The Concept of Digital Divide

The present age is referred to as the digital age. It is called a digital age because the current global economy is driven by a digital device known as the computer. The computer represents data and instructions in 0s and 1s called binary codes, hence, it is known as a digital device. One of the reasons for inventing the computer is to reduce the world to a global village. To achieve this, everyone must have access to a computer (mobile phone, laptop, etc.) and internet connectivity. But this is not the case. Some classes of people have effective access and coverage to information and communication technologies and others have little or no access at all. Hence, there is a digital gap or split between these two groups of people. This gap or split is called Digital Divide

Definition of Digital Divide

Digital divide refers to the gap between people with effective access to digital and information technology and those with very limited or no access at all.
Digital Divide, or digital split, is a social issue referring to the differing amount of information between those who have access to the Internet and those who do not have access.
The term became popular among concerned parties, such as scholars, policymakers, and advocacy groups, in the late 1990s.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Digital divide can be bridged. The basic steps would be:
i. To provide digital access to those in the community who do not have it.
ii. To reduce the base price of ICT gadgets or subsidize them.
iii. Enlighten the masses on the importance of ICT in our current global economy.

The Old Economy versus the New Economy

Economy is the system by which the wealth of a nation or country is made.

The Old Economy

The old economy was centred on industrialization. Industrialization is the development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale. An increase in productivity was achieved by investing a large amount of capital in physical plant facilities. Investment in information systems were relatively small.

Features of the Old Economy

The old economy had the following characteristics.
1. Its processes were time-consuming
2. It requires a lot of labour
3. It was mechanically driven
4. It was constrained by time, space and distance.

The New Economy

Toward the end of the old era, the investment in computers increased, particularly as the transition from manual data processing systems to computer data processing systems took place. The transition can be regarded as a shift from the old to the new economy.

Features of the New Economy

1. It is digital
2. Time, distance and space are irrelevant.
3. It is technology driven:
4. It is knowledge-based

Limitations of Old Economy

The limitations of the old economy to the new economy are:

OLD ECONOMY	NEW ECONOMY
1. Slower and linear	1. Fast and unpredictable
2. Local competition	2. Global hyper competition
3. Automation and mechanization	3. Information and communication technology
4. Limited learning skills required	4. Continuous learning skills required
5. Capital intensive	5. Knowledge and people capabilities
6. Covers small area	6. Covers large area

Benefits of the New Economy

1. The size of the pieces of equipment was reduced.
2. Businesses can start with small capital.
3. Creates new jobs
4. Attract new investment and encourage export
5. Greater competition.