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Digital training supports the social integration of immigrants in Norway

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Abstract:

Even if web use is common, it is not universal. In Norway about half a million people, between ten and fifteen percent of the adult population, are not Internet users. The non-users are primarily people above fifty (seniors), workers with low education, and immigrants. In Norway, the lack of skills is not a matter of poverty. The main barrier is a lack of training.

In this paper I sum up the lessons we have learned from a project designed to provide practical web-oriented ICT training through libraries. The Public Library as an Arena for Adult Learning was carried out in the city of Drammen, thirty miles to the south-west of Oslo. Here we offered free, individual training sessions every week throughout the spring 2008. Anybody could sign up, but participants were mainly immigrants, seniors, or both. After Easter, a smaller town in the same county, Hønefoss, was also included.

In Norway, Drammen is the city with the greatest proportion of immigrants next to Oslo. One in five inhabitants comes from abroad. We offered this service both at the main library and in a small suburb dominated by immigrants from Asia. At the main library we taught in Norwegian and English. In the local branch we recruited instructors who also taught in Turkish and Urdu.

The training was not based on a standardised format. Instead, we offered to help people with the specific problems they wanted to solve then and there. The paper is based on logs kept by the instructors, on discussions within the project, and on my own experience as an instructor. It documents what we have learned about the needs and interests expressed by this particular multicultural population – and

suggests a model for helping non-digital immigrants cross the barrier that stops them from joining regular group-oriented training courses.

Basic statistics

Norway has nearly five million people and more than half a million immigrants. The national statistical agency, Statistics Norway, defines *immigrant* as a resident who (1) were born or (2) whose *parents* were born outside Norway. Today immigrants constitute eleven percent of the total population (1). Sixty years ago the number was less than two percent. Half the immigrant population comes from "the South": Asia, Africa, or Latin America. The rest come from countries with a more "Western culture": Europe and North America.

Four hundred thousand persons have immigrated to Norway since 1990. One hundred thousand were refugees, one hundred thousand came as workers, and one hundred thousand came to rejoin their families in Norway. Nearly seventy thousand arrived in order to marry somebody in Norway (not necessarily a Norwegian) and the rest in order to study.

No adult left behind

Let me start with a concrete example to illustrate the actual content of the project. At Drammen Central Library we defined two small group rooms on the first floor as our "consultation rooms". When we had our sessions, we brought portable computers. The rooms were often used by students, so we could not reserve them on a permanent basis. The customer has booked a training session with one of the project librarians. Her log runs:

This was her third hour. Today she wanted help in finding a summer job. We went to nav.no [Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration] *where I showed her how to limit the search to summer jobs by geographical area and type of work. This went well, and she looked at the pages that came up. I explained the term "publication date" and other phrases she wondered about. It is not easy to understand all the details in the text when your Norwegian is less than perfect. Afterwards she wanted to find the theoretical curriculum for the Norwegian driving license exam. I did not know about that, so we did a Google search. We visited several newspapers offering tests, but the links were rotten. Then we tried vegvesenet.no* [Norwegian Roads Agency]*, but they only gave an outline of what was needed to take the test. I recommended **Veien til førerkortet*** [widely used textbook for driving license tests] *and we found it in our catalogue. The book was available and my customer returned home happily. I noted tremendous progress through these three sessions. She is now much faster and much more confident than at the start.*[Woman from abroad, about 45 years]

The rapid pace of digitalization means that many people are excluded from certain sectors of social life. People who don't use computers on a regular basis face growing difficulties when they want to contact central and local government bodies, banks, travel agencies, and other service providers. When contact with family and friends moves to the web, through e-mail and social media, they also lose parts of

their informal networks. Many older workers stop working when the demand for digital competence increases. For immigrants from non-western countries in particular, a lack of basic digital literacy becomes an additional barrier in a demanding process of integration and acculturation.

