

[eInclusion in]

Finland

Suomi



ICT & Ageing

Geographic Digital Divide

eAccessibility

eInclusion

Cultural Diversity

Inclusive eGovernment

Digital Literacy & Competences

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Disclaimer:

This document is not intended to be exhaustive. Its purpose is to give an overview of the general eInclusion status in Finland. Even though every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the information herein should be treated as indicative and no responsibility for errors can be assumed. Neither the European Commission, nor any person acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use that could be made of the information provided.

Country Profile

Basic data and indicators

Basic Data

Population (1 000): 5 351.4 inhabitants (2010)

GDP at market prices: 171 315.0 million Euro (2009)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-27 = 100): 111.0 (2009)

GDP growth rate: -8.0 % (2009)

Inflation rate: 1.6 % (2009)

Unemployment rate: 8.2 % (2009)

Government debt/GDP: 44.0 % (2009)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): -2.2 % (2009)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Area: 338 000 km²

Capital city: Helsinki

Official EU languages: Finnish, Swedish

Currency: Euro

Source: [Europa website](#)

Information Society Indicators

Percentage of households with Internet access: 78 % (2009)

Percentage of households with broadband connection: 74 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet: 79 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for uploading self-created content: 9 % (2008)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for reading online newspapers/magazines: 64 % (2009)

Percentage of Individuals using the Internet for finding information about goods and services: 73 % (2009)

Percentage of Individuals using the Internet for seeking health-related information: 56 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for looking for a job or sending a job application: 24 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for doing an online course: 13 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking information with the purpose of learning: 66 % (2009)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interaction with public authorities: obtaining information 45 %, downloading forms 31.5 %, returning filled forms 22.6 % (2009)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Editorial notice: Statistical indicators referenced in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.

eInclusion History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: [ePractice news for eInclusion](#)

Recent News

August 2010

On *26 August*, the Disability Policy Steering Group prepared the '[Finnish Disability Policy Programme \(VAMPO\)](#)' 2010-2015 (*Suomen vammaispoliittinen ohjelma, VAMPO*). The programme outlines concrete actions to increase the **inclusion** of disabled persons, i.e. the availability of high quality special services and support measures to be ensured throughout Finland, while also strengthening and enhancing accessibility in Finnish society. One of future goals of the document is a sustainable policy on disability.

July 2010

Finland became the first country in the world to establish broadband as a legal right. Every person in Finland is **legally entitled** to a one-megabit broadband connection. Telecom operators have to be able to provide every permanent residence and place of business with access to a reasonably priced and high-quality connection with a minimum speed of 1 Mbit/s, as currently established by the Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö*). Summer homes are excluded from this regulation.

March 2010

The NGO [Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) (FAIDD), in its capacity as an [ImPaCT in Europe](#) (Improving Person Centred Technology in Europe) project partner, began its assistance in an online survey to assess the use of ICT and Electronic Assistive Technology (EAT). The [questionnaire](#) is available in Finnish, and the results of the data gathered will be used to evaluate the benefits of employing Person Centred Technology (PCT) for people with disabilities. ImPaCT aims to raise awareness about the benefits of using ICT and Assistive Technology to increase independence and quality of life of the disabled.

News 2009 and before

2009

- ▶ On *14 October 2009*, the online service project '[Findicator](#)' (*Findikaattori*) was set up jointly by the Prime Minister's Office and the Statistics Institute of Finland to provide current information on the progress of the Finnish society. The data included approximately 100 indicators for social progress via tables, graphs and written analysis. It has published over 1 000 reports annually online. Efforts have been made to ensure that the technical infrastructure of the website is as user-friendly as possible and meets special needs requirements.
- ▶ On *1 January 2009*, the National Institute for Health and Welfare (*Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, THL*) started operations following the merger of the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden tutkimus- ja kehittämiskeskus, STAKES*) and the National Public Health Institute (*Kansanterveyslaitos, KTL*). It sought to serve the broader Finnish society, in addition to the scientific community, actors in the field, decision-makers in central government and

municipalities, as an expert authority on matters that concern the special care of **persons with disabilities**.

- ▶ In 2009, the Government launched the '[Broadband 2015](#)' project (*Laajakaista 2015 -hanke*) intended to connect more than 99 % of the population to the Internet with fast fibre-optic, or cable networks by the target date.

