



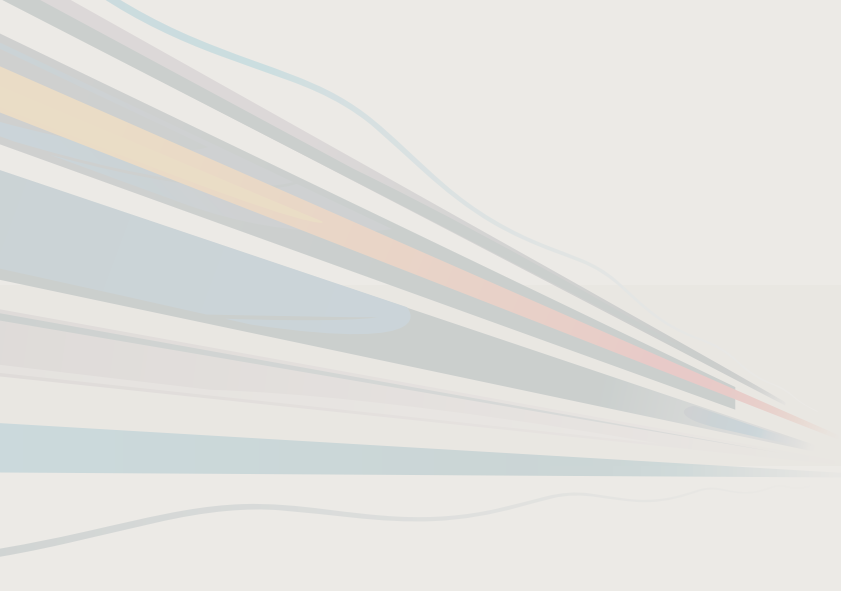
Ministry of Local Government  
and Modernisation

Strategy

# Digital Throughout Life

National strategy to improve digital participation and competence in the population





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# 1 Background

The purpose of this strategy is to prevent digital exclusion in Norway. The purpose, overarching goals and focus areas emphasised in this document will help to through different life phases.

The Government has been working on preventing digital exclusion and divides in the population since 2014. The work has been based on Report No 27 to the Storting (2015–2016) *Digital agenda for Norway*. Efforts have primarily been aimed at elderly citizens and vulnerable groups in society, such as people not in employment or education and non-Western immigrants. Experience shows that they have faced the biggest challenges relating to lacking or poor digital skills. The need for advanced digital skills in the labour market has not been part of this work, but is a separate area addressed through the follow-up of Report No 14 to the Storting (2019–2020) *The Skills Reform – Lifelong Learning*.

The main purpose of the skills development measures implemented in the target groups for this strategy has been to avoid digital divides in the population. Another important goal of the Government's work in this area has been to help speed up the introduction of the digital-first principle in the public sector, and to make sure that as many people as possible are allowed to take part in the digital transition of society.

The digitalisation of society and the business sector has accelerated in a number of areas since the coronavirus pandemic broke out and Norway went into lockdown in March 2020. In many ways, the pandemic has acted as a sort of catalyst for the digital transition. Mandatory home office, travel restrictions and increased demand for online information and services have had numerous consequences for the use of ICT in general and public sector digitalisation in particular. After the lockdown, the need to develop new public digital services exploded. Figures from the Norwegian Digitalisation Agency show that the use of public

digital services, for example the number of logins to 'ID-porten' up until May 2021, increased by more than 30 per cent compared with the same period the year before. And the number of digital mailbox messages sent to citizens during the first five months of 2021 increased by 43 per cent compared with the same period the year before.

More than a year after stringent infection control measures were implemented, there are indications that the rapid technological transformation of society has escalated the need to improve the population's general digital competence. According to the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir),<sup>12</sup> 40 per cent of the population have experienced a need for improved digital skills during the pandemic. The groups that have seen the greatest need are seniors and the unemployed. They are the two groups with the lowest level of digital competence compared with the population in general, and whose needs for digital training and guidance have, to the greatest extent, gone unmet during the pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic may have helped to widen the digital divide in that some groups in society now have insufficient digital competence. They are thereby at risk of being excluded, as they lack both access to and knowledge about the use of important public and private digital services.

## **1.1 Digital competence = knowledge, skills and judgement**

Today, digital skills are a prerequisite for participation in the labour market, education, society and various social contexts. Having basic digital skills means to be able to use digital tools and services in an expedient and appropriate manner.

Digital skills are decisive to be able to understand and make use of information and services offered via digital channels. Digital skills include digital judgement up to a certain level.

