

# Navigating the Digital Landscape: Challenges and Barriers to Effective Information Use on the Internet

Subjects: [Social Issues](#)

Contributor: Jiadong Yu , D. A. Bekerian , Chelsea Osback

The advent of the internet has fundamentally transformed how people access and interact with information. The digital landscape offers easy access to educational materials and healthcare and can support informed decision making. It also presents significant challenges in effectively using this information. This entry discusses the multifaceted barriers that can impede individuals from fully benefiting from the internet's information resources. Key challenges include discerning between accuracy and misinformation, the uneven distribution of digital literacy, disparities in access to technology, and motivational barriers in seeking reliable information. Additionally, the growing involvement of artificial intelligence (AI) in content curation, regulation, and moderation introduces opportunities and ethical dilemmas. These factors complicate efforts to support the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information shared through digital platforms.

digital literacy

misinformation

disinformation

digital divide

information seeking

content moderation

In the past few decades, the internet has evolved into an indispensable tool for individuals seeking information across various domains such as healthcare, education, and daily decision making [\[1\]\[2\]\[3\]\[4\]](#). The convenience, immediacy, and accessibility offered by digital platforms have created an unprecedented information ecosystem, where users can quickly find answers to almost any question [\[5\]\[6\]\[7\]](#). However, the quality, accuracy, and trustworthiness of the information found online are not always assured [\[8\]\[9\]\[10\]\[11\]](#).

This paradox of abundance and uncertainty has raised important questions about the challenges users face when attempting to use the internet as a reliable resource. These challenges include the widespread proliferation of misinformation, disparities in digital literacy, inequitable access to technology, and motivational barriers to seeking reliable information [\[12\]\[13\]\[14\]\[15\]](#). Ethical concerns surrounding content regulation and monitoring further complicate the issue of ensuring the reliability of online information, especially with the advent of artificial intelligence [\[16\]\[17\]\[18\]](#).

The involvement of artificial intelligence (AI) has played an increasingly prominent role in shaping how information is disseminated, moderated, and consumed online in recent years [\[19\]\[20\]](#). AI-driven algorithms now curate content, flag misinformation, and moderate user interactions, raising both opportunities and challenges in the quest for reliable online information [\[21\]\[22\]\[23\]\[24\]](#). AI systems can improve the efficiency of content moderation and help users navigate the vast information landscape; however, concerns remain about algorithmic biases, lack of transparency, and the ethical implications of AI-driven decision making [\[25\]\[26\]](#).

This entry paper provides an overview of these challenges by summarizing the existing literature on the barriers to effective information use on the internet. It examines key obstacles, such as misinformation, digital literacy disparities, motivational issues, access to technology, and the increasing influence of AI in content regulation and moderation. This review of current research and public discourse highlights the complex factors that shape users' ability to navigate and critically engage with online information.

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