Chapter 4
Digital Inclusion:
From Connectivity to the Development of Information Culture

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ABSTRACT
This chapter discusses digital inclusion from a social, educational and cultural dimension. The author considers concepts that have been of great importance in the historical development, such as culture, citizenship and education in the interest of raising an overview of the digital inclusion reflective and critical. Different perspectives of digital inclusion are described, from the perspective more socially oriented to eliminate the gap of digital access to the current perspective, the integration of the citizenship in a mediated society by the emergent information technologies with needs oriented towards the training in access, use, evaluation and communication of information. The chapter concludes by stressing the importance of information literacy to prevent social inequalities but proposes that training of citizenship is made from a humanistic perspective that transcends the merely instrumental and approaching what we call a culture of information, understood as a necessary prerequisite for integration of citizens in society.

INTRODUCTION
Major theorists of the XX century were determined to name the society in which we live. The American sociologist Daniel Bell (1973, 1991 and 2001), raised one of the concepts that have been more successful in Western discourse, Information Society, trying to highlight the strategic value and great social, economic, political and cultural impact that information has had on advanced industrial societies. In the early nineties, this concept was complemented by a new notion, Knowledge Society (Drucker, 1993) that took root in the European Community policy and international institutions such as UNESCO (2005). During the Lisbon European Council in 2000, heads of State and Government marked a common goal for Europe: the effort to become a more competitive knowledge economy and, simultaneously, in a more inclusive knowledge society. It was argued that in this new economic and social structure, knowledge would be one of
the main causes of growth together with capital investment or resources and employment. Therefore, the production of knowledge-intensive products was highly relevant as well as services based in knowledge, and the importance of education and training processes were emphasized, both in their educational and initial training dimension as well as throughout life.


When the different approaches and theories, or the results from the indicators or methods for measuring the information society, are analyzed in depth; and when the policies that drive public or private national and international institutions that operate in this area are examined, the picture drawn is neither homogeneous nor encouraging, and is subject to a variety of interpretations and perspectives.

At the end of the last century it was stated that a post-industrial revolution was beginning, advocated by the information and communication technologies, and encouraged by its extraordinary power of expansion and its ability to generate business earnings, especially for major international companies. At the same time many countries and organisms showed a great interest on the topic of digital inclusion, visible in initiatives and national and international programs of great wingspan promoted among others by the European Union, Latin America and the United States such as: The European Initiative i2010 for digital inclusion, in the V European Union (EU)- Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Ministerial Forum on Information Society or the UNESCO’s IFAP (information for all)

Throughout those years there have been critical voices that, as Roszak (1988), warned of the dangers of the cult to information. The truth is that such revolution of which so much has been theorized has not reached to everyone. We have a massive production and mass consumption of technology and information. The technological and informational omnipresence and the social inequality that characterize today’s world make education and culture become pressing needs because through them human beings can give direction to their life and find their place as citizens. Education and culture today are in transition but at a much slower pace than THE social needs demand. Never before has so much information been circulating as today, we feel overwhelmed, infoxicated, and sometimes quite lost and unable to find just what we need. This information is only valuable if we know where it is, we are able to access it, if we know how to select what we need and above all, if we understand it and apply it to the decisions we make in our life, work, and our environment. The power of information resides in its tremendous potential, a potential that not everyone has the opportunity to update, and this is a big problem because information is a vital element in many ways, one of them being, and not the least, the participation of citizens in the institutions and the consolidation of a true democracy.

During the past decades, an overestimation of technology has occurred against cognitive processes that must follow any digital inclusion processes. In these pages we will discuss digital inclusion from a more social, educational and cultural point of view rather than a technological or political one. We will consider some concepts that have had a great importance on historic becoming, such as culture, citizenship and education in order to lay out a digital inclusion panorama that is reflexive and critical.
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