### **The three levels of digital skills are taken from HK-dir<sup>3</sup>:**

1. Is able to understand digital information when required, and uses simple digital tools. Is familiar with basic netiquette. Needs training to start using new tools or services.
2. Actively uses digital information and is able to apply this information in new settings and situations. Is familiar with and uses digital tools and services. Is increasingly conscious of netiquette and digital judgement.
3. Is a reflective user of complex digital tools and services. Actively uses digital services appropriate to the situation and purpose, and active use is a natural part of day-to-day life in most situations. Able to quickly become familiar with new areas of use and is a conscious, reflective user.

In everyday parlance, the terms digital skills and digital competence are often used interchangeably. This strategy will primarily use the term digital competence, because it includes both knowledge and skills and a capacity for reflection and critical thinking.

It is important that people gain more knowledge about and a greater understanding of topics and challenges relating to data protection and information security linked to the use of digital tools and solutions. This is vital to avoid being the victim of cyberattacks, fraud and other threats and vulnerabilities. Citizens who have acquired such knowledge and have effective strategies to avoid finding themselves in vulnerable digital situations are considered to have good digital judgement.

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<sup>1</sup> On 1 July 2021, Skills Norway was incorporated into the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kompetansenorge.no/nyheter/okt-behov-for-digital-kompetanse-under-korona/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kompetansenorge.no/Grunnleggende-ferdigheter/Digitale-ferdigheter/>

In this strategy, digital competence covers the basic digital skills described above, with particular emphasis on the importance of good digital judgement. This strategy will ensure increased attention to this area.

## **1.2 Most people are digital, but some are left behind**

Norway is among the world leaders in terms of access to ICT equipment, as well as internet access and use. This is reflected in the population's use of and skills relating to digital tools and services. According to Statistics Norway,<sup>4</sup> 92 per cent of the population aged 9 to 79 use the internet daily. Practically everyone between the ages of 13 and 44 visit the internet on an average day. The proportion in the 67 to 79 age group is somewhat lower at 67 per cent, but there is nonetheless an increase of 6 percentage points from 2019. Internet access is on the same level as in the past three years, with a penetration rate of 98 per cent in the population. The proportion owning a smartphone is also stable at 96 per cent, and, overall, 99 per cent of the population between the ages of 9 and 79 state that they have their own mobile phone. Among those aged between 67 and 79, 79 per cent state that they own their own smartphone, an increase of 3 percentage points from 2019.

On assignment for the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (KMD), HK-dir conducted a survey in 2020 of the population's digital skills.<sup>5</sup> The results indicate that the level of basic digital skills is generally good in the Norwegian population. Among people over the age of 16, 61 per cent are considered strong digital users, the highest proportion recorded since 2007, while 24 per cent are considered medium-level digital users and 11 per cent are considered to have a poor level of basic digital skills.

Despite the fact that Norway is one of the most digitally advanced countries in the world, 89 per cent of respondents in HK-dir's survey state that they feel the need to improve their day-to-day digital skills.

Only three per cent of the respondents, approximately 130,000 people, state that they do not use the internet, a smartphone, a computer or tablet. This group is largely comprised of seniors, people outside the workforce and people with a low level of education (primary or lower secondary school). These groups also include the most individuals with poor basic digital skills. The proportion who do not use digital tools is highest in the 80-plus age group, where around 30 per cent state that they do not use the internet or any digital tools.

More than 40 per cent state a lack of interest, or too little time, as the most important challenges preventing them from improving their digital skills. In this group, almost 30 per cent state that too complicated or technical language is one of the main reasons preventing them from becoming better at using digital tools and services. Equally many state that they know too little about digital tools and services to be able to improve. A total of 17 per cent state a lack of universally designed solutions as a barrier, while 67 per cent of the respondents state that they would like to try to develop their digital skills without assistance, and 60 per cent state that they want to receive guidance from family or friends. Thirty-five per cent state that they would like courses to be provided or funded by the public authorities. Approximately 70 per cent would like access to flexible online courses, such as web-based training.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/artikler-og-publikasjoner/norsk-mediebarometer-2020>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kompetansenorge.no/statistikk-og-analyse/publikasjoner/befolkningens-digitale-kompetanse-og-deltakelse/>

Twenty per cent state a lack of training options as a barrier to improving digital skills. At the same time, ten per cent state that there is inadequate training in how to use aids or special settings for people with impairments.

The need for adequate IT security has increased in step with the digitalisation of society. HK-dir's survey identifies the biggest knowledge gap and a considerable lack of experience in this area among the population, including among people under the age of 60 and people in employment.

