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## THE 'EAR' AND 'EYE' DIGITAL DIVIDE

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**Abstract:** This paper is about using technology to help people who share knowledge orally. The objective is to appreciate the social and technical needs of this preference so as to narrow the divide developing between these people and those who earn their living from written knowledge sharing. Writing is not the preferred method of knowledge sharing for the majority of peoples on earth nor is it appropriate for the majority of problems. A mix of both literacy and orality is believed to be the ideal, so a failure to develop cheap and relevant synchronous and asynchronous oral knowledge sharing technology may down play the importance of orality in the social and economic development of both the developed and developing nations. This paper will argue that IS designers interested in global diversity, equity, innovation and economic development through communication technology need to place more emphasis on orality. The difference between oral and written knowledge sharing will be discussed to explain the need for both synchronous and asynchronous communication technologies. A small study comparing asynchronous oral and written communication is presented as is an attempt to design an Internet based oral conferencing system to link Aboriginal communities. It was found that there was a need for developing cheap community based conferencing facilities and to improve the asynchronous oral communication technologies.

**Keywords:** Orality, literacy, asynchronous, knowledge sharing.

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