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The Digital Competence Framework for Consumers

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The Digital Competence Framework for Consumers (DigCompConsumers).

The European Digital Competence Framework for Consumers, or "DigCompConsumers", offers a reference framework to support and improve consumers' digital competence. Consumer digital competence is defined as the competence consumers need to function actively, safely and assertively in the digital marketplace. This definition builds on existing work on consumers' competence, and on the general digital competences as defined in the DigComp 2.0 framework. This report introduces the conceptual reference model (DigCompConsumers) which outlines 14 competences and gives examples of each competence in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

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Foreword

The European Commission led by President Jean-Claude Juncker has set out, as one of its main goals, to create a Digital Single Market where citizens and businesses can seamlessly and fairly access online goods and services, whatever their nationality, and wherever they live.

Consumers are at the heart of making this Digital Single Market work. The Digital Single Market Strategy will simplify consumer rules for online purchases, and make data protection, copyright and telecom rules fit for the digital age. But better access for consumers to digital goods and services across Europe is not achieved through legislative changes alone. It also requires boosting digital skills and learning.

In the "New Skills Agenda for Europe", the Commission has therefore committed itself to supporting national efforts and playing a role in enhancing digital skills, and enabling digital skills learning.

This Digital Competence Framework for Consumers is based on the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp), a common reference framework of what it means to be a digitally-savvy citizen.

DigComp for Consumers aims to define the competence consumers need to function actively, safely and assertively in the digital marketplace. Consumers will be in a better position to benefit from open digital markets if they acquire new knowledge, develop and practice new skills, and adopt a critical and balanced attitude to the digital world.

DigComp for Consumers is a joint research project of the Commission's Directorate General for Justice and Consumers and the Joint Research Centre (JRC). It is based on consultation with, and active input from, a wide range of experts and stakeholders. I would like to thank its authors, and all those who contributed their insights and energy.

I hope DigComp for Consumers will become a reference for the development and strategic planning of digital consumer competence initiatives, at both European and Member State levels.

I trust it will help and enable public authorities, consumer associations, teachers and teacher training institutions, and also private actors, to improve their guidance for teaching digital consumer skills to young and old.

Tiina Astola Director-General Directorate General for Justice and Consumers

Executive summary

This report presents the Digital Competence Reference Framework for Consumers, DigCompConsumers. Consumer digital competence is defined as the competence consumers need to function actively, safely and assertively in the digital marketplace.

DigCompConsumers outlines 14 competences that are grouped in three main areas: prepurchase, purchase and post-purchase. The Framework illustrates each of the competences with concrete examples in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

The expected users of the Framework are public education, consumer policy and other authorities, consumer associations, teachers and teacher training institutions, as well as private and civil society education or training actors.

Policy context

The DigCompConsumers Reference Framework is a joint action of DG Justice and Consumers and the Joint Research Centre (JRC). It works towards fulfilling the objectives of the New Skills Agenda for Europe and the Digital Single Market (DSM). Both these initiatives of the Juncker Commission have underlined the importance of citizens' digital skills and the need to improve their capacity to participate more deeply in our digital society and economy.

Key conclusions

This is a first version of the Digital Competence Reference Framework for Consumers, which is still relatively theoretical and conceptual. It will reveal its usefulness in day-to-day practice, and be adjusted accordingly.

Competence areas	Competences
1. Pre-purchase	 1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering information on goods and services 1.2 Evaluating and comparing information on goods and services 1.3 Recognising and evaluating commercial communication and advertisement 1.4 Managing digital identity and profile in the digital marketplace 1.5 Considering responsible and sustainable consumption in digital markets
2. Purchase	2.1 Interacting in the digital marketplace to buy and sell 2.2 Participating in collaborative economy platforms 2.3 Managing payments and finances through digital means 2.4 Understanding copyrights, licences, and contracts of digital goods and services 2.5 Managing personal data and privacy 2.6 Protecting health and safety
3. Post-purchase	3.1 Sharing information with other consumers in the digital marketplace3.2 Asserting consumer rights in the digital marketplace3.3 Identifying digital consumer competence gaps and limits

Related and future work

DigCompConsumers is part of the work a wider series of studies the JRC is carrying out on competence frameworks in the areas of education and training, employment and lifelong learning. Examples of these include the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens 2.0 (Vuorikari et al., 2016), the European Framework for Digitally-Competent Educational Organisations (Kampylis et al., 2016), the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework for Citizens (Bacigalupo et al., 2016) and the Digital Competence Framework for Educators (forthcoming).

I. Introduction

I.I The Digital Competence Framework for Consumers

introduces the Digital Competence Framework for Consumers (DigCompConsumers)¹.

Consumer digital competence is defined here as the competence consumers need to function actively, safely and assertively in the digital marketplace. This definition builds on the previous work done on consumer competence and adapts it to digital environments (European Commission, 2011).

The publication of the Digital Competence Reference Framework for Consumers by the European Commission is intended as the first step towards achieving a shared understanding of the competences that consumers need in the digital marketplace. It aims to clarify common goals, and to raise their visibility amongst the stakeholders and the wider community. The Framework describes expected learning outcomes to those with an interest in digital and consumer education, and aims to encourage discussion of how to deliver high quality quidance, education and training, both at Member State and at EU level.

The DigCompConsumers Framework is a joint action of the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers and the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Commission's science and knowledge service.

The work is carried out to achieve the goals set out by the European Commission in its two recent Communications of "A New Skills Agenda for Europe - Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness" (European Commission, 2016) and "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe" (European Commission, 2015a). Both underline the importance of boosting digital skills and learning so that citizens can seize the opportunities of the digital society and economy.

This work also aims to contribute to the implementation of the relevant part of the OECD's revised Recommendation on Consumer Protection in e-commerce, in particular: "Governments and stakeholders should work together to improve consumers' digital competence through education and awareness programmes aimed at providing them with relevant knowledge and skills to access and use digital technology to participate in e-commerce." (OECD 2016, p.18).

