



Bridging the Digital Divide

Because of historical and societal systemic inequalities in accessibility, affordability, and adoption of broadband internet, generally Black Americans have not had the technology and skills required to navigate the internet with appropriate safeguards and efficiency.

Did you know?

Black Americans are **10 years** behind broadband access and suffer poor tech connectivity at almost **four times** the rate of their white counterparts.² As the digitization of our schools, workforce, and economy grows, corporate America has a vested interest in bridging the “Digital Divide” to retain their competitive edge with a diverse workforce and consumer base.

3 out of 4 Black Americans could be shut out or under-prepared for **86%** of jobs by 2045¹

Digital Divide Principles



Accessibility



Affordability



Adoption



Data Mapping and Tracking

- **Accessibility:**
 - Supporting Black Americans and communities of color, both in unserved and underserved areas, to have access to reliable broadband network will strengthen the U.S. economy. **36.4%** of Black households (**16M**) do not have a computer or broadband access.³
- **Affordability:**
 - Even when broadband is available, affordability continues to be a challenge for moderate to low-income Americans, disproportionately affecting Black Americans and communities of color. **21%** of Black Americans live below the poverty line and struggle to afford broadband. Additionally, **50%** of disconnected students come from families with annual incomes of less than **\$50,000**.⁴
- **Adoption:**
 - All obstacles to technology adoption must be understood and addressed to enable Black Americans and communities of color to benefit from digital connectivity. Digital literacy is a priority given a widening digital divide over the next 25 years with the potential to disqualify three in four Black Americans from **86%** of U.S. jobs.⁵
- **Data Mapping and Tracking:**
 - Accurate data mapping is necessary to understand the intersection between racial equity and the digital divide. Data-informed policymaking enables better outcomes in digital access, affordability, and adoption.

How to Help

Consumers and employees are increasingly holding corporate America accountable when it comes to societal issues, especially in the areas of economic inequality and workforce reskilling.⁶ Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is no longer optional for companies that want to stay competitive and lead their industry. The Digital Divide team is looking to engage with organizations like yours to find equitable and sustainable ways to provide all Black Americans the opportunities that every individual deserves in our ever-evolving digital ecosystem. By innovating together to make broadband service and digital technologies available for everyone, we can add hundreds of thousands of jobs to the economy and billions more in economic output.⁷

We wish to continue this conversation as you identify ways to put your voice and talent to work. Investments in bridging the digital divide today can unlock lasting impacts to both your ledger and your legacy.

Let's get connected.

¹ Apjit Walia, "America's Racial Gap & Big Tech's Closing Window", *Deutsche Bank Research*, September 2, 2020.

² Ibid.

³ "Computer and Internet Use in the United States: 2018." U.S. Census Bureau. April 21, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/computer-internet-use.html>

⁴ Chandra, S., Chang, A., Day, L., Fazlullah, A., Liu, J., McBride, L., Mudalige, T., Weiss, D., (2020). Closing the K-12 Digital Divide in the Age of Distance Learning. San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media. Boston, Massachusetts, Boston Consulting Group.

⁵ Apjit Walia, "America's Racial Gap & Big Tech's Closing Window", *Deutsche Bank Research*, September 2, 2020.

⁶ Edelman. 2022. *2022 Edelman Trust Barometer*. [online] Available at: < https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2022-01/Trust%202022_Top10.pdf>.

⁷ Jack Fritz and Dan Littmann, "Broadband for all: charting a path to economic growth," *Deloitte*, April 2021.

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