

[eInclusion in]

Norway

Norge



ICT & Ageing

Geographic Digital Divide

eAccessibility

eInclusion

Cultural Diversity

Inclusive eGovernment

Digital Literacy & Competences

Country Profile

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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 Norway. 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): 4 799.3 inhabitants (2009)

GDP at market prices: 275 060.4 million Euro (2009)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-27 = 100): 176.0 (2009)

GDP growth rate: -1.4 % (2009)

Inflation rate: 2.3 % (2009)

Unemployment rate: 3.1 % (2009)

Government debt/GDP: 43.7 % (2009)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): 9.7 % (2009)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Area: 323 802 km²

Capital city: Oslo

Official EU language: Norwegian (*Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*)

Currency: Norwegian krone

Source: [Europa website](#)

Information Society Indicators

Percentage of households with Internet access: 90 % (2010)

Percentage of households with broadband connection: 83 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet: 90 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for uploading self-created content: 12 % (2008)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for reading online newspapers/magazines: 78 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for finding information about goods and services: 82 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking health-related information: 47 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for looking for a job or sending a job application: 22 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for doing an online course: 5 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking information with the purpose of learning: 57 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interaction with public authorities: obtaining information 61.8 %, downloading forms 38.7 %, returning filled forms 34 % (2010)

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

October 2010

The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (*Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet*), (*Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet*) launched the Information and Development Programme '[People with disabilities should not be discriminated against!](#)' (*Mennesker med utviklingshemming skal heller ikke diskrimineres! Informasjons- og utviklingsprogram*) 2010-2013. The programme contains key objectives to ensure the **rights of people with disabilities**, including developing policies, and disseminating information and good practices for ICT.

April 2010

On 30 April 2010, the government set up an Inclusion Committee to address the challenges of a multicultural society. The working group will carry out a comprehensive review of policy in this domain, with a view to laying down the foundation for future policy development, and proposing measures for **eInclusion** and integration.

January 2010

- ▶ On 1 January 2010, the [Centre for ICT in Education](#) (*Senter for IKT i utdanningen*) was established as an agency of the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*). Its main focus is to ensure that ICT contributes to improving quality, enhancing learning and policy strategies among all actors in the sphere of education including, but not limited to authorities, students, teacher trainers and trainee teachers.
- ▶ New mandatory **IT standards for all public websites** took effect as from 1 January 2010, following government regulation. This ensures equal access to online content from government authorities and inclusion of all citizens.

News 2009 and before

2009

- ▶ In *November 2009*, the government prepared the [Action Plan for Sami Languages](#) (*Handlingsplan for samiske språk*) in order to boost and develop the minority language in all areas of society, especially in the education and public administration sectors. ICT and internet-based services will be used to increase the active use of Sami.
- ▶ In *June 2009*, the government adopted a series of new obligatory IT [standards](#) for the state sector, facilitating user access to public information regardless of which software and computer equipment is being used and irrespective of special needs.
- ▶ On *1 January 2009*, the [Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act](#) came into force. The objectives are to strengthen the legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of disability and to prevent discrimination due to a lack of **eAccessibility**. In addition, employers, both public and private, have to actively promote equality and ensure equal opportunities and rights for the disabled, regardless of functional impairment.

- ▶ In 2009, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion published the '[Norway universally designed by 2025](#)' (*Norge universelt utformet innen 2025*), the government's national action plan for **universal design and increased accessibility** for the period 2009-2013.

2008

- ▶ From 1 July 2008-31 December 2008, the [ANIME Project](#) was carried out by the Norwegian Computing Centre. The goal was to identify issues that needed to be resolved in order to ensure that exclusion does not start at the login screen or user management component of information systems. Furthermore, it provided a closer analysis of identity management systems (IMS) with respect to eInclusion.
- ▶ On 28 March 2008, the government appointed new members to sit on the National Council on Disability (*nasjonalt råd for funksjonshemmede*) until 2012. The advisory body for public authorities and institutions will discuss barriers faced by the disabled and the goal of achieving an **inclusive society**.
- ▶ In 2008, following data compiled in the previous year, the [Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning](#) (*Nasjonalt Fagorgan for Kompetansepolitikk, Vox*) published an analysis entitled '[The Digital Citizen](#)' (*Borger og bruker*). It provided an account of the digital competence among Norwegians, and gave details about the characteristics of the **digital divide**.

The main findings were as follows:

- 27 % were non-users or weak users of digital tools, and the majority showed little or no motivation to improve their skills.
- Computer use diminished with age, but the lack of digital skills was not restricted to the elderly. Adults who did not use computers on a daily basis at work were more likely to lack digital competence. This meant an increased risk for adults who were inactive in the labour force.
- Men were more digitally literate than women and this disparity increased with age.

