

Digital Inclusion

How will you invest your resources?

If you had a "10 token budget" to spend every month, how would you spend it? Place the required number of tokens to indicate your spending choices. You have to make a choice for each category. Play a round using each scenario.

Scenario One

Your partner teleworks, and you have two school-aged children. You live in a town or urban area.

Scenario Two

You and your partner are retired and need regular medical care. You live in a rural area about two hours away from the nearest metropolitan area.

Category	A (1 Token)	B (2 Tokens)	C (3 Tokens)
Internet 	No access to Wi-Fi at home. Mobile plan with limited data. <input type="radio"/>	Mobile plan with limited data. Wi-Fi allows limited browsing, but you cannot stream high-quality videos at home. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Home broadband speeds allow unlimited browsing – mobile plan with unlimited data. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Devices 	Flip phone. No smartphones, tablets, or computers. No internet access on the flip phone and no camera. <input type="radio"/>	Adults have a smartphone. Schools provide a Chromebook to students for homework. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	There are smartphones, e-Readers, a smart TV, and laptops for everyone. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Digital Skills 	You have never sent an email. You don't use the internet to work or connect with others. <input type="radio"/>	You send and receive emails. You use the internet a little, but you don't know how to be safe online. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	You can use multiple email tools. You know how to interact safely online and use the internet frequently. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Technical Support 	No access – you pay to replace your device(s) when something goes wrong. <input type="radio"/>	You rely on friends, family, and internet searches for tech support. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	You have a full suite of tech support and insurance. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Digital Content 	You can borrow DVDs and books from the library, but the only digital content is eBooks. <input type="radio"/>	You have one online subscription to a steaming service. You have no other subscriptions. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	You have a full suite of subscriptions from streaming services to music to books. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

Digital Inclusion Data

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance, <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/>, outlines five elements of digital inclusion: affordable, robust broadband internet service, internet-enabled devices that meet the user's needs, access to digital skills training, quality technical support, and applications and online content. Without access to all five elements, people are left in the digital divide, unable to access digital society, including the academic, economic, and health resources they need.

Internet: Access to the internet is 83.9%. This means that roughly two in ten Idaho residents cannot purchase an internet plan of at least 25/3 Mbps. Access to low-priced plans is at 27.3%. Seven in ten residents cannot access it for \$60/month or less. Information provided by Broadband Now. <https://broadbandnow.com/Idaho>

Devices: Roughly 8.3% of Idahoans have a smartphone with no other computing device, and 6.9% do not have a computer. Information provided by the United States Census Bureau. <https://data.census.gov/>

Technical Support: A total tech membership from Best Buy is \$199.99 a year. Computer repair is \$84.95 + parts, according to the Best Buy website. <https://www.bestbuy.com/>

Digital Skills: According to data from the PEW Research Center, 76% of adults used email to connect during the Covid-19 outbreak. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/31/americans-turn-to-technology-during-covid-19-outbreak-say-an-outage-would-be-a-problem/>

Digital Content: The average consumer spends \$219 on subscriptions per month. Information provided by a study conducted in 2022 from C+R Research. <https://www.cresearch.com/>

This game is adapted from United Way's "Making Choices" game. <https://www.unitedway.org/>

If you have comments or suggestions, please email digitalskills@libraries.idaho.gov.

Digital Inclusion Game Facilitator Guide

Game's purpose

The Digital Inclusion Game was created for digital inclusion practitioners to use to increase stakeholder awareness of the issues related to equity. If you work directly with your community, you're probably already doing much of this work without realizing how it fits into the grander ecosystem.

- Target audience: Staff or stakeholders who work with their communities to provide digital access.
- Time: 15-30 minutes. Times can vary depending on engagement with the discussion.
- Group size: 5-20 people. You want enough participants to facilitate good discussion and get folks talking about these issues.

Before you play (1-3 minutes):

- Ask participants to define each of the elements of digital inclusion. Each definition should touch on a few key elements; however, each category contains more issues than we've listed, so feel free to broaden your conversations.
- Internet: speeds, access just on your cell phone versus Wi-Fi at your home, and prices
- Devices: computers and tablets versus phones, use, and prices
- Digital Skills: how to use devices, programs, and applications, and how to be safe online
- Tech Support: do-it-yourself, relying on family and friends, and paying for the experts
- Digital Content: entertainment, education, work, and health

After a brief discussion of the elements, have participants play a couple of rounds (10 minutes).

After you play (5-15 minutes):

- Digital inclusion and the five elements are interconnected. Talk to participants about this and how they made their choices.
- If they didn't choose column B or C for the internet, they probably didn't select column B or C for devices either. You don't need a laptop if you don't have fast, reliable internet.
- Discuss how digital skills, technical support, and digital content are intertwined. If you have strong digital skills, you'll have an easier time DIYing your tech support. But if you don't have either, you probably don't access much content online.
- Internet
 - Some plans run upwards of \$100 a month. What effects do cheaper low-speed plans have on people? In scenario one, three people need to use the internet all day. Can they afford to?
 - In scenario two, there might not be any internet service providers in their area. Or those providers only offer dial-up services. How do you have telehealth appointments or binge Netflix when no one in your county has fast or reliable internet?
- Devices

- When you think about devices, remember that to be effective, they need to meet the user's needs. You can text, call, and take pictures on a smartphone, but it's tough to log in to your doctor's website to view medical records or pay your bill.
- Large-screen devices like tablets, laptops, and desktops can help many users experience more parts of online life. But those devices are expensive, and less costly options have significant limitations.
- Chromebooks do not have fast processing speeds, and many Chromebooks provided by schools and libraries have limitations on their uses. Kids may be able to do homework, but parents still can't access their doctor's website.
- Digital Skills
 - Digital skills are everything from using a mouse to Photoshop to web design.
 - We all have limitations or things we need to learn, but where we start matters. If you know how to use Gmail, you're more likely to be able to use Outlook. If you've never used either, things like composing an email, attaching a file, or marking out-of-office times may seem impossible. You may not know that these are things you can even do with an email program.
 - There is a significant barrier to entry in anything technology related. The industry changes and moves so fast that it can seem impossible to catch up if you've fallen behind.
- Technical Support
 - Basic troubleshooting becomes impossible if you don't understand digital skills or have access to someone who does. Family and friends may not be any better prepared to do tech support.
 - If you don't know how to be safe online, you're more likely to end up with viruses that decimate your operating systems.
 - And new devices, insurance plans, and the Geek Squad are out of reach for many people.
- Digital Content
 - From social media, entertainment, news, and applications galore, the content and apps need to meet the user's needs. Retirees and teenagers use digital content in very different ways, and their interests require a space in the digital world.
 - You can also think about open-access issues. How do paywalls or high-priced subscriptions create barriers to digital content? What are the inequities caused by those barriers?

Action item or key takeaway

- What do you want participants to get out of this game and discussion? Create an actionable goal and plan for these folks, so they have a target.
- If you're targeting boards/funders, how can they support people doing the work?
- If you're targeting staff/volunteers, how can they help?

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