2008

- ▶ On 2 December 2008, the A-Clinic Foundation and Nopola News won the **Marginalised People Award** and the **Geographic Inclusion Award**, respectively, at the European e-Inclusion Awards held in Vienna, Austria.
- ▶ In September 2008, the Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö*) proposed a national action plan to make **high-speed internet accessible** with a minimum speed of 100 Mbps throughout Finland by the end of 2015.
- ▶ In September 2008, the [Finnish National Council on Disability VANE](#) (*Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto, VANE*) introduced the programme 'VAMPO - Preparation of the Disability Policy'. The main aim of the programme was to guarantee equality for persons with disabilities, create a strong foundation for **inclusion**, and outline the most important measures to be undertaken in the field of disability policy through to 2010.
- ▶ In June 2008, **immigrants** living in Finland and associations working on multiculturalism launched a joint web service called '[Monimos](#)'. This virtual meeting place was intended for associations, immigrants and others interested in multiculturalism issues, furthermore providing an opportunity for networking.
- ▶ In spring 2008, the 'Plain Language Search' project was initiated by the Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD) to implement an information search service for **special needs groups**.
- ▶ In February 2008, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö*) published the '[National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People](#)' (*Ikäihmisten palvelujen laatusuositus*). The main aim has been to promote the health and welfare of **older people** and to boost the quality and effectiveness of services, including the right to equal treatment.
- ▶ Since 2008, Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) has chaired a programme to promote open learning environments and active citizenship. The ESR-funded programme runs until 2013, and involves groups from voluntary organisations, educational institutes, libraries and museums.

2007

- ▶ On 13 December 2007, the '[Child and Youth Policy Programme](#)' (2007–2011) was adopted by the Government. A key focus area has been **digital literacy**, and one of its measures has been to create a national Internet youth centre where young people can receive professional guidance and support on issues important to them. The service would simultaneously support access to youth employment services for young people living in remote areas.
- ▶ On 21 June 2007, the Government adopted a resolution on the objectives of the national information society for the period 2007–2011. The resolution included the Government's key objectives and priorities for **ICT skills** for the elderly and the disabled.
- ▶ On 21 June 2007, the '[Ubiquitous Information Society Action Programme](#)' (*Arjen tietoyhteiskunnan toimintaohjelma*) 2008-2011 was prepared by the Ubiquitous Information Society Advisory Board (*Arjen tietoyhteiskunnan neuvottelukunta*) and the Secretariat, chaired by Ms Suvi Lindén, Minister of Communications. Its focus has been on key targets such as **eAccessibility and eInclusion** in the Information Society.

- ▶ In 2007, the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) published its 'Access to Arts and Culture for All' (2006-2010) programme with a view to helping arts and cultural institutions to make their services more accessible to **special needs groups**, including the elderly, the marginalised and disadvantaged.

2006

- ▶ In *January 2006*, the Government launched the 'Centaur' Project (2006-2008) which was responsible for teaching **IT skills** to **sign language users**.
- ▶ In 2006, the '[National Knowledge Society Strategy](#)' (*Kansallinen tietoyhteiskuntastrategia*) for 2007-2015 was drafted as part of the implementation of the Government's information society programme. Key measures include the investment in and implementation of ICT-supported services for the ageing population and the establishment of a national digital library (including digitisation of cultural heritage).

2005

- ▶ In *November 2005*, a national 'Finland on the Web' campaign was launched. Libraries and citizens' service centres advised the elderly on the use of electronic services, assistance with issues and queries related to the services, and provided **IT and eServices training** for free.
- ▶ In 2005, the Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö*) published the action programme 'Towards Barrier-free Communication'. It highlighted the need for **disabled and elderly people** to be given special attention within the scope of developing citizens' information society capabilities. One of the major goals was to increase the prominence and visibility of the visually, hearing and speech impaired, as well as of the elderly in the ICT sector. Special attention was given to improve the ICT capabilities and to lower the threshold for the use of electronic media.

2004

- ▶ In *autumn 2004*, the Ministry of Education and Culture's (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) accessibility committee published its proposals for an action programme that assisted arts and cultural institutions to make their services more accessible to **special needs groups**.
- ▶ In 2004, the '[Culture for All](#)' (*Kulttuuria kaikille*) website was launched by the Finnish National Gallery with a view to providing more awareness and greater **inclusion**. The online source contained working examples and guidance on improving the accessibility of cultural sites and services.

