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Author(s): Kettunen, Jaana

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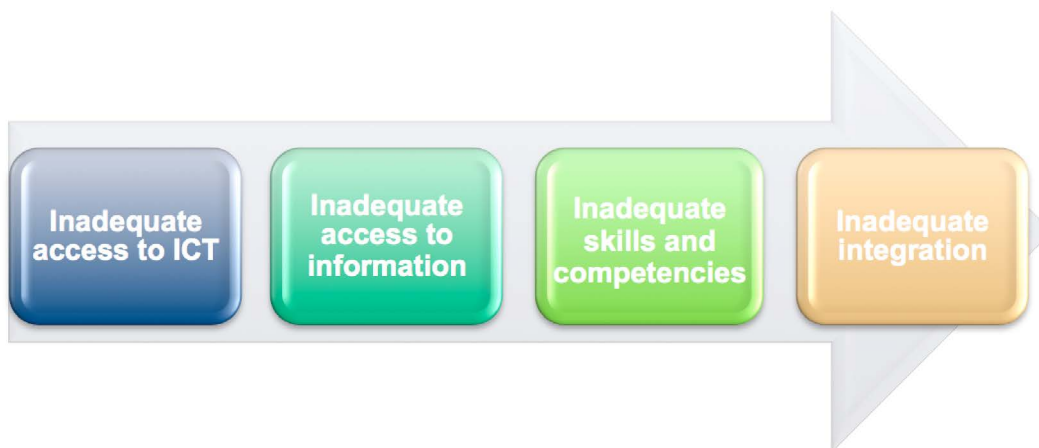
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Perceived challenges in implementing ICT in career services



Information and communication technology (ICT) has gradually gained a firm foothold within the field of guidance counselling. There is evidence of significant progress in integrating ICT into career services and related practices; however, the potential for further improvement persists. With the continuous proliferation of new technologies, improving the implementation of ICT in career services has become increasingly important. In this article Dr Jaana Kettunen outlines research from career development experts' perspectives; providing important insights into the perceived challenges involved in the implementation of ICT in career services.



Perceived challenges in implementing ICT in career services; four categories were identified, which can be considered on a continuum ranging from inadequate access to inadequate integration.

From inadequate access to inadequate integration

The first challenge regarding ICT implementation in career services was perceived as *inadequate access to ICT*. Without adequate infrastructure, it is impossible to fully capitalise on the rapidly expanding opportunities afforded by ICT. There is an acknowledged need for national guidelines and strategies from which to operate so as to secure funding to ensure that citizens have access to career services, including ICT-based services.

The second challenge in the implementation of ICT in career services was perceived as *inadequate access to information* and career-related content and materials. The development emphasis is on consistent career information, made available through modernised resources and services. However, even when the requisite infrastructure is available and individuals are able to access the technology, the cost of adequate bandwidth and relevant content, systems or services remains an important concern in some countries.

The third challenge in implementing ICT in career services was perceived as *inadequate staff skills and competencies*. The need for practices and training methods to improve the digital skills of citizens and career practitioners was highlighted. An individual's lack of general computer skills can constrain the implementation and everyday use of ICT. The successful integration of existing and emerging technologies in career services depends not only on the available skills or technical

facilities, but also on practitioners' willingness to accept the service delivery changes that new technologies may bring.

The fourth challenge in the implementation of ICT in career services was conceived as *inadequate integration*. The identified improvement need at the system level is a commitment to the sustainable development of ICT in the career services sector, including the development of plans and statements of cooperation and engagement that spell out joint responsibilities, objectives, agreed contributions or resources, and other aspects of the linked but distinct roles of the participating actors.

Implementation is an ongoing process

To improve ICT implementation in career development, existing barriers to implementing effective Internet-based guidance must be prioritised, addressed, and overcome at all career development levels. Implementation is an ongoing process; by better anticipating challenges before they occur, less time will be needed to resolve issues that could have been avoided. Ultimately, more effective implementation is seen to promote better use of higher-quality resources and services by citizens. It is interesting to note that although the four categories identified here relate to ICT, an adequate response to these implementation issues emphasises human rather than technological solutions.

Reference:

"Challenges in implementing ICT in career services: Perspectives from Career Development Experts" is openly available here: <https://rdcu.be/Ovho>



The Author

Jaana Kettunen PhD, is a Vice-director and research coordinator at the Finnish Institute for Educational Research of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her main research interest is on the role of ICT and social media in career guidance. It is both theoretical and practical: it aims at the development of theory-based and evidence-informed pedagogical practices.
