

Will We Finally Close the Digital Divide?



Three “Grand Challenges”



**EDUCATION & JOB
TRAINING**



**IMPROVED HEALTH
OUTCOMES**



**ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**

REMOTE LEARNING/ JOB TRAINING SKILLS

DIGITAL
CONNECTIVITY'S
PROMISE



**SEE YOUR
DOCTOR
FROM YOUR
HOME**

**DIGITAL
CONNECTIVITY'S
PROMISE :**



E-COMMERCE & PRECISION AGRICULTURE

**DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY'S
PROMISE**

[This Photo](#)

Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#)



RURAL CONNECTIVITY: WORK FROM ANY LOCATION

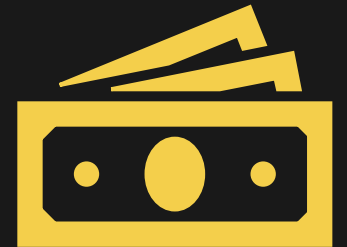
DIGITAL
CONNECTIVITY'S
PROMISE :



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)



UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN BROADBAND “ACCESS”



RURAL INTERNET USE TODAY (2020)

- **26% DON'T USE THE INTERNET AT HOME**
- **21% DON'T USE IT ANYWHERE AT ALL**
- **MOST POPULAR INTERNET USE:**
 - **90% TEXT MESSAGING**
 - **73% SOCIAL MEDIA**
 - **66% RURAL USERS WATCHING ONLINE VIDEOS**

RURAL INTERNET USE TODAY (2020)

- **LESS POPULAR INTERNET USE:**
- **10% SOLD GOODS ONLINE**
- **5% OFFERED SERVICES FOR SALE**
- **16% --**
 - **HAD WORKED REMOTELY ONLINE**
 - **SEARCHED FOR A JOB ONLINE**
 - **TAKEN AN ONLINE COURSE OR RECEIVED JOB TRAINING**

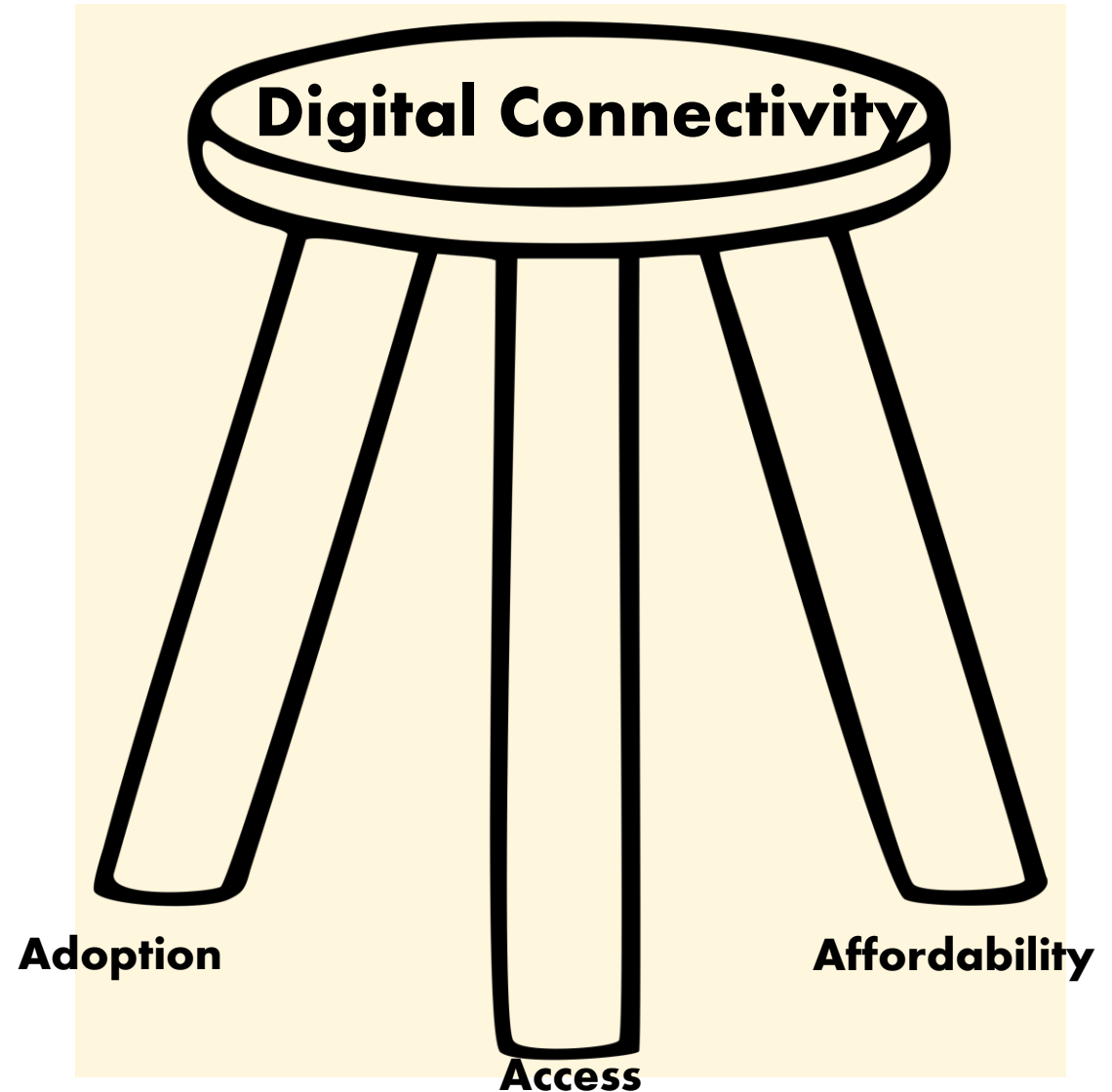
REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT USING THE INTERNET (2020)

