



Strategies for Bridging Digital Inclusion

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Abstract

Digital inclusion refers to the fair access to digital technologies and information for all members of society, particularly those in marginalized communities such as rural areas in South Africa. The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with quantitative data analysis of local government projects targeting rural communities. A thematic analysis revealed that while some community-based internet projects have achieved coverage of 70% in certain regions, others remain underutilized due to lack of awareness and basic ICT skills among residents. Rural areas face significant challenges in accessing digital resources, necessitating tailored strategies that include capacity building programmes for both users and service providers. Public-private partnerships should be encouraged to fund and implement comprehensive training sessions targeting rural communities' specific needs. Model estimation used $\hat{\theta} = \underset{\theta}{\operatorname{argmin}} \{ \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - f(\theta; \xi))^2 + \lambda \|\theta\|_2^2 \}$, with performance evaluated using out-of-sample error.

Keywords: Sub-Saharan, African, Spatial-Analysis, Broadband-Access, Ethnicity, Web-Design, HIV/AIDS

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