

Inclusive Citizenship and Digital Participation of Persons With Disabilities: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Digital transformation opens new opportunities for people with disabilities to access information, public services, communication, advocacy, and participation in civic life, but accessibility gaps and structural barriers still limit meaningful digital participation. This study aims to analyze the barriers and opportunities for digital participation for people with disabilities and develop a more inclusive understanding of digital citizenship. The study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach by adapting PRISMA and analyzing 22 articles published between 2016 and 2026 through thematic analysis. The results show that barriers to participation are multidimensional, encompassing technology access, design accessibility, digital competence, communication, socio-economic resources, institutional support, and power structures. On the other hand, digital technology has the potential to expand access to information, social interaction, advocacy, political participation, media production, public services, and co-design. The findings emphasize that inclusive digital citizenship needs to shift from an orientation based on individual access and competence to an approach based on rights, accessibility, meaningful participation, representation, agency, co-production, and institutional responsibility.

Keywords : inclusive citizenship, persons with disabilities, digital accessibility, digital citizenship, disability inclusion

Abstrak: Transformasi digital membuka peluang baru bagi penyandang disabilitas untuk mengakses informasi, layanan publik, komunikasi, advokasi, dan partisipasi dalam kehidupan kewargaan, tetapi kesenjangan aksesibilitas dan hambatan struktural masih membatasi partisipasi digital yang bermakna. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hambatan dan peluang partisipasi digital penyandang disabilitas serta mengembangkan pemahaman kewarganegaraan digital yang lebih inklusif. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dengan mengadaptasi PRISMA dan menganalisis 22 artikel yang diterbitkan pada 2016–2026 melalui thematic analysis. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa hambatan partisipasi bersifat multidimensional, mencakup akses teknologi, aksesibilitas desain, kompetensi digital, komunikasi, sumber daya sosial-ekonomi, dukungan kelembagaan, dan struktur kekuasaan. Di sisi lain, teknologi digital berpotensi memperluas akses informasi, interaksi sosial, advokasi, partisipasi politik, produksi media, layanan publik, dan co-design. Temuan menegaskan bahwa inclusive digital citizenship perlu bergeser dari orientasi akses dan kompetensi individual menuju pendekatan berbasis hak, aksesibilitas, partisipasi bermakna, representasi, agency, co-production, dan tanggung jawab kelembagaan.

Kata Kunci : kewarganegaraan inklusif, penyandang disabilitas, aksesibilitas digital, kewarganegaraan digital, inklusi disabilitas.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has transformed the way citizens obtain information, communicate with government, build communities, express their aspirations, and engage in public life. In the context of contemporary citizenship, digital spaces no longer merely serve as supplementary communication tools, but have evolved into social and public arenas where citizens obtain information, use services, build relationships, express opinions, and participate in processes that impact their shared lives. Therefore, digital citizenship is not simply understood as the technical ability to use devices or the internet, but also as an opportunity to meaningfully exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship in the digital space. Tobing *et al.* (2024) views digital citizenship as the ability to use information technology to participate in public life, whereas Effendi *et al.* (2026) positioning digital citizenship as a construct that encompasses participation, skills, ethics, and engagement in internet-based communities.

However, opportunities to be present and participate in digital spaces are not evenly distributed. The digital divide has evolved from issues of device ownership and connectivity to issues of quality of access, skills, usage patterns, support, and the benefits derived from technology. For people with disabilities, these issues are further complicated because technological barriers can be intertwined with economic conditions, education, social environment, platform design, and institutional support. Poerwanti *et al.* (2024) Research shows that internet use by people with disabilities is influenced by age, education, income, employment status, location of residence, and level of disability. Therefore, the presence of a device and internet connection cannot be seen as the sole indicator of digital inclusion; what is more important is whether technology can be used in an accessible, safe, independent, and meaningful way to obtain information, use services, interact, express aspirations, and participate in public life Fajriani & Wicaksono (2023).

A rights-based perspective strengthens this understanding by positioning disability not solely as an individual characteristic, but as a problem also shaped by environmental and social barriers. In the digital context, the analytical question needs to shift from whether people with disabilities are able to use the internet to whether technologies, platforms, information, and public services have been designed to enable equal participation. This shift is crucial because limitations on participation can stem from the inaccessible design of technologies and institutions, not solely from user conditions. Harisantoso (2023) Therefore, digital accessibility needs to be positioned as part of fulfilling citizens' rights and as a prerequisite for inclusive digital citizenship.

The human rights framework provides a strong normative basis. Indonesia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) through Law Number 19 of 2011 concerning Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 9 of the CRPD on Accessibility affirms access to information and communication, including information and communication technology and systems, as part of accessibility. Article 21 on Freedom of Expression and Opinion and Access to Information affirms the right of persons with disabilities to seek, receive, and impart information through all forms of communication of their choice, while Article 29 on Participation in Political and Public Life affirms the right to participate effectively and fully in political and public life on an equal basis. Thus, digital accessibility is not simply a matter of user convenience, but is related to the fulfillment of citizenship rights.

In practice, there is still a gap between digital norms and experiences. Studies in Indonesia show that the accessibility of websites and digital content for people with disabilities is not yet fully adequate, even though Indonesia has Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities and has ratified the CRPD. Constitutionally, Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia guarantees the right of every person to communicate and obtain information as well as to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information through all available channels. The principle of equality is also emphasized in Article 28H paragraph (2) concerning equal opportunities and benefits to achieve equality and justice and Article 28I paragraph (2) concerning protection from discriminatory treatment. These provisions are strengthened through Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, specifically Article 18 concerning the Right to Accessibility and Article 24 concerning the Right to Expression, Communication, and Obtain Information, as well as Articles 123 and 124 concerning access and provision of information for

people with disabilities. An evaluation of digital healthcare websites in Indonesia also found variations in compliance with accessibility standards, including errors that could hinder users with disabilities Akmal (2026). This issue is becoming increasingly important along with the strengthening of the Electronic-Based Government System through Presidential Regulation Number 95 of 2018 concerning the Electronic-Based Government System, specifically Article 42 paragraph (1) which stipulates that SPBE services consist of electronic government administration services and electronic public services, as well as Article 42 paragraph (3) concerning electronic public services in the provision of public services.

