Editorial

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Information Will Be Free

Welcome to the third volume year for *Information Technologies and International Development.* With this issue we break with the past—and rush to meet the future—as we introduce ITID now as an *Open Access Journal.* Under this method of publication all of our content will be available over the Internet at no cost. Print copies can still be obtained from the publisher on a fee basis. We believe this open access approach defines the future for academic publications and, critically, will serve well our global audience. Open access publication means:

- Wider access for our readers—especially those coming from the Global South who might not have been able to afford the subscription prices.

- Higher impact to our authors—research shows that open access journals have higher rates of readership, citation, and overall impact.

- The same level of quality and prestige already associated with ITID. We will continue to maintain the same rigorous peer review, editorial commitment will only grow, and the prestige associated with publication by a major university press will remain. And the journal will still be available in print for those wanting to line their physical bookshelves.

- An improved intellectual property environment—under open access publication we will move a Creative Commons copyright license. This license will allow non-commercial reproduction of the material we publish in ITID. All you will need to do is make use of the entire material and give full attribution to the authors of the work and to ITID.

- A richer online environment for discussion, collaboration, scholarship, and community building! ITID is the first open access journal offered by the MIT Press and we intend to work closely with the Press to innovative with the model and help to define open access scholarly publications.

This inaugural open access year is made possible by the generous support of the Community Affairs division of Microsoft. We are looking to expand our set of donors and to enhance the open access business model.

... and Towards Synthetic Scholarship

We made the first public announcement of ITID becoming open access at the inaugural International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD) held this May at the University of California, Berkeley. We are delighted to be working with the ICTD organizers on a special issue of ITID that will feature the best works from the conference. This is just one of three special issues currently under development with ITID (and others in the works)—on wireless technologies, theoretical frameworks, and ICTs in university education. We are particularly excited to be working on

these special issues as they are central to our goal of fostering a rich epistemic community.

The quality of these special issues, and indeed the overall rising quality of submissions to ITID, marks what we believe is a new period in scholarship and research within the domain of ICTs and development—a period of *synthetic scholarship.*

If we look at the field over time, from the 1980s (and indeed earlier) most research contributions were descriptive—how many phones or computers, where are they, who is using them. Then, during the euphoria of the dot.com and telco boom years emerged a "discourse of success stories" (thanks to Heeks for this phrase). As with much of the writing in the broader field of ICTs, here too in ICT4D the technologies were viewed as a silver bullet aimed at solving all of the world's development challenges. The sober years immediately following the dot.com and telco bust led to another discourse— this time of pessimistic reaction willing to question the most basic tenants of ICTs for development. If in the past the glass was half full, this period saw it being described as totally empty.

As our field evolves and grows we believe it has now entered a more healthy and balanced period of synthetic scholarship. The current period is marked by research writing and reflection that is:

- Founded in theory
- Sharing common concepts
- Grounded in empirical analysis
- Cumulative, comparative, and aware of lessons from the past
- Contextualized
- Cross-disciplinary
- Globally aware while locally engaged

With Volume 3 of ITID we intend to build on and extend this new, healthier phase and to ensure that it continues to grow in impact and importance.