Digital Divide Data

Technology in research
The good, the bad & the opportunities

The most important technology is old fashioned

- Understand your research purpose
- Design a good questionnaire
- Train your people well
- Do robust supervision
- Do good quality analysis

But if we have to use devices, we should know why:

- To make our work easier?
- To make our work more accurate?
- To supervise our staff?
- To enhance analyses?
- To do whole new things?
- To reduce costs?

Technology we've used in DDD

- Data collection devices:
  - Phones
  - Tablets
  - Offline PDAs
  - GPS units
  - SMS survey
- Software approaches for data collection
  - ODK (free)
  - Mobenzi (not free)
  - In house development (very expensive)
- Software approaches for data analysis
  - Statistical software (SPSS and Stata)
  - Qualitative analysis (nVivo)
  - SQL for database queries and analysis

What we've gotten out of it

- Data
  - Large and complex data sets
  - Real time data input
  - Much easier management of complex skip patterns, sub-questionnaires etc
  - Flexible and on-demand outputs
- Management
  - Staff supervision benefits
  - Quick adjustments to research plan based on early results
- Costs and time
  - Reduced cost of data entry step from paper surveys

What it does not substitute for

- Research design and purpose
- Questionnaire design
- Staff management
- Data analysis and review by human eyes and brain
- Qualitative interview techniques and recording

What are the opportunities?

- The big question is whether technology can actually help us to collect data or do analysis that wasn't possible at all before?
- Seems to be a limited sphere
  - GPS and mapping
  - On-the-fly calculations and dynamic questions

Big data

- Enables specialized and highly customized analyses

BUT

- Requires specialized and highly customized analysis

- Questions?