The international literature demonstrates a similar paradox. The internet can expand social connections, autonomy, self-expression, and advocacy, but these benefits don't automatically emerge when the infrastructure, platforms, and norms of participation are inaccessible. Regita Cahyani & Andromeda (2026) shows that research into internet use by people with intellectual disabilities finds important benefits in the form of friendships and social connections, but also identifies a variety of risks. Octavianti (2023) then shows that social internet use by people with intellectual disabilities is related to a sense of belonging, maintaining relationships, building new connections, and increasing autonomy and empowerment. In the political realm, Setiawan *et al.* (2024) shows that social media can be an important space for people with disabilities, but can also maintain political marginalization if the characteristics and needs of users are not taken into account.

Digital participation therefore needs to be distinguished from mere digital presence. A person can have a device and an internet connection but still lack the capacity to utilize public services, understand political information, express their aspirations, or influence the public agenda. Nashrullah *et al.* (2025) mentions the consequences of use as an important part of digital divide analysis, whereas Rohida *et al.* (2026) emphasizes that meaningful access requires human, social, institutional, and technological resources. In the context of people with disabilities, meaningful access also depends on the compatibility of assistive technology, information format, interface design, navigation capabilities, language, captions, alternative text, and support that enables user control.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 provides an essential technical framework based on the principles of perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust. These standards are designed to improve the accessibility of web content for users with a variety of disabilities, although the W3C itself emphasizes that technical standards cannot meet all the needs of every user (W3C, 2023, 2024). Therefore, technical accessibility should be understood as a prerequisite, not the entire meaning of inclusion.

On the other hand, studies on digital citizenship are often developed from the perspective of the general population or education, while the experiences of people with disabilities tend to be positioned as a niche issue. This creates a conceptual gap: digital citizenship speaks of participation, but participation theory and practice have not always integrated disability experiences as an inherent part of citizenship design. Studies on digital activism by people with disabilities show that social media can be used to build counter-narratives, increase visibility, and organize advocacy. Susilawaty *et al.* (2025) & Julio & Muhamad Isnain (2024) However, digital activism also demands decisions about visibility, identity disclosure, representation, and risk.

Based on these issues, this article aims to synthesize the literature on the relationship between inclusive citizenship, digital accessibility, and digital participation of people with disabilities. The study focuses on three questions: (1) how the literature explains the barriers and opportunities for digital participation of people with disabilities; (2) how the concept of digital citizenship can be expanded to be more inclusive. The novelty of the study lies in the effort to bring together the perspective of digital citizenship with disability studies and accessibility governance, so that digital participation is not understood simply as the ability to use technology, but as the ability to be present, speak out, obtain services, build relationships, and influence public life equally.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach that adapts the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Parums (2021) This approach was chosen to identify, map, and synthesize in a transparent and structured manner previous studies on inclusive citizenship, accessibility, and digital participation of people with disabilities.

1. Literature Search Strategy

A search for scientific articles was conducted in reputable international and national databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and SINTA, to capture the Indonesian context. Keywords were compiled using a combination of Boolean operators (AND, OR) based on the main elements of the research question: 1) (“inclusive citizenship” OR “digital citizenship” OR “digital citizenship”); 2) AND (“persons with disabilities” OR “disability” OR “people with disabilities”) and; AND (“digital participation” OR “digital accessibility” OR “digital accessibility”)

2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study's boundaries were defined to ensure that the analysis remains focused on the social, political, and governance dimensions of digital citizenship, rather than purely technical aspects.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Thematic Focus	Examining digital participation, accessibility of public/political services, and inclusive citizenship for people with disabilities	Focused purely on the technical/medical development of assistive devices without socio-political analysis.
Document Type	Indexed scientific journal articles and conference articles go through a peer-review process.	Editorials, opinion articles, book reviews, popular reports, or non-scientific articles
Time span	Publication period 2016–2026 (adjusting to the ratification of Law No. 8/2016 and the development of WCAG 2.1/2.2)	Publications before 2016
Language	Indonesian and English	Languages other than Indonesian and English

3. Literature Selection Procedure

The document selection stage is carried out through four systematic phases: 1) Identification is carried out by collecting all initial search results from the database and recording the total number of documents found; 2) Screening is carried out by checking the title and abstract and eliminating duplicate documents or articles that are not relevant to the main theme; 3) Eligibility Checking is carried out by analyzing the full manuscript of articles that pass the screening to ensure fulfillment of all inclusion criteria, and; 4) Final Inclusion is carried out by determining the final set of articles that substantively answer the research questions to be extracted.

4. Data Synthesis and Analysis

The selected articles were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis technique. Clarke & Braun (2017) Data were extracted into a categorization matrix that included: author name, year of publication, research location/context, study method, forms of challenges and opportunities for digital participation, and conceptual proposals regarding digital citizenship. The extracted results were then synthesized narratively and critically to identify patterns, theoretical gaps, and novelties in the concept of inclusive digital citizenship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the process of identifying, screening, and assessing the suitability of articles as described in the methods section, 22 scientific articles were obtained that met the inclusion criteria and were relevant to the study's focus on inclusive citizenship, digital participation, digital accessibility, and persons with disabilities. These 22 articles were then analyzed to identify research trends, the context of digital participation, the forms of barriers and opportunities faced by persons with disabilities, and conceptual developments regarding digital citizenship. This mapping is necessary so that the resulting synthesis not only describes the findings of each study but also shows patterns and relationships between findings in the literature.

