School of Communications, University of Hawaii at Manoa
COM691: Investigations into the Digital Divide and Digital Inequality in Hawaii
Fall 2014
Course Syllabus

Course Information

Meetings: Thursday, 3:00-5:30pm, BUSAD E203
Instructor: Wayne Buente
Office hours: Fridays, 9-11am or by appointment
Contact: wbuente@hawaii.edu
(808) 956-3360 (phone)

Course description:

Recent research on the digital divide demonstrates a more complex problem than merely the access to information and communication technology (ICT). As the widespread diffusion of ICTs appear to bridge the gap, what is becoming clear is how the digital divide represents greater facets of social, economic, and political inequality. As a result, the digital divide is now being understood as a "digital inequality". Digital inequality examines access as a spectrum ranging from technical access to skills, usage and motivation. An important question to address is how we, as a society, address these new understandings of digital inequality. By analyzing this question, communication professionals can contribute to more effective and productive appropriate of ICTs for those members of society attempting to bridge the digital divide or inequalities. This course will investigate the digital divide and digital inequality issues in Hawaii.

Course objectives and outcomes:

•Understand the theoretical foundations of the digital divide, digital inequality and other aspects related to inequality and ICTs

•Evaluate ICTs from a social justice perspective

•Assess government policies and efforts to address digital divide and/or digital inequality issues

Readings:

Readings will be provided through Laulima. We will read a few chapters from the following title.

Eubanks, V. (2011). *Digital dead end: Fighting for social justice in the information age*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Baker, P. M. A., Hanson, J., & Hunsinger, J. (2013). *The unconnected: Social justice, participation, and engagement in the information society.* New York: Peter Lang.

Straubhaar, J. D., Spence, J., Tufekci, Z., & Lentz, R. G. (Eds.). (2012). *Inequity in the technopolis : race, class, gender, and the digital divide in Austin* (1st ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Course assignments:

Weekly comments/Class participation - 15%

Three graded assignments

1. Topic and Outline 10%

2. Prospectus – 20%

3. Peer Review – 20%

Final Paper - 35%

Evaluation:

The grading criteria are taken from Appendix C in
Enerson, D. M., Johnson, R. N., Milner, S., & Plank, K. M. (1997). The Penn State Teacher II. University Park, PA: Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
Retrieved August 22, 2011, from http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/pdf/PennStateTeacherII.pdf

Grading Criteria
These grading standards establish four major criteria for evaluation at each grade level: rhetorical situation, reasoning and content, organization and expression. Since papers may have some characteristics of "B" and others of "C," the final grade depends on the weight the instructor gives to each criterion. A paper grossly inadequate in one area may still receive a very low grade even if it successfully meets the other criteria. A brief summary of the grading criteria is provided below. Please consult the grading criteria in Appendix C for a more detailed explanation.

The " A" Paper: An "A" paper is clear and consistent and the content is appropriate for the assignment. It also demonstrates clear organization and expression.

The "B" Paper: The "B" paper shows an awareness of the audience and purpose. Its content is reasonably well developed with adequate evidence. The organization is clear and expression is competent.

The "C" Paper: The "C" paper has a clear purpose but lacks originality in topic selection. The content is adequately developed and supported with valid reasoning. Organization is clear with mechanical but appropriate transitions. The paper also demonstrates mastery of most conventions of edited English.

The "D" Paper: The "D" paper has a unclear purpose and an inappropriate topic for its intended audience. The content is inadequately developed and evidence is insufficient. The paper also shows flawed reasoning. Organization is deficient and the paper exhibits poor grammar.

The "F" Paper: The "F" paper has no clear purpose or remotely appropriate for its intended audience. The content is not developed nor adequately supported. The paper has no organization and serious errors with English comprehension.

Attendance:

I expect you to be at all class sessions. Excessive absences that are not excused will lower your final grade.

Course Schedule

Digital Divide/Inequality: Background and Context

This starts one of three class sessions to examine the history and development of the research on the digital divide and digital inequality.
Examining its theoretical and conceptual dimensions provides a solid background to build sound policy, practices and measurements for addressing the ICT inequalities that you will encounter as a communications professional.

Week 1 (08/28): Introduction

Introduction to the course and expectations

Week 2 (09/04): Digital Divide Background and Context: History and Origin of the Digital Divide

We trace the origins of the digital divide to a 1998 NTIA report where the term served as a metaphor for inequality in the information age. In this session, we read excerpts from the original NTIA report and other notions of information inequality/poverty.

Hoffman, D. L., Novak, T. P., & Schlosser, A. E. (2001). The evolution of the digital divide: Examining the relationship of race to Internet access and usage over time. In B. M. Compaine (Ed.), *The digital divide: Facing a crisis or creating a myth?* (pp. 47-95). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Mueller, M., & Schement, J. R. (2001). Universal service from the bottom up: A study of telephone penetration in Camden, New Jersey. In B. M. Compaine (Ed.), *The digital divide: Facing a crisis or creating a myth?* (pp. 119-146). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Warschauer, M. (2000). Technology & school reform: A view from both sides of the tracks. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(4).

Week 3 (09/11): Digital Divide Background and Context: Theorizing Divides

DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Celeste, C., & Shafer, S. (2004). Digital inequality: From unequal access to differentiated use. In K. M. Neckerman (Ed.), *Social inequality* (pp. 355-400). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Clement, A., & Shade, L. R. (2000). The access rainbow: Conceptualizing universal access to information/communications infrastructure. In M. Gurstein (Ed.), *Community Informatics: Enabling Communitities with Information and Communication Technologies* (pp. 32–51). Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.

