Jonathan Donner, **After Access: Inclusion, Development, and a More Mobile Internet**, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015, 312 pp., $40.00 (hardcover).

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Author Jonathan Donner paints a picture for readers: In libraries around low-income neighborhoods in Cape Town, South Africa, many students work at library computers, which triggers his question: Your phone has Internet—why are you at a library computer? As can be inferred from the book title, *After Access: Inclusion, Development, and a More Mobile Internet*, Donner offers both theoretical and practical perspectives to explore the implications for socioeconomic development and digital inclusion of the shift to a more mobile Internet.
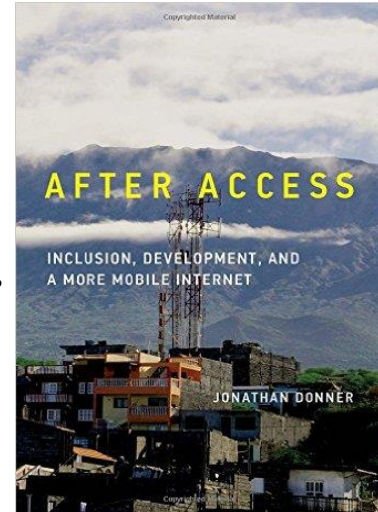
Audiences

The author draws on research from a variety of disciplines, including communication, informatics, economics, sociology, anthropology, public health, design, and computer science. As a whole, however, this book does not fit into any one category. Multidisciplinary communities could gain new insights from this book. In particular, ICT4D (Information and Communication Technologies for Development) and mobile communication studies are the primary communities that Donner intends to reach, since his book contributes to their core conversations and theoretical frameworks. In addition, this book makes some connections to larger communities including technology and society, development studies, social enterprise, design and innovation, and new media and Internet studies. Other than academic audiences, this book is a good resource for policy makers who are trying to understand, reframe, and improve mobile Internet technologies, infrastructures, and services in the developing world as well as those designers, technologists, and entrepreneurs who are seeking to harness mobile Internet technologies to create new products and services.

Book Structure

After Access: Inclusion, Development, and a More Mobile Internet starts by talking about how the variety of technologies, form factors, and use cases makes it difficult to identify a clear line between "mobile" and "fixed" Internet. In the first three chapters, Donner argues that it is better to forget that there is such a thing called "the mobile Internet"; instead, people should focus on how the Internet itself is becoming more mobile over time. Chapter 4 is built on the idea of this shift, suggesting that "it is possible to identify a small set of elements (inexpensive devices, usage-based pricing, wireless connections, personal/portable/intimate devices, universal appeal, and task-supportive experiences), which collectively differentiate mobile Internet experiences from a previous fixed Internet archetype" (p. 178). Chapter 5 begins with a careful separation of the social/structural implications of telephony and

Internet connectivity. In chapters 6 and 7, the author explores the implications of "place(less)ness" and "place(full)ness." In the last part of the book, Donner talks about new constraints in chapter 8, "Digital Repertoires and Effective Use"; chapter 9, "A Metered Mindset"; chapter 10, "Restricted Production Scenarios"; and chapter 11, "Circumscribed Structural Roles."

The Lens

The *lens* is a key word that runs through the book and represents six elements that have played roles in promoting the boom in the uptake and use of a more mobile Internet in the global South. The first element is inexpensive devices. Donner argues that device costs have a significant effect when determining the shape and scope of access. Second, usage-based data pricing makes mobile Internet more convenient and "trial-able" than fixed Internet. Third, wireless connections offer greater convenience and more flexible connections than fixed Internet. Fourth, Donner argues that "users create strong bonds with their small devices" (p. 57), which makes the user feel more intimate with their personal devices. Fifth, as noted by Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu, and Sey (2007), "As elements of daily routine, wireless technologies, particularly the mobile phone, are perceived as essential instruments of contemporary life" (p. 59). The use of popular applications (apps), such as YouTube, Google Maps, Skype, Snapchat, and Instagram, is a good example of universality because those apps offer ways for people to connect and coordinate. The sixth element is task-supportive design, which means the apps on smart phones are easy to use on small screens and are easy to purchase.