I.II Consumers in digital markets

We live in a hyper-connected world. With a penetration rate of 97% in 2015 (International Telecommunication Union, 2015), the number of mobile phone subscriptions is approaching the number of people on earth. In 2015, 83% of households in the European Union's 28 Member States (EU28) had internet access (Eurostat 20152). This reliance on and increased use of technologies for everyday activities has an effect on several aspects of citizens' lives, including their choices as consumers.

The complexity and multiplicity of digital marketplaces provide a plethora of opportunities and risks for consumers. Today consumers acquire "free" goods and services in exchange for their personal data, and data transfers pose new privacy and security risks. Digital content products and services raise questions about usage restrictions. Unsafe products are offered online across borders, and online platforms and

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tqm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tin00134&lang uage=en

https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/digcompconsumers

peer-to-peer marketplaces blur distinctions between traders and consumers and challenge legislative frameworks (European Commission, 2015b).

In this changing landscape, consumers need a new set of competences to engage in the online marketplace, to make informed choices, to increase their welfare, to be able to weigh the benefits against the risks. Given the fast speed of change, consumers' knowledge, skills and attitudes need regular updating, or they risk being out of step with the increasing sophistication of digital marketing practices. Competent online consumers will be empowered and confident consumers, and as such, contribute to making (digital) markets in general work well, and in particular the Digital Single Market.

I.III Consumers and digital competence

This Framework focuses exclusively on those aspects that are relevant in the context of consumers' competences in digital environments. General digital competences that consumers as users of technologies will have to acquire as a pre-requisite to function in a digital environment are described in DigComp (Vuorikari *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, general consumer competences (e.g. Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009, Nordic-Estonian Consumer Education Working Group, 2010) that are not specific to the digital world are not included here either.

The Framework covers core consumer protection issues in electronic commerce, such as fair and transparent business and advertising practices; information about businesses, goods and services, and transactions; dispute resolution and redress mechanisms and payment protection. In addition, it also addresses issues of paying with data and data privacy/security, digital content issues, and peer-to-peer platform participation.

Digital consumers' competences as described in this Framework combine knowledge, skills, and attitudes (thus including values, habits, abilities). Competences are conceptualized in line with the Recommendation of Key competences for lifelong learning (European Commission, 2006), which defines competence as the sum of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The existing literature about consumers in the digital market tends to focus on the risks of fraud and deception that consumers are faced with in online environments. While this is of primary importance in the development of consumers' competences, the Framework focuses also on developing proactive competences that help consumers take advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital marketplace.

The overall objective of the Framework is to enhance consumers' confidence in digital purchasing and selling, and to allow consumers to play an active and assertive role in the digital marketplace.

In particular, the objectives are to help consumers:

- make informed choices in the digital marketplace;
- operate safely online and avoid falling victim to fraudulent or deceptive online marketing practices;
- understand digital marketing and advertising practices;
- manage online financial operations;
- understand the risks and advantages of digital data collection and of the emerging collaborative economy.

With these objectives in mind, the Framework is intended as a conceptual and reference model and_aims to be open to cultural diversity. The examples of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are given for each competence do not intend to be exhaustive. They are meant as a source of inspiration for local adaptation, or for adaptation to a specific target group or purpose.

A competence framework for digital consumers does not and cannot replace regulations and legislation that protect consumers, as both aspects - enhancing the digital competences of consumers and legislating the digital marketplace - must go hand in hand in providing a safe purchasing and selling experience for all.

The core audience to whom this framework is addressed is of a professional nature, such as public authorities, consumer associations, consumer education experts, and educational professionals such as teachers and teacher training institutions, as well as private actors and civil society.

I.IV From DigComp to DigCompConsumers

The starting point for DigCompConsumers is the Digital Competences Framework for Citizens (DigComp), first developed in 2013 by the JRC on behalf of DG Education and Culture, and further developed on behalf of DG Employment, Skills, Social affairs and Inclusion³.

The methodology for building this Framework therefore follows the same principles and modular structure as DigComp. DigCompconsumers in particular consists of:

- 3 areas that are grouped along the purchasing cycle,
- 14 competence titles and competence descriptors,
- 210 examples of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Though it is derived from DigComp, DigCompConsumers is a standalone framework and can be used independently.

The feasibility of developing a Digital Competence Framework for Consumers (DigCompConsumers) was first discussed at the 'EU Consumer Summit' in April 2014. On that occasion, consumer policy stakeholder representatives discussed during a workshop on 'Digital literacy needs for online consumers' if and how to adapt the Digital Competences Framework for Citizens (DigComp) to the consumer context.

To follow-up, a joint research project was set up, consisting of two parts. The first part was a preparatory study to identify emerging issues and potential detriments in the digital consumer context, as well as best practices regarding digital competence in consumer education, as a basis for the DigCompConsumers Framework (Fielder *et al.*, 2016).

The second part was to develop the DigCompConsumer Framework itself. This was undertaken by the authors of this report with support from the JRC and DG JUST. Their initial outline was discussed at an expert workshop in December 2015 and the outcome validated through online consultations and a second expert workshop in April 2016, which also discussed the possible use cases of the Framework and ideas about proficiency levels.

The Framework itself is therefore the result of a joint effort. It was developed, reviewed and validated with the help of a selected group of digital and consumer education experts from EU, OECD and Member State levels, including national consumer authorities (FI, EE, AT, SE), consumer research institutes and academics (NL, F, NO), consumer associations (DE, EU) and others.

The Framework, and in particular its examples, will require review and updating, as new trends and challenges for consumers emerge in today's dynamic e-commerce marketplace.

In June 2016, Phase 1 of the update was published. Phase 2 was completed at the end of the same year.