Immigrants that lack web access find it hard to participate fully in Norwegian society. Data skills help them find jobs in the first place and also to remain employed. They can also use the web to stay in touch with their home countries, friends and extended families. Web phones (Skype) allows free communication. Without web skills, isolated individuals and families remain isolated.

National surveys show that ten to fifteen percent of the adult population are in danger of digital marginalization. The authorities want everybody to master basic digital skills: *no adult left behind*, so to speak. The Norwegian Agency for Adult Learning (VOX) has high ambitions in this field. It has developed a detailed list of skills that individuals need to master in order to achieve full digital literacy. The actual training is left to others, however. Many employers and several large voluntary organizations try to promote individual and collective learning.

The project I report on - *The Public Library as an Arena for Adult Learning*, or VOLARE, was an effort to use public libraries to support the development of digital skills for beginners. VOLARE is an acronym for the Norwegian name: *VOksen Læring med biblioteket som AREna*. It was located at the Drammen Library, supported financially by VOX and coordinated by Oslo University College, where the author is employed as a teacher and researcher in library studies.

Immigrants choose libraries

Public libraries are important to immigrant communities. In Norway, immigrants use libraries far more often than "ordinary" Norwegians. A recent survey of people aged 9-59 from Statistics Norway (2) showed an average of

- 9.3 visits for immigrants from "the South"
- 6.3 visits for immigrants from "the West"
- 5.1 visits per year for the population as a whole

Here, the West includes the European Union, North America, and Australia. The South is the rest of the world: Asia, Africa, Latin America and non-EU Europe. The statistics include both those who use and those who do not use the library. If we look at users only, we find an average of

- sixteen visits for users from "the South"
- eleven visits for users from "the West"
- ten visits per user for the population as a whole

Several local studies suggest that adult immigrants from the South tend to use libraries as a social space. Here they relax, socialize and use computers to a greater extent than the "native population". A closer look at the statistics shows that the difference between Norwegians and immigrants from the South is largely an urban phenomenon. It is very pronounced in municipalities with more than twenty thousand

inhabitants, but much less noticeable in smaller communities. I take this to mean that immigrants are drawn to libraries with a social environment and decent technical resources. Small libraries that offer book lending rather than on site services are less attractive.

In passing, I note that the way immigrants from the South use public libraries is part of a bigger pattern. Natives and immigrants differ quite a bit in their cultural behaviour. We know that immigrants are drawn to libraries. They also go to meetings more frequently than Norwegians. These are mainly meetings within their own communities, I suspect. Norwegians do the same abroad. The natives do not need "ethnic gatherings" in their own country. We meet other Norwegians wherever we go. On the other hand immigrants are much less interested in sports events and concerts. The one cultural activity that pleases everybody, is the cinema. Here attendance rates do not differ, though the actual choice of films may. When I grew up in the fifties, I had never heard of Bollywood. Now Indian pictures is a regular feature in Oslo cinemas and on Norwegian television (in the summer).

Five ethnic communities

A study carried out by Statistics Norway in 2009 showed that nearly half the immigrants in Norway scored low on digital competence. This may restrict their access to several social arenas. The percentage of people with no digital skills (score = 0) was about the same as in the population as a whole. But the number of people with low skills (score = 1) was much higher in the immigrant population. This was a postal survey of three thousand adults (18-69) from the six largest immigrant groups in Norway: Poland, Pakistan, Sweden, Iraq, Somalia and Vietnam (3). In the sample as a whole, less than half were able to send data to public authorities through web forms while more than seven out of ten knew how to deal with SMS messages:
  1. Send or receive SMS by mobile phone: 72 percent
  2. Use Google, Yahoo or other search engines on the web: 67
  3. Send or receive e-mail: 65
  4. Locate needed information on government sites: 53
  5. Installing new software on a computer: 50
  6. Writing, editing and moving text in a word processor: 50
  7. Enter information requested by the government (like tax data): 47

When persons are grouped by country (excluding Sweden), Poland came out at the top and Pakistan at the bottom. The average of the seven percentages was:

  1. Poland: 79 percent
  2. Somalia: 62
  3. Irak: 56
  4. Vietnam: 54
  5. Pakistan: 49

That the Poles rank at the top – very far ahead of the other four countries – is not surprising. Poland is a European country with high literacy and a sound educational system. The great wave of Polish immigration started when the Communist regimes collapsed. It was boosted when Poland joined the European union. The Poles, who

basically come to Norway in order to work, arrive with skills, training and motivation. That Somalia actually comes next, is probably a statistical artefact, due to the high drop-out rate. This is discussed further in the appendix.

