Bridging the Digital Divide: Lessons from COVID-19
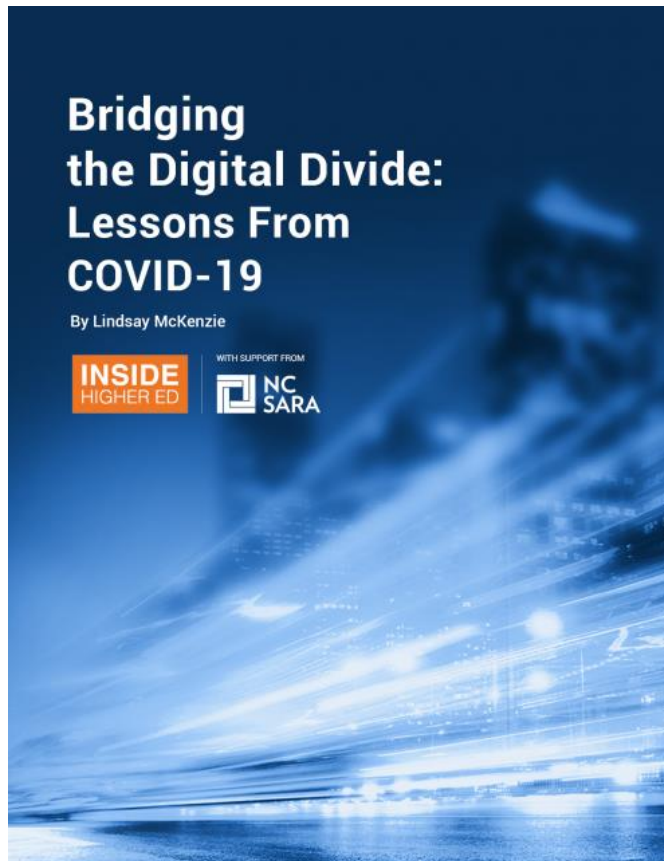
An *Inside Higher Ed* webcast

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2 p.m. Eastern

Presenters

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The Report

- The changing digital divide
- Broadband access – where do we stand?
- Strategies for meeting students where they are
- What happens if we fail to address digital equity gaps

The Changing Digital Divide

- The digital divide has shifted – the chasm between students that have access to technology and those that do not has closed.

- Most students now have access to smartphones, tablets or laptops – but they may not be in good working order.

Device Access

2018 EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research:

- 91% of students had access to a laptop
- 95% of students had access to a smartphone
- Less than 1% of 64,536 respondents had no access to laptop, desktop or smartphone

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Device Ownership

GEAR   12.15.2020 09:00 AM

Need a Cheap Laptop? These Are Our Favorites

You don't have to spend a fortune to get a good notebook.

Best All-Around

Acer Swift 3 (2020)

WIRED: Acer's updated 14-inch Swift 3 is the best cheap laptop you can get. It wraps a midrange Intel Core i5 chip, 8 gigabytes of RAM, and a 256-gigabyte solid state drive (SSD) in a no-nonsense design with a 1,920 x 1,080-pixel IPS LCD display. (IPS is a little nicer than some types of LCD.) The Swift 3 scored well for battery life in our video-based battery drain test, and it boasts four USB ports, including one USB-C port. I've also used the Intel i3 model, which gets even better battery life but with a noticeable loss of computing power.

TIRED: Compared to competitors, the battery life could be better.

$604 AT AMAZON

Source: https://www.wired.com/gallery/best-cheap-laptops/

Device Loan Programs

UC Davis Provides Loaner Laptops to Students in Need

IET, Stores and Donors Contribute to the Cause

By Cody Kitaura/Dateline on March 20, 2020 in Education

Emily Mijangos, a student who works at Shields Library, checks out a loaner laptop from Anita Nichols, on Thursday (March 19). (Bonnie Hain-Anderson/UC Davis)

DIGITALFLAGSHIP

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

What You Will Be Receiving

☐ **Apple iPad**
10.5 inch Space Gray, 256GB, Wi-Fi

🛡 **A Protective Case**
You will be provided a high-quality case to provide protection for your device and hold your Apple Pencil.