2003

- ▶ In *January 2003*, the 'Plain-e: Accessibility for Everyone' project was launched with the purpose to promote accessibility of public **web services** for people with **learning disabilities**.
- ▶ In 2003, the government initiated the '[Information Society Policy Programme](#)' (2003-2007) intended to enhance all citizens' well-being and quality of life through the use of ICT, irrespective of physical and social disabilities. It set as its general priorities **digital literacy** and access to fast broadband connections for the entire population, including the elderly and the disabled.
- ▶ In 2003, as part of the Information Society Strategy for Education, Training and Research (2000-2004), the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) initiated a 'peer learning programme to promote information society skills for all'. The programme lasted between 2003-2008 and involved a few thousand peer trainers from various civic, library and liberal adult education organisations.

eInclusion Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

The National Knowledge Society Strategy 2007-2015

The '[National Knowledge Society Strategy](#)' (*Kansallinen tietoyhteiskuntastrategia*) 2007-2015 is the overarching agenda for policy formation, providing a scaffold for the current '[Ubiquitous Information Society Action Programme](#)' (2008-2011). A strategic aim is that all citizens should have the opportunity to acquire basic **ICT skills** and the skills needed to use electronic and other information society services. Those who, because of age, disability, illness or other factors, cannot or do not want to use network-based services, have been guaranteed the opportunity to use such services through the development of multi-channel services, and personal assistant training and activities. Special groups have been taken into consideration in the development work for equipment and services. All citizens will have access to information society services regardless of residence, social or economic position. New electronic services, such as virtual interpreters, will improve the position and inclusion of special groups.

Ubiquitous Information Society Action Programme 2008-2011

Under the '[Ubiquitous Information Society Action Programme](#)' (*Arjen tietoyhteiskunnan toimintaohjelma*) 2008-2011, more attention will be paid to **eAccessibility** and **eInclusion** as part of the national information society action plan. The information and communications sector's development of products and services will include solutions that prevent the social exclusion of the elderly and create the conditions for a better life. By utilising information and ICT, the elderly and the disabled could live in their own homes for longer periods of time. Moreover, a one-stop shop process for public services can help to safeguard both the high quality and diversity of services in sparsely populated areas.

Finnish Disability Policy Programme (VAMPO) 2010-2015

The '[Finnish Disability Policy Programme VAMPO](#)' (*Suomen vammaispoliittinen ohjelma*, VAMPO) is a strategy designed to implement policy decisions concerning people with disabilities for the period 2010 to 2015 and beyond. It involves a wide range of measures to promote the **equality and non-discrimination of people with disabilities**. An objective is to mainstream disability policy into different functions within society. A further objective is to ensure the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities in practice. Strategic areas of work include independent living (communication and access to information, use of services), inclusion, digital literacy through life-long education, and accessibility to culture.

National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People

One of the main aims of the '[National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People](#)' (*Ikäihmisten palvelujen laatusuositus*) is to provide accessible living for the elderly in order to promote independence through easy-to-use, accessible ICT. The basic premise is that all government authorities have to work together to increase investment in the adoption of user-friendly ICT.

eInclusion Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eInclusion

eAccessibility Legislation

[Equality Act \(L21/2004\)](#)

Finland has no direct eAccessibility legislation. However, [Section 6 of the Finnish Constitution \(731/1999\)](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. In 2004, the 'Equality Act' (L21/2004) transposed the EU Employment Equality Directive into Finnish law. It includes disability with respect to employment equality. It includes the idea of reasonable accommodation at work and comprises **eAccessibility** in this context.

[Basic Education Act 628/1998](#)

According to Finland's 'Basic Education Act' (628/1998), people with disabilities and other children with special needs have a right to receive interpretation and assistance services free of charge, including suitable technical devices that facilitate learning. This includes individual technical tools that assist action in everyday situations, as well as materials and tools that support communication and learning.

eCommunications Legislation

[Communications Market Act \(2003/393\)](#)

In 2008, the 'Communications Market Act' (2003/393) was amended so that universal service would also include a functional Internet connection. The content of universal services with regard to **internet access services** is laid down in the Act. Broadband is a part of the universal service as of 1 July 2010. Every Finnish citizen and business can expect to have a connection of a minimum of 1 Mbit/s available.

[Act on Electronic Services and Communication in the Public Sector \(13/2003\)](#)

The 'Act on Electronic Services and Communication in the Public Sector' (13/2003) stipulates that agencies will seek to use equipment and software that is, in large part, technically compatible with assistive technology tools, and from a customer standpoint, as user-friendly as possible. This legislation requires authorities to aim and offer web services so as to be used with the most widespread **assistive technology** tools.

[Act on Television and Radio Operations \(744/1998\)](#)

On 27 August 2010, the 'Act on Television and Radio Operations' was amended to include subtitling to Finnish or Swedish programmes and audio-description to foreign programmes that are already subtitled. This law reform improves genuinely the eInclusion of disadvantaged groups.

eInclusion Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eInclusion

Policy/Strategy

Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö*)

The Ministry of Transport and Communications is responsible for the legislation on communications networks, issues of privacy protection and information security, the policy on frequencies, and the legislation on radio and television broadcasting. Moreover, the Ministry is responsible for promoting access to communications services.