The selected literature demonstrates a diversity of geographic contexts and research characteristics. The studies analyzed spanned the contexts of Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, China, India, South Korea, and Indonesia. This diversity demonstrates that the issue of digital participation for people with disabilities is a recurring issue across diverse social, political, and institutional environments. Despite these differences in context, a number of relatively consistent issues were identified, particularly those related to technology accessibility, digital skills and support, resource affordability, communication, digital service design, and opportunities for meaningful participation in public spaces.

In terms of research approaches, the 22 selected articles demonstrate methodological diversity, encompassing conceptual studies, literature reviews, qualitative research, ethnography, interviews, quantitative surveys, comparative studies, case studies, website accessibility evaluations, and action design research. This diversity of methods provides a more comprehensive picture of digital participation because this issue can be seen not only from the individual user experience, but also from social relationships, community activities, technology design, public services, organizations, and institutional governance.

In general, the initial mapping of the selected articles shows a shift in research attention from issues of access to technology to the quality and meaning of digital participation. While some early studies emphasized gaps in access, skills, and technology use, subsequent research increasingly addressed issues of accessibility, empowerment, advocacy, political participation, representation, co-design, and the ability of people with disabilities to influence digital spaces. Thus, the evolving literature demonstrates that the presence of people with disabilities in digital spaces cannot be measured solely by their internet access or digital devices, but also by the extent to which they can use these spaces to interact, obtain information, express their voice, build communities, access services, and participate in public life.

Based on this, the following table presents a mapping of the 22 articles that served as the basis for the analysis in this study. The mapping was conducted based on five main aspects: author and year of publication, location or context of the research, research methods, barriers and opportunities for digital participation, and conceptual proposals regarding digital citizenship. These aspects were selected to enable comparisons between publications and to identify emerging conceptual trends in the literature.

Table 2. Literature Mapping on Inclusive Citizenship and Digital Participation of Persons with Disabilities

Author's name, year	Research location/context	Research methods	Forms of challenges and opportunities	Conceptual offer
Alper & Goggin (2017) Digital technology and rights in the lives of children with disabilities	Global context, particularly the discussion of children's rights and disabilities in the digital era	A conceptual/critical review of the literature on digital technology, children's rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities	Challenges include limited representation of children with disabilities' voices in digital policies, unequal access, and the suboptimal integration of	Digital citizenship needs to be positioned as a right, not simply the ability to use technology. Digital participation must encompass

			digital rights with disability rights. Opportunities emerge through digital technology as a means of fulfilling rights, communication, access to information, and social participation.	equal access to information, expression, communication, and the exercise of rights.
Newman et al. (2017) Applying a critical approach to investigate barriers to digital inclusion and online social networking among young people with disabilities	Australia; young people with disabilities and internet and social networking use	A qualitative-critical approach with Bourdieu's critical theory perspective to identify barriers and facilitators of digital inclusion.	Barriers are not only technical but also stem from the unequal distribution of resources. Inequalities in economic, social, technological, and competency capital shape disparate opportunities for online participation.	Digital citizenship needs to be understood as a capacity influenced by social structures, not simply individual abilities. Equitable participation requires redistribution of digital resources and reduction of structural barriers. Digital citizenship is
Lin et al. (2018) To include, or not to include, that is the question: Disability digital inclusion and exclusion in China	China; people with disabilities in the relationship between the internet, social exclusion, and digital inclusion	Ethnography, participant observation, and in-depth interviews	The internet can provide an alternative space for people with disabilities when they experience exclusion in offline social life. However, digital spaces can also reproduce new forms of exclusion.	ambivalent: the internet can be a space of empowerment and inclusion, but also a space for the reproduction of inequality. The concept of digital citizenship needs to incorporate dimensions of power and social exclusion.
Alfredsson Agren et al. (2020) Digital participation? Internet use among adolescents with and without	Sweden; adolescents aged 13–20 years with and without intellectual disabilities	A cross-sectional comparative study using a cognitively adapted national survey for adolescents with intellectual disabilities.	There are disparities in internet usage and participation patterns between adolescents with and without intellectual disabilities. Barriers	Digital citizenship must consider equality of opportunity to participate, including the ability to use the internet socially, communicatively,

intellectual disabilities			relate to skills, support, and opportunities for use. Low accessibility, inadequate usability, and ineffective technology design are barriers. Conversely, digital inclusion has the potential to expand social interactions and reduce experiences of isolation.	and informationally, not just device ownership. Digital citizenship needs to be oriented toward social recognition and equality, not just technical access. Inclusion must simultaneously consider biological, social, and psychological dimensions.
Tsatsou (2021) Is digital inclusion fighting disability stigma?	English; experiences of stigma and digital inclusion of people with disabilities	Qualitative study using focus groups and conceptual analysis of stigma and disability models	Youth with IDD have lower access to and participation in the four elements of digital citizenship, increasing the risk of digital social isolation and disengagement from the community.	Digital citizenship needs to be understood as multidimensional citizenship, encompassing access, use, social participation, and civic engagement. Interventions must take place at both the individual and system levels.
Fisher et al. (2021) Digital Citizenship: Technology Access and Use for Youth With and Without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	United States; youth with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities	Analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of 2012 using a digital citizenship framework	Social media provides opportunities to disseminate information, build communities, voice interests, and raise public awareness. However, gaps in digital competence, economics, age, cognitive ability, devices, and connectivity can create new forms of exclusion.	Digital citizenship needs to incorporate collective and advocacy dimensions. Digital citizens are not just service users, but also actors who produce discourse, voice their interests, and influence the digital public sphere.
Gelfgren et al. (2022) Social media and disability advocacy organizations: Caught between hopes and realities	Sweden; disability advocacy organizations and the use of social media	Qualitative study; 12 semi-structured interviews with representatives of seven disability advocacy organizations, analyzed thematically	The digitalization of city services opens up opportunities for service access and citizen	Digital citizenship can be developed as urban digital citizenship,
Kolotouchkina et al. (2022) Smart cities, the digital divide,	The context of smart cities and digital urban governance	Conceptual study/literature-based analysis of smart cities, digital		