⌨ **Smart Keyboard**
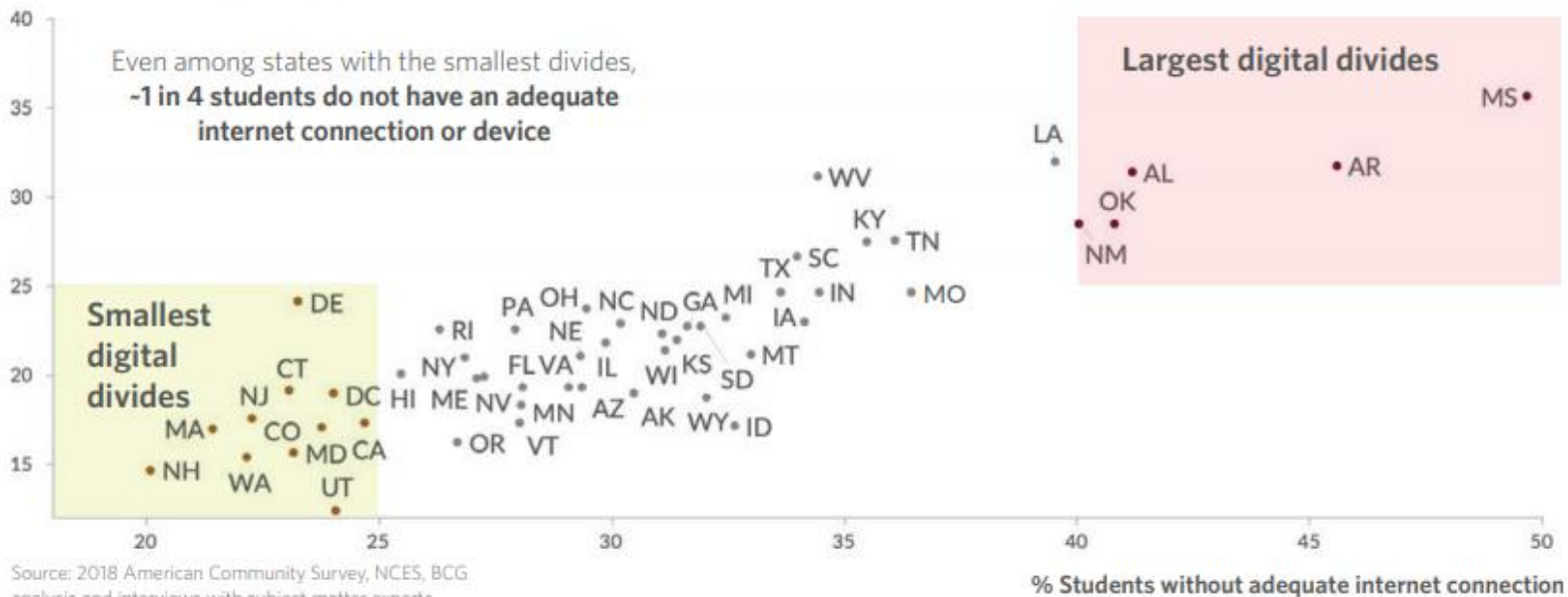The keyboard is easy to attach and allows you to type with your iPad as you would a laptop.

✏ **Apple Pencil**
The pencil can be used to navigate and make selections on your iPad, hand-write notes, draw, design and more.

Sources: https://www.ucdavis.edu/coronavirus/news/uc-davis-provides-loaner-laptops-students-need/
https://digitalflagship.osu.edu/students/technology

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National Broadband Access

Percent of students in households without devices and adequate internet connectivity, by state

Source: 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.
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/common_sense_media_report_final_6_26_7.38am_web_updated.pdf

Survey Your Students

"As employers and educators move their workforces and students online for the foreseeable future, they need to meet people where they are, and **not where they presume them to be**."

- Christopher Ali, associate professor at the University of Virginia and Faculty Fellow at the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society.

MDST 3559: Local in the Digital Age

Life, Broadband Access, and Getting through the semester together

* Required

Are you safe and sound where you are? *

Yes

No

Not sure

Do you have a good enough internet connection where you are that you can stream a video (like YouTube) *

Yes

No

Don't know

Do you have a good enough internet connection where you are that you can download the readings from class (like a PDF or a PowerPoint)? *

Yes

No

Don't know

Source: https://www.benton.org/blog/other-homework-gap-post-secondary-education-during-covid-19

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Meeting Students Where They Are

- With technology, less is sometimes more.

- Check out what resources and support are available to students at your institution and include these in your class curricula.

- Think about what you are asking of students – do you need to select expensive course materials? Do you really require cameras to be on in class?

What Does Failure Look Like?

- K-12 students may decide college is "not meant for me."

- College students may pause their education

- College students may not graduate.

- Young people may feel discouraged from pursuing well-paid jobs, particularly in STEM.

Striving for Digital Equity

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY

In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.

In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.

In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Source: City for all Women Initiative, https://www.cawi-ivtf.org/sites/default/files/publications/advancing-equity-inclusion-web_0.pdf

Questions?

Thank You

- Many thanks for listening and asking your questions.

- Please consider reading the report, which is available to download here: https://www.insidehighered.com/content/bridging-digital-divide-lessons-covid-19

- Reach out with feedback or further questions: lindsay.mckenzie@insidehighered.com

Thanks