According to Elkjøp's tech-trouble 2020 survey,<sup>6</sup> 23 per cent of people over the age of 18 feel that they miss out on information because they lack knowledge about technology. The survey also shows that 36 per cent are concerned that the ever-increasing pace of technological development will lead to more people being excluded. A total of 35 per cent state that they would like to know more about the potential uses of new technology, while 23 per cent would like training in improved utilisation of electronic products

Thirty-eight per cent of the respondents in Elkjøp's survey believe that technology has become too expensive. Sixteen per cent state that they find it challenging to keep up with technological developments due to functional impairments. Age is also an important factor, according to the survey. A total of 48 per cent of respondents over the age of 18 say that they know elderly people whose quality of life would improve if they knew more about technology. Twenty-seven per cent believe that access to, and knowledge about, technology and digital tools have created a class divide in society.

When society and public and private services become increasingly digitalised, it can be greatly beneficial in terms of efficient case processing and time and money saved, but it can also lead to frustration and a stronger sense of exclusion among those who do not have the abilities or resources to participate.

### **1.3 Digital exclusion gives rise to challenges**

Although access to digital tools such as computers, tablets and smartphones is generally good in the population today, there are differences in digital competence both between different sections of the population and in the type of skills they possess. People with little or no digital competence can experience digital exclusion because the way society has developed means that more or less all citizens are dependent on being able to master digital tools, among other things to gain easy access to public services and benefits they are entitled to.

The population survey<sup>7</sup> shows that many people with a low level of digital competence find it difficult to perform tasks on public agencies' websites. This also entails a certain risk of losing out on equal access to services and products provided by both public and private enterprises, including the use of digital solutions provided by local authorities, health trusts, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and the Norwegian Tax Administration, and private services such as online shopping and banking.

There are several reasons why some people are less active in the digital world than others. It is often a question of lack of access to technology, poor finances or lack of motivation and knowledge to start using digital tools and services. Digital exclusion can have consequences

<sup>6</sup> <https://elkjopnordic.com/tech-trouble-2020>

<sup>7</sup> [https://dfo.no/filer/Fagområder/Rapporter/Rapporter-Difi/innbyggerundersokelsen\\_2019\\_-\\_rapport\\_innbyggerdel.pdf](https://dfo.no/filer/Fagområder/Rapporter/Rapporter-Difi/innbyggerundersokelsen_2019_-_rapport_innbyggerdel.pdf), see Chapter 7 Evaluation of the authorities' work.

for the individual's consumption of news, participation in the public debate and society, and thereby represents a threat to freedom of speech and participation in democratic processes.

Previous surveys conducted by Consumption Research Norway (SIFO), among others, and statistics from Statistics Norway, in addition to information from various public, private and voluntary organisations the Ministry has been in dialogue with, identify the following groups as most vulnerable and at risk of digital exclusion:

- People over the age of 65
- First-generation non-Western immigrants, especially women
- People of working age who are neither in education nor employment
- People with functional impairments
- People with temporary or permanent health challenges

They are largely the same groups that were identified in the 2018 report from the project group that helped to develop *Digihjelpen*, a municipal guidance service in basic digital competence.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1.4 Digital vulnerability

The research organisation SINTEF conducts research on digital exclusion<sup>9</sup> to inform the improvement of NAV's digital solutions. They have received input from people working with individuals whose ability to work has been temporarily or permanently reduced due to illness or functional impairment. According to researcher Trude Mariane Midtgård,<sup>10</sup> the biggest challenge in using NAV's self-service solutions is not a lack of digital competence, but a lack of administrative competence, meaning an inadequate understanding of how the public administration works and the language that is used. The transition to digital solutions also requires a higher degree of written communication than before, which can lead to a poorer understanding and ability to communicate the need for assistance. The project finds that existing inequalities are maintained and may be reinforced through the digital solutions currently in use.

According to Midtgård, vulnerability to digital exclusion is defined by four factors: barriers to access, digital competence, bureaucratic competence and health-related challenges. Barriers to access include factors such as access to equipment and the internet, but also the use of an eID code generator, lack of personal guidance, a limited personal network and poor personal finances. Barriers to access can be permanent or arise in an urgent situation without access to necessary or appropriate equipment or assistance. The digitalisation of professional services can make it difficult to distinguish between tasks that require digital competence and tasks that require administrative competence.

