

# Equal access to computing technology



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Digital divide may be defined as the gap between individuals, households, organizations and countries at different stages of socio- economic development with regard to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICTs) and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2001). ICTs have made tremendous changes in the way people, organizations and countries behave. It is believed that the digital age has brought transparency of government, access to information, better markets, reduced cultural difference and increased quality of life. But the sad fact is that majority of the people are deprived of this new opportunities. They either do not have physical access to ICTs or do not have the necessary skills to make use of it. To deal with digital divide, the two most important things we need to create are the following. Ensure physical access to ICTs for everybody Whether ICTs are a solution to digital Divide? ICTs may be introduced when they are helpful in meeting the basic requirements of the people. When majority of the world’s population are suffering from poverty and illiteracy, physical access to internet or broadband alone is meaningless to them. So first priority shall be given to satisfying the basic requirements of the people and ICT could be introduced when it could meet some of their requirements. More than simply having physical access, providing various ICT based services could raise the standard of life of poor and illiterate people. Provide education so that everyone could develop skills to live in a digitalized world Education is the most important means through which we can deal with digital divide. Students can learn necessary skills from schools. So children in all schools and colleges should be provided access to computers and broadband

connection. Through education we can deal with two types of digital divide. The first divide that exists in every country between the rich, educated, the powerful and those who are not. In USA 80% of the rich and 5% of the poor have internet access. The rich is more likely to have ICT access than the poor. So the digital divide caused due to economic inequality can be addressed by education. The second digital divide is language.

Approximately 80% of the websites are in English. Majority of the global population do not speak English. So language barrier makes computers useless for many. This second divide also could be addressed through education. While dealing with digital divide, the two most important obstacles we need to overcome are the following. Poverty The digital divide is the result of severe social and economic problems like poverty and inequality. While the rich persons can acquire ICT skills, purchase computers and maintain internet connection, the poor cannot afford it. This is the reason for the international digital divide. Internet penetration is high in developed countries when compared to less developed countries of Asia and Africa. Widespread access to ICT brings advantages to a nation. But lack of widespread access to ICTs brings disadvantage to poor countries. Thus the digital divide among the countries is on the rise. This problem could be addressed by taking measures to remove poverty in developing countries. Gender inequality Gender also affects digital divide. Women are not able to reap the advantages of ICT as males do. The problem of digital divide is greater for women than men. This divide is however declining. Measures taken to ensure gender equality by various governments is showing positive results and more women have got access to computing technology.

References 1. OECD (2001). Understanding the Digital Divide. Retrieved from <https://assignbuster.com/equal-access-to-computing-technology/>

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/38/57/1888451.pdf> 2. Keniston, K & Kumar, (2003). The Four Digital Divides. Retrieved from [http://web.mit.edu/~kken/Public/PAPERS/Intro\\_Sage.html](http://web.mit.edu/~kken/Public/PAPERS/Intro_Sage.html)