^{4 &}lt;a href="http://ecs.onetec.eu/2014/workshops5">http://ecs.onetec.eu/2014/workshops5 en.html

The terminology and concepts used in DigCompConsumers aim to reflect both those used in DigComp 2.0, and those commonly used in a consumer policy context (see Annex 1 for Glossary).

In Chapter 2, each of the 14 competences that have been identified is presented in a table which includes: a title, a short definition of the competence, and examples of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to competence.

Chapter 3 briefly discusses possible uses of the Framework at national and international level, for policy formulation and support, instructional planning for education, training and employment, and assessment and certification.

Chapter 4 presents the conclusion of the report and some ideas for possible next steps.

Annex 1 presents the mapping between DigCompConsumers and the DigComp Framework; Annex 2 contains a glossary; and Annex 3 lists the participants at the workshops.

II The Digital Competence Framework for Consumers

The Framework tends to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. This means that the Framework is built to describe what competences are needed by consumers in the digital marketplace, without imposing norms for consumers' behaviour. It is neutral, it is – or at least aims to be - not culturally biased or exclusive. As such, it can subsequently be tailored to specific uses and target groups.

The Framework follows the consumer logic and is divided into three areas (or phases): pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase.

Table 1: The list of DigCompConsumers competences

Competence areas	Competences
1. Pre-purchase	 1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering information on goods and services 1.2 Evaluating and comparing information on goods and services 1.3 Recognising and evaluating commercial communication and advertisement 1.4 Managing digital identity and profile in the digital marketplace 1.5 Considering responsible and sustainable consumption in digital markets
2. Purchase	 2.1 Interacting in the digital marketplace to buy and sell 2.2 Participating in collaborative economy platforms 2.3 Managing payments and finances through digital means 2.4 Understanding copyrights, licences, and contracts of digital goods and services 2.5 Managing personal data and privacy 2.6 Protecting health and safety
3. Post-purchase	3.1 Sharing information with other consumers in the digital marketplace3.2 Asserting consumer rights in the digital marketplace3.3 Identifying digital consumer competence gaps and limits

II.I Competences, descriptors, and examples

This section provides, in a tabular view, the detailed Digital Competence for Consumers Framework, which is the core element of this report. For each area we propose a description of the area; and a list of competences that belong to that area. For every competence, we have detailed a description and a non-exhaustive list of examples of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can illustrate it. They aim to provide more detailed guidance on what is meant by that specific competence. They are therefore to be used as a source of inspiration for local adaptation, or for adaptation to a specific target group or purpose.

While we realise that there are some possible overlaps in examples between competences or areas, care has been taken to reduce these overlaps to a minimum.

The examples include some of the main notions of EU digital consumer rights, but do not aim to reflect all such rights, nor to reflect such rights in detail, or as they apply in individual countries. They also do not take any future legislation into account. The

examples aim to reflect current common practices and habits that consumers have developed in digital marketplaces.

As digital markets evolve, and as the applicable regulatory framework changes, both the examples and the competences themselves will need to be updated.

Area 1: Pre-Purchase

Actions taken before purchasing goods and services in the digital marketplace, which focus on information search, comparing information, evaluation of alternatives, dealing with commercial communication, managing digital identity, and making responsible and sustainable consumption choices.

- 1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering information on goods and services
- 1.2 Evaluating and comparing information on goods and services
- 1.3 Recognising and evaluating commercial communication and advertisement
- 1.4 Managing digital identity and profile in the digital marketplace
- 1.5 Considering responsible and sustainable consumption in digital markets

1.1 Browsing, sea	arching and filtering information on goods and services	
	To search for and access information related to goods and services using digital tools. To identify and select the information needed regarding goods, services, and transactions options.	
Knowledge examples	Recognising that search engines are not neutral, and that search results and ranking of search results of goods and services are influenced by advertising and marketing	
	Being aware that different search engines may give different search results for goods and services	
	Knowing that the internet gives access to online shops across the world, and that it may be worthwhile to check offers in other countries/languages	
	Knowing about several digital tools (e.g. portals and apps) that facilitate online shopping	
	Realising that many companies, shops and government agencies have e-commerce and e-government services available online	
	Being able to name sites that sell goods at reduced prices	
Skills examples	Using various different search engines, changing to a different search engine to obtain better results	
	Filtering the search results to adjust searches	
	Refining information searches and selecting specific words in order to find the desired goods and services	
	Finding pertinent deals using digital tools and environments (e.g. by searching price comparison services)	
	Identifying relevant search results from search outputs	
	Checking search results beyond the first page	

Attitude examples

Being proactive in searching for information about goods and services

Valuing the positive impact that technologies have in making better informed consumer choices

Being willing to acknowledge the limits in one's ability to process information and to resist stimuli offered by the digital marketplace

1.2 Evaluating and comparing information on goods and services

To compare and critically evaluate the reliability of digital sources of information on goods and services. To compare and critically evaluate information on goods, services, purchasing terms and conditions related to the digital marketplace. To compare commercial offers using comparison tools, websites and channels.

Knowledge examples

Understanding that not all information online on goods and services is reliable or complete

Understanding that that price comparison results may not be complete, can be inaccurate or impartial

Knowing about digital tools (e.g. apps, portals, sites) that allow one to compare goods, services, prices

Knowing how to find sites, communities, and social media groups where consumers share opinions on products and services

Knowing how to check the reliability of e-commerce sellers and websites (e.g. verifying if the identity, address, contact details of the seller are complete)

Knowing that e-commerce trustmarks ⁵ are a means of identifying reliable online shops

Knowing to compare only total prices that include VAT

Knowing that energy, telecommunication and financial services regulators make online comparison tools available

Knowing that independent consumer associations make comparison tools and comparative testing available online

Knowing that some (price) comparison tools' results may be influenced by advertising and/or marketing

Skills examples

Being able to compare, contrast, and integrate information from different sources regarding prices, quality, purchasing terms and conditions of goods and services.

