

# [T, or just creating morebarriers to entry](https://assignbuster.com/t-or-just-creating-morebarriers-to-entry/)

t, or just creating morebarriers to entry for the average person? The effects of technological advancement differ depending on the level atwhich they are examined.

From an overall societal perspective, thetechnological advances of the past fifty years have made many, if not all, industries more efficient. However, on a more personal level the “ digitaldivide” is a very real phenomenon accentuating the differences between thesocial classes. The implementation of personal computers provides amicrocosm in which to examine the transition state American society is inwith regard to technology.

On the surface, it is easy to see the barriers and inequalities created bytechnological advancement. In the early use of computer, the sheer issue ofcost divided those who could increase their productivity with computertracking and management and those who could not afford the equipment toremain competitive, the hallmark of the free market system. By advancingthose with sufficient capital to modernize, while neutralizing those ofmore limited means, computers initially created greater barriers tofinancial success for increasing numbers of people. In the 1980s, personal computers began to find their way into the publiceducation system, similar to the way combustion engines worked their wayinto public transportation forty years earlier. Similar to business, thiswas an issue of available funding, with the wealthier school districts ableto provide more modern facilities and the poorer districts no computers atall. A limited number of students gaining access to technology fed the much-touted “ digital divide,” which gave a new dimension to the educationsinequality that still plagues the United States. Upper and middle classstudents gained access to the expanding computer science field, whilepoorer students were left to the dwindling manufacturing professions andservice industries. To this day, school systems in extreme rural and urban areas do not havethe available funding to provide computer training to their students.

Inaddition, many students do no have access to a computer at home or a locallibrary. This lack of exposure limits the opportunities of modern studentsin a much more dramatic way than it did their parents, as American societybecomes more dependent on computers to organize and regulate daily life. Modern students and displaced workers without computer knowledge face agrave disadvantage during a job search or higher education. These obvious barriers to those of less economic means should notnecessarily be seen as an indictment of technology or a refutation of themyriad benefits technological advancement has afforded the United States.

The technological revolution is a multi-layered process, with many of theforces involved possessing a longer time frame than those that initiallycreated inequalities. The advent of computers can be seen as analogous tothe advent of the printing press. Just as literacy proved to be a basis forevaluation the value of a prospective student or employee, so has computerliteracy become such a measure today. Continuing the analogy, computers can also embody the great leveling devicethat early books provided. Whereas initial mass printing of the bibleinvited people to defy clerics by coming to their own revelations regardingreligion, so can the information age be a boon to freethinking.

Education, though biased in favor of those with means, cannot be reclaimed like othermaterial assets. The same can be said of computer training and proficiency. If people with less economic opportunity can gain access to computerskills, these skills are accompanied by a chance at social mobility. As computers become more commonplace, which the current trend indicates, the barriers that they initially posed to the lower economic classes willslowly be decreased or eliminated. This stage of the technologicalrevolution is as fundamental to societal advancement and efficiency as waswidespread literacy replacing elitist control of all texts four hundredyears ago. At this point, society must acknowledge the potential barriersthat technology can create and work toward the equal access to technologythat will foster growth and prosperity for all citizens, not just thosewith sufficient economic resources.