

# KNOWLEDGE GAP

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“ As mass-mediated info enters a social system, **certain segments\*** of the population acquire info faster ”

\*such as those with higher socioeconomic status (SES) vs. lower

Thus, an increase rather than a decrease in the gap of knowledge between these two segments over time.

## HISTORY

Before 1970

Idea prevalent in literature on mass communication effects that found education is a powerful correlate of acquisition of knowledge for public affairs and mass media

1970

Proposed by Phil Tichenor, George Donohue, and Clarice Olien (Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge)

Turn of Century

Addition of Internet and new media extended research term "digital divide" to describe theory

## KEY POINTS

*focused on science and public affairs issues*

Pointed out what scientists knew for years: certain people expose themselves to certain kinds of info more and retain more

Isn't about whether there is a gap between SES segments; rather, the widening of the gap over time

All parts of the theory have been studied (limiting conditions of gap, countering the gap, implications of the gap)

## CONTROVERSIES

can't address fundamental reasons for gap existence

few references made to theoretical background

frames gap negatively (digital divide - no solid empirical data to demonstrate advantage of Internet vs. traditional media)

limits to news and social issues

theory is addressed to single topics, so to extend hypothesis to all info is considered premature

# DISCIPLINES

communications | rural planning | sociology  
political science | psychology | health and medicine  
forestry and wildlife management | biology | survey research

# ARTICLES

Narrowing the farm-to-plate knowledge gap through semiotics and the study of consumer responses regarding livestock images (Rumble & Buck, 2013)

Different 'digital divide' exists in agriculture e-commerce (Muirhead, 2001)

Who Gets The News? Alternative Measures Of News Reception And Their Implications For Research (Price & Zaller, 1993)

# RELATION TO AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

*It is present in some research, but not overwhelmingly used.*

Literature cited from original work suggested: "interest in the given topic under consideration is actually the important factor that determines rate of info acquisition; motivation is also important."



Could be useful in determining mediums to use to market information (digital divide)

When selecting our mediums and target audiences for messaging, rather than hitting everyone with one message, it's important to keep in mind specific segments of audiences.

# REFERENCES

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