

# Chapter 17

## Our Future: With the Good, the Bad, or the Ugly eServices? Case Finland

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### ABSTRACT

*We live in an ever-changing world. Despite that many new and excellent reforms are achieved, this period of time is also very confusing when many things that were regarded as concrete are becoming virtual. In spite of all this incompleteness, our common goal should be a good information society and the purpose of this chapter is to find out some factors that reveal the steps toward it. The question we ask is how to find a balance between a good life and eServices from the human point of view. The key findings pointed to issues in the needs of structural changes in the society. Another challenge that can be observed and which will be in the most essential role in the future, is the ownership and control over My Data. Agreements are a common practice in the business and when the subject is eServices in the future, we cannot avoid discussion of the end-user agreements, too.*

### INTRODUCTION

The world is in a great structural change and it seems that the economic growth will be based more and more on services in the future. (European Commission, 2015; Jungner, 2015; Koch, 2015) ICT has played a significant role for decades and this trend still seems to continue, however, in a changing world, the role of ICT has also had to change from a technical role to a more user-oriented role (Digitalization, 2016; Jungner, 2015; Koch, 2015). At the same time as we are encountering so many economic challenges, our common objective should still be the steps towards a good life and good information society (Liideri, 2015). But what does good life mean to us? Very different things, of course, depending on your perspective. The Finnish government has a vision that by the year 2030 Finland is a good place to live a meaningful and dignified life for everyone. The starting point is an individual's dignity and right to live a good and dignified life. Firstly the aim is to take each of us as an individual personality and secondly

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to emphasize self-determination, while, on the other hand, carrying responsibility for ourselves as well. (Korhonen, 2016; Valtioneuvosto, 2016)

Today, knowledge is the raw material and one of the factors of production. Thinking about business life, it can be said that companies are implementing good life by doing profitable business with knowledge. In practice this means that good eServices are established for the people, other companies and the society. Furthermore, when considering good life from the perspective of the society, the main purpose of eServices is to help and motivate people to take care of themselves as well as possible (Korhonen, 2016). To some, it means health and wellbeing services, some others are motivated by hobbies, entertainment or gaming, while for many contacts with the family, neighbours and friends are the most important. In addition the world is undergoing a dramatic demographic transformation: the trend is toward an older population.

As people are living longer, according to many studies these elderly people are suffering from loneliness to a greater extent. Here eServices, and especially platform technology, can offer an opportunity to solve the problem by helping the elderly people to increase interaction with other people (Marcelino et al., 2005). More often than not the elderly also want to live at their homes as long as possible and digital services can help them to live independently and to feel themselves dignified. The working life is also undergoing great changes. In Finland work has traditionally played a very important role in an individual's life, to the extent that sometimes individual's value is measured by one's work or position. Digital services allow new forms of work, as well as different combinations of work and life. Because of that role, eServices are important also in the working life and digital services can be said to be a contribution toward a good life in that sense, too.

The eServices and related matters are reviewed and considered in this chapter. First some background issues are presented while, the next section provides a brief description of digitalization in general and eServices are introduced via three Finnish application examples widely adopted by users: Firstbeat, OnniBus.com, and 112 Suomi. However generally stated and unfortunately, all eServices are not good ones. It can be said that there are way too many bad eServices, even ugly ones and that is why we will study and analyse the features of eServices. Users should demand more and better applications and one key to promote this is try to create awareness of possibilities of applications and enhance the understanding and knowledge of the users. When we discuss eServices one important topic is the end-user agreements and this is, of course, a subject of consideration of that cannot be avoided in this chapter. Personal data and My Data are closely linked to eServices. Therefore, the possibilities of these topics are also discussed. Who owns and controls personal data in the future? The service providers or the person her/himself? What will be the roles of the service provider and the user?

Summarily, the purpose of this chapter is to find out some factors that reveal the steps toward the good information society. It seems that, after all, digital services are the most important building blocks of a good life in the future. However, there are also several significant challenges.

## **BACKGROUND**

In order to understand what eServices really are or mean, we have to study the nature of digitalization in general first. Swedish professor Gulliksen (2016) unfurled the concept of "digitality" in his conference speeches by the words "digitization" and "digitalization". As a product of digitization a file stored in a digital form is created. There are many different formats and the one to be used is determined by the

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