Being able to find relevant communities, networks, and social media groups where consumers share opinions about goods and services

Being able to verify the reliability of sellers before making transactions

Being able to adjust default settings for ranking of search results on platforms and portals $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) +\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left(1\right) +\left(1\right) \left(1\right)$

Being able to use online price comparison tools or tools that compare quality and price

Being able to assess the value of the information that is pushed at the consumer based on previous searches or visits via dynamic advertising or via social media pages or email

⁵ http://www.ecommerce-europe.eu/trustmark

Attitude examples	Values that making informed choices implies comparing offers from different providers
	Being critical regarding the presentation and alleged attractiveness of offers
	Valuing the possibility to make cautious and responsible purchasing decisions
	Critically evaluating the reliability, impartiality and accuracy of the information on comparison websites
	Recognising that people tend to choose default options
	Critically evaluating user reviews and ranking systems

1.3 Recognising and evaluating commercial communication and advertisement

To recognise and critically evaluate different marketing and advertising methods and

activities in digit	critically evaluate different marketing and advertising methods and call environments. To recognise how advertising and commercial influence one's choices as a consumer.
Knowledge examples	Knowing that the purpose of advertising and marketing is to redirect attention and stimulate purchases, which may or may not be in line with one's intentions or needs
	Interpreting and analysing online marketing and advertising to understand whether the goods/services on sale are in line with one's interests and needs
	Realising that certain digital services are free of charge because they contain or facilitate marketing and advertising (e.g. through collecting personal data)
	Being aware of hidden advertisement techniques (e.g. when a blog writer or social media author is paid for writing a review)
	Understanding that some entries or comments on social media and/or consumers' reviews may be sponsored
	Recognising, analysing and interpreting embedded marketing practices in digital environments, e.g. on websites, in digital games, chats, social media
	Realising how consumers' digital trails (footprints) can be harvested, stored, analysed, traded and used for commercial purposes
	Being aware of drip pricing and hidden cost practices
Skills examples	Distinguishing between commercial messages (e.g. paid advertisement through social media) and unbiased consumer information in commercial communication
	Assessing the reliability of the information that is pushed at the user (e.g. advertisement through email and social media)
	Detecting unsolicited commercial messages and indicating one's unwillingness to receive these messages
	Exercising one's right to opt out of direct marketing
Attitude examples	Being critical towards advertising practices and being aware they may be misleading and/or disguised
	Adopting a critical attitude towards targeted advertising
	Being careful when making purchasing decisions and basing purchasing choices on information beyond advertisement

1.4 Managing digital identity and profile in the digital marketplace

To understand that one's profile as a digital consumer can be built, modified, manipulated and exploited. To manage the data that one generates through different digital tools and services. To create and manage one or multiple digital identities (e.g. personal, professional) to maximize the benefits of the digital marketplace.

Knowledge examples	Understanding the benefits of having one or more digital identities, e.g. professional, private, as a consumer
	Knowing that one's consumer data – such as past purchases, products viewed – are analysed for marketing purposes
	Knowing that companies use digital identity data to better target and personalise offers
	Knowing which kind of data are processed when using certain services (i.e. geo-location data)
	Being aware that commercial targeting is based on the knowledge that companies have about one's digital identity (e.g. through the recognition of IP addresses, through device tracking, through email/account tracking)
	Realising that in several cases profile data are neither portable nor interoperable
	Realising that companies value their digital identity, that companies' brands are built on their digital reputation among other factors.
Skills examples	Checking and modifying as appropriate the transaction details before confirming a purchase.
	Constructing one or multiple profiles that benefit one's needs as a consumer, e.g. by using different emails to register with different services
	Tracking one's own digital footprint as a consumer, e.g. knowing how to review and manage one's purchase history or browsing interests in a commercial platform.
	Taking advantage of the benefits of building one's online profile and reputation i.e. through positive reviews
	Using digital tools available to manage or delete one's consumer profile
	Using different digital profiles/identities to counterbalance the effects of dynamic pricing
	Managing different usernames and passwords that are needed to log in to different digital services (with or without a password manager application)
Attitude examples	Being critical towards tracking practices and claiming one's right to anonymity

1.5 Considering responsible and sustainable consumption in digital markets

To understand how one's behaviour as a digital consumer affects the community, society and environment. To use digital technologies to make socially and environmentally responsible choices.

Knowledge examples	Evaluating the effects of one's behaviour as a digital consumer on the environment and its ethical and social impacts
	Knowing that the transport of goods purchased online has an impact

	on the environment
	Understanding the environmental impact of computers and electronic devices and how they can be made to last longer (e.g. changing hard disks) or recycled
Skills examples	Being able to use digital tools to improve the environmental and social impact of one's consumer behaviour (e.g. by looking for local produce, by searching for collective deals, etc.)
	Applying one's understanding of socially responsible sustainable consumption to purchases in the digital marketplace
	Choosing digital means that have less impact on the planet (e.g. reading an online newspaper instead of print; sharing, re-selling and recycling goods through P2P digital marketplaces)
Attitude examples	Endorsing sustainable positions in the digital marketplace and advocating them (e.g. advocating sustainable production and/or consumption through social networking sites)
	Positioning oneself as a sustainable digital consumer
	Being critical about the excesses of consumption or unsustainable production and consumption

Area 2: Purchase

The actions related to purchasing: making a purchase, participating in collaborative economy platforms, managing payments, understanding copyrights, licenses and contracts for digital content, protecting data and health.

