21st Century Challenges

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Royal Geographical Society
with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

Digital Divide in the UK?

Lesson Plan

Lesson1: The UK's digital divide (approx 40mins)

Learning outcomes	Students: • learn about the revolutionary role ICT has played in transforming people's lives (as producers and consumers of wealth and also as citizens participating in democracy); • recognise the social digital divide that has developed over time in the UK, as well as understanding its main causes and consequences; • investigate the suggestion that the geographical digital divide between urban "haves" and rural "have-nots" could be difficult to remove entirely
NB Guidance notes for each section of the lesson can be found in the fact sheet	
Starter	***A technology timeline*** • A quick look at the history of the internet and other important forms of digital communications technology • What are the uses of technology? Using the *BBC* and *Guardian* links below.
Main activity	*Using the **Lesson 1 Article: Tackling the Digital Divide** the following points can be discussed and explored* ***1) Mapping the social divide can be introduces and discussed in class*** The main activity (with online support) focuses on uneven access to high-speed and reliable broadband internet access in the UK. Which social groups, especially in urban areas, suffer from "digital exclusion"? Students will also inquire why this matters so much (with support from on-line discussions provided to the RGS-IBG by key speakers including Martha Lane Fox, Champion for Digital Inclusion and Professor Tanya Byron, psychologist, writer and broadcaster. ***2) Bridging the rural-urban divide*** Attention now turns to the rural-urban divide and what experts are saying about the long-term prospects for evening out geographical inequalities in internet access across the UK. Which areas of the UK have the lowest population densities? And what options exist to help bring internet access to areas of low population density where market forces alone are not strong enough to encourage investment by the big broadband providers? Who can help and who should pay?
Plenary	***Is internet access as important as clean water access?*** Should it be a basic right of British citizens to have access to fast internet access? Is it as important as having access to clean water, healthcare, a telephone or other key services? Students complete the question and discuss with peers, they can then decide by taking a class vote.
Resources	***This lesson is fully supported with the following resources:*** • *Word* **Article: Tackling the Digital Divide**

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- Online "**60 second guide**" exploration of the social digital divide

- **Video clip of Martha Lane Fox**, UK Champion for Digital Inclusion

- **Video clip of Tanya Byron** psychologist, writer and broadcaster

- *Word* document: Lesson 1 Plenary Discussion Activity

External links

- **Commission for rural communities: Beyond digital divides? The future for ICT in rural areas**

- **BBC SuperPower: Visualising the internet** The BBC provides an interactive guide to the growth of the internet and how it works

- **Guardian: A people's history of the internet** The Guardian's interactive historical guide to internet growth

- **BBC: Q&A: Project Canvas**

- **BBC: Broadband tax condemned as 'unfair' by MPs**

- **The Digital Britain Report**

- **Guardian: Digital Britain: 'Broadband in every house by 2012' 29/01/09**

- **Demos Report: Web I'm 64: Ageing, the inter net and digital inclusion**