From the Editors

As I write this in April, it's snowing in Ann Arbor, Michigan (where I moved this past winter) so it's hard to imagine that the Summer 2015 issue of *ITID* is already upon us. This issue contains two research articles, a report on a MOOCs-for-development symposium, and a book review.

Rong Wang delves into a large dataset collected by Research ICT Africa to confirm the hypothesis that social capital plays a critical role in what individuals can get out of the Internet. By running logistic regressions on data from representative samples in 10 sub-Saharan countries, she finds that several measures of social capital correlate on the whole with a range of Internet uses (with some exceptions). The data is sparse (e.g., "measures of bonding and bridging social ties have only one item each in the survey"), and not every hypothesis was confirmed with statistical significance, but the effect sizes are often large (e.g., "affiliation with trade unions increased the odds [of political participation online] by 96.4%"), but the trend across 15 hypotheses and 10 countries supports the overarching hypothesis. At least to me, this is further confirmation that technology amplifies underlying human forces: Social and educational capital offline is a good predictor of benefits one can reap online.

Mariya Zheleva, Paul Schmitt, Morgan Vigil, and Elizabeth Belding observe what happened to Internet usage in Macha, Zambia when bandwidth was suddenly increased from 256 Kbps to 2 Mbps. The area is home to MachaWorks, an NGO that became famous in ICTD circles for providing Internet to the schools and clinics in this predominantly maize-growing dollar-a-day community. As far as I know, this is the first study of its kind in the developing world: Many people work to increase bandwidth in less connected areas, but few stick around to see what happens to use afterward. The authors find an increase in video streaming and content uploading at first, but soon bandwidth-heavy use clogged the new connection, and usage patterns settled into a less intensive equilibrium. The article delves into the subtle details of this shift and considers its implications, including one suggestion that offers an interesting take on current discussions about net neutrality (read the article, search for "critical services").

Nathan Castillo, Jinsol Lee, Fatima Zahra, and Daniel Wagner report on a recent symposium on MOOCs4D: massive open online courses for development. Unlike most ICTs that find their way into international development, MOOCs are still finding their footing even in the developed world. As a result, the symposium's discussions of inclusion, infrastructure, financial sustainability, and evaluation/accreditation in the developing world context are relevant everywhere else, too.

All the articles contain nuanced views, and no one finds evidence that technology is an unmitigated good. Yet, their tenor still seems to be that more technology—and more technology use—is generally a desirable thing. As the developed world increasingly reconsiders its 24/7 engagement with technology, is it worth asking if the excitement around ICT for development is justified *even when it's done "well" by various standards?*

FROM THE EDITORS

Nancy Hafkin asks exactly that question in a review of *Women and ICT in Africa and the Middle East: Changing Selves, Changing Societies* edited by Ineke Buskens and Anne Webb. The book offers an array of case studies of authors as agents *and* experiencers of change. Hafkin suggests that in the end, however, "[t]he reader is left uncertain about the answers to the main questions raised about whether ICTs can contribute to gender equality," a charge that might hold well beyond the book.

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