Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program to Assess the Impact of Public Access to ICTs

Sample Research Topics and Overview of Global Impact Study Probes
# Introduction

Sample Research Topics

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21. How good are telecenters and other public access to ICT venues as public service delivery channels?
22. Does the use of services offered in public access venues increase trust?

## Global impact study in-depth probes

1. Infomediaries
2. Mobile Phones
3. Venue Life Cycle
4. Collaborative Knowledge Sharing
5. Non-instrumental Uses

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Introduction

The Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program to Assess the Impact of Public Access to ICTs will support original research addressing critical issues that will help assessing the impact of public access to ICTs.

Twenty-two (22) research questions have been identified as deserving priority consideration. The first 18 topics were identified during Global Impact Study’s First Phase; and an additional four topics were identified in the process of developing this Fellowship Program.

The list of research topics included here is intended as an aide to emerging scholars who may wish to identify a suitable research topic. This list is not all encompassing and should not be seen as a constraint on researcher initiative in the choice of research topic.

There are other valuable sources of information on public access that may help in the choice of research topic. One pertinent source is the telecenter community forum at www.telecentre.org.

The choice of priority research questions is important. It should be fully articulated and substantiated by applicants. Topic choice will be a key determinant of Fellowship awards.

Sample Research Topics

Global Impact Study - In-depth Research Priorities for Phase II

1. Infomediaries

What are the roles and the impact of infomediaries in terms of what users learn, do differently, and value from their services? What is the effect of staff skills and training on impact of public access venues?

The Global Impact Study has selected this topic for in-depth probe. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/

2. Community Information Ecology:

What are the details of the information ecology of the larger community within which public access sites are located? What forces in the community promote the use of public access ICTs? Does public access venue influence information ecology of a community and vice versa? Note: Information ecology in this context is used as a concept not a methodology, referring to the information ecosystem in general.

3. Direct and Indirect impacts

Is there a multi-step flow of information from a public access site? How does this contribute to our understanding of a realistic number for people affected by a project? To what extent do the benefits of public access extend from users to non-users? Do public access ICTs have an indirect impact on students’ academic
achievement?

4. Non-users

What are the barriers to access (especially for marginalized populations)? How are public access points viewed by nonusers? What are the key sources of information for non-users? Do they include public access ICT users?

5. Mobile Telephony

How do mobile users interact with Internet public access sites? What is the use of Internet public access among mobile phone users? What is usage of public access ICTs by heavy mobile phone users? To what extent are there uses of computers in public access venues that have something to do with mobile phones?

The Global Impact Study has selected this topic for in-depth probe. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/

6. Willingness to Pay

How do users make choices when there are fees? How much are individuals willing to pay for different public access ICT products and services? What is the relationship between users’ perceived value of communication and information services and the actual benefits derived from them?

7. Policy and Regulation

What are the mechanisms that enable research and policy making to work together in the field of public access?

8. Collaborative Knowledge Sharing

Do shared use practices emerge when users access ICTs simultaneously with others in public access venues? What are the consequences for users?

The Global Impact Study has selected this topic for in-depth probe. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/

9. Value of Non-instrumental Uses

Do non-instrumental uses of ICT (e.g., games, chat, entertainment activities) have impacts on the 7 development domains (employment/income, education, civic engagement, democracy, cultural preservation, and health)?

The Global Impact Study has selected this topic for in-depth probe. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/

What are lifecycle models of public access ICTs? Are public access venues best understood as transitional entities? Are some failures actually transitions? What is the impact of failure on the community? When do impacts of public access use become visible at individual and community level? What would be impact of multiple public access venues in a community (competition)? Do public access venues started under different programs (private entrepreneurial, government) function differently?

This probe is presently under review. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/.

11. Institutional/Stakeholder Influence:

What are the main institutional changes that are shaping, or shaped, by development of public access to ICT (national level)? What is the relationship between state structure and the organizational form of public access venues (are certain types of centers associated with certain types of state structure)? What change agents are facilitating the development of public access to ICT (local level)? What role do stakeholders play in public access venues with high impact? What effect does community involvement in the design and operation of a public access venue have on the social and economic impacts of the venue?