- **6% BECAUSE ITS NOT AVAILABLE**
- **18% HOME INTERNET IS TOO EXPENSIVE**
- **1% CONCERNS ABOUT PRIVACY OR SECURITY**
- **60% DON'T HAVE HOME INTERNET BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT OR NEED IT**

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STATISTICS

- **CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE
REQUIRES MORE THAN ACCESS**
 - “TAKE RATES” MAY UNDER PERFORM
THRESHOLD FOR FINANCIAL VIABILITY
 - WOULD USERS PAY MORE IF SERVICE
WAS PERCEIVED TO BE WORTH THE
ADDITIONAL EXPENSE?
- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAY NOT
PRIORITIZE BROADBAND**
 - THINK ISP SHOULD GO IT ALONE
 - DON'T KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP
 - LACK EXPERIENCE WITH BROADBAND
PLANNING & ITS COMPLEXITIES

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY: A 3-LEGGED STOOL



A PUBLIC- PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

PRIVATE SECTOR: ENGINEERING; DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION; OPERATION/MAINTENANCE

GOVERNMENT: ROW ACCESS & RESOURCES, NETWORK CUSTOMER/PARTNER; OPERATOR; PROMOTER OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS

UNIVERSITY/NGO'S: COMMUNITY BASED DIGITAL SKILLS LEARNING; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; SPREADING INFORMATION

It Requires Planning ...

The image features a dark blue background with a network of white human figures. Each figure is positioned on a small dark blue circular base. These bases are interconnected by a web of thin black lines, creating a complex, interconnected network. The figures are stylized, white, and appear to be standing. The overall composition suggests a digital or social network.

Digitally Connected Communities

A group of people are seated in a circle in a meeting room, engaged in a discussion. The room has a brick wall and a large window with red curtains. A whiteboard is visible in the background. The text "Interactive Guide" is overlaid on the right side of the image in a large, bold, yellow font.

Interactive Guide

- **Community Driven**
 - Leaders of a community request
 - Form working group of stakeholders
 - Community Voices – Advocates
 - Community Feedback
 - Identify Resources
 - Bring in local ISPs



Interactive Guide

- **Community Leaders**
 - Needs assessment
 - Community Forums
 - Survey
 - Asset Inventory
 - Identify ISPs, businesses, agencies, groups, people
 - Develop maps based on information

Result

- **Plan to address broadband issues**
 - Access
 - Adoption
 - Affordability
- **Focus on one, you must address the other two**
- **Partnerships**
- **Measurable Objectives**





University of Missouri System

- **Support from all four Campuses**
- **MOREnet**
 - Engaged with the Communities
 - Connection with providers
- **Broadband Initiative Team**
- **Resource Rail (<https://mobroadband.org>)**
- **CARES**
 - Data, mapping, planning, support



University of Missouri System
COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS



M Extension
University of Missouri
an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Extension's Role

- **Community Stakeholder**
 - County Engagement Specialist
 - Facilitator for Process
 - 17 faculty trained across the state
 - 7 RPC staff around the state
- **Beyond the Guide**
 - Education – Adoption
 - Outreach – Program Assistance
 - Connector with University resources





Communities using Guide

- **Atchison**
- **Gentry**
- **Holt**
- **Nodaway**
- **Worth**
- **Lafayette**
- **Other Communities**
 - Working with Extension





Questions?

Joe K. Lear
NW Regional Director
learj@missouri.edu
816.408.0370