

# Toward addressing the participation gap of the digital divide: a digital fluency perspective of millennials

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to offer a multi-disciplinary framework to examine the continuing digital participation divide and within-group use variance among millennials. We focus on millennials due to the size of their population segment. We further critically examine assumptions of homogeneous adoption of emerging Information and communication technologies (ICTs) among “digital natives.” We describe the concepts of digital fluency and capital enhancing activity to explore how and why millennials invest their time in using ICTs. Digital fluency reflects the knowledge, skills, and cognitive capabilities needed to maximize the use of ICTs, whereas capital enhancing activities increase human capital in such a way to offer individuals more opportunities for upward mobility. Employing theories from second language learning, economics, and communication studies we describe the antecedent and composite elements of digital fluency, and its role in motivating capital enhancing use of technology. Future research implications are also described.

**Keywords:** Digital Divide, Fluency, Capital Enhancing Activity