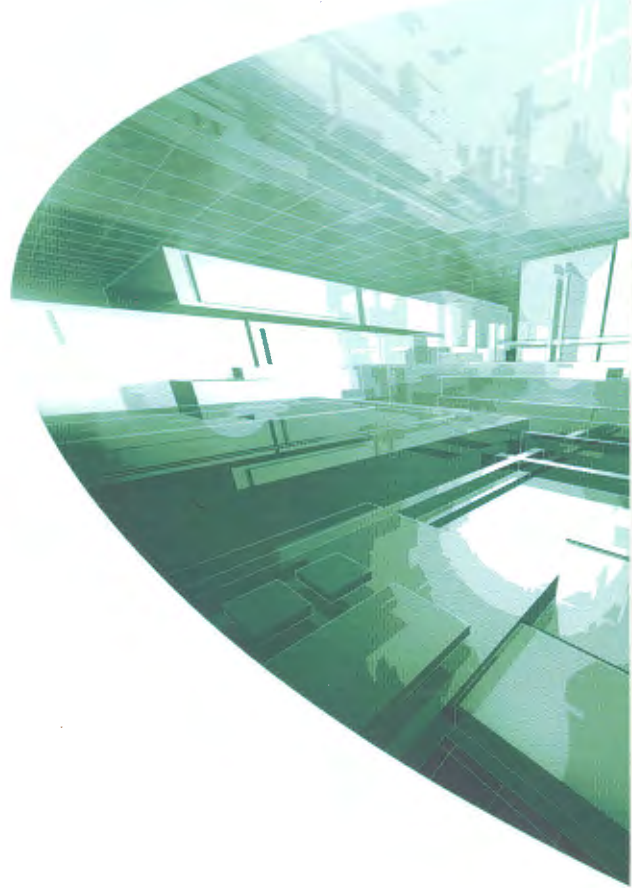


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*Olawande Ori*

Property  
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# Property Management

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# Digital divide – a challenge to the real estate practice in Nigeria?

Ayotunde Olawande Oni

*Department of Estate Management, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria*

Received September 2011

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Digital divide is lack of access to and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). It represents the difference between people with access to ICT and who use it effectively and those who do not. The aim of this study is to determine the level of digital divides amongst estate surveyors and valuers (recognized real estate practitioners in Nigeria). This is with a view to turning the identified digital divides into digital dividends for sustainable real estate practice in Nigeria and elsewhere.

**Design/methodology/approach** – In attaining the aim, primary data were collected on 3,627 corporate members of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) with questionnaires administered through the internet using *SurveyMonkey*, an internet-based software complemented with bulk sms to alert them about posting of the questionnaires into their e-mail addresses. The Culbertson's constructs for evaluating digital awareness in the USA were adapted for inclusion in the survey instrument. The finding on the estate surveyors and valuers was also compared with those on comparable professionals in the building industry to determine if the respondents are lagging behind in adopting ICT.

**Findings** – Based on the Culbertson's constructs, there is great digital divide between practising estate surveyors and valuers and their counterparts in advanced countries. The analysis indicated that 33.75 percent of the respondents were not committed to ICT, 26.25 percent were slightly committed, and at least 38.75 percent were somewhat committed; and the respondents were classified as "low-tech high-touch" professionals; and their level of ICT deployment found to be appropriate within the framework of the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics. This implies that digital divide is not a challenge to real estate practice in Nigeria.

**Research limitations/implications** – The study serves as good starting block for further analysis of the setting, challenges, and practice of real estate profession in Nigeria and elsewhere with regards to ICT applications. The research posited the implication for the NIESV to organize mandatory continued professional development workshops on ICT to remain relevant in the fast moving digital society. The IT requirements, current skill base, and curricula in the higher institutions were however not examined. It is therefore necessary to carry out further research on students and faculty in the higher institutions to identify the gaps in skill and technological capabilities.