2007

- ▶ On 25 June 2007, the [International Conference on Technology for Participation and Accessible eGovernment Services](#) (T4P) opened with a keynote speech on eGovernment and eAccessibility in Norway by State Secretary Wenche Lyngholm of the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform (present-day Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs). In his speech, Mr Lyngholm stressed the need for all citizens to be given the opportunity to participate in the information society, with services available at all times and for all, while taking into account special needs. He added that despite a high take-up in broadband access (95 % in 2006), the goal of broadband coverage for all Norwegians by the end of 2007 remained a challenge given the country's geographical landscape. Furthermore, he outlined the government's objective for all technological development within ICT to be based on the principle of universal design and to focus on the needs of the **disabled in the information society**.
- ▶ On 30 March 2007, Norway signed the [Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities](#). The United Nations instrument is intended to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by people with disabilities, and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law. It stresses that the disabled should be able to live independently and fully participate in all aspects of life. To this end, Norway should take appropriate measures to ensure that people with disabilities have access to ICT.
- ▶ On 12 February 2007, the portal [government.no](#) was launched, providing user-friendly access to relevant government information, while taking into account the needs of the visually impaired and people with learning disabilities.

2006

- ▶ In *December 2006*, the government published the white paper '[An Information Society for All](#)' (*Eit informasjonsfunnsamfunn for alle*), which focused on increased ICT and innovation.
- ▶ In *2006*, the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) initiated a 'Programme for basic skills in working life'. It funded private and public sector companies which provided training in ICT for their employees and jobseekers.

2005

- ▶ On *14-15 November 2005*, the Ministerial conference 'Towards a Knowledge Society - The Nordic Experience' emphasised the government's intention to ensure that all geographic regions and population groups would be covered and have easy access to eGovernment services. It also investigated the **digital divide** issue, and called for digital skills and competency training programmes.
- ▶ On *12 September 2005*, the parliamentary elections resulted in the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party forming a coalition government. The coalition presented its policy in a document called the [Soria Moria Declaration](#) (*Soria Moria-erklæringen*). It gave rise to the vision of transforming Norway into a leading knowledge and ICT nation.
- ▶ In *June 2005*, [eNorway](#) (*eNorge*), a national action plan for a digital society, heralded an era of major renewal that redefined electronic public services and eGovernment. It envisaged **Norway as a leading nation in ICT** through exceptional research communities, advanced digital skills and high competency rates, an increased level of ICT investment and a well-developed ICT infrastructure.
- ▶ In *2005*, the report '[Equality and accessibility](#)' (*Likeverd og tilgjengelighet*) proposed a draft law against discrimination on the basis of disability. It was also put forward to make universal design mandatory for ICT, within explicit time limits.

2003

In *2003*, the report '[School for digital competence](#)' (*Skole for digital kompetanse*) assessed the need for broadband in compulsory education and recommended that educational institutions have a broadband connection from 2 – 100 Mb/s, depending on school size.

2000

- ▶ In *June 2000*, the government formally decided to institute a national ICT policy (eNorway 1.0). The first in a series of eNorway plans, it was published as a response to the goals set forth in eEurope 2002. The overall vision was to **integrate ICT** in all aspects of Norwegian society.
- ▶ [www.norge.no](#), the official portal for public services and information, was launched on *24 January 2000* as part of a government initiative. It was designed to give citizens and public sector employees a comprehensive view of public administration in Norway.

1996

In *January 1996*, the State Secretary Committee for IT issued the report '[The Norwegian Way to the Information Society - Bit by Bit](#)', which formed the basis for all future coordinated IT policies and **disability-related issues in ICT**. It drew attention to IT as an inclusive tool for the disabled and proposed three concrete measures:

- ▶ Public authorities had to promote efforts on increased availability of IT for disabled persons by means of open standards solutions. Pilot projects had to be carried out on the use of telematics to

improve the quality of life and self-fulfilment of the disabled. Public electronic information and electronic publications had to be made available to all groups.

- ▶ Research had to be carried out that would look into ways of coordinating, funding and follow-up at national level, in addition to the training of disabled technology users privately and in the workplace.
- ▶ Digitisation of publications (production of electronic and adapted editions) that would benefit the visually impaired.

eInclusion Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

ICT Policies

Soria Moria Declaration

The official political platform [Soria Moria Declaration](#) (*Soria Moria-erklæringen*), which was agreed upon by all political parties following the parliamentary elections in 2005, laid the groundwork for turning Norway into a leading knowledge and ICT nation. The policy document stressed that everyone shall have access to knowledge and insight to enable their participation in democratic processes, and that a commitment has to be made to new, universally-designed technology and a proactive ICT policy for the public sector. With respect to the public sector, the needs of citizens and the services adapted to them, to the greatest possible extent, constitute the focal point of this ICT policy.

This was to be achieved within the context of an **inclusive society** where the skills and potential of each individual would be taken into account.

