The Digital Divide: Filling the Vacuum

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Introduction and Scope

The following bibliography provides a comprehensive examination of the digital divide from a domestic and international perspective. Within this scope a variety of factors are taken into consideration in order to critique the political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural ramifications of ICT use in both developed and developing worlds. These factors include the roles and impacts of libraries and librarians, the rise in popularity of public access venues in developing countries, the differing ideological perspectives of the digital divide, and how certain industries and disciplines shape the general opinion(s) and legislative initiatives of the government and public alike. The articles were chosen accordingly to reflect the above delineations. They were published from 2003 to 2011.

Description

There has been much debate as to the origins of the term ‘digital divide.’ Several articles single out Larry Irving, the former Department of Commerce’s Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information, as originating the term during a speech concerning “the existing gap in access to information services between those who can afford to purchase the computer hardware and software necessary to participate in the global information network, and low income families and communities that cannot” (Lor, 2003, p.65). Other’s mention it’s use by former Vice President Al Gore and President Bill Clinton in reference to a series of reports by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in 1998 (Plumb, 2007, pg.328). Still, there are several other credible leads that can neither be confirmed nor denied about. Nevertheless, up until this point and time there have been varying uses of the term and the denotations continue to change. The “lexical multiplicity” involved here should not be viewed as a deficiency (Gunkel, 2003, pg.504). It’s noted that, “because IT has evolved at historically unprecedented rates, the various problems that are associated with it also experience accelerated change. The changing of the definition of the digital divide is not the result of capriciousness or an inability to be precise. It has varied because the technology in question has changed considerably” (pg.504). This bibliography attempts to address the ambiguous nature and continuing evolution of the digital divide phenomena, and the need for flexible and comprehensive solutions that attempt to better jive with it’s mobile nature.
Summary of Findings

There has been a dearth of critical examinations of the digital divide, thus resulting in an inordinate amount of rehashed ideological and political rhetoric. The root of this problem seemingly starts with structural issues with it’s definition. Lor (2003) illustrates that by using the word digital, the gap is narrowed down to a technological issue. Subsequently, much of the discussion in literature and in issues concerning hardware, technical infrastructure, and connectivity contain a significant technological dimension. What are these structural issues exactly? Gunkel (2003) points to the critical flaw of using the divide to organize things into two dialectically-opposed types. This is problematic because “it represents it’s problem according to a binary logic, dividing things into one of two types, where the one option is nominally defined as the negative or antithesis of the other (pg.505). Differentiating between the information haves’ and information have not, is defined in a way that discredits and defines those that have (in opposition to) those that do not and are simply less fortunate. Put another way, “They comprise the negative counterpart and undesirable version of their positively-defined other” which “has potentially disquieting ethical consequences, especially when applied in a global context” (pg.507).

Librarians can play a vital role in helping to lessen the gulf that exists between the socioeconomically rich compared with those who are SES poor. Aquili and Moghaddam (2008) stress that librarians are a “major social tool” in determining this outcome. It is noted that there are three stages to the digital divide. They are information accessibility, information utilization, and information receptiveness. When taking these points into consideration, “it can be concluded that the focus of the digital divide is information inequality which can be reduced through information accessibility, information use, and information sharing as well as dissemination” (pg.229). Yamazaki (2007) identifies a set of professional competencies for information Professionals and Librarians can in order to meet the above objectives. They are managing information organizations, managing information resources, managing information services, and applying information tools and technologies. Furthermore, these are best maintained if information professionals maintain generic personal skills (communication, problem solving, etc.), professional/specialist information skills (collection development, knowledge management, etc.), IT skills, business and management skills (accounting, marketing, etc.), organizational knowledge and subject understanding (cultural and climate,
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terminology of the field, etc.) and personal work behavior (pg.57).

Those who are working to eradicate the divide face opposition from many different shapes and forms. Houston and Erdelez (2004) point out that “those with a vested interest in the status quo, those on the “connected” side of the digital divide and who follow the business/conservative agenda, if they admit that a divide exists at all, blame the divide on liberal society or liberal government. They address the gap by ignoring it or by advocating existing market dynamics (the status quo) to close it. Those who sell digital goods and services, the digital industry, aided by government voices, promote digital good and services for purposes of self-aggrandizement rather than to close the digital divide.”

