

# Estonia – a place where things happen first

IN ESTONIA, ALMOST ALL BANK TRANSFERS,  
MEDICAL PRESCRIPTIONS AND TAX  
DECLARATIONS ARE SUBMITTED IN DIGITAL  
FORM. DURING THE LAST ELECTIONS 2023,  
51% OF ALL VOTERS CAST  
THEIR VOTE ONLINE.

**What happens when a country decides to create better solutions for the world?  
To be a pathfinder, who experiments with new solutions and is not afraid of  
problems?**

## Introduction

RESISTANCE

Estonia is a land of inventors, where new solutions have their beginning. Even our most popular animated film for children tells of a village of inventors. Estonian ideas or ideas implemented in Estonia make the world a more efficient place. If we see that something is broken, we will provide a solution. For us, it's easy, tell us the problem and we will offer a solution – cheap calls worldwide (Skype), mobile parking, paperless government, digital signatures, e-residency – the list goes on.

## Narrative 1

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Rainer Nõlvak is an Estonian businessman, who had the idea that we should clean up all the rubbish across the entire country. Does this seem like a feasible mission for one man? Rainer says yes! Under his leadership, all of Estonia's rubbish was cleaned up in one day. The whole country was swept into a cleaning frenzy. But littering is a problem, troubling the entire world. With the example and leadership of Estonia, this action spread to more than 150 countries worldwide.

To make such wonderful things to happen, it was necessary to have a good idea and a clever leader who knew how to combine Estonian traditions (working-bees) and modern technology. Looking at it like this, it takes very little to change the world!

## Narrative 2

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

National borders have become a mere formality for a large part of the world. Being born in one country, studying in another, working in a third but living in your country of birth – we are citizens of the world. How many countries can offer such a lifestyle while also providing public services to its citizens so easily through online solutions? Before Estonia there were none!

About 4% of Estonian citizens are living or working in neighbouring Finland. How can the state in this case, provide services to these four percent? The solution that Estonia came up with was to build the first transnational data exchange platform in the world in cooperation with Finland. This makes it easier to deal with matters in both countries for citizens and the state alike. The world's first transnational data exchange platform between the two countries became operational in 2017.

# Results

EXAMPLES, FACTS

Estonia has become one of the world's most advanced digital societies even though our independence was only restored in 1991. We always keep searching and believing that we can do better. Estonia is a place where things happen first. We are known to the world as e-Estonia, as ICT solutions have become part of our everyday lives.

**Example 1.** Estonians trust e-solutions and use them eagerly as virtually all state-related operations can be completed digitally — prescriptions are issued digitally and only two in every one hundred people submit income tax return claims on paper.

**Example 2.** Digital Solutions save energy, time and money. Digital signatures alone save Estonians five working days per year.

Estonia does not keep the experience to itself, we are a successful exporter of experience and e-solutions — nearly one-third of all countries have learned from the experience of the Estonian digital society. The Estonian ICT sector and our ambitious start-up community (aka #EstonianMafia) dares to create innovative e-services that change the world — from mobile parking to e-Residency. This requires a bit of creativity and the courage to make and admit your mistakes, learn from them, and move on.

# Conclusion

PUNCH LINE

If you want to see how a truly successful information society with e-government works, come to Estonia to study/work/visit/... because we have the world's best start-up ecosystem / cyber security experts / e-government / most advanced information society /..., which makes life easy and comfortable and the government effective.