

PANEL SESSION DAY 2: DIGITAL DIVIDE IN SOCIETY

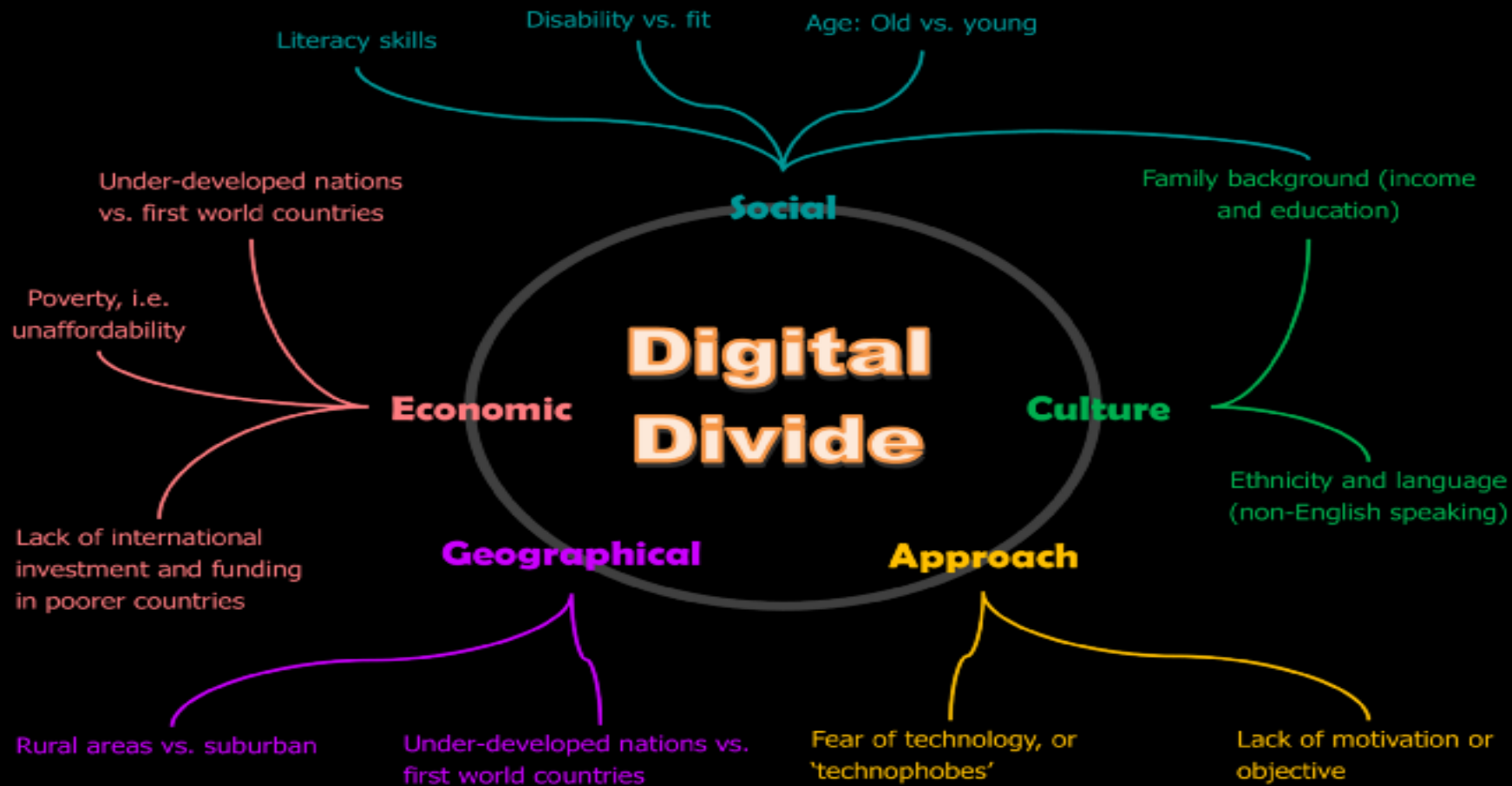
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Digital Divide in Society

- What is digital divide in Society?
 - The digital divide is a term that refers to the gap between demographics and regions that have access to modern information and communications technology (ICT), and those that don't or have restricted access. This technology can include the telephone, television, personal computers and internet connectivity.
- How digital divide affects Society?
 - The consequences of the digital divide include isolation, which can affect mental health, educational barriers as postsecondary education increasingly moves online, and worsening gender discrimination.
- What are the causes and effects of digital divide and its impact on Society?
 - Factors such as low literacy and income levels, geographical restrictions, lack of motivation to use technology, lack of physical access to technology, and digital illiteracy contribute to the digital divide.



Don't let the digital divide become 'the new face of inequality': UN deputy chief

- Without decisive action by the international community, the digital divide will become “the new face of inequality”, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed warned the General Assembly on Tuesday. – 27 April 2021/SDGs
- Although technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain are opening new frontiers of productivity and providing opportunities to people and societies, they pose numerous risks, she said, including exclusion.
- **“Almost half the world’s population, 3.7 billion people, the majority of them women, and most in developing countries, are still offline”, she told ambassadors, tech experts and representatives from civil society groups.**
- “Collectively, our task is to help design digital environments that can connect everyone with a positive future. This is why we need a common effort, with collaboration among national and local governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and multilateral organizations.”



