DIGITAL INCLUSION IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD:
An Emancipatory Manifesto

by
TIM UNWIN

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT

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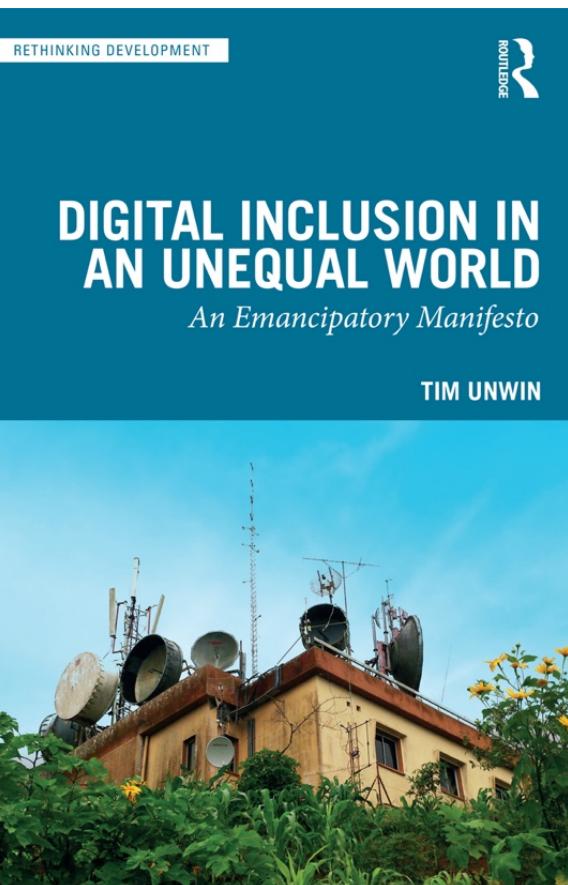
The book:

- Sheds *light* on why the poorest and most marginalised are still being left behind by the latest advancements in digital technologies, despite global rhetoric otherwise.
- Shares *understandings of* why many of those involved in using digital technologies for 'development' resolutely fail to learn from previous practice and research, and therefore continue to make similar mistakes to those made in the past.
- Advances an *emancipatory* agenda based around responsibilities rather than rights, that has the power to change existing priorities and practices

Seven Chapters
https://ict4d.org.uk/diuw/chapteroutline/

1. Notes from the Underground
2. Shifting the Balance: from Growth to Equity
3. A UN System Co-opted by the Interests of Global Capital
4. The 'Me' Syndrome
5. The Innovation Fetish
6. On Freedom and Digital Enslavement
7. Towards Emancipatory Responsibilities and Actions

What makes this book different?

A rigorous critique of why the poorest and most marginalised do not benefit from the use of digital tech due to: the "me syndrome", the UN system, the "innovation fetish", and digital enslavement

Concludes with a clear emancipatory framework built around practical steps that individuals, governments, the private sector and civil society should all take

Includes contributions from 31 leading authorities in the field, all of whom have contributed vignettes drawn from their own experiences, and told in powerful ways, often through short stories

Order direct from Routledge:
https://www.routledge.com/9781032983042

What are people saying about this book?

"Tim Unwin's new book digs into some of the deep psychological reasons why our digital interventions so often fail to live up to the promise of being 'for all'. He offers a sobering, even dystopian view of where things stand today — yet, at the same time, he inspires with his optimism that we still have the power to shape such technologies for real and lasting good."

Prof. Dr. Ralph Hertwig (Director of the Center for Adaptive Rationality at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin) (Image © MPI für Bildungsforschung)

"This new book raises alarms about really important matters. The gap in digital access and use is getting bigger, and the explicit intent for equality and equity in global initiatives is so rarely there. This powerful book resonates with many of my own concerns"

Haif Bannayan (Global Director Business Developmen at The International Baccalaureate)

"Digital transformation is having a major influence on the economy and the future of humanity, but many people in developing countries are still seeing only limited benefits. This important new book challenges us all to think again about how we can ensure that everyone benefits from the use of digital tech. Not only does it provide a sound critique, it also offers a clear manifesto for what we urgently need to do to rectify this."

Torbjörn Fredriksson (Head of E-commerce and Digital Economy, UNCTAD)

"Tim has crossed many boundaries between academia, government service, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. This powerful and passionate book draws on his very extensive research practice to present a convincing case for why digital tech has not yet sufficiently been used to serve the world's poorest and most marginalised. It also goes beyond this, and tells us clearly what we need to do to make the world fairer and less divided"

Chaesub Lee (Chairman of Passwordless Alliance and Principal Advisor of Welchmann Keen; formerly Director of ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau)

About the author

Tim Unwin first programmed in Fortran in the early-1970s, and has been fascinated by digital technologies ever since. His research-practice over the last 25 years has focused on ways through which the most marginalised, especially out of school youth, people with disabilities, women in patriarchal societies, and migrants, can benefit from the use of digital tech. He was founding UNESCO Chair in ICT4D at Royal Holloway, University of London (2007 – 2023), and served as Secretary General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (2011 – 2015). Trained as a Geographer, he has recently been described as "one of the leading minds in digital learning" (OEB, 2023) (For more, see https://timunwin.blog).

Thirty-one Vignettes
https://ict4d.org.uk/diuw/vignettes

- Thought provoking examples and case studies woven into the text
- By researchers and practitioners who have together spent over 500 years working in the field
- From diverse backgrounds in Africa, Asia, South America, Europe and North America
- Listen to the authors reading their own vignettes

Contributing authors

Shabnam Aggarwal
Ken Banks
Tendani Mulanga Chimboza
Marine Al Dahdah
Pari Esfandiari
Domenico Fiormonte
Mei Lin Fung
Akber Gardezi
G. 'Hari' Harindranath
Judith Hellerstein
Emily Hickson
David Hollow
Nick Hughes
Poncelet Ileleji
Lousewies van der Laan
Emmanuel C. Lallana
Janet Longmore
Yuliya Morenets
Nnenna Nwakanma
Dorothy Okello
Alejandro Pisanty
Jamie Proctor
Nimmi Rangaswamy
Benita Rowe
Fernanda Scur
Paul Spiesberger
Revi Stirling
Mohamed Sharil Tarmizi
H. Juliette T. Unwin
Ugo Vallauri
Tom Wambeke