Specifically, the government aimed to:

- ▶ ensure that everyone had the means and motivation to acquire the necessary skills for making optimal use of technologies and new services;
- ▶ utilise ICT actively to reduce social disparities;
- ▶ offer broadband access to all citizens with pricing levels that are comparable across the country, and public funding for regions where broadband rollout would not be commercially viable.

eNorway 2009 - the digital leap

The vision of [eNorway 2009 - the digital leap](#) (*eNorge 2009 - det digitale spranget*) is for an ICT and knowledge society for everyone, where citizens enjoy easy access to electronic services and information. As more and more domains presuppose the use of ICT, the government wants to ensure that all population groups receive guidance and training on the benefits of ICT. The ICT action plan will ensure a comprehensive range of digital public services driven by the needs of the entire population, regardless of special needs. It focuses on multi-disciplinary initiatives and projects across the public and private sectors.

The individual in digital Norway is the key target area for ICT laid down by eNorway 2009. It begins with the basic premise that all citizens are given the opportunity to participate in the information society. Digital services have to be adapted and focused on the needs of the individual.

The following goals have been set:

Digital participation for everyone

- ▶ Establish schemes to ensure that those lacking Internet access have the opportunity to do so in their environs.
- ▶ 80 % of all official websites shall meet the '[norway.no](#)' quality assurance in accessibility.

Digital skills

- ▶ Government collaboration with labour market actors concerning initiatives to prevent early retirement or withdrawal from the workforce due to lack of basic digital skills, and to develop such skills for re-entry.
- ▶ Digital literacy and competencies shall be central to education and training, calling attention to ICT as a teaching aid, its integration in curricula and assessment criteria for competence.

Online services for the general public

- ▶ All online services (including newly-launched online services) shall be made available via the citizen gateway, [MyPage](#), with the aim to achieve high user satisfaction.

An Information Society for All

The white paper '[An Information Society for All](#)' (*Eit informasjonssamfunn for alle*) addressed topics concerning skills and **digital inclusion** where preference lay in universally-designed solutions.

The parliamentary document's formulation and the measures put forth are in line with the [Riga Ministerial Declaration on eInclusion](#), which expresses a common European vision of digital inclusion that includes all citizens irrespective of age, accessibility needs, skills, geography and cultural background.

Based on this, the government identified the need to:

- ▶ ensure provisions for connecting to broadband Internet;
- ▶ target universally-designed technology;
- ▶ strengthen the commitment to digital skills in the population;
- ▶ intensify ICT commitments in education.

It placed particular emphasis on three preconditions for government efforts on digital inclusion: digital access, universal design and digital competence.

Key objectives:

- ▶ Access to infrastructure (Internet, equipment and content) is an important requirement for digital participation in all areas of life. The entire population should be able to adopt new IT if they so wish. Moreover, in the sphere of education, access to equipment should reflect the goal set by the government for educational institutions to be global leaders in the use of ICT in teaching and learning.
- ▶ All technological developments within ICT specifically and digital media in general have to be based on the principle of universal design. Public authorities are responsible for ensuring that different ICT and web-based services do not result in new and broad barriers for special needs groups.
- ▶ No one should be excluded, including special needs groups, from participating in the information society. The government has identified the need to implement measures to maintain and develop digital skills and competencies among vulnerable groups in order to prevent digital divides.

National eAccessibility Action Plan

'[Norway universally designed by 2025](#)' (*Norge universelt utformet innen 2025*) is the government's overarching action plan for **universal design and increased accessibility** for the period 2009-2013. It lays the foundation for achieving the 2025 target through various goals and measures that are subject to set deadlines regarding the implementation of universal design regulations. The document fully supports the [Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act](#), which deals with universal design.

The strategy document draws heavily upon the results of the external evaluation '[The Government's Action Plan to ensure Increased Accessibility for People with Disabilities. A plan to ensure universal design in important areas of society](#)' (*Regjeringens handlingsplan for økt tilgjengelighet for personer med nedsatt nksjonsevne. Plan for universell utforming innen viktige samfunnsområder*) 2005-2008, which delineates the government's commitment to creating a society characterised by active participation and **full equality for all**, especially people with disabilities, the elderly and marginalised groups. They should have opportunities for personal development, participation and self-expression when barriers are removed and efforts are strengthened to increase accessibility to products, services and the use of ICT.

ICT is one of the four priority areas and consists of two main goals:

- ▶ All new ICT intended for the general public's use is to be universally designed as from 1 July 2011.

- ▶ All existing ICT intended for the general public's use is to be universally designed as from 1 January 2021.

The following are key overall measures related to ICT:

