

eGovernment MONITOR 2024

Use and acceptance of digital
administrative services from the
citizens' perspective: A comparison
of the German federal states,
Germany, Austria and Switzerland.



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Basic partners

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At a glance

Why are we doing this study?

The eGovernment MONITOR assesses the success and reach of digital transformation in administrative services for citizens in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Published annually since 2010, it supports decision-makers in measuring progress and identifying areas of improvement. This knowledge can be utilized to make well-aimed measures to improve digital administrative services.



How do we conduct the study?

The eGovernment MONITOR 2024 is a representative study by Initiative D21 e. V. and the Technical University of Munich, conducted by Kantar.



Country coverage

Germany, Austria, Switzerland



Sample size

Germany n = 8,108 (approximately n = 500 per federal state)
Austria n = 1,005 and Switzerland n = 1,007



Population

Persons in private households in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, aged 16 and over, and who use the Internet privately



Survey Method

Online survey (CAWI)



Survey period

May 2024

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Foreword



Nancy Faeser

Federal Minister of the Interior
and Community

Dear Reader,

how can we increase the public's trust in the state? The results of the eGovernment MONITOR 2024 show: digital administrative services be especially helpful. It is all the more pleasing that more and more people are using them. This is particularly evident this year with the eID card, which form is the basis for many other digital government services. The possibility to identify oneself uniformly via smartphone has also sparked considerable interest. This confirms that we are on the right track with the implementation of the national EUDI wallet and shows that our projects meet the public's needs.

The general satisfaction of Germans with e-government services has increased. And yet there is still room for improvement, as shown by a country comparison with Austria and Switzerland. Few people in Germany believe that government actually makes their lives easier. How can we change this? The eGovernment MONITOR provides important answers to this question too.

The key response: we need to increase awareness of our digital administration services. Digital administration saves people time in their daily lives. But only those who are aware of them can use them. The results show that we have not yet reached our goal. Furthermore, our services need to be easier to use. People no longer want to navigate multiple points of contact, but rather want access to a single platform. This would encourage them to use more e-government services. We need to build upon these insights.

This year's eGovernment MONITOR once again shows how complex the digital transformation of public administration is. We need to continue working on many key areas. However, the figures also highlight the enormous potential that digital government services offer.

I would like to thank the Initiative D21 and everyone involved for their important work. The insights provided by the study are valuable and guide us on the way to a digital Germany. It is now our responsibility to continue forward on this path, united and resolute.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Faeser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Nancy Faeser

Federal Minister of the Interior
and Community

Preface



Marc Reinhardt

President of the Initiative D21



Prof. Dr. Helmut Krcmar

Professor for Information Systems
and Delegate Officer of the President -
TUM Campus Heilbronn

Dear Reader,

these days, citizens have been asked to elect a new parliament*. Their voting decision is significantly influenced by their trust in the state. This judgment is also formed by how they perceive the state's performance, for example in their direct interactions with public administration.

The eGovernment MONITOR 2024 clearly highlights the citizens' mandate to the state: almost every second citizen would place more trust in the state if digital access to its services were simple and efficient. Citizens transfer their experiences from daily life and the private sector into expectations to the state. There is still room for improvement: only 19 percent consider public offices and authorities to be as efficient as companies.

A necessary prerequisite for successful e-government is the efficient digitalization within public administration. And what happens 'behind the scenes' must also be tangible for citizens. The eGovernment MONITOR results suggest that this has not yet been sufficiently realized. Those who feel that the state is not fulfilling its duties are less likely to trust it. This poses a serious risk to democracy.

However, the results on the use and acceptance of digital administrative services also show: the German-speaking countries are heading in the right direction! Satisfaction with the digital administrative services has risen to 62 percent, and those who have used local e-government once would do so again. For one of the key infrastructure components, the eID card, usage rates have risen by a full eight percentage points to 22 percent this year. This is a welcome progress, but it is not enough!

Another issue revealed by the eGovernment MONITOR 2024: Mobile e-government use, satisfaction levels and the use of the eID card all show significant differences between the federal states. These regional differences are difficult for citizens to understand. Where you live should not determine how easy or difficult (digital) interaction with the state is.

The eGovernment MONITOR clearly demonstrates the progress made in recent years. But those responsible at the federal and state levels must not rest on their laurels. Instead, the focus now must be on staying committed, accelerating progress and strengthening joint efforts across the federal levels. Our ambition must be higher! Digital transformation is about more than just digital accessibility - it is about citizens' trust in the state and strengthening our democracy. This is the goal we are striving for, and we hope that the insights from our study will make a significant contribution to this.

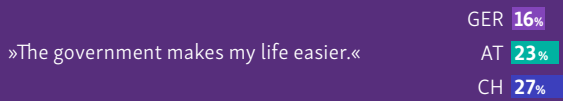
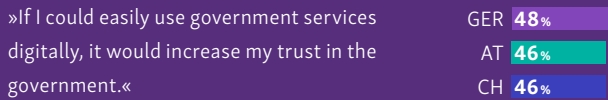
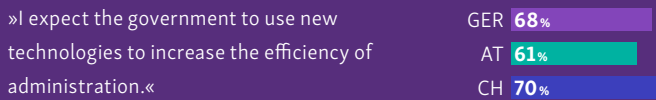
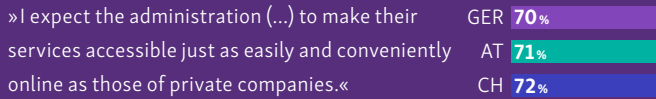
Marc Reinhardt and Helmut Krcmar

*(at the time of publication of the German version, it was not yet clear that there would be an earlier Bundestag election)

Key findings

Performance and trust

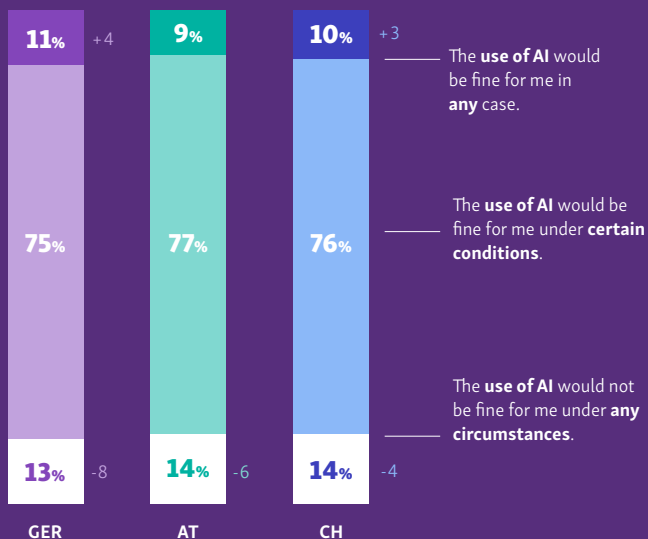
A digital administration that meets the needs and expectations of citizens, thereby making their lives easier, can strengthen the public's trust in the state.



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Acceptance of artificial intelligence

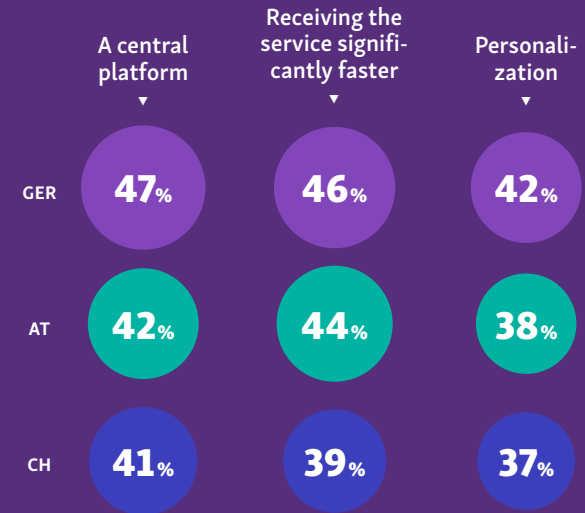
The majority of the population supports the use of AI in administration, provided that key conditions—such as maintaining human decision-making authority—are met. Compared to the previous year, fewer people now outright oppose AI in administrative roles.



» Page 44

Drivers of e-government use

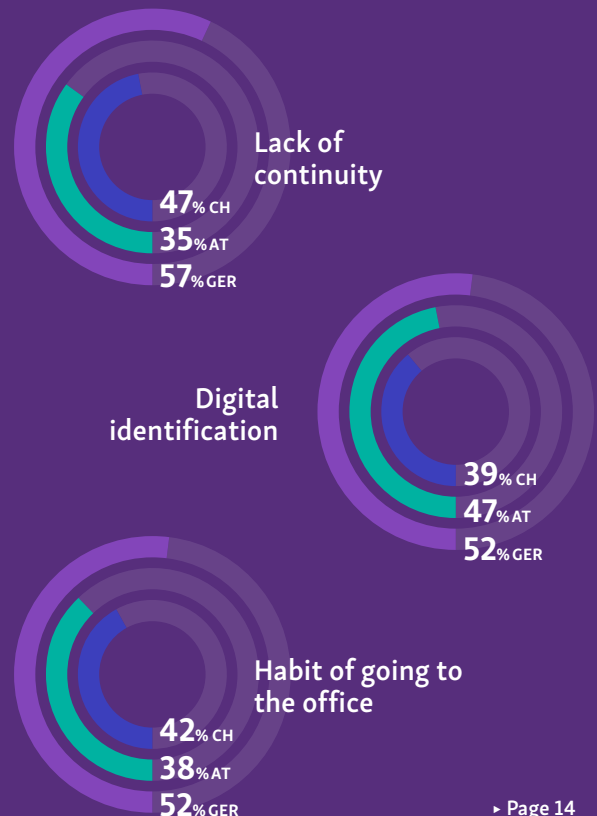
E-government services that are easy and quick to find, and efficient in processing, motivate citizens to use them (more).



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Barriers to e-government use

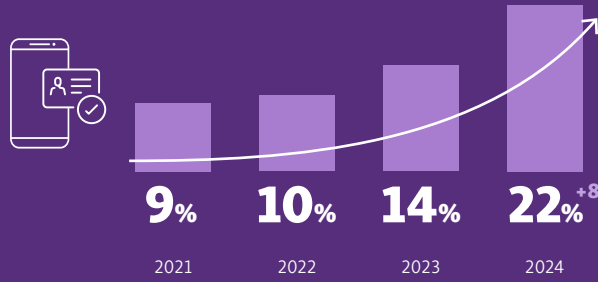
Services that are not fully digitally accessible remain the biggest obstacle to (greater) e-government use.



» Page 14

eID in Germany

In 2024, the proportion of eID card users increases sharply for the first time since the start of measurement.



► Page 19

Analysis of the federal states

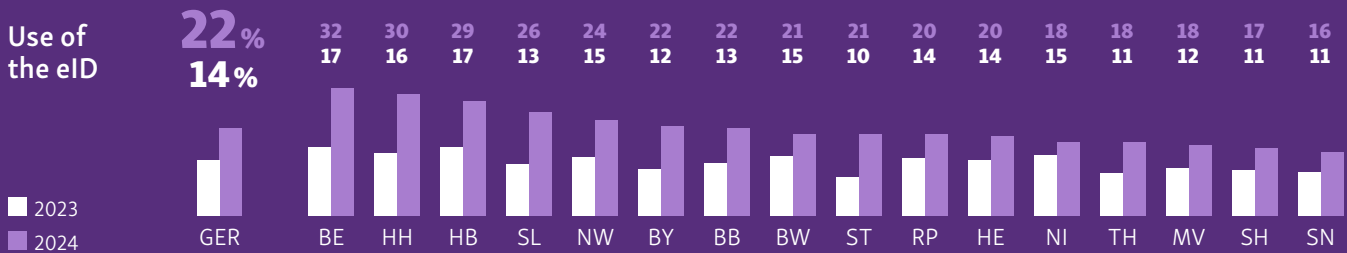
The use and acceptance of digital administrative services still strongly depend on the federal state one lives in, including the eID card. To create

equal living conditions, the situation in the federal states must be analyzed. Key figures on this can be found in the 'Federal States Special'.

► Page 27

Use of the eID

22%
14%



The digital usage gap

The digital usage gap shows the untapped potential of e-government and quantifies the proportion of people who have handled a necessary administrative matter entirely offline. Successful administrative digitalization therefore reduces the usage gap.



► Page 25

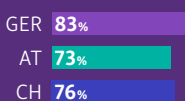
Use of individual services in Germany

Each service has its own characteristic challenges, such as issues with findability or awareness, reasons for abandonment, or lack of interest in usage. To close the digital usage gap, the online service must offer real benefits. For citizen's benefit, a mobile-compatible, simple process is essential for usage, whereas for vehicle registration, de-registration, or re-registration, the primary obstacles are a lack of awareness and findability.

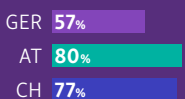
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Mobile usage

In Austria and Switzerland, mobile devices are most frequently used for digital identification, whereas in Germany, they are primarily used to prepare personal contact with government agencies.



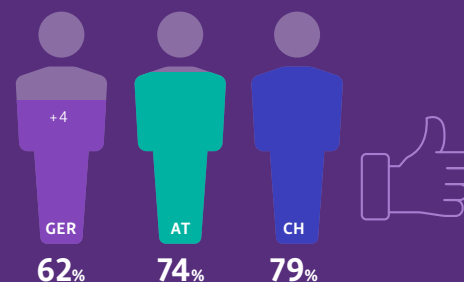
Preparing personal contact with an authority



Confirming identity for a request

► Page 23/24

Satisfaction



Citizen satisfaction with e-government services has improved in Germany, but still remains significantly behind the levels in Austria and Switzerland. These differences need to be analyzed in order to learn from one another.

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Executive Summary

The digital transformation of public administration represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the state: if it fails or cannot meet citizens' expectations, dissatisfaction will grow. If it succeeds, the state can demonstrate its efficiency with modern and efficient digital services, strengthen citizens' trust in the state, and fortify democracy.



»In the 21st century, I expect the administration to make it just as easy and convenient for me to use its services online as those of private companies.«

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); Deviations from the previous year in percentage points

User-oriented digitalization of public administration has the potential to sustainably strengthen citizens' trust in the state (see eGovernment MONITOR 2022). Currently, very few perceive the state as efficient: only 19% believe that public authorities and offices work as efficiently as commercial enterprises. On the other hand, for around half of the citizens, easily and quickly accessible digital services are a reason to (re)gain trust in the state. As daily life becomes increasingly digitalized, public expectations rise: 70% (2023: 63%) believe that administrative services should be just as convenient and easy to use online as those in the private sector.

It is therefore not surprising that 71% of citizens see a clear advantage in e-government compared to traditional administration, and 68% explicitly expect the targeted use of new technologies to increase efficiency in administration.

One of these new technologies is Artificial Intelligence (AI). 80% of citizens believe they can explain the term or at least have a general idea of what it means, and 6 out of 10 have already had usage experience. The majority of the population is open to the use of AI in administration - this acceptance continues to grow. Concerns primarily revolve around the traceability of decision-making processes and responsibilities, as well as the potential susceptibility to errors.

However, AI is not a panacea for the digitalization of public administration. Rather, it is one of many tools, such as networked registers and a user-friendly digital identity, that belong in the toolkit of an outcome-oriented and efficient administration.

Although the administration is still moving too slowly, it is measurably heading in the right direction: this year, it is evident that the progress in the digitalization of public administration is reaching citizens, both in terms of their attitudes and their behaviour.

Citizens' assessment of the state's performance shows a positive trend in many areas compared to the previous year. Although a minority still believes that public authorities and agencies work just as efficiently as commercial enterprises or that the state makes life easier, these numbers have increased compared to the previous year (+6 and +4 percentage points, respectively). Confidence that the state will be able to provide a comprehensive digital services offering in the next three years has also increased (29%, +3 percentage points). All of this suggests that the investments and efforts made so far are beginning to yield results. These results should be seen as an encouragement not only to continue investments and efforts, but to intensify them further.

Citizen-oriented e-government is characterized by the fact that access, application, and receipt of services are as simple, fast and seamless as possible.

A central concern of citizens is the need for a central platform (47%) that consolidates all digital administrative services. The Federal Portal is such a platform. However, in 2023, only 30% were aware of the Federal Portal, and significantly fewer had already used it (6%).

For a similar number of citizens (46%), the faster receipt of services compared to analog procedures is the key impetus for using e-government. Comprehensive and effective digitalization within the administration is required to automate processes and relieve the burden on employees. Additionally, the elimination of the requirement for written form increases the benefit of the digital route.

Personalization also has a strong motivational power: 42% of citizens want previously entered data to be used for future applications, instead of having to re-enter it each time. This need underlines the urgency of modernizing the registry system, which would allow many services to be used more easily and fully in digital form. The legal implementation of the Once-Only principle is an essential step in this direction.

The use of the eID card is finally gaining momentum. The EUID wallet is proving to be highly promising: Most people want to be able to use their smartphone to identify themselves everywhere in the future.

Since 2010, citizens have been able to identify themselves digitally, but it is only in 2024 that the use of the eID card in Germany is significantly increasing: the proportion of ID cardholders using eID increased from 14% in the previous year to 22% today. This increase is observable across all population groups and is primarily due to more

people discovering use cases for themselves. Nevertheless, 3 out of 4 people still do not use the eID card. Too often, there is a lack of benefits and applications relevant to everyday life. In addition, many perceive the setup of the online function too complicated or they do not even know how to do it.

Despite a significant increase in usage, the eID card is still far from taking on a central role in e-government. The vast majority of people have never used it, and for a small majority, online identification has even been an obstacle to using e-government (more extensively). This is hardly surprising, given that on average, one in four people has cancelled an online process when digital identification was required. The goal must be to ensure that digital identification is no longer an obstacle in the future, but rather the central basic infrastructure for fast and simple - in short, successful - e-government services.

The untapped potential of digital administration is measurable in the digital usage gap: 3 out of 10 citizens prefer to take the analog route rather than the digital one when needed. In contrast, our neighboring countries Austria and Switzerland have convinced more people of their digital administrative services.

The digital usage gap indicates the proportion of citizens who currently do not fulfil their needs for government services online. In Germany, the digital usage gap is significantly larger at 31% compared to Austria (21%) and Switzerland (19%).

Digital administrative services can only be used by citizens if they are available, known and easy to find. Moreover, they must meet the citizens' expectations to foster long-term acceptance and satisfaction with the services. Our neighboring countries are more successful in this regard. In Germany, citizens rate the e-government services better overall this year compared to the previous year (62%, +4 percentage points). However, satisfaction remains significantly higher in neighboring countries (AT: 74%, CH: 79%). Therefore, looking beyond national borders is worthwhile if Germany wants to maintain its positive trend and continue closing the gap.

The eGovernment MONITOR shows: The efforts for a successful digital transformation are worthwhile!