Digital technologies are a game-changer. They are critical to achieving the #GlobalGoals and overcoming #COVID19. Yet, we will not see the full benefits of the digital age if we do not address the **#DigitalDivide** and ensure equitable digital empowerment for all.

- United Nations General Assembly President, April 27, 2021



**United
Nations**

The World Economic Forum & the Global Digital Divide

- Unfortunately, that's a lot of people.
- **Despite some improvement in recent years, a third of the world's population (some 2.9 billion people) suffers from the digital divide – even though 95% of the world's population resides within range of a mobile broadband network.**
- Despite that, limited device availability, combined with a lack of digital know-how and skills, impedes efforts to get more people online, particularly in rural areas. (The share of internet users in cities is twice as high as in the countryside.)
- **Only 53% of the world's population has access to high-speed broadband. Lower connection speeds inhibit participation in virtual activities and force households to make compromises on how to use their limited bandwidth.**

How to Close the Digital Divide in the U.S.

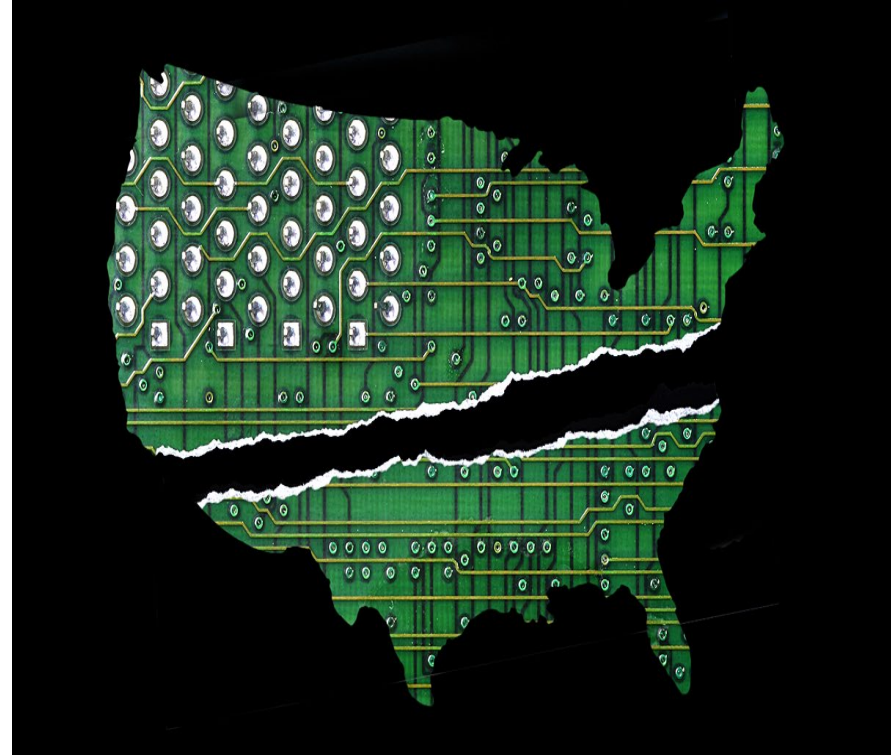
by Bhaskar Chakravorti

Summary.

- The U.S. government is negotiating a plan to address one of the most important — but overlooked — problems facing the country:

the digital divide. While this problem is often talked about as a simple problem of access to broadband internet service, it is deeper and more complex than mere infrastructure. In truth, the digital divide also is a problem of inclusivity, institutions, and individual proficiency, and a solution needs to address all four dimensions. Policymakers should:

- 1) pay for improvements using a “Romer” tax levied on digital ads,
- 2) coordinate locally appropriate solutions,
- 3) recruit Big Tech and major internet service providers to help close gaps,
- 4) invite public-private solutions,
- 5) update and expand existing affordability programs,
- 6) build in future-proofing, and
- 7) invest in digital literacy.



Turning America's Digital Divide into Digital Dividends

As part of their research initiative, Imagining a Digital Economy for All (IDEA) 2030 (established in collaboration with the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth), they disaggregated the digital divide into four distinct components and scored the 50 states along each of these:

- **Infrastructure:** Internet speeds; terrestrial broadband coverage; smartphone usage.
- **Inclusivity:** Affordability of broadband; equity of broadband access across income groups; actual usage of the internet at broadband speeds.
- **Institutions:** Political prioritization of broadband strategy; best practices of government use of technology for public services; restrictions on alternative local broadband solutions, such as municipal networks.
- **Digital Proficiency:** How well people can navigate the digital world, which is shaped by demographic profile, education levels, political tolerance, degree of skepticism about news sourced from social media.

The state of the digital divide across all 50 states can be visualized in the exhibit.

Charting the U.S. Digital Divide: How the 50 States Stack Up

Researchers scored the 50 states across four key measures: infrastructure, institutions, inclusivity, and digital proficiency. The sum effect of these measures paints a picture of each state's particular set of challenges when it comes to closing the digital divide and forms the basis for each state's overall score. For example, while West Virginia has offered incentives for remote workers — and its institutions score reasonably well — its poor infrastructure, inclusivity, and digital proficiency scores indicate that deep investments across those measures will be required to close its digital gap.