Some choose to recognize that divide exists at all. Block (2004) feels that using the argument of inequality or lack of access and resources is a “paradigm case of the proportionality fallacy.” He is of the opinion that “people will differ as to their interests, desires, characteristics, capabilities, etc. But this occurs with just about everything under the sun; it is by no means limited to computers” (pg.394) James (2008) reports that the data used to support such claims; more specifically data that shows developing nations are rapidly closing the information gap, as being flimsy and incomplete at best. He states, “They choose to rely on historical analogy to make the case that growth rates are likely to remain higher in the developing world. That particular analogy is one that records past growth rates of access not only to mature technologies such as telephones and televisions but also to the Internet.”

“Simple arithmetic will show that even only minor absolute increases will register as phenomenally high rates of growth” (pg.56). Valadez and Duran take things a step further by saying, “Others, meanwhile, have argued that declaring the “digital divide” closed based on a wider availability of computers oversimplifies the construct…the “digital divide” is not so much that certain groups have less access to the Internet; it is that they have a different kind of access. In other words students from low-income backgrounds often find their access is restricted to computer labs where they are limited to instructional software that emphasizes low-level drill and practice routines. The technological world is divided into the “interacting” and the “interacted.” The “interacting” includes those who can take advantage of sophisticated applications and research possibilities available on the Internet, while the “interacted” are those individuals who must settle for the most simplistic offerings designed for lower level users” (pg.32).
From an international and/or developing countries perspective the digital divide is less about access as it is “…access to the more valuable information sources, indexes, full-text databases, and e-journals, that are not included in the freely available information on the Internet, leaving scientists and researchers in developing countries excluded from knowledge that may be vital to agricultural, social, and economic development” (Cullen, 2003). In extremely impoverished nations such as Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA), “…there are numerous political, economic, and social problems, in addition to the so-called “digital divide” which increasingly affects these societies...It’s root causes have been theorized by many to be tied to information illiteracy, a lack of resources, governmental censorship and control, established information policies or lack thereof, and internal information infrastructure that lag behind the industrialized West” (Gebremichael and Jackson, 2006). Telecommunication issues are large barriers to access in developing worlds. Cullen (2003) remarks that “In countries where the telecommunications industry is privately owned, the industry is quite open about its reluctance to make substantial investment in markets which represent a tiny percentage of the revenue stream.” Furthermore, “The irony of globalization is that the smaller and less developed nation, the lower the average national income, the higher the telecommunications charges seem to be” (pg.252).

As mentioned above, these issues further exasperate the social and educational issues in impoverished worlds. According to Islam and Tsuji (2011),”…telephone and mobile phone facilities in Bangladesh especially in urban areas are higher and on the contrary, in rural areas it is as low as 0.33 and 6.05 per cent. There has been substantial growth of mobile phone use. The use of ICT facilities is much higher in urban areas compared to rural areas. However, in many countries, the developed communities from developed areas have gone into intricate networks and information superhighways; the indigenous communities of under-developed areas have heard of computers and internet.”

In Sub-Saharan Africa the issues are the same if not worse. “As a continent, Africa represents an estimated 14 percent of the world’s total population, but accounts for less than 2 percent of the world internet usage” also “Some dial-up Internet Service Providers in the U.S. bill users less than $15 USD per month for Internet Access. In contrast, the average dial-up Internet access cost for twenty hours a month in Africa is $68, in addition to Internet subscription fees.” Because of this, “…sources estimate that more than three quarters of the Sub-
Saharan population have been marginalized by advancements in ICT adoption and usage, divided along the lines of age, gender, rural and urban areas, level of education, and unemployment, ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, and other forms of marginalization” (Gebremichael and Jackson, 2006).

Telecenters, cyber cafes, public access venues, and community access/information centers have grown in both success and popularity in developing countries. Gomez and Gould (2010) define the concept of such a venue as “…one that offers public access to information with services available to all and not directed to one group in the community to the exclusion of others.” Cullen (2003) adds, “This involves a paradigm shift from the concept of individual connectivity to community connectivity, contrary to the Gartner Report which insists on domestic access to ensure maximum advantage of the technology.” However, these access centers are not without their issues. Gomez and Gould (2010), conducted a study on the perception of trust in libraries and access centers alike. They found that “…successful use of ICT in public access venues requires that they are perceived as safe in three ways: physically, socially, and technologically.” Additionally, “Overall, the perception of safety tends to be higher in telecenters than the other venues, medium for cybercafés, and lowest for libraries. It is noteworthy that while libraries tend to be perceived as safe, their location tends to be seen as the least convenient, and with the least convenient opening hours.” As far as physical safety is concerned, telecenters are little unwelcoming towards women than libraries, and women often feel more comfortable inside libraries due to the presence of other female staff members (pg.254).