- ▶ **Core project to clarify universal design in ICT** - Mapping the entire procurement process, from the bodies responsible to administration, preparation of regulations to information dissemination.
- ▶ **Universal design on the Internet** - The [Agency for Public Management and eGovernment](#) (*Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT, Difi*) will function as a key player in improving the quality and accessibility of online information and services.
- ▶ **Evaluation of digital learning platforms** - Ensure that digital learning platforms in educational institutions meet the needs of users with disabilities.
- ▶ **Greater adaptation of TV broadcasts and films for the deaf or hearing impaired** - The adoption of broad-spectrum requirements regarding subtitling and sign language interpretation will be examined. The process of converting to digital cinema will take place during the duration of the action plan.
- ▶ **Development of speech recognition technology** - The possibility of developing speech recognition technology for the Norwegian language is to be looked into.
- ▶ **National development project in county councils and local authorities** - Universal design is to be developed as a strategy in local authority and regional planning and administration. The measure includes local authorities that can act as a resource, pilot county councils and new pilot local authorities. All the county councils and 25 % of the local authorities should be actively involved by 2015.
- ▶ **Programme of cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities regarding measures in the local authority sector** - This cooperation constitutes the development of expertise, dissemination of information and coordination of programmes and efforts in which universal design is relevant.
- ▶ **Establishment of an indicator system to measure universal design** - Measures of performance for the universal design of ICT will be established.
- ▶ **Development of universal design standards** - Universal design standards are to be worked out, with ICT representing a key area.
- ▶ **A government communication policy with greater emphasis on eInclusion** - Regulations and norms for universal design are to form the basis of public authority communication activities. This constitutes special needs groups such as the disabled and the elderly, as well as the digitally excluded.
- ▶ **'Innovation for All' programme** - The follow-up to the Norwegian Design Council (*Norsk Designråd*) 'Design for All' project will emphasise the universal design of ICT-based goods and services.
- ▶ **A universal design model for schools** - A review of educational institutions and leading actors is intended to help clarify what issues need to be raised and which measures implemented when planning and developing a school that is to offer all learners an equal education and ensure full eAccessibility.
- ▶ **Incorporate systematic universal design into consumerism** - A project aimed at mapping specifications related to the accessibility and universal design of services in various areas is underway. It will be followed up with concrete standardisation work concerning goods and services.

eInclusion Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eInclusion

eAccessibility Legislation

[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

Norway has signed the **Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities**. Article 4 states that the government will undertake or promote R&D, and encourage the availability and use of new technologies, including ICT, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities. According to Article 9, the government shall take appropriate measures to:

- ▶ ensure people with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to ICT and other facilities and services open to or provided for the public, both in urban and in rural areas;
- ▶ promote access for people with disabilities to new ICT, including the Internet.

The government is currently looking into ratifying the Convention.

[Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act](#)

The overall purpose of the Act is to **support equality and ensure equal opportunities** for and rights to social participation for the disabled, and to prevent discrimination based on disability. It states that both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited. The Act shall assist in removing societal barriers and preventing new ones from taking shape in disability. Section 3 places the onus on public authorities and private sector employers to make concerted efforts in their respective domains to carry out the Act. Section 11 stipulates that the accessibility of ICT related and/or targeted to the public should be universally designed and barrier-free so as to foster inclusion.

The Act comes into force on 1 July 2011 for new ICT and 1 January 2021 for existing ICT. The two requirements for the universal design of ICT are the following:

- ▶ All new ICT intended for the general public is to be universally designed as from 2011.
- ▶ All existing ICT intended for the general public is to be universally designed by 2021.

[Public Procurement Act](#)

The Public Procurement Act of 16 July 1999 No.69 was amended in 2006 and came into force on 1 January 2007. It presupposes that the requisitioning party will have taken the need for **universal design** into account from the planning stage of procurement. This applies to ICT procurement as well.

eCommunications Legislation

[Electronic Communications Act](#)

Chapter 5, Section 5-1 maintains that providers of electronic communications networks and services under the **universal service obligation** secure special services for the disabled and other end users with special needs.

[Regulations on Electronic Communications Networks and Services \(Ecom regulations\)](#)

Chapter 5, Section 5-5 **expands upon the universal service obligation** in Chapter 5, Section 5-1 of the [Electronic Communications Act](#). Providers shall ensure that R&D connected with services for disabled

people and end users with special needs is continued. This may include access to adapted terminal equipment and services that put such end users on equal terms with the rest of the population. Discount or refund schemes are made available.

eInclusion Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eInclusion

Policy/Strategy

Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (*Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet*), (*Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet*)

The Ministry has prepared the action plan '[Norway universally designed by 2025](#)' (*Norge universelt utformet innen 2025*). It is also responsible for integration and inclusion policies that encompass ICT.

Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs (*Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kirkedepartementet*), (*Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kyrkjedepartementet*)

The Ministry is responsible for the national ICT policy, and the development of public ICT solutions that are effective, secure and user-friendly.

Department of ICT Policy and Public Sector Reform (*Avdeling for IKT og fornying*)

Overseen by the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs, it is responsible for formulating strategy and policy for the use of ICT in society.

Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Samferdselsdepartementet*)

The Ministry has the overall responsibility for the regulatory framework within the telecommunications sector. With respect to policy formulation, it prepares laws and amendments, including Regulations on Electronic Communications Networks and Services (Ecom Regulations) and the Electronic Communications Act, in addition to action plans dealing with telecommunications.

Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*)

The Ministry is in charge of ICT in all levels of education and lifelong learning for adults.

Coordination

Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (*Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet*), (*Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet*)

The Ministry is responsible for coordinating '[Norway universally designed by 2025](#)'. It is also tasked with the coordination of policy for people with disabilities.

Department of ICT Policy and Public Sector Reform (*Avdeling for IKT og fornying*)

The Department under the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs is in charge of coordinating the government's national ICT policy.

