

E-participation guidelines: supporting diversity



Immigrant inclusion
by participation



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E-participation guidelines: supporting diversity

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Foreword

This publication is geared towards everybody involved in designing or working with participation processes and immigrant integration issues, especially the issue of enhancing democratic participation.

The integration of immigrants is vital for social cohesion and economic development. To enable immigrants to feel part of a larger society it is necessary to ensure that they have proper tools to participate fully in society. For this purpose, both the European Union as well as its Member States have been developing an increasing number of policy initiatives in the field of integration. Common to these strategies should be the adherence to human rights standards and shared values such as equality, non-discrimination, solidarity, openness, participation and tolerance.

In recent decades, significant changes in the patterns of political participation have occurred, in particular with the introduction of IT. Internet and electronic social networks have enabled new forms of social and political participation. Accordingly, there has been a growing demand for electronic communication not only between individuals but also between individuals and public authorities. Research indicates that the Internet may act as a social capital building system fostering social and community ties through social media. It also has a potential for enhancing civic participation.

The incorporation of information and communication technologies into democracies may also bring about some challenges and limitations. E-participation benefits from the interactive and participatory technologies for increased inclusion. Paradoxically, however, e-inclusion may exclude some groups in society. Marginal groups including immigrants, for instance, may be excluded from political life due to various challenges in the e-inclusion and in the e-participation field. Careful and participatory planning is needed in order to make e-participation inclusive. This manual, therefore, is a very timely and valuable resource for authorities and immigrant organisations in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, but also elsewhere, to consult in their e-inclusion strategies.

This manual is the printed version of its text counterpart, available at supporting-diversity.eu. The manual firstly presents the conceptual and contextual backgrounds of community building and collaboration in the context of online participation. The crucial assets of the manual are chapters 4 and 5 whose usefulness arise from reading them in tandem, either simultaneously or one after the other. Chapter 4 points out a battery of obstacles in e-participation and provides advice on how to cope with issues that may lie in micro scenarios. Chapter 5 then presents a list of e-tools to further help authorities to adjust their policies, services, and management to the needs of e-participation and e-inclusion of immigrants.

This manual is a result of a joint and fruitful development process of the European Union Interreg IVA project. The Immigrant Inclusion by eParticipation (IleP) partners were, from Finland: the University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki, Communication Research Centre and the Ministry of Justice, Democracy and Language Affairs Unit, from Sweden: Södertörn university, Departments of Media Technology and Informatics at the School of Communication, and from Estonia: Tallinn University, Institute of Informatics, Communication Research Centre. The manual can be found in English, Estonian, Finnish and Swedish language.

I am confident that this manual will be most beneficial for readers in their efforts for a more inclusive society.



Head of the IleP project Steering Group

Johanna Suurpää

Director, Unit for Democracy,
Language Affairs and Fundamental Rights Ministry of Justice, Finland

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The goal of this manual is to facilitate the inclusion of immigrants by providing an overview of various means of participation in society using Internet tools (e-tools). Optimally, these technologies can facilitate not only finding information and services for immigrants, but also establishing and maintaining communities which include peers both in their original and new home countries. Online communities can help them to mobilize themselves into groups and movements to make their voices heard, and eventually to find their roles as active participants in their new home societies.



“#iieppro Mauri Kaipainen pointed out that immigrant integration and participation in the society has been problematic.

@Fevenc

This manual is one of the outcomes of the IieP project (Immigrant Inclusion by eParticipation) that focuses on electronic participation as manifested in three different countries, Estonia, Sweden and Finland. These countries all have a relatively high level of online services and Internet use, which may make certain things easy, but may at the same time increase the threshold for immigrants.

Despite the focus on these three countries, the issues are likely to be similar for immigrants in other European countries.

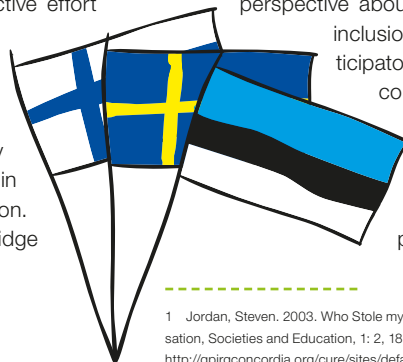
How this manual was developed

This manual is the result of a collective effort by partners who developed the IieP project from Estonia, Finland, and Sweden. The project was realized in 2009-2012. Its overall aim was to bridge the practices of civil society organisations and public authorities in terms of interoperability and integration. More specifically, the aim was to bridge

the tools, activities and concepts of communities with the top-down participation practices and technologies of governments. The project also yielded another manual whose target group is primarily public authorities. Both manuals are based on data generated through interviews and workshops.

IieP has utilised participatory action research (PAR) as a methodology with focus groups in the three countries: Sweden, Finland and Estonia. There is no single definitive model for participatory research, and the project has utilised various data generating techniques and methods (such as participation observation, interviews, compilation of field notes, document analysis, SWOT analysis, problem mapping, etc.) to provide a more rounded and holistic

perspective about the issue of immigrant inclusion by e-participation. Participatory action research has conventionally been a methodology utilised with marginalised groups, argues Jordan¹, as “it has proven to be a powerful approach for



1 Jordan, Steven. 2003. Who Stole my Methodology? Co-opting PAR. Globalisation, Societies and Education, 1: 2, 185 - 200; p. 186. Web Feb. 2012 <http://qpirgconcordia.org/cure/sites/default/files/CGSE1204.pdf>

working with subordinate or oppressed groups to better their circumstances within society.”

Participatory action research in the IleP project implied a dynamic research process involving direct participation with the people affected by this combination of issues and discussions, which has made utilisation of IT resources more common. The project has attempted to adhere to the main characteristics of Participatory Action Research² by providing marginalised groups with greater access to – and thereby “more say” over – the research process. The project has been committed to working with marginalised groups in the societies, as well as to the democratic engagement processes and inclusion of the focus groups. The researchers have used their own expertise alongside the lay knowledge, skills and experiences of the people who are the focus of the study. The research process is conceptualised as an encounter, where equal partners meet, enter into dialogue and share different kinds of knowledge and expertise on how to address issues of exploitation and denial of access.

2 Ibid. pp. 188-190

We would like other related projects (like immigrantpolicy 2.0, puzzledbypolicy, eCitizensII or others) to join and provide input into developing this manual – and keeping it alive.

1.1. Key terms

The terms below will help you to understand the content and discussions in this manual. The intention here is not to create dictionary definitions, but to highlight the important aspects of these otherwise complex concepts. The terms are in alphabetical order.

Access: The capability to reach or communicate with systems, people, and organisations. Access to ICT, information, and people is crucial for e-participation.

Convergence: A term used in the information communications technology and media fields to indicate that multiple services and applications may converge in one tool. A very common example for convergence is the mobile phone that can also be used as calculator, calendar, camera, and to connect to the Internet. This phenomenon challenges the terminology because a tool may also appear as

a service or application. Facebook, for example, is a tool that offers services with applications.

Decision-making partner: Stakeholder who actively and equally takes part in a decision-making process. Including as many stakeholders as possible online improves e-participation.

Digital services: In this manual, digital services basically means the same thing as “e-services”. The “e” may be replaced by “digital” throughout the text as a matter of writing style.

e-governance: The integration of information and communications technologies in the governance processes. The UN states that “E-governance will favourably impact the productivity and performance of the public sector and foster new and deeper citizen involvement within the governing process” (WSIS). Our definition extends this to all permanent and temporary residents.

e-services: Electronic services which (may) allow participation. SMS (Short Message Service), for instance, is an e-service. One should distinguish between e-services and e-public services. An e-public service is the online form of a public service. Accessing public services on public websites, for

example to submit a passport application, is an e-public service.

e-tools: Electronic tools, which are instruments that may allow e-participation. Various social networking or file sharing websites, such as the Flickr, Bambuser, Twitter, Facebook, etc. are e-tools that operate with various applications.

ICT: The abbreviation for Information and Communications Technology, which supports improved communication among users.

Interaction: A reciprocal action or influence. Online interaction between authorities and individuals is indispensable for e-participation.

IT: The abbreviation for Information Technology. IT enables creating, sharing, and storing of information in a fast and efficient way.

NGO: Non-governmental organisation.

Participatory Action Research—PAR: In this project, PAR was used as a research strategy aimed at testing new ideas and implementing actions for solving specific problems related to IT. In our case, it implied a dynamic research process involving direct participation with the people affected by this com-

bination of issues and discussions, which has made utilisation of IT resources more common.

Partners: Independent people or representatives of institutions who agree to establish an arrangement (a partnership) to promote their common interests.

Public authorities: A public authority can be any entity (for example, an institution) providing some public benefit under the control of public administration. Our interest is in public authorities involved with e-participation at the state, regional, or local level.

Social media: Social media includes web-based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein³ define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

³ Andreas M. Kaplan, Michael Haenlein, Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, Volume 53, Issue 1, January–February 2010, Pages 59–68. Web Feb. 2012
<http://www.mendeley.com/research/users-world-unite-challenges-opportunities-social-media-13/#page-1>

Stakeholders: Independent people, organisations, or institutions engaged as participants in or influenced by a course of action.

Web tools: Web tools—what I can use to better achieve my own and my organisation's goals.

Web 2.0: The term Web 2.0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centred design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community.

1.2. Background information

Below we present only in passing the basic discussions that are fundamental for a deeper understanding of the issues addressed in this manual.

Diversifying societies

Many Western states have been built on the notion of a collective national culture. This has also been the case for the IleP project countries, Finland, Estonia, and Sweden. However, to consider that a country has a homogeneous cultural heritage is more a myth than a reality. The cultural composition of any country has always been heterogeneous, with different linguistic, ethnic, and religious configurations. The historical changes which have taken place around the Baltic Sea are visible in the demographics of the populations. For example, at the beginning of the twentieth century Finland's population was composed of seven main groups: Swedish speakers, the Saami, the Roma population, the Jews, the Tatars, the Russian speakers, and the Finnish speakers.

The IleP project has not concentrated much on these historical minorities, but rather to the more

recent new ethnic and linguistic minorities which have formed in the region due to more recent immigration.

Social and political participation by minorities

Membership in an NGO can be seen as an indicator of social participation and civic engagement. NGOs provide a social space as well as a gateway into the society. NGO membership or activism can also be a gateway to obtaining volunteer assignments or even employment as a result of wider social networks.

People join all sorts of non-governmental organisations, not only immigrants but members of other minority as well. The legal status of the various organisations varies greatly, including associations, foundations, unions or charities. They also have different missions. They may focus primarily on the educational, social, cultural or humanitarian dimension, and their orientation may be general or specialised, focusing primarily on immigrants' issues and services. For immigrants, NGOs serve as an entryway into learning social and civic skills in the new society.

Levels of public participation

Participation in civic activities can be analysed in terms of different ladders, types, and levels to determine in what way and how much people participate in political life.