A successful transition to a citizen-oriented digital administration can improve the perception of the government's performance and thus strengthen trust in the government and its institutions. The eGovernment MONITOR shows that the digitaliza-

tion in public administration has made measurable progress in recent years, which is slowly reaching citizens. This is a motivating sign given the decline in trust in the state and its efficiency last year.

However, the findings of this study clearly highlight the need for action: The digital transformation needs to accelerate in speed and effectiveness! E-government services that meet citizens' expectations of a modern and efficient administration are a decisive factor for the success of the administration's digital transformation. Conversely, insufficient or poorly implemented digital transformation is increasingly becoming a burden that is unappealing and costly for everyone involved.

The good news: Citizens are generally open to digital government services. Now, the focus must be on expanding the administration's digital services and, above all, making them easier and more convenient to use. Instead of simply transferring complex analog processes and forms into a digital format, digital tools and new technologies need to be strategically used to improve user experience and to adapt services to different user needs. This includes digital support, optimization for mobile devices, seamless processing, as well as proactive communication about the progress and the automation of processes. This is the only way to close the gap between growing demands and current reality. The path taken with the OZG 2.0, featuring a right to digital administration, the DeutschlandID (GermanyID) as a central citizen account, the abolition of the written form, and the legal enshrinement of the Once-Only principle must be pursued consistently to give the digital transformation of the administration the political priority it needs and deserves as one of the flagships of state efficiency.

*Sandy Jahn (Initiative D21)
Lukas Daßler and Ina Jäger
(Technical University of Munich)*

22% ⁺⁸

have already used the eID.

BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card - GER (n = 7,471); Deviations from the previous year in percentage points

31%

cover their need for administrative services exclusively offline.

BASIS: All respondents with general need for government services in the last 12 months - GER (n = 5,922)

► Fig. 01: Performance and trust

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108);
AT (n = 1,005); CH = (n = 1,007);
Top2 (strongly agree / rather agree)

»If I can use government offers and services quickly and easily digitally, it will strengthen my trust in the state.«



48%

46%

46%

State performances

RELEVANCE

An efficient and citizen-centered administration contributes significantly to the trust citizens place in the state and their perception of its ability to act. As people today are accustomed to digital services that make their lives easier and enable them to complete tasks quickly and conveniently from anywhere, their expectations of the public sector are rising. A modern, digital and efficient administration promotes trust in the state and its democratic institutions. However, if citizens, companies and administrative officers perceive the administration as unappealing, bureaucratic and inefficient, the state's reputation suffers significantly. In the long term, this can jeopardize trust in the state and democracy.

■ Germany ■ Austria ■ Switzerland



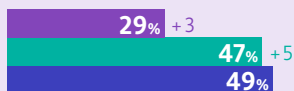
I expect from the administration (...) that I can use their **services just as easily and conveniently online** as those of **private companies**.



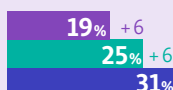
I usually find the contact with authorities and offices **very stressful**.



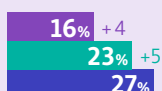
I trust the state to be able to offer **all administrative and official procedures online in three years' time**.



Authorities and offices work at least as **efficiently as commercial enterprises**.



The government makes my life easier.



► Fig. 02: Performance

QUESTION: Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.
BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); Top2 (strongly agree / rather agree); deviations from the previous year in percentage points



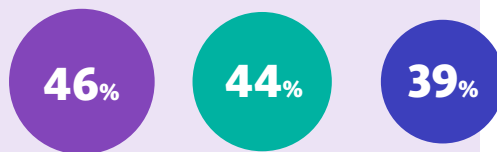
► Fig. 03: Drivers

QUESTION: What would encourage you personally to use (more) government services digitally? | BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007)

A central platform
(all digital administrative services in one place)



Receiving the service significantly faster
(than analog, e.g., passport, citizen's allowance)

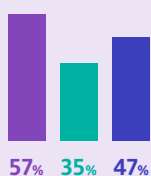


Personalization
(so I don't always have to re-enter all my data)

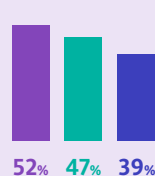


► Fig. 04: Top 5 barriers

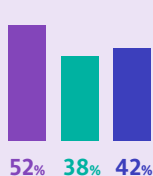
QUESTION: Which of the barriers listed below generally prevent you personally from making (more intensive) use of online government services? | BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); Top3 (strongly agree / agree / rather agree)



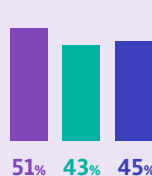
I think I will have to finish it offline in the end (...) because it is **not yet possible to do it completely online**.



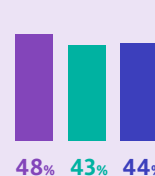
I would have to prove my **identity digitally**.



I am **used** to doing things like this **in person** at the office.



I would **prefer** to have a **personal contact person** for my request.



I am **worried about doing something wrong** without realizing it and then experiencing **negative consequences**.

High-performance digital administration to strengthen trust in the state

80% 

of citizens who see their lives simplified by the state have (very) high trust in the state; the population average is only 38%.

(Source: eGovernment MONITOR 2022, p. 40)

The 2022 edition of the eGovernment MONITOR already demonstrated that the perceived performance of the state and the population's trust in the state are directly linked. Good eGovernment (among other factors) is an important lever for a positive evaluation of the state's performance in the eyes of the population. The more satisfied citizens are with the online services offered, the more often they feel that the state makes their lives easier. This, in turn, has a positive effect on trust in the state (see eGovernment MONITOR 2022, p. 39f.).

Conversely, this means that unsatisfactory digital services and negative experiences can lead to a long-term decrease in trust in the state's performance.

Based on these findings, it seems that a citizen-centered digital transformation of administration services is an effective lever to enhance the perceived performance of the state and (re)strengthening trust in the state. To better understand whether this conclusion is valid, citizens were asked directly this time. One in two (48%) believe there is a direct connection: 'If I can use government offers and services quickly and easily digitally, it will strengthen my trust in the state.'

↘ Fig. 01

PARTNERS



Pragmatism over perfection

The digital transformation of public administration needs to accelerate. Only then the state can meet the expectations of its citizens. They are asking for more digital services that make their lives easier – as clearly shown by the survey results of the eGovernment MONITOR. However, the focus should not be on immediate perfection of solutions. Pragmatism instead of perfection must be the guiding principle: Start simple, continuously improve, and show perseverance – ideally with the involvement of citizens. This not only drives the digital transformation forward but also strengthens trust in the state's ability to act. If this trust is lost, democracy will start to crack. **And that must not happen.**

*Uwe Sander, Senior Director
Strategic Alliances, adesso*

Especially among digital natives, easy to use and quickly accessible digital services are viewed as an effective means to (re)build trust in the state (Gen Z: 56 percent, Gen Y: 54 percent). These services would also convince a majority of men (53 percent; women: 42 percent) and people with a high level of formal education (58 percent; low education level: 43 percent) to regain their trust in the state.

All these groups are characterized by a more digitally-savvy behavior, use digital devices and applications more frequently, are more digitally competent, and are more open to digitalization (see D21 Digital Index 2023/2024, p. 16ff.). Nevertheless, the approval rate is above 40 percent in all sociodemographic groups, thus supporting the importance of a citizen-centered digital administration for building trust in the state and democracy.

70%⁺⁷

»In the 21st century, I expect the administration to make it just as easy and convenient for me to use its services online as private companies.«

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); deviations from the previous year in percentage points

70 percent of the population now expect to be able to use public administration services online just as conveniently and easily as services or offerings from the private sector. In the neighboring countries Austria and Switzerland, the expectations are just as high as in Germany and have also increased significantly. »Fig. 02 The data shows that people who are dissatisfied with the e-government services of their municipality have higher expectations of the administration (81 percent) than those who are satisfied (74 percent).

The challenge for the administration is to meet these expectations. The gap between expectations and reality is significant: Only 19 percent state that the efficiency of authorities and offices is as high as that of businesses. Citizens who are satisfied with digital services rate their efficiency slightly better (26 percent), but even among these generally satisfied individuals, few believe that authorities and offices can match the efficiency of the private sector. This suggests that these citizens, despite their overall satisfaction with e-government services, have higher expectations regarding their efficiency and, thus, the performance of the administration, which are currently not being fulfilled.

E-government offers a real opportunity: While the majority of citizens (64 percent) find contact with authorities and offices to be exhausting (with a rising trend: +5 percentage points), 71 percent see a real advantage in the digital approach compared to the analog approach. Additionally, there is broad support (68 percent) for the idea that the state should strategically use new technologies to increase efficiency (see chapter on Artificial Intelligence »Page 40).

The public's perspective reveals a reassuring trend in many areas in their assessment of the state compared to the previous year, which aligns with some positive signals from the situation report (see Chapter 2: Situation Report on e-government »Page 16). It shows that the progress of administrative digitalization is slowly reaching citizens. Overall, more people in Germany now consider the work of authorities and offices as efficient as that of businesses (19 percent, +6 percentage points). This is accompanied by more people than in 2023 feeling that the state makes their lives easier (16 percent, +4 percentage points). Although these results still leave much room for improvement, the development is heading in the right direction. Along with the cautiously growing confidence that the state could manage the digital transformation in the next three years (29 percent, +3 percentage points), this suggests that the investments and efforts of recent years are starting to yield positive outcomes. These efforts must be continued and intensified.

19%

»Public authorities and offices work at least as efficiently as commercial enterprises.«

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)

PARTNERS

Efficient digital administration: The bulwark of our democracy



A modern, digital administration has never been as important as it is today. Fewer and fewer citizens trust the state. At the same time, it has been proven that people who are satisfied with digital government services rate the state's performance higher. The enemies of our democracy exploit dissatisfaction with the authorities to undermine our state. To counter this, we need an efficient digital administration. The digitalization of public administration can and must make a decisive contribution to increasing citizens' trust in the state, and, thus, protecting our democracy.

Corinna Krezer, Managing Director at Accenture, Head of Health & Public Service DACH and Europe

Barriers and drivers for the use of e-government

 **52%**
state as a reason against (more intensive) use of online services that they would have to identify themselves digitally.

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)

Lack of continuity remains the biggest obstacle for the use and satisfaction of the population with e-government services (57 percent). [↘ Fig.04](#) This is hardly surprising, as the expectations of the population are strongly shaped by their experiences with private sector offerings. Especially digital natives view incomplete digital processes as the biggest obstacle, as they are accustomed to seamless workflows in their other digital experiences (Gen Z: 63 percent, Gen Y: 62 percent). [↘ Fig.05](#)

Lack of continuity can arise, among other reasons, because digital identification is required but fails, either because it has not yet been implemented in the process or because citizens have not yet adopted the eID. The failure of digital identification itself represents the second-largest barrier to using e-government services (52 percent). This underscores the importance of the eID as a key digital infrastructure component for the success of administrative digitalization. These results provide further evidence that digital services are well accepted and used when they are easy to use and offer a clear advantage compared to analog services, such as time savings or reduced effort.

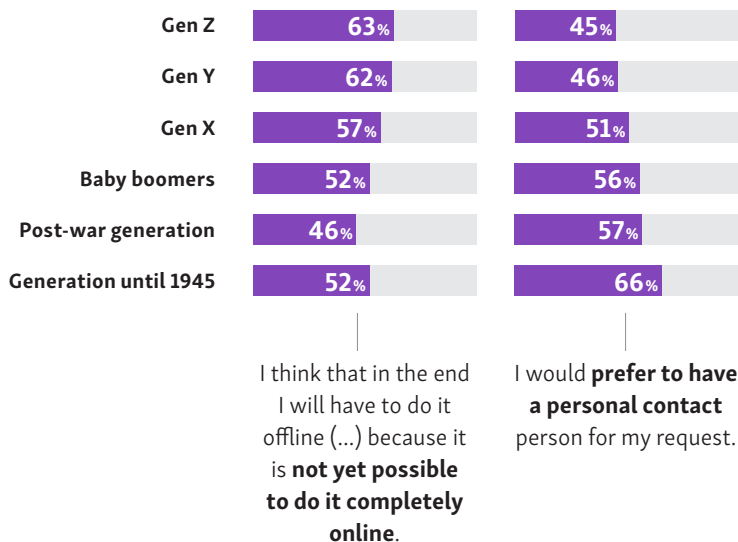
The third-largest barrier for e-government usage is that many people prefer to handle administrative matters in person. However, once someone uses an online service for the first time, this barrier decreases significantly. For years, the eGovernment MONITOR has shown: Those who have used e-government services once typically want to use them again in the future. 9 out of 10 who have used administrative services online would use them again.

42 percent of citizens say they do not know if a particular service is available online. 38 percent have difficulty navigating the corresponding websites. And 66 percent would prefer the government to proactively inform them, rather than having to search for information themselves. For all these reasons, it is important to better inform the public about digital services and make them easier to find.

Only 32 percent of the population consider digital government services to be less reliable than going to the office in person. This concern is less widespread than other barriers.

► Fig. 05: Selected barriers by generation

QUESTION: Which of the barriers listed below generally prevent you personally from using online government services (more intensively)?
BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); Top3 (strongly agree / agree / rather agree)



PARTNERS

The click must be easier than going to the office

Citizens do not want countless points of contact: They want transparent procedures, the use of existing data, and, in particular, a central platform for digital administration. Together with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, we are working on such a central point of contact, the Federal Portal, thus bringing more speed to the digitalization of administration.

*Dorothea Schneider, Senior Solution Manager
Digital Government, Bundesdruckerei GmbH*

47%

»A central platform would encourage me to use (more) government services digitally.«

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)

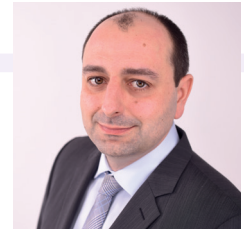
The three main reasons why more people would use e-government services are related to the ease and speed of access to services, as well as applying for and receiving benefits: [v Fig.03](#)

Most citizens desire a central platform (47 percent) where all necessary digital government services are bundled. Especially those who are currently dissatisfied would be motivated to use e-government services through such a centralized access point (57 percent).

The second most important motivation factor is the faster receipt of services compared to the analog approach, for example, when applying for a passport or citizen income (46 percent). Even among the dissatisfied, this is an important driver, with 56 percent stating it as important. For Generation Y, the fast receipt of services is even the most important reason (49 percent), followed by a central platform (46 percent) and the easy processing via app (43 percent).

The third most important motivation factor is personalization (42 percent). Citizens do not want to re-enter their data every time, but instead wish for the administration to reuse previously entered data.

EXPERTS



Citizens must feel that the state actively addresses their needs

The results of the eGovernment MONITOR complement those of our study: Increasing dissatisfaction with state institutions undermines trust in democracy. However, when state institutions are efficient and adaptable, frustration decreases, and trust in democracy increases. The digitalization of administration can make an important contribution here, with the indirect effect being more important than the direct one. Our study was less about citizens directly benefiting from political measures and more about the perception that the state is actively addressing their concerns. Therefore, it seems crucial to me that digitalization increases the efficiency of administrative processes. This frees up personnel resources, which can then be used to strengthen communication with citizens and handle their concerns more quickly and targeted – even in analog form.

The majority firmly supports the liberal-democratic constitutional order.

In light of the diminishing trust in the state, I think it is important to emphasize that the majority of the population still firmly supports the liberal-democratic constitutional order. While efforts are focussed on addressing frustrated citizens, this majority must not be overlooked. In order to maintain and regain trust, institutions must be responsive. This means they need to be easily accessible to citizens, open to their concerns, clear in their communication, and transparent in their decision-making processes. Simply establishing objective proximity to citizens, such as by creating the technical prerequisites for online submissions, is not sufficient. Much more important is the perception of proximity to citizens, meaning the feeling that the state is there for me personally. The digitalization of administrative processes can enable government agencies to respond more flexibly and quickly to citizens' concerns. Key factors are user-friendliness, comprehensibility, and functionality of digital services.

Dr. Robert Gold

Deputy Head of Research Area
(Innovation & International Competition)
Kiel Institute for the World Economy

You can find the full interview via the QR code.



Situation Report per Federal State

Federal states special
► Page 27

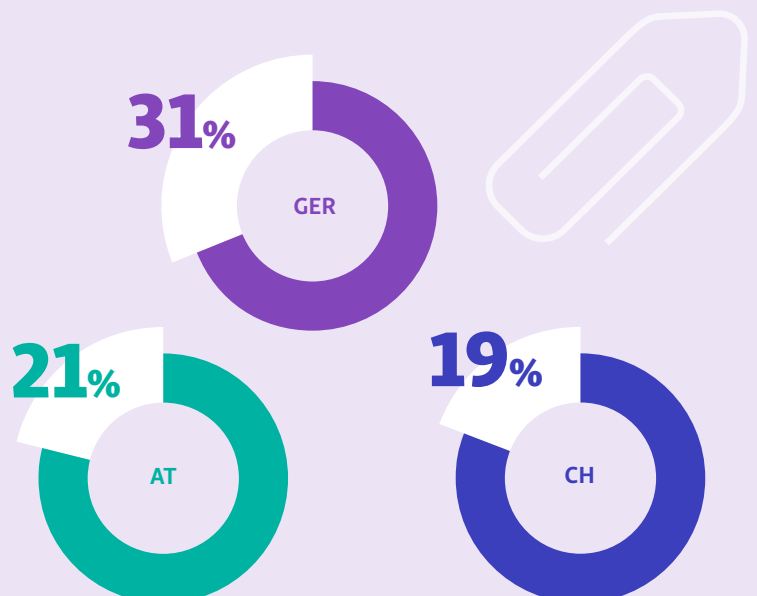
Situation report on e-government

RELEVANCE

Public administration needs to modernize to keep up with the increasing demands of the population. Citizens expect to be able to use public services digitally as easily as they do in their daily lives. The shortage of skilled workers and increasingly complex tasks also require greater efficiency. To ensure the success of this digital transformation, barriers to acceptance and use must be removed. This starts with the awareness and discoverability of the required services, extends to seamless digital processing, including the ability to identify oneself digitally, and ends with straightforward communication with authorities about the status of a request. Digital administrative services have the potential to make life easier for all involved. However, they must be developed according to the needs of the target audience.