Support

Department of ICT Policy and Public Sector Reform (*Avdeling for IKT og fornying*)

The Department under the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs provides the following support:

- ▶ social consequences of ICT, including digital inclusion, participation and universal design;
- ▶ infrastructure for electronic communication, including broadband policy;
- ▶ awareness-raising campaigns and policy implications with regard to the spread of ICT in society;

- ▶ statistics and analyses based on information society.

Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs (*Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kirkedepartementet*), (*Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kyrkjedepartementet*)

The Ministry investigates and follows up on how new technology and the increased use of ICT applications influence society and create new possibilities and needs for change.

Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (*Nasjonalt fagorgan for kompetansepolitikk, Vox*)

The advisory body for the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) works to improve basic skills in the adult population in relation to the use of ICT.

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

Norwegians are going online in greater numbers, and the growth in computer use is the highest among seniors. In 2009, the percentage of daily users aged 65 to 74 grew to 45 % from 28 % in 2008.

Source: [Statistics Norway](#)

The report [Eurostat Data in Focus](#) compared the use of the Internet in 29 European countries. It showed that elderly women (55-74) in Norway ranked highest in Internet usage at 54 %. Men in the same age group ranked third with 61 %.

Actions to support ICT & Ageing

Seniornett

The NGO [Seniornett Norway](#) works to enhance ICT use among seniors through 116 nationwide clubs that serve as training centres. In addition to administering beginner and advanced workshops in ICT, it organises the annual 'Senior Surf Day', an open house event held at libraries and community centres throughout the country. It is intended to inspire the elderly to use computers and the Internet so they can **participate in the information society**. SeniorNett's long-term goals are to claim 250 000 seniors online by 2014, and increase the number of local clubs to 300.

ICT training in libraries

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority (*ABM-utvikling*) published a [report](#) on libraries as digital skills training providers. For the provision of digital competence in public libraries, it targeted both employed and idle elderly with little or no experience in ICT.

Geographic Digital Divide

Status of Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

The number of broadband subscriptions with fixed access on the Norwegian mainland is 1 694 000 (Q2: 2010), an increase of 62 000 subscriptions over the previous 12 months. The most central municipalities have the highest number of broadband subscriptions relative to the number of households at 73 %; the corresponding figure for municipalities in the periphery is 62 %.

ADSL and other xDSL technologies are the most common Internet connections. 57 % of households have ADSL or other xDSL at home in 2010. The share of households with mobile broadband (3G, 3G+) has nearly doubled from 12 % in 2009 to 22 % in 2010.

Source: [Statistics Norway](#)

Actions to support Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

Broadband state of play

The report '[Broadband Coverage 2010](#)' (*Bredbåndsdekning 2010*) commissioned by the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs (*Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kirkedepartementet*), (*Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kyrkjedepartementet*), constitutes an important knowledge base in the effort to meet the future needs of an information society. The report points out the great **disparity in broadband speed** among the regions. Indicative of this disproportion is

Rogaland county, where 65 % of the residents can obtain speeds of 50 Mbit/s, whereas the corresponding figure for Sogn og Fjordane, a rural county with a dispersed population, is 4 %. It stated that the government will continue its activities to facilitate broadband with sufficient capacity for the entire country, and as technologies and needs constantly change, the goal of complete broadband coverage is an ongoing process.

Wireless network infrastructure

[Telenor Norway](#) is the leading provider of broadband services, and has considerably upgraded its network infrastructure in recent years. The operator has launched Turbo 3G technology, enabling download speeds of up to 3.6 Mbit/s, regardless of geographical location, as well as migrating its entire wireless network and core network to an IP-based platform. As of 2010, its GSM network covers 99.8 % of Norway's population and over 85 % of its geographical area.

eAccessibility

Status of eAccessibility

In 2008, 13 % of the population was aged 67 or over. By 2015, when the baby boom generation is set to retire, this figure will further increase, and is projected to reach 17 % by 2030.

Source: [Statistics Norway](#)

According to the [Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud](#) (*Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet*), (*Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet*), one in five people in Norway has what is considered a disability.

Two documents that assessed the status of the work done on universal design and accessibility and give evidence for its continued improvement are: '[Full participation for all? Trends 2001-2006](#)' (*Full deltakelse for alle? Utviklingstrekk 2001-2006*) and '[Status Report 2007 – Social Developments for People with Disabilities](#)' (*Statusrapport Samfunnsutviklingen for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne*). They showed that the proposals in '[From User to Citizen](#)' (*Fra bruker til borger*) from 2001 have either been implemented, or are being considered. The reports further demonstrated that overall progress has been made in **accessibility and universal design** in the area of ICT with respect to awareness, regulations and activity. This is in stark contrast to an earlier report entitled 'The Status of Accessibility in Norway', which concluded that there is limited knowledge on accessibility and universal design in ICT.

Actions towards eAccessibility

Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act

The government's overall objective is for technological development within ICT to be based on the principle of universal design. This is being supported by the [Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act](#) currently in force which focuses on the universal design of ICT systems and products.