**Originality/value** – The findings help in specifying development activities that will enhance improvements in professional standards, build local capacity and improve transparency expected by international investors. Also, the findings provide professional bodies and policy-makers with indications to improve and ensure sustainable real estate professional practice through continuous and life-long training of members in ICT. It recommended capacity building, reviving of interests of practitioners, direct investment of software companies, and research as approaches to reducing the level of digital divide between practitioners in advanced countries and Nigeria in order to remain relevant in the technologically-driven and competitive world.

**Keywords** Digital divide, Digital dividend, ICT, Professional practice, Real estate, Technology, Nigeria, Communication technologies

**Paper type** Research paper



## 1. Introduction

The world has undergone a technologically driven revolution in the last decades; this has led to "the information age" associated with phenomenal proliferation of computers and information devices. Activities have been subjected to technology with

**Real Estate Markets and Sustainable Behaviour**

*Edited by Peter Dent, Michael Patrick and Ye Xu*

Routledge

Abingdon

2012

237 pages

£24.99

ISBN 978-0-415-59144-7

Review DOI 10.1108/02637471311295432

*Real Estate Markets and Sustainable Behaviour* is written by three leading property academics at Oxford Brookes University in the UK, including Professor Peter Dent who has been a long serving member of Property Management's Editorial Advisory Board. The authors are all chartered surveyors and have considerable experience in academic research and graduate teaching in addition to industry advisory experience. This very desirable mix of academic rigour and industry experience is reflected in the practical nature of this book.

The book seeks to present an analysis of the property market, not only in terms of its commercial and legal aspects, but also with a focus on the growing importance of sustainability as a performance measure in contemporary property investment. It addresses both the investor perspective and that of the corporate occupier in their property dealings, not just in respect of financial performance but also from a social and environmental sustainability performance viewpoint.

While comprehensively covering the traditional property material that might be expected in a real property textbook, this text examines the complex nature of property rights and issues related to both investors and occupiers in a rapidly evolving market. The book is presented in four sections. The first deals with an overview of the real property markets and institutions involved in the market. The second section looks at property ownership vehicles and the investment decision-making process including analysis from a socially responsible and sustainable investment perspective. Section 3 takes a more holistic approach to sustainable property ownership with chapters dedicated to place making, balanced scorecard and business approaches to property. The final section reflects on the role of leadership in promoting sustainable business and property practices and provides a framework for evaluating learning of sustainable literacy and knowledge.

The target audience for this book is both property practitioners and students in property economics programmes. I can certainly recommend this text, particularly to those working in the sustainable property development field but also to all those with an interest in green building.

**Clive M J Warren**

*Business School, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia*

## 2012 Awards for Excellence

The following article was selected for this year's Outstanding Paper Award for

*Property Management*

“Housing affordability in Australia for first home buyers on moderate incomes”

**Valerie Kupke and Peter Rossini**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose** This paper examines the opportunity for home ownership by first time buyers who are in occupations defined in the UK literature as key workers within four state capitals in Australia; Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Many of these workers are moderate or average income earners who deliver essential community services such as health, social services, education, safety and emergency services. This paper explores access to home ownership for these workers for 2001 and 2009, a period which included the introduction and reintroduction of increased Australian government grants to first home buyers.

**Design/methodology/approach** The study determines, for each year, the zones of each city able to be afforded on a moderate single income as well as the percentage of suburbs able to be afforded by key workers.

**Findings** The paper identifies the pressure for multiple incomes in order to purchase as well as discussing the commuting distances some workers in Adelaide and Sydney may have to accommodate in order to afford a home.

**Originality/value** Follows up 2001 work, conducted in Australia, on housing affordability for moderate income earners. Housing affordability continues to be a key housing issue in Australia especially for first home buyers.