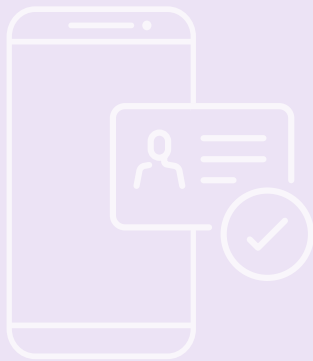
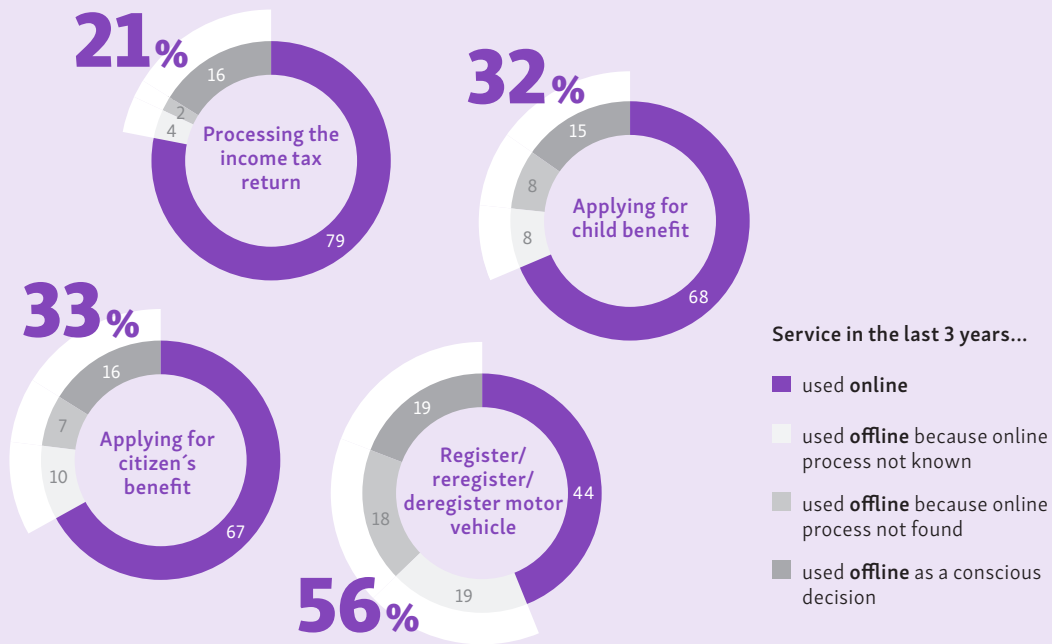
► Fig. 06: The digital usage gap (12 months)

QUESTION: Have you had a request in the last 12 months for which you needed an office or authority? Did you deal with this partially or completely online? | BASIS: All respondents with a general need for government services in the last 12 months - GER (n = 5,922); AT (n = 724); CH (n = 705); No time comparison due to new question (see info box p. 25)



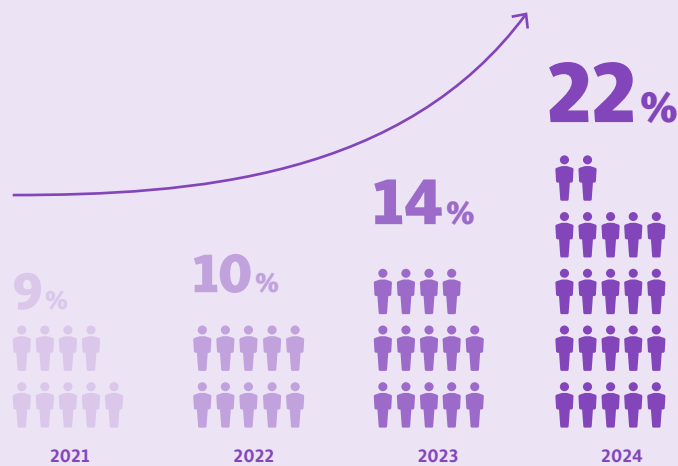
► Fig. 07: Utilization gap of individual services

QUESTION: In the last 3 years, have you done ... (all or part of your work) online?
 If offline: To your knowledge, is it possible to do this online? If not: What applies to you? -
 I have not yet looked for an online option. / I have already looked for an online option, but
 have not found anything. | BASIS: All respondents who have needed this service in the last
 3 years (GER); figures in percent; deviations from 100% due to rounding



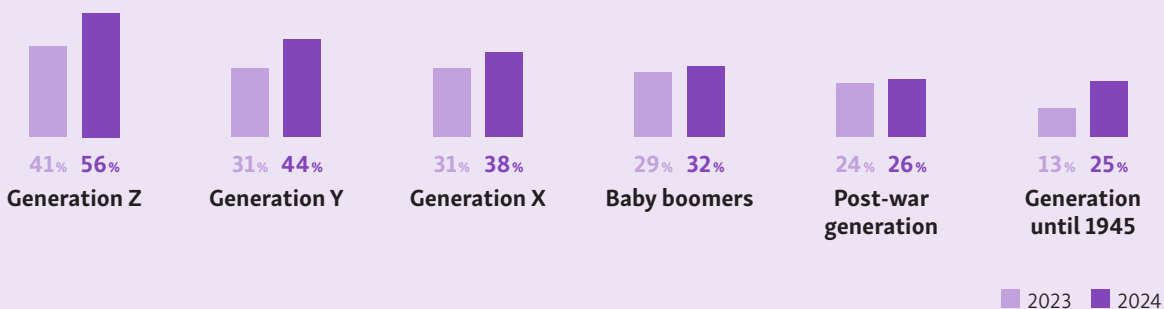
► Fig. 08: Use of eID

QUESTION: Have you ever used your eID?
 BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card - GER (n = 7,471)



► Fig. 09: Readiness to use the eID by generation

QUESTION: Is your eID ready for use? (Note: You must have set your own PIN for this.) | BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card - GER (n = 7,471)



eID as a trust anchor

56% ⁺¹⁵ 

of Generation Z have a ready-to-use eID.

BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID in Generation Z - GER (n = 676); deviations from the previous year in percentage points

Basic requirement: readiness to use

The German government emphasizes the importance of a state digital identity in several areas in its Digital Strategy: On one hand, it is a practical prerequisite for a variety of e-government services, and on the other hand, it is a trust-building element in the relationship between the population and the state. This justifies the call that providing 'secure and user-friendly digital identities' (see the Digital Strategy of the German Government, p. 11) is a core responsibility of the state.

Practice also shows that the ability to identify oneself digitally is a central component of many digital administrative processes and significantly influences their use. For example, 24 percent of

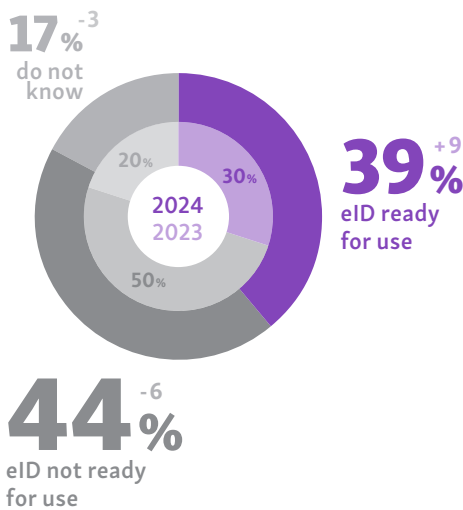
citizens have already abandoned an online procedure because digital identification was required. One in two perceives the need to authenticate digitally as an obstacle to a (more extensive) use of e-government services.

Since the introduction of the ID card in credit card format in 2010, a chip has allowed citizens to digitally identify themselves via the online function. Since 2017, this function has been automatically activated in all valid ID cards, and to use it, only a personal 6-digit PIN needs to be set. While the chip is embedded and active in every ID card, the PIN needs to be actively set by the cardholder. The eID card is only ready for use after completing this step, which was the case for only 30 percent of the population in 2023. However, interest is clearly increasing: This year, the share of people with a ready-to-use ID card is at 39 percent. [↘ Fig. 10](#)

This upward trend is evident across all generations, particularly in the digitally-savvy younger generations Z (+15 percentage points) and Y (+13 percentage points). In Generation Z, for the first time, more than half of the IDs are ready for digital use. But even the oldest generation (born before 1945) has made significant progress, with an increase of 12 percentage points to 25 percent compared to the Baby Boomers and the post-war generation. [↘ Fig. 09](#)

 **52%**
give as a reason against (more intensive) use of online services is that they would have to identify themselves digitally.

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)



► Fig. 10: Readiness for use of the eID

Is your eID ready for use? (Note: You must have set your own PIN.)
BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card - GER (n = 7,471); deviations from the previous year in percentage points

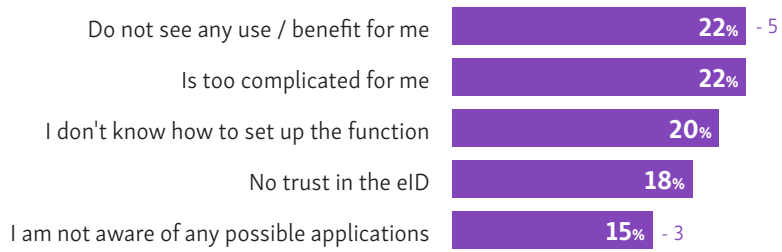
PARTNERS

Strengthening trust – now

Germany's eID card is considered one of the safest systems worldwide and will form the basis of Germany's EUDI wallet. Close dialogue with citizens remains essential to strengthen trust in the eID card through transparency about use cases, comfort, and security mechanisms. Only by prioritizing user-centricity can we achieve widespread adoption.

Sandra Bauer, Director at Capgemini Invent Germany

Top 5 reasons not to have a ready-to-use eID



► Fig. 11: Barriers to operational readiness

QUESTION: Why is your eID not ready for use?
BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card for whom the eID is not ready for use - GER (n = 4,616); deviations from the previous year in percentage points

Positive changes can also be observed among those who have not yet set a PIN for their eID: Fewer people than last year believe that they cannot benefit from their eID. A lack of application possibilities is also mentioned slightly less frequently as a reason why the online function is not yet ready to be used. ▼ Fig. 11 The efforts of recent years to create use cases seem to be having a noticeable impact, leading to increased interest and higher willingness to use the service, which is also positively reflected in actual usage numbers.

Increase in eID usage

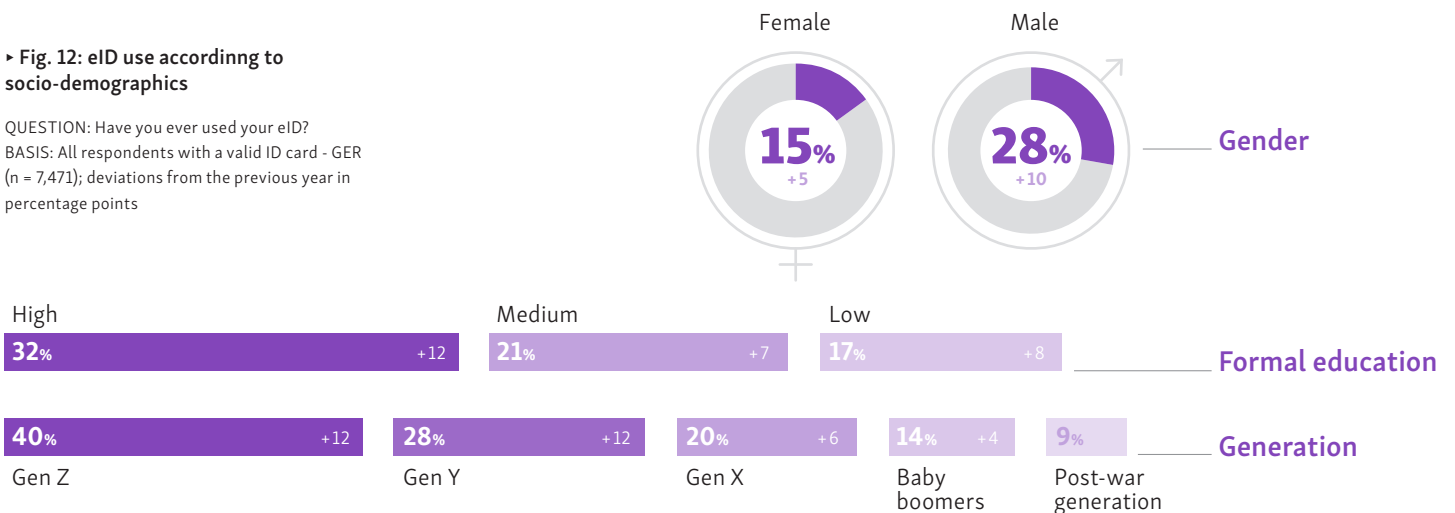
The use of the eID is gaining significant momentum this year, after having increased only slowly in previous years. The proportion of German identity cardholders actually using their eID has risen from 14 percent last year to 22 percent. ▼ Fig. 08 This is the largest increase in usage rates since the beginning of measurement for this indicator. Notably, the increase in usage is evident across all population groups.

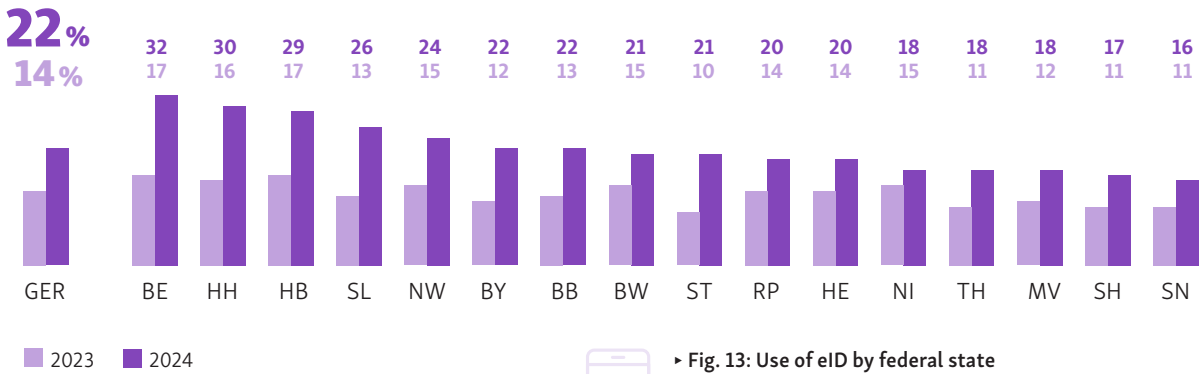
However, regional and sociodemographic differences persist: ▼ Fig. 12 Gender, age, and education continue to influence the use of the eID, and even more so than in the previous year. Users tend to be younger, formally higher educated, or male. These groups are generally more digitally savvy and therefore use digital services more frequently. This means that not all population groups are yet able to use the eID, an essential prerequisite, for accessing digital administrative services.

Significant differences are also evident across the federal states, particularly between city-states (31 percent) and rural states (21 percent). The gap between individual states is also widening, now ranging from 15 percent (Saxony) to 32 percent (Berlin). ▼ Fig. 13

► Fig. 12: eID use according to socio-demographics

QUESTION: Have you ever used your eID?
BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card - GER (n = 7,471); deviations from the previous year in percentage points





► Fig. 13: Use of eID by federal state

QUESTION: Have you ever used your eID?
BASIS: All respondents with a valid ID card - GER (n = 7,471);
Figures in percent

The proportion of non-users of the eID remains high at 78 percent. To encourage these individuals to use the eID, they primarily need to be motivated to activate it by setting a PIN (see above). Simultaneously, existing usage barriers need to be removed, as 17 percent of German ID cardholders have set up a PIN but do not (yet) use their eID. The biggest obstacle for this group is a lack of or unfamiliarity with application possibilities. Although this issue has improved compared to the previous year, it is important to monitor how trust in the eID develops, as there has been a slight increase in mistrust as a usage barrier by 3 percentage points compared to the previous year.

The possibility of using the eID on mobile devices is an important opportunity: The smartphone is the clearly preferred interface over the card reader for 84 percent of users, and the trend is rising. However, this also presents a significant barrier: Only 37 percent of ID cardholders (including eID users) are aware of the option to use the eID with a smartphone.

But interest in mobile identification is generally very high. More than half of the population supports a unified ID solution on smartphones for all areas of life (also beyond public administration).

This high level of support is likely related to the everyday reality of many citizens: 37 percent already use a wallet app on their smartphone, with a clear upward trend (+9 percentage points compared to 2023). Such everyday experiences shape the expectations citizens have of public administration (see Chapter 1 "State Efficiency" [Page 10](#)).

Current role of the BundID

The BundID (which has already been announced to be renamed to 'DeutschlandID') serves as a central user account for digital government transactions and also relies on the eID. It is one of four authentication methods available there.

55%

»I would like it (very) much if I could identify myself everywhere* with my ID card on my smartphone in future.«

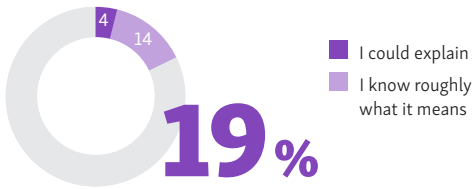
BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108);
* e.g. fitness studios, health insurance companies, public offices and authorities, libraries, universities

PARTNERS

Making the eID successful together

The currently low usage of the eID is not due to a lack of interest from citizens, but rather a result of insufficient use cases in administration and business. Without an increase in use cases, the eID will remain underutilized in the coming years. It is high time to make the eID mandatory in all relevant areas and finally unlock its full potential.

Christiane Fritsch, Tribe Lead Digital Leadership, ING Germany and Vice President, Initiative D21



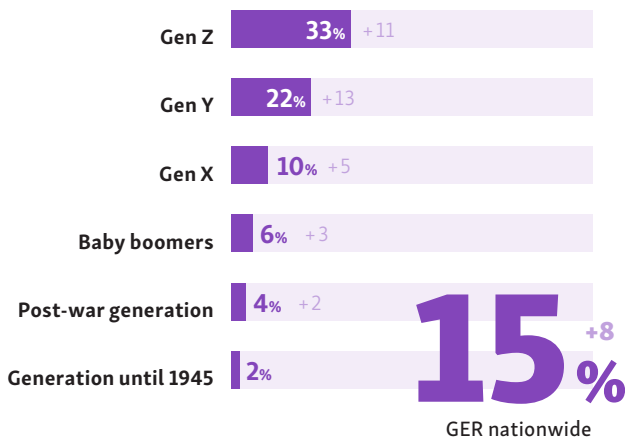
► Fig. 14: Knowledge of the term "BundID"

QUESTION: How well do you know the term "BundID"?
 BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); figures in percent; deviations from the total due to rounding

Only 19 percent of people can explain the term "BundID" or have a general idea of what it refers to. ◀ Fig.14 However, the low level of awareness is actually advantageous for the planned rebranding to 'DeutschlandID'. Usage is modest at 15 percent but has increased by 8 percentage points compared to 2023. This increase is particularly noticeable in Generation Z, with one in three persons having already used it (+11 percentage points).

◀ Fig.15 The boost likely triggered by the energy price allowance last year seems to be continuing.

From the perspective of citizens, the most important reason for using the BundID is the exchange of documents with authorities (44 percent). Almost as important, at 40 percent, is the one-time login that automatically identifies users for all subsequent administrative transactions and transmits their data. For all motivators, there is a significantly higher agreement among those with higher formal education. In contrast, those with lower formal education are disproportionately often not convinced by any of the motivators to use the BundID (30 percent), which could be related to their generally lower affinity for e-government.



