Chapter 15

Implications and Future Trends

Abstract

This chapter presents the implications of the research discussed in this book and outlines future research trends in the area of consumer adoption and usage of broadband. The findings of the studies detailed in this book generate a number of implications that may be relevant to policy makers, Internet service providers (ISPs), and other relevant stakeholders for increasing consumers’ adoption of broadband. The chapter begins by a discussion concerning the implications of this research for the government, followed by the implications for the Internet/broadband service providers and, ultimately, the implications for content providers and emerging electronic services. Finally, a discussion on the future trends in the area of broadband adoption and diffusion is provided.
Implications for the Government

Within the UK case study, self-efficacy was found to be a significant factor influencing individuals’ behavioural intention to adopt broadband, which brings to the forefront policy-related issues. This suggests that there is a need to equip citizens with the skills to use computers and the Internet. When it comes to the government’s role in equipping citizens, it is important to take a segmental approach for identifying and providing relevant skill-oriented courses to those citizens who do not have normal opportunities to learn and use the computer, Internet and other related emerging technologies and applications such as e-government and e-commerce.

The findings related with demographic variables, such as age, were found to be negatively correlated in all case studies of this book including the UK one. This should be considered for identifying segments for attention in terms of skills and resources. Policy makers should ensure that older segments of society should be equipped with essential ICT skills. Ignoring such an issue will increase the digital divide between older and younger population of the digital society.

Governance of many countries including the UK are becoming more and more technology dependent as all local and central government services to citizens are transformed into electronic delivery medium. However, both government and citizens cannot realise the benefits of such a transformation until all citizens are equipped with the skill to access government services via an electronic medium. Citizens’ ICT skills are of utmost important for survival and progress of the digital society. In the UK, the government provides free Internet access in libraries, however, not all people—particularly those in the older age categories—regularly visit the library so it may not prove very useful for motivating and encouraging such a segment of the population to learn and use the computer and Internet. An alternative strategy that may prove useful is providing Internet access in public places such as pubs and in old people’s homes. It also require choosing and equipping one or two people with essential ICT skills who regularly visit pubs as a change agent who may then easily motivate others to learn and use such technologies.

It is clear from the case studies that the government has an important role to help both the broadband provider and the consumers. The implication for the government in terms of the broadband provider is to ensure that the company provides a better service quality. In a monopoly situation like this, it is often very tempting for the monopoly supplier to be inefficient. The government should therefore consider increasing the number of service providers and help create a more competitive market for broadband provision. The UK has done this in two ways in efforts to break down BT’s monopoly of broadband provision. In the UK, the first action has been to allow cable providers, such as NTL and TeleWest, to develop the infrastructure and provide broadband services. This has worked well as quite a substantial proportion of consumers including public services such as schools and hospitals use...
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