

A Framework for Equitable Digital Stakeholder Engagement in Construction Project Governance: A Case Study of New York City

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Abstract:

The utilization of digital stakeholder engagement is becoming increasingly popular in publicly funded construction and urban renewal projects to increase transparency, extend participation, and enhance the legitimacy of governance. But, digitally enabled participation can result in issues of systematic exclusion if internet access, cost, device ownership, and literacy are not uniformly distributed. In this paper, digital participation is treated as a governance risk in construction, and a framework is proposed to understand how internet inequality can influence stakeholder involvement in project-level decision-making. In the context of New York City, this paper combines empirical evidence on internet inequality with participation research to understand how digital exclusion can impact the scope of stakeholder engagement and the legitimacy of public participation processes. The Equitable Digital Stakeholder Engagement Framework aims to provide public agencies and construction managers with a tool to assess participation risk, develop hybrid engagement strategies, employ equity-focused metrics, and enhance accountability within decision-making processes. It is designed to be adaptable within existing construction project governance systems to reduce participation inequality and enhance the trust and equity of public decisions.

Keywords:

Construction management, project governance, stakeholder engagement, digital participation, broadband access, digital inequality, New York City.