Most of the Somalis and Iraqis are recent arrivals. About seventy-five percent have spent fewer than ten years in Norway. The Poles are even more recent: nine out of ten have arrived during the last ten years. The Pakistanis and the Vietnamese constitute much more established communities. Seventy-five percent have lived in Norway for more than ten years. The sample also included second-generation immigrants from Pakistand and Vietnam. People who are born in Norway have no difficulties, however. They are fully integrated into the digital society. The problem clearly belongs to the first generation of immigrants.

When immigrants with low digital skills (levels 0 or 1) are asked about barriers to learning, nearly seventy-five percent state that they know too little about computers. The lack of knowledge is the main factor keeping them back, in their own view. Only seventeen percent refer to lack of interest as a cause. They want to learn more. By contrast, most of the low-skilled Norwegians who were asked the same question, said they were satisfied with their current situation. They did not experience the same need to master the new digital world.

Many immigrants work at home or in jobs which do not require the use of data. This means PCs are not part of their ordinary lives. To acquire digital skills they need alternative learning arenas. In its report Statistics Norway suggested that public training courses could provide such an arena. Four out of ten immigrants with low skills stated that they wanted such training.

Librarians as teachers

With VOLARE we wanted to offer relevant training through public libraries. After a planning period in the autumn 2007 the actual production, or delivery of service, took place during the spring 2008. Finding workable approaches is also a learning process. Originally we wanted to offer training courses with librarians as course instructors. The project coordinator had lengthy experience as a course designer and instructor. But when we started to look at the concrete details, our ideas changed.

The problem was a double one. Effective learning requires a supply of teachers as well as a demand from learners. Most librarians are not comfortable with formal teaching in front of a class, however. They are accustomed to meeting the users individually or in very small groups (2-3 persons). Large libraries often have people on their staff who like to teach in a classroom. But if all trainers should come from this group, most of the staff would be excluded from the project.

At the same time we recognized that there was no lack of digital courses *outside* libraries. Those who wanted organized training could find courses in service centers for immigrants, at evening schools for adults and through voluntary organizations dedicated to digital training for seniors. Some of these courses were even offered inside libraries, but with outside instructors.

Librarians often teach, but they are not trained as classroom teachers. Ordinary courses depend on standardized curricula. All participants must move through the material at roughly the same pace like a body of soldiers marching to the front. The

library's field of expertise is to support the learning processes of individuals or small groups working on a joint project not the management of learning in large classes.

The main "teaching activities" inside the library consist of reference work, giving advice on books and other media, and assisting with the library's technical equipment. Increasingly, librarians are also involved in the design of libraries as an educational space. We concluded that digital training for immigrants had to build on these strengths. Turning librarians into classroom teachers was not in the cards. What librarians are trained to do, through studies and daily practice, is to meet people where they happen to be and to help them with "the next step" forward. Reference librarians do not just provide answer. They also try to sneak in some additional knowledge about sources and search strategies.

There is, at the same time, a real demand for such individual training. Many adults do not know where to start. The are often reluctant to sign up for regular courses, where they have to follow a fixed curriculum and a set rate of progress. They do not want to expose their uncertainties and lack of skills to the instructor and their class mates. Courses demand a greater commitment of time – and the hours may not suit everybody. Some are not even sure they want to start. A single session allows them to test the water before they jump in. People with a bit of experience find it easier to join courses or to study on their own. They know what to expect. Let me illustrate:
Poor knowledge of Norwegian. Had heard about our service at the library. No previous knowledge of PCs and the web, so we started at the very beginning, with mouse and keyboard. We used Startsiden.no [popular subject-oriented web portal in Norwegian] *as a concrete example. We looked at the functions available through the buttons on a web reader and at the difference between an index and a subject portal.* [Man from abroad, about 60].

