[intro music]

Literacy is the ability to read, write, and make sense of things. There are different forms of literacy that require different levels of comprehension. Digital literacy is one of those forms. In the 21st century, it is arguably the most important form of literacy due to the fact that we see technology everywhere we turn.

[keyboard typing fading out]

The American Library Association’s digital literacy task force defines digital literacy as the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills. It is clear that it requires a much higher level of engagement than 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 with this is that not everybody has the same level of access to said technology. Even in 2019, there are people who don’t have access to wifi, computers, or phones. Then there are people who have access but it is limited to school or work. Then there are people who don’t lack access to any of this at any time. Clearly, there’s a disparity in who has access to what 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 in order to do basic tasks like communicate. It’s more complicated than this though. Digital literacy is used widely in educational settings. Digital media is used to conduct research, write papers, turn work in, among so many other tasks. Again, with not everyone having the same level of access, this puts some people at a disadvantage. Not only will they have trouble fulfilling the tasks at hand because of the lack of access, but their knowledge on how to go about fulfilling the task is also less proficient than their counterparts.

[more serious feeling music]

All this is to say that there is a gap in digital literacy and it exists because of the 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 I wanted to get at, is whether access to technology should be a right? Personally, I think this is tough to answer and the answers will vary depending on the type of person you ask. The fact of the matter is that technology and digital literacy have become important to our everyday lives and to reflect this, there shouldn’t be much disparity in levels of access but there are.

<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>