and people with disabilities		divide, disability	and	participation. Barriers include the digital divide, inaccessible service design, and weak digital accessibility leadership.	namely the capacity of citizens with disabilities to access, use, and participate in digital city governance equally.
Safari et al. (2023) Digital technology design activities: A means for promoting the digital inclusion of young adults with intellectual disabilities	Norway; seven young adults with intellectual disabilities and eight support workers	Action Research; individual/group interviews, participant observation, and reflective notes	Design group	Participation in technology design enhances digital skills and knowledge, demonstrates competence, increases interest in technology, and enables users to influence and adapt technology.	Digital citizenship needs to shift from a "for users" paradigm to a "with users" paradigm. People with disabilities need to be positioned as co-designers and co-producers within the digital ecosystem.
Keeley & Bernasconi (2023) Digital participation and digital education for people with profound and multiple disabilities and complex communication needs	International context; people with severe intellectual disabilities/multiple disabilities and complex communication needs	Conceptual/literature review of digital participation, digital education, AAC, universal design, and assistive technology		Barriers include limited communication, technology access, digital literacy, non-universal design, and a lack of reasonable accommodations. Opportunities arise through universal design, assistive technology, digital literacy, and reasonable accommodations. Social media adoption is influenced by disability norms, administrative support, and platform support. Social media offers potential as a channel for services and the dissemination of disability rights perspectives.	Digital citizenship needs to be built through the principles of universal design, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and digital literacy, so that the ability to participate is not determined by the characteristics of the disability. Digital citizenship needs to include institutional support and platform responsibility, because citizens' ability to participate is determined not only by users but also by the institutional and
Alathur & Pai (2023) Usefulness and barriers of adoption of social media for disability services	India; citizens involved in service activities	Questionnaire survey and development of social media adoption model			

van Toorn & Cox (2024) Digital citizenship and disability in the COVID era	Australia/global; digitalization of life, work, education and government services during COVID-19	A critical-conceptual analysis of digitalization and digital citizenship	Digitalization opens up opportunities for employment, education, communication, and remote services. However, it also exacerbates existing inequalities and can undermine the fulfillment of citizenship rights for people with disabilities.	platform ecosystems. Offering a rights-based and critical conception of digital citizenship, by rejecting the understanding of digital citizenship that is only oriented towards individual independence, competition, and technological efficiency.
van Toorn (2024) Inclusion interrupted: Lessons from the making of a digital assistant by and for people with disabilities	Australia; development of government virtual assistant "Nadia"	Qualitative case study; interviews with technology developers, government, and people with disabilities involved in co-design	Co-design offers opportunities for people with disabilities to influence technology design. However, projects can fail due to weak institutional support and resistance to power sharing.	Digital citizenship needs to be seen as a participatory process, not simply the outcome of accessible digital products. Power, representation, and the ability to influence decisions must be part of citizenship.
Kim & Lee (2024) Digitally vulnerable populations' use of e-government services: inclusivity and access	South Korea; digitally vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities	Data analysis of the 2021 National E-government Survey	Low awareness of e-government services is a barrier. However, most of the web services and applications studied are relatively inclusive of people with disabilities compared to some other vulnerable groups.	Digital citizenship needs to include e-government citizenship, namely the ability to obtain information, conduct transactions, utilize social services, and participate in government digitally.
Nurhayati & Kardi (2024) Digital Divide for Persons with Disabilities	Indonesia; accessibility of information technology	Legal and literature review of regulations, information accessibility, and	Websites and digital content in Indonesia still face accessibility issues. There is a gap	Digital citizenship needs to be placed within the framework of

Related to for people implementation between legal digital rights and Indonesian to with disabilities gaps norms regarding legal citizenship, Information from Legal Perspective disabilities from a legal perspective the rights of people so that access to Technology Accessibility from Legal Perspective the realization of digital accessibility. technology is understood as part of fulfilling citizens' rights.				
Pudrianisa et al. (2024) Inclusive Disability Empowerment: Utilization of Digital Applications in Accessing Information for People With Disabilities	Indonesia; access to digital information for people with disabilities	A study on digital information accessibility and disability empowerment	The challenge lies in suboptimal access to digital information. Opportunities lie in leveraging digital applications to improve access to information, independence, and empowerment.	Digital citizenship needs to include informational empowerment, namely the ability to obtain, understand, and use digital information as a basis for social participation. Digital citizenship needs to be expanded into political citizenship, namely the ability to obtain political information, communicate, convey aspirations, and participate in democratic processes through digital spaces.
Hasfi et al. (2020) Internet Access and the Potential in Facilitating Online Political Communication of the Disabled	Indonesia; Semarang City and the context of the 2018 Central Java gubernatorial election	Case studies; in-depth interviews with people with disabilities, election organizers, and disability education institutions	Some people with disabilities have internet access, but this access does not automatically translate into interactive political communication. The virtual political space is still dominated by non-disabled groups.	Digital citizenship can be constructed through the dimensions of access to political information, engagement, and political participation, with communication accessibility as a prerequisite. Democratic digital citizenship requires
Lukitoaji & Noormiyanto (2020) The Influence of Political Internet Users on the Political Participation of Deaf People in the Special Region of Yogyakarta	Indonesia; deaf people in the Special Region of Yogyakarta	Quantitative research on the relationship/ influence of political internet use on political participation	The political internet provides opportunities to obtain information and engage in political activities. The challenge relates to the ability and opportunity to access political information that is appropriate for the needs of deaf people. Several website accessibility issues were identified;	
Dewi & Furqan (2024) Inclusive Elections: An	Indonesia; website of the General	Website accessibility evaluation using		