In order to improve participation, NGOs and associations (and authorities, for that matter) need to be conscious of the nature of their participation policies. Anstein's⁴ analysis may be instrumental in this. Meaningful participation occurs when individuals and their organisations can join power-holders in decision making by being allowed to defend their interests, and when they enjoy the full power of decision making. This top ladder of participation empowers people in political life. Table 1.1 illustrates Anstein's views.

4 Anstein, S. R. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224. Web Feb. 2012
<http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>

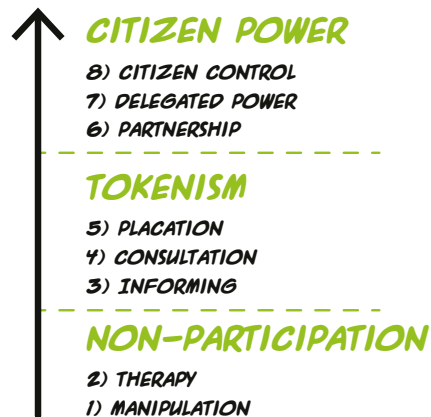


Table 1.1: Ladders of participation

1.3. Moving towards e-participation

This chapter aims to help everyone improve their current online participation in their society of residence. It addresses issues of public actions that seek meaningful and empowering participation.

E-Participation

Broadly speaking, e-participation concerns “the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to broaden and deepen political participation of individuals by enabling them to connect with one another and with their elected representatives”⁵. More narrowly, it refers to ICT -supported participation in the formal and informal processes of government and governance – processes such as administration, governmental service design, and decision and policy making.

5 Macintosh, Ann. 2004. Characterizing E-Participation in Policy-Making. In the Proceedings of the Thirty- Seventh Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-37), January 5 – 8, 2004, Big Island, Hawaii, p. 2. Web Feb. 2012
<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan038449.pdf>



“ #iieppro Can immigrants make initiatives?

@troppone

In e-participation, everyone, not only the government, is involved in democratic decision making processes. The complexity of e-participation processes results from the many spheres of participation, levels of engagement, stages of policy making, and stakeholders involved. Both authorities and residents are involved in e-participation. The government is responsible for designing and operating processes in a way which makes them as transparent and inclusive as possible for individuals and participating organisations.

In this context we are particularly concerned with how various types of e-participation designed for citizens apply to immigrants.

Dimension	Description
1. Level of participation	what level of detail, or how far to engage citizens
2. Stage in decision making	when to engage
3. Actors	who should be engaged and by whom
4. Technologies used	how and with what to engage citizens
5. Rules of engagement	what personal information will be needed/collected
6. Duration & sustainability	for what period of time
7. Accessibility	how many citizens participated and from where
8. Resources and promotion	how much did it cost and how widely was it advertised
9. Evaluation and outcomes	methodological approach and results
10. Critical factors for success	political, legal, cultural, economic, technological factors

Table 1.2: Dimensions of e-participation. Reproduced from Macintosh (2004, 6)

There are two more types of participation when the process migrates to cyberspace. Coleman⁶ defines them as:

- Managed e-participation: e-participation which is initiated by institutional politics.
- Autonomous e-participation: e-participation which takes place in new forms.

6 Coleman, S. 2010. Making Citizens Online, From Virtual Boy Scouts to Activist Networks. In: Olsson, T. & Dahlgren, P. Young people ICTs and Democracy; Nordicom, pp. 71-90.

Throughout the project we observe that immigrants' and citizens' e-participation is often autonomous, involving new types of political activity. Non-governmental organisations dealing with immigrant issues are also urged, however, to strive for managed e-participation. Thus the design of e-participation processes should take into consideration both types of e-participation.



“#üepro @troppone Why couldn't they? The real question is, will any politician listen to non-voting immigrants' suggestions?”

@perkelix

Perspectives of international organisations on e-participation

The European Union considers that “eParticipation is about reconnecting ordinary people with politics and policy-making and making the decision-making processes easier to understand and follow through the use of new Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs).”⁷ The eParticipation Preparatory Action was initiated by the European Parliament in 2006. Through a series of experiments in live environments, the action promoted the use of ICTs in the legislative and decision-making processes at local, regional, national and EU levels.

7 European Commission. ICT for Government and Public Services. Web Feb. 2012



The projects use new digital technologies to improve the drafting of legislative texts, to supply citizens with easier access to information about proposals for legislation, and to give them tools to express their opinions.

On the other hand, the United Nations updated the definitions of the stages of e-government. The highest current level of e-government, “connected,” emphasises citizen participation:

“Connected: Government websites have changed the way governments communicate with their citizens. They are proactive in requesting information and opinions from the citizens using Web 2.0 and other interactive tools. The e-services and e-solutions cut across the departments and ministries in a seamless manner. Information, data and knowledge is transferred from government agencies through integrated applications. Governments have moved from a government-centric to a citizen-centric approach, where e-services are targeted at citizens through life cycle events and segmented groups to provide tailor-made services. Governments create an environment that empowers citizens to be more

involved with government activities to have a voice in decision-making.”⁸

The UN also states that “E-participation goes well beyond e-voting; it changes the dynamics between government and citizens. Web 2.0 and social networking tools have created an environment that politicians and decision-makers must adjust to and incorporate in their daily work. In the United States, for example, more than 2 million followers subscribe to the Twitter feed of President Barack Obama.”⁹

Access to information/news on electoral processes or demonstrations over the Internet, however, does not necessarily mean that citizens e-participate. The characteristics of e-participation include contextual information, feedback facilities, and other participatory tools such as online consultation, which assume the use of webcasting and multimedia discussion forums.

8 5 United Nations. 2010. United Nations E-Government Survey 2010. Web Feb. 2012 <http://www.epractice.eu/files/UN%20E-Government%20Survey%202010%20-%20Part%201.pdf>

9 Ibid.

Spheres of e-participation

Depending on the ICT adopted, e-participation may occur in different spheres. The social e-participation which has taken place in recent years through social media, especially on social networking sites, may permit the disconnected to access and interact with other groups in the society and take part in discussions about social issues. Social media and the Internet have created pressure to enhance political systems to make them more diversified and participatory. There has been a growing need to make systems open to informal actions and initiatives started by individuals, and occasionally by groups, in addition to fixed organisations and official institutions. Established forms of political participation are not the only way of exerting influence and having a say. This manual values social e-participation because it is a very good step for the disconnected to begin connecting with a society. This form of e-participation may also be political in nature.¹⁰

Utilising e-participation in politics is a different sphere. In representative democracies, the main

10 Mouffe, C. 2005. *On the Political*. Verso

method of participation is voting in elections. In the e-participation framework, this corresponds to e-voting. This manual, however, emphasises empowerment with e-participation and thus advocates the definition of participation by Arnstein¹¹ "It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parcelled out." In other words, as the International Association of Public Participation suggests, we should adopt the following path: "Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower." In order to attain empowerment, this manual takes e-participation in politics beyond e-voting and proposes longer term and regular e-participation practices in order to include the disconnected in decision-making processes at the authority level.

11 Arnstein, Sherry R. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224. Web Feb. 2012 <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>

These processes may be a) top-down: e-participation initiated by institutions/authorities, which Coleman¹² calls managed e-participation, b) bottom-up: e-participation which takes place in new forms, which Coleman¹³ calls autonomous e-participation.

e-inclusion

The IleP project is looking at methods and tools for e-inclusion to provide minorities with ways to be active participants in cultural, social and political life in the new contexts where they reside. E-inclusion must be seen as a process and a path which a person can follow by learning new e-skills and e-tools.

e-inclusion: In the present context, e-inclusion refers particularly to the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objectives. It focuses on participation by individuals and communities in all aspects of information society. Policies in e-inclusion, therefore, are aimed at reducing gaps in ICT usage and promoting the use of ICT to overcome exclusion, as well as to improve the economic performance of the target group, improve their employment opportunities,

12 Coleman 2010.

13 Ibid.

quality of life, social participation and cohesion.

Using ICT to remove obstacles which limit or prevent people from participating in the society at large is also part of e-inclusion. It also seeks to overcome digital exclusion, that is, barriers to adopting ICT-based products and services. Use of e-inclusion seeks to create new opportunities for groups with a history of exclusion, and to help them become equal participants in modern information societies. Finally, e-inclusion is an important aspect of building an inclusive Europe with greater social cohesion and mobility, highly participative democracies, better quality of life, and enhanced opportunities for employment and education.¹⁴

14 European Commission. E-Inclusion. Web Feb. 2012 http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/index_en.htm

CHAPTER 2

Community building

Civic engagement

Civic engagement is the process through which you are invited to participate in on-going political, economic and social efforts. As an example, according to the Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership at the University of Maryland, acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one's community empowers individuals as agents of positive social change, for a more democratic world.

It is this community engagement, then, which establishes the frontier between just deploying communities or creating and sustaining thriving civic communities; civic communities which develop a civic sensitivity or civic communities which want to participate in building a civil society, and benefiting from the common good.

This civic participatory society is developed through "... the skills of citizenship and nurturing a collection of positive social norms that foster stability, loosely connected under the rubric of 'social capital'".¹

¹ Edwards, M. (2004). *Civil society*. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 14.

Community engagement

Communities can both address different kinds of barriers which stand in the way of participation and build the capacity and confidence of their members who are in danger of exclusion to participate in negotiations with institutions that affect their lives.

Effective engagement generates more inclusive and sustainable communities, facilitates the sharing of responsibilities and fosters relationships based on mutual understanding, trust and respect.

Community engagement can be seen as a two way process:

Bottom-up approach: by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of individuals and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment.

Top-down approach: by which governments and other business and civil society organisations involve individuals, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes.

Inclusive engagement requires that minorities and marginalised people have adequate resources to participate meaningfully in the broader community, and that they have a stake in the outcome and equitable benefits which result from being involved.

The Brisbane Declaration² recommends that core principles of integrity, inclusion, deliberation and influence are endorsed in community engagement:

- **Integrity**—when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement;
- **Inclusion**—when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard;
- **Deliberation**—when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understanding and appreciate respective roles and responsibilities;
- **Influence**—when people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.

² United Nations. 2005. *The United Nations Brisbane Declaration*. IAP2 Australasia - The International Association for Public Participation. Web Feb. 2012 <http://www.iap2.org.au/resources/un-declaration>



Recommendation:

Make sure that newcomers of your community are ready to perform certain activities. Develop an awareness strategy that identifies opportunities for engagement and inclusive practices that are relevant for your community, such that can take advantage of web-based social networking.

2.1. E-communities

IT has enabled people to connect with each other regardless of time or space restrictions. IT also allows alternative forms of communication for people who already know each other primarily in real life. IT also supports a variety of social and professional goals, and provides a ground for flourishing social networking and collaboration.

However, it is the diversity of individuals, rather than the effects of media itself, which tailors the com-

munity and contributes to the intellectual climate of society.