Chapters 1 and 6 in
Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J., & Stansbury, M. (2003). *Virtual inequality: Beyond the digital divide*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Week 4 (09/18): Digital Divide Background and Context: Theorizing Divides and Social Context

Chapters 1, 2 and 8 in
van Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2005). *The deepening divide: Inequality in the information society.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Pub.

Hargittai, E. (2004). Informed web surfing: The social context of user sophistication. In P. N. Howard & S. Jones (Eds.), *Society online* (pp. 257-274). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Week 5 (09/25): Digital Inequality and Pscyhological Factors

Stanley, L. D. (2003). Beyond access: Psychosocial barriers to computer literacy. *The Information Society, 19*(5), 407 - 416.

Selwyn, N. (2006). Digital division or digital decision? A study of non-users and low-users of computers. *Poetics, 34*(4-5), 273-292.

Clark, L. S. (2003). Challenges of social good in the world of Grand Theft Auto and Barbie: A case study of a community computer center for youth. *New Media & Society, 5*(1), 95-116.

Hanson, J. (2013). The new minority: The willfully unconnected. In P. M. A. Baker, J. Hanson & J. Hunsinger (Eds.), *The unconnected: Social justice, participation, and engagement in the information society* (pp. 223-240). New York: Peter Lang.

Week 6 (10/02): Digital Inequality, Social Context, and Social Justice

Read chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 in
Eubanks, V. (2011). *Digital dead end: Fighting for social justice in the information age.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Week 7 (10/09): Digital Inequality and Skill Development

Zillien, N., & Hargittai, E. (2009). Digital distinction: Status-specific types of Internet usage. *Social science quarterly, 90*(2), 274-291.

van Deursen, A., & van Dijk, J. (2011). Internet skills and the digital divide. *New Media & Society, 13*(6), 893-911. doi: 10.1177/1461444810386774

Blank, G., & Groselj, D. (2014). Dimensions of Internet use: amount, variety, and types. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(4), 417-435. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2014.889189

van Deursen, A. J., & van Dijk, J. A. (2014). The digital divide shifts to differences in usage. *New Media & Society, 16*(3), 507-526. doi: 10.1177/1461444813487959

Week 8 (10/16): Digital Inequalty and Digital Skills

Chapter 2 in
Dijk, J. v., & Deursen, A. v. (2014). *Digital skills: Unlocking the information society.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Correa, T. (2010). The Participation Divide Among “Online Experts”: Experience, Skills and Psychological Factors as Predictors of College Students' Web Content Creation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 16*(1), 71-92. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2010.01532.x

Brock, A., Kvasny, L., & Hales, K. (2010). Cultural appropriations of technical capital. *Information, Communication & Society, 13*(7), 1040-1059. doi: 10.1080/1369118x.2010.498897

Week 9 (10/23): Digital Divide and Education

Robinson, L. (2014). Endowed, Entrepreneurial, and Empowered-Strivers: Doing a lot with a lot, doing a lot with a little. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(5), 521-536. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2013.770049

Paino, M., & Renzulli, L. A. (2013). Digital Dimension of Cultural Capital: The (In)Visible Advantages for Students Who Exhibit Computer Skills. *Sociology of Education, 86*(2), 124-138. doi: 10.1177/0038040712456556

Helsper, E. J., & Eynon, R. (2010). Digital natives: Where is the evidence? *British Educational Research Journal, 36*(3), 503-520. doi: 10.2307/27823621

Vanden Abeele, M., & Roe, K. (2013). Adolescents’ school experience and the importance of having a “cool” mobile phone: Conformity, compensation and resistance? *Poetics, 41*(3), 265-293. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.03.001

Week 10 (10/30): No class

Week 11 (11/06): Digital Divide and Mobile Devices

Pearce, K. E., & Rice, R. E. (2013). Digital Divides From Access to Activities: Comparing Mobile and Personal Computer Internet Users. *Journal of Communication, 63*(4), 721-744. doi: 10.1111/jcom.12045

Wijetunga, D. (2014). The Digital Divide Objectified in the Design: Use of the Mobile Telephone by Underprivileged Youth in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 19*(3), 712-726. doi: 10.1111/jcc4.12071

Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J., & Hamilton, A. (2012). Broadband Adoption| Measuring Digital Citizenship: Mobile Access and Broadband. International Journal of Communication, 6(0).

Week 12 (11/13): Digital Divide and Inequity in the Technopolis

Chapter 1, 7, and 8
Straubhaar, J. D., Spence, J., Tufekci, Z., & Lentz, R. G. (Eds.). (2012). *Inequity in the technopolis : race, class, gender, and the digital divide in Austin* (1st ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Week 13 (11/20): Public Libraries and Digital Divide

Jensen, D., & Harrington Jr., J. W. (2013). Placing connectedness: Libraries virtual and proximate. In P. M. A. Baker, J. Hanson & J. Hunsinger (Eds.), *The unconnected: Social justice, participation, and engagement in the information society* (pp. 83-101). New York: Peter Lang.

Week 14 (11/27): Thanksgiving

Week 15 (12/04): TBD

Week 16 (12/11): Final Discussion of Survey Results