



The Newsletter of the GST BOCES Digital Citizenship Initiative - Volume I - Issue 5 - January 2018

This issue we focus on:



Digital Access can be defined as "full electronic participation in society". As educators and parents, it is our duty to ensure that all students have equal opportunities in terms of technology access and use within the classroom as well as the opportunity for all to be involved in today's digital society including equitable access and assistive technology for those students requiring accommodations.

## FACTORS THAT CAN EFFECT ACCESS



### 1 SOCIO - ECONOMIC FACTORS

We hear a lot of people talk about the technology "Haves and Have Nots." Many American teens would find it strange not to have access to a smartphone, or other device. Students who have their own computers and other technologies at home have a head start over their peers who do not possess these things. Technology costs \$\$\$.



### 2 INFRASTRUCTURE FACTORS

In the United States, we have a lot of public Wifi access and high-speed Internet providers. US customers can often choose between ISPs, cell phone providers, and cable systems for their access. This isn't true in other countries where telecomm systems may be scarce, or where they don't have access to reliable electric power.



### 3 CONTENT FACTORS

Most of the textual content on the Internet is in English. English readers and speakers have a definite advantage over those who don't understand English. Translation software can help, but isn't perfect. Some countries have stricter rules regarding filtering and censorship so some users aren't even allowed to visit certain sites.



### 4 GENDER FACTORS

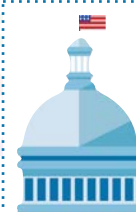
In some countries and societies, women do not have the same access to education as men. So, they have less access to technology. Even in our country, girls are sometimes discouraged from participating in technological or mathematical fields. Programs like "Girls Who Code" are trying to make a difference.



### 5 SKILL FACTORS

Students that have developed technology-related skills with years of training and experience can choose from a variety of jobs. In many cases, employers see technology skills as a plus when considering hiring an individual. Those without tech skill may face a lot of closed doors. An individual's future may depend on their skills.

What kind(s) of digital access do you have? Do you have access to a computer and the Internet at school? Do you have a computer and Internet at home? Can you use other technology like phones, tablets, scanners, 3D printers, etc.? Do you have broadband Internet? Do you consider yourself a have or a have-not?



## US CONGRESS MAY VOTE TO END NET NEUTRALITY

Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers must treat all data on the Internet the same, and not discriminate or charge differently by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or method of communication.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net\\_neutrality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_neutrality)

TIME TO GET INVOLVED!



We live in a constantly connected world..

How do you react to situations where you have little or no WiFi?

TIME TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION: Do you think that ALL AMERICANS should have equal access to TECHNOLOGY and the INTERNET? Should it be a RIGHT or a PRIVILEGE?

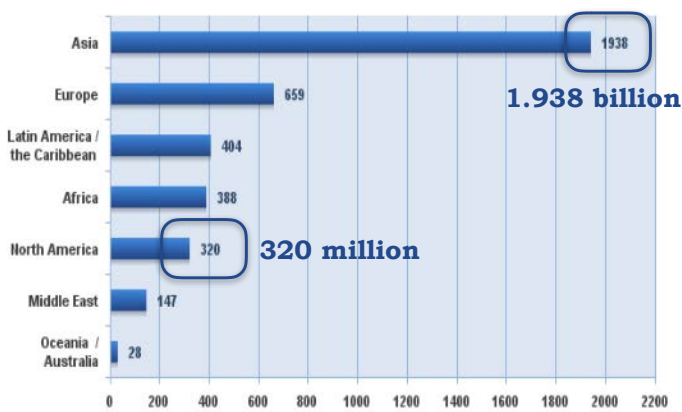


If you have comments or suggestions about this newsletter contact [dc@gstboces.org](mailto:dc@gstboces.org)

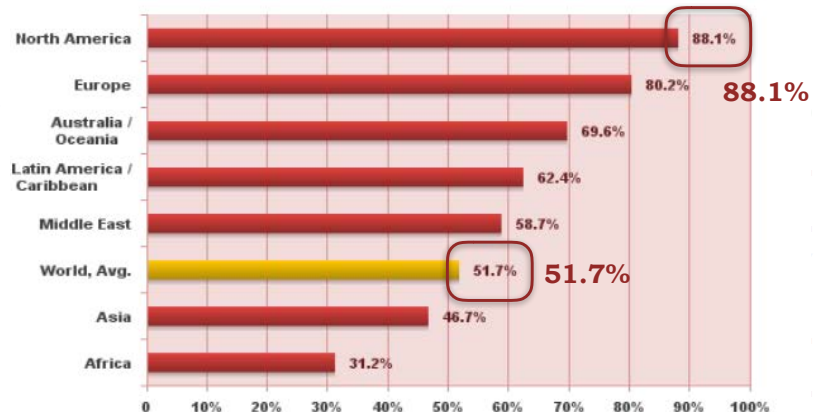
Visit our website at <http://dc.gstboces.org>