Gomez and Gould (2010) also researched the perception of “cool” in driving usage of ICT in public access venues. They would said the following, “Cool emerged in our study as a set of subjective perceptions that make public access to ICT attractive: a combination of unrestricted internet access, friendly operators, and a comfortable space for social interaction. Young people appear to be finding public access venues (cybercafés in particular) cool places to hangout and socialize with friends, online and offline. While cybercafé’s tend to be perceived as very cool, telecenters and libraries tend to discourage or block the social interactions that make using ICT cool, especially for youth” (pg.257).
Conclusion

Conducting research for this topic really opened my eyes to an assortment of ideas and point of views that many (including myself) fail to take into consideration. Instead of viewing the issue as an either/or opposition I now recognize that solutions and problems exist on a continuum that involves a complex list of factors based on varying degrees of access to information technology. As one author put it, though internet and computer technology (ICT) is useful to certain cultures and/or demographics, it is not delegated an unquestioned human right or necessity. As it stands it is accessible by small percentage of the world’s population, and therefore useful to only a small fraction of the world’s population. Barriers such as language, cultural and community relevancy, and demand for the technology are some of the factors that are left out of status quo arguments on the topic.

In my readings, several authors spoke about the parallels between the industrial age and the information age, and how technologies then and now are pitted against those who are unable (by no fault of their own) to participate in the advantages of the latest technological revolution. As we all know; as it is with most social inequalities, there lies a great economic, political, and cultural inequalities that inhibit vast swaths of the world’s inhabitants from participating in the advantages of the developed world. I’ve learned that both access to, and use of technology is a symptom and not the cause of socioeconomic opportunity. When looked at this way (in a critical manner that is) one can’t help to take a cynical yet realistic stance on why the former statement holds true. Quite simply, the data point to a blatant show of exploitation, greed, and crisis of ego and arrogance amongst those who were fortunate enough to be born in a developed – industrialized world. Furthermore, every great invention promises drastic social improvement. I would like to end this conclusion with a quote from Gunkel (2003), “…neither writing nor printing alone is an “agent of change”; their impacts are determined by the manner in which human agency exploits them in a specific setting.”
Bibliography

Entry 1:

Abstract: “The purpose of this paper is to show how the digital divide has become a common metaphor originating from now nearly obsolete phrases such as “information have and have nots” and “information rich and information poor”. The article aims to focus on several dimensions of the digital divide that pertain to service as well as the responsibilities of libraries.”

Annotation: Provides a keen focus on the greater political and economic ramifications of inadequate information infrastructures and the adverse effect it has on access, literacy, and relevancy as it relates to digital resources. The authors share their point of view and provide a theoretical framework for supposed solutions. While these solutions were well researched and clearly indicated in the work they were a bit biased, as the authors are information professionals themselves, and the article conclusions (while extremely informative) were strictly pro-librarian to the exclusion of other methods and viewpoints.

Search Strategy: I decided to use the OneSearch tool in Dialog in order to search multiple databases. First, I selected the Social Science & Humanities category, and then INFOSCI due to it’s breadth of content on Library & Information Science. Lastly, I performed a full text search in the Library Literature & Information Science file (438).

Database: Dialog

Method of Searching: Keyword

Search String:
ss (digital()divide OR lack(2n)access OR knowledge()divide)AND(librar?)/ti, ab, de
rd
set detail on
s 12
save temp digital
b 438
exs digital
SORT s13/ALL/PY
T 13/5/71-88

Scholarly/Refereed Status: I cross-referenced both the article and the journal using LISA and Ulrich’sWeb database. LISA listed the article as peer-reviewed and Ulrich’s lists the journal (The Electronic Library) as being refereed and geared towards an “academic – special adult” demographic. Also, the journal is described as being “Devoted to the applications and implications of new technology, library automation, user interfaces, and networks on libraries and information centers worldwide.”
Entry 2:

Abstract: “The electronic resources (ER) librarian has a social responsibility to be knowledgeable about the digital divide. Discourse on the digital divide began in the mid-1990s and continues today. Data analysis reveals that divides still exist, particularly when considering income, education, region, disability, age, and race. Librarians face many challenges to take on the digital divide. These challenges include issues of access, content, technical literacy, privacy, civic participation, education, employment, non-use, and political debate. Yet for each challenge, there is an opportunity for the ER librarians to thrive while they face down the digital divide.”