The idea of social networking is much older than the Internet or even mass communication. It represents people's ability to connect with others who share similar interests.

The proliferation of social networking services primarily facilitates users' (people's) access to their social links (people's connections) at any time and at any place, offering them a variety of additional services. Services which focus on building and reflecting social networks or social relationships among people, usually with similar interests, lead to a community engagement process which fosters more inclusion and participation.

Today's society may benefit from these tools, creating an opportunity to invite people to more easily engage in joint social civic activity. In other words, it means that these tools enable the community engagement process. It also creates more inclusion of community members in the decision-making process and creates the possibility of achieving better results and avoiding mistakes.

"Better" can mean different things here: decisions which are made based on more accurate information, with more accurately estimated impacts, which are more realistic, more efficient, better understood, more widely supported, and implemented more promptly.

An important element of NGO services is providing training in e-skills, as well as free or low-cost access to computers and the Internet. NGO training programmes use interactive, informal teaching methods, presenting ICT in concrete ways by applying the new skills to practical tasks. Most NGOs use e-skills training not only to enhance language skills but also to promote self-esteem, independence, as well as social and cultural skills among women. Thus, along with social participation of immigrants in NGOs, it is also important for them to be involved in these types of training programmes.

Not actually online

There could be several reasons why some people use ICT tools less than others. It could be because the Internet is not accessible, or the benefits of using the Internet have not become apparent. Some

may simply be hesitant to learn and use new technology and related equipment.

Since research shows that about one fifth of immigrants do not use the Internet at all, and others have intermediate skills, the following recommendations could be applicable to migrant or multicultural organisations.

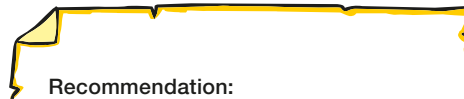
There are people who would like to use ITC resources, but do not know how to find relevant local or national issues on the Internet. Therefore, they also might not see the benefit in, or might lose interest in, using digital technology in their daily lives.

In the process of building an e-community it is always wise to consider possible obstacles which could keep people from becoming active Internet users. While it is not possible to make everyone adapt to a particular manner of participation in an e-community, it is still always advisable to consider and find ways to convey the discussions and thoughts shared in e-communities to people who are not online or not following the same channels of information.

At a community level it is wise to think about and plan how to help less Internet-savvy community

members join in e-activities. This could mean organising e-skills training programmes, disseminating information about courses provided by other organisations, or even organising joint e-skills workshops by combining the resources of various communities.

It might also be worthwhile to look into possibilities for funding to organise ICT training for community members.



Recommendation:

Community members can teach each other about the benefits of using digital technology, point out relevant web-spaces, and demonstrate how information is gathered and how it could make everyday life for the person or the community easier.

Not everyone has equally capable ICT tools available

When discussing and sharing information over the Internet with other community members, it should be done in a way that takes into account various hardware and software tools. One must be sure of using the latest technology in a way which is accessible to all members of the community. Free open source software alternatives could be promoted for use by community members.

To provide the technology needed, it could also be a good idea to collect and pass on used ITC equipment to those who do not yet have any, and to help them become aware of some of the benefits available through Internet.

2.2. Access to information

Collecting information in various languages

There are a number of useful Internet tools available at no cost which can help in automatic translation of useful sites and information into your language of choice, and also help with collecting news from

various sources simultaneously, making it easier to stay informed more quickly and easily.

In order to read any web site in the language you prefer, you can browse web sites with the free web browser Google Chrome, which has the built-in functionality to automatically translate the sites you are viewing. This kind of translation functionality could also be added to other commonly used web browsers. In the section Translation Tools, the various possibilities are explained in more detail and links are given to sources for tools.

Issue 1: People tend to look only for information in their primary language of preference.

Issue 2: Using only your first language of preference on multi-language websites may leave you unaware that the translated pages may not contain the full original text and content.

Issue 3: Web addresses assume knowledge of culture and language. Web addresses are not necessarily intuitive and may assume specific knowledge.

Issue 4: Being unaware of Internet sites which are directed at immigrants or are designed for participation.

Issue 5: Assumption of knowledge of the written language vs. lack of knowledge of the written language.

Recommendation:

When viewing multi-language websites, it might often be that the most accurate and extensive information is given in the national language(s) only, and the translated versions of the site only partially cover the actual information presented in the primary language. Therefore it is advisable to search for information through (if necessary) a translation-enabled web browser, instead of just picking one translated language version to follow at a multi-language site.

Recommendation:

When searching for information it is always advisable to use search words in more than one language, especially if your language of preference is not the official language of the state. The most accurate search results will probably be found by searching in the state language. You can use the online Google translation tool to look for a word you need in the state language(s) and try the search using that. Then view the results again with the translation-enabled browser, as explained above.

When searching for a key word or a phrase, especially in another language, keep in mind that it is easier than you think to make spelling mistakes. Therefore, if it looks like the website you are looking for does not exist, try double-checking the spelling of the address, or of the key word if you are doing a web search. You can use the online Google translation tool to look for the correct spelling of a translated word.

2.3. Reaching out to community members

If you already have a group of friends, you are most likely already conversing with others face-to-face, or by other means like phone calls, e-mails, or through an Internet environment for connecting with people. Here is a list of links to tools that might interest you:

- Information Collecting Tools
- Co-editing and Commenting Tools
- Visualisation Tools
- Group work environments
- Planning and management tools
- Community Building Tools
- Sharing organisational information among members—web site, community space, e-mail lists
- Publishing of outcomes—community space and publishing sites, automated newsletters, forums, common calendars, co-texting and commenting

The IleP project has observed that some NGOs have challenges in reaching out to their members.

The tools used most often are email and email lists. Many organisations also have their own Facebook fan pages, where they can e-inform about activities. Also, separate event pages are posted on Facebook to promote events, send invitations to members and encourage members to share the link and thus promote events even more widely.

Provide various ways of expression, which could be more fun and easier than writing. For example, Helsinki Verkkoruuti (a youth e-participation system) arranges a Ruutiexpo. Youths are allowed to express themselves in any way they want, including, for example, using videos.

Look out for:

1. not enough knowledge about information targeted at an audience overall
2. not enough knowledge about information targeted specifically at newly arrived people, people who prefer another language, and other special groups (re-migrating, emigrating, etc.)
3. need for special services/information is not considered or tailored enough to meet real needs (example: information in English only

about tourist sightseeing, although local residents are not the target group)

4. special services exist, but cannot found or reached
5. some people would like to find local/national issues on the net but do not know how

Your organisation should always look for ways to encourage more people to get involved, help those participating to have a better experience, and thus attempt to increase positive outcomes of their members' participation. (See also 2.4. *Activating and Motivating Members.*)

Good ideas should be always shared, in order to see them turn into good results.

2.4. Activating and motivating members

Civic inactivity and disincentives which lead to it, for example apathy and abstention (see Getting Involved), are counterproductive to e-participation and even the long term sustainability of democracy. Considering these obstacles, a central issue becomes how to involve and activate all members of a community or organization, and also how to give



Recommendation:

1. Start with practical life issues.
2. Establish good communication with members.
3. Invite members to share their ideas.
4. Give members freedom to initiate.

everyone an opportunity to contribute ideas and take part in discussions and the decision-making processes.

There are several existing, handy Internet tools, which will help to organise the community and activate each member by providing them with information and involving them in discussion and sharing ideas, as well as commenting, providing feed-back and engaging in a self-evaluation process.

Issues: People are hard to motivate, when issues seem to be too far away from everyday life.

Lack of interest and motivation in participation due to everyday living routines and “survival”.

2.5. E-empowerment

Here we refer to e-empowerment as the improvement of participants in their use of e-tools for participating in civic activities in the society where they live. More often than not, empowerment begins with information, given its central role in decision making; and the starting point of information is language proficiency. For this reason, language barriers may hamper empowerment. The barriers particularly pertain to online information which seems to present information in different language, but in practice “deeper” information is missing or is not presented in a manner which is clear and easy to find.

This results in feelings of frustration, especially for those who rely on such information to become more aware of issues in the society in which they live.

Another example is the difficulty in finding some e-participatory tools.



Recommendation:

- Provide a list of e-participatory tools which can be a valuable for those who want to become more participatory but lack an initiative attitude.
- Provide a list of arguments explaining the usefulness and purpose of the e-participatory tools.
- Stress the importance of participating, explain at what level they can influence the decision making process, and that their participation will be take into account.

CHAPTER 3

Collaboration with others

This chapter discusses improving life in the community, either together with other communities, organisations or local and/or national government bodies. This is often only perceived as issue-driven and reactive problem solving. But we also want to emphasise the proactive and constructive aspect of participation. There are as many creative ideas to share as there are people to share them.

Below you will find an inventory of possibilities for use of Internet/online tools in participation in society through collaboration.

Collaboration with local and national authorities

In various processes affecting people, civil servants are required by the law to consult with the citizens about how they would prefer things to be organised in the society, in principle allowing co-creative operation of the society.

The following are common types of activities through which local and national governments invite people to take part in a dialogue.

Consultation: people and organisations are asked to present their ideas, concerns and suggestions regarding some issues at hand, about existing regulations, or about drafting new legislation or decision making.

Joint collaboration: local government working together with public (individuals, NGOs, community representatives, businesses and other groups concerned), in order to design regulations and laws according to the expectations or desires and ideas presented by a wider range of society members. Common ground is sought, alternatives are discussed, and joint solutions developed.

Delegation: local government turning over decision-making power to representatives of the local community.

At each level of collaboration, there are plenty of opportunities for local organisations and communities to provide their best input and develop initiatives for developing the local region into a more attractive and better place to live.

- Being aware of published information and sharing it with members/partners
- Offering to partner with the relevant office

- Establishing good and transparent communication processes
- Planning inclusion of members and partners in forming a decision or common point of view
- Negotiating with other organisations

Joint collaboration could be seen as local government working together with the public (individuals, NGOs, community representatives, businesses and other groups concerned) in order to design regulations and laws according to the expectations or desires and ideas presented by a wider range of society members. Common ground is sought, alternatives are discussed, and joint solutions developed.

Issue: Organisations claim to be representative of a specific interest group, but are not able to prove it. Notice as well that

- Organisations are in fact not representative, although claiming to be.
- Organisations are not able to demonstrate that they are truly representative.



Recommendation:

Community members can teach each other about the benefits of using digital technology, point out relevant web-spaces, and demonstrate how information is gathered and how it could make everyday life for the person or the community easier.

3.1. Becoming noticed

If you or your organisation or community is striving to be noticed, you must take concrete steps. Here are some ideas.

What to do?

1. Instead of waiting to be contacted, it would be a good idea to be proactive and initiate contacts with the local government yourself by letting them know which topics and issues are of interest to your organisation or community, and establishing common interests. This could be done easily by e-mail,

which is treated like any other official contact, such as personal meetings or regular mail.

