Digital Divide

DARIUS BLANKS & DAN HIPP

Overview

- Professor Gunkel's *Second thoughts: a critique of the digital divide*
- The Pew Internet Project: *Digital Differences*
- Aleph Molinari: Let's bridge the digital divide!

Second thoughts: toward a critique of the digital divide

new media & society

ARTICLE

Second thoughts: toward a critique of the digital divide

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Defining Digital Divide

- There are several thoughts on what "digital divide" really means

- Unclear origin

- It is commonly referred to as the gap separating people who have access to information technology (IT) and the people who do not

References to Digital Divide

- Different takes on the meaning:
- Is it just about information technology haves and have-nots?
  - -- Amy Harmon of the LA Times believes it is a 'voluntary partition . . . galvanized by strongly-held views about whether today's technology is a force for progress or destruction'
  - -- Al Gore—educational issue for K-12
  - -- Late 90's digital divide meant the separation of IT user capability
  - -- Angwin and Castaneda—racial issue regarding unfair employment opportunities
- Change in definition is a result of changing technology

Variables for defining Digital Divide

- Digital divide cannot be defined as a binary division
- There are many factors that may contribute to the meaning of the phrase:
  -- Age
  -- Education
  -- Race
  -- Social status
  -- Geographic location
  -- Interest

Technological determinism

► The belief that technology is the prime cause for change in our society

► This idea is often refuted

► Critics of digital divide, today, argue that it is no longer just IT haves and have-nots:

--Want-nots—those who have no interest in technology use

--Internet drop-outs—those who have used the internet and lost interest

► Some people may change their views with the advancements in technology, but some may keep true to their traditional views and not use technology

"Second Thoughts"

- ▶ The idea that we have in our heads about digital divide may be flawed

- ▶ The meaning of the word is constantly changing

The Pew Internet Project: Digital Differences

Pew Internet
Pew Internet & American Life Project

a project of the
PewResearchCenter

APRIL 13, 2012

Digital differences

While increased internet adoption and the rise of mobile connectivity have reduced many gaps in technology access over the past decade, for some groups digital disparities still remain

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	% of offline adults
What is the MAIN reason you don't use the internet or email?	
Just not interested	31%
Don't have a computer	12
Too expensive	10
Too difficult	9
It's a waste of time	7
Don't have access	6
Don't have time to learn	6
Too old to learn	4
Don't want/need it	4
Just don't know how	2
Physically unable	2
Worried about viruses/spyware/spam	1
Other	6

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older (n=496 for non-internet users).
More: http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Home-Broadband-2010.aspx

- 1 of 5 American adults does not use the internet
- Less likely to use/have Internet access:
  - -- Senior citizens
  - -- Those who prefer Spanish over English
  - -- Less educated
  - -- Lower income households (less than $30,000/year income total income)

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► Among adults who do not use the internet:

-- Almost ½ think the it is not relevant to them

-- Most of them have not used the it before, or live with anyone who does

-- 1 of 5 think they are not tech savvy enough to use it

-- 1 of 10 are actually interested in using it in the future

- The 27% of adults living with a disability in the U.S. today are significantly less likely than adults without a disability to go online (54% vs. 81%)
- 2% of adults have a disability or illness that makes it more difficult or impossible for them to use the internet at all

- Internet usage rates have leveled off
- However, those adults who are online, seem to be doing more
- Regarding the "core" internet activities studied, significant usage has been noted
- These terms of use are generally related to