► Fig. 15: Use of "BundID"

QUESTION: Have you already used the BundID?
 BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); deviations from the previous year in percentage points



EXPERTS

In Denmark, a single digital identity provides access to over 2,000 services – both public and private.

The acceptance of digital identities in Denmark is based on a user-centered model that combines high security, data protection, and intuitive usability. The MitID system, developed by Nets, allows access to over 2,000 public and private services through a single digital identity, making citizens' daily lives more convenient. The integration into many areas of life, along with comprehensive information campaigns, strengthens trust in digital identities and promotes their use. This positive experience demonstrates how digital identities can simplify life.

For a unified digital market in Europe, we need to collaborate interdisciplinary and across borders.

For Germany, improving user-friendliness, introducing mobile solutions, and expanding application possibilities are crucial to increase the use of the eID function. Public relations work for education and incentives can raise awareness and interest among citizens. Additionally, it is important to offer training programs to help citizens become familiar with digital services.

The challenges posed by the eIDAS regulation and the introduction of the EUID-Wallet require interdisciplinary collaboration and international exchange of best practices. Overall, the digital transformation presents opportunities for creating a unified digital market in Europe that makes transnational services simpler and safer. All member states could benefit from this progress. We can only strengthen trust in digital identities and lay the foundation for a successful digital future through innovative solutions that focus on citizens' needs.

Roland Eichenauer

Vice President of Sales and Business Development, Nets DanID

You can find the full interview via the QR code.

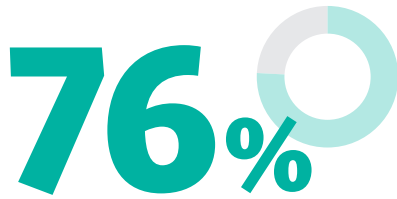


PARTNERS

Austria is solidifying its leading role in the field of mobile government through the expansion of digital IDs

The Austrian digital identity, ID Austria, provides secure identification and authentication for digital services through the 'Digitales Amt' app – anytime and anywhere. ID Austria, with the 'eAusweise' app, enables digital IDs. As of August 2024, around 600,000 digital driving licenses, 265,000 digital age certificates, 500,000 digital registration certificates, and nearly 100,000 digital identity verifications are in use.

Claudia Plakolm, State Secretary for Digitalization, Youth, and Civil Service in Austria



76%
of Austrians have an idea of what the ID Austria is.

BASIS: All respondents - AT (n = 1,005)

Digital identification in Austria

At the end of last year, Austria officially completed the transition for digital identification from the smartphone signature to the ID Austria. Three-quarters of the Austrian online population aged 16 and older know what the term refers to, or even feel confident enough to explain it.

Like its predecessor, the ID Austria enables a legally valid electronic signature, equivalent to a handwritten signature. The focus is on mobile use: it uses the fingerprint or facial recognition feature of the smartphone, or alternatively, a PIN. Options without a smartphone are also available (FIDO tokens or signature cards).

Data from the app 'Digitales Amt' (oesterreich.gv.at) clearly demonstrate the momentum the mobile use of digital identification through the ID Austria has gained: After a continuous increase in usage over the past years, there has been a significant jump this year. 57 percent of Austrians with smartphones now use the administrative app, which is 19 percentage points more than in 2023.

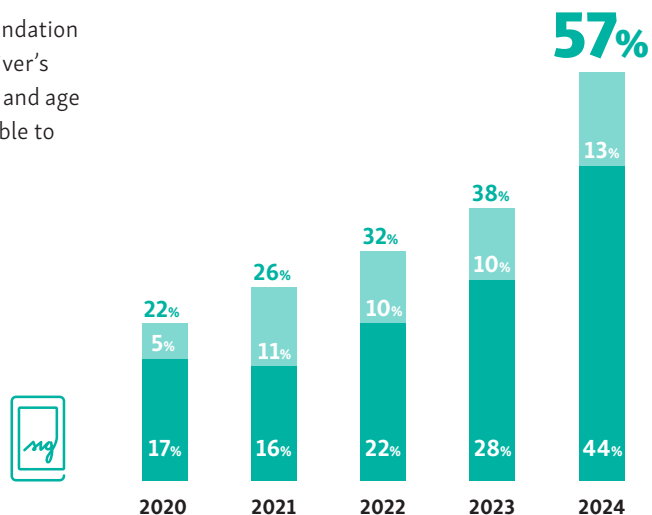
▼ Fig.16 A key driver of this growth is the 'Single Sign-On' feature.



64%
of Austrians state that they have the ID Austria, a cell phone signature or a card with activated citizen card function.

BASIS: All respondents - AT (n = 1,005)

The ID Austria serves as the foundation for digital IDs. Following the driver's license, registration certificate, and age verification, it is now also possible to digitally prove one's identity.



► Fig. 16: Use of the "Digitales Amt" app (oesterreich.gv.at)

QUESTION: Do you already use oesterreich.gv.at as an app on your smartphone? | BASIS: All respondents with smartphone ownership - AT (n = 601)

- Yes, I use the app and have also activated the phone signature / ID Austria there.
- Yes, I use the app without activation.

Overview of usage and acceptance

Current use of e-government

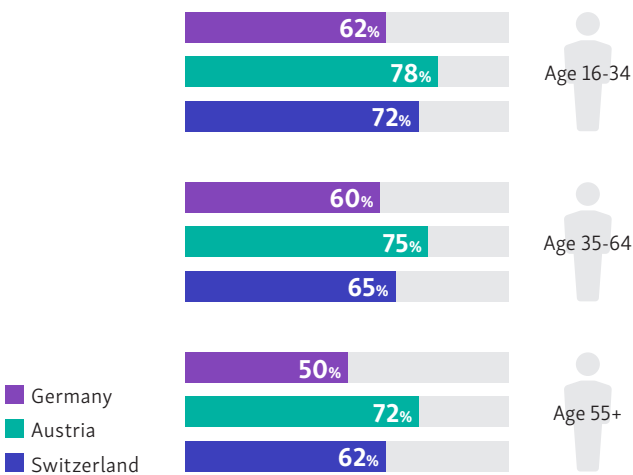
The first general indicator of the acceptance of digital administration among the population is the current use of e-government. In 2024, the proportion of people who have used e-government in the past 12 months is 56 percent, the same as last year. [↙ Fig.17](#) Thus, more than half of the population is using e-government. This was not always the case – at the beginning of the measurement in 2011, the figure was 40 percent, and it remained below 50 percent until 2019. It was only through the Online Access Act (OZG) and other measures and initiatives at both federal and state levels that a broader segment of the population was reached. While the Covid-19 pandemic certainly had an impact, it was less significant than other developments (see eGovernment MONITOR 2020 and 2021). It is striking that, in Germany, younger people (62 percent) are still more likely to engage with digital administrative services than older people (50 percent).

Austria and Switzerland are still ahead of Germany. Both countries improved compared to 2023 (AT: +5 percentage points, CH: +6 percentage points). Additionally, in Austria, the differences between age groups are much smaller than in Germany. There, e-government reaches citizens aged 55 and older (72 percent) almost as well as younger people under 35 (78 percent).

Mobile usage

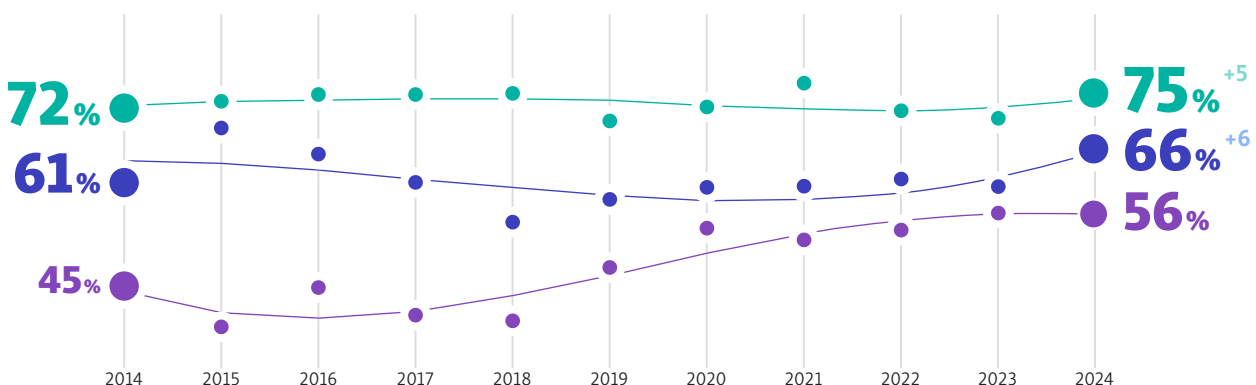
Among those who own a smartphone or tablet and have experience with e-government, 59 percent have already used digital administrative services on their mobile devices. This mobile e-government usage is significantly higher in younger age groups than in older ones. [↙ Fig.18](#) 44 percent of 16- to 34-year-olds say they would be motivated to use e-government if they could manage everything in one app. 38 percent in this age group are discouraged from using it because the services do not (or do not sufficiently) work on mobile devices (see Chapter 1 State performance [↙ Page 10](#)).

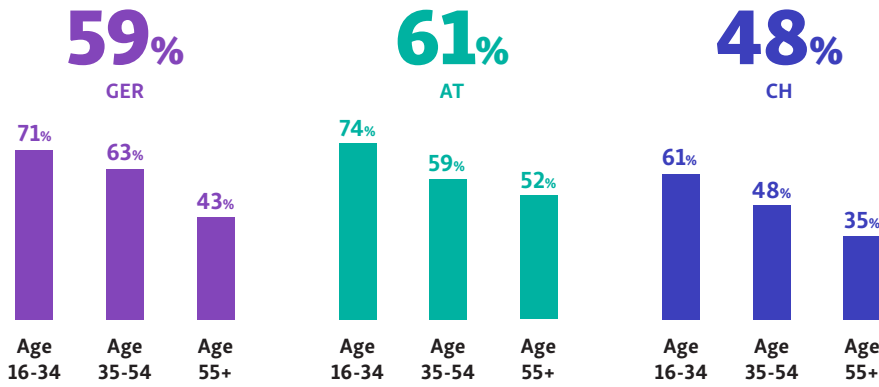
The gap between the youngest and oldest age groups in mobile e-government usage exists in all three countries – but it is particularly large in Germany, with a difference of 28 percentage points.



► Fig. 17: Current use of e-government

QUESTION: Have you used e-government services in the last 12 months? By this we mean information and services from authorities and public institutions (municipality, city, federal state) that can be used via the Internet, e.g. electronic tax returns, information on the responsibilities of authorities, downloading forms or online appointments. | BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); deviations from the previous year in percentage points





► Fig. 18: Mobile e-government use

QUESTION: Have you ever used a smartphone or tablet [in connection with an online government service]? BASIS (new!): All respondents who have already used e-government and use a smartphone and/or tablet - GER (n = 5,945); AT (n = 823); CH (n = 745); Note: No comparison to last year possible due to a changed basis.

The use of smartphones or tablets differs between the countries of the D-A-CH region (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland). In Austria and Switzerland, mobile identity verification is commonly used, while in Germany, citizens primarily use their mobile devices to prepare for personal contact with authorities. ◀ Fig.19 For example, they search for directions to the office, check opening hours or phone numbers, or schedule an appointment in person. The moderate usage rate of the eID very likely contributes to the relatively infrequent use of smartphones or tablets for identification in Germany. But the identity verification is actually an ideal application for mobile devices, given that smartphones have become the standard reading device (see subchapter 'eID as a Trust Anchor' ◀ Page 18). Ultimately, citizens in Austria and Switzerland also more frequently handle necessary activities related to an application via mobile devices, such as uploading documents or sending emails. In Austria in particular, the transition from mobile preparation to the full completion of a request via a mobile device is already part of everyday life. But in Switzerland, too, both the mobile preparation and the full processing of administrative matters are more widespread than in Germany.



PARTNERS

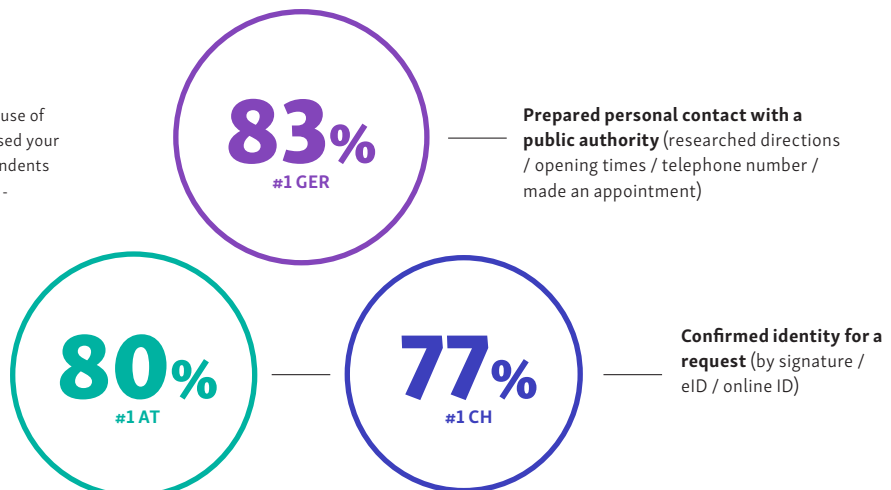
Mobile use of public administration

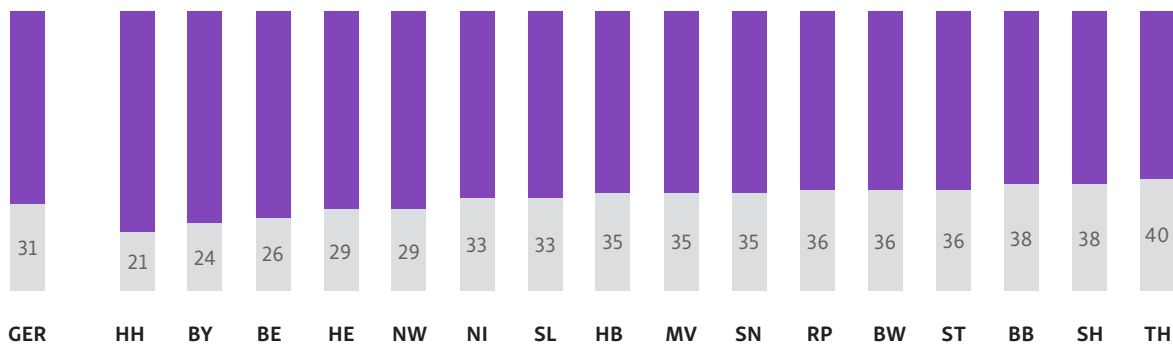
As part of e-government, the mobile use of public administration services is becoming increasingly important. Citizens want to use administrative services conveniently from anywhere, saving time and effort. With mobile applications, requests can be submitted, appointments can be scheduled, and important documents can be retrieved. These digital offers contribute to an increased efficiency and provide easy access to administrative services. The development of secure mobile platforms ensures the protection of sensitive data. Mobile services make public administration more flexible and citizen-friendly by significantly facilitating access to public services.

Juan Perea Rodríguez, General Manager & Chief Commercial Officer of Wire

► Fig. 19: Top reason for using mobile e-government

QUESTION: Please think back to your mobile use of online government services. Have you ever used your smartphone or tablet to ...? | BASIS: All respondents who have already used mobile e-government - GER (n = 3,535); AT (n = 506); CH (n = 349)





► Fig. 20: Digital usage gap in the federal states

QUESTION: Have you had a request in the last 12 months for which you needed an office or authority? Did you do this partially or completely online? | BASIS: All respondents with a general need for government services in the last 12 months - GER (n = 5,922); figures in percent, no comparison over time possible, see info box

■ Online access is used
 ■ Offline access is used: Digital usage app

Digital usage gap

The digital usage gap is a key indicator of the acceptance of digital administrative services within the population. It highlights the untapped potential of e-government and quantifies the proportion of people who have not fulfilled their administrative needs online. We differentiate between a general digital usage gap (covering all needs in the last 12 months) and a service-specific digital usage gap (related to a specific service required in the last 3 years, such as housing benefits or income tax return, see subsection Detailed Examination of Services [v Page 32](#)).

The general digital usage gap in Germany is significantly larger at 31% compared to neighboring countries Austria (21%) and Switzerland (19%)

[v Fig.06](#)



31%
 cover their need for administrative services exclusively offline.

BASIS: All respondents with a general need for government services in the last 12 months - GER (n = 5,922)

INFO

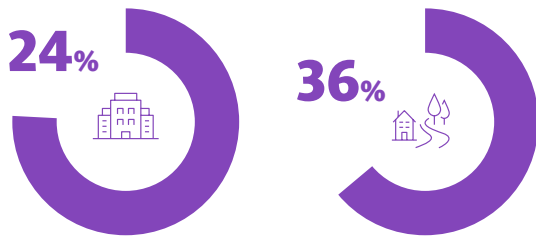
The general digital usage gap (new) celebrates its independence: Starting this year, it will be measured using new general questions that are completely independent of the annual list of surveyed e-government services. While this means it cannot be directly compared to previous years, it will be more independent and better comparable in the future. Moreover, the reference period has been shortened to the last 12 months (previously 3 years), meaning the experiences surveyed from citizens will now be more recent.

PARTNERS

Administration needs fully digitalized and automated services

Citizens will increasingly use digital administrative services if they can receive services more quickly. Therefore, we must enable the administration to perform its tasks quickly and efficiently, despite the current shortage of skilled workers. To achieve this, we need services based on the 'Administration-as-a-Service' principle: fully digital and automated solutions that cover the entire administrative process and relieve the burden on the administration.

Dr. Johann Bizer, CEO, Dataport



► Fig. 21: Usage gap in urban and rural areas

BASIS: All respondents with a general need for government services in the last 12 months - GER (n = 5,922)

A closer look shows that in Germany, the digital usage gap is not equally large across all population groups. Significant differences (up to 12 percentage points) are found depending on the level of education and income: the higher the formal education or income, the smaller the digital usage gap. Furthermore, the gap varies depending on the place of residence: residents of rural areas (36 percent) are more likely to meet their needs completely offline than residents of urban areas (24 percent). [↘ Fig.21](#) Major differences also exist between federal states: there is a difference of 19 percentage points between the smallest digital usage gap of 21 percent in Hamburg, and the largest of 40 percent in Thuringia ([↘ Fig.20](#), see also subchapter 'Federal States Special' [↘ Page 27](#)).

PARTNERS

The benchmark is no longer merely the availability of digital administrative services, but their acceptance and usage.

The digital usage gap is a key metric as it reveals whether the digital services are actually being used. Results clearly show that in order to achieve a fully digital administration, we must actively promote usage. Now more than ever, it is crucial to raise awareness of digital services, encourage first-time use, and create targeted incentives.