2. Another way to make yourself more visible, although not as directly, is to participate in existing opinion polls or a special website dedicated to listening to people, and to mention your continuous interest in similar discussions or collaborative events. For example, the City of Viljandi (Estonia) has a special site for residents to comment and raise issues of concern, minu.viljandi.ee

3. Another good way to build connections with the local government is to initiate meetings with community members and local government representatives. Especially if the members of your organisation do not yet know much about how the local government works and the opportunities for people to participate in shaping local community life, it might be a good idea to invite local government representatives to meet your community members and explain governance in the community, discuss democratic practices and explain the decision-making process. At the same time, they would learn about how your community could be more involved in the governance process.

Promoting your community

Also, check whether your local government can help to promote your organisation through its Internet channels, like listing your organisation on their website, or allowing you to promote your activities through their information network. There may be many options available, but they are not advertised. Also, it could be that options are discussed only in the national language, and translated versions of the site are not available.

Example of advertising your events:

On the Tallinn website, under the local events section, anyone can promote an event for free, by creating an account and entering the necessary data in the fields. The announcement becomes visible after a review by a city government aide.

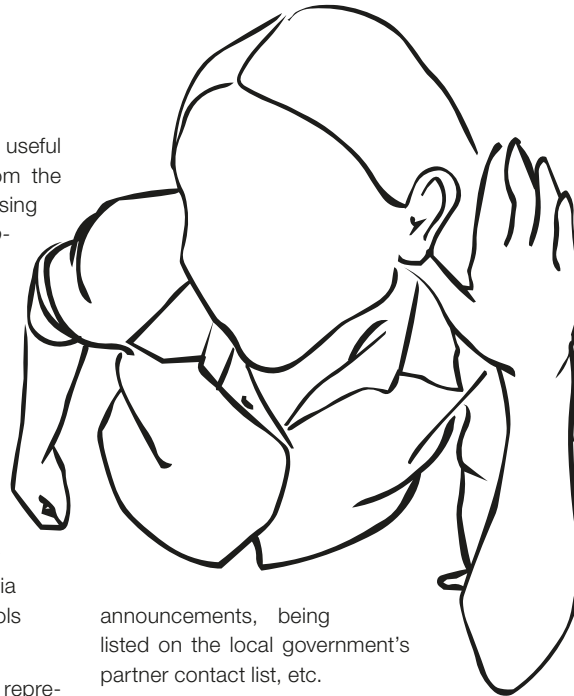
In order to post an event, one needs to go to the login window, which is available in Estonian at: <http://won2adm.delfi.ee/login.php>. The site is not available in other languages.

You can also find information about some useful tools for regularly receiving information from the Internet (section *Informing Tools*) or advertising yourself using various web tools (section *Publication Tools*).

3.2. Staying informed

To gain access to useful information it is always good to use many different methods, like making personal contacts with local government officials and meeting face-to-face to discuss the concerns or interests of your community, while at the same time seeking out all the options available to follow and receive up-to-date public information via the Internet. There are also many helpful e-tools available.

One good idea is to ask local government representatives directly how you could keep up with their activities in areas which interest you. They could inform you about various ways they share information with their partners and with the public at large. There could be many options, including attending open meetings, receiving newsletters and



announcements, being listed on the local government's partner contact list, etc.

Example of a service for receiving news:

On the City of Helsinki's website, you can subscribe to the City Government's newsletter: <http://www.helsinki.fi/fi/index/uutiskirjetilaus.html>

Example of documents available on the web:

The City of Stockholm has a website which includes the section *Newsfromthecommitteesandboards*, on which anyone interested can see current agendas, minutes and meeting times for the City Council, municipal councils and local companies. You can also subscribe to the agendas and minutes of meetings, and monitor your areas of interest.

Examples of invitations to public engagements:

The government in the City of Tartu posts invitations to participate in various discussions on its main website. There is an example of an announcement to the public asking them to make comments and proposals about detailed planning of the city centre in Tartu: http://www.tartu.ee/?menu_id=2&page_id=24212.

The "Kesklinn" (City Centre) area of the City of Tallinn publishes documents regarding development plans for the Old Town on their website: <http://www.tallinn.ee/est/Vanalinna-arengukava>.

Since not all information may be available in the language you prefer, there are useful automated translation tools you can find in the section *Translation Tools*.

There are other possibilities for receiving useful information via the Internet, as well. Please see chapter 5, section *Informing Tools*.

3.3. Participation in consultation

Consultations are two-way communication processes. Planning or decision-making bodies like national or local governments may ask for views and opinions about a specific issue or policy. They have various ways of conducting consultations. In Finland, for example, the City of Tampere has developed a website, called VALMA, to continuously consult with Tampere residents. Similarly, consultations can be started at an early phase of policy planning via a single interview or a battery of sessions with a selected target group. Any person or organisation can express judgments, feelings, convictions, etc., and in the best cases influence the outcome(s) of a consultation.

Getting involved

Ideally, if consultations are designed to provide feedback on policy proposals, anyone who wants to get involved not only in consultations but also in debates, petitions, political processes, etc. should be able to do so. However, there are many obstacles to achieving this ideal. From the standpoint of civil society, the worst obstructions are apathy and abstention, which are also obviously counterproductive to long-term sustainability of democracy. As explained in 3.2. *Staying Informed*, information is also crucial; receiving the necessary information is crucial to being able to successfully participate in consultations and discussion events.

Good internal communication patterns

When planning to be involved in consultations, you need to establish successful, regular communication patterns within your community, so that when members of your community are invited to share their opinions they can be quickly and easily informed about how to gather and record their feedback with little effort and hassle.

As authorities in general have well-established work routines and often tight schedules to keep, they also tend to expect a similar kind of work culture and timeliness from the people and partners involved in the consultation process. Communication will probably be expected to be handled via the Internet, and the documents and information involved in the process will be shared over the web, as well. Therefore, it is practical to designate key people in your community to follow up on all related information and pass it on to the other members of the community in a timely manner.

There are various e-tools which could be used to establish and develop well-functioning communication among community members as well as with other organisations, partners and government officials. Suggestions can be found in chapter 5.

What to do?

There are two issues to address:

1) Helping your community to be aware and better informed about issues currently being discussed at the local or national level, and to learn to use existing e-tools, which are helpful in receiving and sharing information. See also Translation Tools, Informing Tools, and Publication Tools in chapter 5.

Recommendations:

While there is much need for change on the part of authorities to enable participation by communities, the most helpful change would be to take notice of this linguistic issue (see the section 2.2. Access to Information), and apply free translation e-tools available on the Internet (see also Translation Tools in chapter 5).

In order to widen debates and open discussions, more interaction is needed between immigrants and authorities.

2) Communities and associations could be in closer contact with each other, so that in consultations the authorities would know how to approach your community and invite them to participate in the consultation process. See also 3.1. Becoming Noticed.

Information in many languages

Despite a tremendous effort by a great number of authorities to translate the information on their websites into many different languages, it still appears that when it comes to consultations, these avenues are usually unknown to immigrants and other language groups in general. Consultation sites have often not taken into consideration readers of various languages, so processes are announced and carried out in one language and media sphere which does not reach the entire society.

3.4. Being proactive

Since this manual is an attempt to facilitate immigrants' inclusion by providing an overview of e-tools, the value of high-quality participation cannot be over emphasized. We encourage you to be proactive in civil society and take part in what may

easily feel like a frustrating and never-ending process, but the outcome of which is ultimately rewarding. Here are some ideas.

Initiating consultations

The simplest way to take the initiative on any issue worrying you is to locate the relevant office or people in local government, or in a state office, and send them a notice about an issue which has come to light or a situation which needs to be improved.

The notice should be short and concise, addressing only one issue at a time. In addition to presenting the issue, it is always good to propose a possible solution, as well. All contact details should also be provided to facilitate further discussion and cooperation in the matter. Also, most certainly indicate whether you are willing to correspond via the Internet. This will definitely shorten the response time and facilitate sharing of relevant information which is available on the web.

Once the correspondence is in digital form, it is easy to share it with other members of the community as the process progresses, without much extra time or effort.

There are also often means provided by local governments for receiving notices and proposals from citizens about daily life in the local area. These can be special websites or discussion forums specifically designed to communicate with residents about their interests, concerns and ideas.

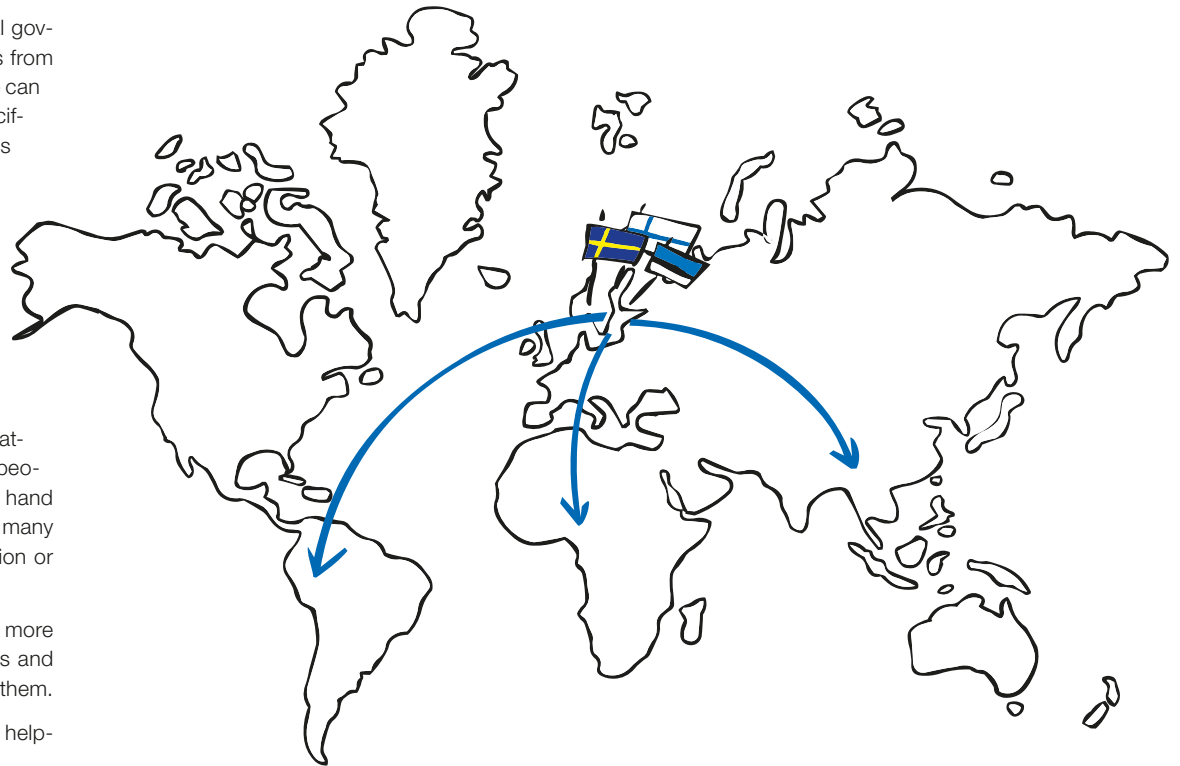
For example, the City of Viljandi (Estonia) has a special website, minu.viljandi.ee, where people can post their initiatives and observations concerning possible improvements in the city.