According to Midtgård, digital competence is about the ability to make use of digital technology to achieve personal goals, for example to use a keyboard and mouse to navigate a browser, find a form, complete it and upload attachments. Administrative competence is about the ability to read, understand and use information to achieve personal goals, for example which rights and duties apply, but also to understand which form is relevant to your own case and which fields should be completed. A lack of administrative competence can also make it difficult to know what to ask for or who to contact.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ks.no/globalassets/fagomrader/digitalisering/digihjelpen/digihjelpen-rapport.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.sintef.no/prosjekter/2019/digitalt\\_utenforskap/](https://www.sintef.no/prosjekter/2019/digitalt_utenforskap/)

<sup>10</sup> Midtgård, Trude Mariane, Kari Sand, Sylvi Thun, Geir Haakon Helland and Solveig O Ose (to be published in 2021). *Digital ekskludering i NAV – hvem, når, hvordan?* SINTEF report.

According to Midtgård, health-related challenges are an additional challenge for some users of NAV's digital solutions. Health-related challenges consist of physical barriers, cognitive barriers and reduced self-efficacy and self-confidence. Health-related physical barriers include challenges such as focusing on a screen, light sensitivity, tremor, pain and reduced impulse control. Cognitive barriers include problems with concentration, memory, problem-solving, decision-making and orientation, and factors that impact the ability to gain an overview of and complete digital tasks. Self-efficacy and self-confidence are fundamental to the motivation needed to take on digital tasks unaided.





## 2 Measures implemented to improve users' digital competence

Not everyone has an employer or family member they can ask for advice and help if they have difficulties using digital tools and services or need help to improve their own digital competence. It is in the interest of society that key resources are available in the public, private and voluntary sectors to help vulnerable groups and individuals access public or private digital services. Public services are intended for all citizens, which is why they should be accessible to everyone regardless of their competence and skills.

In cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), the Government has been working since 2015 to develop a local (municipal) low-threshold service for the purpose of increasing people's digital participation.

### **Digidel – digital training resources**

From 2015 to 2017, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (KMD) carried out a national programme for increased digital participation and competence in the population, which, among other things, developed free training and guidance material in basic digital skills (the Digidel programme). The resources were developed as a collaboration between KMD, KS, HK-dir, the National Library, the Norwegian Library Association, ICT Norway, Bufdir, NorSIS, Seniornett and the Norwegian Digitalisation Agency.

The Digidel programme formed the basis for the establishment and development of the training resources that are now administered and further developed by the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir, formerly Skills Norway). Course and guidance material is freely available via the website [www.digidel.no](http://www.digidel.no). KMD annually allocates funds for the operation and further development of these resources for use in connection with courses and training, or by anyone who would like to learn by themselves.

### **Municipal Digihjelpen services**

Since 2018, KMD and KS have been involved in a partnership<sup>11</sup> to help local authorities establish a permanent guidance service for citizens with little or no digital competence. Some municipalities currently offer assistance and guidance via libraries and citizen centres (*innbyggertorg*), and some also collaborate with voluntary organisations such as Seniornett, the Norwegian Pensioners' Association or the Red Cross. KS currently runs an advisory service that helps municipalities to develop and establish Digihjelpen services ([www.digihjelpen.no](http://www.digihjelpen.no)). Through this service, municipalities can receive tips and advice and share experience with other municipalities, so that the establishment of local services is based on the knowledge and experience gained by municipalities that have already established such services for their citizens.

Since 2017, more than 120 municipalities have received allocations of a total of NOK 15 million. Based on their feedback to the Ministry, most of the recipients have managed to organise various temporary courses and training services for citizens, but many municipalities find it difficult to establish a permanent service. There are currently only 59 municipalities, accounting for 1.97 million citizens, that have registered with KS and state that they have established a guidance service. A survey conducted by Rambøll on behalf of KMD found that 75 municipalities and 2 county authorities have a corresponding guidance service<sup>12</sup> (see below for more information about Rambøll's survey).

### **Grants for basic digital competence**

Since 2014, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation has allocated more than NOK 50 million to various initiatives aimed to increase digital participation and improve the population's basic digital competence. The initiatives include annual grants for Seniornett Norge to help provide digital training to senior citizens throughout the country, access to KS to operate the advisory service for the establishment of municipal Digihjelpen services, the operation and development of free training material via Digidel.no, and direct grants for municipalities that would like to establish their own assistance and guidance services.

## **2.1 Available grant schemes**

On assignment for KMD,<sup>13</sup> Rambøll has mapped support and grant schemes that aim to improve citizens' digital competence and participation. The survey includes all types of organisations working on digital competence and participation, including those that do not receive support under these schemes.

