

**ASSESSMENT OF A TELECENTER IN BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN
RURAL AREAS:
A CASE STUDY OF RULINDO DISTRICT, RWANDA**

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ABSTRACT

Telecenters have been the main strategy to face the connectivity and access issue in developing countries for the last two decades. Mobile technologies have recently introduced new ways to connect to the Internet and to communicate online, reshaping the technological ecosystem of access. The purpose of this research project is to ascertain the effectiveness of a telecenter in bridging the digital divide in Rwanda's rural areas. The study based on literature review and interviews of persons involved in activities of bridging the digital divide in rural areas selected from libraries, electronic resources and national and non-governmental organizations. This study employed questionnaires for data gathering and prepared for a sample of 200 respondents selected from a total population of 400 persons which is the average of telecenter users per month. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to analyze data achieving descriptive statistics. The findings of this study revealed that 42.00% of respondents are aged between 19 and 30 years where 57.00% of respondents are male and 69.00% are employed. Findings also revealed that 84.00% of telecenter users based on our sample access the internet connection provided by telecenter and 88.00% of respondents are satisfied with internet connection services. The study also shows that 56.00% of respondents access telecenters services, between one day to five days in a month. Telecenter user's perception toward telecenter services shows that 95.50% agreed that the community will develop economically and 93.00% agreed that using telecenters services will enhance their job performance. The analysis of challenges faced by telecenter users revealed that 91.50% agreed that telecenter staff customer care influence their use of telecenter services and 84.50% agreed that their level of education influence them to use telecenter services, in addition to providing recommendation to the Rwandan government and entrepreneurs to contribute towards bridging the digital divide.