Annotation: The data contained in this article is intriguing due to its strict specificity on the issues that are at play concerning the digital divide. While the material is relevant and well researched, it feels as if the author tried to take too many issue at once. The digital divide as it pertains to the role of the electronic resources librarian, social-economic-political-cultural implications, and rebuttal to it’s critics, are all discussed in the article. Furthermore, it must be noted that there is little evidence to suggest that the author is recognized authority, although she does serve as a professional electronic services librarian at the University of Wyoming College of Law.

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T 13/5/51-70

Scholarly/Refereed Status: I cross-referenced both the article and the journal using LISA and UlrichsWeb database. LISA lists the article and journal alike as peer-reviewed and Ulrich’s lists the journal (The Electronic Library) as being refereed and geared towards an “academic – special adult” demographic. Also, the journal’s website described it as being “the essential
Entry 3:

Abstract: “The phrase “digital divide” has been applied to the gap that exists in most countries between those with ready access to the tools of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and those without such access or skills. This may be because of socio-economic or geographical factors, educational, attitudinal and generational factors, or because of physical disabilities. The paper reviews recent research concerning the digital divide in New Zealand, and the factors that alienate people from enjoying the benefits of information technology and participation in the knowledge economy. While socio-economic factors affect use of ICTs by urban Maori and Pacific Island communities, and rural communities are affected by inadequate telecommunications infrastructure, rural Maori are even more disadvantaged. The paper examines strategies used in the USA and the UK at national and regional levels to address similar issues, including the use of libraries to reduce the digital divide, and compares these with New Zealand initiatives, to identify positive means of increasing participation in the knowledge economy.”

Annotation: The author, Rowena Cullen, has achieved professional and international recognition for her instruction and research in e-government, health informatics, and evaluating information services. Her expertise and knowledge is on full display with this article. It’s meticulously researched and the concepts and opinion alike are plainly stated and easy to grasp. It’s worth noting that the article is a decade old, so some of the data may be a little irrelevant at this point in time. Although, the content is similar to other article in regards to the socio-economic and political implications of the digital divide, it dissimilar in that it attacks the issue from an international angle and provides statistical data from various countries, and unlike other articles concludes with an in-depth look into plausible solutions.

Search Strategy: I decided to use the OneSearch tool in Dialog in order to search multiple databases. First, I selected the Social Science & Humanities category, and then INFOSCI due to it’s breadth of content on Library & Information Science. Lastly, I performed a full text search in the Library Literature & Information Science file (438).

Database: Dialog

Method of Searching: Keyword

Search String:
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set detail on
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save temp digital
Scholarly/Refereed Status: I cross-referenced both the article and the journal using LISA and UlrichsWeb database. LISA listed the article as peer-reviewed and Ulrich’s lists the journal (The Electronic Library) as being refereed and geared towards an “academic – special adult” demographic. Also, the journal is described as being “Devoted to the applications and implications of new technology, library automation, user interfaces, and networks on libraries and information centers worldwide.”

Entry 4:

Abstract: “This article does not attempt a scholarly exposition of the digital divide in general. It is concerned with the role of national libraries in respect of this phenomenon. In approaching this topic the author briefly defines the national library and describes the roles it can play nationally. The concept of the ‘digital divide’ is analyzed into a number of dimensions in order to identify possible roles for the national library in dealing with it.”

Annotation: Throughout his career as an information professional, the author, Dr. Peter Johan Lor, has published over 150 professional and research publications relating to International Librarianship. Although, this article is an opinion piece it provides pertinent and relevant information as it pertains to “national libraries”, their historical contexts, and specifically how those contexts relate to the overall framework of problems that arise within the digital divide. Some of the more interesting content deals with culture heritages of developing countries and its relation to developing information infrastructure. In summary the article is light on statistical date and delves shallowly into inner working of the digital divide, but offers a concrete and well researched approach to how developed nations can play a role in bridging the divide.

