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## Four essentials for using digital technologies in career guidance

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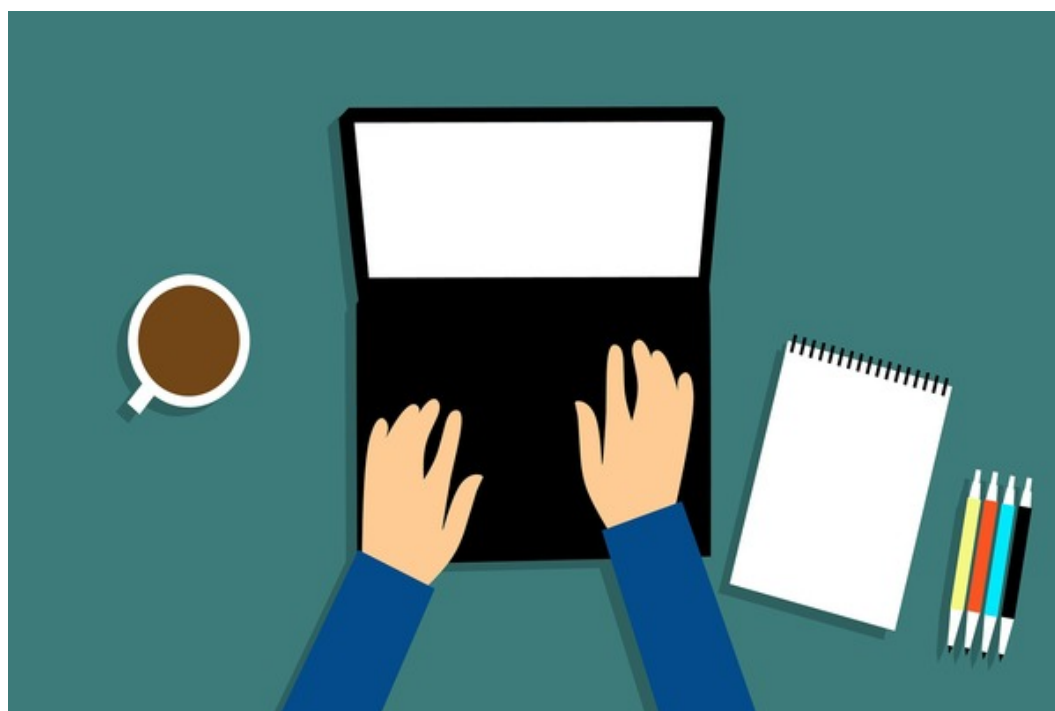


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Information and communication technology (ICT) has gradually gained a firm foothold within the field of guidance and counselling. There has been significant progress in integrating new technologies into career services and related practices – but potential for further improvement persists.

The role of digital technologies came under the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic. Technological innovations, such as the expansion of the Internet and the increased use of mobile phones and social media, present new opportunities for people to access career support, and service providers reach out to young people in particular (e.g. through career games, virtual career fairs, chat or chatbot conversations, text messaging and video conferencing). While ICT is increasingly used in career guidance in most countries, the success of its adoption and use varies significantly from country to country. With the continuous proliferation of new technologies, improving the implementation of ICT in career guidance has become increasingly important.

## Key elements to consider

Recent research has shed light on the key elements associated with the successful implementation of ICT in career guidance. These include **adequate access to ICT, adequate access to information, adequate skills and competencies** and **adequate integration**.

### Adequate access to ICT

Unequal access, in particular for remote areas and disadvantaged groups that might not have their own devices, or limited connectivity in households, is a serious challenge to the widespread implementation of technology in career guidance services. Without adequate access to ICT, it is impossible to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by existing and emerging technologies. There is a need for national guidelines and strategies for securing funding so that all citizens have adequate access to career services, including online services.

### Adequate access to information

Limited access to information and career-related content and materials remains an important challenge in some countries. One limitation may be outdated or invalid data and data presentation. There is an acknowledged need to improve the availability of and access to relevant, up-to-date, culturally relevant information at national and local levels. This content should be modified to fit the latest technology. A related factor that may reduce access is the digital divide: not having the know-how to access, assess and use information resources.

### Adequate skills and competences

Career practitioners' capacity building is crucial for the successful integration of digital technologies in career practices, and there is an urgent need for both the pre-service and in-service training curricula to include this knowledge. Career practitioners need to attend digital skills courses and practise these skills afterwards to extend career guidance and support those with weak digital skills both in career development and in the use of digital guidance services. The successful integration of technology in career guidance is dependent not only on the available skills or technical facilities but also on practitioners' willingness to accept changes that new technologies bring.

### Adequate integration

The use of diverse technologies and constant technological development means that the appropriate implementation of ICT in career guidance has become increasingly important and remains challenging. Problems that commonly undermine effective implementation include poor planning, a lack of practitioner participation in decision making, poor integration of new technologies within service delivery organisations, poor evaluation and inadequate staff training. Increased coordination among collaborating partners and stable funding in service delivery can address this.

## Implementation of digital technologies is an ongoing process

Implementation of digital technologies in career guidance is an ongoing process; anticipating challenges before they occur can ensure that less time is needed to resolve them. The implementation of these technologies can promote the more effective use of higher-quality resources and services by citizens. It is interesting to note that, although the four essential issues identified here relate to digital technologies, it is the individual career practitioner that makes the difference, rather than the technology.



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