12. Rules

How do restrictions on the use of computers, the Internet and venue space generally in public access venues impact usage?

13. Role of Networks in Venue Ecosystem

What is the relation between public access venues and government, NGOs and other public access venues at the local level (are there programmatic ties)? Do public access venues that are a part of a larger network have more or less impact on their users and communities? Does access using a pre-existing network work better than developing a new establishment?

14. Local Content

What is the importance of local content to a public access site having impact in its community? What is the geographical scale at which information must be gathered and disseminated to ensure that public access to ICTs is beneficial?

15. Venue architecture/design

How does the nature of physical space (including availability of space for ancillary activities (e.g., computer placement, meeting rooms, computer repair work, childcare) at public access venues affect usage?
16. IT Skills/Training and Employment

What is the value of basic IT training and services provided at public access venues, does it lead to people getting jobs, or provide skills that better their life? Does public access to ICT change the levels of computer and information search/use skills of their users; does it improve their job prospects? What are the differences in the ICT skills developed by users of different types of public access ICT venues?

17. Cost-benefit

What is the relationship between costs and benefits of providing public access to ICT? Note: Cost-benefit is a cross-cutting issue that should be taken into consideration wherever appropriate. It is included here as a separate item to provide room for people who may be interested in carrying out a focused cost-benefit analysis of some particular project or activity.

18. Info-ecology

What do the four attributes of information ecology look like in a given setting? 1. Integration of diverse types of information; 2. Capturing the dynamics of evolution and change; 3. Describing (mapping) out information sources and processes, and 4. Focusing on people and their information and communication behaviour (Davenport, 2009). For item 1 we will focus on health, education, employment as information content areas. For item 2 we will address a time frame of relevance to each context to capture important changes in the recent past and possible future scenarios. For item 3 we will focus on a combination of local, meso and macro levels, with possible emphasis on the meso. For item 4 we will narrow the focus to a cross section of individuals who experience the information ecology first hand.

Additional Priority Research Questions

19. Do users of public access to ICT venues network?

Email has clear advantages (“social affordances”, following Wellman 1999, Wellman et al, 2003, Hampton and Wellman 2003, Mok, Wellman and Carrasco 2008) for expanding a person’s network. The asynchronous nature of email enables communications without people having to be available at the same time. Email presents no barriers across continents; it is flexible, easy to forward, copy, and share and amend, fostering easy gossip and knowledge sharing with multiple members in a network. Email etiquette is informal and tolerant of grammatical errors and modes of expression. Readers of this document, all frequent users of email, are familiar with the gradual process through which online strangers get to know one another and build up mutual trust through repeat interaction.

In India, the main applications used by urban Internet users are: email (51%), information gathering (20%), entertainment (13%), chatting (11%) and e-Commerce (IAMAI 2007).
In the US, where most Internet users also have access to wire line and mobile phones:

“Asynchronous email exchanges still top the charts of daily internet activities. We’ll say that again: Sending and reading email is still the most frequently reported internet activity by the average internet user, despite the growth in real-time communications like IM, text, and social network site messaging. Fully 53% of adult internet users sent or read email on a typical day in December 2005 – a figure virtually unchanged since 2000 when 52% of online adults emailed on a typical day. That's more than instant messaging, blogging and online shopping—combined.

Even the omnipotent search engine can’t compete with email; only 38% of online adults use search on the average day.”  
(Madden and Fox 2006)

Boase et al 2006 differentiate between core and significant ties. The former are “the people with whom Americans turn to discuss important matters, with whom they are in frequent contact, or from whom they seek help”, Significant ties are “the people outside that ring of ‘core ties’ in Americans’ social networks, who are somewhat closely connected”. Significant ties “are weaker than core ties”, but “they are more than acquaintances and they can become important players as people access their networks to get help or advice”. This distinction is analogous to Granovetter’s (2005) differentiation between “strong ties” and “strong weak ties”.

According to Boase et al 2006:

All communication mediums (face-to-face interaction, landlines, mobile phones, email, chatting) are used interchangeably; but telephone communications appears to be particularly useful in strengthening strong ties; email in building up larger networks of weaker but not inconsequential ties.

