This study evaluates regional information society strategies and their implementation in Western Finland and Lapland in the years 1994-2004. It reviews how these provinces have tried to utilise information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to create welfare services that are jeopardised by threats such as globalisation and migration.

Finland has recently been among the most developed countries when it comes to the information society. Provinces such as Western Finland and especially Lapland aren't, however, generally seen as being as developed as some other areas in Finland. Furthermore, many areas in these provinces suffer from trends that affect their possibilities to create welfare and ICT services.

By utilising three analysis dimensions (networks, regional advantages, accessibility and user skills) it is found that these provinces’ information society strategies differ from each other and that these strategies take into consideration both national goals as well as local settings.

As a conclusion is drawn that the information society development is taking quite well place in both provinces. Networks such as the Centres of Expertise and Multipolis have balanced regional development in both provinces. There have also been several projects that have increased accessibility and user skills in Western Finland and Lapland. Also regional advantages are to some extent utilised in information society projects. It seems, however, that the development of the information society could be improved with better internal and external communication and overall co-ordination. These provinces’ ICT funding has mostly been in line with their information society strategies but also funding could be improved both nationally and internationally.

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