Rambøll has identified a total of seven schemes whose main objective is improved digital competence and participation, one of which is the learning resource Digidel (KMD). The remaining six schemes are financial grants and consist of a grant for the establishment of Digihjelpen (KMD); a grant for Seniornett (KMD); training and implementation support to strengthen digital competence – package of measures for elderly citizens (Directorate of Health); the development and testing of technological tools and ICT training to counteract loneliness among the elderly (Directorate of Health); Universal design – knowledge development, skills development and information (Bufdir); and the Elkjøp Foundation. Overall, the survey identifies few support and grant schemes exclusively aimed at digital competence

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/fortsetter-samarbeid-om-digital-kompetanse/id2684986/>

<sup>12</sup> Report by Rambøll on support and grant schemes for digital competence and participation at 23 August 2021. The final report will be published in September 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Report by Rambøll on support and grant schemes for digital competence and participation at 23 August 2021. The final report will be published in September 2021.

and participation. The size of the public grant schemes aimed at digital participation and competence totals just over NOK 45.8 million. The private Elkjøp Foundation manages a fund of NOK 500,000.

Rambøll has found, however, that there are a number of grant and support schemes where improved digital competence and participation is one of the sub-goals, or schemes with a broad mission that indirectly covers digital competence and participation. The survey identified a total of 40 such schemes; 31 in the public sector and 9 in the private sector. The schemes have many purposes other than digital competence, but the survey has identified that the most relevant competence areas they cover are basic digital skills, work-related digital competence and digital participation.

The mapping of the landscape of providers that offer training or in other ways work to improve people's digital competence and participation identified a total of 106 organisations. They include 33 public, 52 non-profit or voluntary and 21 private organisations. In general, the organisations cover a wide spectrum of target groups, but some groups are significantly better represented than others. The two main groups are elderly citizens and immigrants, each making up around 20 per cent of the target groups covered by these providers.

#### **Who are the providers?**

The main organisations directly involved in raising the population's basic digital skills, in terms of both services and geographical scope, are:

- Public libraries
- Volunteer centres
- Local branches of the Red Cross
- Local branches of Seniornett
- Local branches of the Norwegian Pensioners' Association
- Individual adult education associations, their local branches and member organisations

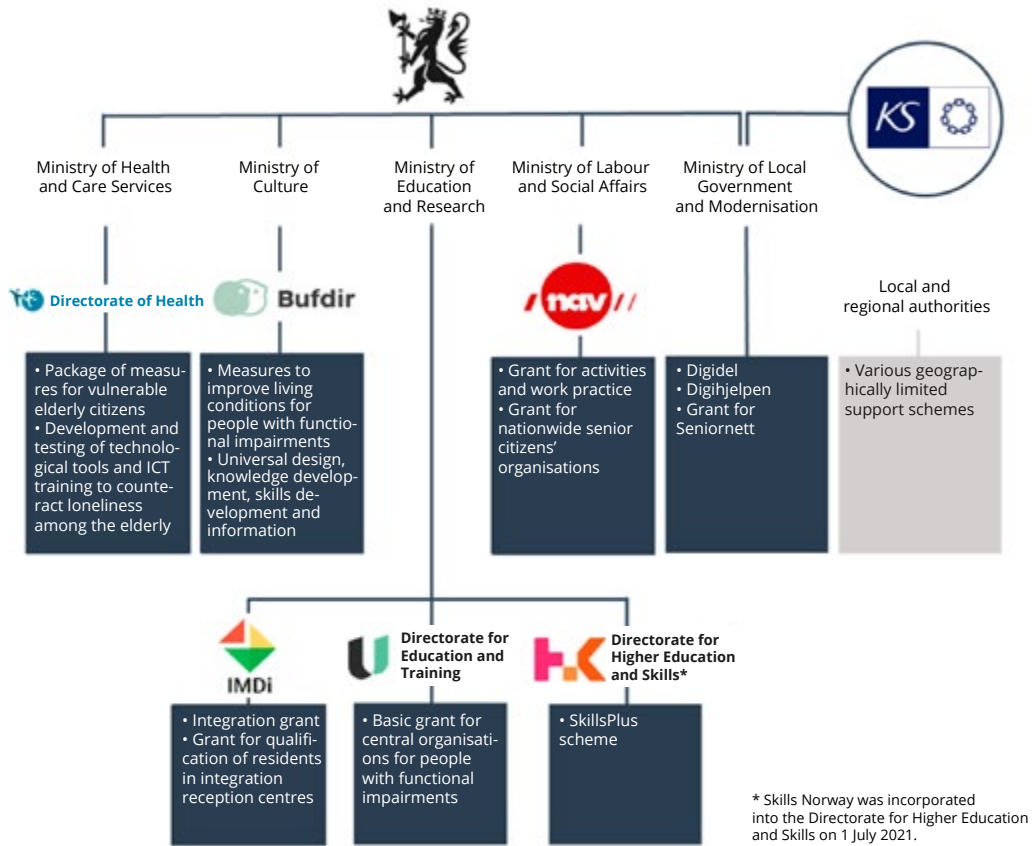
In addition, a fair number of smaller non-profit and voluntary organisations, municipal and private providers offer services aimed at improving digital skills. The majority of these providers work to improve people's basic digital skills. There are also a number of organisations working on knowledge dissemination, especially to raise the level of digital judgement in different population groups.

