A System Map of the Digital Divide

What is the system, or how does the problem appear as a system of factors? The digital divide is a concept that indicates that people have different levels of access to the Internet and that this affects quality of life.

What are parts of the system?

1: Technology used to access the Internet
2: Uses of the Internet for improving existence
3: Different levels of access to the Internet by
   a: Place/Geography
   b: Socioeconomics
   c: Race/ethnicity
   d: Age
4: Efforts to increase access
   a: Public/Gov’t
   b: Private Industry
   C: Public/Private Cooperation
5: Possible unconsidered issues

How does each part behave/What function does it serve?
1A: Technology may set the price or spread of Wireless service
1B: New technology in computers may make them more affordable
2A: People use the Internet to find work, pay bills, access their city government, and other uses
3A: What aspects of social identity affect use of the Internet?
4A: Private Industry and public agencies or government are alternate sources of potential service provision

Possible Problems with each part?
- The unserved are not served by the market because of costs or lack of demand (low profit potential)
- The unserved are not aware of new technologies or of the use of technology
- People unserved by technology experience a lower quality of life
- People unserved by technology may fall behind socially; this could create new forms of inequality or make existing ones worse
- Private industry uses the legislative system to outlaw competition from public internet providers
- Government(s) are not aware of the Digital Divide or are indifferent to it; people whose internet use affects the government are already online.
- A government that provides Internet access in its jurisdiction benefits at the expense of a government that does not. Incentives and subsidies to industry do not work
- Government(s) believe provision is a private matter and do nothing

What Research is Available on any part of this system?