

2001-1 Text 2

1- A great deal of attention is being paid today to the so-called digital divide - the division of the world into the info (information) rich and the info poor.

And that divide does exist today.

My wife and I lectured about this looming danger twenty years ago.

What was less visible then, however, were the new, positive forces that work against the digital divide.

There are reasons to be optimistic.

2- There are technological reasons to hope the digital divide will narrow.

As the Internet becomes more and more commercialized, it is in the interest of business to universalize access - after all, the more people online, the more potential customers there are.

More and more governments, afraid their countries will be left behind, want to spread Internet access.

Within the next decade or two, one to two billion people on the planet will be netted together.

As a result, I now believe the digital divide will narrow rather than widen in the years ahead.

And that is very good news because the Internet may well be the most powerful tool for combating world poverty that we've ever had.

3- Of course, the use of the Internet isn't the only way to defeat poverty.

And the Internet is not the only tool we have.

But it has enormous potential.

4- To take advantage of this tool, some impoverished countries will have to get over their outdated anti-colonial prejudices with respect to foreign investment.

Countries that still think foreign investment is an invasion of their sovereignty might well study the history of infrastructure (the basic structural foundations of a society) in the United States.

When the United States built its industrial infrastructure, it didn't have the capital to do so.

And that is why America's Second Wave infrastructure - including roads, harbors, highways, ports and so on - were built with foreign investment.

The English, the Germans, the Dutch and the French were investing in Britain's former colony.

They financed them.

Immigrant Americans built them.

Guess who owns them now?

The Americans.

I believe the same thing would be true in places like Brazil or anywhere else for that matter.

The more foreign capital you have helping you build your Third Wave infrastructure, which today is an electronic infrastructure, the better off you're going to be.

That doesn't mean lying down and becoming fooled, or letting foreign corporations run uncontrolled.

But it does mean recognizing how important they can be in building the energy and telecom infrastructures needed to take full advantage of the Internet.

25. Digital divide is something _____.

[A] getting worse because of the Internet

[B] the rich countries are responsible for

[C] the world must guard against

[D] considered positive today

26. Governments attach importance to the Internet because it _____.

[A] offers economic potentials

[B] can bring foreign funds

[C] can soon wipe out world poverty

[D] connects people all over the world

27. The writer mentioned the case of the United States to justify the policy of _____.

[A] providing financial support overseas

[B] preventing foreign capital's control

[C] building industrial infrastructure

[D] accepting foreign investment

28. It seems that now a country's economy depends much on _____.

[A] how well-developed it is electronically

[B] whether it is prejudiced against immigrants

[C] whether it adopts America's industrial pattern

[D] how much control it has over foreign corporations