- 2.1 Interacting in the digital marketplace to buy and sell
- 2.2 Participating in collaborative economy platforms
- 2.3 Managing payments and finances through digital means
- 2.4 Understanding copyrights, licenses, and contracts of digital goods and services
- 2.5 Managing personal data and privacy
- 2.6 Protecting health and safety

2.1 Interacting in the digital marketplace to buy and sell To use digital marketplaces for buying and selling goods and services.	
Knowledge examples	Knowing about the opportunities and risks of selling goods and services in digital marketplaces
	Knowing that, in the digital marketplace, goods and services can be bought and sold either through commercial transactions or through consumer-to-consumer transactions
	Knowing about tangible goods (i.e. those good that have a physical nature) and intangible goods (i.e. virtual or digital goods)
	Knowing that, in the EU, prices for goods and services offered for sale online must be inclusive of VAT
	Knowing that, in the EU, pre-ticked boxes for buying additional services are prohibited
	Understanding the different rules that apply when buying online from a company or from a private person (i.e. consumer-to-consumer

	transactions)
	transactions)
	Knowing that, in the EU, there is a 14-day right of withdrawal when buying online from traders
	Knowing how to check if a trader is based in one's own country, in the EU or elsewhere
	Knowing that the internet gives access to the global marketplace and that rules that apply (for example, for products and services that are prohibited) can be different by country.
	Knowing that EU online consumer rights also apply to online purchases from traders outside the EU if they direct their activities to EU consumers
	Knowing how to cancel an online purchase
Skills examples	Being able to sell goods using digital marketplaces (e.g. eBay)
	Checking if platforms that facilitate sales by a third party decline or accept (limited) liability for transactions concluded with third parties
	Being able to contact sellers and services providers through different digital means (e.g. email, forum, chats) and to interact according to one's needs
	Being able to use apps that manage passwords safely
	Checking that the description and pictures of a product/service correspond and are exhaustive.
	Checking whether platforms that facilitate sales by a third party (e.g. E-bay) decline or accept (limited) liability for transactions concluded with third parties
	Checking that no unwanted additional services are included before confirming a purchase
Attitude examples	Taking an active attitude in contacting sellers and services providers at the different stages of the purchase
	Proactively changing passwords for e-commerce accounts

2.2 Participating in P2P and collaborative economy platforms

	participate in sharing or collaborative economy platforms. To engage in ces (P2P). To recognise different and new digital business models.
Knowledge examples	Knowing about peer-to-peer (P2P), sharing and collaborative economy platforms for (re)sale, exchange and renting/hiring of goods and services
	Understanding the risks and opportunities of using collaborative economy platforms
	Knowing that when buying goods and services from private persons or peers online, one's rights are different than when buying online from a trader (e.g. right to cancel a purchase)
	Knowing that there may be legal and tax issues when selling goods and services or when renting out rooms, apartments or houses via online platforms
	Knowing that regularly selling, renting out etc. via online platforms for a profit can add up to a professional activity that must be declared to the tax authorities and is subject to sectorial regulation
	Knowing that (in certain countries) a special legal statute exists for

	micro entrepreneurs
	Knowing that certain online platforms will provide assistance and insurance in case of problems with a transaction between peers
	Knowing how to distinguish crowdfunding and other collaborative platforms that facilitate gifts or exchanges from those facilitating sales/renting/hiring or investment
Skills examples	Being able to assess the reliability of a P2P, collaborative or sharing platform
	Being able to verify the reliability of the sellers and offers on online platforms, e.g. by using rating systems and user reviews
	Being able to assess if user reviews are valid and well argued, and sufficient in number to generate trust
	Being able to check for any rules and obligations applicable to one's activity on P2P platforms
	Being able to search and find local, national and international P2P platforms that respond to one's needs
	Being able to communicate with other peers on P2P platforms about details of transactions
	Being able to present offers correctly and with clear prices, including costs of payment, delivery and platform fees
Attitude examples	Critically evaluating the opportunities and cost-effectiveness of the peer-to-peer economy, and also its risks
	Proactively checking applicable rights and responsibilities when engaging in P2P, collaborative or sharing economy platforms

2.3 Managing payments and finances through digital means

To safely make digital payments and use online financial services. To use digital

technologies to keep track of and manage one's personal budget.				
Knowledge examples	Knowing that digital devices, including tablets, computers, smartphones, enable access to bank account and payment services anytime, anyplace			
	Knowing that services and goods can be paid for through digital devices (e.g. mobile phone, smartphone)			
	Knowing how digital wallet services work			
	Knowing the risk related to using digital financial services			
	Knowing the importance of safeguarding passwords, pin numbers, etc.			
	Knowing that systems for authenticating online payments (e.g. code via SMS) offer a higher level of security			
	Knowing that, in online payments, one should never give the four digit pincode of a debit/payment/credit card, as used for cash withdrawals or paying in offline shops			
	Knowing not to send e-commerce a scan of credit cards or bank cards			
	Knowing that the amount of the purchase can be taken from one's account immediately at the time of purchase, even if delivery is later, unless otherwise indicated by the seller			
	Knowing that security software should be installed on devices to secure online payments			

Skills examples	Being able to use access devices (e.g. authentication tools) and use digital financial services (e.g. banking, PayPal) safely	
	Being able to recognise phishing or pharming attacks on online banking	
	Being able to identify whether online payments are secure and encrypted by checking the address bar/URL for "https" instead of "http" and the closed padlock security sign	
	Being able to challenge a payment in case of fraudulent use of a payment/credit card online and obtain reimbursement	
	Being able to recognise whether a payment involves automatic repeat purchases of goods or automatic contract or subscription renewal	
Attitude examples	Critically evaluating different types of security measures used digital transactions and attaching importance to security (e.g. keepin pin numbers, passwords safe)	
	Being aware of the benefits and risks of managing finances and financial transactions through digital means	

2.4 Understanding copyrights, licenses, and contracts of digital goods and services

To understand and act upon rights and responsibilities related to digital content, goods and services.

