

Digital Divide



Information Technology and Social Life

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Digital Divide Research

- Digital Divide - The gap that exists between those who have and those who do not have access to technology (telephones, computers, Internet access) and related services.
- Can be defined in terms of race, gender, income, educational status, age, geography, etc.



Gender Issues

- Women's access - roughly equal access to Internet as men
- Usage and representation
- Women underrepresented in technology programs, companies, as tech executives, developers, bloggers, etc.
- Girls socialization with technology
- Intimidation and harassment
- Style of online interaction turns women off
- Dismissive or hostile treatment
- Women cast as victims, rather than empowered users

Currently 66% men 61% women

Different attitudes toward technology - men as extension /women as means to an end

Game "Boy"



Feminization of the Internet

- Internet becoming domesticated like other technologies, i.e. telephone
- Is access the only determinant of gender equity?
- Matrix of oppression when considering multiple divides, ex. African-American women; commingling of issues of income and education
- Women use Internet for email to keep in touch with friends or to battle isolation
- Men-news, financial information, stocks, auctions, politics, hobbies.
- Women tend to use Internet to reinforce private life, men for engaging in public sphere.
- Availability of feminist communications
- Web content for women developed with specific audience in mind
- Gender (and race) can be coopted by marketplace, where they are viewed not as coalitions, but as markets or consumers.

Design, administration, governance, ownership,

White, middle-class

Ramifications - underrepresented in computer science, higher paying employment, technology products not being developed with them in mind.

Governance - few women in ICANN



Art vs. Code

- Three stages:
 - 1993-1996- Art and Code Fusion - pre-boom economy
 - 1997-1999 - Art and Code Bifurcation - boom
 - 2000 - Domination of Code over Art - post-boom
- Looked at ways that Web designer role had been advertised and described over time.
- Design and development emerged as separate in the 2nd stage
- Art devalued as skill in post-boom economy
- Contrast with Pink article on left brain vs. right brain



Race and Commerce in New Media

- Pew Center Report 2000
- 58% whites, 43% African-Americans, 50% Hispanics
- 75% Asians
- African-Americans don't go online as frequently as whites
- African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics more likely to consume music online
- Those that are online spend more time chatting instant messaging, gaining sports info. and downloading music (compared to whites)
- More engaged with the Internet in terms of expressive or popular culture
- Being constructed as markets as opposed to authors?

Focus on what is done online as opposed to old focus on “haves and have nots”

Four categories: fun, information seeking, major life activities, transactions

All associated with minorities in the fun category - what does this say about how we value these activities in our culture?

To some extent, associated with youth of users Hispanic 61% under 34, 37% of whites, 54% of African-American, 63% Asian

Critical to track production as well as usage. Putting up sites, posting music, images, videos, contributing to list serves, etc.