KEY DATA AND DOCUMENTS

Photo: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment

DISCOVER

The resources in this section are the most useful resources relevant to the gender digital divide, particularly looking at the individual use of mobile and the Internet. This list includes the most influential reports from organizations and agencies who are prominent in the gender digital divide ecosystem, as well as a specific list of reports and organizations looking at the risks of ICT for women and girls. The resources also include key gender digital divide indicators, publicly available demand-side datasets, and practical research toolkits.

BOX 1. USING KEY DATA AND RESOURCES IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

The publications that discuss the gender digital divide invariably provide caveats: available sex-disaggregated data in this domain is sparse and non-uniform; sample populations are not necessarily representative of the country at large; and concepts like "digital skills" are defined differently across studies. These data concerns are outlined in more detail in Box 1 of Tool 4.

Therefore, it is important to take these studies as an aggregate of current knowledge, and to identify both the data sources and data collection methodology of publications. While there are some discrepancies in data and projections between studies, there are more similarities than differences. Monitoring indicator changes over time and geography can best approximate national gender digital divide data.

RESOURCE 1: OVERVIEWS OF THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

GSMA CONNECTED WOMEN – THE MOBILE GENDER GAP REPORT 2020

This now-annual report from Connected Women reports on primary sex-disaggregated data from 18 low- and middle-income countries, for adults aged 18 and over. The data focuses on women's mobile and mobile Internet access and use, and quantifies the global, regional, and national gender gap in mobile ownership and mobile Internet use. In the 2020 report, it also examines the smartphone ownership gender gap for the first time.

ITU – FACTS AND FIGURES 2019

This bi-annual report from the ITU lays out data points on digital development at the country and global level. Data is reported from national statistic offices, and the report includes a section on the Internet gender gap (for adult women only) at a global and regional level.

EQUALS – TAKING STOCK: DATA AND EVIDENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY IN DIGITAL ACCESS, SKILLS, AND LEADERSHIP

This report from the EQUALS coalition's Research Group is one of the most extensive reports about the gender digital divide—covering not only ICT access, but also ICT skills and ICT leadership. The report has over 12 standalone chapters covering the current state of the gender digital divide, ways to measure it, and the gendered risks in ICT. They also address more specific topics, such as the gender implications of artificial intelligence technology.

GIRL EFFECT AND VODAFONE FOUNDATION – REAL GIRLS, REAL LIVES: CONNECTED

The first, and to date only, global study on adolescent girls and mobile phones examines the gender gap in mobile and Internet access and use for girls under the age of 18. While many of the findings are similar to those for adult women, the report highlights specific concerns around the risks and need for safe-guarding for girls in particular.

USAID – GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE ONLINE COURSE

This short online course was produced for USAID staff and partners, as well as wider development practitioners, to understand the gender digital divide. The course introduces participants to the barriers in women's access and adoption of digital tools as well as the impact of the digital gender divide, to develop an understanding of key gender and ICT considerations when designing and implementing projects and programs with digital components.

WEB FOUNDATION – WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE

The Web Foundation regularly publishes primary research on women's Internet access and use in a few low- and middle-income countries. The report is based on primary quantitative research with thousands of urban women across 19 countries; it focuses on the gender gap in access to and use of mobile and the Internet, as well as barriers to uptake and use.

GSMA CONNECTED WOMEN – BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP 2015

This ground-breaking report first quantified the gender gap in women's mobile access and use, for 11 countries: it determined the global, regional, and gender gaps in mobile ownership for the first time, and identified key barriers and recommendations to close the gender digital divide. It is one of the most cited reports in this space.

RESEARCH ICT AFRICA – LIFTING THE VEIL ON ICT GENDER INDICATORS IN AFRICA

This influential study across 11 countries in Africa was the first to make the link between the gender digital divide and gender inequalities in income and education. The report was also the first to argue for tackling the underlying causes of the gender digital divide (societal inequalities), as well as tackling its symptoms (inequitable access).

RESOURCE 2: GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE INDICATORS

ALLIANCE FOR AFFORDABLE INTERNET – MEANINGFUL CONNECTIVITY

The Meaningful Connectivity Standard is the newest set of indicators and was released in 2020. The indicators are specifically designed to set a new standard and raise the bar for meaningful Internet access and use. It moves the measurement conversation a big step forward by not only looking at how many people are online but also looking at the quality of connectivity through four key indicators: regular Internet access, having an appropriate device, having enough data, and having a fast enough connection. While the Meaningful Connectivity Standard is at an early stage and is still being built out, it is expected to include sex-disaggregated metrics, potentially becoming widely adopted over time within the digital development ecosystem.

ITU – MANUAL FOR MEASURING ICT ACCESS AND USE BY HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS

The ITU uses the core list of ICT Indicators to collect data from national statistics offices for their annual reports. They have recently started reporting on the Internet gender gap in access, and they have the most comprehensive datasets globally. However, they often focus narrowly on computer Internet rather than mobile Internet, and focus too much on access. Their methodology for measuring the Internet gender gap differs from others: the ITU defines the gender gap in Internet penetration in percentage terms, as a proportion of the Internet penetration rate for men.