#### **Target groups for the grants**

Through its mapping of various grant schemes and providers, Rambøll noticed that most of the services are aimed at two target groups: elderly citizens and immigrants. As regards the latter, most of the services are aimed at women, including ethnic minority women, and not immigrants in general.

Several providers also target people with functional impairments, especially people with impaired vision or combined hearing and vision impairments. Young people are also a target group to a certain extent, but largely in the digital judgement field.

Figure 2.1 Overview of public grant schemes and administrators



## 2.2 Digital skills development through different phases of life

Today, a range of different providers are responsible for offering citizens training to achieve basic digital competence on a lifelong basis. In early childhood, parents and immediate family members set the standard and limits for young children's opportunity to explore and test digital tools and solutions. Later, various other providers are responsible for facilitating digital skills development in education or employment.



### 3 Purpose of the strategy, overarching objectives and focus areas

#### Prerequisites for equal digital participation

A strategy to improve the population's digital competence and participation must be based on a common understanding that certain key conditions must be in place to make sure that all citizens become equal digital participants. The figure below outlines five conditions on which the strategy's measures are based.

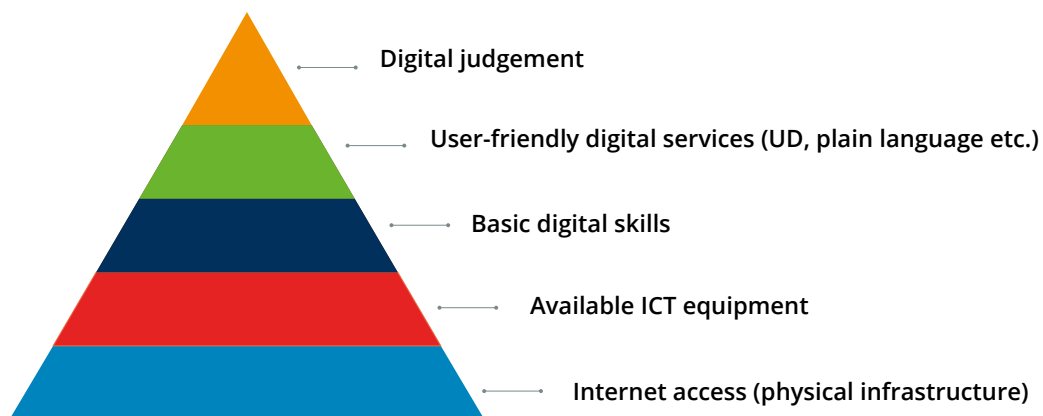


Figure 3.1 Five conditions for equal digital participation in society

The main objective of the strategy is to counteract digital exclusion by ensuring that all citizens have sufficient digital competence to be able to participate in society on an equal basis.

#### The Government's aims:

- to help prevent digital exclusion in all age groups
- to facilitate free, quality-assured assistance services for citizens with little or no digital competence

- to further develop the partnership with KS to facilitate the development of good, local guidance services throughout the country
- to work on holding the business sector more accountable for including all citizens in the digital services they provide
- to help ensure that, as a rule, publicly funded low-threshold services aimed at people with little or no digital competence are free
- to ensure regular mapping of citizens' level of digital competence
- to work together with public, private and voluntary providers on a campaign to encourage citizens who need to improve their digital competence to register for courses
- to consider whether one public agency should be assigned overarching responsibility for coordinating national efforts to improve the population's digital competence

### 3.1 Main focus areas

#### Internet access (the digital foundation)

Access to reasonable, modern, high-quality mobile and broadband services across the country is one of the conditions for enabling all citizens to take active part in a digitalised society. If the quality and speed are not satisfactory seen in relation to what is required of the users, and the price level is too high, this may exclude some people from digital participation, for example people in rural districts with poor internet access or people from low-income families. Good collaboration between central and local authorities and providers of mobile and broadband services is important to ensure high-quality internet access in all parts of the country.

