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EBSCOhost: Meeting the Challenges in Africa

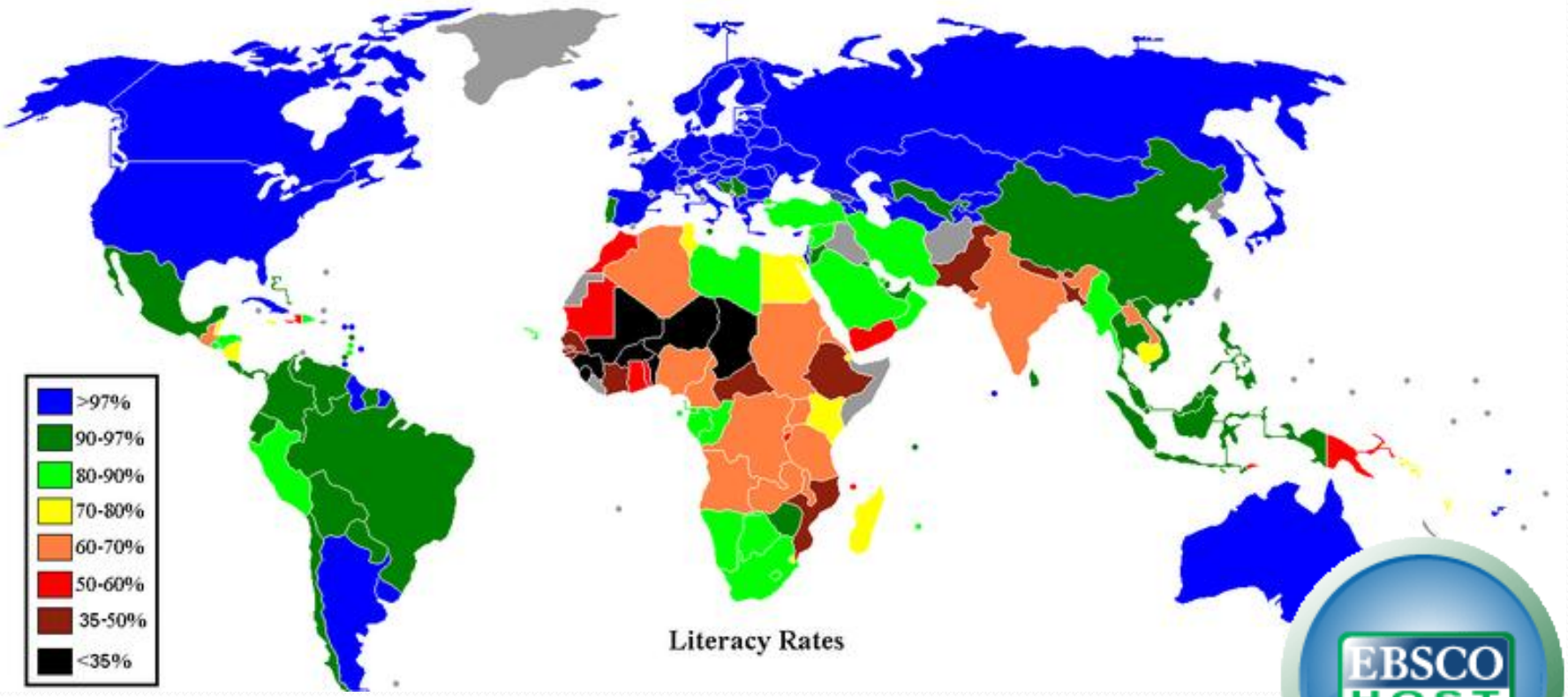
Matthew Buys
EBSCO Publishing
ICADLA-2 Conference

Education & Literacy in Africa

- Education is a central socio-economic right that provides the foundation for life-long learning and economic opportunities.
- Literacy data published by the UNESCO[1] Institute for Statistics (UIS) in 2007 shows that the lowest adult literacy rates are observed in Africa and South Asia. In some countries, fewer than three out of ten adults can read and write. UIS provides national literacy data for two age groups: youths aged 15 to 24 years, and adults aged 15 years and older.

[1]*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*

Education & Literacy in Africa



Source: UN Home Development Report 2007/2008

Access to information with technology: Barriers

- Telecommunications
- Legislation
- Costs
- Regulatory bodies

Dagada, R. 2011. 'The Impact of the South African Universal Access Policy to ICT in Education: Issues and Challenges', Journal Of Communication & Computer, 8, 7, pp. 599-608, Computers & Applied Sciences Complete, EBSCOhost, viewed 15 November 2011.