Assistive Technology Centres

Municipalities are responsible for the health and rehabilitation of their citizens, including the provision of assistive technology. Assistive technology centres are tasked with the overall responsibility for the provision of assistive technology in their respective counties. They provide the disabled and caregivers with expertise on assistive devices, as needed. The 19 assistive technology centres each represent one county.

Delta Centre

The [Delta Centre](#) (*Deltasenteret*), under the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, is the National Resource Centre for Participation and Accessibility for persons with disabilities in Norway. The overall vision is **inclusion and accessibility through equal opportunities** for the disabled to participate in society. It works to ensure that products and services such as the Internet, synthetic

speech, speech recognition, Smart Home technology and DAISY audio books take into account universal design and are barrier-free.

IT Funk

[IT Funk](#) is the Research Council of Norway's (*Norges forskningsråd*) RTD programme on ICT for people with disabilities. The purpose of the project is to contribute to **accessibility for all**: ICT and society at large through the use of ICT. It supports R&D, innovation and standardisation of accessible ICT-based products and services and assistive ICT-based technology. IT Funk targets businesses and institutions that research, develop, produce and distribute ICT-based products and services of importance for accessibility in society. In collaboration with other R&D programmes, it offers financial support to projects based on universal design principles and on assistive technology. The programme has been running since 1998, and the new programme period is from 2007 to 2012. It is the Norwegian partner of Ambient Assisted Living (AAL), a joint research and development funding programme (2008–2013) which aims to enhance the quality of life of older people through innovative ICT solutions.

Digital Literacy and Competences

Status on Digital Literacy and Competences

Recent statistics reveal that Norwegians are among the most **advanced Internet users** in the EU, which attests to the country's efforts to include everyone in the information society. Even though digital divisions still exist, the divide is smaller than in the EU.

In 2009, [Eurostat Data in Focus](#) compared Internet access and broadband connections by households in 33 European countries. Norway ranked consistently high in both Internet access (86 %, 4th) and broadband connections (78 %, 3rd).

Over 80 % of Norwegians possess digital skills. Norway is one of the most advanced countries for internet connectivity, with high broadband penetration and excellent DSL coverage. Moreover, both 3G and wireless laptop connections are much more widely used than the EU average. Approximately 86 % of households have internet subscriptions, 91 % of which are broadband connections. As for wireless broadband, only Luxembourg in the EU has a higher penetration of laptop-based wireless connections. Its status as **one of the world's leading Internet countries** is reflected not only by the very high number of wired households, but also by the widespread take-up of most internet services, which is significantly higher than the EU average.

Source: [Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report 2010](#)

The 2010 report '[Immigrants on the Web](#)' (*Innvandrere på nett*) analyses the digital skills and competencies of the five largest immigrant groups in Norway: Polish, Pakistani, Iraqi, Somali and Vietnamese. The main findings show that immigrants, especially women, have much lower digital literacy rates than the remainder of the population. These immigrant groups possess a high motivational factor to learn ICT; however, they find few opportunities available to them for instruction.

Actions towards stimulating Digital Literacy and Competences

Programme for Digital Competence

The overriding strategy of the [Programme for Digital Competence](#) (*Program for digital kompetanse*) is **digital competence for all**. It targets primary and secondary education and training, higher education and adult learning.

The following three main objectives have been set for the Programme period:

- ▶ Digital competence is to be at the fundamental core of education and training at all levels. All learners, both active (enrolled) and non-active in educational institutions should be able to use ICT in order to develop the knowledge and skills needed to fully participate in the information society.

- ▶ The education system should strive to become among the world leaders in the development and use of ICT in teaching and learning.
- ▶ ICT is to be an integrated tool for innovation and quality development in education, based on organisational and operational methods promoting learning and innovation.

Knowledge Promotion

Under the [Knowledge Promotion](#) (*Kunnskapsløftet*) reform of 2006, schools prioritise the cultivation of basic skills in primary and secondary school subjects. This is an important foundation for all other types of learning. The ability to use **ICT is considered a basic skill** and has been approved by the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*), and incorporated into the school syllabi. All teachers are therefore responsible for enabling students and student teachers to develop such basic skills. Teacher training colleges have followed suit.

Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning

The [Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning](#) (*Nasjonalt Fagorgan for Kompetansepolitikk, Vox*), an agency overseen the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*), has been tasked with promoting **lifelong learning in the workplace**. ICT skills and competencies is one of the four basic areas of competence that is dealt with. The primary aim is to contribute to the development of competencies in the labour force. It cooperates with local authorities, companies, education providers, organisations and private citizens.

Basic Competence in Working Life Programme

The [Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning](#) (*Nasjonalt Fagorgan for Kompetansepolitikk, Vox*) administers the ongoing national programme [Basic Competence in Working Life](#) (*Program for basiskompetanse i arbeidslivet*). It provides adult employees and job seekers with the opportunity to acquire the basic digital skills needed to keep up with demands and changes in today's working environment and civil society.

