# Guidance for Online Public Services

This guidance aims to show how Universal Design processes and techniques can be progressively used to enable more people to use online public services with ease and satisfaction. For the web, Universal Design means designing and deploying a website so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

## Contents

* [Universal Design Guidance for online Public Services](https://universaldesign.ie/Web-Content-/Guidance-for-Online-Public-Services-1.pdf)
* [Research: "The Lived Experience of People in Ireland using Online Public Services"](https://universaldesign.ie/Web-Content-/Research-The-Lived-Experience-of-People-in-Ireland-using-Online-Public-Services-.doc)

In 2011/2012 the National Disability Authority's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design conducted extensive research into the lived experience of people in Ireland using public sector websites.

This research involved asking over 1,200 people about their experience of these sites, extensive consultation with public sector website managers, end-user representative bodies and Irish web development companies, as well as expert evaluations and user testing of public sector sites. The results of this research are available on the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design’s website.

This research found that nearly 50% of survey respondents do not use 10 of the most popular online public services, preferring instead to use the phone or visit an office in person. Clearly there is a lot to be done to encourage Irish citizens to use online public services. The research also found that public sector bodies face many challenges in making their online services engaging, usable and accessible while at the same time ensuring the content remains comprehensive and legally accurate. Working within such boundaries, innovative and creative approaches are essential to ensuring that the needs of the end user are kept central during the process of design, development, maintenance and upgrading of our online public services in Ireland.