

# Initiating digital guidance

This documentation was prepared to support the initiation of digital guidance, especially with regard to guidance provided by voluntary peer tutors. That said, the tips are sure to be useful to other target groups and forms of guidance as well.

## WHAT IS DIGITAL GUIDANCE?

Digital guidance means instruction in the use of computers, tablets and mobile phones. It does not cover repairing broken devices, however, as this is handled by other service providers.

Frequently, the most effective method is face-to-face guidance, which involves the tutor and customer sitting side-by-side at the same device. That said, guidance can also be provided via telephone, e-mail, Facebook groups and remote software. The essential aim is to find the most suitable methods for the organisation and customer.

**The purpose of the digital guidance is to help seniors operate in the digital world.**

## WHAT KINDS OF PARTIES CAN ORGANISE GUIDANCE?

Digital guidance for seniors can be arranged by a variety of organisations, such as senior and activity centres, sheltered housing units, local associations, libraries, banks and other municipal operators. The most important thing is the willingness to support seniors in their digital development and digital inclusiveness.

## WHO IS SUITABLE FOR A TUTOR?

Volunteers, students, persons in subsidised employment or hired recruits can serve as tutors. Tutors do not need to know everything. The key element is the desire to help elderly people navigate in the digital world. The main idea is to provide calm and patient guidance in the use of digital devices and services, not do things for the customer. Senior volunteers have been found to be excellent peers and sources of encouragement.

## WHAT IS A GOOD GUIDANCE LOCATION?

A good guidance location is easy to get to and as accessible as possible. The space should be undisturbed, since noise and commotion will make it more difficult to hear the guidance and focus. Poor lighting, in turn, will impede visibility.

People often come to the guidance sessions with their own digital devices. This is why the location should have at least a wireless Internet connection, a table and two chairs, and a power socket. For customers without their own devices, at least one device for shared use is required.

## HOW DO YOU GET STARTED WITH DIGITAL GUIDANCE?

### 1. Consider a goal and scope for the operations

- Do you want to increase the digital skills of seniors on a general level or with regard to the use of a specific device or program, for example?
- Is the target group the residents of your own sheltered housing unit or all seniors in the nearby area, for example?
- How many requests are there for tutors and how frequently is there demand for guidance?
- Is it possible to make appointments or not? Take the impacts of this into account in communications and in relation to cases of illness, for example.
- Determine indicators for measuring the objectives. Are the guidance sessions sufficient or are other services required?
- Ensure that all measures taken lead towards the set goal.



### 2. Recruit the digital tutors

- Recruit volunteer tutors and discuss the wishes and objectives with them.
- Provide induction training for the digital tutors: Meet with all tutors personally to discuss their competence, the digital guidance, your organisation and the support available to the volunteers.
- Help the tutors get acquainted and form groups. It is easier to ask for help from others within a familiar group.
- Read the 'Digital tutor's recruitment and induction' documentation.



### 3. Prepare the guidance location

- Reserve the necessary premises well in advance!
- Make sure that every tutor and customer has room to sit as well as a table for the devices and guidance. The chairs should also feature armrests or other accessories to make it easier to get up.
- Make sure that a sufficient Internet connection is available for more than one guidance pair, if necessary.
- Make sure that the space has power sockets for charging devices.
- Make sure that the lighting is sufficient.
- Make sure that the space is undisturbed. It should also be possible to talk about confidential guidance topics.
- Consider where it will be possible to wait for a tutor to become available, if necessary.



- Consider whether the premises require signposts.
- If the guidance will be provided on some other operator's premises, consider this together.

#### 4. Market and communicate

- Communicate about the guidance through as many channels as possible.
- The traditional ones are the most important: noticeboards, distributable ads and newspapers, but social media channels and groups can also be used.
- Remember to provide information about the guidance widely within your own organisation and to any partners.
- Determine the various services and locations that seniors access: banks, libraries, different local and national services for seniors, pensioner organisations, parishes, grocery shops, and so on.
- If there are other digital support operators in the area, it is a good idea to cooperate with regard to communication and guidance!
- In Finland, you can also list your guidance location on the SeniorSurf guidance map ([www.seniorsurf.fi](http://www.seniorsurf.fi)).



#### 5. Collect statistics and feedback

- Collect the essential statistics regarding the guidance. They can pertain to the numbers of tutors, customers and guidance sessions, for example.
- Where possible, also collect feedback from tutors and customers.
- Learn from the statistics and feedback: use them to develop your operations.



#### 6. Support the digital tutors

- Remember to regularly thank the digital tutors for volunteering and the valuable work they do.
- The tutors sometimes need learning events on current topics. The tutors can also train each other, so you should provide the opportunity. Learning new things can motivate the tutors.
- It is valuable for the tutors to meet with each other in an informal setting. You can also arrange coffee catering, if possible. For example, at the end of a season it is a good idea to sit down together to think about past and future events and developments.



## 7. Find peer support for yourself

- The organisers of the guidance need peer support too. In Finland, peer support for organisers is available through SeniorSurf network and regional digital support networks.
- Many municipalities have their own networks for coordinating volunteer activities.
- Do not hesitate to ask for advice and tips from others.



## 8. Be patient

- The guidance activities may not kick into high gear immediately and will take time to ramp up. Customers often think long and hard before mustering the courage to seek guidance.
- Communicate regularly and try to highlight trailblazers.
- Various events provide a good path towards reaching potential customers and talking about your operations.



**A typical guidance session takes one (1) hour. It involves learning about the basic use and handling of a smartphone. Several things are covered over the course of one session. That said, you should not cram too much into a single session. There needs to be enough time to practice and internalise everything.**

## STRENGTH IN COOPERATION

Digital guidance is an excellent theme for cooperation. There is enough to do for everyone, and it is in everyone's best interest for people to strengthen their digital skills. In terms of digital guidance, you should actively consider the areas in which you and your partners can help each other.

Cooperation can take place around communications and tutor training, for example. Guidance can be arranged in cooperation, which means that the tutors can come from multiple organisations and the sessions can be organised on the premises of several operators. The services can also be developed in cooperation. Gather the suitable parties and get to work together.

***These instructions will help you get the digital guidance activities off to a good start. You can also ask for additional tips and assistance from the SeniorSurf services of the Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older Adults.***



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