



LEO Satellites in Action: Bridging the Digital Divide

A stubborn “digital divide” separates individuals, families and communities that can readily access 21st-century communications technology from those that cannot. According to [GSMA](#), terrestrial fixed broadband has still not been physically deployed to seven percent of Latin America, or approximately 44 million people. Globally, there are billions of people who do not have access to reliable broadband.

Policymakers have taken substantial action to expand broadband access through traditional technologies, such as the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and major improvements to broadband mapping in the U.S. and Germany’s 2022 “[Gigabitstrategie](#)” program to deploy the latest fiber and mobile communications standard across the country and expand fibre-optic networks to households nationwide by 2030. But much more must be done to fully bridge the digital divide. This includes unlocking the full potential of innovative connectivity technologies like low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites.

LEO satellites will give everyone, everywhere the opportunity to access fast, affordable broadband — including regions and communities where it is uneconomic or impossible to extend other technologies due to geographic barriers or economic factors. LEO satellites have the potential to play a pivotal role in helping to close the digital divide by providing a new, reliable and cost-effective broadband option to previously underserved or unserved communities around the world.

Case Study / LEO Satellites in Action:

LEO satellites are expanding educational opportunities for students around the world. In 2024, Girls With Books was able to install [internet connection in South Sudan](#) through a LEO broadband provider, making education more accessible in an area where currently [84 percent of girls over the age of 15 are illiterate](#).

LEO Satellites and Education

- Research shows that K-12 students’ [technology access](#) and [broadband adoption in their communities](#) have positive impacts on educational outcomes and academic achievement.
- Yet millions of K-12 students across Latin America still lack access to reliable, high-speed internet at home. As of 2024, nearly [62 percent](#) of Peru’s 71,000 educational facilities had no internet connection.
- Because LEO systems are less reliant on terrestrial infrastructure, anyone on the planet with the right terminal — a small receiver about the size of a plate — and the ability to power it can connect to satellite broadband. LEO satellites will play a pivotal role in bringing fast, affordable and reliable broadband to underserved students — particularly in rural and tribal communities where the educational effects of the digital divide [hit hardest](#).

LEO Satellites and Healthcare

- The [World Bank Group](#) found that broadband is “a basic necessity for economic and human development in both developed and developing countries. [Research](#) has found reliable internet access is a significant factor in reducing health inequality, and increased broadband access improves both physical and mental health.
- Experts believe that expanding broadband access could have a particular impact on improving maternal health. The [Pan American Health Organization](#) supports implementing strategies based on telecommunications in rural areas to improve prenatal care and transform the experience women have during pregnancy.
- LEO satellites will narrow the digital divide in healthcare by providing a new option for fast, affordable and reliable broadband to individuals, families, healthcare providers, hospitals and other healthcare facilities in areas that have not been adequately served by other technologies.

Case Study / LEO Satellites in Action:

Reliable, high-speed internet from LEO satellites is transforming rural regions in Latin America, ranging from telemedicine to agriculture. In the rural [northwest of Mexico](#), LEO satellites are helping farmers distribute products to international customers, coordinate with distributors and connect with market insights in real time. Connectivity unlocks game-changing growth and innovation, while preserving the rich culture heritage of regional agriculture.

LEO Satellites and Economic Opportunity

- Experts [find](#) that increased broadband access impacts gross domestic product, productivity and employment.
- A 2025 [report](#) from J.P. Morgan found that investing in digital equity will “drive greater technological inclusion and open new opportunities” in Latin America. When connectivity is more fully distributed, it will expand online learning resources for students, increase agricultural productivity and bolster economic productivity.
- Around the globe, [research](#) finds that increasing digitalization and greater technology use increase countries’ economic growth and development.
- By injecting fast, affordable broadband access into underserved areas that need it most, LEO satellites will open new economic opportunities and expand prosperity — locally, nationally and worldwide.