

# International Internet Access Levels and Student Implications

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## Abstract

International students may face challenges in performance and in participation if Internet access levels in their country of residence are low. Using the viewpoint of the Internet as a utility, the study reviewed historical utility provisions to developing countries. This information will be further analyzed to create proposals to increase Internet access for international students and their communities.

## Problem

As enrollment of international students increase, the issue of students being disadvantaged in the pursuit of their studies due to the scarcity of internet access in their immediate region also increases.

## Relevant Literature

Three main categories of relevant literature:

- Global internet access studies
- Classic economic theories
- Modern utility distributions strategies

*Full reference list available*

## Research Questions

What are the current internet access condition of international Walden University students?

What barriers to educational progress do these internet access conditions create for students?

Using the viewpoint of internet access as a utility, what strategies can be used to help students overcome these barriers?

## Procedures and Data Analysis

Key global internet access studies were reviewed in order to get an understanding of the levels and conditions of internet access for Walden University international students and students living abroad.

Classic economic theories were utilized to view internet accessibility in terms of a product in demand and supplemental educational requirement. Also, modern utility distributions strategies to developing countries were reviewed to frame internet access as a utility needed by students.

## Limitations

It is understood that limited in the access in the students' country of residence does not directly correlate to limited access to the student.

## Findings and Conclusions

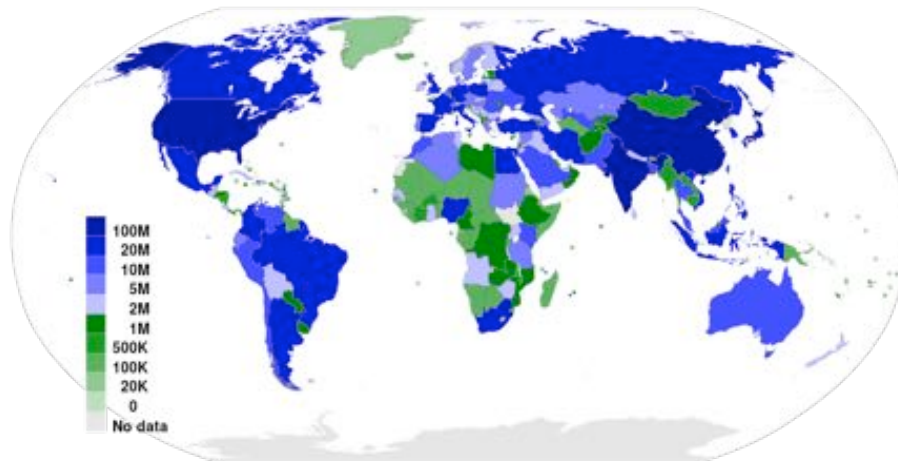
Key findings concerning internet access for international students indicated that students that live in countries with lower access levels of internet access often encounter barriers to academic progress. These barriers include limited time to search for and access literature and other data sources, inability to submit assignments in a timely manner, and disproportionate time spend travelling to and waiting for internet access point availability.

Classic economic theories allow one to use the viewpoint of internet access as a commodity; one that is in demand and considered an essential supplement to one of the core needs of education. It is also recognized that internet access can be utilized for additional purposes outside of education pursuits. These include social and entertainment purposes, financial purposes, and other information oriented pursuits.

A key conclusion in review of modern utility distribution strategies involves the following line of thinking: ***If the commodity of internet access is viewed as a utility, it can be "bundled" as such with a major investment such as an educational degree. Walden University and other internet driven educational institutions may be able to assist international students in overcoming barriers due to limited internet access by combining mobile internet access as part of their educational packages and offering it to international students that would benefit from this.*** This would serve a dual purpose of eliminating educational barriers for students as well as increasing the attractiveness of the Walden University educational catalog.

## Social Change Implications

Walden University provides its students with "the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can effect positive social change." The implications of this study will hopefully increase the opportunities of international students to participate in the Walden experience and thus expand the number of these social change opportunities.



## Purpose

The global map above indicates the number of internet users per country. As indicated, there are striking disparities in the number of internet users in countries such as the United States compared to countries located on the African continent and in central Asia. The chart to the right indicates these disparities in terms of the percentage of a countries population that has access to the internet. The chart focuses on countries in which Walden students are enrolled, although it is by no means all inclusive. The selected countries are utilized to emphasize the stark differences in access levels based on country of residence. These low access numbers translate to barriers for students in accessing the internet and being able to accomplish work in a timely and consistent manner.

The purpose of this study is to examine these disparities and use the viewpoint of the Internet as a utility to create proposals to increase Internet access for these international students and their communities.

Country or area	Internet users	Percentage of population	Rank
Somalia	138,849	1.4%	206
Ethiopia	1,352,259	1.5%	204
Cambodia	738,641	4.9%	187
India	200,780,998	12.5%	164
Honduras	1,503,350	18.1%	147
Thailand	17,779,139	26.5%	132
Nigeria	55,930,391	32.9%	128
Japan	100,684,474	79.1%	33
USA	254,295,536	81.0%	28
S. Korea	41,091,681	84.1%	21
UAE	4,517,169	85.0%	20
Canada	29,760,764	86.8%	16
U.K.	54,861,245	87.0%	14
Sweden	8,557,561	94.0%	4