The number of core ties does not vary between Internet users and non-users. Further, face-to-face contacts with core or significant ties are not lower for Internet users. Instead, people who use the Internet simply communicate more often, now using email and to lesser extent also chatting.

Internet users have more significant ties than non-users. These larger social networks are made easier by email. Both parties to a face-to-face contact or phone conversation need to coincide in time.

E-mail’s asynchronous character imparts greater flexibility to interpersonal exchanges. As the size of a person’s network increases (either of core ties or of significant ties), the frequency with which these ties are contacted decreases. The same is true for phone contacts and chatting; but not for email. People contact their core ties with the same frequency, regardless of whether their network is small (1-10 core ties), medium (10-22 ties) or large (more than 22 ties). A similar pattern is observed with respect to networks of significant ties.

Internet users resort to their contacts and to information available on web pages whenever they face major decisions or need help or information to solve specific problems. This includes: getting additional training to enhance a career; helping a person with a medical ailment; choosing a
college for a child; finding a new place to live; and buying a car.

For email to be an effective networking tool users need to first get their hands on a computer connected to the Internet, learn how to use it and have or be in a position to develop a network of family and friends who can also communicate using the technology. When these conditions are met, computer mediated communication thrives.

Among Chile’s (mostly rural) telecenter users interpersonal communications is the most popular service. Email was used by over 90 percent of telecenter users surveyed; chatting by over 60%. The other popular applications are browsing the net to read the news (over 50%), and to consult educational content (over 40%). (Subtel 2005, page 73.).

An analysis of use patterns of 793 users of Colombia’s telecenters (small towns), the most frequent use was to communicate and strengthen and extend personal relationships (35%), followed by information gathering (24%), doing homework (15%), Research (12%), Recreation (12%) and work (2%). When users were asked what they perceived as the benefit from using the center they ranked access to information highest (54%) followed by strengthening of relationships (32%). Other perceived benefits were cited less often: work opportunities (7%), educational opportunities (5%), support to local organizations (1%), communications at lower cost (3%), no benefit (5%). (CEDE 2007, pages 49-59)

Among 721 cybercafé users in Bengalore, Internet browsing (92%) was found to be the most frequently used service, followed by email (72%), phone calling (52%), games (50%), and chatting (49%) (Haseloff’s 2005).

Many rural kiosks in India, including 70% of those of n-logue and Drishtee (Toyama et al, 2005), rely on the operator or “infomediary” to deal with the computer. Customers seldom use the computer on their own (Fillip and Foote, 2007). These kiosk users do not benefit from the single most powerful Internet application there is, email!

An expansion in personal social and commercial networks is one of the most important impacts of using the Internet. To what extent does networking also benefit telecenter users (who probably use the Net less frequently)? Are there differences in the importance of networking between rural and urban telecenters? What are the differences between countries? What accounts for these differences? What are impact implications of these differences? What are the implications for telecenter program design?

20. How can nations and public access to ICT programs overcome the dual challenge of low-density personal networks and digital illiteracy?

Governments at the forefront of ICT for development try to overcome the dual constraint of digital illiteracy and weak (computer-based) communications networks through mass digital literacy campaigns. These campaigns are usually closely linked to public access to ICT initiatives:

In Korea, Government carried out mass media informatization campaigns (Park 2001) and established Education Information Centers in schools and post offices, to provided free or low cost information and education to 10
million people, mainly students, government staff, soldiers and housewives (Lee 2002).

Chile's national digital literacy campaign (Gobierno de Chile 2004) training over 500,000 people in basic PC skills in 2003-2005.

The Akshaya pilot program in Malappuram District in Kerala, sought to create the first district in India in which every one of its 600,000 families had at least one e-literate member. The program is being expanded to cover the entire state of Kerala.

The Gates Foundation sponsored Biblioredes project (www.biblioredes.cl) was a leading partner in Chile’s digital literacy campaign. Biblioredes equipped 365 libraries with additional computers and connectivity (de la Maza and Abbagliati 2004,) In all, the program trained about 30% of the country’s digital literacy target.

E-Literacy training was the focus of the Akshaya program for 6 months starting May 2003. All eCenters were to have been connected by January 2004, but there was an 11-month delay during which time the centers focused on e-literacy training to generate income (Kiran 2007).

