

What is Digital Competence?

Digital competence is the ability to use technology in a useful, safe, and responsible way. It is not only about knowing how to use a computer or smartphone, but also about understanding how technology works, how it affects our lives, and how we can use it to improve our daily activities, communication, and work. Digital competence is therefore an essential part of being an active participant in modern society.

Why is Digital Competence Important?

Today, most of our everyday tasks and communication have become digital in some way. We use the internet to pay bills, book medical appointments, send applications, shop online, and stay in touch with family and friends. People who lack basic digital skills may find it difficult to take part in society and access important services. For this reason, it is important that everyone has the opportunity to learn the basics of digital tools and use them safely.

Digital competence also helps us make the most of the opportunities technology offers. It allows us to work flexibly, learn new things online, stay informed, take part in social discussions, and enjoy entertainment. Those who know how to use technology responsibly are also better protected against misinformation, scams, and unsafe websites.

Key Areas of Digital Competence

Digital competence covers several key areas that are useful in everyday life. Here are the main areas that everyone can gradually develop:

- **Information and Data Literacy:** The ability to search for information online, evaluate its reliability, and use it responsibly. This includes understanding the difference between facts and opinions and being critical of what you see on social media or websites.
- **Communication and Collaboration:** The ability to use email, video meeting tools, and social media effectively. It also means communicating respectfully

online, protecting other people's privacy, and working together in digital environments.

- **Digital Safety:** Protecting yourself and your personal information online. This means using strong passwords, being careful with personal data, and recognizing signs of phishing or fraud. It also includes installing antivirus software and keeping your devices up to date.
- **Creativity and Problem Solving:** Using technology to create and produce new content such as documents, presentations, images, or videos. It also involves finding digital solutions to real-life problems, whether at work or at home.
- **Technical Skills and Independence:** Understanding how to operate common devices and programs such as computers, tablets, smartphones, and online platforms. This includes installing apps, adjusting settings, and solving simple technical problems independently.

How to Improve Your Digital Competence

Becoming confident in using digital technology takes time, but everyone can learn with practice and patience. The best way is to start with simple tasks and build on your knowledge step by step. It is also important to ask questions and seek help when needed – We all need help from time to time.

Here are some useful steps to improve your digital skills:

- Start with simple activities like sending an email, searching for information, or filling out online forms.
- Practice using public digital services such as online banking or government websites like Ísland.is.
- Learn how to use video meeting platforms like Teams or Zoom to stay in touch with others.
- Watch free tutorials on YouTube or educational websites to learn new skills.
- Join a local course or community group where people learn digital skills together in a supportive environment.
- Use digital tools regularly – daily practice helps strengthen your confidence and ability.

The Benefits of Developing Digital Competence

Improving digital competence increases independence, safety, and participation in society. It helps you take control of your personal information, use online services securely, and communicate more effectively. It can also enhance job opportunities, save time, and make daily life easier.

Digital competence is not limited by age or background. It develops through practice, curiosity, and continuous learning. The goal is not to become a technical expert but to use technology in ways that improve your quality of life and help you participate actively in society.

Conclusion

Digital competence is a key life skill in the modern world. It means understanding technology, being aware of its impact, and using it responsibly. By strengthening our digital competence, we empower ourselves and our families to thrive in a digital future.

Useful links

Useful links to practise on – If you are not sure ask someone close to assist.

- **The Digital Competence Wheel:** Easy survey to evaluate your own knowledge:
<https://digital-competence.eu/dc/en/>
- **Statistics Iceland:** Statistics that can be viewed interactively. You can see "Population Overview", "Wages and Income", "Weather" and much more.
 - **Main:** <https://statice.is/>
 - **Inhabitants:** <https://statice.is/statistics/population/inhabitants/overview/>
 - **Salary:** <https://statice.is/statistics/society/wages-and-income/wages/>
 - **Weather:** <https://statice.is/statistics/environment/land-and-air/weather/>
 - It's an information site and good place to view and practice information gathering – You are safe, don't worry you will not damage anything here.
- **Digital Island:** Digital public services - Clear, secure and simple way. Everything in one place – "Driving and vehicle", "Finance and taxes", "Health", " and more.
 - <https://island.is/>
 - If you are "unsure", it is good to get help logging into the website, but without logging in, it is safe to browse the website - browse and search for information.