

Views from both sides of the digital divide

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I was nodding my head vigorously in agreement when I read your editorial (The Guardian view on the digital divide: a growing problem that must be taken seriously, 6 August). An hour later I was having a telephone conversation with your subscription team about the fact that I could no longer have my subscription vouchers for the Guardian. I now need to use a barcode that would be scanned by my newsagent – in our only village shop. They do not have a scanner. I found myself chuckling away at the supreme irony of it – I must have a very good sense of humour. Josephine Culhane Haverhill, Suffolk • Your correspondents (Letters, 3 August) complain that increased use of technology makes it difficult for elderly and disabled people to maintain their independence. There is another side to the story. Automated processes reduce the number of dull, repetitive, soul-destroying jobs, releasing human energy to undertake more inspiring tasks. My parents and grandparents would have welcomed that. As a 92-year-old with a variety of ailments, computerisation enables me to achieve things that would otherwise be impossible. I have a lifestyle that only the most wealthy in society could enjoy when I was born. Furthermore, there are large numbers of active newly retired people around who are eager to serve others; as in the blitz, this creates cohesive and interacting communities and helps to counteract the dehumanising influence of new technology. Progress always has downsides but, in a world where there is much to be fearful about, improving living standards and extending opportunities need not be among them. Wally Harbert Frome, Somerset • Perhaps those pushing for general digitalisation should be supplied only with digital coffee at their meetings. An infinite number of options could be offered on their smartphones. David Ward Wigton, Cumbria • Have an opinion on anything you've read in the Guardian today? Please email us your letter and it will be considered for publication in our letters section.