How ICT Is Improving Everything

Internet and communications technology has had a deep impact in global health and, more recently, finance for people without access to banks and credit. But what might be a surprise to engineers and other practitioners of global development, ICT is also making forays into home construction, sanitation services, hydropower and the management of social enterprises. Here we present some of the newest ways that mobile and other digital technologies are improving every field of global development, and a reflection on why it is hard to introduce these tools to the global development community. Read on for more.

A new digital tool takes the guesswork out of making earthen blocks for construction

A new algorithm and simpler soil tests in development now may soon improve the quality of compressed earth blocks with quick results and standardized quality.

ICT4D infrastructure: How two kinds of technologies are putting the whole world online

Start-ups and even giants of ICT business are finding new ways to connect the unconnected without the telecommunication "grid." They are building an off-the-grid Internet. The technologies they have devised fall into two categories. (1) Hardware that connects users to the Internet (2) Offline sharing software and hardware that integrates into new ways of creating "Intranets." This is a look at both.

New open-source tools analyze sites for small hydropower generators

Engineers at Oregon State University have developed a kit of open-source tools that improves the climate and geographical data available along the world's remote waterways. The result is a tool suite that analyzes potential sites for run-of-river hydropower systems anywhere in the world.

Why Is it So Hard to Do Something New in ICT4D?

"ICT4D is still failing to move beyond pilots, extend access and inspiration for projects beyond a few people in each agency, and to really scale," says Laura Walker McDonald at SIMLab. "I think a lot of this is rooted in our insistence that technology is an innovation in and of itself. In a decades-old field, that just isn't true anymore. We need to professionalize, share best practice principles and make them more mainstream."
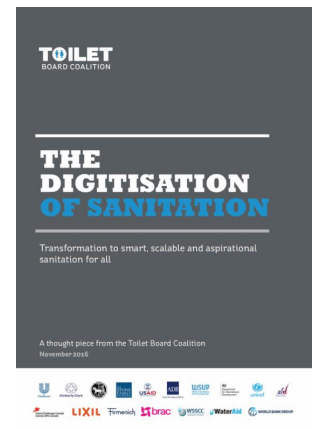

These are McDonald's tips on how to introduce new tools into global development work.

How mobile tech improves global sanitation: Research brief on the Digitization of Sanitation

"There are two key starting points for many of the entrepreneurs we speak with - mobile payments and customer relationship management (CRM) systems," says Alexandra Knezovich, Program Manager at the Toilet Board Coalition. "Both technologies have the potential to quickly transform the capacity and efficiency of a small business."

These are a few of the Toilet Board's findings from their report, the Digitisation of Sanitation.

10 mThings Changing Lives in Developing Countries

Apps, SMS- and voice-based services are improving health, financial inclusion, education, governance, energy delivery and other fields of global development.
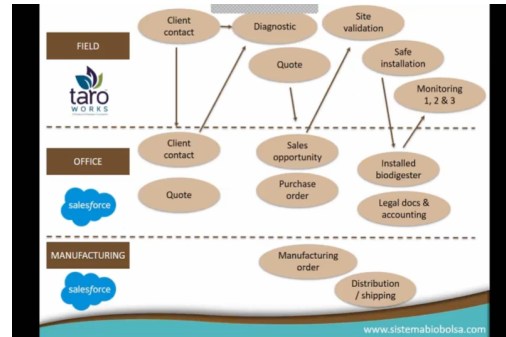
These apps have given rise to terms like mHealth, mFinance, mEducation, mGovernance, mWater, etc. In short: mThings.

Here we list 10 mThings that provide a glimpse of what is being done in low-income settings.

Case study: How an offline CRM helps a biogas business expand in Latin America

When the Latin American biogas enterprise Sistema Biobolsa grew out of using spreadsheets and notepads to manage its customer data, sales and manufacturing operations, it turned to TaroWorks. Esther Altorfer at Sistema Biobolsa gives in an in-depth review of her company's experience with TaroWorks' offline CRM tools in the field.

E4C Webinar | Bring the Infrastructure and Plan for the Impact: Best Practices Deploying Electronic Medical Records and ICT4D Solutions in Low Resource Settings

Paul Amendola, Executive Director of Vecna Cares Charitable Trust, will provide an overview of his organization's work sharing and collecting electronic medical records (EMR). The project supports hundreds of thousands of patients and hundreds of frontline health workers who serve them.

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