Search Strategy: I decided to use the OneSearch tool in Dialog in order to search multiple databases. First, I selected the Social Science & Humanities category, and then INFOSCI due to it’s breadth of content on Library & Information Science. Lastly, I performed a full text search in the Library Literature & Information Science file (438).

Database: Dialog

Method of Searching: Keyword

Search String:
ss (digital()divide OR lack(2n)access OR knowledge()divide)AND(librar?)/ti, ab, de
rd
set detail on
s 12
Entry 5:

Abstract: An oft heard complaint is that there is a digital divide: that some racial, ethnic and gender groupings have more than their fair share of access to computers than others. Commentators who articulate this perspective offer as solutions to this problem the subsidization of such technology for those who are supposedly underprivileged in it. The present paper denies that there is any such problem in need of rectification.

Annotation: The content of this article is severely biased and politically speaking, is clearly written by someone who admittedly ascribes to a right-wing conservative ideology. From outset the author, Dr. Walter Block, makes it clear that digital divide is socialist and leftist propaganda so to speak. While the article is noticeably well written, the tone is condescending and a bit immature. However, it gives an interesting insight into the view points of those who do not believe the digital divide exists or merits much attention whatsoever.

Search Strategy: I chose Google Scholar to do my bidding because I thought I would have a better chance of finding scholarly articles that I could access via “Get It”. Search wise, my aim was to retrieve articles that were hyper critical of the digital divide. One of my articles (Digital Divide Complacency by Jeffrey James) made mention of criticisms that go as far as suggesting that even if the divide did it exists it is no more an issue than the divide between those who own, say, a Mercedes automobile, and those who didn’t. From that point forward I set out to find such an article.

Database: Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Keyword

Search String: digital divide AND Mercedes AND egalitarianism

Scholarly/Refereed Status: LISA failed to retrieve records for both the journal and article titles. Ulrich’s listed the article as being refereed, stating “Publishes original articles from a variety of
methodological and disciplinary perspectives concerning ethical issues related to business.” It’s directed towards a “scholarly/academic” demographic and includes a “journal citations report.”

Entry 6:

**Abstract:** “This study critiqued the notion that a binary "digital divide " between high and low resource schools describes accurately the technology disparity in U.S society. In this study, we surveyed teachers from six southern California schools. Five of the schools were low resource schools and one school, chosen for comparative purposes, was characterized as a high resource school. We found that high resource school teachers had significantly more physical access to computers and the Internet (C&I), more frequent use of C&I, more creative uses of C&I for instruction, communicated by email more often with students, and engaged more frequently in professional activities such on on-line communication with other teachers. The study lent modest support to previous researchers (Natriello, 2001; Warschauer, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Wenglinksy, 1998) who claimed that high resource students are more likely to use C&I for more experimental and creative uses than students from low resource schools. In addition the findings contribute to a broader definition of the "digital divide" that includes social consequences including the impact of social networks and wider use of technology to improve instruction.”

**Annotation:** This article is unique in that not only does it critique the digital divide from an access point of view (the most popular view amongst peer-reviewed articles), but it delves beyond the shallow framework of teacher access and the plight of low socioeconomic status students who lack complete or sufficient computer and internet access. It’s meticulously researched, complete with graphs and tables, and it’s also been cited in a number of works.

**Search Strategy:** I used JSTOR to search out issues concerning the digital divide, (specifically) in the United States, between 2005 and 2010.

**Database:** JSTOR

**Method of Searching:** Keyword

**Search String:** (((Digital Divide) AND (United States)) AND (Libraries)) AND (year:[2005 TO 2010])

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** There was no listing for either the article or the journal in LISA. Ulrich’s however, listed the publication “The High School Journal” as being refereed and geared toward an “academic/scholarly” demographic. It’s website exclaims “HSJ is a project of PhD students in the Culture, Curriculum, and Change Program in the School of Education at UNC Chapel Hill.” It is produced on a bi-weekly basis and it is published by The University of North Carolina Press.
Entry 7:

**Abstract:** “This article introduces critical perspective into the discussion of the digital divide, which is commonly defined as the gap separating those individuals who have access to new forms of information technology from those who do not. The analysis is distinguished from other undertakings addressing this matter, insofar as it does not document the empirical problems of unequal access but considers the terminology, logical structure, and form that define and direct work on this important social and ethical issue. The investigation employs the tools of critical theory and targets extant texts, reports, and studies. In this way, the analysis does not dispute the basic facts gathered in recent empirical studies of computer usage and internet access. On the contrary, its purpose is to assist these and other endeavors by making evident their common starting point, stakes, and consequences.”