The Communications Policy Department (*viestintäpolitiikan osasto*) at the Ministry is divided into two units. The Communications Networks Unit (*viestintäverkkoyksikkö*) prepares laws and other strategic guidelines related to frequencies and network licences, broadband connections, information security and critical infrastructure protection. The Media and Communications Services Unit (*viestintäpalveluyksikkö*) is responsible for issues related to privacy protection and confidentiality of communications, information society projects, preparatory work for radio and television programme licences, postal services and subsidies for newspaper publishing.

Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*)

The Ministry has fostered the use of ICT in its sector since 1995, when the first information strategy 'Education, Training and Research' was published. Furthermore, its 'Access to Arts and Culture for All' (2006 – 2010) programme contains measures for the disabled, and other minorities and special needs groups, such as immigrants, cultural and language minorities, and the elderly. It grants extra resources to disability organisations for their cultural activities and accessibility projects.

Department for Education and Science Policy (*Koulutus- ja tiedepolitiikan osasto*)

The Department under the Ministry of Education and Culture drafts the policies that contain key measures (such as study vouchers for liberal adult education) related to digital skills and competencies that concern all citizens, with a view to increasing the digital literacy of people with no such background or training, such as marginalised youth, disadvantaged groups, immigrants and people over the age of 55.

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö*)

The Ministry is tasked with the promotion of the health and welfare of all citizens, and in particular people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, as well as of the ageing population. As of 2009, it has also become responsible for preparing the Government disability policy programme.

Ministry of Employment and the Economy (*Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö*)

The Ministry drafts and amends legislation to improve the access to employment and training for persons with disabilities and the elderly. It also aims to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability by ensuring their equal treatment and creating an accessible working environment for them.

Coordination

Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy (*Kulttuuri-, liikunta- ja nuorisopolitiikan osasto*)

As a Department within the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*), it directs the activities of the Division for Cultural Policy, which deals with matters relating to public libraries and culture in information society, and oversees the operation of the Celia Library for the Visually Impaired.

National Institute for Health and Welfare (*Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, THL*)

The National Institute for Health and Welfare under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is a National Contact Centre for the European Design for All e-Accessibility Network (EDeAN), and it coordinates the national [Design for All network](#) (*Suomen Design for All -verkosto*) consisting of 39 members. THL promotes eInclusion in cooperation with other authorities and actors.

Implementation

Department for Education and Science Policy (*Koulutus- ja tiedepolitiikan osasto*)

The Department under the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) implements key tasks through its various divisions.

Support

Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (*Viestintävirasto, FICORA*)

The Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority has the duty of ensuring data security in communications in Finland, the country's communications networks and markets function effectively and without interruption, and the position of consumers is safeguarded. FICORA ensures that everyone has access to versatile, effective and secure communications in Finland. It belongs to the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

eInclusion Who's Who

Main eInclusion decision-makers and executives

Ministers responsible for eInclusion



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eInclusion Areas

Riga Declaration Priorities

ICT & Ageing

Status in ICT & Ageing

More than 15 % of the Finnish population is aged 65 or over. The **broadband connection/penetration rate** for 65-79 is 24 %. It is estimated that there are at least 70 000 visually impaired elderly people. Several thousand lose all or part of their eyesight every year. There are approximately 740 000 people with hearing impairments of different severity. It is anticipated that the number of hearing impaired will have doubled by 2020 (one in four adults), as a result of an ageing population. An ageing population will result in an increased reliance on ICT-supported services; therefore, it is of vital importance that the threshold for using digital media is lowered.

Source: suomi.fi

The Government Programme is aimed at ensuring the elderly access ICTs on an equal basis with others. This includes removing the barriers encountered when trying to access and use ICT products, services and applications.

Actions to support ICT& Ageing

'National Knowledge Society Strategy' 2007-2015

The '[National Knowledge Society Strategy](#)' 2007-2015 (*Kansallinen tietoyhteiskuntastrategia*) proposes a measure for the initiation of a 65+ innovation programme aimed at developing well-being services for the ageing and elderly population.

National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People

The '[National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People](#)' (*Ikäihmisten palvelujen laatusuositus*) outlines measures for the support of technology-assisted living for the elderly. Accessibility can be achieved through:

- ▶ assistive devices;
- ▶ 'smart home' technology;
- ▶ e-mail;
- ▶ online old-age home services.

Enter ry

[Enter ry](#) (*Ikäihmisten Tietotekniikkayhdistys*, ICT Association for Seniors) encourages senior citizens' ability, readiness and willingness to make use of ICT. The website provides digital literacy courses, peer training and support, learning material, as well as computer and Internet access points.

libraries.fi

The Finnish [library network](#) (*kirjastot.fi*) provides an introduction to the information society for the elderly by offering instruction in internet and computer use.

