



## Inclusive Communication Guidelines

### OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of our inclusive communication guidelines is to ensure inclusive language and broad appeal of DigiQ's communication efforts across diverse segments. Inclusive language is the words and phrases that we use to avoid biases, slang, and expressions that discriminate against groups of people based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability. These guidelines build upon established principles of inclusivity and draw inspiration from initiatives undertaken by the European Parliament<sup>1</sup>.

### RATIONALE

When individuals do not see themselves reflected in our communication endeavours, they may perceive that our messaging is not meant for them. Therefore, it is crucial that we make a conscious effort to inclusively represent the entire range of the population in all DigiQ activities and campaigns, challenging preconceived notions tied to gender and other dimensions of diversity. We aspire to create an environment where everyone feels valued and included so that we resonate with more audiences by speaking and writing in ways that everyone understands and makes everyone feel welcome.

### SCOPE

These guidelines seek to provide DigiQ partners with a comprehensive understanding of inclusive communication, its purpose, functions, and guiding principles. It is essential for DigiQ partners to fully engage with and comprehend the significance of mainstreaming equality and diversity into communication outputs. While these guidelines apply to all communication tasks undertaken by DigiQ (e.g., presentations, posters, flyers), it should be noted that human resources-related inclusion issues, such as selection, recruitment,

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament Inclusive Communication Guidelines:  
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/files/grants/media-and-events/en-annex-9-inclusive-communication-guidelines-of-the-european-parliament.pdf>

promotion, and work-life balance, fall outside the scope of this document. Separate guidelines addressing these aspects have been provided by DigiQ.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

DigiQ partners are expected to diligently apply these guidelines in their work and activities, ensuring their incorporation becomes an ongoing practice. To facilitate ease of reference and enable partners to benchmark their practices, specific lists have been included within this document, covering various areas of DigiQ's activities. By consistently adhering to these guidelines, we can cultivate a culture of inclusive communication that reflects the diversity of our audience and reinforces the values we uphold.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **INCLUSIVE VISUALS**

When making decisions regarding images and design, apply our visual communication guidelines to ensure coherence with DigiQ's identity.

- Choose images of diverse people in terms of gender, disability, age and ethnicity, ensuring diverse groups feel visually represented.
- People should be depicted in their everyday environment and in natural poses.
- Avoid using an image showing only women or only men if the group addressed or referred to is mixed.
- Show women and men, and people of different origins in roles and functions of equal value.
- Favour pictures of active behaviour (speaking, shaking hands, walking, writing...).
- Challenge gender stereotypes in images. This could mean choosing a woman to illustrate a topic traditionally considered male, e.g. technology or science. Inversely, choose a man to illustrate a subject traditionally considered female, e.g. family care, human resources management, household-related tasks, etc.
- Images of persons with a disability should aim neither to hide a visible disability nor over-emphasise it. Persons with a disability should be portrayed as able-bodied persons, in a setting where they have equal value.

### **Checklist of useful questions to ask when making the final choice of pictures:**

- Who is in the picture? Choose images of people that are diverse in terms of gender, disability, age and ethnicity, ensuring diverse groups feel visually represented.
- What are the apparent power relations between them? This can be expressed through their physical positions or postures, their facial expression, their clothing, etc.
- What are the possible underlying messages that could be interpreted from this image (ask several people for their opinion, since this can vary enormously)?
- Does it correspond to the message we want to get across?
- If any of the questions above make you doubt the picture's suitability, choose another one.

When working with collaborators, ensure they are also aware of these guidelines.

### **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

Inclusive visuals need to be reinforced with inclusive language. Societal perceptions and media portrayal can feed into gender stereotypes, not only through imagery and narratives but also through language. Gendered language is so common that it can be difficult for many to even notice it. Language powerfully reflects and influences attitudes, behaviour and perceptions, thus using gender-fair and inclusive language can help to reduce gender stereotyping, promote social change and contribute to achieving gender equality.

The same principles should be applied when we speak about vulnerable or disadvantaged groups and our choice of words when describing controversial topics such as migration and refugees. It is important to be respectful and to use neutral language when referring to these groups.

Apply these tips for gender-neutral and inclusive language. Gender-inclusive language is a way of speaking and writing that avoids using gender-specific terms and aims to be more inclusive of all genders:

- Use “workforce” instead of manpower.
- Use “chair”, or “chairperson” instead of “chairman”.

- Use “colleagues,” “team,” or “people” instead of “ladies and gentlemen” or “guys and girls”.
- Use “parental leave” instead of “maternity leave” and “paternity leave”.
- Use digital tools like [Gender Decoder](#) to check gender-neutrality in job ads.

Apply these tips when referring to persons with disabilities:

- Use person-first language: a person with a disability (instead of “disabled person”).
- Emphasize each person’s individuality and capabilities rather than defining them by a condition. Avoid phrases like ‘suffers from’ and passive ‘victim’ words.
- Avoid terms that define the disability as a limitation.
- Do not use collective nouns such as ‘the deaf’ as these groups are not homogeneous.
- Remember that a large majority of disabilities are invisible.

## DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

When creating new web products and maintaining existing ones, use this list of guidelines and incorporate it wherever possible and applicable. These guidelines draw inspiration from the guidelines undertaken by the UK Government <sup>2</sup>.

- Provide alternative text on pictures in digital content, both on websites and on main social media platforms.
- Include alternative text on images that contain information and subtitles on videos.
- Use Camel Case (capitalize the first letter of every word) for hashtags as far as possible.
- Use tools like [WebAIM](#) to ensure web accessibility.
- For people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, use:
  - [WebAIM’s contrast checker](#) tool (avoid bright contrasting colours)
  - Plain language (avoid figures of speech)
  - Bullet points and simple sentences (avoid a wall of text)
  - Descriptive buttons, f.eg. ‘Attach file’
  - Simple and consistent layouts
- For people with a visual disability, use:

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<sup>2</sup> Accessibility in UK Government: <https://accessibility.blog.gov.uk/2016/09/02/dos-and-donts-on-designing-for-accessibility/>

- Readable font sizes
- A clear map of where to find information
- Simple and logical layout
- Descriptive buttons
- Use accessible colour palettes<sup>3</sup>: blue-orange is a common colour-blind-friendly palette and can be used together for data visualization. Avoid red and green together as that can be problematic.
- For people with dyslexia:
  - Support text with visual aids.
  - Use fonts like [OpenDyslexic](#).
  - Align text with left alignment and keep a consistent layout (avoid too much bold, italics or capitalized text).
  - Provide audio formats next to textual formats where possible.
  - Keep content clear and simple.
  - Make it possible to change the contrast between the background and text, wherever possible.
- For people with physical or motorial disabilities:
  - Make large, clickable buttons.
  - Provide space between information/action blocks.
  - Provide speech-online use.
  - Calculate enough time for filling in forms or doing actions.
- For people with hearing problems:
  - Use plain language (avoid figures of speech).
  - Provide subtitles in videos.
  - Make sure that content is not based on hearing only.
  - Use a clear and logical layout.

An example of digital accessibility following some of these guidelines is [www.esero.dk](http://www.esero.dk). You can test the web accessibility of your website at [WebAIM](#).

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<sup>3</sup> Tableau: <https://www.tableau.com/en-gb/blog/examining-data-viz-rules-dont-use-red-green-together#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20blue%2Forange%20is,blue%20to%20someone%20with%20CVD>