The 15-hour long e-literacy Akshaya program in Malappuram, Kerala, India, focused on increasing awareness using a course on a CD, as opposed to giving users hands on experience with computers and the Internet. Awareness did increase among the population, but very few of the trainees became learned to use or became regular users of the technology. Training took place in 635 Akshaya e-centers, including 160 cybercafes recruited into the program. After first phase subsidies were discontinued, many of the newly created e-centers had to shut down (Pal et al 2006, Pal 2007). By end 2005 only 415 eCenters were still operating (Kiran 2007).

Notable differences between these two programs are:

Chile’s program is much more expensive (see table below). Biblioredes is entirely funded by Government. Akshaya opted instead for a public-private partnership and relied on the equivalent of cybercafés, supported with some stimulus from the state government including the creation of a wireless network to serve the program at low cost and the channeling of service contracts to specific (e.g. women run) cybercafés to bolster their sustainability.

Malappuram District in Akshaya is nominally rural, but in reality it is a densely populated quasi-urban area. Chile’s program is implemented in libraries distributed throughout the country, the majority situated in small towns.

Biblioredes provides a venue and the opportunity, free of charge, for each trainee to work with a computer, and to practice on their own at the library after class. Akshaya Malappuram trainees barely touched the computer, except perhaps to turn it on or off. The cost of any follow-up practice or training in Akshaya must be born by the trainee.

Most of Biblioredes trainees are satisfied with the training they received and many have become regular users of computers and the libraries (Román and Guerrero 2005, Salas, et al 2005). In Akshaya, in the week preceding Joyojeet Pal’s survey, only 2.3% of Akshaya trainees had been
back to an e-center for some service.

### Two Approaches to e-Literacy Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblioredes, Chile</th>
<th>Akshaya - Malappuram, Kerala, India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income per capita</strong> (a)</td>
<td>US$ 5,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Literacy rate</strong></td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation period</strong></td>
<td>2002-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment – million US$</strong> (e)</td>
<td>US$ 19.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of course</strong></td>
<td>10 hours hands on training in basic computer &amp; Internet skills, with opportunity for free after class practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal libraries</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-existing eCenters (cybercafés)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New eCenters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computers per center</strong></td>
<td>2-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connectivity costs per center</strong> (b)</td>
<td>US$ 208 (average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e-Literacy Training</strong> (c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>114,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>121,262 (+21,029 in advanced skills)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sources:


**Biblioredes:** de la Maza and Abbagliati 2004, Román and Guerrero 2005, Salas et al 2005

(a): For Chile, World Development Report; for Malappuram, Pal et al. 2007

(b): In Chile, these are costs paid by Municipal Governments. Actual cost varies depending on viability of technological options. In Kerala, costs are paid by eCenter operators to Tulip, the wireless provider.

(c): Kerala training was e-awareness. In Chile, computer/Internet literacy proper.

(d): Pal 2007 found that only 29.7% of households participated in the program. Of participating households 14.5% only attended the first hour of the course. The 152,361 figure is 29.7% of 600,000 (178,200) minus 14.5 percent of that amount.

(e): Includes US$ 10 million donation from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

(f): Approximate estimate based on figures given by IIIT 2005. Includes US$ 1.4 million for eLiteracy campaign from local government; US$ 1.4 million from State Government to establish connectivity and develop content; and US$ 3.75 million from entrepreneurs to set up kiosks.

How effective are ongoing digital literacy programs? How is an effective digital literacy program best organized? What is the contribution that telecenters can make to such programs? What are the critical elements of success? What are the costs? What is the cost-effectiveness of various options?

21. How good are telecenters and other public access to ICT venues as public service delivery channels?

Some countries, mainly India, have tried to use telecenters as mediators in the delivery of public services. Successes tend to be temporary, and closely linked to enthusiastic public leadership at the time a program is launched. Changes in leadership are often followed by a waning of official commitment and the demise of the program. The best known example is that of Drishtee, a program that has
been reorganized to de-emphasize public services. Other programs, e.g. land administration in Kerala, have telecenters specifically dedicated to provide land information, and these appear to have been more successful.

