



Digital Inclusion Dynamics in Rural South African Communities: An Exploration of the Digital Divide

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Abstract

Digital inclusion in rural South African communities has been a subject of significant interest due to socio-economic disparities and geographical challenges. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews was employed to gather data from various rural areas across South Africa. Findings suggest a significant gender disparity in internet access, with women comprising 45% of the non-connected population in surveyed communities. The Digital Divide persists as a complex issue influenced by socioeconomic factors and infrastructure availability. Strategic investments should prioritise digital literacy programmes targeting rural women to bridge this gap. Digital Inclusion, Rural South Africa, Digital Divide, Community Engagement

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, GIS, participatory mapping, e-participation, digital equity, socio-economic stratification, community empowerment*

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