

Using Social Media To Support Community Development: A Case Study Of E-Inclusion Intermediaries In Underprivileged Communities Of South Africa

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Abstract

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For many marginalized community members e-inclusion intermediaries (e-IIs) are the only accessible and affordable option to access computers and the Internet, yet their use of the provided ICTs is low. This is due to a lack of awareness about e-IIs and ICTs benefits. To create awareness and promote the use of ICTs by community members e-IIs need more effective communication strategies that share information. Social media can be effective in this regard, yet many e-IIs do not utilize their potential. This paper presents findings of a qualitative study that investigated how selected e-IIs in South Africa communicate using social media. The study found that social media can facilitate communication for development by enabling low-cost, participatory communication approaches that build networks to share information, resources and create awareness. Social media are however only effective if they are appropriate for the target audience.

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