ITU – PARTNERSHIP ON MEASURING ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT: CORE LIST OF ICT INDICATORS

This core list of 60 indicators can be used to form the basis of ICT data collection in a particular country. It is used in developing countries by national statistical offices and other official statistical entities to collect individual-level ICT data. These indicators are used by the ITU (and others) to measure Internet access and use, and ITU uses these indicators in their own data portal, facts, and figures and in their Handbooks. However, the indicators are not sex-disaggregated, and some are narrowly focused on computer usage, using indicators such as "copy and paste" and "transferring files" that are unfamiliar to the majority of the world's ICT users, who use mobile phones. They also only measure access, rather than meaningful use.

UNCTAD – MEASURING ICT AND GENDER: AN ASSESSMENT

This report builds on the core list of ICT indicators used by the ITU and others, identifying which existing ICT indicators are currently sex-disaggregated. It takes stock of existing ICT indicators disaggregated by sex, assessing data availability, and identifying main data gaps based on an evaluation of needs and demand for such indicators.

RESOURCE 3: GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE DEMAND-SIDE DATASETS

AFTER ACCESS

The After Access datasets include data on mobile and Internet access and use across 16 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, using surveys that are nationally representative, along with a methodology that allows comparisons across all countries. The datasets focus on both access and meaningful use. Data is available for 2005 to 2008, 2012, and 2017. The data is not released regularly; it is most useful for country snapshots, though not necessarily for panel or time series analysis.

ALLIANCE FOR AFFORDABLE INTERNET – AFFORDABILITY REPORT

This annual report provides data on how affordable Internet is in different countries and regions, using a wide range of different indicators and metrics around infrastructure and access. Data is available for 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019. While it is not specifically gender-focused, it gives a good indication of whether cost is a barrier in a specific country, and it has some gender metrics such as policies for equitable internet access and use for women and girls.

DIGITAL GENDER GAPS PORTAL

This portal uses big data to measure global gender gaps in Internet access in real time. Using social media advertising data, it can disaggregate data from the platform by gender, age, language, education level, and location, as well as by user behavior. It uses the social media data to build models to extrapolate and make predictions on the gender gap, not only at the global and national level but also at the subnational and community level. The models correlate with national ITU figures. It is the only dataset to actively collect data for girls under 18 (as social media advertising provides insights on users as young as 13).

GSMA – ANNUAL MOBILE GENDER GAP SURVEY AND METHODOLOGY

GSMA uses the annual GSMA Intelligence Survey to collect sex-disaggregated data on mobile and mobile Internet access and use. Their annual report, covering data from 18 low- and middle-income countries for adults aged 18 and over, is one of the most widely cited datasets. This resource is a link to the methodology used for the 2020 report. While GSMA does cover meaningful use as well as access, and identifies barriers, it often does not go far enough to reach very remote areas—the women who most need the benefits or opportunities that mobile can bring. It has also been criticized for not adequately considering meaningful use, by assuming that a woman is a mobile Internet user if she has used the Internet at least once in the last three months, which is a very low benchmark. Like ITU, GSMA defines the mobile and Internet gender gap as the difference between men and women as a proportion of the rate for men (rather than women).

WEB FOUNDATION – DIGITAL GENDER GAP AUDIT TOOLKIT

This toolkit is to help policymakers develop evidence and monitor country progress towards closing the digital gender gap. The Web Foundation covers meaningful use as well as access, and it explores barriers. Unlike the GSMA or the ITU, the Web Foundation measures the Internet gender gap as the difference between men and women as a proportion of the rate for *women*, making it female-centered.

RESOURCE 4: GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE TOOLKITS

GSMA CONNECTED WOMEN – WOMEN AND INTERNET RESEARCH TOOLKIT

This toolkit has qualitative and quantitative tools to help practitioners measure and understand women's Internet access and use, at the national and subnational level. While it has been mapped to the ITU's Core ICT indicators, it has added a gender lens, and it focuses on both access and meaningful use. It is particularly useful to understand the social and power dynamics of ICT and its risks, as it covers behavioral themes such as control, ownership, and perceptions.

USAID – GENDER AND ICT SURVEY TOOLKIT

This toolkit, with its ready-built qualitative and quantitative tools, is designed to help implementing partners and development practitioners to collect baseline sex-disaggregated data on ICT access and use and to incorporate the tools into their routine monitoring and evaluation activities. The tools are designed to provide development practitioners with deep insights on wider connectivity issues at the individual or community level. While the data-collection tools are not mapped explicitly to any standardized global metrics, they have been deliberately designed to be user-friendly to non-academics, while at the same time drawing on both GSMA and Web Foundation survey questions and indicators. They will be particularly useful for understanding the social and power dynamics of ICT as well as its risks, as the toolkit covers behavioral themes such as control, ownership, and perceptions.

WORLD BANK – ENGENDERING ICT TOOLKIT

This toolkit highlights the barriers women face in owning, accessing, and benefitting from digital sector interventions implemented by the World Bank and identifies opportunities for using ICT to empower women. It also provides some practical advice and steps that practitioners can take to address gender and ICT issues.

DOCUMENTS IN THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE GENDER ANALYSIS TECHNICAL RESOURCE

HOW TO USE THIS GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE GENDER ANALYSIS TECHNICAL RESOURCE

UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

TOOL 1: GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE ILLUSTRATIVE QUESTIONS

TOOL 2: CLOSING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE TO IMPROVE USAID SECTOR OUTCOMES

TOOL 3: ADDRESSING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE IN PROJECT AND ACTIVITY DESIGN

TOOL 4: GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS

RESOURCES 1–4: KEY DATA AND DOCUMENTS