



MANIFESTO TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO AND USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR OLDER PERSONS

BACKGROUND

On 27 March 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/252, proclaiming **17 May World Information Society Day (#InternetDay)**, to promote the good use and spread the enormous benefits of the Internet and digital technologies to people around the world.

Each year, the #InternetDay Impulse Committee (IC), formed by 50-plus social organisations, chooses a theme on which to focus actions and activities to celebrate the event. **The theme chosen for the 2022 edition is "Internet and digital technologies for older persons and healthy ageing"** proposed by the ITU and unanimously approved at the Impulse Committee meeting on 24 June 2021.

That is why we have drawn up this **List of 10 Key measures** to facilitate access to and use of digital technologies for older persons and to contribute to their empowerment.

CONTEXT

Older persons **represent a very diverse and increasingly numerous segment of Europe's population**. In Spain, 20% of the population, nine and a half million people, are elderly.

Special attention needs to be paid to **older persons with disabilities** (30% of the group), due to their special vulnerability and the onset or aggravation of dependencies that can occur in parallel to the ageing process.

In addition, **being an older woman** sometimes entails a double discrimination due to the socio-cultural and economic context that often aggravates their situation, as they are sometimes left with the task of caring for other members of the family.

Using **digital technologies** already **plays an increasingly important and central role in older persons' daily lives** because it helps them to be present and take part in society, exercise their rights, avoid the onset of unwanted loneliness and age more healthily.



Meanwhile, the digital transformation is moving so fast that **many devices, services and technologies are still not adapted to the elderly**, preventing them from using services or even claiming their rights on equal terms with the rest.

At the same time, older persons must be able to access the opportunities and benefits of digitalisation **in a reliable and secure environment**. This involves organising campaigns and courses of actions to teach them the principles of cybersecurity because, just like in the physical world, it is essential that they **learn how to protect themselves and spot possible scams**.

Ensuring the full inclusion of our disabled and non-disabled elderly entails establishing of social measures and resources designed to provide **responses that fully respect their dignity, rights, interests and preferences, with their effective participation**.

Choosing **digital technologies from a human perspective, taking older persons into account**, will contribute to their empowerment as citizens, to their personal development, to improving their daily lives and to a healthier ageing. **This, in turn, makes us all better as a society**.

TEN KEY MEASURES

- 1) Promote social attitudes based on full respect for their dignity, freedom, interests, preferences and their right** to participation and an effective social life so that older persons, including people with disabilities, are contextualised in the Digital Society, so that they can play their rightful role on an equal footing.
- 2) Respect and enforce what has already been approved** in the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as in Spanish and European Union legislation regarding **accessibility obligations and absence of barriers** in digital technology-based devices, applications and services.
- 3) Promote, encourage and advocate that everyone can access technological devices, products, applications and services**, paying special attention to the Internet, to ensure that it maintains its universal and accessible design for any type of older person and that it offers them the same facilities as the rest of the population.
- 4) Develop initiatives and public aid plans that let older persons acquire the knowledge and skills** necessary to independently use digital tools (Devices, applications and services) and thus guarantee an equal user experience. Support and promote Digital Skill Centre activities that empower older persons in all areas of digital reality.



- 5) Promote the **safe use of digital technologies** for older persons by teaching them the necessary knowledge and skills, with specific **cybersecurity** awareness projects and campaigns that raise the level of protection against Internet threats and help them to prevent possible cyber-incidents.
- 6) **Invest in analysis, studies and research** to anticipate and respond adequately to older persons' demands and needs in the digital society, providing them with realistic funding through specific support schemes.
- 7) Enhance the **importance of senior talent and experience** in order to give them a place in society, seeking digital technology-based formulas that older persons keep on contributing talent and experience.
- 8) **Avoid** age- or disability-based **discrimination and algorithmic bias** in new Artificial Intelligence applications. Encourage social algorithms with ethical, responsible and inclusive criteria to serve as a guiding and prescriptive framework to ensure that Artificial Intelligence has a social dimension.
- 9) Pay special attention to **new legislative reforms** in the field of digital technologies, supporting them and providing them with adequate resources to make them viable and effective for older persons.
- 10) Promote **specific support and training plans** to encourage and facilitate the use of technologies by older persons, through the approval and implementation of public policies, strategies, action plans, laws and non-discriminatory regulations that promote and guarantee the full enjoyment of all their rights and fundamental freedoms, enabling the whole of society to be connected.



#ddi2022

Día de
Internet
2022

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