**Annotation:** An unadulterated and unabashed critique of how the digital divide is perceived and processed by outside world, the dichotomized structure of the term, and the universal ideological viewpoint that the C&I (computer and internet) deal with “significant society ramifications” (Gunkel, 2003). Meticulously researched and extremely well written article, that delves beyond criticism(s) of the digital divide in it’s traditional sense. The content is a great counterpunch to articles that a more uniformed stance. The author, David J. Gunkel, is a Communications professor specializing in information and communications technology (ICT). This particular article has been cited 28 times (Web of Science).

**Search Method:** I set out to discover articles that concerned themselves with either problems with the my topic or had sharp criticism towards it. After exhausting all of my intellectual ability using Dialog, I chose to undergo a search using Google Scholar.

**Database:** Google Scholar

**Method of Searching:** Keyword

**Search String:** “digital divide”AND criticism? AND problems

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** I was unable to retrieve any results using LISA for the article or journal. However, Ulrich’s listed the article as refereed and geared towards an academic/scholarly demographic. The website description of the journal states, “New Media & Society is a top-ranked, peer-reviewed, international journal that publishes key research from communication, media and cultural studies, as well as sociology, geography, anthropology, economics, the political and information sciences and the humanities….” It is published 8 times a year, and it produced by Sage Publications.
Entry 8:

**Abstract:** “This paper is intended to review the key aspects of the environmental changes now occurring around libraries, information centers and library professionals, followed by a tentative proposal with the aim of making a breakthrough for them in the digital era. We will focus our attention on information professionals in special libraries, information centers and so on. They have been exposing themselves to the risk that the resources assigned to their libraries would be easily reduced, influenced by the difficulties in finance and the renewal of management plans of parent organizations, mainly due to economic depression. This makes them even more sensitive to efficient and effective management of their libraries. By analyzing them, we are able to acquire some ‘leading indicators’ in library services management and human resource management for library people.”

**Annotation:** This work was used as a reference and model for the article “Bridging the digital divide: The role of librarians and information professionals in the third millennium. “It provides great insight into the ever changing scope of how information is both procured and sought, and how sound communication, basic business skills, and computer and network literacy skills can serve to enhance librarianship. I found it to be instrumental in helping to fuse together the role of the librarian and information technology (IT) with the myriad of issues that surround the digital divide.

**Search Method:** This article was cited in an earlier work, “Bridging the digital divide”, and so I decided to search the catalog (Summon - Hagerty Library site) to see if it was available. I was available to access it though Sage Journals Online.

**Database:** N/A

**Method of Searching:** Footnote Chasing

**Search String:** Reference in:

**Scholarly/Referee Status:** Both Ulrich’s and LISA list the journal, IFLA Journal, as being peer-review/refereed. Also, the article is listed as being peer-reviewed in LISA. The journal is produced on a quarterly basis, it’s published by Sage Publications, Ltd., and it’s website proclaims, “*IFLA Journal* is an international journal which publishes original peer reviewed articles, a selection of peer reviewed IFLA conference papers, and news of current IFLA activities.”
Entry 9:

Abstract: “In the United States an intense debate has taken place between those wishing to minimize the digital divide and others who are skeptical of this view. In regard to the global digital divide, by contrast, although a similar type of complacency can be found, it has not yet been seriously debated. This article, accordingly, hopes to initiate such a discussion. It attacks the notions that information technology can be easily compared with the earlier diffusion of consumer durable goods, that the divide can be made to disappear by redefining the issue, and that the global divide can be analyzed without the help of basic knowledge from fields such as innovation studies, technology and development, and the diffusion of process innovations.”

Annotation: This article peers deeply into the bevy of proclamations made by those who perceive the digital divide as something that’s rapidly shrinking. Providing readers with graphs, charts, and soundly researched arguments, the author, Jeffrey James, illustrates how critics of the divide often overlook the systematic inequalities that create the have/have not’s duality that exists between developed and developing worlds.

