

Software usage IN unsupervised Digital Doorway Computing Environments IN disadvantaged South African communities: Focusing on youthful users

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ABSTRACT

Digital Doorways provide computing infrastructure in low-income communities in South Africa. The unsupervised DD terminals offer various software applications, from entertainment through educational resources to research material, encouraging unsupervised and peer-assisted learning of basic computer skills and information access, particularly for youth and children. This study aims for better understanding of user behaviour and the nature and extent of DD interactions. Mixed-methods research is used to investigate usage of the embedded software applications at selected sites, and its relationship to user demographics – age, gender and location. We focus on the quantitative component of the study, while touching briefly on qualitative aspects. Data analysis indicates trends and significant relationships between age, gender, location, and application usage. Highest use occurs amongst youth aged between 10 and 25. Recommendations are provided for future DDs and similar initiatives.