To the extent that cybercafé customers download government information, forms and transact with government, these urban telecenters are also helping expand public service outreach. Galpaya, Saramajiva and Shamistra 2007 have nevertheless argued that mobile phones are likely to be a more effective way to provide public services.

How effective are telecenters as public service delivery channels? How have programs relying on telecenters to expand public service outreach fared? What are the public services that have been implemented most successfully, relying at least in part on telecenters to reach communities? How do telecenters compare with mobiles with respect to public service delivery?

22. Does the use of services offered in public access venues increase trust?

Trust is key to economic growth and social development (Fukuyama 1996; Knack and Keefer 1997; Raiser 1999; Zak and Knack 2001). Trust is the cognitive glue that binds social networks and facilitates the build up of social capital.

Raiser (1999) makes a useful distinction between “ascribed trust”, i.e. the obligation felt by members of a family or kinship group to support each other; process-based trust which develops as people interact or transact repeatedly and appreciate the advantages of cooperating with each other; and generalized trust. The latter is a feature of advanced modern economies where people cooperate and transact with each other with limited prior knowledge regarding trustworthiness and little expectation of repeat interaction. 

Family, one’s own clan and close friends are trusted first, in part because of a genetic predisposition, but also because informal norms for enforcing cooperation (gossip, moral suasion) are more effective among people who see each other frequently and have lasting bonds; i.e. because the process-based trust mechanisms work more effectively.

Ascribed trust and process-based trust dominate interpersonal relationships in small rural communities. Informal arrangements to cooperate on tasks, trade, labor exchange and enforcement of mostly verbal contracts are common. There is no need for formal means of recording land rights because community members know who has rights over an asset and what she may or may not do with it (Libecap 1999). Rural money lending is character based, which is feasible between people who know one another. Exchange labor is common in agriculture because it makes work easier for everyone involved. Farmers starting to grow a new crop learn from their experienced neighbors as they adopt new practices (Conley and Udry 2005).

Interpersonal networks also play a major role in labor markets, traditional and modern, by facilitating information and reducing the costs of searching for suitable qualities from both the perspective of the employer and that of the employee (Granovetter 2005).

To facilitate transactions between people who do not know one another or who are far removed in distance or frequency of interaction, modern societies develop
detailed contracts, rights recording and credit rating agencies, specialized monitoring arrangements and litigation, to discourage misrepresentation, corruption and fraud. These institutions are costly and difficult to establish in low trust settings. Where people do not trust one another, business and organizational transactions take longer and are costlier to complete (Fukuyama 1996, Covey 2006).

Neighbors and friends provide a valuable network on which rural dwellers depend often, but these networks of strong ties can also constrain opportunities and may not provide a way out of poverty. Communications and resources are limited within these networks particularly in highly unequal societies where the general level of trust is low (Adato, Carter and May 2006) and where elites use their position of privilege to keep benefits within an exclusive closely knit club of peers (Deresiewicz 2008).

Extended networks help amplify information and provide assistance in unfamiliar settings, which is often unavailable from within a tightly knit network of family and close friends. They provide what Granovetter (2005) calls the strength of weak ties.

Knack and Zak (2002) have identified a number of policies that could increase generalized trust in a society. Some are difficult to implement, as is the case with increasing “freedoms” or reducing inequality. Others are more practical, such as increasing education and increasing communications by expanding landline and mobile phones.2

The Internet affects trust as it mediates communications between individuals with other people, and with web content set up by strangers and entrepreneurs, some of whom we know little, and with Government agencies each with different track records of service and reliability.

Dutton and Shepherd 2003 have found that trust in the Internet and in the information one finds in the Internet increases as people become more familiar with its use; i.e. the process-based trust of users increases. British Internet users see themselves as less shy, more outgoing, more in charge of their own lives and are more prone to attend meetings of clubs or associations than non users or ex users (Dutton and Helsper 2007). Evidence collected by Zak and his colleagues suggest that telecenter use also increases generalized trust (Raven 2004).