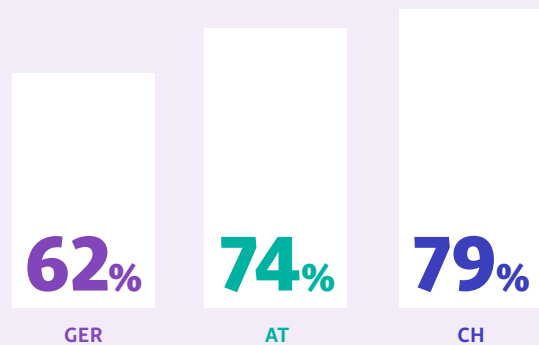
Salma Nosseir, Leadership Team Public Sector,
Cassini Consulting AG

Satisfaction

The population in Germany rates the e-government services more favorably than last year: Overall satisfaction has risen to 62 percent (+4 percentage points). In neighboring countries, satisfaction levels remain unchanged but are significantly higher than in Germany (AT: 74 percent, CH: 79 percent).

In Germany, the increase in satisfaction is particularly strong among younger generations, especially in Generation Z, whose satisfaction rose from 59 to 68 percent. This has further widened the existing gap between younger and older generations.

Overall satisfaction is an important indicator for evaluating the online services of authorities. It reflects the public's overall attitude and influences the perception of the state's performance (see chapter on Detailed assessment of services [↘ Page 32](#) and eGovernment MONITOR 2022, p. 37 ff.). Satisfied citizens are more likely to trust that the state will be able to offer all administrative services online in 3 years (39 percent), compared to dissatisfied citizens (15 percent). Satisfied citizens are also more likely to perceive the administration to be as efficient as private companies (26 percent) than dissatisfied citizens (8 percent). Last but not least, satisfied citizens more often feel that the state makes their lives easier (24 percent vs. 7 percent among dissatisfied citizens).



► Fig. 22: General satisfaction with e-government



QUESTION: If you now think of all the online services currently available in your city or municipality for dealing with public authorities online, how satisfied are you? | BASIS: All respondents who are aware of the online services of their city/municipality - GER (n = 7,087); AT (n = 925); CH (n = 924); Top3 (extremely satisfied / very satisfied / somewhat satisfied)

Federal states special

As early as 2019, the 'Equal Living Conditions (Gleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse)' commission of the 19th government of Germany acknowledged in its report 'Our Plan for Germany (Unser Plan für Germany)' that digitalization is a helpful means for achieving more equal living conditions, particularly in rural areas: 'The proximity of administrations to citizens must be ensured in structurally weak regions, for example, through digital or mobile forms' (p. 71). It further states: 'Through [...] digital administration, digitalization should/will also become tangible and beneficial for the population' (p. 69). However, whether and how this happens still varies significantly depending on the place of residence: the ease of access to digital government, the availability of services, or the simplicity and user-friendliness of digital processes differ across all federal states. Ideally, (digital) administration should make people's lives easier, regardless of where they live. The following profiles analyze the current status from the perspective of citizens and provide an overview of developments and progress. Looking at the past three years, the heterogeneous development patterns of usage across federal states are particularly noticeable. However, satisfaction presents a consistently positive picture, improving by double digit percentage points in nearly all federal states compared to 2021.

16 federal states in key figures:

Digital usage gap

Basis: Citizens with a need for an administrative service in the past 12 months, question text in Fig. 06, figures in percent, deviations from 100% due to rounding.

Mobile use of e-government

Basis: Citizens who have already used e-government and use a smartphone/tablet, question text in Fig. 18.

Satisfaction with the municipal online services

Basis: Citizens who are familiar with the online services of their city/municipality, question text in Fig. 22.

eID usage

Basis: Citizens with a valid ID card, question text in Fig. 08.

Current use of e-government

Basis: All respondents, question text in Fig. 17, figures in percent.

External Data: Population size (2023), average age (2022) (Source: Federal Statistical Office), population density (2022) (Source: Federal and State Statistical Offices)



EXPERTS

Smart regional adaptations and a stronger user focus are essential

The provision of digital administrative services in Germany is making visible progress, reflected in the increased satisfaction of citizens. These positive developments are the result of joint efforts by the federal government, states, and municipalities. However, there is still much to be done. As FITKO, we strengthen cooperation between the federal levels, on behalf of the IT Planning Council to ensure that all citizens equally benefit from the advantages of modern administration. We will particularly address the regional disparities in the availability and user-friendliness of digital administrative services.

For the success of nationwide digitalization of administration, centrally coordinated strategies, and standardized IT architectures and uniform interfaces are crucial.

This creates the foundation for solutions that address local needs and regional specifics, which are interoperable and economically sustainable.

Focusing on the user perspective even more is key. We know that only simple and barrier-free usage fosters the acceptance of digital services. By strengthening collaborations within the administration as well as with civil society actors, we can not only accelerate digitalization but also ensure that it sustainably meets the needs of citizens.

The path to a fully digitalized and efficient administration requires not only technological innovations but also continuous adaptation and the involvement of the various actors in this complex process. FITKO takes on the role of facilitator and coordinator to shape a modern, efficient, and citizen-oriented administration together with all stakeholders.

Dr. André Göbel

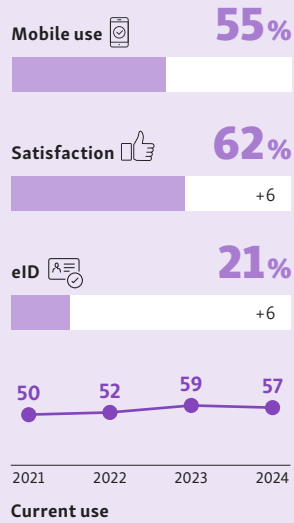
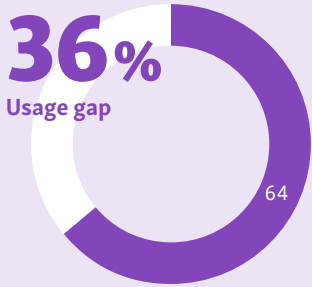
President of FITKO
(Federal IT Cooperation)

You can find the full interview via the QR code.



Baden-Württemberg

11,339,000 Inhabitants
 316 Inhabitants per km²
 Average age: 43.8

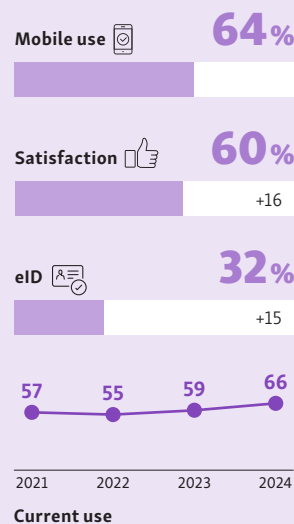
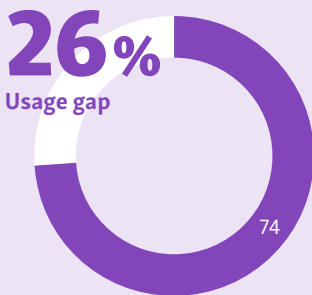


Citizens are significantly more satisfied, and the use of the eID is gaining momentum

Those who required an administrative service in the last 12 months have predominantly chosen the digital path. E-government usage in the population is slowly but steadily increasing (up by 7 percentage points since 2021). The use of the eID function has also risen in this period from 9% to 21%. Satisfaction has grown by 6 percentage points compared to the previous year, now standing at 62%.

Berlin

3,782,000 Inhabitants
 4,214 Inhabitants per km²
 Average age: 42.9

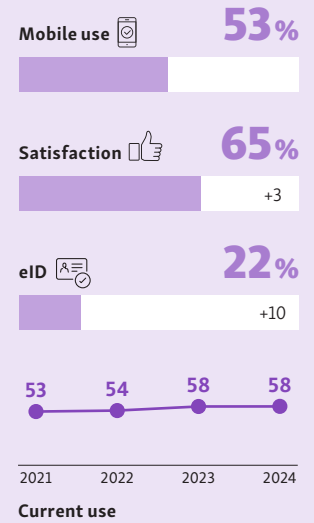
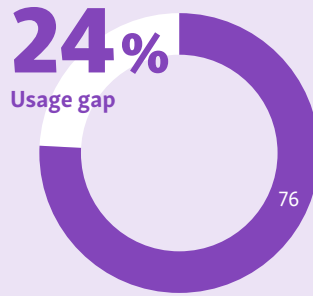


Remarkable increase in usage, satisfaction, and the eID

Over the past three years, e-government usage has increased by 9 percentage points. This means that 2 out of 3 of Berlin's residents have used e-government services in the last 12 months. When requiring administrative services, the analog path was seldomly chosen (26%). Nearly one in three residents used the eID, almost twice as many as the previous year, and 19 percentage points more than in 2021. These improvements are also reflected in satisfaction, which has risen from 44% to 60%.

Bavaria

13,435,000 Inhabitants
 190 Inhabitants per km²
 Average age: 44.2

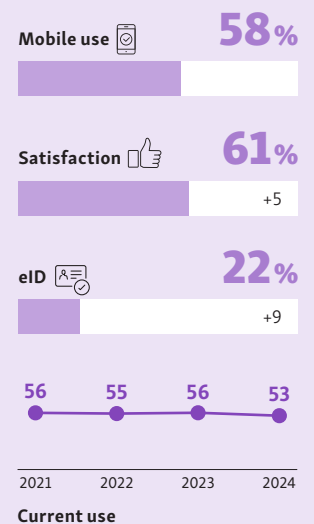
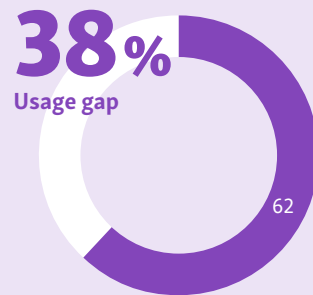


High willingness to use online services, but a restrained uptake of mobile options

The digital usage gap is low at 24%, with 3 out of 4 people having used digital services for their needs in the last 12 months. Two-thirds were satisfied with the online services, an increase of 3 percentage points. The eID is now used by 22%, compared to only 9% in 2021. However, only about half of the online users make use of mobile services.

Brandenburg

2,582,000 Inhabitants
 87 Inhabitants per km²
 Average age: 47.3

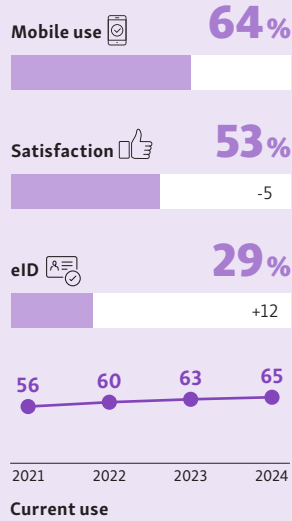
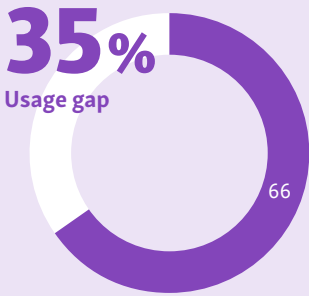


Increase in eID usage despite stagnating usage levels

E-government usage has stagnated in recent years and is now slightly declining. The digital usage gap is large: 38% still go to the office when they need an administrative service. However, mobile usage of e-government services remains high, and satisfaction with it has even increased (+5 percentage points). Additionally, more people are using the eID compared to the previous year.

Bremen

692,000 Inhabitants
1,632 Inhabitants per km²
Average age: 43.3

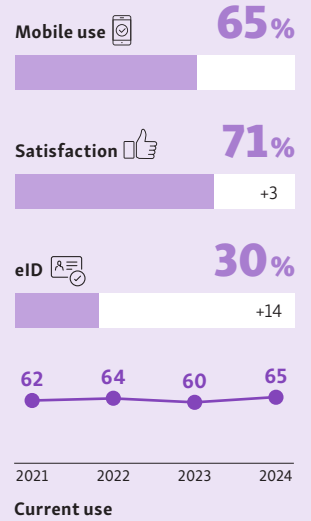
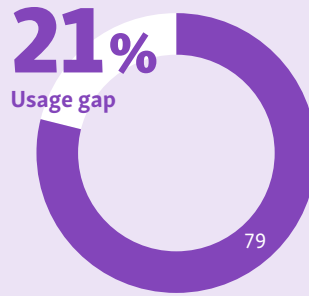


High usage and significant increase in eID usage, but declining satisfaction

The level of e-government usage has increased by 9 percentage points since 2021, now reaching 65%. Mobile usage is remarkably high, and the use of the eID has significantly risen by 18 percentage points since 2021. However, these positive developments are offset by a decline in satisfaction with the online administration services. Additionally, the digital usage gap is relatively large for a city-state.

Hamburg

1,910,000 Inhabitants
2,506 Inhabitants per km²
Average age: 42.3

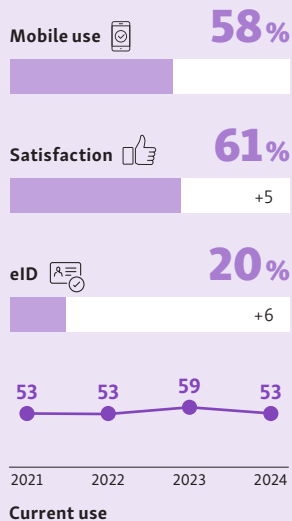
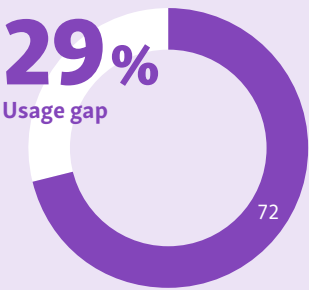


High (mobile) usage and acceptance of e-government

Two out of three residents of the city-state have used e-government services in the last 12 months. A large majority of 79% completed required administrative tasks online, resulting in a digital usage gap of only 21%. Most users accessed services via a mobile device. The eID was used by approximately twice as many citizens as in the previous year. Satisfaction is very high.

Hesse

6,421,000 Inhabitants
303 Inhabitants per km²
Average age: 44.2

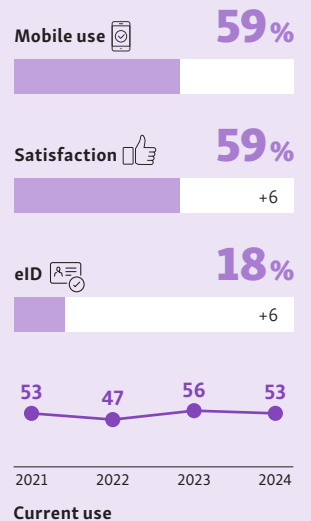
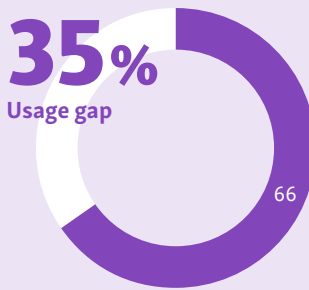


Stagnation in e-government usage despite progress in satisfaction

Following a peak last year, usage has returned to the level of 2022. However, 72% of those who require administrative services are now handling them online. Satisfaction has increased by 5 percentage points to 61%. The share of users of the eID has doubled compared to 2021, rising from 10% to 20%.

Mecklenburg Western Pomerania

1,629,000 Inhabitants
70 Inhabitants per km²
Average age: 47.8



E-government usage back to 2021 levels, but more satisfied citizens

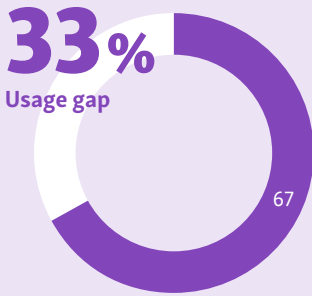
The usage does not follow a linear trend but instead fluctuates over time. Currently, one-third of the population still relies on offline channels for their administrative services. However, satisfaction with the online services has significantly increased in recent years. The use of the eID has also risen: after stagnating at 8%, it initially increased by 4 percentage points in 2023 and has now risen by another 6 percentage points to 18%.

Lower Saxony

8,162,000 Inhabitants

171 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 45



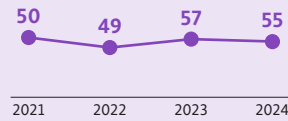
Mobile use 📱 **63%**



Satisfaction 👍 **59%**



eID 🏠 **18%**



Current use

E-government usage fluctuates over the years, and eID usage increases steadily

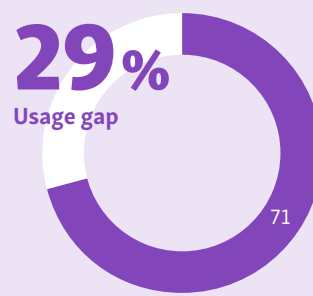
Usage has increased by 5 percentage points compared to 2021, but not continuously, unlike the use of the eID, which has steadily risen. One-third of residents still completes administrative tasks entirely offline. Those who choose to handle tasks online often do so via mobile devices. Satisfaction with the online services has decreased compared to the previous year's high level.

Nort Rhine-Westphalia

18,190,000 Inhabitants

532 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 44.4



Mobile use 📱 **62%**



Satisfaction 👍 **62%**



eID 🏠 **24%**



Current use

Usage and acceptance are slowly increasing, while the eID becomes significantly more important

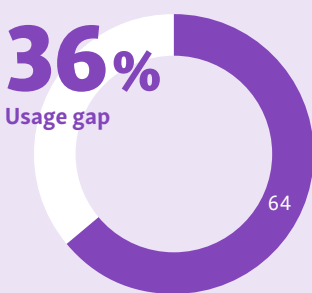
Online services are used by 71% of individuals when needed. Overall, e-government usage has slightly increased compared to the previous year, now matching the level of 2021 again. Satisfaction has risen slightly from 58% to 62%. The proportion of individuals using the eID has increased significantly, from 9% in 2021 to 24% this year.

Rhineland Palatinate

4,174,000 Inhabitants

209 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 45



Mobile use 📱 **55%**



Satisfaction 👍 **55%**



eID 🏠 **20%**



Current use

Usage Currently Declines, Large Digital Usage Gap

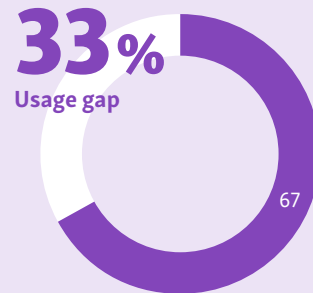
After a positive trend until 2023, usage has now returned to the level of 2022. Currently, 36% of individuals still complete their administrative tasks offline when needed. Satisfaction has not changed compared to the previous year but has seen notable improvement since 2021. The number of eID users has also increased, and is now 9 percentage points higher than in 2021.