'Government Information Society Programme' 2003-2007

The 'Government Information Society Programme' (2003-2007) placed emphasis on the elderly and the retired population, and improving their well-being and quality of life through the effective use of ICT.

Nopola News

[Nopola News](#) (*Kyyjärven Mediayllarit ry*) online magazine has prompted the elderly residents of Kyyjärvi town to acquire ICT skills so as to help them play a more active part in the digital community in addition to contributing online content for the news portal.

Geographic Digital Divide

Status of Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

Minister of Communications, Mrs Suvi Lindén, has called for an increase in the number of free-of-charge publicly accessible broadband networks for all Finns.

72 % of Finnish households have a **broadband connection** and 82 % have a PC at home. Broadband services such as interpretation and videoconferencing are extremely beneficial in the communication of the deaf and hearing impaired. Broadband also improves the availability of services for the elderly and disabled, in that digital media means a reduced need for mobility.

Source: [Statistics Finland](#)

Third-generation (3G) mobile network coverage has greatly improved in recent years. In November 2009, the 3G network was available in 331 municipalities, or 95 % of all municipalities.

Actions to support Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

Broadband 2015

The aim of the '[Broadband 2015](#)' project (*Laajakaista 2015-hanke*) is to ensure that **remote** and **sparsely-populated areas** will be no further than two kilometres from a 100Mbit/s fibre-optic or cable network by the end of 2015.

1 Mbit Internet access a universal service

New universal service obligations for telecom operators took effect in early July 2010. Broadband access now is included in basic communications services like telephone or postal services. As of the beginning of July, telecom operators defined as universal service providers must be able to provide every permanent residence and business office with access to a reasonably priced and high-quality connection with a downstream rate of at least 1 Mbit/s.

'Child and Youth Policy Programme' (2007–2011)

The 'Child and Youth Policy Programme' (2007–2011) has established a nationwide multi-disciplinary internet youth centre where professional support is available for young people living in **remote areas**.

Nopola News

[Nopola News](#) (*Kyyjärven Mediayllarit ry*) is an online news portal where the news content is mainly provided at a grass roots level by local citizens of Kyyjärvi (pop. 1 600), a town which does not have its own local paper. It provides local news and information to the small, sparsely populated and isolated rural community and its surrounding area through the use of civic journalism.

eAccessibility

Status of eAccessibility

The Government Programme has set as a priority to increase the prominence and visibility of specific groups, such as the disabled, to ensure that they access ICTs on an equal basis with the rest of the population. The development of services should be functional to the greater population. Where necessary, the service shall be tailored to meet the needs and requirements of those users who cannot

take advantage of the basic services in place. Special facilities and services should only be introduced as a last resort.

'Citizen Activity in the Information Society' (2007-2010)

The 'Citizen Activity in the Information Society' (2007-2010) project focuses on the independent use of internet communication devices for the learning disabled.

In Finland, **assistive technologies** are, in general, easily accessible and widely used.

Actions towards eAccessibility

Accessible.fi

[Accessible.fi](#) (*Saavutettava.fi*) publishes news, articles and commentary on **accessibility** and web standards. Furthermore, the aim is to provide centralised information on good practice to ensure that the website and services are equally accessible to all, including the visual and hearing impaired, the disabled and the elderly.

Suvi

An [online dictionary of Finnish Sign Language](#) (*Suvi*) provides sign language for everyday communication. It can also be accessed via pocket PCs and smartphones.

Papunet

'[Papunet](#)' is an Internet website dedicated to speech impairments and plain language. The website provides information for people with speech impairments, their families and professionals working in this field. It also serves as a channel for information exchange.

Celia Library for the Visually Impaired

The [Celia Library for the Visually Impaired](#) (*Celia Näkövammaisten kirjasto*) provides equal access to literature and information for people who are not able to read printed materials.

KI-deaf.fi

The website for the [Finnish Association of the Deaf](#) (*Kuurojen Litto ry*) provides a [library and information service](#) which is a specialised library that contains literature about the **deaf and sign language**.

Plain Language Search - Project for the Implementation of a Finnish-language Information Search Service Suited for Groups with Special Needs

The '[Plain Language Search - Project for the Implementation of a Finnish-language Information Search Service Suited for Special Needs Groups](#)' (2008-2009) aimed to improve the information society capacities and skills among special needs groups by developing an effective information search tool. The primary objective was to create an open source-based, easy-to-use, Finnish-language information search service into the Internet. The target group of the project were people with **speech impairments** and/or **intellectual and developmental disabilities** who can read and have adequate computer skills. The easy-to-use information search service developed within the project will in the long range also be useful to many other user groups, such as students with different learning styles, the elderly and immigrants.

