



Charter of Digital Networking

(English translation)

The diversity of our modern society, globalization, demographic change and the ever new possibilities for innovative information and communication technologies significantly shape the economic and social life in Germany. The future of our country depends increasingly on how we use digital technologies and how we integrate them into the economy and society. Germany must now provide the basis for growth and progress in the future digital society.

It is not just about the use of the Internet, computer or smartphones, but about a growing number of networked devices that communicate digitally connected with other devices, machines or people – for example in houses, wind turbines, vehicles or street lamps. The digital networking of all life and work areas, the progressive automation and digitization in the basic sectors energy, health, transport, education and management must not happen accidentally, but must be deliberately driven and based on a shared social understanding.

Germany can only remain economically successful if we systematically develop the potential of digital networking.

The use and promotion of modern information and communication technologies open up opportunities for new, creative solutions, for growth, competitiveness and innovation. We need to exploit them consistently and in a timely manner, to maintain jobs and to create and to strengthen the competitiveness of the industrial location Germany. The necessary cultural acceptance requires a broad future dialogue on all social levels.

10 Principles of the Charter

The following principles are an expression of our mutual understanding on how to move towards a digital society:

1. We understand the use and development of digital networking to be a decisive location factor for Germany.
2. We are convinced that digital networking will evolve to become the basis of social prosperity and help improve the living conditions for people over the next decade.
3. We seek an open dialogue across all industries and social groups to promote society's technological progress. While doing so, we will carefully weigh social risks and opportunities.
4. We are aware of the obligation to securely handle personal data and information and will act according to data protection rules. We will guarantee this through effective technical and organization measures, which prevent unauthorized access and misuse. We perceive a uniform European data protection law to be an important framework. Continued multilateral harmonization of legal frameworks should be addressed quickly.
5. We seek to make large and diverse amounts of data, generated by digital networking, more usable so that opportunities and benefits for our society and each individual can be gained. In order to establish a suitable framework, business, politics, science and society must take joint responsibility.
6. We deem the extensive availability to access modern broadband networks as a prerequisite for discrimination-free participation with regard to the benefits of digital networking. Education and media literacy, as well as targeted collaborative research efforts by governmental and non-governmental institutions are also vital to pave the way towards a digital networked society.
7. We support the rapid development and use of open international standards and norms for interoperable, global solutions.
8. We understand first and foremost that people and businesses are the driving forces behind digital change. In order for society to benefit from these forces, stable legal and investment-friendly framework conditions are required.
9. We want to avoid a shortage of skilled workers and promote new skills. To do this, mandatory new multidisciplinary and cross-industry qualifications must be integrated into the planning, implementation and operation of digital networked applications. They must also be embedded into the educational system and vocational training programs.
10. Digital networking shall serve as an index of social progress, freedom and prosperity. Together, we want to help make Germany future-proof.