

## How can Mobile Technologies serve to Close the Digital Gap and Accelerate Development?

The emergence of IT was accompanied with the hype that it could serve close the economic-, educational- and social gaps between the rich and the poor regions of our planet. These hopes were primarily based on two assumptions. First, that IT characterized by low-cost entrance (compared to starting traditional businesses), would allow young scientists/entrepreneurs from developing countries evolve at the same speed and compete with colleagues in developed countries. Second, since the New Economy (i.e., IT-, Knowledge based) is taking over the traditional inflexible heavy-duty economy, this will open the door for small, innovative, flexible companies to compete with international giants. Unfortunately these hopes were dismissed at the dawn of the new millennium. First, we witnessed the collapse of several stock markets (especially the dot-com bubble, which was correlated in the minds of many with the concept of new economy). Second, the Republican government in the US promoted an oil- rather than information-based economy. Does this mean that closing the economic, social- and digital gap will remain an elusive dream?

The author develops the thesis that it remains a viable possibility and develops arguments based on Cypriot experiences and lessons derived from the computer era. To achieve this goal, developing nations need an aggressive strategy based on three axons: (1) Policies to increase IT penetration (with responsible integration in the lives of children). (2) Policies to discourage brain drift. (3) Transformation of legal- and financial infrastructure to facilitate fast/efficient proliferation of new businesses.

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