Analysis of the Accessibility of the General Elections Commission's Website Based on WCAG 2.1	Elections Commission of the Republic of Indonesia	WCAG-EM, WCAG 2.1, and the automated tool SortSite	approximately 42% of indicators showed above-average levels of problems. This could hinder access to election information for users with disabilities. Digital technology provides opportunities for accessing information, products, services, empowerment, and independence. Challenges arise from limited accessibility and gaps in technology utilization.	accessible electoral information, so access to election information becomes part of the digital citizenship infrastructure. Digital citizenship needs to be developed as a process of inclusion, empowerment, and independence, not simply the provision of an internet connection or device. Digital citizenship needs to move beyond access, towards meaningful participation, namely the ability of people with disabilities to produce media, determine agendas, build representation, and contribute to the public sphere.
Poerwanti et al. (2024) The Long Road to Digital Inclusion for People with Disabilities in Indonesia	Indonesia; the state of digital inclusion for people with disabilities	Literature review, observation, and library study	Challenges include organizational sustainability, accessibility, resource constraints, and capacity building. Opportunities lie in the ability of disability media to voice experiences and shape the public agenda.	
Nurfikria et al. (2026) Beyond access: Rethinking participation and inclusion in Indonesia's disability media	Indonesia; six digital media platforms led/based by disability communities	Fieldwork on six disability media platforms; practice-oriented qualitative analysis		
Frاندell & Allgood (2026) Breaking barriers: Evaluating accessibility in local government online platforms for individuals with disabilities	United States; local government websites in various cities	Longitudinal analysis of government websites; survey data from 534 local governments combined with WAVE evaluation and error/alert measurements based on WCAG; Poisson regression analysis	Government websites can present digital barriers. Website age, oversight, government structure, and organizational learning processes are all factors that influence accessibility.	Digital citizenship requires institutionalized accessibility, that is, accessibility that is part of institutional governance and learning, not just the responsibility of users.

A mapping of the 22 articles in Table 2 shows that research on digital participation for people with disabilities has a broader focus. The literature no longer solely addresses issues of device ownership and connectivity, but has expanded to include issues of accessibility, technology use, social interaction, political participation, advocacy, representation, media production, digital public services, and involvement in technology design processes. These developments demonstrate a shift in understanding digital inclusion, from an access-oriented approach to one that emphasizes meaningful participation.

Furthermore, the mapping results show that barriers to digital participation do not exist in isolation. Technological and accessibility barriers interact with social, economic, communication, skills, institutional support, and power structures. In some studies, digital technology even exhibits an ambivalent character: on the one hand, it opens up opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain information, build social relationships, advocate, and participate in public life; on the other, digital spaces can also reproduce existing forms of exclusion in social life.

These findings are crucial for understanding the concept of digital citizenship. If digital citizenship is defined solely as an individual's ability to use technology effectively, the structural and institutional aspects that determine whether someone can truly participate are overlooked. Numerous studies have shown that accessibility, institutional support, technology design, and opportunities for participation in decision-making are crucial components of the digital citizenship experience for people with disabilities.

1. Selection Results and Literature Characteristics

Based on the literature selection process, 22 relevant articles focused on inclusive citizenship, digital participation, digital accessibility, and disability were obtained. The literature analyzed included research and studies from Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, China, India, South Korea, and Indonesia. This diversity of contexts demonstrates that the issue of digital participation for people with disabilities is a transnational issue related not only to the availability of technology but also to social structures, technological design, policies, institutions, representation, and opportunities to influence the digital public sphere.

In terms of methodology, the 22 articles demonstrate diverse approaches, ranging from conceptual and literature reviews, qualitative research, ethnography, interviews, quantitative surveys, comparative studies, website accessibility evaluations, and action design research. This diversity of methods allows the issue of digital participation to be viewed from several levels of analysis: individual experience, social relations, communities and organizations, technology, and institutional governance. Thus, the literature synthesis does not position disability solely as a matter of an individual's ability to use technology, but rather as a relational issue between users, technology, the social environment, and institutions.

Substantively, the analysis reveals two main trends. First, the literature consistently demonstrates that barriers to digital participation are multidimensional, while opportunities for participation emerge when technology is accompanied by accessibility, support, skills, accommodations, and opportunities to play a meaningful role. Second, the concept of digital citizenship has shifted from an orientation toward access and the ability to use technology to one based on rights, participation, representation, empowerment, and influence over the public sphere. These findings form the basis for the discussion based on two research questions.

2. Barriers to Digital Participation for People with Disabilities

2.1 Barriers to digital participation are multidimensional

A synthesis of 22 articles shows that barriers to digital participation for people with disabilities cannot be explained solely by device ownership or internet connection. Barriers emerge at several interconnected levels: technology access, design accessibility, digital competence, social support, economic conditions, communication, institutions, and power structures.