Forming interest groups

Sometimes, in order to bring an issue to the attention of the appropriate authorities, active people need to present evidence that the issue at hand is indeed worthy of notice and that there are many other people who are also expecting a solution or change.

Or, together with your group, you could find more people who are thinking along the same lines and let them know you would like to connect with them.

In such situations e-tools become especially help-





Recommendations:

In facilitating the overall inclusion of immigrants at all levels, participation at neighbourhood, local, national and transnational levels should be considered. It is important to recognise the double consciousness of immigrants – being at home and away from home at the same time, being here and there at the same time.

Transnational identity is a useful concept, taking into account original background, country of departure (old home) and current country (new home). It is important to link this sense of transnational identity with processes and methods for inclusion, integration, participation and empowerment.

ful, providing a chance to “meet” and connect with people across distances or borders which usually separate people from one another.

On the web you can share various standpoints and discuss options, and look for the best solution or for common ground. It is also possible to collect signatures for petitions or organise voting and polls to demonstrate a common opinion among many people who might otherwise never have met.

See also *Initiative Taking* and *Voting Tools* in chapter 5.

3.5. International activities

Being transnational

A transnational identity consists of having multiple socio-cultural values and allegiances. Some immigrants are more connected with their counterparts internationally than interested in local political participation. Thus there are multiple interconnected dimensions and fields of e-participation as immigrants search for social, cultural and political inclusion and identity online. The increased authentic recognition of diversity and multiplicity in ways of acting and thinking also requires a re-examination of individuals' participation on a more transcultural and international level. Immigrants should have

greater opportunities to produce intercultural and inter-ethnic global dialogue in order to have more autonomy in defining their interests.

The Internet contributes to transnational identity. As most users will recognise, it supports keeping in touch with family and other people in geographically distant places. But more important for a transnational identity, the Internet enables the following of events in the original and new country in real time, either through authentic web media services or traditional media services in web format, such as newspapers. Besides, with transnational media, immigrants can be in touch with their own language, culture, music and entertainment.

CHAPTER 4

Obstacles

This chapter presents a battery of obstacles to e-participation. There are all sorts of issues that prevent the improvement of online participation, but here we concentrate on those issues which arose from the materials we gathered through workshops, interviews, and observations during the IleP project in the three countries included in the project—Estonia, Finland, and Sweden.

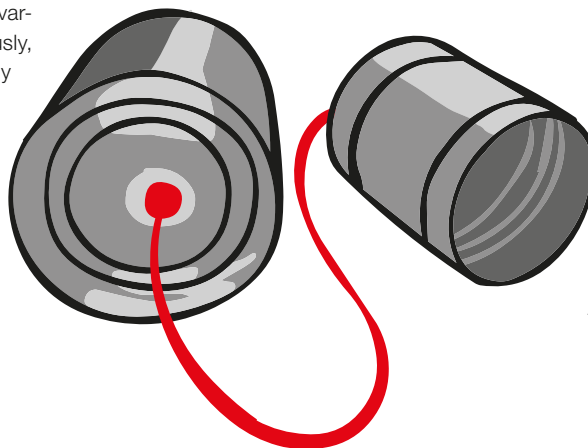
After the identification of each issue we also give advice to cope with it. Our advice, however, varies in its capacity to solve the problem. Obviously, some of our advice can be implemented easily whereas others require more effort.

Reviewing the issues we mention in this chapter will help you to realise that e-participation is a complex engagement with civil society which is full of pitfalls, but not an impossible or overwhelming one.

4.1. Technical barriers

Lack of technical means

Not everyone has the latest ICT tools available. Some people are not even interested in acquiring modern ICT tools. There will be always differences in technical means available to people. It is, then, important to consider these differences when communicating.



It is advisable to share information discussed or received with each person according to their most comfortable means of receiving it. Also, consider how to reach those people who are not using ICT tools. For example, while some members of a community communicate with each other in a chat room and then make a decision which applies to a wider range of people, they could expand the discussion and decision to include others by sending an e-mail, posting it on their community's website, sending an SMS or even just printing the information and passing it out those who do not use the Internet.

When sharing information over the Internet with other community members, it is also necessary to take into account that people may be using very different sets of software and ICT tools, including both older and newer devices and programs. Therefore it is best to share files and messages in a way that does not require the latest equipment to receive the information.

There are also e-tools that help pull together existing information from various sources and present it on a website or in a file so it can be easily published on a website, forwarded as an email, or printed out

on paper to inform those who do not follow the original information sources themselves.

Digital skills

If our interest is to facilitate electronic inclusion by using e-tools which foster participation in civic society, we cannot underestimate the role of the digital skills needed to use e-tools. These digital skills describe what participants should know and be able to do to use information technologies and communication so they can develop skills which strengthen and promote their integration into the activities of civil society.

Recommendation:

Arouse interest, help to learn the skills, share technological tools, provide information in various forms.

For additional information, see chapter 5, sections: *Publishing Tools*, sub-section *Aggregating Tools*, *Informing Tools*. It would also be helpful to review *Access to Information*, as well as the section *Translation Tools*.

4.2. Awareness

Not everybody is aware of the websites directed to them that contain participation opportunities. Besides, a general unawareness in the field of participation may prevent anyone to access the information of their interest. In many occasions, participation opportunities might be advertised through a narrow selection of channels that limit the number of people informed.

Awareness of the existing information

It may be the case that you are not aware of the information relevant to them being available over the Internet. You may not know about municipal or national web-pages, which specifically published for them, neither you may be aware of the sites with local news and public information targeted to all.

Recommendations:

Participation opportunities need to be advertised also by as many available means as simply the organizations' web-site. Add the functionality of sharing web-content through social media networks.

Authorities need to improve their communication, and you need also to actively look for it. Helping your family and community members to find, to follow and to use the existing communication channels and methods, you can increase their degree of participation in their new place of residence.

See also chapter 5, sections: *Access to Information* and *Informing Tools*.

Connecting with the authorities

Your community can take the initiative and keep connected with the authorities both on local and

national levels, even on the international level. There are a number of e-tools available for the purpose.

See also chapter 5, sections: *Becoming Noticed*, *Being Proactive*, *Publication Tools*, *Initiative Taking* and *Voting Tools*.

4.3. Language and communication

Information only in one language

People usually prefer to receive news and information in the language they are most comfortable with. This determines which news and media channels they choose as their primary information sources. On the other hand, important information regarding daily hot topics, various helpful e-services or inclusion/participatory activities may be announced only in the official language of the state.

People whose native language or language of preference is one other than the official state language may not receive or even accidentally stumble upon essential information or announcements using news and media channels in the state language.

They may also not find necessary information when searching the web if they use keywords or phrases in other languages.

What can communities do?

First of all, it must be recognised that many communities are intercultural. Therefore, it is good to look into whether community members need help with translating or finding information they need. For example, the community website could include a button for automatic translation functionality, or links to web based translation tools. This would provide everyone reading the page with an option to translate the content into their preferred language.

Mismatching amount of translated information

The next area of concern is the reliability of the existing translated information on websites. The translated versions may include only a summary or a portion of the content presented in the original language, leaving multi-language website visitors unaware that the translated pages may not contain the same amount or quality of information as the original pages did. Those responsible for the informa-

tion of a website may not realise that not everything has been translated, and that the key information may not appear in the translated versions and are available only in the official language. Therefore, to ensure that all the information covered is available in other languages, a user who needs translated versions should find his or her own methods for translating the material. For suggestions, see chapter 5, *Translation Tools*.

Web addresses are not intuitive

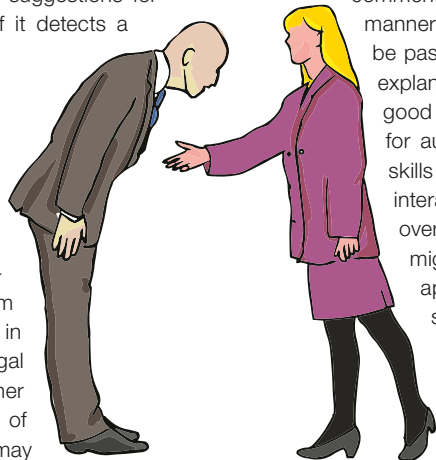
Sometimes a web site has a domain address which is not intuitively clear or assumes knowledge of specific culture and language. For example, in Estonia some web sites use words containing double-vowels (like www.eesti.ee), which may be unknown to people not familiar with Estonian grammar. Therefore it could be easy to misspell the URL when typing the address, or searching for it on the web. The same difficulties arise when web addresses contain words or abbreviations which are widely known in the local culture, but not necessarily among newcomers. A misspelled web address may lead the user to a website owned by a cybersquatter instead of the intended site.

What could be done?

When looking for a particular web site, it is best to use a web browser which offers suggestions for similar, existing web addresses if it detects a misspelling.

Daily language and legal language

More often than not, the public authorities use a language plagued with legal and technical terms making the information difficult to understand and differ from daily, oral language. Difficulties in understanding grow when the legal language is not a person's mother tongue or preferred language of communication. These issues may discourage certain groups of people (youths, immigrants, less educated, medically impaired etc.) to approach authorities. Translating a legal or bureaucratic text will not succeed without the skills of a professional translator.



Communication skills:

Participants may lack skills in proposing ideas and comments in a brief and effective manner to authorities. They may be passive or in need of further explanation, which requires good communication skills for authorities. Poor language skills may also challenge the interaction. Authorities may overlook initiatives by immigrants who fail to submit applications through the suitable/proper means. Authorities, on the other hand, may lack public relations skills themselves.

Discussion skills:

Authorities may lack the skills to organise and facilitate discussions; the discussions may stray out of scope, a large number of participants may seem intimidating and lengthy and wide-ranging discussions may be difficult to handle.

Communication traditions:

The underlying expectations about how official communication is generally carried out may pose an obstacle in communication with people from different cultural backgrounds. In the IleP region countries writing is very highly regarded, whereas in some other places texts are regarded more flexibly. This in turn may create a situation where messages delivered in other than written form may go unnoticed, or the advantages of other forms of communication may not be fully exploited.

Cultural relativism

There is no universal way of doing things. All cultures differ in the way they value and transmit information, such as the way to assign unique, personal names, key dates marking personal events like birth and marriage, residence location, etc. Not surprisingly, recording such information is done differently in different places, and authorities are always challenged by the task of transferring records from an unfamiliar system into their own, and by trying to obtain relevant information from a person who does not value the same data.

