

What level of Internet access does Paducah, Kentucky have? In order to answer this question, I ran a search of ISPs (Internet Service Providers) in the (502) area code (the area code which contains Paducah, Kentucky). The result of this search, which I obtained at <http://www.ispfinder.com>, showed one hundred-ninety ISPs that provided local access numbers for the (502) area code. Included in the search results were local ISPs (such as Access Kentucky INC) and national ISPs (such as CompuServe and Mindspring).

Based on these search results, I think that the level of Internet access availability in Paducah is equivalent to that in a major metropolitan area. One of the factors that make the Internet the “global village” is that as long as an area has phone lines, it can connect to the Internet through a computer.

Another factor, however, which needs to be considered when determining the level of Internet access of Paducah is the ability of its citizens to afford Internet access. The main reason why workers at the Paducah plant continued to work there, even after they had grown suspicious that their health was in danger, was that it was one of the better paying jobs in the area. “[The Paducah plant] offers some of the best-paying jobs in a region plagued by low salaries” (Stephens, 2). This leads me to believe that affording Internet access in Paducah is a problem.

It is my guess that Internet access in homes is about half as prevalent in Paducah as it is in a wealthier city, such as San Francisco, California. Would a higher level of Internet access in Paducah have prevented the mishandling of dangerous radioactive material, and thusly the ensuing environmental disaster? Because the Internet did not become readily available until about 5 years ago, a higher level of Internet access would not have affected the events before then. However, it is possible that in the last five years, a worker at the plant could have decided to do some research on the effects of the radioactive materials that were handled at the plant. Had this worker possessed easy access to the Internet, it might have been easier for him to conduct this research.

In my opinion, it would be less likely for something that happened in Paducah to happen in a more wealthy area, such as San Francisco, California. The main reason for this, however, is not that the level of Internet access is greater. Instead, the fact that more jobs would be available in the wealthier area would leave the workers not as willing to work under such poor conditions, thereby forcing the plant to improve working conditions.