and services.	
Knowledge examples	Knowing that some digital content (music, movies, books, etc.) are available for free and that others are for purchase
	Knowing that digital content (music, movies, books, etc.) can be subject to copyright and that downloading copyrighted material without permission is illegal
	Knowing that it is illegal to upload and share certain content such as music
	Knowing that sharing illegally downloaded content with others can give rise to legal sanctions
	Knowing that it is not possible to cancel the purchase of digital content once it has been downloaded
	Knowing which licenses apply to the goods and services one is interested in
	Knowing that most software is used under licenses, which need to be renewed once the license periods expire
	Being aware that that streaming and downloading movies, shows, books from pirate websites is illegal
	Knowing that some content (music, movies, books, etc.) may not be accessible because of one's location (i.e. geo-blocking)
Skills	Being able to check which sites offer illegal downloading or streaming
examples	Being able to select legal material for downloading or uploading.
	Being able to check and understand the right to use or re-use digital content and goods that one purchased
Attitude examples	Being respectful of copyright and contract terms and using official distributors for downloading movies, music, books
	Weighing the benefits of illegal downloading against the risks (e.g. viruses, sanctions)

2.5 Managing personal data and privacy

To protect personal data and privacy in the digital marketplace. To understand how to share identifiable personal information while protecting oneself and others from risks. To know that digital services provide a "Privacy policy" to inform how personal data is used and acting upon this information.

Knowledge examples

Being aware that every time one goes online, one shares information and data about oneself, one's purchasing interests and one's behaviour with the search engines, social media and/or the sites one visits

Knowing it is not easy to delete personal data or information after having shared them, or to transfer them to another service provider

Understanding that clicking "I accept" to a "Privacy policy" may mean that one agrees that one's personal data may be sold to third parties

Knowing which measures to take to protect and manage personal data and privacy to avoid fraud

Understanding that assumptions are made about behaviour and purchasing interests based on automated processing of data (profiling)

Knowing where to go and who to talk to when one is concerned about personal data use

Being aware that personal data are also collected, processed and stored outside the EU, and that different data protection rules may in some cases apply

Knowing how to find out how personal data are being used by third parties

Being aware that personal data can be sold and used by third parties for targeted marketing purposes

Knowing that in the digital marketplace some goods and services can be acquired for "free" in exchange for one's personal data, and realising the implications of these exchanges

Skills examples

Reviewing privacy policies and identifying key terms about personal data use

Identifying privacy policy terms that are a threat to data privacy

Checking privacy policies to verify whether personal data are sold or transferred to third parties

Being able to change the privacy settings on social media

Checking what data protection rules apply and using one's rights to access, modify and suppress personal data

Being able to access and modify or request deletion of personal data given to a seller

Knowing how to claim the right to be forgotten⁶

Verifying the level of security offered by e-commerce platforms, sites or apps and (free) digital services

Setting privacy enhancing tools to protect the privacy of one's personally identifiable information

Weighing benefits and risks when/if sharing data in digital environments

^{6 &}lt;a href="http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/factsheets/factsheet data protection en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/factsheets/factsheet data protection en.pdf

Attitude examples	Being responsible for protecting one's and others' personal data when making online purchases	
	Valuing the protection of personal data when shopping online	
	Weighing the benefits of sharing personal and consumer data (e.g. to receive personalised suggestions, auto-complete forms) against the risks (e.g. profiling, identity theft, fraud, unsecure transactions)	

2.6 Protecting health and safety				
	To understand and avoid physical and psychological health and safety risks related to information, goods and services in the digital marketplace.			
Knowledge examples	Understanding that online purchasing behaviour can have addictive aspects			
	Knowing that when buying products online, especially from e-commerce sites or apps located outside the EU/EEA, it is advisable to double-check whether the product complies with EU safety standards or is banned in the EU			
	Knowing that online medical advice can be unreliable or sponsored by producers/sellers of medical or paramedical products			
	Knowing that when buying medical products online, the EU logo for online sale of medicines indicates that the site or app is operating legally and not selling falsified and illegal products			
	Knowing that second-hand products bought, rented or borrowed from other consumers online are not subject to product safety rules			
Skills examples	Checking whether a product was subject to a recall or other restrictive measures on RAPEX website ⁷ and/or OECD portal on product recalls ⁸			
Attitude examples	Assuming responsibility for protecting personal health and safety when shopping in the digital market			

Area 3: Post-purchase

Actions taken after purchase: sharing information, asserting consumer rights, updating digital consumer competences.

Critically evaluating the effects that digital and media-embedded

Being vigilant regarding one's purchasing behaviour and evaluating

3.1 Sharing information with other consumers in the digital marketplace

merchandising can have on wellbeing

the risk of addictive digital purchasing

- 3.2 Asserting consumer rights in the digital marketplace
- 3.3 Identifying digital consumer competence gaps and limits

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/index_en.htm/

⁸ http://globalrecalls.oecd.org/

3.1 Sharing information with other consumers in the digital marketplace To share reviews, knowledge, advice, and experiences in the digital marketplace.		
Knowledge examples	Knowing about websites that offer users advice on products and services and understanding that their reliability may vary	
	Understanding that information can be shared anonymously or through profiles	
	Knowing how to find sites, communities, and social media groups where consumers help each other solve problems with products and services	
Skills examples	Evaluating the information that peers are sharing digitally about goods and services.	
	Judging the value of the content to share and the target audience to share it with	
	Sharing experiences with fellow consumers on social media and digital platforms	
	Providing advice to other consumers through social media, discussion fora, online rating, etc.	
Attitude examples	Being active in sharing one's opinions regarding products and services Weighing the benefits and pitfalls of experiences and reviews shared by other consumers	

3.2 Asserting one's consumer rights in the digital marketplace

To know one's rights and responsibilities as a digital consumer. To assert one's rights after making a purchase and to know how to solve problems and disputes.

