



From the Editors

It is with particular pleasure that we welcome you to this general issue of *ITID*, the last of our seventh-volume year. At *ITID*, we have increasingly moved toward publishing special issues that focus on some technology, method, or problem. Special issues play an important role, as working closely with our Special Issue Editors, we attempt to tackle substantial intellectual puzzles within the *ITID* space. An increasing frequency of special issues should not, however, suggest any diminution of our commitment to general issues, each of which features a diverse collection of articles on a variety of topics associated with ICTs and development. Indeed, all else being equal, we are now striving for something like a 50/50 split between special and general issues.

As with any general issue of *ITID*, we expect the collected papers to represent a wide diversity of problems, places, and methods, and this issue does not fail to deliver. For example, the collected works here represent broad theoretical diversity. Martin and Abbott, in their piece on mobile phone use in rural Uganda, employ the popular Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) theory to help explain how rural farmers are adopting and purposing their mobile telephones. In contrast, Tusiime and Byrne employ the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to examine of information system deployments and innovations along the supply chains of the World Food Programme during humanitarian relief efforts in Chad. Indeed, Tusiime and Byrne explicitly argue that DoI is *not* an appropriate theory for them, given how, for instance, the systems under study did not naturally diffuse throughout the environment, but were instead imposed and then innovated.

Moving beyond theory, the articles in this general issue also represent a wide range of methods. Chew, Levy, and Ilavarasan employ an intensively data-driven quantitative method. In their study of ICT use among women-owned small businesses in Mumbai, India, they find that ICT use seems to account for only scant business growth that occurred among their sampled entrepreneurs. In contrast to Chew and his co-authors' quantitative methods, Geldof uses a qualitative survey method, including interviews, focus groups, and digital camera interactions. Flowing from these qualitative approaches, she finds that limited time and mobility among young, low-literate women in Ethiopia and Malawi account for some of the disparity in their use of ICTs when compared against their male counterparts.

Our fifth research paper, a contribution from Ale and Chib, brings in some new diversity while also echoing some of the properties of the works already noted. In their study, they employ qualitative interview and focus group methods to reveal factors related to needs training and ownership in ICT adoption within primary schools in rural India. This study makes use of the Technology–Community–Management theory—something we have seen little of in the pages of *ITID*, especially as compared to such “blockbuster” theories as DoI and ANT.

Across these papers, however, we see only limited diversity in geographic foci. Two of the works focus on India, and the remainder convey research from Africa (Uganda, Chad, Ethiopia, and Malawi). In this

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issue, we regret the absence of contributions from other geographies, most notably, Latin America. However, we are attempting to correct that imbalance, and are seeking original research articles for a Special Issue on “Research on ICT4D in Latin America” due February 20, 2012. (For details, please visit <http://itidjournal.org/itid/announcement/view/13>. These research articles may be submitted in English or Spanish. If accepted for publication, they will be professionally translated and published in both languages in this Special Issue.)

Furthermore, diversity notwithstanding, we note that all of these articles fundamentally reflect, at their core, field and survey work. None recount engineering efforts or policy interventions—a fact that echoes the preponderance of such styled work in the submissions to *ITID*. Put simply, we would like to publish more engineering- and policy-relevant work, so please consider submitting such work, and urge your colleagues to do the same!

Finally, this issue ends with Balaji Parthasarathy’s review of Shirin Madon’s book overviewing e-governance efforts in rural India. This is the second contribution in our current book review series, which is ably managed by Book Reviews Editor Jonathan Donner.

ICTD2012: Fifth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development

We look forward to seeing you for ICTD2012 to be held March 12–15, 2012 at the Georgia Institute of Technology. As our attentive readers know, *ITID* and the ICTD Conference have enjoyed a distinct relationship wherein we publish a special issue of *ITID* comprised of some of the best papers (expanded and further reviewed) from each ICTD Conference. In addition, for this upcoming conference, the relationship between *ITID* and ICTD goes even deeper, as one of us (Best) also serves as ICTD General co-Chair.

The connection between the journal and the conference is especially appropriate, as we believe ICTD to be the world’s premier scholarly conference for examining the role of computers and communications in social, economic, and political development. We expect the conference to attract more than 500 leading scholars and practitioners with two days of single-track peer-reviewed papers; two days of open sessions (interactive workshops, panels, and more); and a series of keynote speakers, demonstrations, and more.

We invite *ITID* readers to enjoy the conference, along with its host university and city. Georgia Tech, situated in the very heart of Atlanta, Georgia, USA, is one of the world’s leading research universities with a particular focus on improving the human condition through advanced science and technologies. And Atlanta itself is a world-class city with a rich history and vibrant urban beat.

Registration for ICTD2012 is already open and accessible at <http://www.ictd2012.org/registration>

See you in Atlanta!

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