Search Strategy: I wanted to find articles that provided insight into those who viewed the digital divide as fiction or as something that once existed but ceased to no more. I decided to use Google Scholar because of the noted access to Hagerty Libraries “Get It” feature.

Database: Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Keyword

Search String: “Digital Divide” AND Fiction AND Internet

Scholarly/Referee Status: The journal (The Information Society) is listed as refereed/peer-reviewed by both Ulrich’s and LISA. It is geared towards an scholarly/academic demographic, and it’s published only 5 times per year. The website featured a “Peer Review Policy” that states, “All research articles in this journal have undergone editorial screening and peer review.”
Entry 10:

Abstract: “Scholarship since at least Leete (1919) has studied the socioeconomic gap as a function of access to information. In the mid-1970s, Childers (1975) deemed economic poverty the leading indicator of information poverty. Since the late 1990s, the "digital divide," the gap between "users" who have access to the Internet and "potential users" who do not, has gained ever-increasing prominence. This paper reviews the current literature on the digital divide, analyzes the motives of the authors proposing solutions for closing the divide, and uses the analysis as a perspective from which to examine the benefits of proposed solutions.”

Annotation: Provides a unique and valuable insight into the proposed solutions of so-called “stakeholders” in a variety of disciplines, in relation to the business, political, social, and economic ramifications of the digital divide, and the possibilities of its closure. The authors explain their methodology and research processes in detail, and provide the reader with facts, figures, and graphs to support their finding. The conclusion presents a bit of a political and/or ideological bias or preference. Also, much to their admission, this study managed to only capture a small percentage of the literature available on this particular topic. Furthermore, strategies and philosophies have radically changed on how to approach the digital divide, thus complicating matters even further.

Search Strategy: I specifically set out to find articles that dealt with solutions and solutions only. I tried a number of different keyword searches to no avail. My two constants were “digital divide” and “solutions.” However, I remember the word “Internet” frequently sprouting up as a subject heading in other articles. I then added to my search string and performed a search in the Web of Science database.

Database: Web of Science
Method of Searching: Keyword
Search String: Digital Divide AND Solutions AND Internet

Scholarly/Referee Status: The article is listed as peer-reviewed in LISA. Both Ulrich’s and LISA list the journal (The Journal of Information Ethics) as a peer-reviewed/refereed publication. It circulates semi-annually, is geared towards an academic/scholarly demographic, and is published by McFarland & Company, Inc.
Entry 11:

Abstract: “The purpose of this paper is to discuss different attempts that have been made to bridge the digital divide in Bangladesh, with special focus on the Community Information Centers (CICs), which are playing a unique and innovative role in reducing the digital gap. The paper is a case study and is based on a survey method for collecting information through telephone (outbound call center). Besides these, internet, personal visits (as a project member) and other secondary sources such as research reports, Grameenphone internal reports, articles are used.”

Annotation: Provides a look at not only the ICT (internet and computer technology) faced by the socioeconomically disadvantaged people of Bangladesh, but provides universal data that can be used as a model for most “third-world” developing countries and their rural populations. Statistical data via graphs and tables are present throughout the article, supporting the methodology/approach used by the authors.

Search Strategy: My strategy here was simply to try and uncover more information about the community access centers, telecommunications hubs, and “telecenters” that were featured in previous journal articles that I read. More specifically, I was also looking for additional information from a developing countries perspective on the digital divide. Two keywords that would become synonymous with my search strings were “information centers” “and communication technologies.” Combining these terms with “digital divide” often times did not retrieve what I was looking for. I then went back and searched earlier articles and discovered that the word “internet” was used heavily.

Database: Web of Science

Search Method: Keyword

Search String: Digital Divide AND Information Centers AND Internet

Scholarly/Referee status: I cross-referenced both the article and the journal using LISA and Ulrich’sWeb database. LISA listed the article as peer-reviewed and Ulrich’s lists the journal (The Electronic Library) as being refereed and geared towards an “academic – special adult” demographic. Also, the journal is described as being “Devoted to the applications and implications of new technology, library automation, user interfaces, and networks on libraries and information centers worldwide.”
Entry 12:

Abstract: “Equitable access to information is one of the most vital principles in the emerging global information economy, and there is perhaps no region of the world that epitomizes the conflict between the information haves and have-nots than Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In addition to the more traditional forms of poverty, a new concept, “information poverty,” has emerged that better explains the true nature of being a have-not in a world increasingly reliant on information and communication technologies (ICT). This article will take a holistic approach in discussing possible first steps towards evaluating user needs in SSA, exploring the need for information professionals from industrialized nations to take a more active role in international collaboration to help combat information poverty in the developing world. This article will also examine efforts in developing countries to help bridge the digital divide with the industrialized world.”