KÄKÄTE - user-centred technology for elderly people and care givers

The main focus of KÄKÄTE is to improve the possibilities of living longer at home and to facilitate the assisting work by means of technology.

The project aims to:

- ▶ promote the co-operation between various professionals in the field of gerontechnology;
- ▶ improve the awareness of the needs of elderly people and the possibilities of technology to meet these needs, in addition to the needs of persons with memory disorders;

- ▶ promote the use of technology as a resource in elderly care;
- ▶ improve the quality of life of elderly people and to improve the possibilities of them to influence the development work.

The project is run by [The Union for Senior Services](#) (VALLI) and the [Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged](#). It is a five-year project which started in January 2010 and it is funded by [Finland's Slot Machine Association](#) (RAY).

National Human Factors standardisation group

The National Human Factors standardisation group established by the [Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority](#) (*Viestintävirasto*, FICORA) deals with the needs of the disabled and elderly for the development and standardisation of communications networks, services, terminal equipment and user access, and monitors the international standardisation in this area.

Digital Literacy and Competences

Status on Digital Literacy and Competences

The [Ministry of Education Strategy 2015](#) states that measures will be taken to support, upgrade and maintain citizens' **ICT** and **elearning skills** in all the sectors of education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) committee has proposed that the **ICT facilities** of teacher training departments and vocational teacher training colleges should be enhanced. The educational institutions will also be supported in their equipment acquisitions. According to the proposal, teacher training departments of universities, vocational teacher training colleges and teacher training schools of universities will receive up-to-date ICT equipment.

Actions towards stimulating Digital Literacy and Competences

'The ICTs at School's Everyday Life' project

[The ICTs at School's Everyday Life](#) (*Tieto- ja viestintäteknikka koulun arjessa –hanke*) is a national project coordinated by the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö*), and carried out with the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) and the Finnish National Board of Education in co-operation with industry and commerce. It is included in the Finnish Government Programme and National Information Society Policy of Finland. The goal is to produce new knowledge and know-how for schools and educational administrations about the latest developments in ICT, but more importantly to develop the **educational use of ICT** in a multi-dimensional way. The Project terminates at the end of 2010, and outcomes will include a strategy for the Finnish government's next term of office.

The strategy is comprised of pedagogical models, recommendations and practices related to:

- ▶ ICT tools, infrastructure and usability;
- ▶ learning environments and pedagogical models;
- ▶ content creation and learning materials;
- ▶ development of school communities;
- ▶ development of public-private partnership models.

Adult education centres

There are 207 [adult education centres](#) (*kansalaisopisto*) that offer **digital literacy training** for disadvantaged adult groups, such as the unemployed, senior citizens, immigrants and asylum seekers. They are owned and operated by their respective municipalities, and receive over half of their funding from the Government.

libraries.fi

The Finnish [library network](#) (*kirjastot.fi*) offers ICT skills training for the elderly and promotes digital literacy.

Nopola News

[Nopola News](#) (*Kyyjärven Mediamyllarit ry*) provides a user-friendly content management system and trains the citizens of Kyyjärvi town in computer and Internet skills. The locals are able to create and publish online content themselves with basic computer skills acquired through their training.

Interactive Technology in Education Conference

The annual [Interactive Technology in Education Conference](#) is the largest such initiative in Finland related to ICT in education; it presents current issues in digital literacy.

Tikas

[Tikas](#) is an innovative **ICT training model** designed for learners with special needs of all ages. It benefits, among others, people with intellectual disabilities, the autistic, those studying according to a prescribed syllabus, and people with reading and learning difficulties. It is also ideal for the elderly, immigrants and people with a multilingual background. It is run by the Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD).

eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Status on eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

The Ministry of Education and Culture's (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) 'Access to Arts and Culture for All' programme (2006–2010) contains measures for the disabled, other minorities and special needs groups, such as immigrants, cultural and language minorities, and the elderly.

Actions towards eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Info Bank

'[Info Bank](#)' (*Infopankki*) is an online service which operates in 15 languages and contains **regional information** for immigrants on the functioning of society and opportunities in Finland. The web service will undergo changes under the Info Bank online service reform during 2009-2011. The Helsinki Region multicultural information service, '[Selma](#)', designed for multicultural and immigrant workers, became part of 'Info Bank' during 2009. It is funded by a five-year cooperation agreement (2009-2013) between the Finnish Government and the municipalities.

Monimos

'[Monimos](#)' is a networking portal for immigrants living in Finland and associations working on **multiculturalism**. The website contains valuable information on the very small and fragmented immigrant associations in Finland. The cooperation network of multicultural associations in the Helsinki metropolitan area includes 50-60 associations.

