

Bridging the Digital Divide: Possible Ways

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What constitutes digital divide?

The gap between people having access to and the people lacking access to the following, in general, is perceived as digital divide:

- Hardware
- Internet Connectivity
- Software
- Digital Content

The Present Trend

When talking about digital divide, a significant portion of focus largely revolves around providing:

- Hardware
- Internet connectivity

Whereas the real focus should be on the soft aspect of providing content that everyone in Nepal can benefit from

- Digital media without relevant content is as good as useless
- Relevant content is what drives the utilization of ICT
 - Smart phones need apps
 - TV & Radio channels need programs
 - Computers need software
 - Internet needs useful sites

Local Digital Content

- Language has been one of the main barriers
- Very little digital material in Nepali language found
- English language content relevant to Nepal is also limited
- Knowledge of English language is a pre-requisite to use ICT and this, in turn, drastically cuts down the percentage of Nepali population who can reap the benefits of ICT
- Demand for ICT will grow when people can
 1. Understand the language of instruction and delivery
 2. Find meaningful content and useful purpose

Possible Way Forward

- Nepali Wikipedia
 - Great source of knowledge for Nepali-speaking population
- Localization of Free/Open Source programs and content
 - Khan Academy, CK-12
- Nepali Language tools
 - Unicode typing (input engine, keyboard, fonts)
 - Nepali Linux
 - Nepali Spell/Grammar Checker
- *E-Pustakalaya & E-Paath*: Educational tools
 - Enable students from early grades
 - E-Pustakalya content available online on www.pustakalaya.org
 - Also available in low-power, low-cost offline servers

Thank You!

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