At the access and resource level, Newman et al. (2017) Research shows that digital inclusion is influenced by the uneven distribution of economic, social, technological, and competency capital. These findings suggest that two individuals with the same internet access do not necessarily have

the same opportunities for participation. Differences in resources and support can determine the extent to which individuals are able to use technology to build social networks and participate in community life.

Similar gaps are seen in research Alfredsson Agren et al. (2020) And Fisher et al. (2021) . Both show differences in digital usage and participation patterns between individuals with and without intellectual disabilities. Fisher et al. (2021) Research even shows that youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities have lower access to and participation in several elements of digital citizenship. This situation has the potential to increase alienation and disengagement from digital communities.

Thus, formal access to technology does not equate to the ability to participate. Device ownership, for example, is only the beginning. For technology to be used for social and civic purposes, users need skills, support, accessible information, and a digital environment that allows them to interact on an equal footing.

2.2 Technology accessibility is a prerequisite

The next finding relates to technology design and accessibility. Tsatsou (2021) shows that low accessibility, usability, and inappropriate technology design can be barriers for people with disabilities. Keeley & Bernasconi (2023) also identified communication issues, digital literacy, technology that is not universally designed, and lack of accommodation as factors that limit digital participation.

These findings are reinforced by research focusing on public digital services. Dewi & Furqan (2024) For example, based on a WCAG 2.1 evaluation, the General Elections Commission (KPU) website found accessibility issues, with approximately 42% of indicators showing above-average issues. This situation has the potential to hinder access for users with disabilities to election information.

Meanwhile, Frandell & Allgood (2026) Research shows that accessibility issues are also found on local government platforms. An analysis of 534 local governments revealed a link between website accessibility and factors such as website age, oversight, government structure, and organizational learning. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that accessibility is not just a technical issue of the interface, but also relates to how government organizations manage and prioritize accessibility.

Therefore, the synthesis results show that accessibility is a condition that enables participation, but technical accessibility alone does not automatically lead to inclusive digital citizenship. A technically usable website must still provide relevant, easily understandable information, enable interaction, and provide a space for users to express their opinions.

2.3 Social and structural barriers reinforce digital exclusion

Structural perspectives are increasingly visible in research Newman et al. (2017) , Lin et al. (2018) And Tsatsou (2021) . Lin et al. (2018) shows the ambivalent nature of digital technology: the internet can be an alternative space when people with disabilities experience social exclusion in the offline world, but at the same time digital space can reproduce new forms of exclusion.

This means that technology is not neutral to social structures. When social inequality, stigma, limited resources, or power relations already exist in society, these conditions can be carried over into the digital space. Tsatsou (2021) This study demonstrates that digital inclusion does have the potential to expand social interactions and reduce isolation, but stigma and inaccessible design can hinder these benefits. These findings suggest that an approach that simply positions people with disabilities as individuals in need of digital skills development is inadequate. Participation issues also need to be examined in light of the structure of opportunities available to users.

2.4 Communication barriers are an important issue in social and political participation.

The communication dimension becomes increasingly important when digital participation is linked to citizenship and democracy. Lukitoaji & Noormiyanto (2020) shows that the use of political internet can open up opportunities for deaf people to obtain information and be involved in political activities, but these opportunities are related to the ability and opportunity to obtain political information that suits their needs.

Findings Hasfi et al. (2020) provides a similar picture in the Indonesian context. Although some people with disabilities have internet access, this access does not automatically result in interactive

political communication. The virtual political space still shows the dominance of non-disabled groups. This demonstrates the difference between being online and being politically engaged online. A person can be present in the digital space but may not necessarily have the ability or opportunity to express their aspirations, communicate with political actors, obtain relevant information, or influence public discourse.

3. Opportunities for Digital Participation of Persons with Disabilities

Although the literature identified various barriers, the 22 articles also demonstrated that digital technologies have significant potential to expand the participation of people with disabilities.

First, digital technology can increase access to information and independence. Pudrianisa et al. (2024) shows that digital applications can be used to improve access to information, independence, and empowerment of people with disabilities. Poerwanti et al. (2024) It also demonstrates that digital technology can open access to information, products, services, empowerment, and independence. Second, social media provides opportunities for community building and advocacy. Gelfgren et al. (2022) found that disability advocacy organizations use social media to disseminate information, build communities, voice interests, and raise public awareness. Third, digital spaces can be a means of producing representations and public agendas.

Nurfikria et al. (2026) This study demonstrates that digital media platforms led or based on disability communities provide opportunities to voice experiences and shape the public agenda. These findings broaden the understanding of participation, as people with disabilities are positioned not only as consumers of information but also as producers of media and shapers of public discourse.

Fourth, digital technology can open up space for participation in the design process. Safari et al. (2023) shows that engaging young adults with intellectual disabilities in technology design activities can enhance their digital knowledge and skills while enabling them to influence and adapt technology.

The findings are reinforced van Toorn (2024) through a study of the development of the government virtual assistant Nadia. Co-design provides opportunities for people with disabilities to influence technology design, although its effectiveness can be hampered when institutional support is weak or there is resistance to power sharing. Thus, opportunities for digital participation can be formulated in several ways:

Table 3. Mapping the Forms of Opportunities and Manifestations of Digital Participation in Inclusive Citizenship

Opportunity form	Manifestation of participation
Access to information	Obtaining, understanding, and using information
Social interaction	Building relationships and community
Advocacy	Expressing interests and rights
Political participation	Obtaining information, communication, and conveying aspirations
Media production	Producing content and representation
Co-design	Influencing technology and service design
E-government	Access services and interact with the government
Agenda formation	Contributing to public discourse and space

4. Expanding the Concept of Digital Citizenship to Make it More Inclusive

4.1 From digital access to meaningful digital participation

The second research problem formulation resulted in the main finding that the concept of digital citizenship needs to be expanded from the ability to access and use technology to the ability to participate meaningfully in social and civic life. Fisher et al. (2021) shows that digital citizenship has a broader dimension than just access to technology, whereas Alper & Goggin (2017) emphasizes that digital technology needs to be understood within the framework of rights fulfillment.

