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Chapter IV

Digital Divide: A Glance at the Problem in Moldova

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Abstract

In this chapter, we want to state shortly the basic components and manifestations of the digital-divide problem, as well as the ways of its solution in a specific country with its specific regional, social, historical, and political features. Moldova is taken as such a country. The problem is interesting to consider in the example of such a country because it is especially manifested in countries of such type: those that are waking up to development and are limited in means.

Introduction

> *"The love for one's country impels and imperiously dictates to everyone, who intends to describe the customs of one's nation, to praise the nation, to which he belongs by birth, and to laud the population of the country which gave him birth (generally speaking, not many strangers know the customs of moldovan people). On the other hand, the love for truth hinders and forbids praising of what is to be condemned upon a fair balance. It will be more useful for country if we will not hide from its citizens' eyes the shortcomings, which are current among them in abundance…"*
>
> (Demetrii Cantemirii, "Descriptio Antiqui et Hodierni Status Moldaviae," Petropoli, 1727)

No problem could be explained if we speak only about a problem in general. When putting forward some general conclusions and discussions, one should always examine them with concrete examples. In real life, the problem is manifested by concrete facts, at a concrete place and at a concrete time.

In the previous chapter, we examined basic statements of the digital-divide problem: a short history, the situation in the world, and basic manifestations and approaches to its solution that the world community undertakes and recommends. These discussions were illustrated by some examples from the history of different countries. In the present chapter, the authors base their arguments on the judgments and conclusions stated in their chapter for the examination of the digital-divide problem, and give possible ways to its solution in a specific country. Moldova is chosen as such a country.

Moldova is a country that just now became aware of the necessity to create the information society. Though scientists of the country have told about this for more than 10 years, extreme poverty and instability did not allow people to even think about any purposeful actions in spite of having a comparatively good infrastructure. The concrete, real steps have been started only since the year 2003, although the corresponding rhetoric sounded in different documents and speeches earlier.

The chapter describes the economic situation in the Republic of Moldova (RM) as one of the countries with strongly pronounced symptoms of the digital divide, and describes Moldova's steps in the creation of the information society and the problems that it faces. The chapter shows the degree of the complexity of the digital-divide problem in this country, and what priorities and difficulties occur.

Naturally, national peculiarities are present in Moldova as in any other country. This is not just a type, but a real country. The authors have no pretension about Moldova's oneness, but want to emphasize only that every country, when resolving the digital-divide problem, should take into consideration general statements and the country's individuality as well. In the course of the whole chapter, the authors compare Moldova with other countries by all measured and available indices.

The situation in Moldova is considered in the context of other countries, namely, its direct neighbors (Romania, Ukraine) and a set of other countries from the former socialist camp and that are just passing or has just passed through the phase of transition from planned to