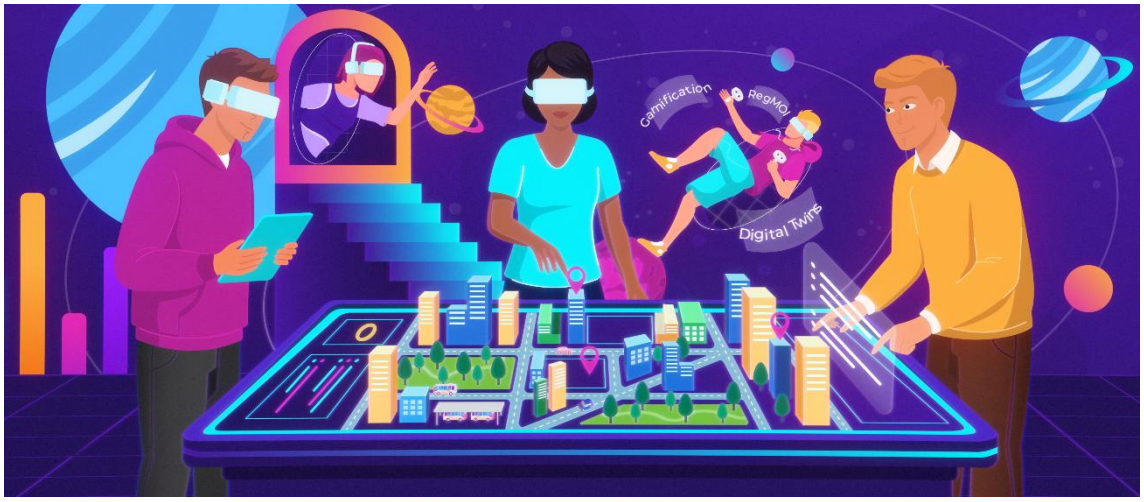

INCLUDE

DigidelCenter – Public Library

Interreg
Co-funded by the European Union
Northern Periphery and Arctic
INCLUDE

Table of Contents

1.1 General Information

- Title of the Good Practice: DigidelCenter
- Region / City / Municipality: Härnösand
- Country: Sweden
- Contact Organisation: Härnösand's Public Library
- Contact Person & Role: Susanne Hägglund, Library Director
- Email / Website: Digidelcenter - Härnösand bibliotek
- Date of Implementation: ongoing

1.2 Summary of DigidelCenter – Public Library

Residents who lack digital skills risk being left out of societal development as more services and contacts become digital. This can make access to public services, healthcare, education, and the labor market more difficult. Lack of digital experience affects individuals' opportunities for participation, influence, and democratic engagement.

The demands on municipalities to provide support, alternative channels, and inclusive digital services are increasing. Without targeted efforts, digital development risks reinforcing social divides. Digital inclusion therefore becomes a central issue for social sustainability, trust, and equitable public services.

Digidelcenter offers personal and easily accessible support to residents who need help with digital services. The operation functions as a safe physical meeting place with generous opening hours where residents receive guidance based on their own needs and conditions. Focus is on everyday digital skills, e-services, and various digital tools that are fun to use in daily life. Through low-threshold support, individuals' independence and participation are strengthened. Digidelcenter thereby contributes to reduced digital divides and increased social sustainability.

1.3 Context and Challenges Addressed

- What territorial challenge or opportunity did the region face?

The region faced the challenge of digital exclusion despite widespread internet access. While many residents had access to the internet, a significant number either limited their online use due to privacy and fraud concerns or felt excluded because they lacked sufficient digital skills and understanding of technology.

At the same time, this situation represented a clear opportunity: by establishing Digidelcenter at the public library, as a central, accessible entry point for digital support, the municipality could strengthen digital participation across the entire area. Through targeted guidance, free learning, and hands-on support, Digidelcenter enabled residents, both long-

term inhabitants and newly arrived migrants, to build confidence in using digital services, thereby reducing digital exclusion and supporting the municipality's broader digital development goals.

The use of AI is increasing in society at large. For residents, AI can primarily mean better accessibility, faster service, and new ways to participate in societal development, while the municipality is aware of the risks regarding source criticism, equality, and trust, and therefore introduces AI gradually and with clear governing documents. Knowledge about AI varies among both residents and staff, which can create digital exclusion if support is not provided. The importance of knowledge in source criticism is increasing. AI makes it more difficult to determine what is reliable information, which imposes higher requirements on both the municipality and the residents.