How does telecenter use affect users’ trust of other people? Do telecenter users feel more trust for others than non-users? Is there a difference in trust building for different types of applications? Is there a difference in trust building for different uses of the personal communication tools (e.g. email, chatting, browsing, mobile phone)? If telecenters indeed have an effect on user trust, how does this effect change over time and experience using a telecenter? How can this trust effect be nurtured and harnessed to improve telecenter program performance? Do mobile users feel more trust for others than non-users? Is there a difference between trust induced by using the Internet or by using a mobile?)
Global impact study in-depth probes

The Global Impact Study has selected five topics for in-depth investigation during its second phase (www.globalimpactstudy.org/researchdesign/methodologies/). An overview of each of these probes is given here, based on and to a large extent reproducing the documentation prepared by Global Impact Study researchers. The information given for each probe includes the title of the research investigation to be undertaken, the country coverage planned and the research questions to be addressed in each case and the source of this information.

Some overlap between the Global impact study in-depth probes and the investigations selected for an Amy Mahan Fellowship is likely, even desirable. Some studies supported by the Program will fruitfully complement Global impact study in-depth probes.

Duplication of efforts is for the most part improbable because in-depth probes target a limited number of countries and focus on particular hypotheses and approaches. Nevertheless, proposals that are very likely to duplicate efforts with Global impact study in-depth probes will be disallowed. When choosing a topic, applicants are urged to review the description of in-depth probes and their up to date status at: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/.

1. Infomediaries

Title of study: Infomediaries: brokers of public access

Countries covered: Chile, Bangladesh and Brazil

Research questions to be addressed:

1. What are the practices, skills and attitudes exhibited by infomediaries across different types of PAVs (libraries, telecentres, cybercafes) and job descriptions (formal Vs informal)?

2. What outcomes do patrons provide as evidence of a positive experience from using a PAV (across sectors like health, education, finance, job, democratic engagement)?

3. To what extent do users point at infomediaries’ practices, roles, skills, attitudes as contributors to their positive or negative experiences, outcomes and motivation to use PAVs (and how do they vary across sectors)?

4. Under what conditions are infomediaries most able to contribute to positive impact in terms of ‘effective use’ (Gurstein, 2003) and improved info-ecologies?

To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/
2. Mobile Phones

Title of study: Mobile Nexus with Public Access Research Probe

Countries covered: Bangladesh, Chile, Lithuania, Philippines.

Research questions to be addressed:

1. What are the services (communication, information and transaction) are available through various media, platform and venues?

2. What services are available through more than one media, platform and venues (overlap)?

3. What categories of users use mobile facilities to access services?

4. What categories of users use public access facilities to the services?

5. What are the socio-economic characteristics of users, who access same services through multiple media, platform and venues?

6. What are the socio-economic characteristics of users, who access services only through public access venues?

7. What are the factors behind choice of single or more than one media, platform and venues?

8. What services are unique to public access venues, which are not feasible both to users and service providers through mobile phone?

9. What services are unique to mobile phone/device, which are not feasible both to users and service providers through public access venues?

10. Can we identify information, communication, or other related emerging needs (or desires) that mobile use does not fulfill and could be fulfilled by public access?

11. Are there synergies between mobile use and public access that can be better exploited in a development context?

12. To what extent is the use of mobile devices users’ first contact with new ICT?

13. What actors disseminate information about services that could be accessed through mobile devices? ... on the internet? How the information reaches those who are at “the bottom of the pyramid”? 

14. Is PA a substitute and/or an interim stage for private access?

The list of research questions presented here has been taken from: "Revision of Mobile Phones Probe" by Ananya Raihan.

This probe is presently under review. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/
3. Venue Life Cycle

**Title of study:** Analysis of the life cycle of Public Access to Internet (PAI) venues located in libraries (Biblioredes)

**Countries covered:** Lithuania, Bangladesh and Chile.

**Research questions to be addressed:**

1. How does the role and relevance of PAI (Public access to ICTs) venues for users change over time?

2. Are the changes in the different dimensions related to each other?

3. Are the changes in the different dimensions related to changes in external factors?

4. Do similar PAI venues share the same pattern of change?

This probe is presently under review. To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: [http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/](http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/)

4. Collaborative Knowledge Sharing

**Title of study:** Collaborative Knowledge Sharing

**Countries covered:** The focus is on low-income countries, with Ghana, India or Bangladesh as possibilities.

**Research questions to be addressed:**

1. Do Public Access facilities afford opportunities for sharing of experience, space, expertise, and technologies so as to enhance outcomes/impacts in ways that *could not have been as effectively realized* outside of a public access space?

