

Estonia has been a pioneer in the development of e-governance technologies and may also be a pioneer when it comes to giving meaning to the digital society," told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today at a conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the e-Governance Academy, entitled "From E-governance to Open Governance".

According to President Ilves, we must continue our current e-governance success story, contributing further to deciphering the digitised society and analysing its problems and opportunities – this process should be led by the e-Governance Academy, which, being a centre, would develop new ideas about the changes that are taking place in society during the digital era.

He compared the changes that accompany digital development to the invention of the steam engine in the 18th century. "Back then, it also took some time before people realised what sort of social changes this meant," commented the Estonian Head of State.

"We need a similar social analysis today. We do not know exactly what the consequence is of everyone being in direct contact with the rest of the world via the internet – although we already take this for granted," stated President Ilves, adding: "Not only have the processes of communication, governance and spending free time changed, but also the ways in which we think about security and international relations."

According to President Ilves, modern technology will also offer new opportunities to those wanting to restrict freedom: "George Orwell could have never imagined all the possible methods of repression offered by modern technology. Therefore, it is even more important for democratic countries to defend freedom, openness and transparency both on the internet and in our 'offline' lives."

You can listen to the recording of the speech by Toomas Hendrik Ilves here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBcUORzU3CA>

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229