

EQUITY IN DIGITAL ACCESS

Deputation to Council Executive
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Moving Beyond Mapping

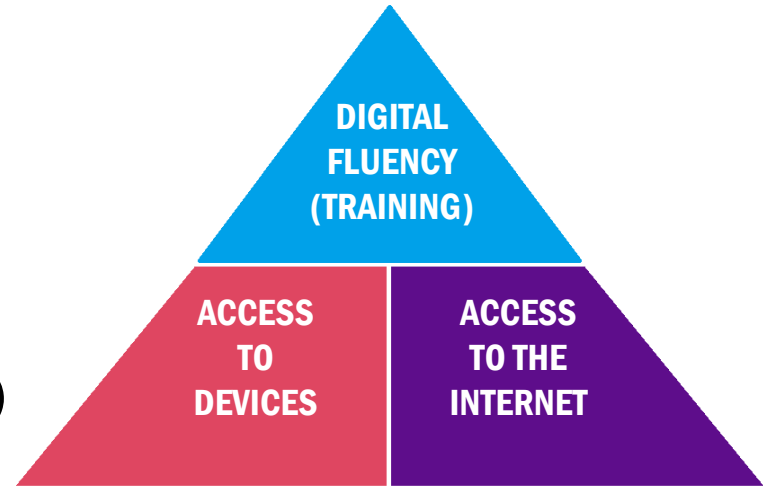
Humber is pleased to be one of the contributing higher education institutions on the joint research initiative with the City of Toronto, “Digital Access: Who is Underserved and Why”.

This deputation is in support of the ConnectTO initiative and will reference data from the recent report, “Mapping the Digital Divide” as well as relevant evidence from Humber’s ongoing work to address digital equity for students and our larger community.

Digital Access is a Two-Tiered Issue

1. Access to Tools (bottom)
 - A. Access to Devices
 - B. Access to the Internet

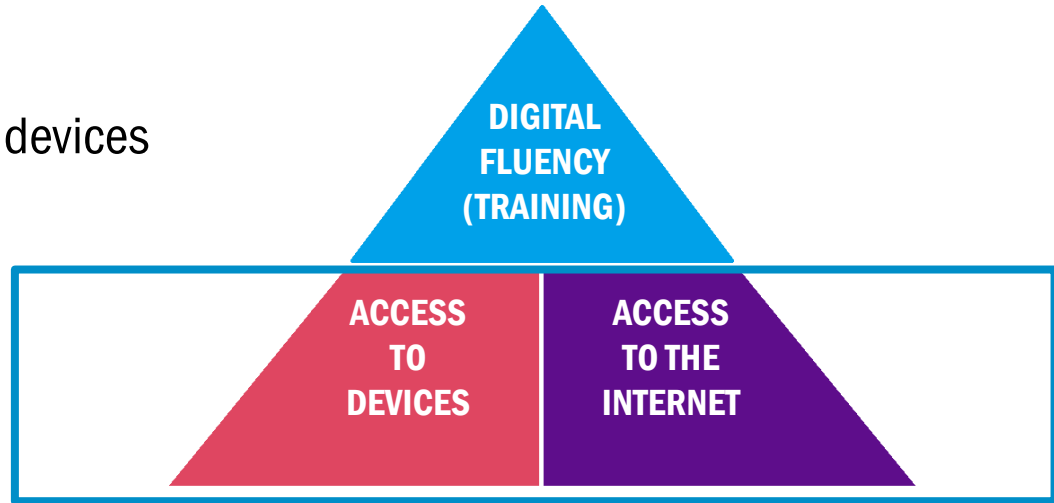
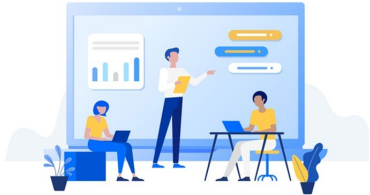
2. Access to Skills: Digital Fluency (top)



Equity in Access: Digital Tools

Access to digital tools is the first step of digital access.

