

The logo for the WIA 2007 Report features the letters 'WIA' in a large, white, serif font. A white crescent moon is positioned above the 'W' and 'I'. Below 'WIA', the words '2007 REPORT' are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark background with a large, light-colored arrow pointing to the left. To the right of the text, there are several vertical bars of varying heights, resembling a barcode or a stylized graphic element.

WIA

2007 REPORT

The World Information Access Project investigates the causes and consequences of the global digital divide. New information and communication technologies offer different capacities and constraints for people around the world.

The 2007 WIA Report explores information access by looking at trends in the digital divide between the world's primary and secondary cities, the cost of internet access in terms of income, the impact of telecommunications policy reform on the internet in Africa, the global broadband divide, and the state of the wired libraries, political parties, civic groups, and governments around the world.

WIAReport.org

Focus on Policy Reform in Africa

For several decades, African governments have been encouraged to reform their telecommunications sector through:

Regulatory Separation	formally separating regulatory authority from the executive branch of government
Privatization	selling the government's majority stake in public telecommunications companies
Market Liberalization	introducing competition in telecommunications markets
Regulatory Depoliticization	making the regulatory authority independent of political influence

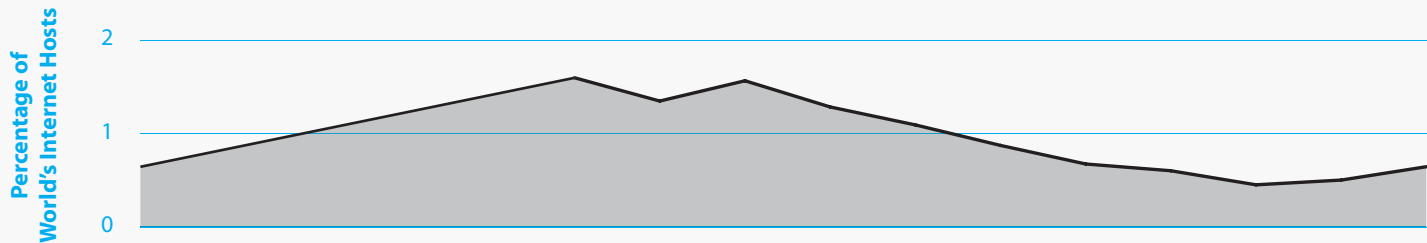
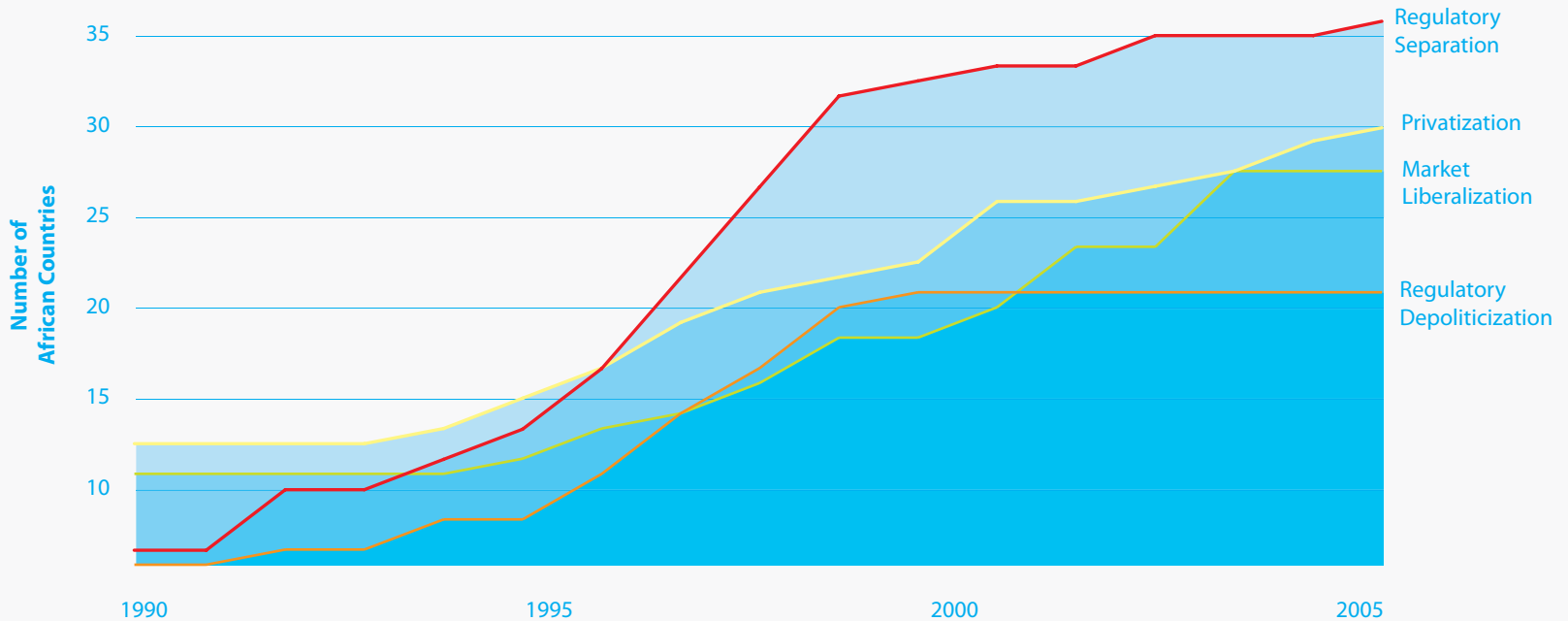
Over time, the number of countries pursuing these types of reforms has increased. By 2006, 36 of 53 African countries had separated the regulatory authority from their executive branches of government, 29 privatized their public telecommunications provider, 26 liberalized their telephony markets, and 18 depoliticized their regulatory authority.