See also chapter 5, sections: *Staying Informed* and *Translation Tools*.

4.4. Motivation

All aspects of daily life are being influenced by the new circumstances that the digital era has brought along. But in spite of the need for changes, many people fear them for not knowing in advance which will be the consequences for status quo, the organizational effectiveness, and economic costs. Obviously, a negative reaction to the electronic change is counterproductive to e-participation, which ultimately is connected in the long term to the sustainability of democracy.

As an ideal, public authorities should strive to ensure that whenever there is someone who wants to get involved in a debate, petition, political process, and the like, should be able to do so. As an additional ideal, everybody should take advantage of the possibilities to contribute in the activities of civil society — apathy and abstention move in opposite direction to any kind of participation.

Inspiration

Swedish campaign Digidel 2013 is a campaign to increase the share of the population actively using digital services. Almost 80 percent of the Swedish population regularly uses the Internet. One and a half million Swedes do not. The campaign is formed by a network of NGOs, libraries, companies and authorities. The objective of this joint effort is that the 500,000 individuals currently not using the Internet will get online by the end of 2013.

On www.digidel.se you can join the campaign as a partner or as an individual champion – just describe what you aim to do and report your results when achieved. The network is expanding all the time as new participants join the network with their own activities to fulfill the overall goal.

Fear or disinterest in the Internet

Some people may not feel comfortable using the Internet in general, or managing their activities and voicing their opinions online. The reasons for fear or negative feelings towards Internet tools and services might be due to the initial frustrations felt while still learning to use ICT tools. Some may even experience technophobia—a fear of all kinds of technologies and distrust in their beneficial effects. Others do not feel or see the need to use digital technology in their daily lives. These reasons could be obstacles to becoming active Internet uses for anyone, but are perhaps more common among older people, and among a portion of the female population due to cultural restrictions.



Recommendation:

Members of the community who are more accustomed to ICT tools could disseminate information to other community members through other means, like bill boards, printouts, social events, etc. When sharing information over the web, the community always needs to consider the members offline, as well, and find alternative means for keeping everyone equally informed and involved.

As an individual, ask others how they feel that they benefit from using Internet. Recognise that digital skills are crucial in today's society, and seek out some existing opportunities to learn about the benefits of having computer and learning to use the Internet. Make use of the people and organisations around you which can facilitate your entry into the digital world—do not give up.

Community members can teach each other about the benefits of using digital technology, starting by demonstrating how the everyday life of the person or the community could be made easier. Be proactive in the sharing of knowledge.

Recommendations

The need to respond quickly to an unfamiliar situation and the inability to accept uncertainty is associated with an attitude defined by prejudice and a need to simplify the social world by making stereotypes. If you are afraid to be uncertain and incapable of understanding a given social situation, then try to understand the first problem, that is, just what makes the situation confusing.

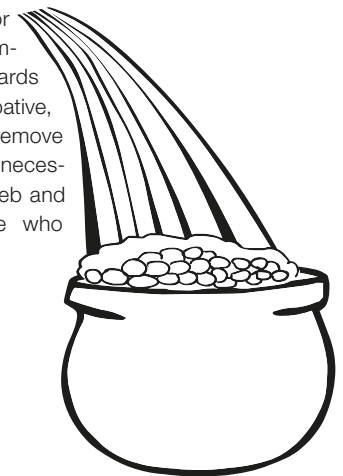
Discover and acknowledge your own prejudices. Talk to others to find out what you achieve by discriminating against others. If you have ever been discriminated against, how did you feel about it, and why would you want to perpetuate that vicious circle? Remember that stereotypes are false and based on unreliable information.

Unrealistically high expectations

Unrealistically high expectations of online services may lead to disappointment and the contrary to motivation, counterincentive, not to mention a negative attitude towards online communication and socialisation practices. Similarly, a lack of understanding regarding what to expect of Internet services and e-tools may lead to frustrations and prevent people from using them.

New users of ICT and e-tools are recommended to have a clear of the realistic outcomes of new technologies, to remember that skills need to be acquired and not to be afraid to ask for support.

While having a web site or belonging to an online community is a good step towards becoming more e-participative, it does not necessarily remove other issues, like finding necessary information on the web and sharing it with everyone who needs it.



For good ideas about sharing and collecting information or collaborating with others using the Internet, please see the following chapters: 2. *Community Building* and 3. *Collaboration with Others for more detailed discussions*.

See also section 2.2. *Access to Information*, and chapter 5 *Informing Tools, Publishing Tools and Translation Tools*.

4.5. Digital access

Digital access is an absolute prerequisite to e-participation but can not be attached to a single technological issue, let alone issues concerning immigration in tandem with digital access. There are many areas that may create obstacles for a wider inclusion and/or participation; yet, in accordance to the IleP project findings, the challenges in this area include language issues, ability to contact relevant people and organizations, find the relevant information and motivation. Respectively, those issues commented here can be found in 2.2. *Access to information*, 3.1. *Becoming noticed*, 3.2. *Staying informed*, 2.4. *Activating and motivating members* and 4.4. *Motivation*.

4.6. Prejudice

A prejudice is a judgement—usually negative—made about a person, a group, or a situation without having any actual evidence of its basis in reality or first-hand experience of the people or phenomenon in question. Unfortunately, such unexamined preconceptions can be found in all levels of society, by any social group regardless of origin. Prejudice, moreover, entails a disposition of mind prone to stereotyping, for example, groups of people.

A stereotype fixes a group of people into a rigid and collective type. Such a view of a group refuses to recognize the possibility of variation and difference among individuals. In connection to e-participation, stereotyped thinking and prejudices hinder the practice of inclusion activities.

Issue: Prejudice among minorities towards each other and ethnic majorities.

4.7. Gender

Gender issues are always present in any social order. The problem is how to identify them. “Gender” within the context of a social order does not refer to the same thing as “sex” in the biological sense. Gender refers to the socio-cultural conditions which define the position of a man as opposed to a woman in society. Concerns about gender roles and relationships are not limited to women; it is important to ensure that all participants, whether male or female, have access to the same resources, services, responsibilities, actions, etc.

Recommendation: Focus on all gender roles and relationships rather than on women only; the design should ensure that both women and men have access to project resources and services which apply to their actual responsibilities in life.

Inspiration:

JallaVärlden! (Jalla World!) is a project funded by the Internet foundation (iis.se) as part of the digital inclusion initiative and is a collaboration between Bagarmossens' Neighbors Association (Bagisgrannar), the Association SMAKA (taste) and Bagarmossens library, the project is part of Digidel 2013.

The aim of the project is to support women from isolated immigrant communities in their desire to become more digitally included. The project offers a practical introduction to computers through creation of a food blog in Swedish, Arabic and Somali, which includes foods from many countries – including traditional Swedish food – aimed at people from different backgrounds who are interested in food, and promoting cooperation and cultural exchange.

The blog can be found at www.tagine.se.

4.8. Representativeness

Immigration poses a special problem with the issue of representativeness. Generally speaking, immigrants are a conglomeration of all sorts of people whose only binding feature is that they live in the same geographic area. For example, with the exception of working for the same company in Stockholm, a young woman who is a systems engineer from a city of India has little in common with fifty year old man who is from a small village in Bolivia and has a temporary cleaning job. Another general feature is that the composition of immigrant groups is ephemeral due to shifts in the life circumstances of many immigrants. The special problem, then, is who and/or what organisation or body can guarantee the representativeness of an amorphous group.

Issues: Some organisations claim to be representative of a specific interest group, but are not always able to prove it.

Organisations which are in fact not representative, although claiming to be.

Organisations which are not able to demonstrate their representativeness.

Recommendations

Associations, non-governmental organisations and communities have a need for transparency when selecting representatives in decision-making capacities and representative boards, forums and networks. Be aware that consultation with immigrant groups by authorities may be done by representatives who are already well known and well established advocates and use existing email lists, and thus can be said to have an activist-bias. This sometimes leads others to discredit their proposals, creating a lack of trust among all stakeholders which may affect the final implementation of the policy. Organisations should question such situations and demand a fair hearing on all relevant avenues, and be active in creating a dialog with authorities.

CHAPTER 5

Toolbox

Improving e-participation unavoidably requires a certain level of knowledge about the available online tools. The previous advice, about how authorities may overcome the obstacles to immigrants e-participation, all include the use of online participatory and collaborative tools. This chapter present several online tools based on what activity they may facilitate in the participation process. It should be noted that no printed list of online tools will remain relevant for a long period of time. New tools enter the industry every day, some tools may cease to work.

For an updated list of known tools, please check out the site: supportingdiversity.eu¹.

This manual approaches participation as an empowering process for the governed. Therefore, it adopts the participation process steps that include; *Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate* and *Empower* as developed by the International Association of Public Participation. The manual also analyses the obstacles to e-participation in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden based on empirical data. The table following presents an overview of the participation process, the goal and the possible obstacles in each step, and the kind of online tools that may help authorities overcome the obstacles and apply our advice. The chapter later presents several tools to inspire authorities in their use of online tools in e-including immigrants in the participation processes.



¹ We kindly ask you to share your experiences with other tools and services with us and other interested readers

Online tools to overcome the obstacles in the empowering participation process

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	provide balanced and objective information	obtain public feedback on analysis	work directly with the public throughout the process	partner with the public in each aspect of the decision	place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Possible obstacles often relate to	Access Technical/management	Interaction Cultural issues	Interaction Political cultural issues Technical/management	Access Interaction Political culture	Political culture
Overcoming obstacles online with	e-mail lists websites Blogs Microblogs Vlogs Social networking sites Translation tools Aggregating tools Web feed	websites Blogs Miniblogs Vlogs Social networking sites Translation tools Voting tools	Translation tools Planning tools Collaborative working tools Instant messaging & Voice and video call	Translation tools Planning tools Collaborative working tools Instant messaging & Voice and video call	Translation tools Planning tools Collaborative working tools Instant messaging & Voice and video call

The following presents several tools that may help authorities to overcome possible obstacles in different phases of a participation process.

5.1. Inform

5.1.1 E-mail lists

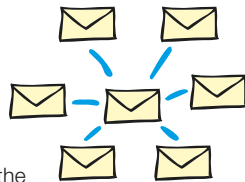
E-mail lists allow you to send information to all the people who have signed up for your mailing list. Many organisations use e-mail lists to disseminate, for instance, their newsletters online. Mailing list hosting services include:

FreeLists (freelists.org) provides free e-mailing list hosting.

Mailchimp.com (mailchimp.com) is an e-mail marketing and e-mail list manager.

5.1.2. Web publishing

There are a number of service providers that offer free hosting of your website, some



providers additionally offer content managing systems (or CMS) that allow you to design and maintain a website with only a minimum of technical skills. These are usually offered in free and full versions, where the free version has some limited functionality.

