

STUDENTS RISK BEING LEFT WITHOUT VITAL DIGITAL SKILLS IF SCHOOLS DO NOT TAKE A UNIFIED APPROACH TO E-SKILLS

PRESS RELEASE: EMBARGOED UNTIL 14 OCTOBER 2015

Brussels, October 2015

Computing education in schools is in danger of becoming fixated on coding. This trend could leave young people without the skills they will need to progress in school, further studies, and the workplace. That's a key message from a new position paper released by ECDL Foundation today at an event in the European Parliament, hosted by Catherine Stihler MEP.

The paper, titled 'Computing and Digital Literacy: Call for a Holistic Approach', explores the different approaches to teaching e-skills at school, and calls for students to have the opportunity to learn the basics of computing, including coding in addition to digital literacy skills.

Damien O'Sullivan, CEO of ECDL Foundation said, "We need to see an approach to e-skills at school that ensures every student will become digitally literate and will also have the opportunity to explore computing and coding, which will deepen their understanding of digital technology. For some students, this approach will provide a clearer pathway to a career in ICT. For all other students, the approach will prepare them for a career using ICT".

"While some students are being provided with valuable learning opportunities in various areas of computing, there is much diversity in approach and inconsistency in availability across Europe. Our paper calls strongly for a standardised approach that makes sure that both computing and digital literacy are taught as significant areas of digital skills."

The paper was launched at an event in the European Parliament, hosted by Catherine Stihler MEP, and attended by key stakeholders in digital skills from the European Commission, the Parliament, and other key institutions. Participants heard from speakers including Miles Berry of the UK's 'Computing at School', and discussed the paper's findings.

Catherine Stihler MEP, an e-Skills for Jobs Ambassador, added, "Digital skills and training are essential in making products and processes work. Some 90% of jobs require some level of digital skills so ensuring a digitally-ready workforce is critical.

"Providing relevant education and training, from the youngest age possible, is key to creating a more competitive Europe. It is great to see the ECDL Foundation exploring ways to achieve this."

This position paper adds to ECDL Foundation's extensive work on digital literacy policy, including our previous paper on the danger to digital skills education posed by the fallacy of the 'digital native', and supports our work around the world to raise digital literacy levels and equip people with the skills they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- Download the position paper
- Find more information about our paper at: ecd.org/eskillsatschool
- Download our 'e-Skills at School' brochure

About ECDL

ECDL Foundation is an international organisation dedicated to raising digital competence standards in the workforce, education and society. Our certification programmes, delivered through an active network in more than 100 countries, enable individuals and organisations to assess, build and certify their competence in the use of computers and digital tools to the globally-recognised ECDL standard, known as ICDL worldwide.

As a nonprofit social enterprise ECDL Foundation (ICDL Foundation) benefits from the unique support of experts from national computer societies and partners worldwide to develop vendor-independent standards which define the skills and knowledge required to use digital technology effectively. We work with education and training partners, local and regional authorities, national governments, international development organisations as well as public and private sector employers in all sectors, in the delivery of our programmes.

The quality and reputation of ICDL is built on almost twenty years of experience in delivering our certification programmes to over 14 million people and in more than 40 languages worldwide, with more than 2.5 million ICDL tests taken annually. Our success is maintained by our ongoing innovation in certification programme development, our commitment to rigorous test design methodologies, and consistent adherence to our quality assurance standards.

Contact Details

Tom Redford
Digital Communication Officer
Tel.: +32 (0)2 772 8251
Email: tom.redford@ecd.org