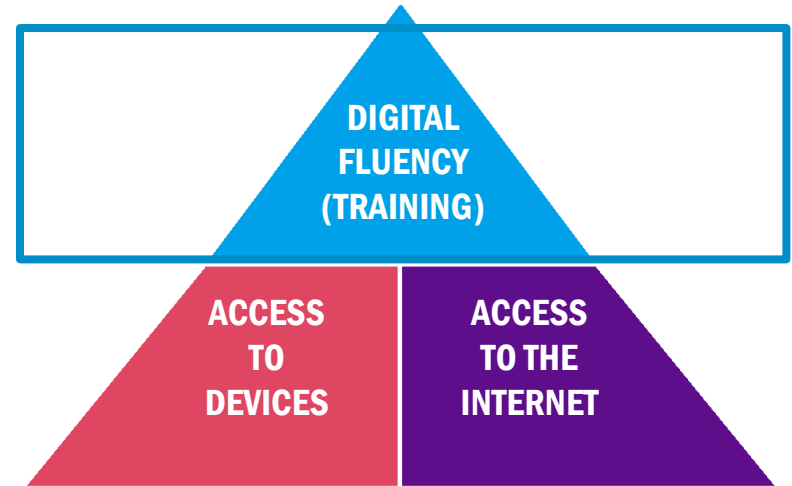
1. Access to Devices
 2. Access to the Internet
- = often referred to as connected devices



Equity in Access: Digital Skills (Fluency)

Access to a foundational level of digital skills is the second step of digital access.

Digital fluency can be understood as spectrum of related skills and competencies that allow a person to successfully navigate and understand the constantly evolving digital eco-systems of work, education, and life.



Socio-Economic Implications:



- Inequity in digital access will further serve to reinforce what we see in Wellbeing Toronto maps.
 - Some Torontonians are simply better positioned to access opportunities in a digital world than others.
 - If inequity in digital access is not addressed, Toronto will continue to be a city divided along socio-economic have and have nots.

Significant portions of Toronto's local working age population, largely represented by adults and youth from historically disadvantaged equity seeking groups, struggle to access the education and training required to fit the needs our of current and future economy.

Without meaningful interventions, a society will continue to reinforce cycles of poverty, marginalization, and negative outcomes for these individuals, instead of capitalizing on the assets and benefits these individuals have to offer.

Socio-Economic Implications:

- Education, Training and Employment
 - Digital access is vital for equitable engagement in education, training and the workforce.
 - COVID-19 has changed how people engage with school, work, and personal connections. Even in a “new-normal” digital learning, training, and modes of employment are here to stay.
 - Without equitable digital access for all to connected devices (tools) and the skills (digital fluency), Toronto’s post-pandemic economic recovery will be lopsided. Inclusive economic growth will be important to building communities across Toronto where people have access to education and economic opportunities that significantly impact overall wellbeing.

Socio-Economic Implications:

- Education, Training and Employment cont...
 - Without equitable digital access for all to connected devices (tools) and the skills (digital fluency), Toronto's post-pandemic economic recovery will be lopsided. Inclusive economic growth will be important to building communities across Toronto where people have access to education and economic opportunities that significantly impact overall wellbeing.
 - Toronto residents need to have connected devices and the digital fluency in the post-pandemic economic recovery to: search for jobs, complete applications, navigate job portals, interviewing virtually, succeed in mandatory employer trainings, and thrive in virtual school and co-op experiences.

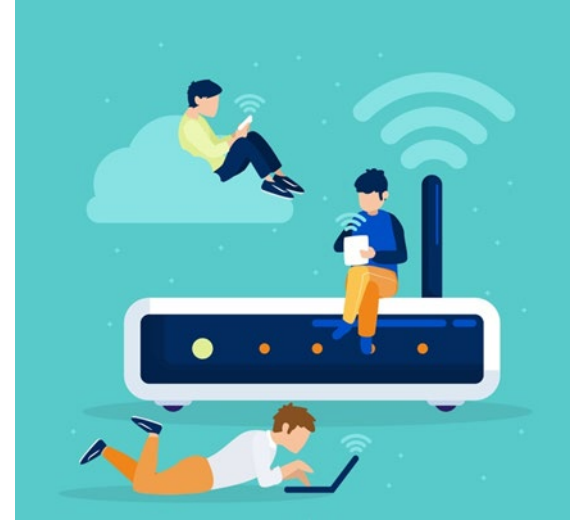
Socio-Economic Implications:

- Social Implications:
 - Shift to virtual community, mental health, and some health-based services is here to stay.
 - While a return to in person programming will be vital, we have seen that the upside to virtual is the capacity to reach people who might otherwise take longer to engage with a physician, reach out for help, or engage in activities that combat social isolation.
 - Toronto's post-pandemic economic recovery will not happen in isolation from strong social development initiatives, such as ConnectTO and other strategies that address poverty reduction.



Solutions:

- Toronto is a world class city, capable of world-class solutions
- Complex issues require the development of innovative, intentional strategies that includes the participation of several key stakeholders of government, industry, community and education partners, as well as resident voice.
- The larger issue of inclusive economic growth that doesn't leave anyone behind must include equitable digital access solutions, and should include the participation of these key stakeholders.



THANK YOU.



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