

Bridging Digital Divide in Kenya Using Access-Involvement-Interaction

Policy Model

Empirical Exploration of Nairobi and Environs

Kennedy Odiwuor Okong'o

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of

Science in ICT Policy and Regulation in the Jomo Kenyatta

University of Agriculture and Technology

2011

ABSTRACT

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a critical input in contributing to national socio-economic development and for any nation to benefit, the nation has to ensure her citizens access and utilize ICTs. In Kenya, a study of available statistics concerning internet access could make one think that this vision may soon be realized. To achieve this, a plan of action for Kenya is needed to reduce the digital divide. The starting point is to design appropriate policies to constitute a plan of action. Borrowing from South Korean ICT policy model of access-involvement-interaction, the research adopts an empirical exploration to evaluate the policy implication that can be deduced for the Kenyan context as far as the phenomenon of digital divide is concerned. The study takes an interdisciplinary approach incorporating socio-political and economic perspectives. The research design was a survey and sampled 210 respondents in Nairobi and immediate environs consisting of three groups namely: civil servants, university students and housewives. The results indicated that access only cannot fully explain the gaps in internet use within groups, other factors as relevance of content, gender and educational level are important. The results further indicated that policy emphasis ought to focus on skills and usage access besides infrastructure access which has been the focus of many ICT related initiatives. This study led to a theoretical model proposed in this research pursuit for use in charting necessary policy considerations that must be accounted for in order to shrink the already large digital gap in the heterogeneous Kenyan society in efforts to globally position Kenya as a competitive information economy.