Framework for Basic Skills for Adults

The Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) assigned the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (*Nasjonalt Fagorgan for Kompetansepolitikk, Vox*) the responsibility to establish national standards for reading and writing, maths, **digital competence** and oral communication. Vox developed the [Framework for Basic Skills for Adults](#) (*rammeverk i grunnleggende ferdigheter for voksne*), which contains descriptions of levels of competence for each of the basic skills (digital competence is one of the four core skills), including ICT. It has issued a [handbook](#) which illustrates how the competence goals can provide support for preparation and implementation of training programmes for ICT skills.

Digital resources

The [Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning](#) (*Nasjonalt Fagorgan for Kompetansepolitikk, Vox*) has developed the following digital resources to support basic skills training for adults:

- ▶ [ABC pc](#) - An interactive training programme available in Norwegian and English for basic computer skills, web surfing and email messaging. Aimed at adults who want to improve their basic ICT skills, the course allows for downloading and translating into other languages.
- ▶ [Read and Write](#) - The website is a low-threshold tool for digital literacy skills training intended for adults. It maintains approximately 1 000 interactive tasks of various types and levels.

Vox is coordinating the following action within the European Commission funding programme Leonardo da Vinci:

- ▶ [InterAct](#) - The web-based model's objective is to improve the basic skills of employees with little formal education and minimal ICT skills.

Libraries as digital learning resources

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority (*ABM-utvikling*) carried out a government-funded pilot project in collaboration with four public libraries that looked into the possibility of a national

initiative to transform the modern-day library into a setting for digital literacy and competence training. The project [report](#) published in 2010 stressed the need for strengthening the efforts of public libraries with respect to digital inclusion. The recommendation put forth was that a library should be seen in a larger context, and that it has an important role to play in meeting the needs of a diverse number of people.

eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Status on eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

The population of Norway is linguistically, culturally and religiously diverse. In spite of increased immigration, the immigrant population at the beginning of 2009 was still comparatively small in relation to the total population, and was positioned at the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average.

As of 1 January 2009:

- ▶ 423 000 total immigrants;
- ▶ 508 000 were legal residents who had either immigrated to Norway or were born in Norway to immigrant parents;
- ▶ immigrant groups made up 10.6 % of the population;
- ▶ approximately half originated from Asia, Africa or Latin America.

Source: [Statistics Norway](#)

According to the Riga Dashboard, the 'Index of Regular Internet Use in At-Risk Groups by Country', compiled by the European Commission's ['Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report'](#) (2010), Norway placed first overall at 0.88 for the 'Riga Total-at-Risk Groups'. The corresponding European (EU-27) average is 0.68.

Actions towards eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Grant schemes for immigrant children and youth

The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion allocates funds on a yearly basis for initiatives and measures aimed at children with special needs and marginalised immigrant youth groups in 23 municipalities. Some of the grants earmarked for these larger urban centres support **integration** efforts through ICT.

Action Plan for Sami Languages

The Sami, Norway's recognised indigenous population, have long since safeguarded their cultural heritage and promoted their diversity. The information society necessitates the spread of Sami culture in all ICT contexts. The 2009 ['Action Plan for Sami Languages'](#) (*Handlingsplan for samiske språk*) stressed the need to increase the public's awareness of the language and its importance on the country's cultural landscape. In this way, it will have a positive effect on attitudes surrounding the minority language as well as the overall interest in it from the public.

This can be achieved by:

- ▶ arranging for the development of Sami news websites in Lule and Southern Sami;
- ▶ arranging web-based information services about the Sami language and in Sami;
- ▶ securing the availability of Sami content on the Internet;
- ▶ introducing the use of the Sami character set in all public administration web services, ensuring that these services (i.e. software) do not lead to the creation of new barriers.

Fostering linguistic diversity in the digital space

As mentioned in the '[Action Plan for Sami Languages](#)' (*Handlingsplan for samiske språk*), 'You Tube in Lule Sami' is a pilot project co-financed by the government which involves making videos on the Internet combined with a high level of user participation. An editorial team consisting of Sami-speaking youth from Tysfjord and Sami speakers from the region with experience in journalism strives to create an informal and interactive environment for the Lule Sami language. Weekly television broadcasts have been added.

Government-funded, internet-based language domains where users have the opportunity to use the Sami language actively and disseminate information via blogs, chat rooms and email messaging include: www.infonorra.no; www.skriverbua.no; www.klara-klok.no; and <http://www.diggi.no>.

samIT

The [samIT website](#) (Competence in the Sami language and IT, samIT) facilitates the government's use of the Sami character set (15 special characters). Public authorities are able to receive assistance with regard to the publication of Sami text online. It is run by the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs.

Giellatekno

The shortage of Sami dictionaries impedes the language's spread and development. Furthermore, dictionaries for Norwegian speakers wishing to learn Sami are non-existent, as are Sami-Norwegian dictionaries to explain the contextual use of Sami words for Norwegian speakers. [Giellatekno](#), the centre for Sami language technology, aims to preserve Sami language by **building language technology** such as proofing tools, text processing tools, pedagogical programmes, digital dictionaries and text-to-speech systems.