  -- Age

  -- Household income

  -- Educational attainment

Internet adoption, 1995-2011

% of American adults (age 18+) who use the internet, over time. As of August 2011, 78% of adults use the internet.
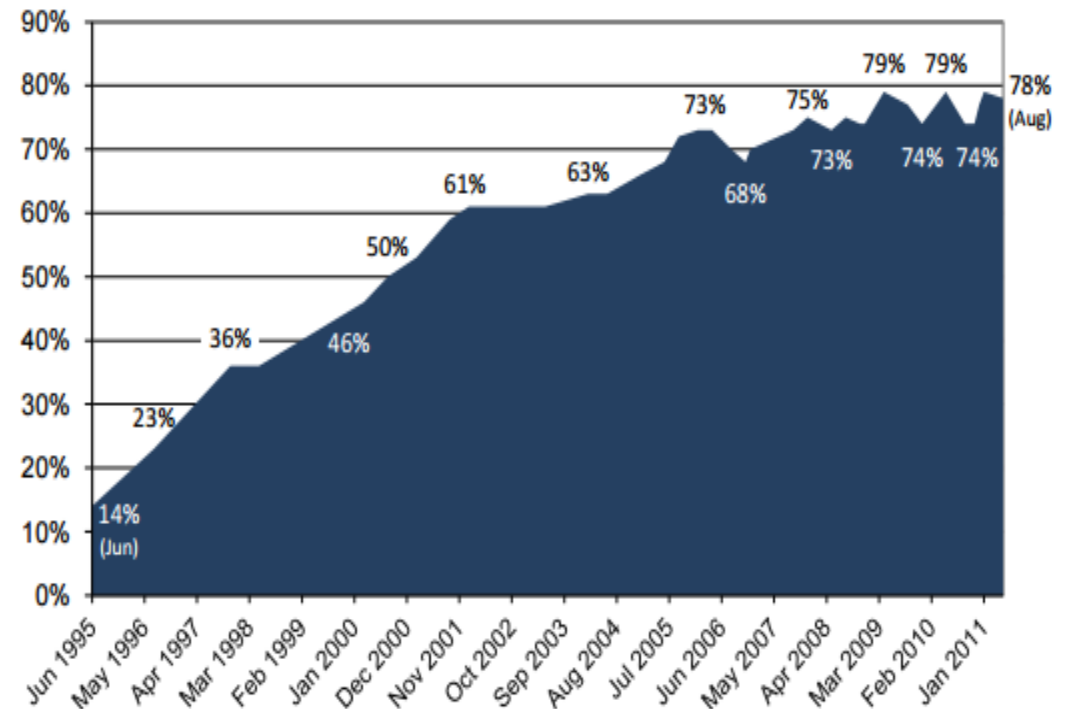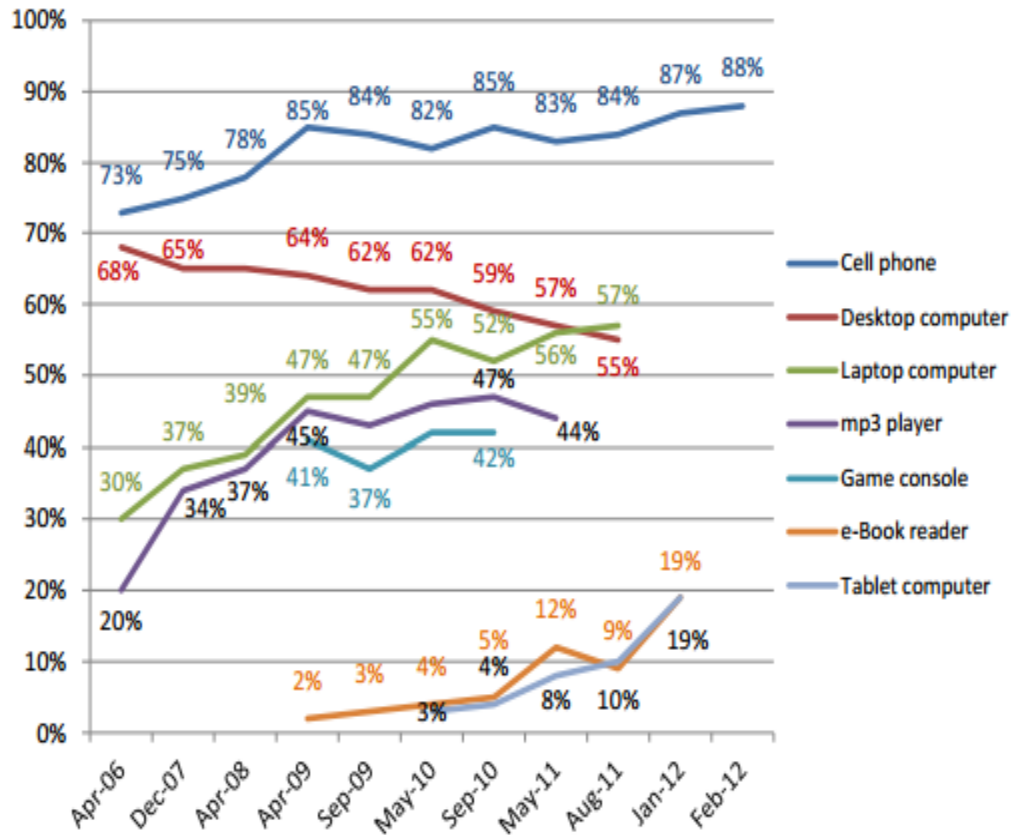

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys, March 2000-August 2011.
More: http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Internet-Adoption.aspx

Adult gadget ownership over time (2006-2012)
% of American adults age 18+ who own each device
Source: Pew Internet surveys, 2006-2012.