Saarland

994,000 Inhabitants

386 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 46.4



Mobile use 📱 **61%**



Satisfaction 👍 **57%**



eID 🏠 **26%**



Current use

Significant increase in eID usage, but e-government use is declining recently

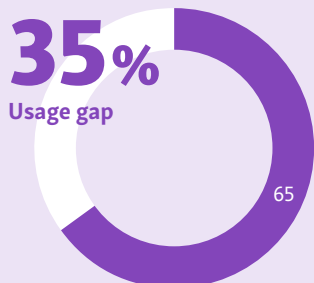
Following an upward trend until 2023, the usage of e-government services has now returned to the 2022 level (57%), but still remains above the 2021 level (50%). Satisfaction has steadily increased since 2021, now reaching 57%. A strong growth can be observed in the use of the eID: 26% have already identified themselves online, twice as many as in 2023 and more than three times as many as in 2021 (8%).

Saxony

4,089,000 Inhabitants

221 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 46.9



Mobile use **56%**



Satisfaction **63%**



eID **16%**



49 52 51 56

2021 2022 2023 2024

Current use

Usage increases more than in previous years, the digital usage gap is at 35 percent

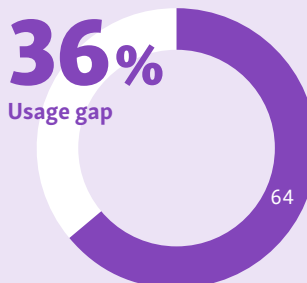
When in need of a service, only 65% of people use available online services. After initially slow growth, e-government usage has improved by 5 percentage points this year. The use of the eID has also increased (up 7 percentage points since 2021). Satisfaction has significantly increased by 8 percentage points compared to the previous year, now reaching 63%.

Saxony-Anhalt

2,180,000 Inhabitants

107 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 48.2



Mobile use **60%**



Satisfaction **61%**



eID **21%**



49 49 55 52

2021 2022 2023 2024

Current use

Significant increase in interest in the eID, little movement in e-government usage

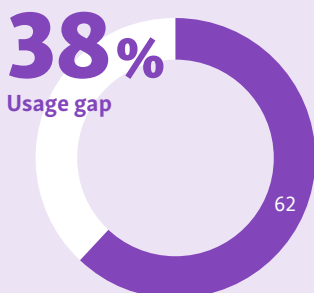
After stagnating in recent years, usage of the eID has increased by 11 percentage points this year. However, e-government usage has fluctuated around the 50% mark for the past four years, with a slight positive spike last year. Overall, a positive trend can be observed in terms of satisfaction, which has risen to 61% over the past years.

Schleswig-Holstein

2,966,000 Inhabitants

187 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 45.7



Mobile use **56%**



Satisfaction **62%**



eID **17%**



50 59 56 57

2021 2022 2023 2024

Current use

Significant increase in satisfaction, 38 percent use offline services when needed

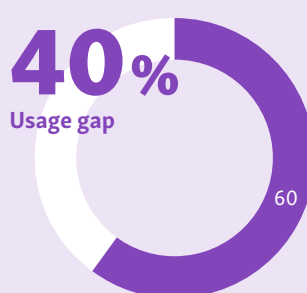
Those who needed administrative services opted for online solutions (62%), but the digital usage gap remains relatively large at 38%. The level of e-government usage had significantly increased two years ago and has since remained just below 60%. Just over half of citizens use mobile devices. There has been remarkable increase in satisfaction by 11 percentage points.

Thuringia

2,122,000 Inhabitants

131 Inhabitants per km²

Average age: 47.6



Mobile use **58%**



Satisfaction **56%**



eID **18%**



56 49 55 57

2021 2022 2023 2024

Current use

Large digital usage gap and stagnant usage, progress in the adoption of the eID

The digital usage gap is large: 2 in 5 citizens cover their administrative needs entirely offline. E-government usage stands at 57%, maintaining the same level as in 2021. Citizens' satisfaction with the services has stagnated recently, but has still improved compared to 2021. The use of the eID has increased from 7% in 2021 to 18%.

Detailed Assessment of Services

When comparing the countries of the D-A-CH region (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), a clear trend emerges: In Austria and Switzerland, significantly more citizens use online services for necessary administrative tasks than in Germany, with Austrians showing a stronger preference for online solutions. For example, in Austria, 92% of citizens file their income tax returns online, and about as many check their pension accounts online. As a result, the digital usage gap is low in both Austria and Switzerland with just 8%. In Germany, the income tax return is the most commonly used online service, but at a lower level of 79%. In Switzerland, income tax returns also reach a comparable usage level (80%), but they

are not the most frequently used service. Instead, Switzerland's citizens more commonly request criminal record certificates or debt collection records online (both at 85%).

The digital usage gap is generally composed of both online and offline users. Offline users face 3 types of problems:

1. Problem of awareness:

When in need of a service, citizens did not even search for an online solution.

2. Problem of findability:

When in need of a service, citizens searched for an online solution but could not find it.

3. Problem of conscious rejection:

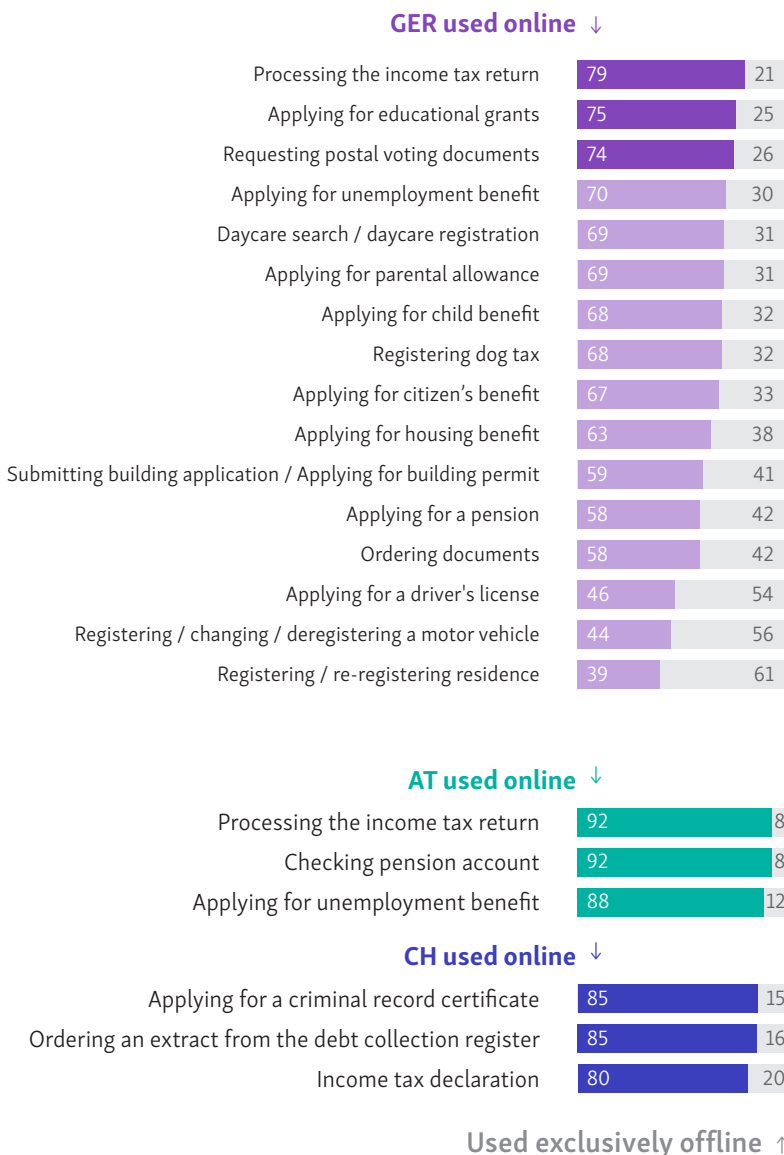
Citizens knew that the service was available online but consciously chose not to use it.

For almost all administrative services examined, conscious rejection of online solutions is the most common reason for using services offline. In other words, most offline users are aware that they could complete the task online but choose not to. Only in some cases do problems of findability (e.g., applying for a driver's license, ordering certificates, or registering a change in residence) or awareness (e.g., applying for retirement benefits) represent the biggest problem. For most services, only the combination of a lack of awareness and the problem of findability accounts for a similar share of offline use as conscious rejection.

The most frequently cited reason for consciously choosing offline services across all surveyed services is the habit of handling matters in person at the office (GER: 43%, AT: 47%, CH: 46%). Other reasons include the fear of making mistakes online (GER/CH: 21%, AT: 15%) and the complexity of the online process (GER: 18%, AT: 17%, CH: 14%), but these are far less frequent than the reason of habit.

► Fig. 23: Online use of services - GER

QUESTION: Have you ... done all or part of your work online in the last 3 years?
BASIS: All respondents who had a need for this service in the last 3 years; figures in percent, deviations from 100% due to rounding



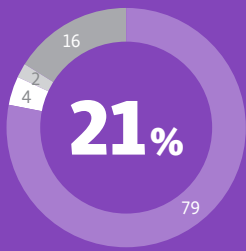
► Fig. 24: Online use of services - Top3 AT and CH

Have you ... done all or part of your work online in the last few years? | BASIS: All respondents who had a need for this service in the last 3 years (AT or CH); figures in percent; deviations from 100% due to rounding

Processing the income tax return



Usage gap

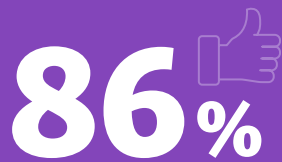


Service in the last 3 years...

- Used online
- Used offline because online process not known
- Used offline because online process not found
- Used offline as a conscious decision

QUESTION: see Fig. 07 | BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 4,066); figures in percent; deviations from 100% due to rounding

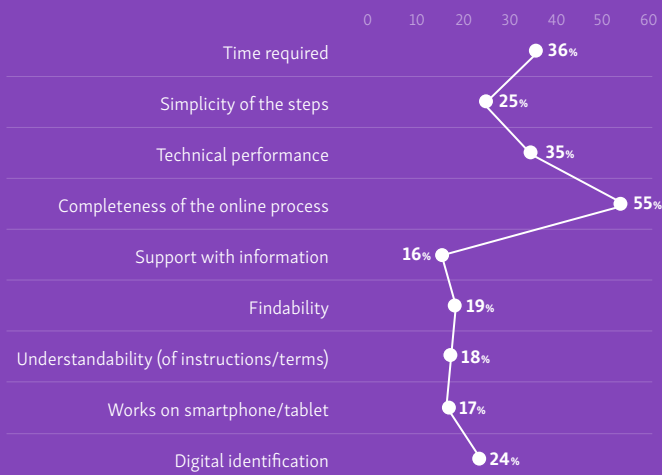
Overall satisfaction



of people who have completed the process online in the last 3 years were (very) satisfied with it

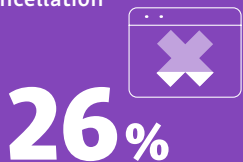
BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 2,548)

Aspects of satisfaction



QUESTION: Which 3 aspects were you most satisfied with? | BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 2,548)

Cancellation



...have tried to complete the process online in the last 3 years, but had to cancel. Main reason: 'I didn't have all the required documents available digitally.'

BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 4.066)

Future use



of offline users would like to apply for the service online in the future.

BASIS: Offline users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 829)



of online users would apply for the benefit online again next time.

BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 3,237)

The **income tax return** is the most frequently used online administrative service among the services surveyed in Germany. Accordingly, the digital usage gap is relatively low at 21 percent. No significant differences could be observed between socio-demographic groups.

Problem of awareness: Only 4 percent believe that online processing is not possible. From the citizens' perspective, transparent information regarding the online services is largely available.

Problem of findability: Compared to other services, the issue of findability rarely arises with the income tax return. Very few people search in vain for an online option when needed (2 percent).

Problem of conscious rejection: The largest group of offline users (16 percent) consciously chooses not to use online services. They justify their decision primarily with the habit of handling such matters in person (43 percent). Many also cite the fear of making mistakes online (33 percent) or find the online process too complicated (31 percent).

For individuals with lower household net income, complexity is a significantly more relevant barrier (44 percent) than habit (31 percent). This highlights the need to simplify the online processing. Citizens with higher household net incomes less frequently perceive complexity as a barrier, which could suggest they can rely on alternative support such as tax advisors or private online services with an ELSTER interface.

Cancellations: 26 percent of citizens who had to or wanted to file a tax return in the last 3 years have attempted to do so online but had to cancel for various reasons. The main reason is that not all required documents were available digitally (31 percent). The high complexity also plays a role for those who cancelled – 27 percent cite this as a reason for their cancellation.

Satisfaction: The satisfaction of those who have already handled their income tax return online is very high at 86 percent. Users are particularly satisfied with the continuity (55 percent), the time required to complete the process (36 percent), and how well the system functions technically (35 percent). The greatest dissatisfaction lies in the clarity of instructions and terminology.

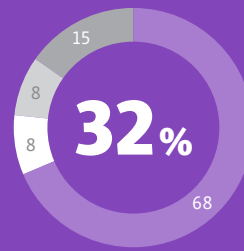
The willingness to reuse the online service stands at 97 percent and aligns with the high satisfaction level. Therefore, someone who has already completed their income tax return online wants to do so again in the future. In contrast, only 60 percent of offline users could imagine switching to the online process next time.

Conclusion: The income tax return has been available online for a long time and is familiar to many citizens. Offline users often act out of habit. The digital service could be improved through a more user-friendly design. This would help reduce the high complexity and alleviate the fear of making mistakes and their consequences. Explanatory texts and intuitive user guidance could increase acceptance and satisfaction. However, increasing the share of online users will be a long-term endeavor, because attitudes are the main barrier to online use, and these change only slowly. But positive user experiences from family, friends, and acquaintances can help, making investments in user-friendliness especially worthwhile.

Applying for child benefit



Usage gap



- Service in the last 3 years...
- Used online
 - Used offline because online process not known
 - Used offline because online process not found
 - Used offline as a conscious decision

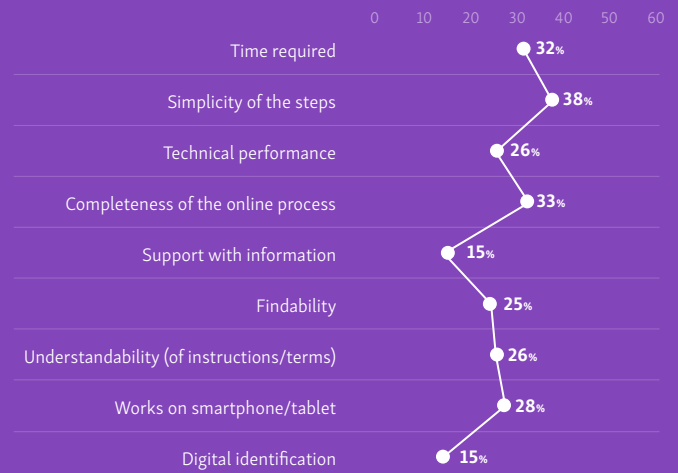
QUESTION: see Fig. 07 | BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 968); figures in percent; deviations from 100% due to rounding

Overall satisfaction



BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 474)

Aspects of satisfaction



QUESTION: Which 3 aspects were you most satisfied with? | BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 474)

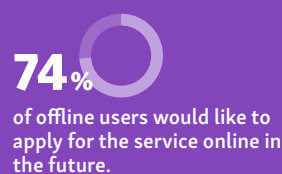
Cancellation



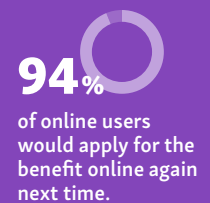
...have tried to complete the process online in the last 3 years, but had to cancel. Main reason: 'The website crashed or took too long to load.'

BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 968)

Future use



BASIS: Offline users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 314)



BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 654)

68 percent of citizens who applied for **child benefits** in the past 3 years used the online procedure (digital usage gap: 32 percent). Notably, differences between citizens with different levels of education and between households with high and low incomes are relatively small. The largest differences appear between generations, reflecting the varying needs for this service at different life stages. Significant differences also occur based on the place of residence: in urban areas (74 percent), requests are more frequently handled online than in rural areas (63 percent). Additionally, online requests are more common in western federal states (70 percent) than in eastern ones (60 percent).

Problem of awareness: 8 percent assumed that it was not possible to submit the request online.

Problem of findability: A further 8 percent of applicants searched in vain for an online option to apply for child allowance.

Problem of conscious rejection: 15 percent, or roughly half of offline users, consciously chose the offline solution.

People from rural areas prefer to submit the application in person, even when they are aware of the online option (21 percent vs. 12 percent in urban areas). Similar to the income tax return, the most common reason for consciously opting for offline use when applying for child allowance is habit (41 percent). Further reasons are a perceived high complexity (16 percent), the fear of making mistakes (15 percent), and doubts about whether the online request would even work (15 percent). These are far less commonly stated than the reason of habit.

Cancellations: In the past 3 years, 23 percent of citizens who tried to apply for child allowance online cancelled the attempt. The main reasons stated are website crashes or long loading times (26 percent), the need to continue the process offline (24 percent), or a lack of support when filling out the request (23 percent).

Satisfaction: Satisfaction among citizens who have already submitted a child allowance application online is very high at 84 percent. Users are particularly satisfied with the simplicity of the process (38 percent), the continuity (33 percent), and the time required (32 percent). Reasons for dissatisfaction are the digital identification process (28 percent), the findability of the service (27 percent), and also the time required to complete the process (26 percent).

The willingness to reuse the online service is very high (94 percent). Three-quarters of citizens who have previously submitted the application in person at an office could imagine doing so online in the future.

Conclusion: Most citizens who apply for child allowance already do so online. However, citizens in rural areas tend to continue submitting their applications offline. This could be due to fewer obstacles, such as scheduling appointments, in the administration in rural areas, and is therefore perceived as more time-efficient. The personal contact with employees at the office provides benefits that cannot always be replaced online. Online services must offer real benefits for all citizens, even in rural areas, to close the digital usage gap in child allowance applications.



PARTNERS

The people in focus

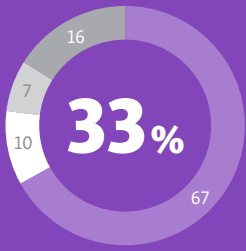
Tax, child allowance, vehicle registration: We are already well on the way to digitizing particularly relevant administrative services. However, online services that citizens cannot find or do not understand and, as a result, choose to go to the office instead, are not efficient and do not generate a digital dividend. To close such usage gaps, we must focus on users' perspective. Digitalization should not be an end in itself. At its core, it must serve the people it is intended for. Our recipe for success is to collect targeted feedback and continuously optimize our online services. This way, usage numbers of digital administration can be increased while also reducing bureaucracy. Ultimately, optimization also helps tackle the growing shortage of skilled workers.

