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Quantitative Measurement of the Digital Divide¹

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Bandwidth and the Internet infrastructure are the life-blood of the world's knowledge economy, but they are often scarcest where most needed. Measuring the numbers of users of the Internet infrastructure is not easy in developing countries because many people share accounts, use corporate and academic networks, or visit the rapidly growing number of cyber cafes, telecentres and business services. Also measuring the number of users does not take into account the level of use. One valuable indicator for measuring the Internet infrastructure is the international Internet performance of a country or region. One of the major aims of the PingER project is to provide an historical archive of extensive, publicly accessible, up-to-date, measurements, analyses and reports of multiple Internet performance indicators (such as delay, loss, throughput, reachability, and jitter) between sites, countries and regions of the world. This talk will briefly describe the PingER project and then compare and contrast the Internet performance and its trends within and between countries and regions of the world. By means of extensive case studies it will also identify which regions need the greatest attention, together with their major issues and possible approaches to reducing the divide.

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