Knowledge examples	_			•	_			•		ules and rights nt elsewhere
	Knowing a only	about	spe	cific o	consur	ner	rights	that apply	to or	nline purchases
	Knowing problems		to	find	help	to	solve	disputes	and	post-purchase

Being aware of one's right to be forgotten⁹

Being aware of one's right to cancel online purchases of most goods within 14 days of delivery and get reimbursed without justification

Knowing the main exceptions to the right to cancel a purchase (food, tailor made products, unpacked CD, DVD and software, opened hygienic and health products, travel products like hotels and tickets)

Recognising the importance of accepting terms and conditions related to digital purchases and transactions in digital marketplaces and platforms, and the consequences this may have

Knowing that online out-of-court redress options (Online Dispute Resolution) exist if there are problems with an online transaction

Knowing that different types of redress options exist

Knowing that one can cancel online purchases not delivered within 30

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/factsheets/factsheet_data_protection_en.pdf

	days of purchase if timely delivery was essential, or if a reasonable additional delay is not respected
	Knowing that rights and responsibilities apply when buying online from a trader, and are not the same when buying from private citizens
	Realising that one can file a complaint with the authorities to solve a dispute with a trader
Skills examples	Finding independent advice on digital consumer rights and redress
	Being able to file a form for cancelling an online purchase or write an e-mail to cancel a purchase
	Using different means to assert rights after an online purchase, be it online or offline
	Exercising consumer rights in practical situations
	Finding information and/or digital platforms for redress and consumer rights
	Checking deliveries of online purchases before signing for receipt
Attitude examples	Being motivated to assert one's consumer rights and filing a complaint if necessary
	Being confident in taking action with after-sales services if an online purchase is not as desired

3.3 Identifying digital consumers competence gaps and limits

To understand gaps and limits of one's digital consumer competences. To keep updated with developments in the digital marketplace that have an influence on one's opportunities and risks as a digital consumer.

and risks as a digital consumer.		
Knowledge examples	Understanding and evaluating the opportunities and risks that technology offers consumers	
	Understanding that one's knowledge of the digital domain as a consumer might be limited and that the rules of the digital marketplace evolve rapidly	
	Understanding the need to update one's digital competence to benefit most from the opportunities offered by the digital marketplace	
Skills examples	Possessing the skills to update one's own knowledge about the purchasing and selling possibilities offered by digital technologies Being able to adapt to new practices of the digital marketplace	
Attitude examples	Being confident and willing to experiment with new digital tools are digital practices that could benefit one's digital purchasing experience.	
	Following technological developments and being vigilant as regards the benefits and risks that one faces as a consumer	

III. DigCompConsumers possible uses

This section gives first ideas for possible uses of the Digital Competence Framework for Consumers at national and international level. The two main categories of use are policy formulation and support, and instructional planning for education, training and employment, including assessment and certification uses.

III.I Policy formulation and support

In consumer policy research, the Framework could be used for benchmarking the actual level of competences of various population groups through surveys or behavioural experiments. The knowledge and skills items, for example, could be used for drafting survey questionnaires. This data could support consumer policy development, to help evaluate the impact of different types of measures on consumers in general, or on specific consumer groups in particular, and to further develop the concepts of vulnerable consumer and average consumer.

Both academic and policy types of research could also be used to create an evidence base for consumer education, for example to develop indicators to measure the need for and the impact of consumer education efforts. The absence of this type of data has been identified as one of the main obstacles to consumer education development by the OECD and at national level.

At national level, the Framework could become a useful instrument for developing a dialogue between consumer policy and education ministries about the incorporation of digital consumer education into school curricula and adult education. National consumer policy strategies and consumer education policies could use the Framework for the purpose of updating and conducting gap-analysis.

III.II Instructional Planning and Assessment

The Framework could be used for instructional planning by teacher training institutes and universities, by private and public educational organisations and by individual teachers.

The Framework could also be used by national and EU level consumer education platforms for the classification of existing teaching materials, for identifying gaps in materials regarding digital competences, or as guidance for teachers.

In addition, the Framework could form the basis for the development of assessment tools, either for self-assessment purposes or for testing competences in an education or training environment.

IV. Conclusions

This is the "Science for Policy" publication of the Digital Competence reference framework for Consumers, DigCompConsumers. It outlines 14 competences that are grouped in three main areas: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. The framework illustrates each of the competences with concrete examples in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

The overall objective of the framework is to enhance consumers' confidence in digital purchasing and selling, and to allow consumers to play an active and assertive role in the digital marketplace.

With these objectives in mind, the framework is intended as a <u>conceptual and reference</u> <u>model</u>. The examples of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are given for each competence do not intend to be exhaustive. They are meant as a source of inspiration for local adaptation, or for adaptation to a specific target group or purpose.

The DigCompConsumers framework may require further updating for two main reasons: first because digital competence must evolve as technologies and practices change; and secondly because the framework is still theoretical and conceptual, and needs to be tested in practice.

Its practical implementation and use will reveal its usefulness, necessary adaptations and the need for proficiency level development for specific purposes. While recognising that learning or achieving proficiency does not always occur linearly, such proficiency levels can offer ways to define steps of progression. First proposals for possible uses and proficiency levels are published as part of the full DigCompConsumers report available from DG Justice and Consumers¹⁰ and can be further elaborated in view of practical use made of the framework.

¹⁰ at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/index_en.htm

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ANNEX I: Glossary

Collaborative economy and consumption: the term refers to business models that facilitate market places for the temporary usage of goods or services between (peer) suppliers and (peer) consumers or users. The collaborative economy involves three categories of actors: (i) service providers who share assets, resources, time and/or skills — these can be private individuals offering services on an occasional basis, or service providers acting in their professional capacity (ii) users of these; and (iii) intermediaries that connect — via an online platform — providers with users and that facilitate transactions between them ('collaborative platforms'). Collaborative economy transactions generally do not involve a change of ownership and can be carried out for profit or not-for-profit.

