

## Antecedents of disparities in access to digital public services: A literature review

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### Abstract

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Digital transformation in the public sector is aimed towards enabling universal, easier and cost-efficient access to public services based on user-centricity, efficiency, and transparency. However, research shows that different economic, cultural, social and personal factors have the potential to generate disparities in access to digital public services. This has incited the question if digitalization, instead of a catalyst, carries the risk of being a disabler of inclusive access to public services. To identify antecedents that generate barriers of access to digital public services in different contexts, this paper presents a literature review of 285 selected articles from the Scopus and Web of Science databases published in the English language. Conceptually, the paper takes into account the relation between offline and online resources that may affect equality of access in the digital domain. In addition, the key findings related to access enablers, barriers and type of usage are presented referring to the four successive access phases: motivational access, material access, skills access, and usage. Identifying and clustering antecedents of digital access barriers may be a guideline to policymakers in preparing tailor-made solutions addressing specific users' needs.

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Keywords: digitalization; access; enablers; barriers; public services; usage; inequalities

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