

# Lessons learned

## Introduction

RESISTANCE

In a complicated ICT world, Estonia cannot hope to always choose the correct paths. A country that has consciously chosen the role of a pathfinder means that there are no readymade choices — we must create our own journey.

Through rapid reforms, creating new solutions and being a role model to the world, it is inevitable that sometimes things go wrong. It is important to stick to your principles, learn from your mistakes and to talk about them openly. A feature of a true expert is the courage to talk about mistakes. It is in this way that a successful digital society was built in Estonia.

## Narrative

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

### **Estonia shares its lessons openly with the whole world**

Unlike other cyber attacks that are kept quiet, Estonia decided to document its 2007 cyber attack in detail and share this experience with the world. It was a new experience for Estonia, but by deflecting these attacks, Estonia immediately became a credible advocate for cyber security, as cyber security is one issue where the size of a country or the number of residents does not play a role. Thanks to this openness and transparency, Estonia's credibility in the cyber security field grew, and in part due to the experience of the 2007 attacks, the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence and the IT-agency of the European Union are now based in Estonia.

Sometimes we must suppress our first instinct, and stick to our principles. One must not fear difficulty, but rather to see an opportunity to learn and share with the world.

## Results

EXAMPLES, FACTS

Thanks to a trustworthy Nordic approach, a high-level information society has developed in Estonia, making us a global example and pathfinder for information societies — we can show the world how to build a modern information society, where it is good to live, work and do business because digital solutions save energy, time and money. Digital signatures alone save Estonians five working days every year.

The Estonian experience has shown that the main criticism of an information society — the loss of privacy or privacy violations — can be overcome. Functioning and successful information society based on e-solutions can be built safely without compromising privacy. A comprehensive and consistent explanation shows users how their rights are protected so that trust in e-solutions can grow as each individual perceives how they benefit. There is a vast difference between making a bank payment at the bank at a pre-arranged time and paying during lunch using your smart phone.

Since Estonia established a functioning information society, it has become a successful global exporter of experience and e-solutions — nearly one-third of the world's countries have learned from the experiences of Estonia in order to build a modern information society. By following the example of the public sector, the innovative ICT sector and ambitious start-up community have had the courage to create new e-solutions to change the world — from mobile parking to Skype, Transferwise and GrabCAD.

Through private and public cooperation, Estonia's information society and e-government have become one of the most advanced in the world — due to the ICT solutions that have become part of our everyday lives, we are now known as e-Estonia.

# Conclusion

## PUNCH LINE

Real experts dare to admit their mistakes – they know things go wrong in the learning process. Through a Nordic frankness and sound administration comes reliability and new opportunities to share. Private and public sector cooperation will create even more opportunities, which in turn increase economic growth resulting in the Estonian ICT sector becoming increasingly stronger with each passing year. In contrast, concealing errors or hiding awkward situations closes opportunities down and in the long term only leads to regress.