Copyright: A bundle of intangible rights granted by statute to the author or originator of certain literary or artistic productions, whereby, for a limited period, the exclusive privilege is given to that person (or to any party to whom he or she transfers ownership) to make copies of the same for publication and sale.

Digital content: any type of content that exists in the form of digital data that are encoded in a machine-readable format, and can be created, viewed, distributed, modified and stored using computers and digital technologies, e.g. the internet. The content can be either free or pay content. Examples of digital content include: web pages and websites, social media, data and databases, digital audio, such as mp3s, and e-books, digital imagery, digital video, video games, computer programmes and software (Vuorikari et al, 2016).

Digital consumer: a person who buys, shares, sell goods and services using digital environments.

Digital environment: a context, or a "place", that is enabled by technology and digital devices, often transmitted over the internet, or other digital means, e.g. mobile phone network, Records and evidence of an individual's interaction with a digital environment constitute their digital footprint. In DigComp and DigCompConsumers, the term digital environment is used as a backdrop for digital actions without naming a specific technology or tool (Vuorikari et al, 2016).

Digital identity: Digital identity is the sum of all digitally available information about an individual. It is becoming increasingly complete and traceable, driven by the exponential growth of available data and the big data capabilities to process it (BCG 2012). For instance, one person could use one email account for personal reasons, and another one for his/her consumption transactions.

Digital marketplace: in the context of DigCompConsumers, the digital marketplace is the array of websites, webshops, apps, games, platforms where consumers can sell, share, and buy goods and services.

Personal data: "personal data" shall mean any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('Data Subject'); an identifiable person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identification number or to one or more factors specific to his physical, physiological, mental, economic, cultural or social identity (EU Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC)).

Privacy policy: the term related to the protection of personal data, for example, how a service provider collects, stores, protects, discloses, transfers and uses information (data) about its users, what data are collected, etc.

Sustainable consumption: Sustainable consumption is the consumption of goods and services that have minimal impact upon the environment, are socially equitable and economically viable whilst meeting the basic needs of humans, worldwide. Sustainable

consumption targets everyone, across all sectors and all nations, from the individual to governments and multinational conglomerates¹¹.

Sustainable production and consumption: "The use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations." (UNCSD, 1994).

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http://www.gdrc.org/sustdev/concepts/22-s-consume.html

ANNEX 2: Mapping between DigComp and DigCompConsumers

The table below shows how the competences defined in the DigCompConsumers framework are underpinned by the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.0).

	Comp	DigCompConsumers			
1.1	Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content	Browsing, searching and filtering information on goods and services			
1.2	Evaluating data, information and digital content	Evaluating and comparing information on goods and services			
		Recognising and evaluating commercial communication and advertisement			
1.3	Managing data, information and digital content				
2.1	Interacting through digital technologies	Interacting in the digital marketplace to buy and sell			
2.2	Sharing through digital technologies	Sharing information with other consumers in the digital marketplace			
		Participating in collaborative economy platforms			
2.3	Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies	Asserting consumers' rights in the digital marketplace			
		Managing payments and finances through digital means			
2.4	Collaborating through digital technologies				
2.5	Netiquette				
2.6	Managing digital identity	Managing digital identity and profile in the digital marketplace			
3.1	Developing digital content				
3.2	Integrating and re-elaborating digital content				
3.3	Copyright and licences	Understanding copyrights, licences, and contracts of digital goods and services			
3.4	Programming				
4.1	Protecting devices				
4.2	Protecting personal data and privacy	Protecting personal data and privacy			
4.3	Protecting health and well-being	Protecting health and safety			
4.4	Protecting the environment	Considering responsible and sustainable consumption in digital markets			
5.1	Solving technical problems				
5.2	Identifying needs and technological responses				
5.3	Creatively using digital technologies				
5.4	Identifying digital competence gaps	Identifying digital consumer competence gaps and limits			

ANNEX 3: Participants at the workshops

Workshop in Brussels on 14-15 December 2015

Frank Molcker	ECDL Foundation
Hanna Turetski	The Consumer Protection Board of Estonia
Cristophe Bernes	INC Paris
Sissel Annie Husebråten	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Oslo
	Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs
Taina Mäntylä	The Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority
Vera Fricke	Federation of German Consumer Organisations
Anna Fielder	
Anita Forsnäsgård	Consumer Agency of Sweden
Mattia Tempini	EC DG JUST
Julien Brugerolle	EC DG JUST
Katja Viertio	EC DG JUST
Anita Fokkema	EC DG JUST
Silvia Pella	EC DG JUST
Riina Vuorikari	EC JRC
Yves Punie	EC JRC
Martin Ulbrich	EC DG CONNECT
FAURE Jean-Pierre	Secretariat, CES
Emanuele Ciriolo	EC DG JRC
Barbara Brečko	Expert

Workshop in Sevilla on 28-29 April 2016

Hanna Turetski	The Consumer Protection Board of Estonia			
Taina Mäntylä	Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority			
Vera Fricke	Federation of German Consumer Organisations			
Cristophe Bernes	INC France			
David Martin	BEUC - European Consumer Organisation			
Rieko Tamefuji	OECD			
Muriel Santoro	Expertise France			
Ingrid Kjorstad	National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO)			
Eva van Reijmersdal	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences University of Amsterdam			
Yves Punie	EC JRC			
Riina Vuorikari	EC JRC			
Stephanie Carretero	EC JRC			
Nuria Rodriguez	EC JRC			
René Van Bavel	EC JRC			
Anita Fokkema	EC DG JUST			
Barbara Brečko	Expert			
Anusca Ferrari	Expert			

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