

Group 1 – Access and Affordability Group Assignment

Topic: Broadband and Socio-economic factors

Shuying, Aishwarya, Meena, Satyen, Shwet, Yash

1. What are the access challenges associated with your issue?

The main challenge is to provide access to mobile broadband at affordable prices to each person irrespective of who they are or where they live in this global information society by treating and judging equally according to the same norms. High prices of the service might be a barrier for mobile broadband adoption, as 25 countries out of 200 countries for which ICT data are reported have the annual cost of mobile broadband service more than a month's pay. Applying universal broadband service to all 200 countries for which ITU reports data, control of corruption, making sure that people have an equal right to access mobile broadband service for their wellbeing as through this they can obtain information about health care, employment and education are some of the other challenges.

2. How does affordability impact those challenges?

Broadband touches almost every facet of modern life from education to employment to entertainment, it bridges the gaps between the 'information-rich' and 'information-poor' Unfortunately, both access to broadband and broadband affordability remains a barrier to opportunity.

To understand how affordability impacts the access challenges, several aspects of the information ethics (IE) perspective are used in this article and is explained by the following data analysis findings,

- a. Low levels of income inequality is directly correlated with increased broadband affordability meaning that countries whose moral agent acknowledge the rights of all to obtain vital information will promote more affordable mobile broadband
- b. Universal broadband service directly addresses broadband Internet access meaning whether a country is committed to putting mobile broadband in the hands of all citizens

- c. Shared financial investment indicate greater shared financial investment in ICTs is associated with more expensive mobile broadband services.
- d. Significant cooperation between service providers, governments and other stakeholders is necessary since this will promote healthy competition among service providers and help bridge the mobile broadband divide leading to more affordability

3. What policies have been or should be developed to address access challenges?

The global mobile broadband divide is characterized by inequalities in the cost of mobile services, income distribution, shared financial investment and competition. Social justice criteria and consideration of individual needs, capabilities, and opportunities can help bridge the ongoing mobile digital divide. Taking these factors into consideration, access challenges can be addressed by principles such as open access and net neutrality. These principles can provide unrestricted online access to the information resources. Also, governments should foster competition between the service providers. Among the 103 countries in the given study, competition between service providers helps make mobile broadband more affordable. It has been argued that access to the Internet may not be morally (or legally) mandatory or obligatory for governments or other agencies to provide to all. In this sense, such services are seen as negative, not positive rights. That is, people have a (negative) right not to be interfered with; as compared to having a (positive) right to, for example as in the U.S., receive a free public education through high school. Based on the positive right argument, affordable access to broadband Internet has been made and extended not only to education, but also to healthcare and political participation resources to all citizens.

4. Who should develop those policies?

If mobile broadband is to follow the trajectory of mobile telephony, and be more inclusive, governments, policymakers, mobile service providers and others in the mobile broadband ecosystem must take their roles and responsibilities seriously. Principles and policies should be developed by these entities present in the mobile broadband ecosystem to provide access to mobile broadband at affordable prices to everyone.

5. Key Terms

Infrastructure ecologies: These are the basic critical infrastructure services—affordable energy, clean drinking water, dependable sanitation, and effective public transportation, along with reliable food systems.

Veil of ignorance: Philosopher John Rawls suggests that we should imagine we sit behind a veil of ignorance that keeps us from knowing who we are and identifying with our personal circumstances. By being ignorant of our circumstances, we can more objectively consider how societies should operate.

Universal service/access: This is the principle that everyone should have access to communications services

Sociotechnical systems: This is an approach to organizational work design that recognizes the interaction between people and technology in workplaces

Elements of a universal service/access program: Scope, Segments of the population, Entities, Technologies, Resources, Mechanisms

Open access: refers to free, unrestricted online access to research outputs such as journal articles and books

Net neutrality: is the principle that an internet service provider (ISP) has to provide access to all sites, content and applications at the same speed, under the same conditions without blocking or preferencing any content.

Common carrier: is an entity that provides wired and wireless communication services to the general public for a fee.

6. Main Concepts

Access and affordability

Access is the means of approaching towards something and affordability is a measure of people's ability to pay for services without financial hardship, considering not only the price of the service

but also indirect and opportunity cost. Its an interaction of spending, income and judgements about the value of something relative to its price.

Social Justice

Social justice is where each person has an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. It operates on the premise that we as humans share the same basic needs and have the same self-interests, but also share the same concerns for others.

Governance Principles

If applied properly and mutually recognized and respected by all, the governance principles would help establish a fair, stable, and well-ordered information society and will meet the criteria of social inclusion as well as moral acceptability. With these the fundamental rights of people will be recognized and protected and the differences between individuals and groups also will be recognized and dealt with according to the degree of differences and contexts.

Universal Service

It focuses on promoting and maintaining universal ability of connections by individual households.

Universal Access

A situation where every person has a reasonable means of access to a publicly available commodity like phone.

Capability Approach

the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value.

- 6. Does it make sense for a company to set up libraries? Why? If libraries cannot be done by the private sector, why do we have them? How should they be funded?**

Libraries have a large impact on the local economy and workforce development, they have always been sources for information, Company libraries are the norm in law practices, but far from standard in other fields, yet it is a practical budget-conscious approach to shared knowledge and resource management.

Public libraries can bring many assets when partnering with business and economic development, including knowledgeable staff; proven return on investment; online and print resources to support business, workforce, and literacy development; and the library building and its technological resources. Libraries can house technical books, editorial reference guides, material samples, or even archives of user guides, and it makes complete sense for a company to set up a library because of the following reasons,

Saves money. Instead of buying the same book for every employee who might need to reference it, you can purchase one for a shared library

Consistent information. You are assured that your team is using the same resource information and, therefore, not conflicting information to work on a collaborative project. This is especially important in the era of websites being used for reference guides without any checks and balances from more established and edited sources

Privatization of libraries has both pros and cons, but if you observe closely it is not as bad an idea as it seems, for example the Santa Clarita, California. In 2010, the city decided to pull their three libraries out of the Los Angeles County Library system and turn the system over to LSSI to run. After the privatization, the library was open 7 days a week, there are 77 new computers, a new book collection dedicated to home-schooling parents and more children's programs they even installed a fancy laptop dispenser, where patrons could swipe their card to check out a laptop to use anywhere in the system. Even though after privatization it turned out to be helpful for the general public along with considerable cost reductions from \$5.1 million a year to \$3.8 million. This savings means the city has been able to budget \$4.8 million a year for libraries, with the extra \$1 million going to buying new books and improving the facility.

Libraries can be funded for different programmatic activities by both nonprofit sources like Friends of the Library, State humanities councils, State and local arts councils, University administration, Historical organizations etc and from profit sources such as Credit unions, Computer networks and computer stores, Target and other department stores, Banks, Auto dealerships, Supermarkets, Hardware stores, Newspapers, Utility companies, etc