The website provides visitors with an opportunity to:

- ▶ organise polls;
- ▶ present objectives and activities;
- ▶ serve as a discussion forum;
- ▶ disseminate information.

The main language is English, but it is also possible to use other languages on the site. The web service is developed in cooperation with the 'EPACE' project coordinated by the [Ministry of Justice](#)

(*Oikeusministeriö*) and financed by the European Commission, the 'SOMUS' social media research project and Moniheli, the cooperation network of multicultural associations. The service is operated by Moniheli.

Hymykuopat

The city of Salo administers the '[Hymykuopat](#)' (Dimples) project which develops **cultural services** in such areas as applied dance, literary art and electronic media for groups with special needs and people living in remote locations.

Finnish Museum of the Deaf

The [Finnish Museum of the Deaf](#) (*Kuurojen museo*) aims to collect, research and exhibit **the cultural heritage** of deaf and sign language users in Finland. Through its website, the museum communicates knowledge to the public at large of the culture of deaf and sign language users and strengthens their identity.

Etätulkki.fi

[Etätulkki.fi](#) was a nationwide remote **interpreting system** co-funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö*), municipalities and joint municipal authorities. During the course of the project, a service was established that enabled interpreting between different languages and communication means irrespective of place. It was launched in July 2007 and has been extended until the end of 2010.

Inclusive eGovernment

Status on Inclusive eGovernment

Reliable services for each citizen

An important goal for the Government is to create a uniform, secure and reliable single portal to **online public services**. This involves developing a unified solution that will provide a central site where every citizen can track how their own cases are being handled and obtain public documents, such as official decisions, in electronic form. In addition, the authorities will be able to supply citizens with proactive advice about their present circumstances in terms of the services offered.

With regard to the reliability of online **eGovernment services**, electronic identification methods are becoming more and more important. A special group has been set up to develop the use of eIdentification in Finland. One of the aims is to develop functioning markets for eIdentification in ways that allow consumers to choose the most convenient tool for them to use. Mobile eIdentification appears to be a very promising tool for the near future. Wider use of eIdentification will be encouraged, as well as the use of other new and recent tools – such as, the electronic identity cards which were introduced in Finland in 1999.

According to the '[Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement](#)' 2009 report prepared for the European Commission, Finland ranked consistently high in both eGovernment and the Information Society. One of the assessment criteria included the extent to which the national portal was accessible to people with disabilities.

Actions towards Inclusive eGovernment

Finnish Government website

The government's official [portal](#) (*valtioneuvosto.fi*) provides access to information and resources related to the government, authorities, ministries, departments, statistics and other related services. The site is accessible to citizens with special needs.

Info Bank

The [Info Bank online service](#) (*Infopankki*) supports immigrant integration by providing information on Finnish society and its services in 15 languages, from the perspective of the immigrant user. It gathers basic information about permits, education and work, housing and social services, society, culture and leisure, and other issues.

National Knowledge Society Strategy

The '[National Knowledge Society Strategy](#)' (*Kansallinen tietoyhteiskuntastrategia*) 2007-2015 proposes a measure for the initiation of a policy programme to **reform service structures** in the public administration. Services and service production methods are assessed throughout the public administration in a customer- and process-oriented way, from the perspective of utilising ICT, existing databases and registers, as well as reforming structures and operating models. Another priority area includes designating the ministry responsible for developing public sector administration and information management, and appointing a ministerial working group to coordinate the issue.

Findicator

The web service '[Findicator](#)' provides up-to-date data to decision-makers and citizens on the progress of society in a user-friendly way. It is a joint effort of the Prime Minister's Office and Statistics Finland, and includes about 100 indicators categorised according to policy issues of the Government Programme, such as cultural participation in information networks, ageing and functional ability.

A-Clinic Foundation

The A-Clinic Foundation operates an interactive [website](#) as part of the 'Shadow World' project, to reach out to 11-15 year-old Finnish youth suffering from parental substance misuse. The organisation has created an interactive website to support a Manga-style comic book that provides **vulnerable and isolated youth** with knowledge about their options for seeking help. An online forum also provides the opportunity to speak to others in the same position. Over 50 000 people use the Foundation's online services every month. The services are funded mainly through contracts with municipalities. Funding is also provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö*).

Information Society Policy Programme

The 'Information Society Policy Programme' (2003-2007) provided an increasing proportion of its services on the Internet in both official languages. Particular attention was given to making them as customer-friendly, easy-to-use and secure as possible. This enabled the services to be provided to citizens regardless of time and place, which helped to promote social and regional equality. The Government cooperated with local authorities and the Advisory Committee on Information Management in Public Administration (*Julkisen Hallinnon Tietohallinnon Neuvottelukunnan, JUHTA*), so that the supply of electronic services and their validity, quality and smooth functioning would be ensured.