#### The Government's aims:

- that the digital foundation provides all users with secure, robust internet access and services
- that all households and enterprises in Norway are offered high-speed broadband (at least 100 Mbit/s download speed and at least 10 Mbit/s upload speed) by the end of 2025
- to continue offering state grants to develop broadband infrastructure in rural areas
- to offer a rural 'package' in excess of NOK 0.5 billion for the upcoming 5G auction for the development of high-speed wireless broadband of at least 100 Mbit/s
- to facilitate home internet access for all citizens
- to consider establishing a public procurement scheme to ensure universal functional access to internet and telephony services
- to help ensure the availability of at least three full-service mobile networks that can compete in the corporate and private markets, with mobile network coverage where people work and spend their time, and where the private, voluntary and public sectors operate
- to facilitate effective competition that reduces the price difference to other Nordic countries on mobile and broadband services, and ensure that the electronic communications authority devote special attention to the price level in parts of the country where there are fewer providers to choose from
- that one or more broadband consumer portals are established that enable price comparisons between different broadband services
- to work to ensure that good security solutions are incorporated into products and services by default and by design, thereby ensuring maximum consumer trust

### **Available ICT equipment**

There is currently an array of computers, tablets and smartphones in different price categories on the market. Norwegians are world-leading in terms of access to and use of ICT and electronic equipment. Despite this, a number of elderly citizens and low-income families have neither access to nor the means to buy the equipment needed for digital participation. It takes a certain level of understanding and general technical skills to buy and start using various ICT equipment, for example to set up a router, connect to the internet, use a computer and subscribe to an online newspaper. Most pupils and students gain access to a computer or tablet at school, but many elderly citizens and people outside the workforce have few places where they can borrow ICT equipment or receive guidance in the use of equipment that suits their needs.

The electronics industry, represented by chain stores, workshops and suppliers, has joined forces to offer consumers a safe and secure second-hand electronics scheme. The company behind the website OmBrukt.no will facilitate reuse of discarded electronic equipment by issuing a two-year exchange warranty on these products.

The industry's own reuse scheme will help to extend the products' service life. This is environmentally friendly and reduces the amount of waste, while also making reasonable electronic equipment with a warranty available to consumers. The scheme initially only covers white goods, but will be extended to also include more products such as brown goods and mobile phones. Some telecom providers already offer corresponding solutions for second-hand mobile phones. Increased market access, for example to second-hand smartphones, will be a favourable solution for citizens with limited finances.

#### **The Government's aims:**

- to facilitate the establishment of reuse schemes by the business sector and IT industry to provide consumers with easier access to more reasonable electronic equipment
- to ensure that social welfare measures that provide necessary access to and use of digital tools are maintained

### **Basic digital skills**

A minimum level of digital competence is required to be able to use the internet and ICT equipment and to utilise the range of digital services offered by public and private providers. Primary and secondary school pupils are taught basic digital skills, and the national curriculum contains several learning objectives to cover this area. Students, apprentices and people in employment are offered training in use of relevant systems and programs they need in their education or profession. Unemployed persons can apply to NAV to take part in training measures for the purpose of qualifying them for available jobs.

Disability benefit claimants, people not in employment or education and elderly people are some of the groups currently not entitled to digital skills training from the public.

An increased range of learning activities does not seem to be enough to increase the rate of participation among people with poor digital competence. The activities also need to be adapted to make it easier for these groups to participate. Working on increasing motivation and offering meaningful, achievable activities can help to boost demand for these services.

#### **The Government's aims:**

- to help develop the role of public libraries and citizen centres as local guidance centres for digital competence
- to support the National Library's development and collaboration projects, with the aim of, among other things, helping the libraries to develop and start using new forms of services and collaboration that benefit citizens, in line with the priorities described in the National Library Strategy 2020–2023
- to strengthen cooperation with the voluntary sector on various training and guidance initiatives
- to strengthen cooperation with the business sector and voluntary organisations to raise the level of digital competence in the population
- to help establish a permanent meeting place for public and private providers to develop joint measures that can raise the level of digital competence in the population
- to help increase the business sector's participation in the development of digital training initiatives and courses and make these services more easily accessible

#### **User-friendly digital services**

In order to enable all citizens, including people with different functional impairments, to start using digital services offered by the public and private sector, the digital solutions must be universally designed and use plain language, without excessive use of foreign words and specialist terminology. User-friendly digital interfaces are important to enable citizens to exercise their rights and duties in society.

The Government and KS have presented a joint digital strategy for the public sector for the period 2019–2025 *One digital public sector*. One of the key measures outlined in the strategy is the development of seamless digital services for seven selected life events. Going forward, efforts devoted to the establishment of seamless services should consider including the design and position of some common basic features in the interfaces and menus, to make them more easily recognisable and thereby easier to use for users with poor digital skills or functional impairments.

