



BRIDGING THE  
DIGITAL GAP THROUGH  
REVERSE MENTORSHIP

# Guidelines for the volunteer consultant

## How to help seniors discover the digital world?



LANGAS | ATEITJ

IT-GUIDE



Nordic Network for  
Adult Learning



Nordic Council of Ministers  
Office in Lithuania

# Information and communication technologies



For some it is everyday life,  
convenience, the engine of future  
progress...



... for others,  
uncertainty, fear and  
insecurity.



The aim of the consultation is to help seniors to get smarter, safer and have more fun with digital technologies!

**You don't need to know all the answers right away!**



Listen and respond to the needs

Appreciate the opportunity to learn from the life experiences of seniors!

# What IT skills do seniors lack?



- Knowledge about online security and privacy encourages the use of online shopping and e-services.
- E-services help seniors get the things they need on a daily basis.
- Social networks help seniors to communicate with each other and with loved ones.
- Smartphones can help with everything - photography, design, communication...
- E-mail is essential for communication.
- Online shopping saves time and widens choices.

All of this can significantly improve the lives of seniors!



# Lessons on digital services for all (in Lithuanian language)



- Test “Are you safe online?” <http://testas.draugiskasinternetas.lt/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/ismanusis-telefonas-galimybes-ir-informacijos-apsauga>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/nemokamos-programeles-ismaniajame-telefone>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/populiariausios-programeles-ismaniajame-telefone>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/sveikatos-paslaugos-internetu/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/teisines-paslaugos-ir-informacija/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/socialiniai-tinklai/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/renginiu-informacija-ir-bilietai-i-renginius/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/pirkite-pigiau-internetu/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/kelioniu-planavimas/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/ismanus-ir-saugus-gmail-el-pasto-naudojimas/>
- <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/e-valdzia-ir-viesosios-paslaugos/>

For more such training, see: <https://www.epilietis.eu/kursai/>. Some of the services are being significantly updated over time, so use the material critically!



# We've seen that it's important!



Hear the needs and views of seniors

Try to understand what the elderly person **expects** from your consultation.

Help you learn what they like

What knowledge would help him/her feel more **confident** and **secure** in the digital world?

What apps could help him/her with **daily routine**?

Everyone is interested in their **hobbies**, **socialising** and **having fun**.

# Important to demonstrate



Show everything in practice

**Demonstrate** how to do actions by explaining. Give some practical tasks to seniors too!

Disclose your experience

The **result** is more convincing than stories about possibilities.

Share your **real** experiences of apps and social networks.

Most seniors would like to **learn how to take photos** like you.



# Communication is probably the most important thing



Show attention

Don't hurry and don't make them hurry

Praise, recognise achievements

Ask for feedback of your consultation

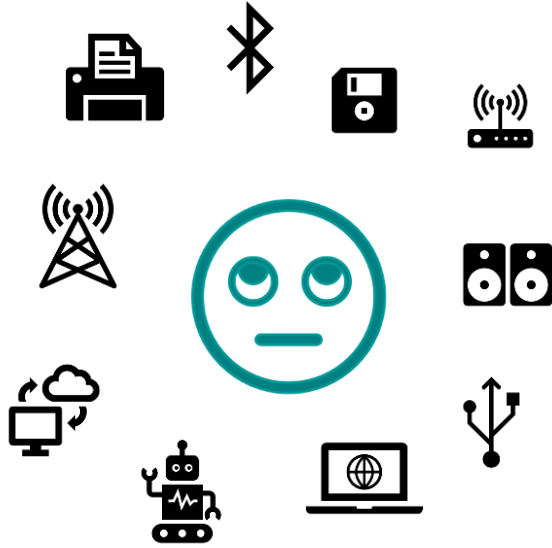
Seniors expect you to **listen** to their stories and hear their problems.

Listening to a problem can be even more **important** than solving it.

Praise them not only for their achievements, but also for their **efforts** and encourage them.

Find out what seniors think about your **consultation** (not about you!).





Even after starting to learn, people often shy away from unfamiliar subjects and new applications.

It is important to dispel these doubts!



# Engage and encourage

It is up to each user to decide what information is published and who can see it.



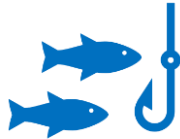
But wouldn't it be great to share some things with close friends and relatives?



**"I don't use social networks: there's absolutely no need for everyone to know what I do all the time."**

# Engage and encourage

Ask them what activities they are interested in, there are all sorts of information on the internet about knitting, saving or fishing. Why not try it out for yourself?



**"I'm not interested"**

# Engage and encourage

Certain **precautions** must be taken when using the internet.



But it's great to be able to contact your friends or manage your bank account at any time.

**"It's not safe to go online"**



# Asking for help is good



The first task in the consultation process is to build confidence and self-esteem.



Explain that it is normal to ask for help. Digital technology is changing very fast and it is impossible to know everything.

Remind them that you don't mind explaining things as many times as they need.

Be attentive and monitor your listeners' progress. Always notice and praise their achievements!

**"I also thought it might be difficult, but it turned out to be interesting. Let's try it together, step by step"**



# Asking for help is good

When teaching how to use a computer or smartphone, don't be tempted to do it for the listener. Let them try to do what you explain verbally.



It's not enough to explain - to learn, listeners have to try things out, and even more than once. Allow enough time for the exercises.



# IMPORTANT: What not to do!



To avoid misunderstandings, you **cannot**:

- ask for passwords, personal or payment card details;
- register, make purchases or perform any online or on-device actions on behalf of another person.
- It is up to everyone to know their own passwords and not to disclose them to anyone!
- Show them how to do it, but don't do it yourself on someone else's account or device.



# Explain clearly

We are so used to using technologies that we often don't even realise how many steps are involved in even simple actions.



Remember that the steps that are familiar to you are not obvious to others. Explain the steps consistently, step by step.

**"How many steps does it take to open a text document and write a sentence in it?"**





# Listen and observe



Check if the audience has understood your explanations. **Ask** them what was easy and what seems difficult, perhaps something that needs repeating. Be sure to ask if the audience has any **questions!**



People communicate with each other with more than just words. You can get just as much information by observing the body language of your listeners. Is he or she sitting on the edge of the chair and listening intently? Is he leaning back, arms crossed and frowning with displeasure? It is important for the volunteer counsellor to observe all the non-verbal signals shown by their listeners.



# GOOD LUCK!

Link to the initiative description and all materials:  
<https://norden.lt/en/project/it-mentorship/>

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