These reforms have many consequences: Mobile phones are widely available in many African cities, long-distance calls are cheaper than ever before, and many local entrepreneurs have started new businesses in this sector. However, one consequence of privatization is that

governments find it difficult to provide leadership in developing their infrastructure. This is especially true when it comes to internet infrastructure.

Even though the number of internet hosts around the world has grown significantly since 1990, the relative portion of hosts residing in Africa has actually declined. In 1995, only 1.6 percent of the world's internet hosts were stationed in African countries, and by 2005 this portion had declined to 0.7 percent. In terms of national information infrastructure, the internet capacity of many African countries has declined over time.

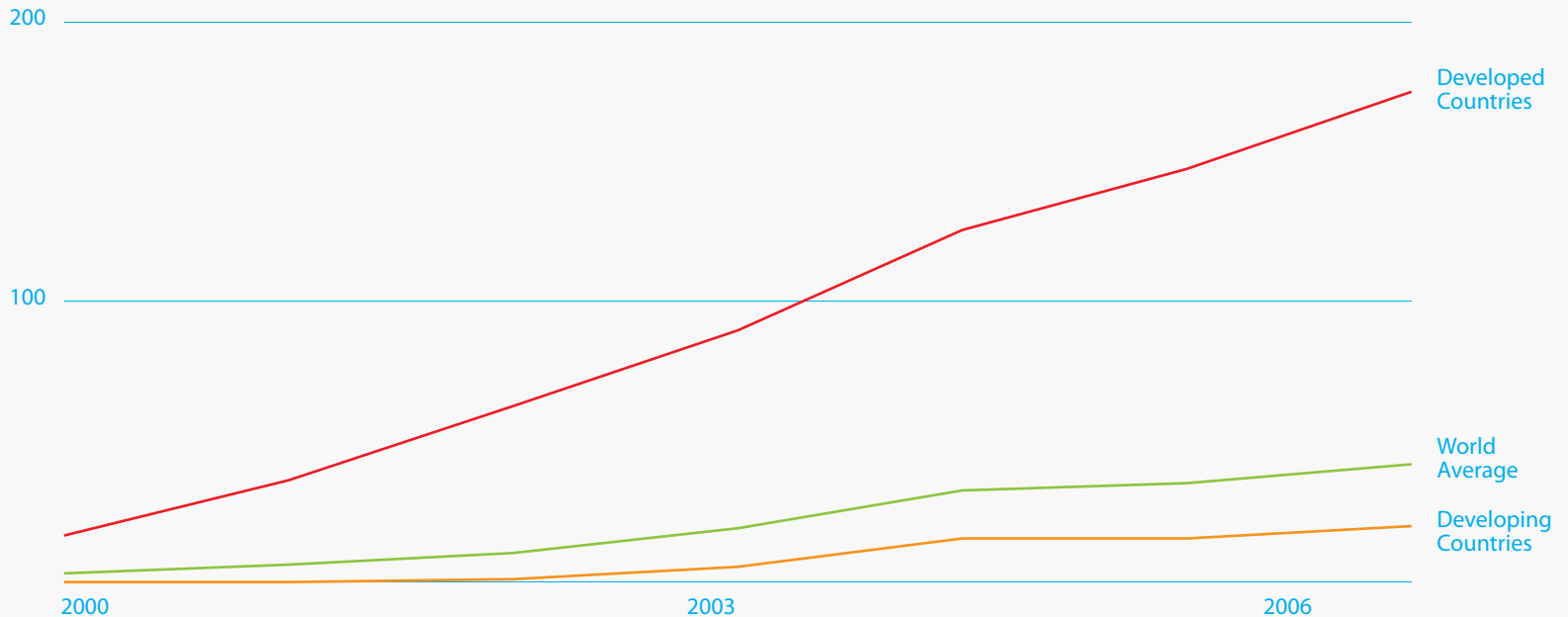
