

Digital Trust: a condition for Africa's emergence

Ferdi Webinar series, September-October 2020

The Ferdi's **Digital trust Chair** is organising a series of webinars to share its first outputs and its conviction that *digital trust is a condition for the emergence of Africa*. Digital trust reflects the public and private actors' inclination to adopt and use digital technologies to meet the needs of the population and to promote an endogenous development dynamic. This trust is based mainly on the integrity, size and quality of the telecommunications network, as well as on the reliability of information sharing. The dissemination of digital technologies and their widespread application, which are evidence of higher digital trust, is a condition for the positive impact of digital technology on the wellbeing of African populations, more particularly in western African countries. It is therefore important to have a better understanding of the main determinants of digital technology penetration, and the conditions for scaling up digital initiatives with proven positive impact.

Building on presentations of the Digital Trust Chair's main research outputs, these webinars will discuss the challenges of digital technologies adoption and diffusion and the importance of digital trust for Africa's emergence. Emphasis will be placed on the potential of digital technology to facilitate access to information and reduce transaction costs, in order to develop production capacities and improve access to basic services. Several areas of impact will be particularly considered, starting with human capital, in particular health, in ordinary times as in times of crisis. Webinar will also address the role of digital technologies for improving financial inclusion, spurring entrepreneurship and youth employment.

These webinars should lead to recommendations on how to promote the transition to digital technologies scaling-up, and thereby, to trigger an endogenous development dynamic that will encourage emergence of Sub-Saharan Africa and its western part. The exchanges will combine the contribution of recent academic knowledge on digital economics in the African context and the experience of both public and private practitioners.

Context

According to the United Nations, Africa's population is expected to grow from 1 billion in 2018 to 2.4 billion in 2050, which will then represent a quarter of the world's population. The population of 15-24 year olds is expected to increase from 200 million to more than 700 million in 2050. It is therefore on this continent that the economic and social transformations brought by the diffusion of digital technologies are raising the greatest expectations. By contributing to the emergence and dissemination of innovations in trade, agriculture, education, health, financial services, transport and the modernization of public administrations, digital technologies have the potential to act as "multipurpose technologies", with important externalities, and thus play a driving role in the development process of sub-Saharan African countries.

In 2017, about 400 digital initiatives have been driven by both public and private actors around the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, and more specifically in East Africa, digital initiatives, especially those based on mobile money, are proliferating and fuelling a vigorous development dynamic in its eastern and southern parts. In the West of the continent, digital expansion is also accelerating but is not yet generating the expected spillover effects and scaling up.

Thus, although mobile telephony-based technologies are expanding and having a proven impact in sub-Saharan Africa, as evidenced by the researches conducted by Pr. Jenny Aker, co-leader of the chair, the "digital dividends" are slow to materialize and bump into a multidimensional digital divide. Indeed, with a low Internet penetration rate and an heterogeneous access to mobile telephony, digitization in West Africa benefits the richer rather than the poorer, urban dwellers rather than rural dwellers, men rather than women, and the better-educated rather than the less-educated.

The organiser

FERDI (www.ferdi.fr), a leading European think tank in the field of public development policies, has launched its Chairs policy inaugurated by the launch of the Sahel Chair in January 2018. This new tool deals with specific themes but in a transversal way and by looking for solutions that have the greatest possible impact on populations.

By launching the Chair "Digital Trust" in 2019, FERDI expresses its conviction that digital trust is a real challenge for Africa, likely to reposition the continent in the world economic hierarchy. It is in this spirit that Be-Ys1 has agreed to support the Chair in order to provide it with the means to study, formulate recommendations, and identify innovative technological solutions to foster digital transformations that meet the needs, expectations and economic interests of African countries.

INDICATIVE PROGRAMME

Thursday, 17th of September 2020 (11:00am-12:40pm)

*****Webinar 1 : Digital trust and public service provision in Africa ***** (100 minutes)

Introductory session from **Mrs. Minister Niale Kaba, Ministry of Planning and Development of Côte d'Ivoire.**

Presentation of the Webinar series : **Patrick Guillaumont**

Moderator: Pr. **Jenny Aker, Tuft University**

Presentation of the Chair's report #1 by **Joël Cariolle, FERDI Research Officer**

Panellists :

- **Chux Daniels**, Senior Fellow (ACET)
- **Hugues Kouadio**, Directeur général (ENSAE-Côte d'Ivoire)
- **Josselin Thuilliez**, Chargé de recherche (CNRS - Université Paris 1 Sorbonne)
- **Benoit Schoeffler**, Directeur Technique (Almérys), co-président du groupe "Financial Management (HL7)
- **Rohen d'Aiglepierre**, Expert régional éducation, Direction Régionale Afrique Centrale (AFD)

Thursday, 24th of September 2020 (11:00am-12:30pm)

***** Webinar 2: Digital trust and financial inclusion***** (90 minutes)

Moderator: **FERDI**

Presentation of the Chair's report #2 by **Jenny Aker, Tuft University, (Senior fellow FERDI),**

Panellists :

- **Abossé Akue-Kpakpo**, ICT Expert, Director of Digital Economy, WAEMU Commission
- **Njuguna Ndung'u**, Executive Director, AERC
- **Paul Harry Aithnard**, Managing Director of Ecobank Côte d'Ivoire and Regional Executive, UEMOA
- **Catia Batista**, Professor of economics, Nova school of business and economics - Scientific director - Novafrika research center
- **Nicolas Fichers**, Economist, Senior research manager, GSMA
- **Alban Ahoure**, Director, CAPEC

Thursday, 1st of October 2020 (11:00am-13:00pm)

***** Webinar 3: Digital trust, entrepreneurship, and job creation in Africa ***** (120 minutes)

Moderator: **Sebastien Boye**, Chief investment officer (letP)

Presentation of the Chair's report #3 by **Joël Cariolle**, FERDI Research Officer

Panellists :

- **Dr. Caroline Paunov**, Senior Economist, Head of Unit, Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (OECD)
- **Jules Tapsoba** Resident representative in Togo (IMF)
- **Abdoulaye Mbaye**, CEO of Neurotech.
- **Fatoumata Ba** Founder and CEO (Janngo)
- Ministry of planning and development, Côte d'Ivoire