- Why was digital innovation relevant in this context?

Digital innovation was relevant because access alone was not enough to ensure digital participation. Even though internet use was widespread, many residents either avoided digital services due to concerns about privacy and online fraud or felt excluded because they lacked the knowledge and confidence to use digital technologies.

Digital innovation, through Digidelcenter, made it possible to address these barriers in a practical and inclusive way. By applying service design methods, involving users continuously, and offering hands-on, tailored support, Digidelcenter improved how citizens experienced and understood digital services. This innovation helped residents build trust in digital solutions, strengthen their digital skills, and use municipal and public digital services independently.

In this context, digital innovation was essential to reduce digital exclusion, increase digital participation, and ensure that all citizens could benefit from the municipality's digital development, regardless of prior experience or background.

- What specific community or stakeholder needs were identified?

The community faced several interconnected needs related to digital inclusion and access. Although internet use was widespread, many residents lacked the skills, confidence, or trust needed to use digital services effectively. Some deliberately limited their online activities due to concerns about privacy and the risk of online fraud, while others felt excluded because they did not sufficiently understand digital technology. Both long-term residents and newly arrived migrants needed easily accessible support in a safe and trusted environment. There was also a clear need for a single, well-defined entry point to the municipality's digital expertise, where citizens could receive guidance

and, when necessary, be referred to the right support. In addition, many people required digital learning that was tailored to their individual interests, abilities, and everyday needs, as well as opportunities to explore and use digital tools and technologies, such as computers, creative media, and welfare-related technologies, that they would not otherwise have access to.

1.4 Objectives

- Reduce digital exclusion
- Strengthen citizens' digital skills and independent use of digital services
- Provide accessible, inclusive, and free digital support
- Improve public services through user-centered and participatory design
- Increase information and medial literacy skills

1.5 Description of the Practice

1.5.1 Activities Implemented

The practice was implemented through a range of practical and user-focused activities aimed at increasing digital inclusion. Digidelcenter functioned as a physical and accessible entry point where citizens could receive hands-on support with digital services. Individual guidance and learning sessions were offered based on users' specific needs, helping them build confidence and independently use digital tools and public services. User involvement was central to the process. Service design methods were applied, and continuous feedback from visitors was used to improve courses, accessibility, and overall user experience. When Digidelcenter could not provide direct assistance, users were guided to the appropriate municipal or external expertise, ensuring continuity of support.
In addition, the center organized opportunities for citizens to test and explore digital technologies, such as computers, tablets, 3D printers, and creative media tools. It also enabled residents to become familiar with technologies used in municipal care before they were needed. By being open six days a week, including evenings, Digidelcenter ensured broad accessibility and ongoing engagement with different user groups.

1.5.2 Stakeholders Involved

☒ Local/regional authorities

☒ Civil society organisations

☒ Youth organisations

☐ Businesses / SMEs

☐ Universities / research centres

☐ Digital innovation hubs

☐ Other (please, name)

1.5.3 Resources Used

• Human resources

The practice relied on municipal staff with digital expertise working at Digidelcenter. These staff members provided guidance, training, and hands-on support to citizens. They also applied service design methods, continuously involving users and incorporating feedback to improve services. When needed, staff acted as coordinators by connecting citizens to the appropriate municipal or external expertise, ensuring comprehensive support.

- Technical resources

The practice used a range of digital and technical tools to support learning and inclusion. These included access to computers and tablets, as well as 3D printers and other digital technologies. Digidelcenter also provided a creative studio equipped with podcast equipment, musical instruments, editing software, and access to digital media and databases. In addition, the center enabled citizens to explore and understand technologies used in municipal care before they were needed. The practice was financed through national development grants for public libraries and internal municipal funding.

1.6 Thematic Categorisation

A. Digital Technologies

☒ Digital platforms for participation

☐ Open data solutions

☐ Digital twins / GIS / mapping tools

☐ AI supported

☐ Immersive tech (VR/AR) for community engagement

☐ Gamification

☐ Other (please, name)

B. Co Creation Methodologies

☒ Digital platforms for participation

☒ Participatory design

☐ Living labs

☒ Citizen assemblies

☐ Hackathons

☐ Digital consultation tools

☐ Collaborative prototyping

☐ Other (please, name)

C. Youth / Minority Groups Engagement

☒ Digi Tailored outreach to youth tal platforms for participation

☒ Inclusion of minority or marginalized communities

☒ Capacity-building for underrepresented groups

☐ Mentorship or ambassador programmes

☒ Co creation activities specifically targeting these groups

☐ Other (please, name)

1.7 Results and Impact

1.7.1 Quantitative Results

Number of participants: In 2025, 260 participants took part in teacher-led learning sessions.

