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THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND SPACE ACTIVITIES IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE(S): A
GENERAL OVERVIEW OF AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA

Abstract

Africa and South America share some commonalities, but are quite different in many respects. Both continents had several thriving indigenous cultures prior to their being colonized by mostly European settlers. The legacies left by the colonizers are quite different, but in the 21st century, there may be some convergence, particularly in respect to some space activities.

Communication and remote-sensing satellites, and internet access have played a key role in the last 20 years in bringing the benefits (and some of the ills) of industrialization and globalization to even the most remote areas in the southern hemispheres. International and national satellite systems, whether for communications or earth observation, have influenced their development. In turn, countries in the southern hemispheres have also had an impact in the development of space policies and regulations.

This paper will set forth what seem to be common issues, as well as issues on which there are differences between Africa and South America. It will also examine various attempts to unify the countries in these respective continents, the result of some of these efforts, and their impact on the development of space activities in Africa and South America

Will the digital divide prevail, or will it be reduced through the availability and adoption of new technologies in the southern hemispheres? Will these help bridge or grow the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” on either side of the digital divide?