Divvun Project

The '[Divvun project](#)' (*Divvun-prosjektet*), administered by the Sami Parliament, has produced **language tools** in the form of electronic spell check, proofing programmes and educational software for various Sami languages. Development of such technology ensures the survival of the Sami language as a living language in modern society.

Adult education project for Roma people

A government-funded programme for the minority population group Roma was started at the Gamle Løren school in Oslo. Young adults are taught digital skills.

ICT training for immigrants

Immigrant women are provided with basic computer guidance and instruction on a weekly basis at the [Red Cross](#) in Oslo. The [Oslo Adult Education Service Centre](#) (*Oslo Voksenopplæring Servicesenter*), which serves immigrants and refugees in the municipality, provides access to computer terminals and assists inexperienced users.

Inclusive eGovernment

Status on Inclusive eGovernment

According to the European Commission 2009 report '[Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement](#)', Norway is a **leading information society**, with a strong performance in implementing ICT in the public sector, particularly in the use of eGovernment. eGovernment is part of a wider information society policy ([eNorway 2009 - eNorge 2009](#)), with a focus on servicing the citizen and developing the required infrastructure. Norway continues to perform above the EU 27+ average in the online availability of the 20 basic eGovernment services with a score of 80 %. In terms of accessibility of the national portal, results place it in the top three among the 31 benchmarked countries.

Actions towards Inclusive eGovernment

Gateway to the public sector

[Norway.no](http://norway.no) serves as an entry point to government authorities and general information. The disability-friendly portal assists the public in finding information and accessing services more easily through its online citizen help desk. It also caters to English speakers.

IT standards for the state sector

The Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs has published a [reference catalogue for IT standards in the public sector](#) (*Referansekatalog for IT-standarder i offentlig sektor*) containing mandatory IT standards to be used by public institutions. The purpose is to provide simpler and more effective electronic interaction within the public sector and between public institutions and citizens. All users, including special needs groups, are to have **equal access to public information and services** on the Internet, and the government should not discriminate on the basis of technical equipment and software utilised. Furthermore, the document includes the adoption of the standard for character sets ISO10646, represented by UTF8, which is to be used on all new ICT projects in the government sector. From 1 January 2012, UTF8 is to be used during electronic information exchange. The UTF8 decision is a key action for enabling the public sector to handle characters in the Sami language and other languages correctly. Initially, the obligatory standards will only be applied to the state sector. The Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs is planning regulations to make them applicable for the municipal sector as well.

Accessibility in the public sector

The [Agency for Public Management and eGovernment](#) (*Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT, Difi*) is tasked with the quality and accessibility of the information and services offered on the Internet, and ensures that these contribute to the **equal treatment and inclusion of all citizens**. Overseen by the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs, it endorses public websites (state and local) with respect to accessibility. Approximately 700 public websites are evaluated annually according to 36 criteria, including accessibility. Recommendations are provided on the standards that should be followed up or met. Results are made public on norway.no.

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'.

Norway is involved in the following FP7 projects:

1. ['Coordination action in R&D in accessible and assistive ICT'](#) (CARDIAC)

Research area: ICT-2009.7.2 Accessible and Assistive ICT

Project start date: 1 March 2010

Project end date: 28 February 2013

2. ['UNIVERSal open platform and reference Specification for Ambient Assisted Living'](#) (UNIVERSAAL)

Research area: ICT-2009.7.1 ICT & Ageing

Project start date: 1 February 2010

Project end date: 31 January 2014

3. ['Helping autism diagnosed young people navigate and develop socially'](#) (HANDS)

Research area: ICT-2007.7.2 Accessible and inclusive ICT

Project start date: 1 June 2008

Project end date: 31 May 2011.

National project

Core Competence and Value Creation in ICT (VERDIKT)

The [VERDIKT programme](#) endeavours through ICT research to place Norway at the leading edge of the development and application of knowledge. This will enhance interaction, innovation and value creation in the ICT-based network community. It is currently funding 100 projects for basic and applied research that are intended to develop ICT as an area of knowledge, be it user-oriented, technology-oriented or system-oriented research. It is a project under the [Research Council of Norway](#) (*Norges forskningsråd*) Large-Scale Programme Initiative and runs until 2014.

Future Challenges

The government's main vision regarding eInclusion is to fully implement the principles of universal design by 2025. In ICT, legal requirements already exist with respect to how universal design is to be executed. Realising an inclusive and accessible society by pursuing a variety of actions with fixed deadlines requires multi-sectoral coordination and harmonisation of measures that are spread across the policy areas of 17 ministries.

Local government (municipalities) have to promote greater participation and equality for the disabled in their public administration and governance. One of the biggest eAccessibility challenges lies in ensuring that authorities follow up the recent [Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act](#) so as to remove barriers and prevent new ones from being created.

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.

eInclusion practice is an initiative of the Directorate General for the Information Society and Media.

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