2. Are there characteristics to the activity undertaken or people engaged that enhance the benefits of sharing; similarly are their cases where sharing hinders outcomes?

To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: [http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/](http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/)
5. Non-instrumental Uses

**Title of study:** Non instrumental use of ICTs as a Component of General ICT Skill Acquisition

**Countries covered:** Ghana

**Research questions to be addressed:**

1. Do people gain any ICT skills (ie, keyboarding skills, knowledge of OS and file structures, etc.) through non instrumental uses of ICTs?

2. Are any skills gained through non instrumental uses transferable to other (instrumental) uses of ICTs (like searching strategies, information evaluation, synthesis and summary)?

3. Do non instrumental uses constitute an important motivation for non-users to start using computers? If so, does that non-instrumental 'first touch' then lead to instrumental use.

4. How do the characteristics and consumption patterns of non instrumental use differ between public and private access points? (i.e. what are the types of activities users perform with what frequency and where?)

5. How do user’s understandings of and attitudes towards ICTs differ between public access sites where the emphasis is on consumption of information versus the creation of content/multimedia

6. How do the characteristics of users [gender and age, socio-economic level] affect skill level and activity choice in public access sites (captured by survey)

To avoid duplicating efforts with the Global Study, Amy Mahan Fellowship Program applicants whose topic covers similar grounds should check for updates of this probe in the following site: [http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/](http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/project-updates/).
Notes

1. Glasser et al 1999 define trust as “the commitment of resources to an activity [by an individual] where the outcome depends upon the cooperative behaviour of others” and trustworthiness as “the behaviour that increases the returns to people who trust you”. Zak (2007) defines “generalized trust” as “the probability that two randomly chosen people will trust each other in a one-time interaction”. Guerra et al 2003 and Dutton and Shepherd 2003 use Bacharach and Gambetta’s (2001) definition of primary trust: “a person trusts someone to do X if she acts on the expectation that he will do X when both know that two conditions obtain: if he fails to do X she would have done better to act otherwise, and her acting in the way she does gives him a selfish reason not to do X”

Generalized trust is affected by social norms and values as well as by biological factors. Uslaner 2005 considers generalized trust to be fairly stable because it is linked to deeply ingrained values people are taught in their formative years by their parents. Zak however finds that generalized trust is mediated by the neurological emission of the neuroactive peptide, oxytocin. We trust strangers in a one-time interaction because of a biological predisposition to do so (Zak 2007, 2008).

Survey measures of trust (as used by the World Values Survey) may change significantly over relatively short periods of time, suggesting that a society’s gains in trust can rapidly vanish in times of adversity. Survey measures are also of limited value as compared to observed behavior, either experimentally (Glasser et al 1999) or in business practices (Raiser, Roussso and Steves 2003).

According to Ferlander 2003 and Ferlander and Timmons 2007, social capital is made up of three components: social networks, social support and trust. Social networks and social support are interrelated; social networks customarily involve norms of conduct spanning a broad range of mutual support obligations: informational, emotional, financial, resource sharing, transactional. Trust is the cognitive element in social capital. It is the way individuals feel as a result of participating in networks and receiving social support from networks. Trust also has a moral value: trusting people have an optimistic view of the world. They believe things will get better because they have trust in other people.

There is a positive correlation between feeling happy and trusting others.

“It literally feels good when someone trusts you, and that good feeling causes ost of us to be trustworthy”. Zak 2007

See Also Zak and Fakhar 2006.

2. Knack and Zak’s (2002) study suggested that expenditures in additional phone service could not be justified purely in terms of the trust dividend that they provided. As noted in Zak (2007), these early estimates ignored other benefits, beyond trust, provided by phone service. They also did not foresee the dramatic fall in phone service cost that has occurred since 2001, nor the impact on trust resulting from a fourfold increase in the total number of telephone subscribers that (according to ITU data) has occurred since then, or the concomitant increase in value of the parallel expansion in interpersonal communications networks.
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