Access to information with technology cont.

- In the past, online learning has tended to be isolating and less participatory and has been distinct from using technology in the classroom. But going forward, interactions will be key. Just as people engage in online interactions - around virtual sports teams, cooking, or whatever - students will be able to engage in participatory learning experiences online in and out of the classroom.

Karen Cator
Director of the Office of Educational Technology,
U.S. Department of Education

Scherer, M. 2011, 'Transforming Education with Technology', Educational Leadership, 68, 5, pp. 16-21, ERIC, EBSCOhost, viewed 15 October 2011.

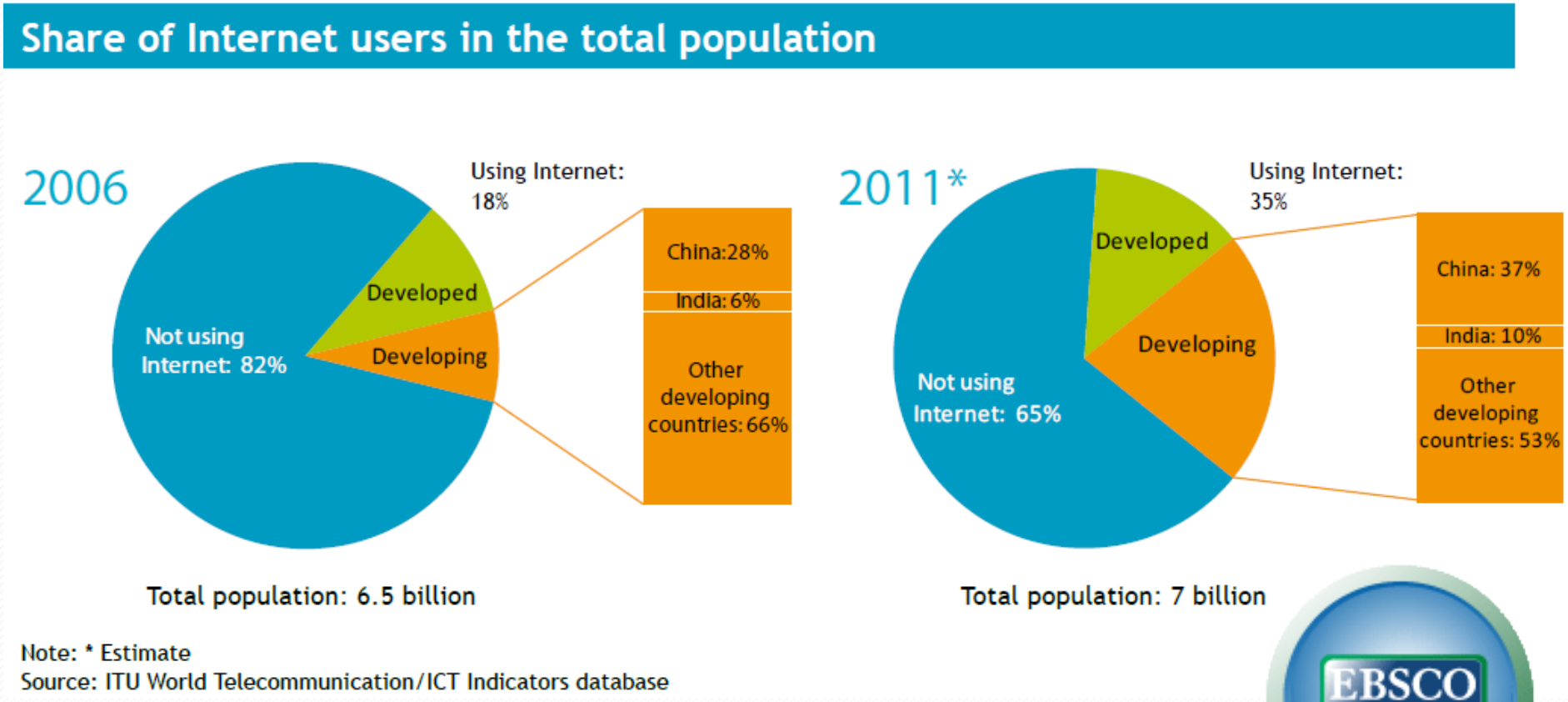


Access to information with technology cont.

- "Part of being literate in the 21st century is being able to make careful decisions about technologies and their uses."

