



University of Southern Queensland

Through the Digital Futures - Collaborative Research Network (CRN) program of work funding has been awarded for the following research project: **Project 2: Determining the Social and Policy Challenges of a Digital Future: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of Rural and Regional Australia**

What is the project about?

The aim of this project is to model and quantify the socio-economic and policy challenges communities are facing in regional Australia, particularly in the context of rapid expansion of digital technologies. Digital technology has not only become a crucial part of economic and social development but is also a strong means of creating social capital. Using information and technology and community informatics to promote social inclusion and community engagement is a more productive approach to ensuring digital inclusion. This research therefore investigates the potential for digital technologies as a platform for stronger social cohesion and underpinning social development in rural and regional communities.

Why is it important?

There is a clear gap in Australian public policy making in terms of its information and communication technology policy. While the provision of access to technology is important, the issue needs a detailed understanding and measurement of relationships between technology, community and public policy.

Who is involved?

University of Southern Queensland
Australian National University
University of South Australia

How will the research be conducted?

The research will include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data and information will be collected from both primary (e.g. survey, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions) and secondary sources (e.g. reports, internet and databases).

What will be delivered?

The study will result in a range of quantifiable outcomes including conference presentations, working papers and refereed articles.

What is the timeframe?

The duration of the project is three years (2012-15).

Project Leaders

Dr Khorshed Alam, Professor Julie Cotter, Associate Professor Margee Hume, Dr Michael Lane and Dr Jianming Yong.