*Dr. Fabian Mehring Member of State Parliament,
Bavarian State Minister for Digital Affairs*

Applying for citizen's benefit



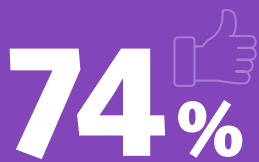
Usage gap



- Service in the last 3 years...
- Used online
 - Used offline because online process not known
 - Used offline because online process not found
 - Used offline as a conscious decision

QUESTION: see Fig. 07 | BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 1,086); figures in percent; deviations from 100% due to rounding

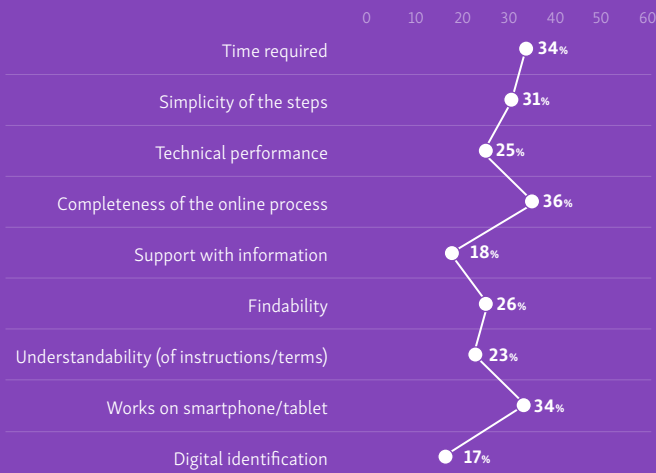
Overall satisfaction



of people who have completed the process online in the last 3 years were (very) satisfied with it

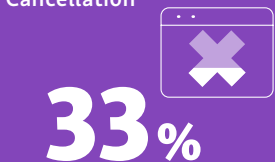
BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 492)

Aspects of satisfaction



QUESTION: Which 3 aspects were you most satisfied with? | BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 492)

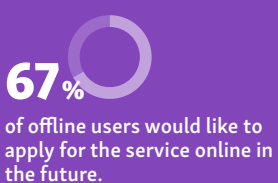
Cancellation



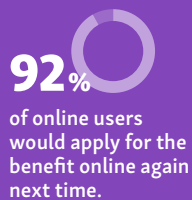
...have tried to complete the process online in the last 3 years, but had to cancel. Main reason: 'I didn't have all the required documents available digitally.'

BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 1,086)

Future use



BASIS: Offline users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 359)



BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 727)

In the past 3 years, 67 percent of applicants for **citizen's benefit** (formerly unemployment benefits II or Hartz IV) submitted their applications online. This means that one-third of applicants submitted their applications offline. There are hardly any differences between generations for this benefit, as it is not tied to a specific life stage, unlike child allowance. However, significant differences are observed for the educational level: 80 percent of those with higher formal education use the online solution, but only 62 percent of those with lower formal education. Additionally, there are differences depending on the degree of urbanization: in rural areas, only 59 percent of applicants submit their applications online, compared to 72 percent in urban areas, resulting in a larger gap in rural areas (41 percent) than in the city (28 percent).

Problem of awareness: 10 percent of benefit applicants believe that it is not possible to submit the application online. In urban areas, 7 percent do not think they can do so online. The proportion in rural areas is almost twice as high (13 percent).

Problem of findability: 7 percent of applicants have unsuccessfully searched for an online option.

Problem of conscious rejection: Nearly half of offline users (16 percent) consciously decided against applying online. The most common reason for this is habit, cited by 46 percent of



PARTNERS

The Future must be consistently digital

Comprehensive digitalization with linked registers increases completion rates and the number of returning users. For better accessibility and transparency for service users, modernized registers are necessary. Providing online forms and applications directly connected to the registers enables citizens and businesses to fully utilize administrative services digitally, improving both efficiency and quality of services. The networking of registers and online administration services is urgently needed to optimize usage and reduce cancellations due to missing digital documents.

Cornelia Gottbehüt, Head of Government & Public Sector Germany, EY

respondents. Other reasons are the fear of making mistakes (22 percent) and the perception that the application is too complicated (21 percent).

Cancellations: The online application for citizen's benefit has the highest cancellation rate among all surveyed services: 33 percent of applicants attempted to submit the application online in the past three years but had to abandon it. It should be noted that even among digitally savvy groups, such as generation Z (51 percent) and highly educated individuals (54 percent), the majority cancel the process. The most common reason for cancellation is that not all necessary documents were available digitally (27 percent). Applicants also perceive that the technical implementation is too complicated (22 percent) and complain about the lack of support when filling out the application (21 percent).

Satisfaction: 74 percent of those who submitted an application online are satisfied. They particularly appreciate the functionality on smartphones or tablets (34 percent), the continuity of the process (36 percent), and the time required to complete the process (34 percent). The importance of mobile usability is particularly notable for citizen's benefit: it is ranked among the top 3 satisfaction factors for only 3 other services (parental allowance, unemployment benefits, and address registration).

The willingness to reuse the online service is 92 percent. In contrast, only 2 out of 3 citizens who previously visited the office in person for the application could imagine submitting it online in the future.

Conclusion: Since citizen's benefit is a vital support service, it is crucial for applicants to avoid errors that could delay or jeopardize receiving the benefits. Therefore, a simple and intuitive online process, which also provides digital assistance when filling out the application, is essential. Members of this group, which mostly don't engage in paid work, often only own a smartphone and lack additional devices like a tablet, laptop, or desktop PC. Thus, it is crucial that they can easily submit the application via smartphone. Since the most common reason for cancelling an online application is the lack of digital documents, this group could be a significant target audience for the DeutschlandID, provided that it serves as a document safe and enables the exchange of documents with authorities.



EXPERTS

Usability and trust are crucial for an efficient state

Digitalization is not an end in itself, but rather an opportunity to view and redesign administration from the perspective of citizens. Usability and trust play a decisive role in how people perceive and engage with a functioning state. To achieve this, we need widespread digitalization and digital competence at all levels of government, rather than just a few flagship projects.

But we must also have the courage to bring digitalization to the fore, specifically in the practical interaction between citizens and administration. Rather than having citizens sit in front of screens while the administration operates behind the scenes, we should learn together. This will help build trust in digital processes and provide the administration with essential feedback for continuous improvement. 'Digital first' must play a central role, as evidenced by the cultural pass: the high level of acceptance results from the fact that the digital process is the only available option. Clear processes and positive experiences ensure that people embrace new approaches.

Digital transformation is not only a technological but also a social project.

In addition to habit, it is the fear of making mistakes that prevents many people from submitting applications digitally. With e-government, the state can take on a new role: The modern state does not simply manage tasks but acts in a customer-oriented and cooperative manner.

A revision of administrative language is urgently needed: citizens and the administration should speak a common, understandable language. It is also important to rethink and simplify processes, rather than just transferring them 1:1 to the digital realm.

Furthermore, I advocate for the introduction of a digital basic allowance. Around one-third of those receiving SGB II benefits do not have access to a digital device or an internet connection. In my opinion, a one-time subsidy of 400 euros, as well as a monthly allowance for access to the digital world, would be a reasonable measure.

Valentina Kerst

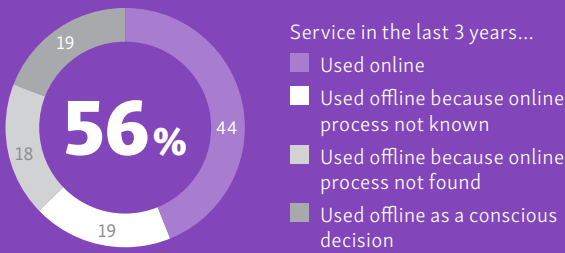
Former State Secretary and Entrepreneur

You can find the full interview via the QR code.



De-/ Re-/ Registering a motor vehicle

Usage gap



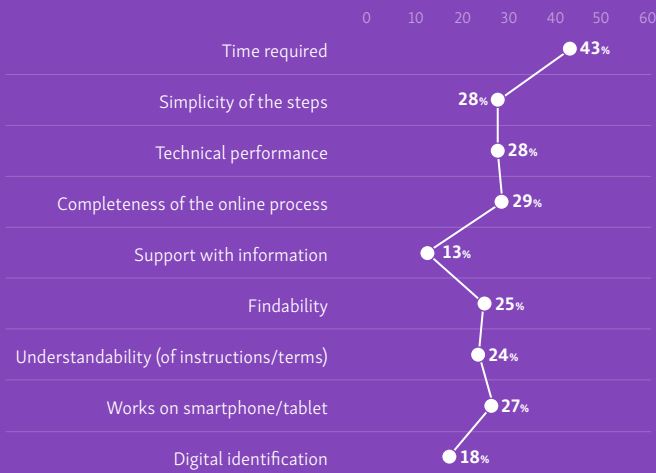
QUESTION: see Fig. 07 | BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 2,266); figures in percent; deviations from 100% due to rounding

Overall satisfaction



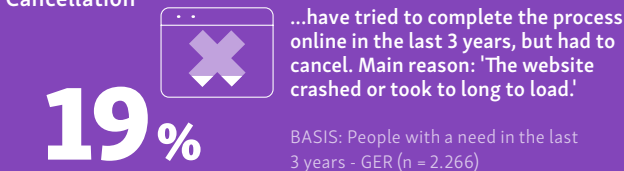
BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 675)

Aspects of satisfaction



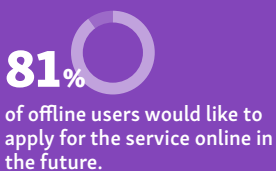
QUESTION: Which 3 aspects were you most satisfied with? | BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years (random selection) - GER (n = 675)

Cancellation



BASIS: People with a need in the last 3 years - GER (n = 2.266)

Future use



BASIS: Offline users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 1.289)



BASIS: Online users in the last 3 years - GER (n = 977)

44 percent of citizens who **registered, deregistered, or re-registered a motor vehicle** in the past 3 years did so online. This service has the second-largest digital usage gap (56 percent) of all surveyed services. Only registering or deregistering a residence is done offline more frequently (61 percent). There is a clear age gap: 'digital natives' (Gen Z and Gen Y) predominantly use the service online (51 percent each), but the percentage drops significantly after that. A slim majority of urban residents (53 percent) choose to use the online solution, while only 38 percent of rural residents do so.

Problem of awareness: 19 percent believe that it is not possible to complete this task online. This is particularly the case for people with lower levels of education (26 percent) and lower incomes (27 percent).

Problem of findability: 18 percent of applicants searched in vain for an online solution.

Both awareness and findability issues are among the most significant for this service. These issues are more pronounced only for the cases of applying for a driver's license and the registration or deregistration of a residence.

Problem of conscious rejection: 19 percent consciously decided to complete the process offline. The majority justify their decision by habit (40 percent). Other reasons are less significant: doubts about whether the online process will actually work smoothly (15 percent), the fear of making mistakes (12 percent), and a perceived high complexity (9 percent) play a smaller role.

Cancellations: The cancellation rate for vehicle registration, deregistration, and re-registration is one of the lowest among all surveyed services: 19 percent attempted to complete the process online in the past 3 years but cancelled it. More than one-quarter of 'digital natives', highly educated individuals, and urban residents cancelled the process. Again, it seems that digital-savvy groups try to use the online solution but do not complete the application with it. The most common reasons for cancellation are that the website crashed or took too long to load (20 percent), closely followed by the need for digital identification (19 percent), and not having the required documents in digital format (17 percent).

Satisfaction: Satisfaction among those who have already registered, deregistered, or re-registered a motor vehicle online is at 83 percent, and thus very high. Primary source of satisfaction is the minimal time required (43 percent). The main complaint is the difficulty in finding the service.

The willingness to reuse the online service is very high (95 percent). Additionally, 81 percent of those who have previously handled this matter in person at the office can imagine doing so online in the future. With that, the willingness to use the service for vehicle registration, deregistration, or re-registration online in the future is the highest of all the surveyed services.

Conclusion: The registration, deregistration, and re-registration of a motor vehicle stand out from other services as the majority of citizens have not yet tried completing the process online. The main reason for this is that many are unaware that the online option is now available. Even when they suspect there is an online option and search for it, their attempts are often unsuccessful. However, there is a significant willingness to use this service online. A targeted, long-term communication campaign could be crucial here. It can be complemented by ‘nudging’, meaning gentle prompts, towards the online service, for example by providing initial information during vehicle purchases or at the driver’s license office. Such measures could help more people discover and use the online service, thus narrowing the digital usage gap considerably.



PARTNERS

Forcing comprehensive mobile online usage!

When examining the digital usage gap (i.e., the use of offline instead of online services in case of need), it is evident that there is still significant room for improvement. While the top individual usage, the income tax return, is relatively high, essential services like vehicle registration remain significantly behind. In my view, the mission and vision of e-government usage should focus on enabling a comprehensive digital use of all services. Positive experiences with the use of a specific service should encourage the use of others. This requires user-friendly, intuitive applications that can be seamlessly processed, especially on mobile devices.

Ingobert Veith, Vice President, Head of Public Affairs & Communications, Huawei

INTERIM CONCLUSION

The benefits of e-government must finally become tangible

#1 The range of digital administration services is steadily growing, as is the public's expectation of administration. Citizens are accustomed to using digital services from the private sector quickly, easily, and continuously – every day and from anywhere on their smartphones. However, this is far from the case with public administration services. The habit of handling matters at the office is therefore the biggest barrier to online usage. When citizens use administrative services offline, they usually do so intentionally. For only a few services, discoverability or awareness are the biggest issues. However, when combined, they still present a central barrier to usage.

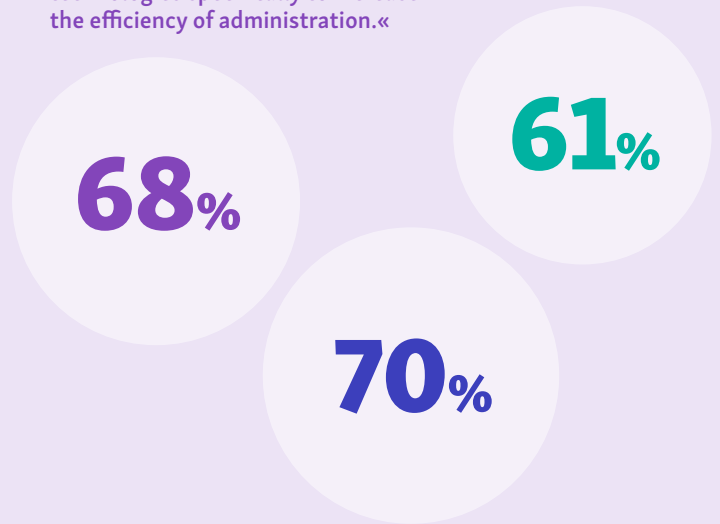
#2 So far, it has not been possible to effectively convey the benefits of e-government to citizens, even though many believe in the benefits. In Austria and Switzerland, the population is significantly more satisfied than in Germany, and the digital usage gap is smaller. Personal contact at the office offers benefits that online services have not yet been able to replace. In rural areas, going to the office can sometimes be just as fast, or even faster than using online services. Additionally, lack of information and support for digital processing reduces citizens’ satisfaction. To close the digital usage gap, the online services must provide tangible benefits for all citizens. This includes clear language, quick and easy processing, and ensuring that online services do not require offline continuation at any stage, neither for identification, signature, nor because required documents cannot be submitted online.

#3 The prerequisites for this include the widespread use of secure digital identities, interconnected registers, the consistent implementation of the Once-Only Principle, and the abolition of the requirement for written form. Citizens should perceive digital interaction with the state as a convenience, so that the digital approach becomes their new habit.

► Fig. 25: Desire for the use of new technologies

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); Top2 Box (strongly agree / rather agree)

»I expect the state to use new technologies specifically to increase the efficiency of administration.«



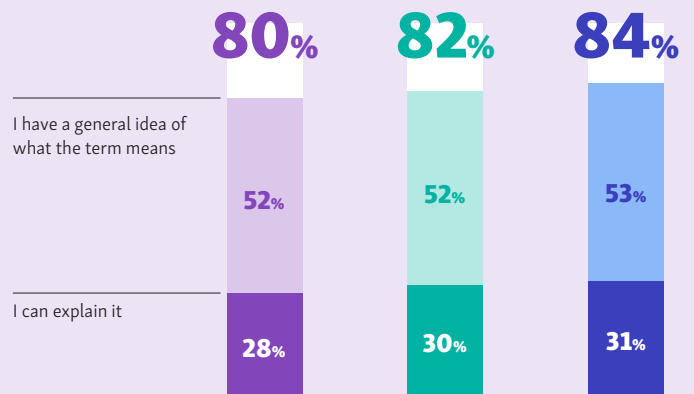
Artificial Intelligence

RELEVANCE

Efficient administrative operations are crucial for a capable state and for strengthening the democracy. Therefore, it is important to explore the use of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public administration to optimize processes. This can relieve the burden on the administration personnel and allow them to focus on more complex tasks, which is particularly important given the shortage of skilled workers. AI also allows services to be more closely aligned with citizens' needs. In order to build trust and encourage acceptance, it is essential to communicate openly about the use of AI and to involve citizens in the process. Their perspectives and concerns must be acknowledged and thoughtfully addressed to ensure the successful implementation of AI in public administration.

► Fig. 26: Knowledge of the term AI

QUESTION: How would you rate your knowledge of the term Artificial Intelligence (AI)?
BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007)



■ Germany ■ Austria ■ Switzerland

► Fig. 27: Acceptance of AI in administration

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); deviations from the previous year in percentage points; deviations from 100% due to rounding

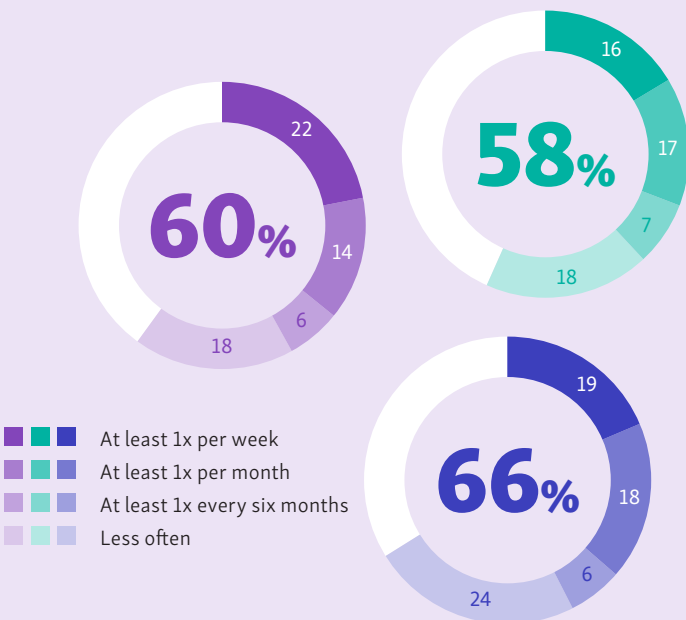
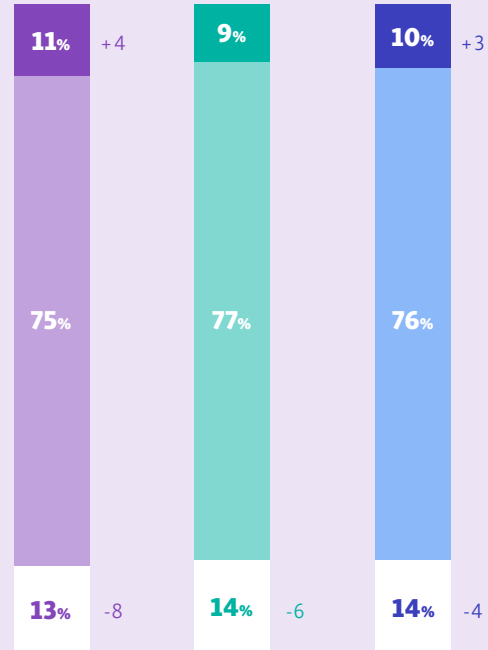
QUESTION: Imagine you send a digital application for a social benefit or pension to your authority. An AI reads the information, saves it and prepares the application for a human to make a decision. The case handler sees all the information in a well-prepared format and can make decisions more quickly. This reduces processing steps, errors and processing time.