#### **The Government's aims:**

- to enforce the regulations relating to the universal design of ICT
- to facilitate more testing by users, including people with functional impairments, in the development of public digital services
- to help ensure sufficient expertise relating to the procurement and ordering of public digital services that comply with universal design requirements and plain language principles
- to ensure the coordinated development of seamless services for selected life events
- to work to ensure that the design of public digital services is user-friendly and recognisable across different agencies, thereby making them available to citizens with a low level of digital competence
- to keep a clearer focus on the usability of public digital services
- to intensify the work on digital guardianships and authorisations
- to ensure better and more easily accessible information about how public services work and are organised



- to ensure that all citizens receive public information, whether they are digital users or not, through increased use of alternative information channels used by e.g. immigrants, elderly citizens and young people outside employment/education
- to help ensure that dummy versions of key digital services are developed for use in guidance and training contexts, to safeguard data protection

### **Digital judgement**

Digital judgement is about the ability to reflect and think critically, for example in relation to data protection, information security and copyright, and it is related to a critical understanding of the media. Digital judgement also concerns the ability to interact with and respect others, however, and the capacity for ethical reflection.

Citizens with poor digital judgement are more susceptible to various forms of fraud, for example by disclosing sensitive personal data to unauthorised persons who may abuse this information. Poor digital judgement can also weaken a person's ability to be critical of sources, which can contribute to the spreading of disinformation and propaganda (e.g. manipulated 'deepfake' videos). Poor digital judgement can also lead to citizens unintentionally being exploited by cybercriminals who attack digital services through IT equipment, and thereby contribute to destroying equipment and data.

For several decades, the authorities have made long-term, targeted efforts aimed at suppliers of ICT services and products to hold them accountable for integrating security and data protection into their products and services ('by design and by default'). This will mean that private individuals to a lesser extent will be required to have cyber security competence or acquire new digital skills and knowledge to be able to safeguard information security and data protection when they start using ICT products or services. The National Cyber Security Strategy for Norway (2019)<sup>14</sup> contains a comprehensive overview of the authorities' work on digital security.

Today, children and young people are trained in digital judgement through primary and secondary education. The website *dubestemmer.no* ('You decide') contains teaching resources available to schools. Many members of the population left school before digital judgement become part of the curriculum. They also need a place to seek advice and guidance and improve their digital competence. The website *Nettvett.no* contains guidance on topics such as security and data protection, aimed at all target groups. Private companies also offer guidance and security packages, among other things for the purpose of preventing online fraud. The website *Faktisk.no* also contributes to a more facts-based public discourse and aims to reduce disinformation.

The possibility of making existing training material more accessible and considering the need for new measures should nonetheless be looked into. The population's trust in the public sector's digitalisation work is decisive, and it is therefore particularly important that central and local authorities join forces to strengthen information security and data protection training for employees tasked with guiding citizens.

With support from the Directorate for Education and Training, KS has initiated the project 'SkoleSec' for the purpose of strengthening work on data protection and information security in primary and secondary education. The main purpose of the project is to support the school owners' work on assessing risk and facilitating and offering expedient tools and

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nasjonal-strategi-for-digital-sikkerhet/id2627177/>

services for use in schools. It is important, primarily, to define clear requirements of data protection by design and by default from service providers.

**The Government's aims:**

- to ensure that knowledge of data protection and information security is maintained by developing learning resources aimed at citizens
- to conduct information campaigns to raise citizens' level of digital security knowledge and skills
- to ensure that the principle of data protection by design and by default forms the basis for the development of all public digital services

**Other measures**

**The Government's aims:**

- to help ensure that public sector employees who provide guidance to citizens with little or no digital competence have the skills needed to do so
- to make sure that input, knowledge and advice are obtained from patient and user organisations when considering new measures in areas concerning digital skills development for selected target groups



## 4 Implementation and action plan

The main objectives and focus areas of the strategy will be followed up by an action plan containing concrete measures related to increased digital participation and competence in the population. The plan will be available before the end of 2021.

The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation has overarching responsibility for implementing the strategy. Implementation of the focus areas requires extensive cross-sector cooperation between ministries, public sector agencies, the municipal sector, private enterprises with commercial interests in digital services and products, and voluntary organisations.

The Ministry will enter into dialogue with KS on their further joint efforts to better facilitate the development of good local guidance services across the country. The Ministry will also consider whether one public agency should be assigned overarching responsibility for coordinating national efforts to improve the population's digital competence and participation.

The financial and administrative resources required to implement the strategy will be covered within the budgetary framework that applies at all times.

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