**Keywords** Housing, Affordability, Australia

This article originally appeared in Volume 29 Number 4, 2011, *Property Management*

The following articles were selected for this year's Highly Commended Award

“Real estate education: an investigation of multiple stakeholders”

**Joanna Poon, Mike Hoxley and Willow Fuchs**

This article originally appeared in Volume 29 Number 5, 2011, *Property Management*



“Public property management in Italian municipalities:  
framework, current issues and viable solutions”

**Carlo Vermiglio**

This article originally appeared in Volume 29 Number 5, 2011, *Property Management*

**Outstanding Reviewers**

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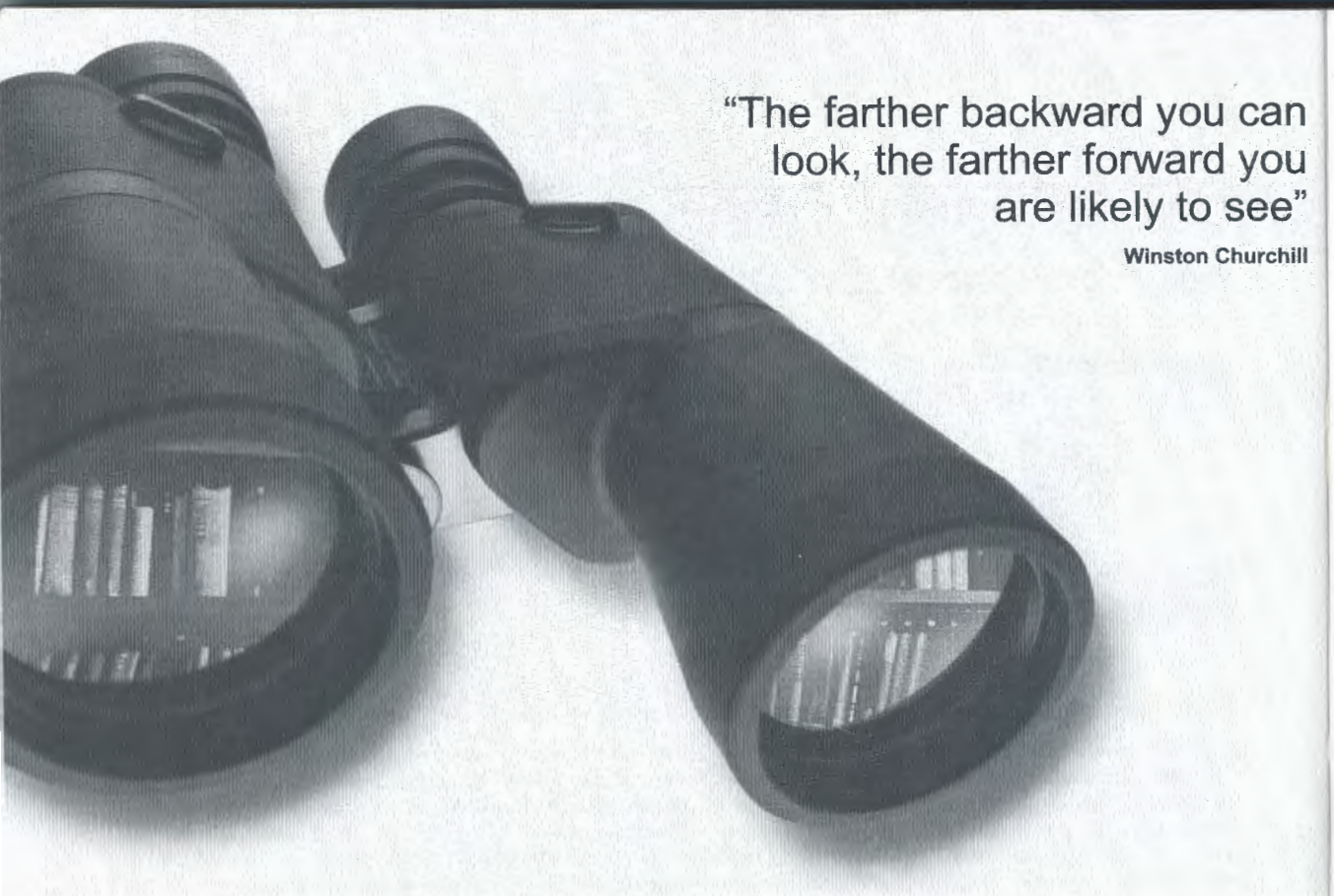
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