We called our service: "*New to the web"* to emphasize that this was aimed at beginners. We offered a total of eight hours per week at the Drammen Library, four hours per week at Hønefoss (after Easter only) and two hours per week at the Fjell branch library, alternating between a young Turkish speaking female and an older Urdu speaking male instructor. The latter were not librarians but known and respected in their communities. Since they spoke Norwegian and English as well they could also assist other visitors.

From an economic point of view individual sessions are obviously very expensive – just as expensive as reference work. The cost per hour equals the librarian´s salary – with thirty to fifty percent added. Staff needs time to prepare, to do some follow-up (includes logging), to co-ordinate sessions, to share and learn from experiences. Clearly, one-on-one service cannot be the normal mode of training. But it is also clear that some people are unlikely to *start* with a regular course:
The family had a PC at home, but that was constantly occupied by her two teenage kids. Her husband normally paid the bills, but planned a visit to their home country, so she wanted to learn how to use a web bank. We went to the bank she used, but she had not received her password and her digital code generator yet. I showed her how to write the bank's URL in the address field. She did not feel quite comfortable with the mouse, but tried and managed not too badly.She was going to get a library card, so that she could train on our PCs. After the session I showed her how to log in

from scratch - and told her to ask for assistance from the staff on duty if necessary. [Woman from abroad, about 60]

Since courses follow preset curricula, they cannot go into the many specific questions, needs, and desires that particular people may have without slowing everybody else up. The older people are, the more they stress relevant learning. That requires great flexibility from the instructor:
Her grandchildren had signed her up and she was eager to learn. But she knows absolutely nothing – cannot even steer a mouse. It was a terrible feeling to sit there with her, not knowing how to tackle the situation. Finally I put my hand above hers to show that it is possible to press the button in a quiet and controlled way. It did not help much. When the 45 minutes had passed, I felt I had confused her further rather than helped her. She thanked me when she left, and shook my hand. She said she wanted to book a new hour. She had not been scared away, at least. [Elderly woman from India].

Staff that works with people from non-Western countries need some additional skills. They ought to have some information about digital resources in other languages and from other cultures. Often they have to deal with pedagogical challenges, either because the students are less than fluent in a shared language - Norwegian or English, or because they lack contextual knowledge that we can take for granted when we deal with "westerners". Let me illustrate:
He did not know Norwegian very well. We had to mix Norwegian with a few English words. Sometimes I did not quite understand what he intended to say, but I hope he could use what I taught him. He asked several questions about the hard disk, for instance how one can find the actual size of the memory. He had had problems with Yahoo Messenger on his own PC and had delivered it to a repair shop. The staff had explained that the whole disk had to be replaced. This sounds like a scam to me. If the hard disk had actually been broken, many more features would have been affected. [Man from Iran, about 60].

When we undertake this form of teaching we are changing the nature of library work. VOLARE created a broader area of contact between users and librarians. When you spend repeated hours with the same student, helping her master a series of different tasks on the web, you get more involved in her life. The consultation is professional, since the encounter takes place in the library. But the setting, two persons sharing a computer, is rather informal. You learn about family and friends and personal interests. With immigrants, who are struggling to master a totally new environment, you also function as a cultural guide.

The librarian-cum-instructor has to manage a more complex professional role. How far should she go to help - with recommendations or warnings about suppliers, with advice on institutions, with the drafting and editing of letters, with bookings of tickets and changes of passwords? When we train with real-life problems on the web, the line that separates professional assistance from personal involvement becomes thin indeed.