Under what circumstances would yo agree to the use of artificial intelligence, as described above, in government services?

The **use of AI** would be fine for me in **any case**

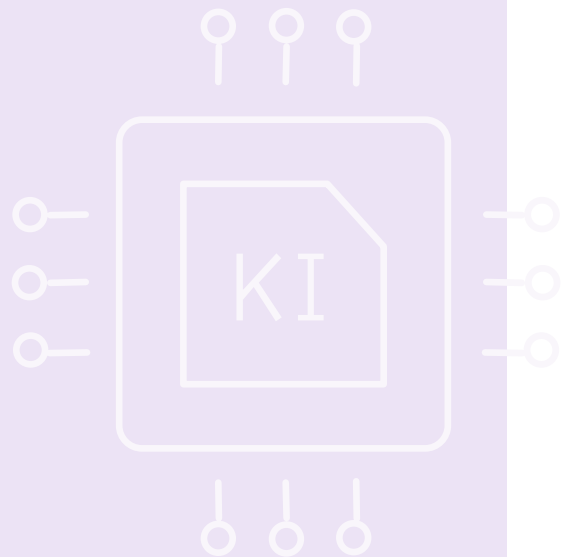
The **use of AI** would be fine for me **under certain conditions**

The **use of AI** would not be fine for me **under any circumstances**



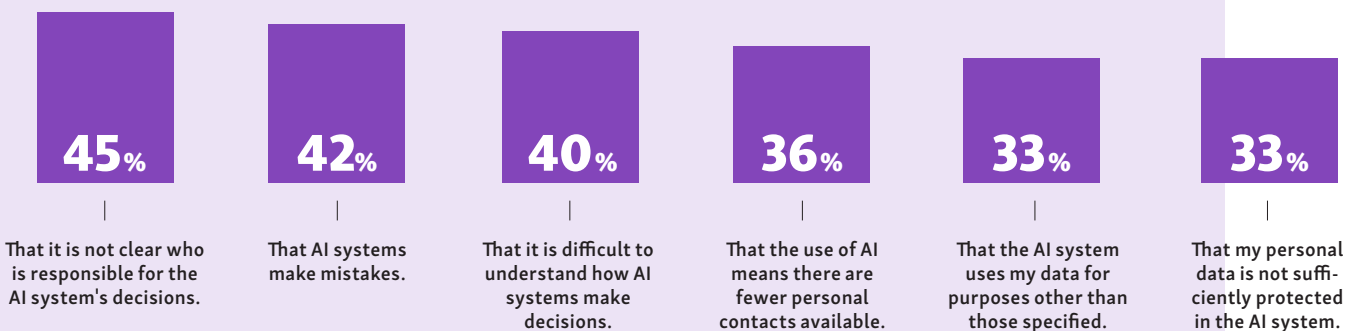
► Fig. 28: Use of AI in everyday life

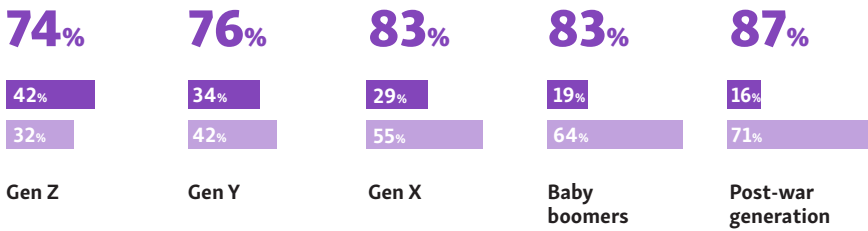
QUESTION: How often do you use AI-based solutions (e.g., voice assistants such as Siri or Alexa; chat systems such as ChatGPT, BERT or DALL-E; image recognition systems such as text recognition via the cell phone camera) in your everyday life or profession? | BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); figures in percent



► Fig.29: Concerns about the use of AI in administration

QUESTION: Where do you generally have the greatest concerns about the use of artificial intelligence in administration? Please select the 3 concerns that apply most to you. | BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)





► Fig. 30: Knowledge of the term AI by age

QUESTION: How would you rate your knowledge of the term artificial intelligence (AI)? | BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); deviations from the total due to rounding

- I can explain it
- I have a general idea what it means

What do citizens expect?

Trust in the state's performance, especially compared to the private sector, is currently not very high in Germany: only about 19 percent of citizens believe that public administration is as efficient as private companies (see chapter on the state performance [↘ Page 10](#)). Simultaneously, citizens in the 21st century expect to be able to use administrative services online as easily and conveniently as they can use those of the private sector. They experience how digital devices and applications simplify their everyday lives. Accordingly, a majority of citizens (68 percent) expects the state to use

68%
expect the state to use new technologies specifically to increase efficiency in the administration.

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)

new technologies to make administrative services more efficient. Expectations are similarly high in Switzerland (70 percent) and Austria (61 percent). [↘ Fig.25](#)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the emerging technologies currently under discussion and is already being piloted in certain areas of public administration. The following section explores how

familiar citizens already are with this technology and how they perceive its use in administration.

How familiar are citizens with AI?

Given the varying levels of development and models encompassed by the term Artificial Intelligence (ranging from 'weak AI' for specific solutions to hypothetical 'general AI'), it is important to emphasize that this inquiry is not about technical expertise. Self-assessment does not reflect actual knowledge of AI in all its complexity. Instead, the goal is to understand how familiar or unfamiliar citizens feel with this new technology.

A large majority (80 percent) state that they are familiar with the term Artificial Intelligence or at least have an idea of what it means. More than one in four citizens even feel confident explaining the term (28 percent, AT: 30, CH: 31). [↘ Fig.26](#)

This high level of familiarity suggests that the term has evolved from a technical jargon to a widely recognized buzzword: it has entered the everyday lives of citizens. Across all generations, a majority is familiar with the term. However, the proportion of citizens who feel confident enough to explain the term decreases significantly with increasing age. Generation Z feels most comfortable explaining the term (42 percent), while the post-war generation feels the least confident (16 percent). [↘ Fig.30](#)

Citizens' familiarity with AI differs significantly between those with higher formal education and those with lower formal education: 86 percent of those with higher formal education report being familiar with the term AI, and 41 percent believe they can explain it. In contrast, only 70 percent of those with lower formal education are familiar with the term, and just 18 percent believe they can explain it.



PARTNERS

Fostering acceptance and building trust!

Despite the benefits of less paperwork, faster processing, and easier decision-making, some citizens remain skeptical about the use of AI. Involving employees early in the development and implementation of AI systems helps foster acceptance. Users should have a basic understanding of how AI works, what benefits it offers, and how they can work with it. But the questions and concerns of citizens must also be taken seriously and answered transparently. As providers of AI assistants, we must be able to explain our models and curate the data basis in close coordination with the users. If we manage to remove the fears of employees and citizens and use AI assistants responsibly, they can help us achieve a more efficient administration.

Isabel Netzband, Director of Government Relations & Public Policy, Fujitsu

PARTNERS

Communicating the Benefits of AI transparently



The acceptance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in administration is steadily increasing, as more and more authorities recognize the benefits of this technology and seek to leverage it. AI applications allow an efficient, fast, and cost-effective design of numerous administrative processes, significantly enhancing the performance of government and administration. Despite the obvious benefits, challenges such as data protection, security, and employee acceptance must also be addressed. Through careful planning, transparent communication, and the involvement of employees, the advantages of AI can be leveraged while simultaneously reducing barriers. In the long term, this will lead to a more efficient, faster, and citizen-friendly administration.

Tim Brauckmüller, Managing Director, aconium GmbH

The high level of awareness of the term 'Artificial Intelligence' is related to the fact that many citizens have already had personal experiences with this technology. In Germany, one in five respondents reports using AI-based applications, such as the chat system ChatGPT, on a weekly basis. [▼ Fig.28](#) The overall usage rate (including biannual or occasional use) is 60 percent (Switzerland: 66 percent, Austria: 58 percent).

As with other digital applications, younger generations are particularly active users: In Generation Z, 8 out of 10 individuals already have experience in using AI, and almost one-third uses AI applications weekly.

These everyday experiences also extend to the administration: Almost one in three individuals has interacted with chatbots in the administration. This is a clear increase compared to the previous year (+8 percentage points). But not every chatbot is an AI application. Many chatbots function based on rules without involving AI. However, citizens are often unaware of whether a chatbot is rule-based or AI-powered, even though there are noticeable quality differences in its functionality.

Most citizens have at least a basic understanding of the potential capabilities of AI. 77 percent believe that AI can translate texts, and 72 percent think it can answer any question. In Austria and Switzerland, slightly more citizens trust AI with tasks such as translating texts or searching for answers. These are application areas that people are already familiar with from their everyday encounters with AI. AI is also believed to have the ability to compose music and engage in natural conversation by around half of the respondents. Note that there already exist initial applications for both capabilities. [▼ Fig. 31](#)

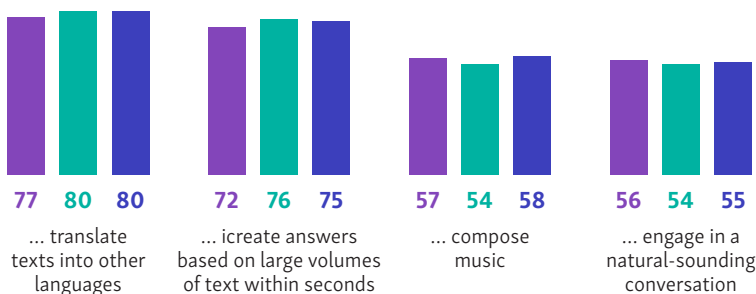
However, 23 percent of citizens attribute at least one of three abilities to AI for which there is currently no evidence: building genuine relationships, making moral decisions, and/or experiencing emotions. Each of these abilities is attributed to AI by 11% of the respondents. This pattern is also observed in Austria and Switzerland.

31%
have already communicated with a public authority via a chatbot.
BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)

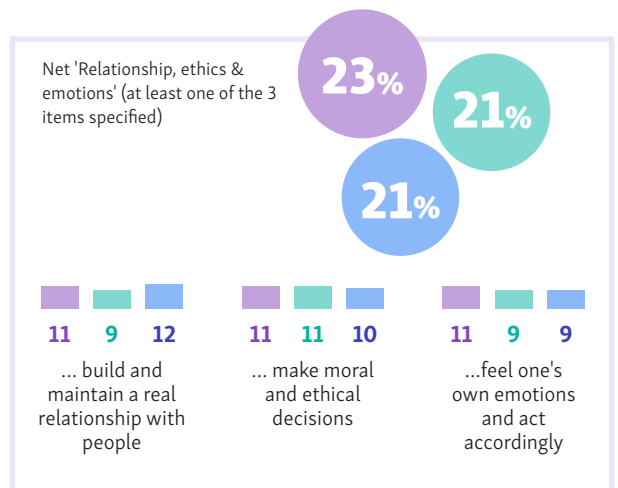
► **Fig. 31: Capabilities of AI**

QUESTION: What tasks can artificial intelligence (AI) perform today? Please indicate everything that you think an AI can already do.
BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108); AT (n = 1,005); CH (n = 1,007); figures in percent

AI is able to ...



Germany Austria Switzerland





EXPERTS

Artificial Intelligence should not replace human contact

The use of Artificial Intelligence in public administration is no longer a future dream, but a reality. Our goal in the network 'Artificial Intelligence in Public Employment and Social Protection Services' is to promote a human-centered use of AI at the intersection of technology, law, and ethics. The self-imposed guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs stipulate that AI must serve humanity. Following this principle, the guidelines state that AI systems in Public Employment and Social Protection Services must meet the needs of both citizens and employees. This applies to all steps ranging from development, training data and testing through to deployment in the authorities. Naturally, the systems must be free from discrimination, transparent, understandable, and subject to regular review and human final decision-making.

Partly due to the shortage of skilled workers, the remaining human workforce must be deployed where it is indispensable: AI should not replace human contact, but rather relieve employees from bureaucratic tasks and enable them to focus on the essential, advisory, and empathetic aspects of their work.

Education and acceptance are the key to digital transformation.

It is also important to create a basic understanding of AI among the population. Citizens should learn that AI is not 'magic', but a tool that, when used responsibly, has significant potential. This basic understanding also includes rudimentary knowledge of how AI functions. I don't mean that everyone must learn to code. Instead, users should have a general idea of the mechanisms, programming instructions, or data foundations which AI systems are based on to make decisions or solve problems autonomously. By promoting education and knowledge about AI, we can reduce fears and increase positive acceptance of these technologies. The positive feedback from the citizens shows that people are open to technological innovations. However, it is important that they understand that these technologies serve their well-being.

Ana Dujic

Director General — Digital, Work, Society, Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

You can find the full interview via the QR code.



In Germany, there is also a correlation with age: In Generation Z, one in three believes that AI possesses at least one of the three abilities of building relationships, making moral-ethical decisions, or experiencing its own emotions. In Generation Y, the share is 28 percent. The generational gap is most pronounced regarding the ability of relationship-building: In Generation Z, 18 percent are convinced that AI can build and maintain a real relationship with people (Generation Y: 15 percent), while only 6 percent of the post-war generation share this belief. This suggests that the more frequent and intense use of AI applications in younger generations (Y and Z) influences their tendency to attribute abilities to AI for which there is no evidence yet. This is supported by the fact that people with higher formal education are also more likely to attribute such capabilities to AI. This group also demonstrates above-average usage behavior. This suggests that as usage increases, people become more aware of AI's potential and, consequently, confidence grows that the technology could possess such capabilities (now or in the future).

What is the level of acceptance of AI in administration?

75%

agree with the use of AI in administration under certain conditions, and another 11% even agree in general.

BASIS: All respondents - GER (n = 8,108)

The population is generally open to the use of AI in administration: 3 out of 4 citizens would agree, under certain conditions, that in a hypothetical scenario AI could collect their data and prepare an application, which would then be handed over to administrative staff. [↘ Fig.27](#)

What is particularly important to citizens is that fundamental decisions remain the responsibility of employees (53 percent agreement).

One in ten citizens would even agree to the use of AI without further conditions. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points compared to the previous year. The proportion of citizens who strictly reject the use of AI has decreased by 8 percentage points. Openness to the use of AI in administration is therefore increasing. This trend is not only observed in Germany, but also in Austria and Switzerland (-6 and -4 percentage points for strict rejection, respectively).

The generational differences in acceptance are less pronounced than in usage. Generation Z is the only one standing out with an above-average acceptance (16 percent would be fine with the use of AI in any case, while only 8 percent categorically reject it). Citizens born before 1945 are most likely to reject the use of AI (23 percent), but also among

those with lower formal education, the use of AI is more frequently deemed unacceptable under any circumstances (19 percent).

What are citizens' main concerns?

Although openness to the use of AI in administration has increased, more than half of the German population would only agree to the use of AI if decisions are still made by humans. Citizens are concerned that otherwise it would no longer be clear who is responsible for the decisions made (45 percent of citizens see this as one of the top 3 concerns). From citizens' point of view, this is particularly problematic when the AI used makes mistakes (42 percent). The fear that it will be difficult to understand how AI systems reach their decisions is also a major concern for 40 percent.

↳ Fig. 29 Therefore, it is not surprising that most citizens consider the final decision-making authority of administration employees as a vital condition for the use of AI.

In general, citizens value the human element, not only regarding final decision-making but also as a point of contact for their concerns. 36 percent of citizens fear that this human interaction will no longer be available with the use of AI. For one-third of citizens, concerns about their data are also one of the biggest issues: 33 percent worry that their personal data could be used for other purposes by AI, or that it will not be adequately protected due to the use of AI.

PARTNERS

A capable state must also rely on AI

Artificial Intelligence is becoming increasingly important in various areas of life and work. It helps maintain the performance of the state, manage crises, and address demographic challenges. Moreover, it improves the planning and management of state tasks as well as the quality of services. These effects strengthen trust in the state and our democracy.

Nadja Kwaß-Benkow, Director Digital Government, Materna Information & Communications SE

INTERIM CONCLUSION

Maintaining and strengthening openness to AI: communication and human decision-making authority are key

#1 Efficient administrative action is essential for a capable state. Given the rising expectations for a modern administration and the increasing shortage of skilled workers, the use of new technologies like AI is gaining importance. AI can help accelerate processes, relieve staff, and handle routine tasks. This enables a faster preparation of decisions, shorter processing times, fewer errors, and an increased efficiency. Transparency and citizen participation play a central role in fostering acceptance for the use of AI.

#2 The development of an AI application at the German Pension Insurance (Deutsche Rentenversicherung/ DRV Bund) is an illustrative example. The DRV Bund is obliged to audit a company's social security contributions every 4 years (around 400,000 audits per

year). On average, the approximately 1,500 employees have less than one working day per audit. With such little time, priorities need to be set and samples need to be selected, both of which are determined by the employees based on their experience. Here, AI can assist: it can search the digital documents for patterns and identify anomalies. These are flagged, and based on this information, the auditors then decide which cases require a more detailed examination. As a result, AI increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the auditing service, while also helping to mitigate the growing shortage of skilled workers.

#3 Responsible use of AI is crucial to avoid undermining citizens' trust and to ensure a successful implementation. Decision-making must remain the responsibility of humans. Transparency and data protection must be ensured. Moreover, citizens should always have the possibility to contact human representatives to address concerns and strengthen trust in the administration and its technologies.

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