January 2018 - page 1 of 2

Number of Internet Users Worldwide by Region (in millions)



Percentage of Population that are Internet Users (Penetration rate)



**SOME INTERESTING DATA TO CONSIDER** - The numbers may be a little hard to see in these scaled down graphs (see source page for full-size) but it is clear to see that North America has only 320 million internet users compared to Asia's 1.9 billion but we do have the highest percentage of internet use in all of the regions of the world. We are very fortunate to have a lot Digital Access in this country. (Data shown is from June 2017)

Source for Graphs: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

## PROVIDING FOR TECHNOLOGY USERS WITH DIFFERING ABILITIES **A11Y**

**A11Y** is acronym used on the Internet as a shortcut for the word Accessibility. Basically it is just an A and a Y with 11 other letters in the middle - so A11Y = accessibility.

The term, accessibility, in technology and online situations usually refers to making that technology so that it can be accessed and used by people with disabilities. These disabilities can include visual or hearing impairment, as well as physical, mental, or cognitive impairments.

Some people estimate that approximately 20% of the US population (one person out of five) has some kind of disability. These disabilities require that certain technologies used by a large part of the population must have modifications to make them usable by disabled people.

For example, visually impaired users often use some kind of screen reader software to read the text on the screen to them. Hearing impaired users may need captions to go along with videos because they can't hear the text that is spoken in the video.

Government websites are required by law (Section 508) to make content on their sites accessible to users with disabilities.

If you are someone who creates content for the web, is your content accessible? Check out <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/accessibility.html> or <https://www.google.com/accessibility/>

One hundred years ago, people were faced with the choice of learning to read or remaining illiterate laborers who would be left behind as have-nots in a rapidly modernizing world. In the coming century, being able to command a world that will be thoroughly computerized will set apart those who can live successfully in the future from those who will be utterly left behind.

**Yishan Wong**  
Chief Executive Officer of Reddit

QuoteAddicts.com

## GET THIS MONTH'S DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE

**How do you rate your Access to Digital Technology? Try this Self-Assessment.**

**Part 1 - Try to answer these questions as honestly as you can. Give yourself 2 points for each one that you answer "Yes!"**

**Part 2 - Consider these factors that can affect digital access. Subtract 2 points for a factor that negatively affects you.**

**Basic Expenses:** Technology costs money. What part of your family's budget is spent on internet and technology? Do the more fortunate families have access in your community?

**Infrastructure:** Does your community have broadband internet? Can you choose between Wi-Fi and Cable providers? Is there good cell coverage in your area?

**Content:** Do you have the access to the content that you need for school? (Have your internet provider restrict access to certain sites or types of sites? Do your parents monitor your online activities?)

**Gender:** Sometimes girls are not encouraged to take high-tech, technology, or programming classes?

**Skills:** Your computer/technology skills may determine what career opportunities you may have. Will you be ready for your future?

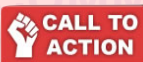
**Part 3 - After answering the questions and considering the various factors that affect you, give yourself a final score. Where would your score put you on the number line below. If you scored higher than 10 you are really, really fortunate to have a good deal of digital access. If your score is higher than 15 feel privileged because you have more access than most people. What do you think the average score in your school would be?**

**Continuum for Math Access**     **The Digital Access Continuum Number Line**     **Great Access**     **Good Access**     **Some Access**     **No Access**

This month you can download a printable PDF poster about Assessing Your Digital Access.

We hope you enjoy it.

<http://go.gstboces.org/dc-180101>



## DO A DIGITAL ACCESS PROJECT

Your students may need to add more hours to their Service Learning hours. Why not have your students research digital access in your community? Are there certain individuals or groups of individuals in your areas that don't have access to technology, or to the Internet? After identifying a need students could create a project to meet that need. For example, visiting a senior living facility and teaching seniors about social media, or encouraging local businesses to provide public wifi to bring more people into their stores, or creating an after school drop-in site where people could come with technology questions and students would try to help them.

There are so many possibilities of what can be done. Give it a try and let us know about your project at [dc@gstboces.org](mailto:dc@gstboces.org).