This is particularly true when we work with immigrants, who often lack the social and conceptual resources that natives take for granted. They are strangers in a strange land. The public library is one of the few bridges that connect the world they left

behind with the world they have entered. The librarians that guard the bridge need not be computer experts. But they require both pedagogical and intercultural skills to do their work well.

Progress report

The logs reflect the actual experience of instructors and students. They are, so to speak, a window into the life-world. Here we follow a woman from Ukraine, in her mid-sixties, through her first two sessions, with comments added.
The customer had limited experience with data and had never used the Internet before. Her Norwegian was pretty good, but when I spoke fast, she had problems understanding me.

In such a situation it is difficult to start in a regular course.

The reason she contacted us was that she had discovered a couple of interesting URLs in a periodical. I decided to use these as training examples: seniornett.no and savalen.no.

The librarian anchors the session in the concrete world of the customer. The first address is the home page of a digital support network for seniors. The second is a site aimed at visitors to Savalen, a tourist destination in Norway. The English version of the Savalen page is here.

She insisted that I had to move slowly. She wanted to do many repetitions when new functions were introduced.

In order to be comfortable, the customer wants to control the process.
As a first step we explored the interface of the browser. I explained the role of the address field. We tested the navigation buttons and the difference between minimizing and closing a window.

Actions that seem obvious to us look strange and complex to the beginner.
We continued with the two web sites she wanted to look at. Several things occurred that needed explanation. One of them was a window that popped up when she clicked on a particular link. Another was a link to a PDF document. When the document was opened, the whole interface changed. This confused her. I needed a bit of time to explain what was going on.

On the screen, our input makes things happen. But the relation between action and effect can not be understood by reference to our familiar physical world. The web is a programmed environment. Any action could, in principle, lead to any effect.

In practice, a large number of conventions have developed. These must be learned in order to navigate the web with confidence. A guide can be very helpful in this first stumbling phase. This, by the way, is a good example of Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development*(4).
She also found it difficult to distinguish between the content of the web site itself and the marketing banners that surrounded the main text. These banners are often more

prominent than the regular content, and users may want to click on them rather than continuing with their original task. I have seen this in other cases as well.

Attention is the currency of the web. Experienced users learn to block out advertisements. Beginners must be helped to do so.

She was unsure of herself. "I can't do anything", she said.

One-on-one is a safe situation. It also allows people to express their insecurity. This was the start of the second session.

We did practical training with the mouse and the pointer.

For beginners, the mouse is an obstacle. Keyboards are similar to typewriters. But there is nothing in the pre-digital world that corresponds to this strange device.

We discussed web addresses: what does http mean? why is www only included only in some addresses. We experimented with up- and down-scaling of fonts, using ctrl +/-. She wrote extensive notes all the time.

This was an active student, committed to her own learning.

She had brought a newsletter from the Methodist church and wanted to find an article about their missionary work on the web. This was no problem, and she looked at various pages on their site. Then she wanted to find information about the Methodist church in Drammen on the web. I showed her the main Norwegian search portal [ABC Startsiden] *and she searched for (Methodist church Drammen). I explained how to interpret the hit list. She was able to find the home page for the Methodist church in Norway, but could not locate anything about Drammen.*

She is learning through practice, which necessarily includes a mixture of hits and misses.

The time was nearly out. To get a clear answer about Drammen I did a rapid search for her - and found a list of all congregations with their own web sites. Drammen was not included.

The instructor steps in to establish the existence or non-existence of what she is looking for.

The student thanked and wanted to book a new session. She definitely needs this in order to become more self-reliant.

The value of logging

In order to document the project, we asked the instructors to write brief logs after each session. Getting them to spend these additional minutes was harder than expected, however. Librarians are doers rather than writers. Documenting their work made them more visible to others. The internal library culture tends to emphasize the pressure of work and the constant lack of time. Whether that is a realistic description is another matter ...

We did, however, get a fair number of written logs. We used a non-public WordPress blog to share the logs within the project. The project itself was a test-bed. One of my strong conclusions after VOLARE was that logging makes this type of project, and the library itself, more professional. By creating a record of events, it helps us identify patterns over time rather than routines that repeat themselves.

