Digital divide: a wound that requires an operation
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Digital divide can be defined as the strong inequality that rises in societies because of the differences between those who access information and communication technologies (ICT) and use them in their daily lives, and those who can’t or don’t know how to access.

This new form of inequality—that it is added to the one caused by income level differences—can deteriorate even more the social exclusion of some sectors of the population. Digital divide can be produced between different genders, ages, languages, income levels or other factors, but can also be produced within a country or between the most advanced and the most backward countries. The latter is advancing at a more accelerated rhythm.

In the same way that an injury is treated with different drugs depending on its causes and derivations, each inequality needs a different treatment.

Once the diagnosis is made, the question is how to close the rift caused by digital divide, how to cure the wounds which are emerging in the social body during the development of the Information Society.

As in medicine, there are experts who state that the wound will heal itself. They explain that, as happened with colour TV or other domestic technological inventions, eventually the whole population will have a computer. In other words, there is no necessity to encourage any kind of action because the divide will close by itself, just like a scratch.

But this won’t happen with the use of information technologies, because they require a minimum learning period, an open attitude to continuous innovations and an education aimed at being able to convert an overwhelming amount of information into knowledge.
Although in western countries the gender divide, or even the difference in the level of income, tends to diminish, this is not the case of inequalities between rich and developing countries. Given that, holding a summit to make people aware of this exclusion risk emerging in the new Information Society is, in itself, positive. More criticisable is the short term view of the established objectives of the meeting, because delaying the solution to these problems until 2015 will mean assuming a worse situation created during that period.

The digital divide between countries is not just a scratch. If actions are not taken, including resource contributions by some of the most developed countries, the divide may become a huge fault into which the excluded and outcast, those who won’t be able to adapt, will fall. What is more, they will become a social gangrene menacing our stability. There’s still time to heal the wound.