Policy Reform & IT Infrastructure in Africa



Is The Digital Divide a Broadband Divide?

Although many people around the world now have internet access, different speeds of service have become a new divide. With broadband services providing high-speed access to data and cultural content in wealthy countries, the information-rich are getting their information more quickly.

Number of Broadband Subscribers per Thousand People



The World's Libraries Online

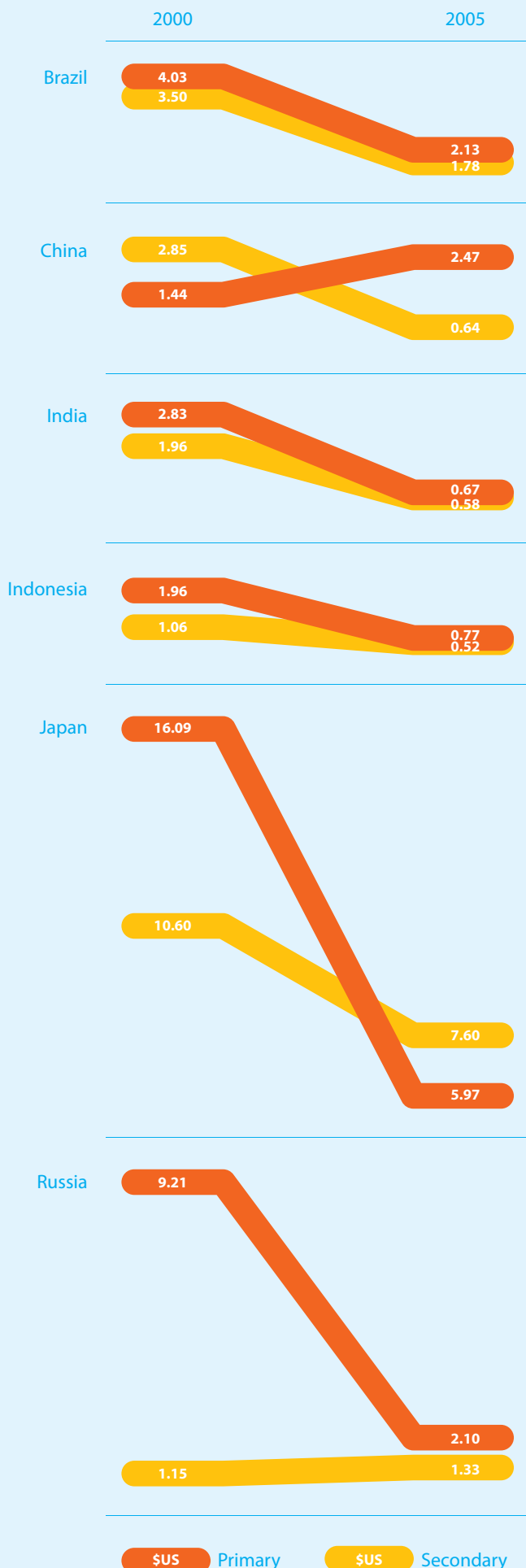
In many parts of the world, the most well-developed information infrastructure is supported by libraries. A country's national library typically houses information on legislation, historical archives, patents, and sometimes court and tax records. University libraries store information on research and are often a gateway to international information services.