Wordpress (wordpress.com) is as a blogging tool that can be equally seen as a free web publishing and content management platform. It offers a variety of layout templates. The wordpress software can also be downloaded and installed to a server of your own choosing.

Edicy (edicy.com) is a simple, customisable tool for creating a website. Minimum technical skills are needed and has both a free and a paid “pro” version. The user interface is available in 16 different languages.

Google sites (sites.google.com) is a free and simple tool for setting up websites. The choice of layouts and additional options, however, is smaller compared to for example Wordpress.

Links on your website: A link you wish to share on your website may be very long and difficult to read. Service providers offer URL forwarding service so you can make a short version of the URL address (link) and use the short link instead of the long one. There is a variety of short URL service providers, including:

shorturl.com
goo.gl
tinyurl.com
ow.ly/url/shorten-url

Links collections: You may collect, organise, save, and share links with social bookmarking services like Delicious (deli and Diigo (diigo.com)).

5.1.3. Blogs

Blogs are web-based services which allow publication in written, audio, and video formats. They are often used to express opinions and facilitate discussion with the blog followers about a given topic.



Benefits of blogs include:

- structured organisation of your content usually in chronological order;
- ready for use after registering with an online blog service provider;
- an easy-to-use text editor which allows you to see the article while writing it, almost in the same form as it will appear after publishing it;
- support embedding of various widgets provided by other service providers such as YouTube videos and Slideshare slides.

Some free blogging service: **WordPress** is a blogging and publishing service with a focus on aesthetics, web standards, and usability. The Wordpress blog can be made private, meaning that it is visible only to the people selected by the blog owner, or otherwise publicly visible to everyone. The user interface is available in 120 languages.

Blogger (blogger.com) is a publishing tool from Google for sharing text, photo, and video. In order to blog in Blogger, a Google account is necessary. Private blog may be shared with up to 100 Google account holders. The user interface is available in 50 languages.

If you have a blog, it may appear on **Technorati** (technorati.com), the largest blog search engine in the world. Once you register Technorati tracks “blog reactions” or blogs that link to yours. You can search for your name on Technorati and subscribe to RSS alerts, so that you know about it when someone blogs about you.

5.1.4. Microblogs

Microblogs or miniblogs differ from traditional blogs for they provide a forum for more limited content at a time. Organisations or individuals may use microblogs to announce short and condensed messages.

Twitter (twitter.com) is the best known microblog which allows posting up to 140-character long text updates. Users can follow other users’ tweets. Posting regular tweets and following the tweets of the target audience may increase your visibility and the number of your followers. Please note that your tweets may be set as public so that anybody can see your updates, or private so that only your followers can view your content.



Facebook (facebook.com) and **Google+** (plus.google.com), the popular social networking sites, may also be used as microblogs with the status updates that are visible to all the other users in your network. Please note that the status updates on Facebook and on Google+ may also be set as public so that everybody may see your updates.

Tumblr (tumblr.com) is an easy-to-use tool, which allows sharing content in text, photo, and video formats. The tool provides its users with a useful support centre.

5.1.5. Vlogs (video blogs/video sharing tools)

Using video sharing tools, vlogs, may help you increase your outreach. Providing information in video format in an interactive and Web 2.0 sharing environment may be beneficial in reaching people with difficulties in reading and /or language difficulties.



Some video sharing tools include: **YouTube** (youtube.com) and **Vimeo** (vimeo.com) are video sharing websites where users can upload, share, view, and comment on videos made by themselves and by others.

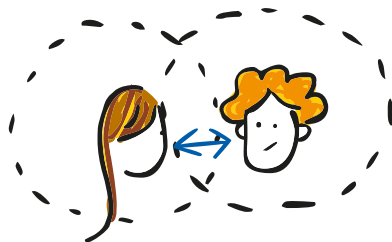
VideoJug (videojug.com) is focused on “how to..?” videos.

Animoto (animoto.com) helps to turn photos, video clips and music into videos to share with everyone.

Screenr (screenr.com) is a web-based screen recorder to make screen-casts.

5.1.6. Social networking sites

Social networking sites consist of individuals and/or organisations that are related to each other in various ways, depending on the network type (e.g., friendship, interests, business relationships, etc.).



Benefits of social networking sites include:

- joining existing networks
- creating new networks
- sharing information in real time with mobile applications
- increasing outreach
- increasing interaction
- increasing participation

Facebook (facebook.com) is a social networking service that enables people to connect with friends and others who work, study and live around them. Facebook provides an opportunity to share text, photos and videos with friends on your contact list. Organisations can use Facebook by creating a page or group. The main advantage to an organisation of having a Facebook page or group is that everyone who likes or joins the organisation will receive updates to their own Facebook wall, and therefore can be updated about news. For example, when authorities start an inclusion process, they can post information on their Facebook page so all those following their activities will receive an update.

Google+(plus.google.com) is a networking platform that was built as an alternative to Facebook, enables forming online groups and communities named as circles of people in order to share different information between different circles of people. It also includes video and group chat features. It allows sharing updates with particular groups, and collecting information on keywords or topics of interest.

Other popular social networking tools include, among others: **diaspora**(diasporaproject.com), **badoo**(badoo.com), **foursquare** (foursquare.com), **IRC Galleria (Finland)** (irc-galleria.net), **ning** (ning.com), **Tagged** (tagged.com).

It should be noted that any list of social networking services is likely to be partially outdated at the time of printing.

Many sites analyse the popularity of web sites and social media; ebizma², for instance is specific to social media while alexa³ and comscore⁴ analyse the popularity of websites.

2 <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-networking-websites>

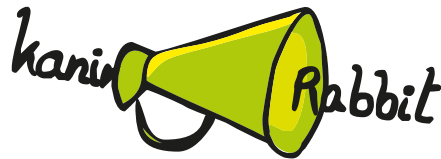
3 <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>

4 <http://www.comscore.com>

Finally, **AddThis.com** (addthis.com) will enable authorities to allow others to share their information wherever they like.

Wikipedia⁵ alone lists over 200 social networking sites.

5.1.7. Translation tools



5.1.7.1. Making a website multilingual

You may provide a multilingual website by integrating a translation gadget on your website. The gadget allows the user to select a preferred language on the website, and translate the content immediately.

Google translate gadget⁶ can be added to any web site to enable site visitors to easily translate

5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites

6 http://translate.google.com/translate_tools

content into one of the 50 available languages on Google translation tools.

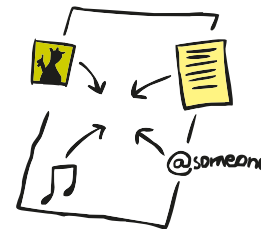
Microsoft translator widget⁷ is a similar tool providing translation to and from over 30 languages.

5.1.8. Aggregating tools

Using multiple social media tools may be challenging in terms of managing the updates and the interaction. Aggregating tools allow mixing different types of social media content, creating blogs that gather all kinds of feeds so they appear on one page.

Some of the services include: **flavors.me** (flavors.me) and **about.me** (about.me) allow you to create a website that collects social media updates, photos and videos into a unified web presence.

7 <http://www.microsofttranslator.com/widget>



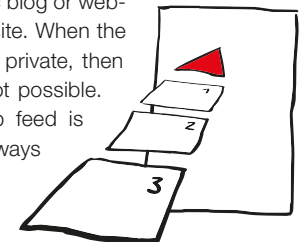
Posterous (posterous.com) is a service for posting material on many social media channels at once, eliminating the need to post material separately to each one.

Paper.li (paper.li) allows you to pull together different content, e.g. Facebook or Twitter feeds or any other web content and publish it as a newspaper.

Civicboom (civicboom.com) is a content sharing tool which allows anyone to post requests for specific items of content and to share content. It is possible to geotag the content (set location on the map).

5.1.9. Web feed

A web feed is a data format used for providing users with frequently updated content, e.g. news from another public blog or website, without visiting the site. When the blog or website is made private, then reading a web feed is not possible. The most common web feed is RSS. There are different ways for reading web feeds:



Web browsers: users can add feeds of websites of interest to their web browser favourites menu, and be notified when there have been changes to the websites. Learn about subscribing to a feed using the **Microsoft Internet Explorer**⁸, **Firefox**⁹ or **Safari**¹⁰ browsers. **Google Chrome** cannot automatically read feeds, but an official extension can be downloaded from chrome.google.com/webstore.

E-mail clients: RSS feeds can be viewed as e-mails on many of the e-mail client programmes. For example, read how to set up MS Outlook to read RSS feed¹¹.

RSS readers: there are also online RSS readers. The main advantage is that feeds can be read from any computer or mobile device. Examples of such services are **Bloglines**¹² and **Google Reader**¹³

8 <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Using-feeds-RSS>

9 <http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/Live%20Bookmarks>

10 <http://www.apple.com/safari/features.html#rss>

11 <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook-help/add-an-rss-feed-HA010159539.aspx?CTT=3>

12 <http://www.bloglines.com/index.html>

13 <http://www.google.com/reader>.

See also HOW TO: Use Google Reader Like A Rockstar: <http://mashable.com/2008/12/07/how-to-use-google-reader>

which enable searching, subscribing, creating and sharing news feeds, blogs and rich web content.

FeedDemon (feeddemon.com) is an RSS feed reader for Windows.

RSSOWL (rssowl.org) is for Windows, Linux (32 Bit and 64 Bit) and Apple Mac OS X, which can save selected information in various formats for offline viewing and sharing. There are tutorials available for various features of RSSOWL.

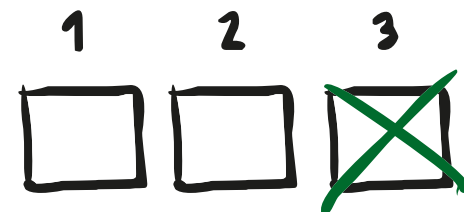
Authorities may also integrate the **AddThis** button (addthis.com) on their website to help spread their content. The button can also be installed into your browser allowing you to share any content you find interesting even if the sharing option is not provided by the website. Alternatively, **Lockerz Share** tool (share.lockerz.com) can be used to share information to many desired channels. Lockerz Share tool exists for a variety of different web services.

5.2. Consult

All the above tools may also be used in the consult phase. The consult phase aims at collecting feedback from the public. Therefore, additionally,

authorities may also benefit from the online petition and voting tools.

5.2.1. Petition and voting tools



Online voting tools allow platforms to collect public feedback. Examples of online voting include:

Petitsioon.ee (petitsioon.ee); Developed in Estonia, a private initiative, the site allows obtaining feedback. The tool can be used for collecting signatures, and carrying out opinion polls.

ipetitions (ipetitions.com) is a free online service for launching a campaign or petition. Registration is required.

The Initiative Channel (www.aloitkanava.fi) is a national online service in Finland, which was devel-

oped to fulfil the requirement to find ways for young people to take part in determining youth work and youth policy, as stipulated in the Youth Act. In Finland, the service is part of the Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007–2011, and many municipalities have implemented it as one of the participation and consultation systems for children and young people.

