Theme 2: digital divide

2.2 Origin of the digital divide

- Term coined by Larry Irving in 1990.
- Irving used term in a series of reports for the NTIA, Falling through the net: "the existing gap in access to information services between those who can afford to purchase the computer hardware and software necessary to participate in the global information network, and low-income families and communities that cannot"
- Popular term in the 1990's to explain the differences between those who had a access to the internet and those who didn't.
- Concept has since expanded, but has also become a "hot topic", and a great amount is still being written about it.
- Van Dijk and Hacker (2003) offer different viewpoint, that the divide depends on the type of access defined.
- If the digital divide is defined as having possession of hardware, then shrinking the digital divide is as easy as giving everyone hardware.
- First reliable way to transport info faster than a person could travel had a big impact on warfare and businesses, and those who had access and knowledge to use this tech benefited from it.

2.3 Define the digital divide

- The term only caused various other synonyms to be coined with all of them having different focus points.
- Example, the information gap. Information rich versus the information poor.
- These terms refer to the information-structure or lack thereof.
- Digital divide focuses more on the IT infrastructure or the lack thereof.
    - This context refers to the physical aspect that gives people access to online information (cables, computers, severs).
    - This shift of the view from content to IT infrastructure is still problematic.
- More dimensions of the 'digital divide':
    - **Connectivity** (access to physical aspects of the internet, access to computers, phones lines, ect.).
    - **Content** (the amount of information available on the internet, websites, and also other barriers like language, relevance of content).
    - **Community** (inclusiveness in respect of sections of the community).
    - **Commerce** (infrastructure development for ecommerce).
    - **Capacity** (space to grow in controlling and using the internet, developing cyber law).
    - **Culture** (government attitude to telecommunications, business, and entrepreneurial culture).
    - **Co-operation** (between the government, academia, private sector, and civil society).
    - **Capital**.

- A problem, shortage, or even a lack encountered with any of these problems will constitute it a digital divide.
- Attention must be given to the more social aspects of the digital divide.
- These 8 C's of internet economy success can be used to fully classify what is meant by digital divide, and also present a way to understand and address the different barriers and to overcome them.

technological barrier	Connectivity
social barrier (language, pricing of information)	Content
social barriers	Community, capacity, co-operation
cultural barrier	Culture
economic barriers	Capital, commerce

2.4 Types of divides found.

Szilárd Molnár (2003) suggests using types of digital divides to address the different dimensions of the digital divide. Expanding on the view that there are different types of digital divides will solve the problem where it is view as IT divide.

According to Molnár (2003) there are three digital divide types.

Adaptation stage	type	The digital divide term	description
Early adaptation	Access divide	Early digital divide	The difference between Those who have access and those who don't
Take off	Usage divide	Primary digital divide	The difference between users and non users.
saturation	Divide between the quality of use	Secondary digital divide	The difference between users and users

dif between level of use.

Early digital divide can be seen as the pure digital divide. This divide then transforms into the usage divide (primary digital divide) where there are people who have access but not necessarily using it.

From there the divide shifts to the quality of use, people can use the technology but have different skills and abilities.