- 88% of American adults have a cell phone

- 57% have a laptop

- 19% have an e-book reader

- 19% have a tablet computer

- Approx. 63% of adults go online with one of the above devices

- Gadget ownership is generally related to age, education, and household income

- However, some devices (tablets, e-books, and others similar) are as popular, or even more popular among adults in their 30's and 40's compared to younger adults

- Rise of mobile is changing the story
- Traditional, non-internet users are switching sides and using mobile devices for internet purposes
- Among smart phone owners: young adults, minorities, users with no college education, and users from lower household income levels are more likely to use their smart phones as their main source of internet access

Mobile internet use, by demographics

% of American adults age 18+ within each group who go online wirelessly with a laptop or cell phone, as of August 2011

	% who go online wirelessly
All adults (age 18+)	63%
Men	67
Women	59
Age	
18-29	88
30-49	76
50-64	53
65+	21
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic	63*
Black, Non-Hispanic	62*
Hispanic (English- and Spanish-speaking)	63*
Household income	
Less than $30,000/yr	50
$30,000-$49,999	64
$50,000-$74,999	75
$75,000+	86
Educational attainment	
No high school diploma	36
High school grad	53
Some College	72
College +	82

* All differences are statistically significant except for those between the rows designated with an asterisk.
Source: The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project's August Tracking Survey conducted July 25-August 26, 2011. N=2,260 adults age 18 and older, including 916 interviews conducted by cell phone. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

Smartphone ownership by age & income/education

% of adults within each group who own a smartphone (for example, 58% of 18-29 year olds with a household income of less than $30,000 per year are smartphone owners)

	18-29 (n=336)	30-49 (n=601)	50-64 (n=639)	65+ (n=626)
All adults	66%	59%	34%	13%
Annual Household Income				
Less than $30,000	58	42	16	5
$30,000 or more	72	69	44	27
Educational Attainment				
High school grad or less	63	43	22	8
Some college or college graduate	70	71	44	20

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project January 20-February 19, 2012 tracking survey. N=2,253 adults age 18 and older, including 901 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. Interviews conducted in both English and Spanish.

Smartphone ownership demographics

% of American adults age 18+ within each group who own a smartphone. "Smartphone ownership" includes those who say their phone is a smartphone, or who describe their phone as running on the Android, Blackberry, iPhone, Palm or Windows platforms.

	May 2011	Feb. 2012
All adults (age 18+)	35%	46%
Men	39	49
Women	31	44
Race/Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	30	45
Black, non-Hispanic	44	49
Hispanic (English- and Spanish-speaking)	44	49
Age		
18-29	52	66
30-49	45	59
50-64	24	34
65+	11	13
Household Income		
Less than $30,000/yr	22	34
$30,000-$49,999	40	46
$50,000-$74,999	38	49
$75,000+	59	68
Education level		
No high school diploma	18	25
High school grad	27	39
Some college	38	52
College+	48	60
Geographic location		
Urban	38	50
Suburban	38	46
Rural	21	34

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project April 26-May 22, 2011 and January 20-February 19, 2012 tracking surveys. For 2011 data, n=2,277 adults ages 18 and older, including 755 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. For 2012 data, n=2,253 adults and survey includes 901 cell phone interviews. Both 2011 and 2012 data include Spanish-language interviews.

- Both African Americans and English-speaking Latinos are as likely to own any sort of mobile phone
- Both are also more likely to use their phone for a wider range of activities

Cell phone activities by race/ethnicity

% of American adult cell phone owners age 18+ within each group who do the following activities with their cell phone, as of May 2011

	White, non-Hispanic (n=1343)	Black, non-Hispanic (n=232)	Hispanic (n=196)
Send or receive text messages	70	76	83*
Take a picture	71	70	79*
Access the internet	39	56*	51*
Send a photo or video to someone	52	58	61*
Send or receive email	34	46*	43*
Download an app	28	36*	36*
Play a game	31	43*	40*
Play music	27	45*	47*
Record a video	30	41*	42*
Access a social networking site	25	39*	35*
Watch a video	21	33*	39*
Post a photo or video online	18	30*	28*
Check bank balance or do online banking	15	27*	25*
Participate in a video call or video chat	4	10*	12*
Mean (out of 14)	4.7	6.1	6.2

*indicates statistically significant differences compared with whites.

