

BBC

Last updated: 27 January, 2010 - 10:50 GMT

When mobile internet phones came to a rural Nigerian village

A global survey commissioned by the BBC for the SuperPower Season suggests that the vast majority of us - 80% - believe the internet is now a fundamental right. But only around 16% of us actually have access to the web.

The BBC has installed two internet-capable mobile phones in a remote Nigerian village which has had no access to the web up to now. It's the village of Zangon Gitata, about 60 kms from the capital, Abuja.

It's a small village mainly of traders and the people here are poor but very hard working.

But the gap, both social and economic between Gitata and the capital, Abuja, is visible the moment you get here.

It's not connected to the national electricity grids so instead of the noisy TV sets and radios you would expect, you can hear the occasional motorbike coming by and domestic animals.

One of our internet pioneers, a farmer called Nicholas spoke to the BBC's Komla Dumor about his online experiences so far.

Nicholas "I was feeling very excited when the mobile phone was given to me: I don't have access to any computer. (Now) I can browse information from the internet.

The problem was (with) the service provider at times, because (the signal) is not much. Every area in Gitata that you can get service you must go around (to) get (the best) service signal."

Komla: "But how does it make you feel, because there are other parts of the world where to be connected to the internet is just like the snap of a finger, but in Gitata there's not even electricity?"

Nicholas: "Yes I was very very sad because sometimes if my battery is low I have to take it down to this charger and they will charge me money. How can a poor man have access to information if such charges continue?"

Komla: What you're saying is that poverty is a barrier to information access?

Nicholas: Yes I want the government to intervene in this situation so that everybody should have right to information at least at a subsidised rate.

Komla: So you think internet information should be a right for everyone in Nigeria?

Nicholas: Really, really, really.