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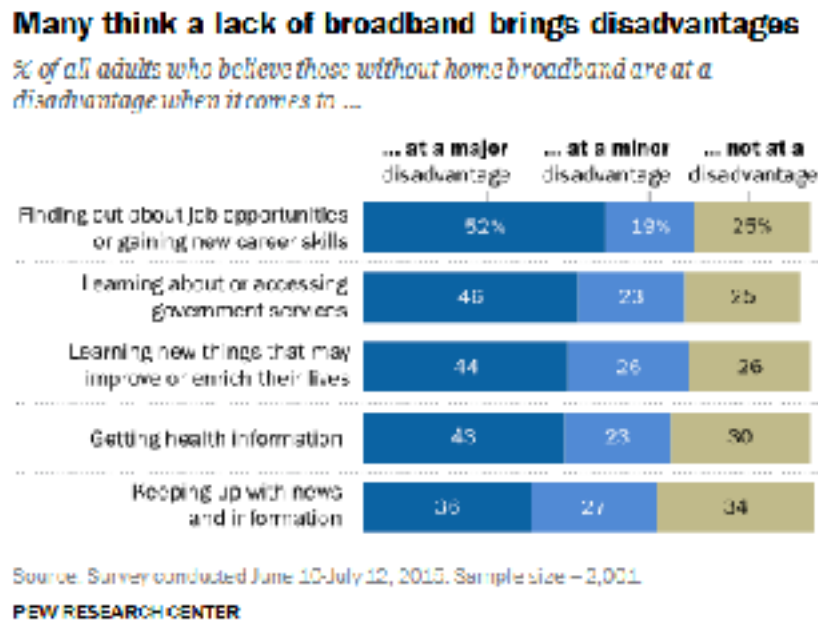
Citizen 110

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Internet Access as a Right

According to the Pew Research Center of Internet & Technology, 67% of all adults have a broadband connection located at their residence, with another 13% of adults owning a smartphone instead of a residence broadband connection⁽¹⁾. With constant unfettered access to the internet, the world's knowledge is at the fingertips of nearly every person at any given time. However, for some, this knowledge is just out of reach with readily available internet access only available at a local library or school. Access to this database of knowledge should be, in my opinion, a right provided to each citizen. With equal access to this information, benefits could include improved access to job opportunities; education; government services; health information; and news. These benefits would not only improve the lives of those provided with the internet access, but would also benefit society as a whole, allowing less fortunate individuals to become more productive members of society. This additional benefit to society perfectly exemplifies Rule Utilitarianism, with all households having access to the internet, a greater improvement to society would be the result.

With a majority of American adults believing that there is some form of disadvantage to those without a broadband connection⁽²⁾ (Fig. 1), it seems to be evident that a lack of internet access can severely inhibit an individual’s ability to be a productive member of society. As stated by the Pew Research Center of Internet & Technology, “Americans ... are increasingly likely to view home broadband as a key tool for accessing information that is important to their lives.” Not only is this important to the lives of adults, but it is also integral to the education of students in both k-12 and college. A majority of a students require the use of a computer to properly complete assignments.



(Fig. 1) A majority of American adults believe that there is some form of disadvantage to those without a broadband connection.

Exemplifying Rule Utilitarianism, providing free or reduced cost internet access would benefit society as a whole. Citizens would have the improved access to job opportunities; education; government services; health information; and news. With this improved access, children can have a better education; adults can find better job opportunities, including working online; those who can not work can have access to government services; and citizens can stay up-to-date on the latest news and become more involved with their community and government. With access to these resources, citizens are better able to become productive members of society, contributing their skills in whatever ways they can.

In conclusion, I believe that it is in the best interest of the individual citizens, and society as a whole, to provide internet access for free or reduced cost to every household. The benefits of this could include improved access to job opportunities; education; government services; health information; and news. With these benefits, children can have a better education; adults can find better job opportunities, including working online; those who can not work can have access to government services; and citizens can stay up-to-date on the latest news and become more involved with their community and government. Exemplifying Rule Utilitarianism, the benefits of this will result in the

betterment of not only the individuals life, but the betterment of society as a whole. This conclusion seems to be obvious when paired with the data from PEW Research Center of Internet & Technology. According to data from this source, a majority of American adults believe that there is some form of disadvantage to those without a broadband connection⁽²⁾. As this lack of access applies not only to adults but also to children and adolescents in school. This disadvantage is what puts individuals and our society where it currently is. Without the proper education and access to the internet, citizens can not form and share their own ideas. That is why I believe that internet access is a positiver right and should be provided to every household for free or reduced cost.

References

- (1) Wormald, Benjamin. "Several Groups Are Shifting Their Home Internet Connectivity Away from Broadband and toward Smartphones." Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech, 18 Dec. 2015, www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/pi-2015-10-21_broadband2015-00/.
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