"What's Next, 'Post-Digitalization Era'?" Rural Digitalization.
Bridging IS Research Streams with the Reality of Digital Divides

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Recent academic panels and workshops now reflect on the opportunities and challenges that the "Post-Digitalization era" might present to organizations and society, and how the future of IS research can aim to address these. The assumption is that digitalization has become pervasive and completely ubiquitous, e.g., the rise of the Digital "X" trend in IS research (Grover et al., 2017). However, this is in stark contrast to the reality of a more macro perspective, which provides ample evidence that we are far from all living in a post digital world. Particularly in rural communities, large percentages of people still live without internet connectivity that meets the standards necessary for obtaining some of the most basic benefits of digitalization (Strover, 2018). The need to address this reality, and for rural innovation, is increasing exponentially, one topical example being the worldwide demographic transition to older populations (World Health Organization, 2015). It is forecasted that by 2050 nearly half of the world will be elderly in need of additional health services, many living in rural communities where there is insufficient internet connectivity to leverage the benefits of e-Health advances. And yet technology will be, and is, critical in finding solutions for this challenge. Further, this digital divide continues to grow as the standards for minimum data-transmission speeds for broadband service climbs to keep up with technological advancements. This is akin to the disparity between the reality of the progression of digitalization and where the IS research agenda has recently pivoted focus. This talk aims to illuminate and reframe this disparity as an opportunity, and hopefully provoke the advancement of suggestions for future IS research.

References
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