Annotation: As it relates to other articles contained in this bibliography not much new is offered here in terms definitions, socioeconomic implications, and possible solutions and/or guidelines. It focuses specifically on the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and this is where it’s value lies. Like other articles that deal with the divide from an international/micro level, it provides a unique insight into both developed and developing countries, their costumes, language, culture, and economic plights and how it relates to the greater digital world.

Search Strategy: My goal this time around was trying to find the most economically and politically disenfranchised demographic of people on the planet, in order to gauge their point of view in terms of the digital divide, their culture, and possible solutions. I continue to have a lot of success using the Web of Science, so I decided to remain with it.

Database: Web of Science

Search Method: Keyword

Search String: Poverty AND Digital Divide AND Communication Technologies

Scholarly/Referee Status: Both Ulrich’s and LISA list the journal (Government Information Quarterly) as being refereed/peer-reviewed. Also, the article itself is listed as being peer-reviewed in LISA. It’s website proclaims, “As the leading journal in the field, Government Information Quarterly seeks to publish high quality scholarly research, reviews, review essays and editorials that inform both researchers and practitioners regarding the relationship between policy, information technology, government, and the public.”
Entry 13:
Gomez, R., & Gould, E. (2010). The cool factor of public access to ICT: Users' perceptions of trust in libraries, telecentres and cybercafés in developing countries, Information Technology & People, 23(3), 247 - 264

Abstract:
Purpose: This paper aims to determine how trust and perceptions shape uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in public access venues (libraries, telecentres, and cybercafés) in 25 developing countries around the world.

Design/methodology/approach: As part of a global study conducted by the Technology & Social Change Group at the University of Washington, local research teams conducted surveys, site visits, and interviews of over 25,000 respondents in different types of public access venues in the selected countries, using a shared research design and analytical framework.

Findings: The use of public access venues is shaped by the following trust factors: safety concerns, relevance of the information, reputation of the institution, and users' perceptions of how “cool” these venues are. While libraries tend to be trusted as most reputable, telecentres tend to be trusted as most relevant to meet local needs, and cybercafés tend to be perceived as most “cool”.

Research limitations/implications: The paper is limited by its descriptive and not predictive nature, and is not based on a statistically representative sample of the population.

Practical implications: The insight presented in this paper can help inform policy decisions about public access initiatives, and inform future research to better understand the causes and consequences of trust in public access ICT. Understanding these perceptions helps gain a more nuanced understanding of the way services are provided in venues that offer public access to ICT.

Originality/value: This paper is novel as it covers public access to ICT in 25 developing countries across different types of venues, using a shared design and methodological approach. A study of this magnitude has never been done before. The findings provide valuable insight into understanding how people trust different types of public access ICT venues.

Annotation: The article provides insight into public access venues, specifically concerning itself with the nature of these venues and prevalence of non-instrumental use. It’s unique in that goes beyond the typical factors and surface issues (access, training, political, economic, environmental, etc.) and deals directly with the core issues, beliefs, and interests among youth and adults alike when it comes to utilizing ICT.

Search Strategy: I wanted to build on my knowledge of both information centers and telecenters (and the like), by seeking out articles that specifically dealt with these spaces in a broader sense. Again, I searched out keywords from previous articles to come up with a good search string. The term “public libraries” proved to be most instrumental in this instance.

Database: Web of Science
Search Method: Keyword

Search String: Communication Technologies AND Internet AND Public Libraries

Scholarly/Referee Status: LISA contains no search results for either the journal (Information Technology & People) or article. Ulrich’s lists the journal as being refereed and directed towards an academic/scholarly demographic. In addition, the website journal’s states that it’s key audiences are “academics in computer and information systems, developer’s practitioners who manage information systems in organizations, and policy makers.” Content is written on a scholarly, theoretical, technical nature, it is produced on a quarterly basis, and the journal is published by Emerald Group Publishing, Ltd.

I certify that:

- This assignment is entirely my own work.
- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
- I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature: Shawn A. Woodson
Date: 12/04/2011