Library work tends to be fragmented. Transactions with users are atomistic rather than cumulative. Every loan, every visit and every reference query is treated as a separate event - not as a cumulative sequence of loans, visits, and queries. Individuals follow their own library trajectories, But librarians do not, in general, see reading, using and learning as time-series or "careers". This is particularly true in larger libraries. From their point of view, users come and go at random. Smaller libraries often have regular customers. Here, librarians may build more permanent relationships with at least some of their users. But such relationships are not, as far as I know, a theme in library education. They are personal rather than professionalized. The moment we engage in systematic computer training, for immigrants or others, we take on a different responsibility, Training has a step-wise nature. Education is a pyramid rather than a wilderness of giant stones. Knowledge is a string rather than a bag of pearls.

Logging links the separate transactions together and bring them back into the shared professional world. Specifically:

- The project was geographically dispersed: coordinated from Oslo and delivered at three different locations in Buskerud county. Logs facilitated the sharing of experiences among the project workers. They also made it easier for new project workers (like those who joined after Easter) to understand the form of work
- Logs allowed the central project team, and the project steering committee, to follow the work on a regular basis. The project changed and developed during the spring. The logs kept developers on the ground - and a dispersed group of directors - in contact without additional meetings or reports.
- When users came back, logs provided continuity in the training. In the longer run, such logs may document the progress of particular users over time.
- The logs were also the most important source of data for reports and dissemination from the project.
- Logs provide arguments and illustrations that libraries can use vis-a-vis the municipalities that run them - and also to inform journalists and other political actors.
- Logs contribute to personal and organizational learning within the project. Asking students to write logs is a well-known educational tool. By writing about our own sessions, we learned more from our own experiences as digital instructors.
- And finally, of course: logs may be used as source material for research

The right to privacy had to be maintained. Within the project we defined the content of the sessions as confidential - just like the books people borrow or the questions they ask. But web training is not a sensitive area. We did not encounter very personal or revealing issues. Our students were not worried. The main point is not to link specific persons with specific digital questions.   Like doctors sometimes do, we are willing to reproduce logs in anonymized form. This may include shifting a person from nationality A to nationality B to make them less traceable.

Digital skills in libraries

VOLARE was a test-run. It was followed by similar experiements in four libraries, financed by a grant from the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs. Drammen Public Library was one of the four. The other three were Trondheim, Lillehammer, and Arendal. The new project was called *Developing digital skills in libraries* (NO: *Digital kompetanseheving i biblioteket*) or DIGIKOMBI (6). Since the four were expected to function as models for public libraries in general, DIGIKOMBI described them as "model libraries". Their experiences were quite similar. Below I summarize what we learned from both projects.

Legitimacy

The concept of the library as a learning space (or arena) is well established in the general planning documents of all four libraries. The plans do not emphasize digital training, however. Explicit planning for this will require coordinated effort, at the local, regional and national level.

Staff

One-on-one training is a labour intensive activity. Every session takes a big chunk out of a normal working day. In VOLARE, we could pay for the hours spent but finding replacements for staff was still a problem. In Drammen we actually had to hire a couple of students to help us. Offering this service on a regular basis requires (1) separate funding or (2) cutting tasks elsewhere.

Marketing

Norway has more than half a million immigrants. About half of them come from "the South." The greater the cultural difference, the more difficult it was to recruit students for our training. The two projects were able to help many people with a non-Norwegian background. But some groups are hard to reach. Distributing information through immigrant centers and associations (as we did) may help.

But even the best of marketing can be defeated by regressive cultural norms. In some Muslim communities, (young) women have limited freedom of movement outside the family home. If they come from rural areas, they may also be illiterate. This type of problem requires intervention from a stronger power than the library.