In the context of people with disabilities, this expansion is important because someone may have a device and internet connection, but not yet be able to use technology to access services,

communicate, build communities, express opinions, or influence public decisions. Thus, based on the synthesis of 22 articles, meaningful digital participation can be understood as the ability and opportunity for people with disabilities to: 1) be present in and access digital spaces; 2) obtain accessible information; 3) communicate and build relationships; 4) use digital public services; 5) express identity and experiences; 6) voice interests; 7) participate in political processes; 8) produce information and media; 9) be involved in technology design; and 10) have influence over decisions or agendas related to their lives.

This shift is in line with the findings Nurfikria *et al.* (2026) which explicitly directs attention from access to meaningful participation, including media production, agenda setting, representation, and contribution to the public sphere.

4.2 Digital citizenship as a right

The second dimension that emerged was rights-based digital citizenship. Alper & Goggin (2017) places digital citizenship within a rights framework, while Nurhayati & Kardi (2024) emphasize the importance of viewing access to information and technology as part of digital rights and legal citizenship.

This approach has important conceptual consequences. If digital access is viewed as a right, then accessibility failures cannot be understood solely as user deficiencies. Instead, service providers, governments, technology developers, and digital platforms have a responsibility to provide an environment that enables citizens to participate.

Findings Frandell & Allgood (2026) Strengthening this perspective through the concept of institutionalized accessibility. Accessibility needs to be part of organizational governance and learning, not just the responsibility of individual users.

4.3 From individual citizenship to shared responsibility

The findings of 22 articles also show the need to shift the overly individualistic paradigm of digital citizenship. Newman *et al.* (2017) shows that digital participation capacity is influenced by social structure and distribution of resources. Alathur & Pai (2023) adding that administrative and platform support also influence social media adoption in the context of disability.

Therefore, inclusive digital citizenship is better understood as a shared responsibility between citizens, society, government, organizations, and technology providers. Individuals still have a role in developing literacy and using technology, but successful participation is not solely determined by individual capacity.

The framework is also in accordance with van Toorn & Cox (2024), who critique understandings of digital citizenship that focus solely on individual independence, competition, and technological efficiency. They draw attention to a more critical, rights-based conception of digital citizenship.

4.4 From “for users” to “with users”

One of the most powerful conceptual extensions in the literature is the shift in the position of people with disabilities from objects of services to subjects who have the capacity to shape technology. Safari *et al.* (2023) shows that the involvement of people with disabilities in technology design enables them to become co-designers and co-producers. Meanwhile, van Toorn (2024) shows that co-design is not just a matter of producing accessible products, but also a matter of who has a voice, who is represented, and who has influence in decision-making.

Thus, inclusive digital citizenship needs to incorporate a dimension of participatory agency. People with disabilities are not simply recipients of technology designed by others, but rather have the opportunity to influence how technology is designed, used, and developed.

5. Conceptual Synthesis Towards Inclusive Digital Citizenship

Based on a total of 22 articles, this study found that the concept of digital citizenship for people with disabilities can be expanded through five interrelated dimensions, namely:

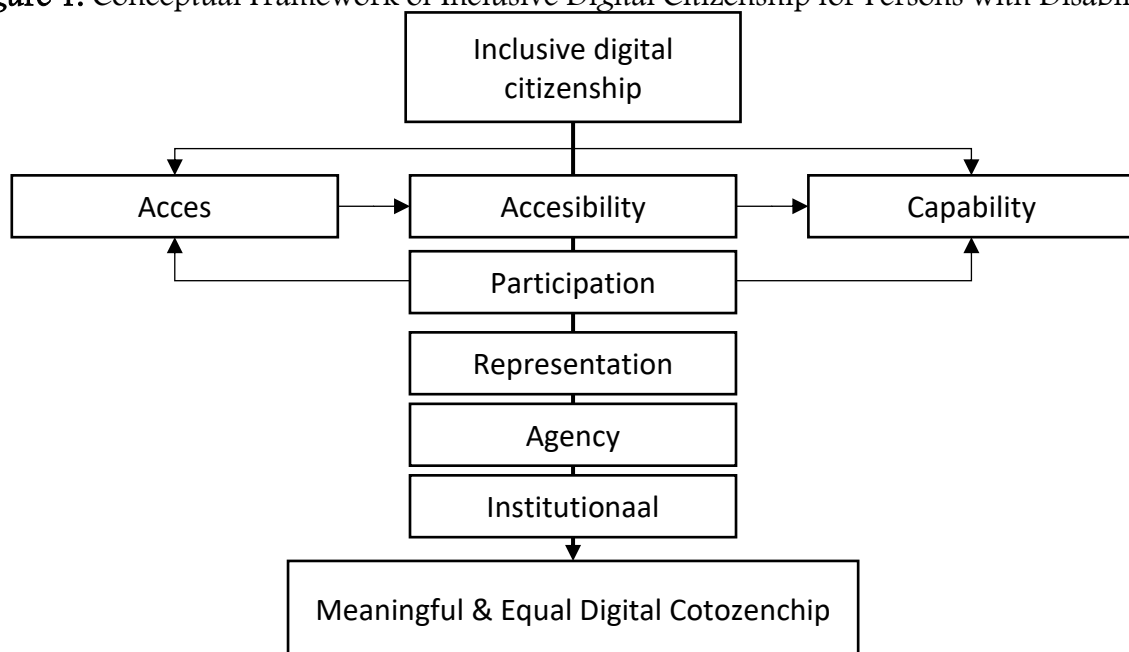
Table 4. Dimensions of Inclusive Digital Citizenship for Persons with Disabilities

