

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves today delivered a lecture on the digital society at one of America's most prestigious universities – Stanford University in Silicon Valley.

Invited to speak by the University before an audience of professors and students, the Head of State showcased Estonia's e-governance and e-services (including the national ID card) and discussed the challenges of the digital society that every country will sooner or later have to face.

"If you don't have a digital identity, you don't have security in the digital society," President Ilves said. "For example, our Estonian ID card and its two-layer identification system guarantee that you know who you're communicating with online."

President Ilves underscored the fact that the fundamental basis of the digital society is people's willingness to accept change. "There was a time when there was no such thing as television, or cell phones, or computers," he remarked. "But when we're ready for new things, society too can move forward."

President Ilves said that in order for the digital society to function it is not only a digital basis that is required, but also a legal basis – one that enables people to operate more effectively and more securely in cyber space. "It's equally important that we turn our attention to cyber security, to ensure the protection of people and data," he said.

In the afternoon President Ilves met with Singaporean IT Minister Yaacob Ibrahim, also in Silicon Valley.

From California the Head of State will be continuing on to Minneapolis, where he will receive an honorary doctorate from St Olaf College.

Office of the President

President Ilves discusses future of digital society at Stanford University

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