Strategies for Bridging Digital Inclusion in Rural South Africa

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Abstract

Rural areas in South Africa face significant challenges in accessing digital technologies and services, exacerbating existing socio-economic disparities. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to assess current digital access levels and identify barriers. The survey revealed that only 35% of respondents had reliable internet connections, highlighting a substantial gap in connectivity for rural areas. Current strategies have shown limited success; further targeted interventions are required to bridge the digital inclusion gap effectively. Implement community-led pilot projects and advocate for government policies that prioritise rural infrastructure development and digital literacy programmes. Digital Inclusion, Rural South Africa, Community Engagement, Infrastructure Development Model estimation used $\hat{\{\theta\}} = argmin\{\theta\} sumiell(yi, f\theta(\xi)) + \lambda lVert\theta rVert 2^2$, with performance evaluated using out-of-sample error.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, Affordability, Accessibility, Socioeconomic, Governance*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

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