Development informatics research and the challenges in representing the voice of developing country researchers: A South African view.

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Abstract:

Abstract Indigenous or local researchers from developing countries have not made a leading contribution to development informatics (DI) or information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) research. This is noteworthy since these researchers should be in a prominent position to contribute to the discourse, where context knowledge is regarded as vital. Furthermore, a dependence on foreign scholarly direction can create a gap between research and reality in a way that affects the success of ICT programmes in African countries. Extant literature highlights this problem, but most studies stop short of considering the causes and proposing how to amplify the voice of developing country researchers. This paper documents the ICT4D/DI research discourse that took place during four seminal academic events in South Africa during the period 2012 to 2015. Those discussions are presented and analysed here to contribute to the wider discourse on ICT research and practice in developing countries, with the aim of enhancing the research contribution of developing countries. An interpretivist, involved researcher analysis of the workshop reports is conducted to gain an improved understanding of the South African ICT4D/DI researcher's challenges to proportional participation. While this study takes a South African perspective, many of the findings could apply to researchers in other developing countries.