Karen Cator
Director of the Office of Educational Technology,
U.S. Department of Education

Changes in internet technology



Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database

Changes in internet technology cont.

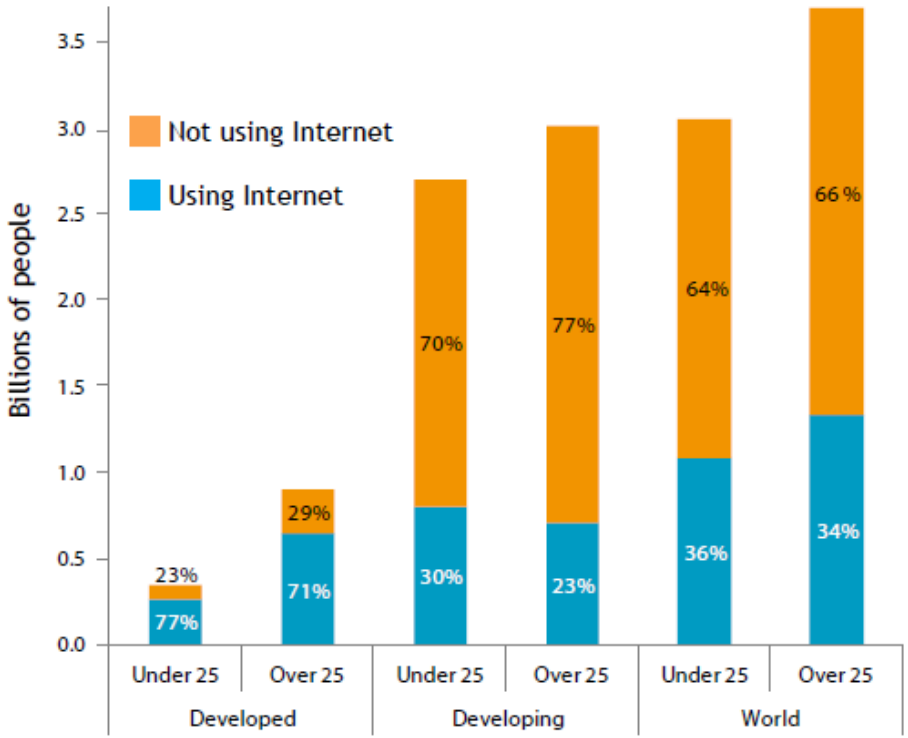
- The world is home to 7 billion people, one third of which are using the Internet; 45% of the world's Internet users are below the age of 25.

- Over the last five years, developing countries have increased their share of the world's total number of Internet users from 44% in 2006, to 62% in 2011. Today, Internet users in China represent almost 25% of the world's total Internet users and 37% of the developing countries' Internet users.

Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database

Growth in internet technology cont.

Internet users by age and by development level, 2011*



Note: * Estimate
Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database

- Younger people tend to be more online than older people, in both developed and developing countries.
- In developing countries, 30% of those under the age of 25 use the Internet, compared to 23% of those 25 years and older.
- At the same time, 70% of the under 25-year-olds — a total of 1.9 billion — are not online yet: a huge potential if developing countries can connect schools and increase school enrolment rates.

Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database

Changes in technology prices

- The ITU ICT Price Basket 1 shows that between 2008 and 2010 ICT services have become more affordable and relative prices came down by an average of 18%, globally.

- The steepest price drop occurred in developing countries, where fixed broadband prices dropped by 52.2%.

- In developing countries, mobile cellular prices, which have substantially dropped over the last decade, fell by a further 22%. The 2010 mobile-cellular sub-basket represented on average 11.4% of monthly GNI per capita, compared to 2% in developed countries.

Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database

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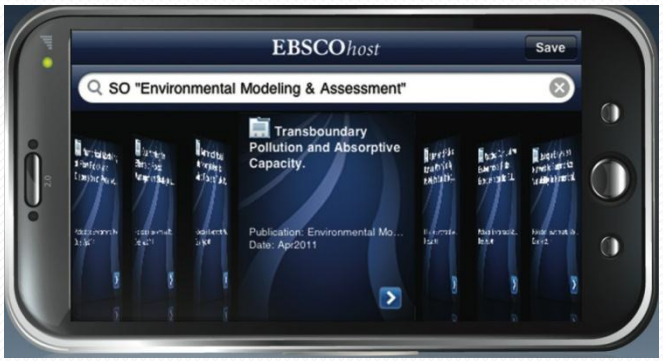