Source: The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 26 – May 22, 2011 Spring Tracking Survey. n=2,277 adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Aleph Molinari

Molinari's take

▶ Molinari believes digital divide is the gap between those who have access to the internet and those who do not

▶ Those who do not have access:

   1. cannot afford it

   2. do not know how to use it

   3. do not know the benefits

Digital Abyss
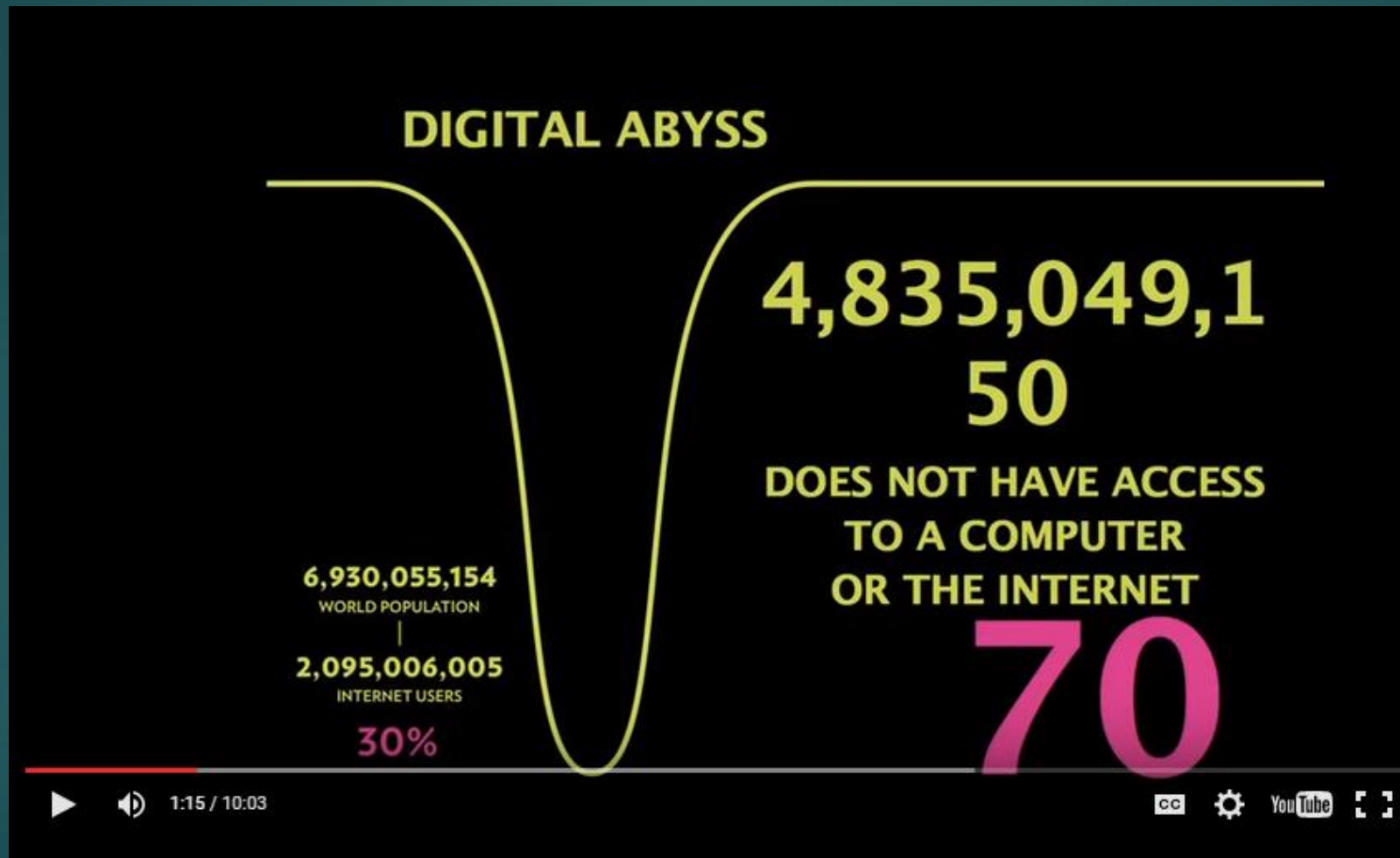
INTERNET = RIGHT

- Molinari believes the 30% of the world that uses the internet is far superior to the 70% that does not

- "Technologically excluded"

- "Rest of the world"

- Right vs. Wrong

- Survival of the fittest

Internet Map

Molinari's Plan

- Infrastructure

  -- Learning facilities

- Connection

  --Not only to the internet but to each other

- Content

  --72 hour digital citizens

- Training

Conclusion

- Digital divide is the gap between those who use internet technology and those who do not

- We learned that there are several differing opinions on what factors contribute to the meaning of the phrase

- Questions?