

It's been said that information is power and that the separation between the economically well-off nations, individuals, companies, and the like, and those that are not (economically well-off) is the use and control of information. What is the value of information? How does it affect the viability and competitiveness of nations or companies? How does your access to and use of information affect your ability to be successful in a work-related setting?

I remember back in 2000 when I suddenly found it very difficult to find work in Washington DC because there was a sudden influx of overly qualified IT personnel from India. These were some of the most skilled information workers I have ever encountered, and working under them was a continual learning experience. Comparing the income of an IT worker from India with that of a laborer from South America is a powerful illustration of the value of IT.

A few weeks ago on the radio, I heard a guest on a talk show refer to “Those of you out there on the wrong side of the Digital Divide.” I can easily see how countries lacking in IT are at a disadvantage against those with a strong IT foundation. The announcer was speaking to a local community, so the Digital Divide doesn't just apply to countries, but individuals as well, and I can see the Digital Divide and how it coincides with the economic-divide in my local community.

Education is a type of information, which is why higher education is of chief importance to a successful career. But is the disparity in income levels in my local community a result of their lacking information (IT, higher ed), or do they lack information because they lack income for a computer, college, or Internet connection? Perhaps that's why there are programs like the One-Laptop Per Child, which seeks to bring IT to disadvantaged children around the world.

<http://laptop.org>