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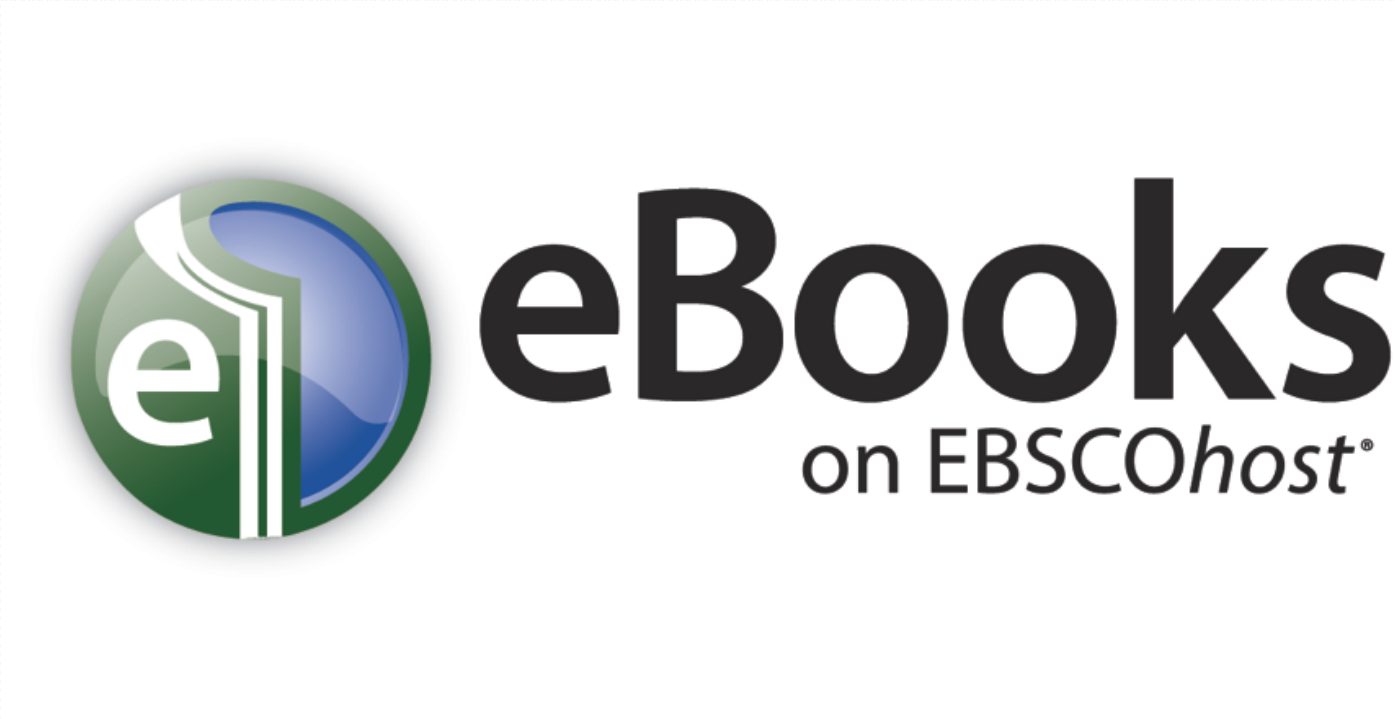

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Far East	867	602
Latin America & the Caribbean	438	397
Middle East	645	636
United States	21,773	2,488
Western Europe	10,355	4,161
TOTAL	35,254	9,168

* Figures as of March 25, 2011

Case study

African Languages and Information and Communication Technologies: Literacy, Access, and the Future
Donald Z. Osborn
Bisharat, Ltd.

"To a certain degree one can provide computer access to people who cannot read text, through innovative use of the technology, e.g., audio and images, and text-to-speech processing. Such interfaces then imply other kinds of literacy – in particular computer literacy. This kind of consideration suggests widening both the kinds of ICT interfaces provided for and the range of literacies accounted for (multiple literacy). In effect ICT that can both be made accessible in some ways to illiterate or semiliterate people and assist in their education begins to imply new approaches both to ICT for development projects and literacy strategies where ICT is introduced."

Osborn, Donald Z. 2006. African Languages and Information and Communication Technologies: Literacy, Access, and the Future. In *Selected Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics, ed. John* Mugane et al., 86-93. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project

Case study: Important points

- Computer literacy
- African languages
- Affordable access to information

Thoughts on change

- Embrace the rapid changes in technology
- Mobile phones
- Offline access
- “Discoverability”
- Think global, act local!

Questions?

Thank you

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