The digital divide is an economic and social issue that has seen great interest in recent years. Digital divide refers to the gulf between information and communication technology (ICT) haves and have-nots, and exists across a variety of demographic, ethnic, and geographic dimensions. Overcoming the digital divide by successfully deploying ICTs in developing countries can have major socioeconomic implications for those countries. In fact, it is hoped and expected that ICTs will be a cornerstone for the development of these countries by providing better quality of life through greater access to education, health care, and government. ICT Success, typically defined in terms of adoption and use, is rare, with up to 85% failing to some degree in developing countries. Success of digital divide interventions is of great interest to organizations, government and private. Likewise, corporate social responsibility has been a topic of recent interest to organizations. In order to be more socially responsible, organizations spend billions of dollars each year on ICT implementations to bridge the digital divide in developing countries, such as China and India. For instance, Project Shiksha is a Microsoft-led effort in collaboration with the government of India to address the digital divide in villages across the country through increased access and education. Organizations, such as the United Nations, also invest a great deal in efforts to address the digital divide in developing countries. The goal of this presentation is to present an overview of a large-scale research project being conducted in India among over 3,000 farming families across 10 villages in India that are being studied over 5+ years. Two forthcoming papers serve as the background to the presentation and ongoing papers will be discussed.
Viswanath Venkatesh, who completed his PhD at the University of Minnesota in 1997, is a Professor and the first holder of the George and Boyce Billingsley Chair in Information Systems at the Walton College of Business, University of Arkansas, where he has been since June 2004. Prior to joining Arkansas, he was on the faculty at the University of Maryland. In addition to presenting his work at universities across the world, he has held many visiting appointments at universities around the world.

His research focuses on understanding the diffusion of technologies in organizations and society. For over a decade, he has worked with several companies and government agencies in different capacities ranging from a systems engineer to a special consultant to the Vice-President, and has rigorously studied real world phenomena. He is most proud of his ongoing work on the digital divide in India, which he has presented at the United Nations where he has also served on an expert panel on the advancement of women in less developed countries. The sponsorship of his research has been about $10M, including funding from government agencies, e.g., NSF and DOT. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in leading journals in information systems, organizational behavior, psychology, marketing and operations management journals. Various indicators have indicated that his work has had a significant impact. His articles have been cited over 23,000 times and over 8,000 times per Google Scholar and Web of Science respectively. Some of his papers are among the most cited papers published in the respective journals: his ISR (2000) is the 2nd most cited paper, his DSJ (1996) is the 1st most cited paper, his MISQ (2003) is the 2nd most cited paper, and his Management Science (2000) is the 5th most cited paper. In 2008, his MISQ (2003) paper was identified as a current classic by Science Watch (a Thompson Reuters’ service) and since 2009, it has been rated as the most influential article in one of the four Research Front Maps identified in business and economics. A recent article by Thompson Reuters’ service rated him as the most cited information systems scholar and 23rd highest in business over a 10-year period. Likewise, he was identified by an Academy of Management Perspectives article as the 27th most influential scholar in management and 16th most influential of graduates since 1991 (highest among information systems scholars). He recently published a book titled “Road to Success: A Guide for Researchers in the Behavioral and Social Sciences” (http://vvenkatesh.com/book).

He has taught a wide variety of undergraduate, MBA, exec MBA, PhD, and executive courses. Student evaluations have rated him to be among the best instructors at the various institutions, and he has received teaching awards at the school and university levels. He has performed extensive administration and service. At Arkansas, he is the director of the information systems PhD program. At Maryland, he was the Director of the MBA Consulting Program and led undergraduate curriculum revision efforts. In 2009, he launched an IS research rankings web site (http://www.vvenkatesh.com/ISRanking) that has received many accolades from the academic community and is affiliated with the Association for Information Systems (AIS). He has served on several committees at the university, school and department levels. He is currently a Senior Editor (SE) at MISQ and AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction. From 2008 to 2011, he served as an SE at ISR. He is also an Associate Editor (AE) at DSJ and is on the editorial review board of Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes and Production and Operations Management. He has served as an AE and/or a guest SE at other journals, such as Management Science, MISQ, ISR, Journal of AIS, and Journal of Operations Management. MISQ named him “Reviewer of the Year” in 1999.