

Background

A digital divide is an economic and social inequity with regard to access to, use of, or impact of information and communication technologies (ICT).¹

The digital divide is fundamentally a socio-economic issue that effects communities nationally. There are different aspects to the digital divide, but it is sufficient state that it is no longer practical to leverage the full capabilities and thus enjoy the full benefits of contemporary society if one cannot engage with services and capabilities that are increasingly, and at times exclusively, provided in a digital fashion across the Internet.

Today, 34 million Americans lack an affordable and reliable broadband connection. Of these, 19.4 million live in rural areas. This digital divide means they are unable to take advantage of economic, health and educational opportunities that exist in other connected communities. What is true nationally is also true in Connecticut. The emphasis on closing the digital divide often centers on providing broadband to every home. While this helpful, it does not automatically address the fact that network connectivity is only one element required for full true access.

Resolution

WHEREAS, information and services required for full participation in society are increasingly best or exclusively provided through digital means: and

WHEREAS, Connecticut's public libraries are optimally situated with respect to location, facility, and expertise to address digital equality by providing free Internet Access and training in digital literacy; and

WHEREAS, continued public and private investment in public library infra-structure to support Internet Access and digital literacy initiatives is a public good,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission on Education Technology (CET) strongly endorses the role of public libraries in ameliorating the digital divide across the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CET work with the Connecticut State Library and the Connecticut Library Association to develop of a comprehensive statewide initiative to provide public libraries with equipment, software, and infrastructure to leverage their location, expertise, and mission as a key approach to facilitate access to digital capabilities and education in digital literacy to advance digital citizenship in communities throughout Connecticut.

¹ Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_divide