Place(less)ness and Place(full)ness

Donner argues that the new place(less)ness enabled by a more mobile Internet may contribute to socioeconomic development. He lists several examples such as diasporas, gender and agency, learning on the move, and mobile money. International and regional migration and diasporas benefit from "rich, multichannel and inexpensive communication and coordination" (p. 86). In terms of gender and agency, Donner argues that "place(less)ness may create opportunities to reduce place- and resource-based male control of ICTs" (p. 86). However, the author did not elaborate on the vision of decreased male control of ICTs and how a more mobile Internet could make that happen.

Donner talks about protest and citizen engagement in the chapter on place(full)ness. It is true that social media and mobile devices played a vital role in both the Arab Spring in the Middle East and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. In the Umbrella Movement, for instance, the fight for suffrage in Hong Kong was fueled by tweets and hashtags of protesters and supporters from around the world. During September 26–30, 2014, the movement had more than 1.3 million tweets, which means more than 1.3 million opportunities to be heard, to persuade someone, and to advocate for change (Dastagir & Hampson, 2014).

New Constraints

One of the major points Donner tries to make throughout the book is that access to the Internet alone is not enough for a more mobile Internet. The decreased digital divide is bringing the global South

closer to the rest of the world. Nevertheless, scholars and policy makers should be aware of new constraints. First and foremost is the digital repertoire. Donner's definition of *digital repertoire* looks not only at the devices and the Internet but also at people's skills in using their devices and the Internet.

The second constraint, which is related to the digital repertoire, concerns effective use. Community informatics scholar Michael Gurstein (2003) makes a point about effective use:

> There is a need now to distinguish between an approach to the "Information Society" and to ICTs which "stresses access/the DD [digital divide]" and one which stresses "effective use." . . . ICTs when used effectively provide significant resources/tools for transforming one's condition—economic, social, political, cultural . . . through obtaining the means for effective use of information and communications capabilities and tools. (p. 117)

Donner quoted Michael Gurstein to explain effective use, which—in my opinion—emphasizes the necessity of integrating ICTs into social, economic, and cultural movement and progress.

The third new constraint concerns cost. Donner uses the words "a metered mindset" (p. 123) to stress that cost is actually a major barrier to the ongoing use of the Internet once people can access it. In addition, the quality of the mobile device data varies based on individuals' locations and data usage plans. Last, Donner brought up the restricted production scenarios of portable and personal mobile devices. Looking again at libraries in low-income neighborhoods of Cape Town, we can now see that students use libraries to do their homework, despite having mobile Internet access, not only because of the free Internet but also because of the ease and convenience of doing homework on a computer with a full-size keyboard and screen.

Conclusion

In everyday life, we become dependent on our mobile devices and the Internet, whether we use cell phones or computers. In a more mobilized world, what does the mobile Internet mean to us? Or what does it mean to those in the global South who just got access to the Internet? In his book, *After Access: Inclusion, Development, and a More Mobile Internet*, Donner talks about the changes, opportunities, and new constraints that appear alongside the realization of the mobile Internet. This would be a good introductory book for those who are interested in the mobile Internet, the digital divide, globalization, and even daily life, since the mobile Internet is so essential in our living world now. I recommend that readers who are interested in mobile communication studies and the global Internet look at the *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, edited by James Katz (2008). The *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies* offers a more detailed and comprehensive view of how mobile communication across the globe affects cultural, family, and interpersonal life.

Let me end this book review with one of the passages in Donner's book that struck me, as it summarizes the past, present, and future of Internet access: "In most cases, some Internet access is

better than no Internet access, a somewhat affordable Internet is better than an unaffordable Internet, and an Internet that is easy and fun to use is better than one that is difficult" (p. 191).

References

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