Expectations

Since we offered a new type of service, to people with limited skills and knowledge, they may expect too much from the training. Digital learning takes time and practice. To avoid such an expectation gap, it is necessary to be very clear about what the library can and cannot provide. It is also advisable to check the user's level of competence before training starts.

Collaboration

Both projects tried to cooperate with other actors in the training field. This was more difficult than expected. Two competing explanations are lack of time and lack of interest. Many municipalities have special centres, or at least special staff, to help refugees getting settled and socially integrated. Such centres often offer computer access and some data training. If libraries do the same, they may be competing for the same municipal funding.

Actors like *Seniornet*, which offers data training to older people, and the *Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration* (NAV), which helps people find or get trained for paid work, are not aimed at immigrants as such. But immigrants may of course use their services and will often need special support in order to do so. In principle, libraries could be part of that special support. This would require a stable cooperative relationship between organizations that are not accustomed to such joint projects, however. The parties must get to know and like each other before they can combine their efforts.

We conclude as we began, with a real-life illustration:

At her second session she wanted to learn more about using her bank on the web. The last time we were unable to link up because of server problems, but today everything went smoothly. I showed her how to log in, how to pay bills and how to find the list of previous payments. I stressed once again the need to log out after using the bank. Then we repeated the use of Google. She wanted to look at Ringerikes Blad [local newspaper]. *We repeated how to retrieve each article directly from the main page. I also showed her the Return button since she thought she hade to write the URL once again to come back to the main page. She wanted to search for a flat through Ringerikes Blad. I did not find any relevant links on the newspaper site, but mentioned Finn.no* [a nation-wide classified ads service run by Norway's biggest newspaper]. *She had used this before, so she did not need more assistance. She asked how to apply for jobs and I showed her nav.no* [Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration]. *We did a test run and she managed that well enough. Then we used Google to find Le Monde and other French newspapers. We still had some time, som she asked me what I'd like to show her, I chose web-based television, using wwitv.com, which I think has the best start page for international TV channels. She had not heard about TV on the web before and was very impressed. When we finished she said she had learnt a lot and would like to come back two weeks later. I could see definite progress. She is more confident and moves more rapidly from page to page.* [Immigrant woman around 45 years].

Resources
1. Innvandring og innvandrere. [Immigration and immigrants]. Statistics Norway.
2. Kultur- og mediebruk blant personer med innvandrerebakgrunn. [Culture and media use among immigrants]. Statistics Norway.
3. Mange innvandrere digitalt ekskludert. [Many immigrants digitally excluded]. Statistics Norway.
4. Lev Vygotsky. Wikipedia.

Appendix

That Somalia ranks second in digital skills is very surprising at first sight. Nearly all Somalis arrive in Norway as refugees asking for political asylum. This is the immigrant group that differs most from ordinary Norwegians in terms of economic, social and educational background. In the sample studied, nearly thirty percent of the Somalis had not completed primary education. In the case of Iraq, Pakistan and Vietnam, this number was about fifteen percent. For Poland, it was zero. Only one out of thirteen Somalis had higher education – compared with one out of five among Iraqis, Pakistanis and Vietnamese.

The main reason for Somalia's high rank is probably its low response rate. This was a postal survey. Mail-based surveys tend to have lower response rates than phone-based surveys. In the study of culture and media use among immigrants (2), which was carried out by phone, the response rate was fifty percent. In the postal survey of digital skills the rate was only thirty percent. Persons who drop out from surveys tend to be less interested, less educated and less socially integrated than the average. They remain close to their culture of origin and care less for Norwegian society and its strange institutions, including surveys. Those who are left will then be a bit more "Norwegian" than the average. This means that all the data have a slight positive bias. Immigrant data skills are somewhat overestimated. In the Somali case, as many as six out of seven dropped out from the survey. Statistics Norway knew this was likely to happen. Four groups received about fifteen hundred questionnaires each. The Somali group received three thousand. The fifteen percent that answered are likely to be much better integrated than the Somali majority. The drop-out effect (positive) is so strong that it eliminates the effect of low education (negative).