Public libraries serve a broader clientele, often by providing internet terminals and access to electronic databases. But not every country's library infrastructure is up to the challenging task of being an information gateway for citizens. Not all national, university, and public libraries have the capacity to maintain a website, and not all provide website access in the range of languages that their citizens read, write, and speak.

Comparing the World's Wired Libraries

77	60	40	40
% of Countries with 1+ National Libraries Online	% of Countries with 2+ University Libraries Online	% of Countries with 2+ Public Libraries Online	% of Countries with 5+ Major Libraries Online
National Libraries	University Libraries	Other Libraries	All Libraries
54	64	50	58
% that load in the national language(s)			
69	34	27	43
% that load (or offer) some English			
15	20	25	20
% that do not load in the national language(s)			

Cost of One Hour of Internet Access



Urban Digital Divide I

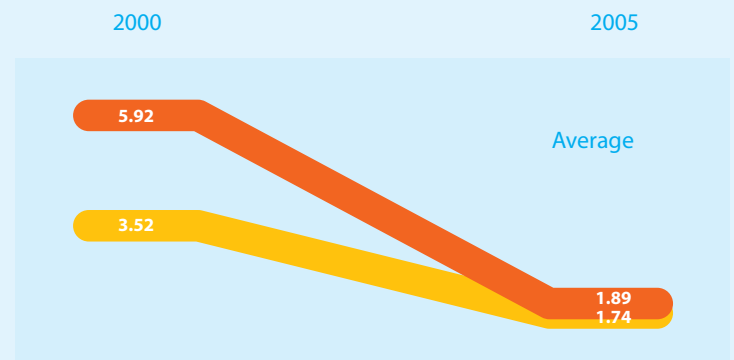
Primary & Secondary Cities

Although the world's most dense global cities are often packed with commercial internet access points, in many countries the cost of an hour of internet use is higher in primary cities than it is in secondary cities.

We estimated the cost of an hour of internet access in a sample of 14 densely urbanized, global cities and contrasted these estimates with the cost of an hour of internet access in 69 regional cities and provincial capitals in 2000 and 2005. The number of secondary cities with internet access grew significantly between 2000 and 2005. In 2000, 33 of the 83 secondary urban centers we surveyed had commercial internet access points. By 2005, 71 secondary urban centers reported internet access.

The average cost of hourly internet access in a country's secondary cities is usually less than that in a country's primary cities. Adjusting to 2005 dollars, the average cost in 2000 in all cities was \$4.46 an hour, and the average cost in 2005 in all cities dropped to \$1.67. By comparison, the cost of internet access in primary cities dropped from \$5.92 to \$1.89 per hour, and the cost of access in secondary cities dropped from \$3.52 to \$1.74.

The urban digital divide between primary and secondary cities is closing, but in different patterns around the world. Today, in Brazil, India, and Indonesia the cost of internet access in primary cities is about the same as in secondary cities. The cost of access has also dropped in Russia cities, Japanese cities, and China's secondary cities. But in China, Japan, and Russia there is still a digital divide between primary and secondary cities.



06-0424



World Information Access Project

Dept of Communication, Box 353740

University of Washington

Seattle, Washington 98195-3740

United States