1.7.2 Qualitative Results

Describe how the initiative improved territorial governance, participation, empowerment, or inclusiveness.

The initiative improved inclusiveness and participation by offering an open and trusted environment where citizens could easily access digital support. By placing Digidelcenter in the public library and providing free, user focused services, the municipality lowered barriers to digital engagement for a wide range of residents. Citizens became more confident in using digital services and felt better supported in navigating public and municipal solutions. This increased individual empowerment, strengthened digital participation, and helped reduce digital exclusion, contributing to a more inclusive and responsive territorial governance.

1.8 Innovation and Added Value

- What is innovative about the approach or technology?

The approach is innovative because it combines digital inclusion with a physical, trusted civic space and a strong user centered methodology. Digidelcenter does not only provide access to technology but integrates service design and continuous user involvement to shape services based on real needs. By offering hands on support, opportunities to explore advanced technologies such as 3D printing and welfare technologies, and guidance before these technologies are needed, the initiative goes beyond traditional digital support and creates a more empowering, inclusive, and forward looking public service experience.

- How does it differ from traditional community engagement?

It differs from traditional community engagement by focusing on hands on, individual support rather than one time consultations or information sessions. Instead of asking citizens to adapt to existing digital systems, Digidelcenter adapts services to users' needs through continuous interaction and feedback. Engagement happens through practical everyday problem solving, skill building, and long term empowerment, making citizens active participants in digital society rather than passive recipients of information.

- What elements could inspire replication by other EU regions?

Elements that could inspire replication by other EU regions include the use of a public library as a trusted and inclusive hub for digital support, the focus on free and accessible services for all citizens, and the strong emphasis on user centered service design with continuous feedback. The combination of hands on individual support, opportunities to explore both everyday and advanced digital technologies, and a clear entry point to municipal digital expertise demonstrates a scalable model for reducing digital exclusion and strengthening digital participation at the local level.

1.9 Lessons Learned

- What worked well?

The combination of accessible location, free services, and hands on support tailored to individual needs worked very well. Placing Digidelcenter in the public library created trust and lowered barriers to participation. Continuous user involvement and service design ensured that support remained relevant and easy to use. The focus on practical guidance and confidence building helped citizens become more independent and reduced digital exclusion effectively.

- What challenges were encountered?

One key challenge was that many citizens limited their use of digital services due to concerns about privacy and online fraud. Others felt excluded because they lacked sufficient digital skills or understanding of technology. Meeting very diverse needs also required continuous adaptation of services and significant individual support to ensure that no one was left without help.

- What would you do differently?

With experience gained, the initiative could place even earlier focus on proactive outreach to groups that hesitate to seek help, particularly those with strong concerns about privacy or low digital confidence. It could also strengthen collaboration with other municipal services to identify needs sooner and align support more closely with citizens' life events. This would further increase reach, efficiency, and preventive support against digital exclusion.

1.10 Transferability and Scalability

- Which aspects can be replicated elsewhere?

Aspects that can be replicated elsewhere include the use of an existing public and trusted space, such as a library, as a hub for digital inclusion. The model of free and open access to digital support, combined with hands on, needs based guidance, can be applied in many regions. The focus on user centered service design, continuous feedback, and a clear entry point to municipal digital expertise is also transferable. In addition, offering citizens the opportunity to explore both everyday and advanced digital technologies before they are

needed can be scaled and adapted to different local contexts across EU regions.

- What conditions (resources, policy environment, partnerships) are needed for transfer?

The transfer of this practice requires qualified staff with digital competence and experience in user focused support. Access to a stable technical infrastructure and basic digital equipment is also necessary. A supportive policy environment that prioritizes digital inclusion, lifelong learning, and equal access to public services is important. Strong partnerships between libraries, municipal services, and other public or civil society actors help ensure coordination, trust, and effective referral to the right expertise.

1.11 Links and Supporting Materials

- Website
- Video
- Tools/datasets
- Reports, publications
- Photos/images