The Initiative Channel is an open and direct form of participation enabling young people to share their ideas, comment on other people's ideas, and support and log in to initiatives of their choice. The e-democracy tool also makes it possible to track how initiatives are being processed in a municipality. One of the benefits of the service is that everybody can participate as long as they have an online connection, computer and login name. Users are able to express their opinions using a nickname or anonymously, so participating is easy.

Online questionnaire services do also provide multiple opportunities for collecting feedback from the public. These services include **webropol** (webropol.com), **digium** (digium.fi) and **survey-monkey** (surveymonkey.com).

5.3. Involve, Collaborate and Empower

The involve, collaborate and empower steps of the participation processes include co-working with the stakeholders. The online tools below permit co-working and collaborating online both in synchronous or asynchronous modes. As translation tools appear above please see the previous section for those tools.

5.3.1. Planning tools



5.3.1.1. Inclusion process planning

The inclusion **Process planner**¹⁴ developed in the UK helps you to choosing methods suitable in vari-

¹⁴ <http://www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/ProcessPlanner/Scope+introduction>

ous stages of planning where you want to involve people in a project, common decision-making activities, or other participatory events. The Process planner prompts you with a series of questions, which are compared to a database of inclusion methods to determine which of these best fits your needs. It is often a good idea to combine different methods at different stages of a decision-making cycle.

The Finnish e-participation environment project (osallistumisymparisto.fi and otakantaa.fi) develops web services for enhancing and enabling dialog and interaction between citizens, politicians and public servants. The services provide tools and methods for, e.g., inclusion planning, deliberative discussions, different kinds of online discussions, questionnaires and surveys, formal commenting of drafts and municipal and national initiatives. The services are introduced in phases, mainly between mid-2012 and 2013, and can be used on a local, regional and national level. Target groups of the toolset are governmental organisations as well as NGO's and individuals.

5.3.1.2. Scheduling meetings and events

Online scheduling tools save resources in planning an event with multiple stakeholders.

Doodle (doodle.com) allows you to select a range of dates for a meeting, and ask everyone to indicate their preferences. You can decide the meeting time according to the options most suitable to the participants, sending all a notification with the final decision on date and times. Additionally, all participants can see which dates and times other people had preferred for the meeting. Doodle is simple, quick and requires no registration.

Wiggio (wiggio.com) is an easy to use toolkit, allowing you to keep a shared calendar (with text message reminders), poll groups in real-time, send bulk text messages, store files in one common folder, and create to-do lists. The advantage of Wiggio compared to others is the possibility to set up virtual conference calls ¹⁵.

Zwiggo (zwiggo.com) is a group sharing platform for private and public groups. Each group can de-

¹⁵ Watch a tutorial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNBXyDUNI7I&feature=related%20w=400&h=200%5d>

sign their own space by adding applications for chatting, sharing photos, files, links, documents and books, creating and assigning to-dos, date planning and calendaring, putting up sticky notes, having discussions, mapping out locations, blogging, getting votes and making decisions ¹⁶.

5.3.2. Collaborative working tools

Collaboration tools allow collaborative creation and management of documents online, and may be useful in allowing many people to work on the same document at the same time. When you use online collaboration tools, there is no need to send static documents between the collaborators by email. Instead, a document can be created and commented on online.

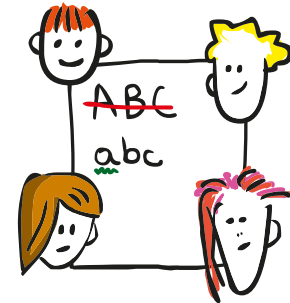
5.3.2.1. Document creation and editing tools

Document creation tools allow instant online collaboration with commenting, editing and discussion functionalities. Here is a list of somewhat similar on-

¹⁶ See an overview video: <http://www.vimeo.com/30843187 w=400&h=200>

line tools, which do not require registration or any user account, are easy to use, and useful for recording meeting minutes, brainstorming, project planning, drafting sessions and more. The tools below allow multiple people to edit the same document at once, and all changes are instantly reflected on every participant's screen. Once the document is created it can be easily shared by simply sharing the document's URL (link) with others. All co-authors can pick a personal colour that indicates their original text in the document.

Sync.in (sync.in) allows you entering a suitable name for your online document upon creation. Basic text editing tools, such as bold typeface are provided. You can save and export versions of the document. The time slider function provides an overview of the document changes over time. A chat room is also included so users can add comments and discussions next to the document editing area.



Primarypad (primarypad.com) has all the above-mentioned features similar to Sync.in, but additionally it allows importing files to be edited. Up to 15 people are allowed to collaboratively work together in real time. The document will be saved online for 30 days. You can save up to 50 revisions.

Netcomment.net (netcomment.net) is a service that makes the process of commenting and approving digital material easy and efficient. In addition to commenting, it provides too to manage the workflow of document editing and approval.

YooMoot (www.yoomoot.com) is a place to participate in structured debates. Although currently in a “by invitation” mode, it has received praise from technology media companies and is a service perhaps worth trying out later.

Google docs & Spreadsheets (docs.google.com) allow creating collaborative online documents and spread sheets with all the main possibilities of document editing software, being somewhat similar and recognisable for those used to Microsoft Word and Excel or LibreOffice. You can also upload your existing files, pictures or videos and share them with other users. The files may be exported and saved,

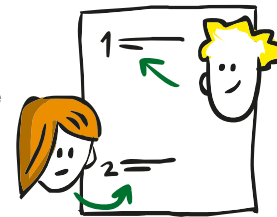
or shared online with selected users or made public to everyone. The tool thus has more sophisticated features, but requires registration and a user account.

5.3.2.2 Wikis

A wiki is a website where users can collaboratively add, modify, or delete its content.

Wikis keep track of the history of changes in a text; so that earlier versions of the document can be tracked when necessary. Wikis do not allow instant co-creation of a document, an article will be locked while it is being edited by someone. But it allows making changes when other users are not working with the document.

Wikis are especially useful for building knowledge bases because they allow expansion and creation of new articles or sub-articles when new information becomes available. Creating sub-articles and building connections between articles makes it



easy to use wikis as a source of information ¹⁷. Although most wikis require downloading and installation on a web server, there are also web-based versions of wiki software available:

Wikispaces (wikispaces.com) allows you creating a wiki which you and your readers can add to, edit and change in any way

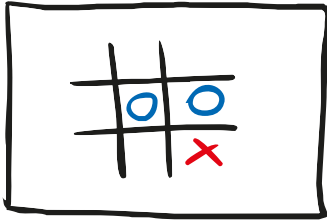
EditMe (editme.com) is a wiki hosting service that empowers non-technical users to quickly and easily build and host editable web sites.

Wikidot (wikidot.com) is a wiki hosting service which allows the creation of up to 5 wikis for free, with limited storage space.

5.3.2.3. Visualisation tools

Visualisation tools allow drawing or sketching ideas collaboratively. These tools can be especially useful during online meetings; for instance during a Skype call when participants need to visualise their ideas.

17 See the comparison of wiki:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_wiki_software



Some easy-to-use visualization tools include:

Dabbleboard (dabbleboard.com) is a drawing and sharing tool that does not require registration. There are many possibilities to draw elaborate shapes for sharing ideas. It is possible to download and upload files.¹⁸

CoSketch (cosketch.com) is a multi-user online whiteboard designed to give you the ability to quickly visualise and share your ideas as images. No registration needed. You can upload and share images to draw on or use Google maps as the background for your sketches to show directions or share trips.

18 Tutorial video is available at <http://www.dabbleboard.com/tour>

Scriblink (scriblink.com) is an interactive whiteboard that is geared more for educational purposes, and allows using various characters and math symbols. In addition to chat it is possible to use VoIP (voice over IP) conferencing at the same time.

Chartle (chartle.net) allows easy creation of charts and embedding them into a blog or a website. In addition to the variety of charts and diagrams, it is possible to make intensity maps and geo maps.

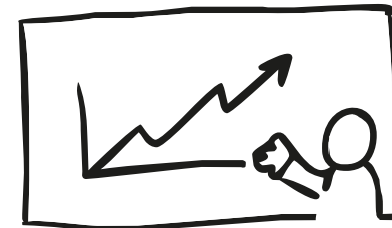
Mindmeister (mindmeister.com) is a collaborative online mind-mapping tool. The basic version is free and facilitates sharing folders and files as well as task lists. There are various templates for brainstorming, project plan, to do list among others. It is possible to chat and attach files to the mind-map.

5.3.2.4. Online slide presentation tools

Online presentation tools are useful in many ways. For example, when the meeting is carried out online, using Skype, all participants could simultaneously follow the slide presentation presented by the speaker.

Sharing presentations online has the following advantages:

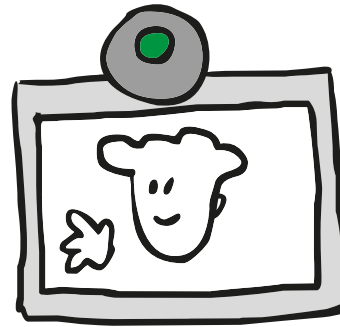
- The presentation file is too big to be sent by e-mail, or there is doubt about whether everyone can receive large files by e-mail.
- Uploading presentations to a website can help spreading the information among a wider audience, attracting possibly interested people outside the existing contact list, and community members.
- Online presentations can be shared very easily by sharing and forwarding only the link to the presentation instead of the file itself.
- The viewers of the presentation do not need additional software for viewing it.



Slideshare (slideshare.com) allows uploading slide presentations to the web for sharing with other people.

Prezi (prezi.com) is meant for preparing creative presentations collaboratively over the Web.

Issuu (issuu.com) is a publishing platform which enables its users uploading and sharing PDF documents such as magazines, catalogues, and presentations.



5.3.3. Instant messaging & voice and video call

Instant messaging tools allow discussions and meetings free of place restrictions.

Instant messaging tools offer two basic functions:

- Chatting—participants can collaborate and discuss issues in a common chat environment and the whole discussion may be saved for further reference.
- Calling—participants can collaborate over a voice call (VoIP). For smaller meetings it is enough to use a laptop's built-in speakers and microphone. For bigger meetings more advanced technical equipment like loudspeakers, a stand-alone video camera and microphone may be needed.

Skype (skype.com), **MSN messenger** (explore.live.com), **Yahoo messenger** (messenger.yahoo.com), and **Google Talk** (google.com/talk) offer similar functionalities of chat and video call, although Google Talk seems to be more efficient with slow Internet connections.

For concrete example on how to use various collaboration tools—for example wikis, collaborative writing tools, microblogs and instant messaging and VoIP tools together¹⁹.

¹⁹ See for example Social media for citizen participation. Report on the Somus project. <http://www.vtt.fi/int/pdf/publications/2011/P755.pdf>





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