Dimensions	Main focus
Accessible Citizenship	Access to technology, information and services
Empowered Citizenship	Literacy, independence, and the ability to use information

Participatory Citizenship	Social interaction, communication, advocacy, and political participation
Representative Citizenship	Media production, self-representation, and agenda-setting
Co-productive Citizenship	Co-design, co-production, and influence on technology decisions

These five dimensions demonstrate that inclusive digital citizenship is not simply defined as a person's ability to use technology safely and effectively. In the context of disability, digital citizenship must encompass the ability and opportunity to gain access and use technology, build relationships, express opinions, obtain public services, participate politically, generate representation, and influence decision-making processes. Conceptually, this synthesis can be formulated as:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Inclusive Digital Citizenship for Persons with Disabilities



This formula isn't simply about adding technological elements, but rather represents a paradigm shift. Access is the starting point; accessibility ensures technology can be used; capability allows users to utilize technology; participation enables social and civic engagement; representation provides space for the experiences and voices of people with disabilities; agency allows them to influence the digital space; and institutional responsibility ensures the entire process isn't solely the responsibility of individuals.

Discussion

1. Barriers and Opportunities for Digital Participation of Persons with Disabilities

The synthesis results show that the literature describes barriers to digital participation at three main levels. First, individual barriers include skills, literacy, communication skills, and the need for support. Second, technological barriers include inaccessible design, usability, compatibility, and limited information formats. Third, structural barriers include resource inequality, stigma, weak institutional support, policy design, and power distribution. At the same time, digital opportunities are found in the form of information access, social interaction, public services, advocacy, political communication, media production, and involvement in technology design.

Thus, the main finding for the first problem formulation is that the issue of digital participation of people with disabilities is not merely a digital divide in the sense of device and internet access, but

rather a participation divide, namely the gap in abilities and opportunities to benefit, interact, have a voice, and influence the digital space.

2. Draft Digital Citizenship Can Be Expanded to Be More Inclusive

The literature suggests that the concept of digital citizenship needs to be expanded from an approach centered on individual access and competence to one that encompasses rights, accessibility, meaningful participation, representation, agency, co-production, and institutional responsibility. Alper & Goggin (2017) as well as van Toorn & Cox (2024) provide the basis for rights-based and critical digital citizenship, while Safari et al. (2023) and van Toorn (2024) expanding it through co-design and participatory agency.

Thus, inclusive digital citizenship can be understood not only as being able to use digital technology, but also as being able to participate, be represented, exercise rights, and influence digital public life. These findings demonstrate that people with disabilities need to be positioned as digital citizens with rights, voice, capacity, and agency, while governments, public institutions, organizations, and technology providers have a responsibility to create the conditions that enable such participation.

3. Theoretical Implications of Synthesis Results

The synthesis of 22 articles reveals a conceptual shift from digital inclusion, digital participation, to inclusive digital citizenship. The first phase focused on access, asking whether people with disabilities have the tools, connections, and capabilities to use technology. The second phase shifted to participation, asking whether technology truly enables social interaction, access to information, services, advocacy, and political participation. The third phase saw newer literature positioning people with disabilities as digital citizenship actors who can produce media, set agendas, advocate, and engage in technology design.

These developments demonstrate that digital inclusion doesn't stop when someone successfully enters a digital space. Inclusion becomes more substantive when individuals can use that space to exercise their citizenship rights, build relationships, express their interests, obtain services, generate representation, and influence public life.

Thus, the findings of this literature point to the understanding that inclusive digital citizenship is a multidimensional and relational concept. It is shaped not only by individual capacity, but also by the relationships between individuals, technology, society, organizations, and institutions. This perspective also explains why providing internet access or devices alone is not enough to generate equal digital participation. Findings regarding institutionalized accessibility, co-design, digital rights, political digital citizenship, and meaningful participation demonstrate that expanding the concept of digital citizenship must encompass both structural and institutional dimensions.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the literature review, digital participation of people with disabilities cannot be understood solely in terms of device ownership and internet access. It is a multidimensional process influenced by technological accessibility, digital skills, socioeconomic conditions, communication support, service design, and institutional support. The literature shows that digital technology offers significant potential for expanding access to information, education, public services, social communication, advocacy, political participation, media production, and the empowerment of people with disabilities. However, various structural and institutional barriers still cause digital technology, under certain conditions, to reproduce existing exclusions. Therefore, the concept of digital citizenship needs to be expanded from an understanding oriented towards the ability to use technology to a digital citizenship that guarantees accessibility, fulfillment of rights, the ability to participate meaningfully, representation, agency, and involvement in the process of developing digital technology and services. The literature synthesis shows that inclusive digital citizenship positions people with disabilities not merely as technology users, but as citizens who have the right to access, use, influence, produce, and participate in the digital space.

Based on these findings, the development of inclusive digital citizenship needs to be directed towards a more systematic approach and oriented towards meaningful participation. Technology developers, digital platform providers, governments, educational institutions, organizations for people with disabilities, and the community need to strengthen the implementation of accessibility and universal design principles, provide support and improve digital literacy and skills, ensure the availability of accessible information and public services, and directly involve people with disabilities in the design, evaluation, and decision-making processes related to digital technology. Further research is also recommended to expand empirical studies on the experiences of various disability groups in the digital space, particularly regarding political participation, media production, advocacy, public services, and co-design, so that the concept of inclusive digital citizenship can be developed based on the real experiences and needs of people with disabilities in diverse social contexts.

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