

# A System Map of the Digital Divide

**What is the system, or how does the problem appear as a system of factors?** *The digital divide is a concept that indicates that people have different levels of access to the Internet and that this affects quality of life.*

## What are parts of the system?

1: Technology used to access the Internet

2: Uses of the Internet for improving existence

3: Different levels of access to the Internet by  
a: Place/Geography  
b: Socioeconomics  
c: Race/ethnicity  
d: Age

4: Efforts to increase access  
a: Public/Gov't  
b: Private Industry  
c: Public/Private Cooperation

5: Possible unconsidered issues

How does each part behave/What function does it serve?

1A: Technology may set the price or spread of Wi-Fi service

1B: New technology in computers may make them more affordable

2A: People use the Internet to find work, pay bills, access their city government, and other uses

3A: What aspects of social identity affect use of the Internet?

4A: Private Industry and public agencies or government are alternate sources of potential service provision

## Possible Problems with each part?

- The unserved are not served by the market because of costs or lack of demand (low profit potential)
- The unserved are not aware of new technologies or of the use of technology
- People unserved by technology experience a lower quality of life
- People unserved by technology may fall behind socially; this could create new forms of inequality or make existing ones worse
- Private industry uses the legislative system to outlaw competition from public internet providers
- Government(s) are not aware of the Digital Divide or are indifferent to it; people whose internet use affects the government are already online.
- A government that provides Internet access in its jurisdiction benefits at the expense of a government that does not.
- Incentives and subsidies to industry do not work
- Government(s) believe provision is a private matter and do nothing

What Research is Available on any part of this system?