The Future of eInclusion

Research in Practice & Future Challenges

Research in Practice

The [Seventh Framework Programme](#) (FP7) comprises, under its umbrella, EU research initiatives that play a vital part in attaining the objectives of growth, competitiveness and employment. The broad objectives of FP7 have been grouped into four categories: [Cooperation](#), [Ideas](#), [People](#) and [Capacities](#). eInclusion aspects hold a prominent place in this programme, which has been operational since 2007 and will expire in 2013.

Approximately € 400 million have been allocated to FP7's [Challenge 7: 'ICT for Independent Living, Inclusion and Governance'](#), one of the seven 'Challenges' of the [ICT Work Programme](#) 2009 – 2010 under FP7. The aim of 'Challenge 7' is to create ICT products, through research and development, which will foster independent and active living among Europe's ageing population, improving living standards and mitigating ICT complexity in order to encourage groups with special needs to uptake and use ICT tools and technologies to their benefit.

'Challenge 7' set three objectives:

Objective ICT-2009.7.1: [ICT & Ageing](#)

- ▶ Service robotics for ageing well
- ▶ Open Systems Reference Architectures, Standards and ICT Platforms for Ageing Well
- ▶ RTD roadmaps and stakeholder coordination.

Objective ICT-2009.7.2: [Accessible and Assistive ICT](#)

- ▶ Embedded Accessibility of Future ICT
- ▶ ICT restoring and augmenting human capabilities compensating for people with reduced motor functions or disabilities
- ▶ RTD research agendas & coordination of constituencies.

Objective ICT-2009.7.3: [ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling](#)

- ▶ Governance and Participation Toolbox
- ▶ Policy Modelling, Simulation and Visualisation
- ▶ Roadmapping and Networking for 'participation, governance and policy modelling'.

Finland is involved in the following FP7 projects:

1. [European ambient assisted living innovation alliance](#) (AALIANCE)

Research area: ICT-2007.7.1 ICT and Ageing

Project start date: 1 January 2008

Project end date: 31 December 2009

2. [Ubiquitous care system to support independent living](#) (CONFIDENCE)

Research area: ICT-2007.7.1 ICT and Ageing

Project start date: 1 February 2008

Project end date: 31 December 2011

3. [Usability of music for social inclusion of children](#) (UMSIC)

Research area: ICT-2009.7.2 Accessible and Assistive ICT

Project start date: 1 September 2008

Project end date: 31 October 2011

4. [Haptic, audio and visual interfaces for maps and location-based services](#) (HAPTIMAP)

Research area: ICT-2009.7.2 Accessible and Assistive ICT

Project start date: 1 September 2008

Project end date: 31 October 2012

Future Challenges

The Government Programme's disability agenda set a target to build a Finnish society for all. Positive developments and the measures in spite of targets have not been fully realised. Full equality between persons with disabilities and the mainstream population has not been achieved yet. There are structural and attitudinal barriers in society that restrict people's equal opportunities and participation. A strategic area for the future concerns how the inclusion of persons with disabilities will be guaranteed in Finland over the next few years.

The responsibility for a disability policy is vested in all the administrative sectors and stakeholders in society. A strategic disability policy promotes the inclusion and equal opportunities of people in all areas of life. It provides the framework and prerequisites for local authorities and other actors for planning, decision-making and implementation. The current action plan, '[Finnish Disability Policy Programme \(VAMPO\)](#)' 2010-2015 (*Suomen vammaispoliittinen ohjelma*, VAMPO) maintains as a future goal a sustainable policy on disability.

The use of ICT in special education in Finland remains in its infancy with respect to the use of advanced technologies for students with special needs.

Broadband 2015

The Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö*) set as a priority for all residents of Finland to be equipped with **high-speed Internet connections** by the end of 2015. The Government had already decided to make a 100-Mbit/s broadband connection a legal right by this date. Public finances will be used to build networks in sparsely populated areas where commercial projects are not possible.

Ubiquitous Computing Cluster Programme

The vision of the '[Ubiquitous Computing Cluster Programme](#)' is that by the programme end date in 2013, Finland will be the know-how leader in the development, commercialisation and capitalisation of embedded intelligence in human-centred, distributed, mobile and constructed environments. **Ambient intelligent services** provide special needs groups with greatly increased accessibility.

European Commission - eInclusion Practice

eInclusion practice (epractice.eu) is an information and exchange service for European professionals.

The eInclusion factsheets are one of the epractice.eu services. The factsheets present an overview of the eInclusion status and progress in the European countries.

The eInclusion factsheets are produced and updated once a year.

The eInclusion practice is an initiative of the Directorate General for the Information Society and Media, European Commission.

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