[intro music]

Literacy is the ability to read, write, and make sense of things. There are many forms of literacy that require different levels of comprehension. In the 21st century, digital abilities, are one of the most important forms of literacy due to the ways that technology shapes our lives.

[keyboard typing fading out]

The American Library Association defines digital literacy as the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical engagements that extend beyond basic literacy skills. We acquire these skills both through higher levels of education and through exposure to different technologies.

[music similar to intro music]

The problem is that not everybody has the same level of access to these technologies. Even in 2019, there are people who don’t have access to wifi, computers, or phones. Then there are people whose access is limited to school or work.. Clearly, there’s a disparity in who has access to the many forms of digital media. That’s obviously going to lead to the people with less access having a lower level of digital literacy.

[transition music]

We need digital literacy today for basic communication. It’s more complicated though. Digital literacy is used widely in educational settings to conduct research, write papers, even to turn work in. Again, lack of access puts some people at a disadvantage. Not only will they have trouble fulfilling the tasks at hand, they will also fall behind their counterparts in digital proficiency.

[more serious feeling music]

All this is to say that we can't talk about digital literacy without addressing differences in access. In a world where technology is so important, shouldn’t we all have the same level of access? The tough question that follows is whether access to technology should be a right? The answers will likely vary depending on the type of person you ask. Whether you believe access to technology is a right, it's clear that disparity in levels of access prevents many from participating in these new forms of digital literacy.

<https://www.teachthought.com/literacy/4-principals-of-digital-literacy/>

<https://www.stevenson.edu/online/blog-news-events/importance-of-literacy>

<https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>