The digital transformation of the society and economy is radically changing service delivery practices. New approaches to offer services in the private sector have raised citizens' expectations regarding the delivery of public services. The shift from reactive to proactive service delivery mechanisms, enabled by a transition from e-government to digital government, where the use of digital technologies is assumed as an integrated part of governments’ modernisation and innovation strategies, creating public value through the engagement of a broad ecosystem of stakeholders, offers the chance to better respond to user demand. Yet, to achieve this, governments need to better map, understand and integrate citizens’ demands and needs in the design and delivery of public service strategies. Public data is a powerful asset to move from citizen-centred to citizen-driven approaches, allowing governments to better design and tailor public service delivery processes.

In 2016, about 36% of individuals from OECD member countries submitted filled forms via public authorities’ websites. There has been a sharp increase in the use of digital government services by individuals over the past decade, which has tripled on average among OECD member countries since 2006. This reflects a good impact of governments’ digitisation efforts and citizens’ progressive adoption of digital service delivery channels. However, there are persisting differences in the use of digital government services across various population groups. Governments need to be aware of these differences in order to develop tailored public service delivery approaches and avoid creating new forms of digital exclusion as the digitisation of the public sector progresses.

When comparing the level of education of users of digital government services, substantial differences can be found. On average across the OECD in 2016, about 54% of individuals with higher education submitted filled forms via public authorities’ websites, against 17% of individuals with low levels of education. This difference in the use of digital government services by education level is less important in the Nordic countries (such as Denmark, Finland and Norway), while it is more important in Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia and Portugal. The level of income and the age of individuals also seem to influence the level of digital interaction with public authorities. On average in OECD member countries, about 49% of individuals in the top income quartile (richest) used the Internet to submit filled forms via public authorities’ websites, against about 25% of individuals in the fourth income quartile (poorest). In addition, about 42% of individuals aged 25-54 years submitted forms online using public sector websites, against only about 24% of individuals aged 55-74 years. The differences in the adoption of digital means to interact with public services can be linked to different needs, but also to varying levels of digital skills influenced by socio-economic inequalities among the population.

In order to foster the digital transformation as a way to strengthen and nurture digital interaction, a number of countries have adopted the “once only principle”, which considers that citizens and businesses should only provide the same information once to the public administration. To accomplish it, governments have to reschedule their back office operations, so that public sector entities can exchange and reuse citizens’ and businesses’ data and information, while ensuring the respect of national and international standards on data security and privacy protection. Through the widespread adoption of the “once only principle” and progressive data exchange among public sector institutions, combined with increased penetration of machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques, governments can better understand citizens’ needs and facilitate digitally enabled service delivery.

**Methodology and definitions**

Data come from Eurostat's, information society database and the OECD ICT database. “Public authorities” refer to public and administrative services (e.g. tax, customs, business registration and social security). Data cover the local, regional and national level. High income corresponds to individuals with income levels in the top 25% (top income quartile). Low income corresponds to individuals with income in the bottom 25% (bottom income quartile). Education attainment is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For more information please see: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/

**Further reading**


**Figure notes**

Data for Australia, Korea, Israel, Japan and the United States are not available.

11.5: Data for Canada, Poland, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom are for 2007 rather than 2006. Data for Mexico are for 2015 rather than 2016. OECD average excludes Canada, Chili, Iceland and New Zealand due to missing time series.

11.6: Data for OECD non-European member countries are not available. Data for Mexico are for 2015 rather than 2016.

11.7: Data for OECD non-European member countries and for Iceland, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom are not available.

11.8: Data for OECD non-European member countries and for Iceland and Switzerland are not available. Data for Mexico are for 2015 rather than 2016.
11.5. Individuals using the Internet for sending filled forms via public authorities websites in the past 12 months, 2006 and 2016


StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933533416

11.6. Individuals using the Internet for sending filled forms via public authorities websites in the past 12 months, by education level, 2016


StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933533435

11.7. Individuals using the Internet for sending filled forms via public authorities websites in the past 12 months, by income level, 2016


StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933533454