

Computing and Digital Literacy: Call for a Holistic Approach

B'Kara, 10th October 2015

Presently in several countries there is an ongoing debate regarding coding skills development and digital literacy in schools. There is a danger that computing education places too much emphasis on coding to the detriment of digital literacy skills.

ECDL Foundation has issued a position paper calling for a unified approach that equips all school students with both coding (or computing) and digital skills.

Two misconceptions exist around digital literacy:

- *First misconception:* Young people who grow up surrounded by computers and tablets intuitively gain digital literacy skills (i.e. they already know how to work with text documents and spreadsheets), and therefore they do not need digital education or training. Extensive research indicates that this is not the case (refer to position paper - link at the bottom).
- *Second misconception:* Computer science is more important for employability than digital literacy skills. This misconception relies on the European Commission forecast that by 2020, Europe might face a shortage of up to 825,000 ICT professionals. However, statistics show that ICT professionals make only around 5% of the total European labour force. In contrast, 90% of jobs will require at least basic digital skills by 2020 but 40% of the European population has insufficient digital skills and 22% has none at all. These numbers confirm that digital literacy skills development is as relevant as computing.

ECDL Foundation recommends that schools should equip students with computing and digital literacy skills. Just like all school students are taught basic science and have the opportunity to go on to study at a more advanced level, ECDL Foundation thinks that every pupil should have an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of basic computing, introducing the academic discipline. This should be done together with the basic ICT skills developed from the very beginning of a student's digital education.

The position paper proposes an approach that balances digital literacy skills with computing from early to final school years. It includes the whole range of skills, from essential skills required to use the computer and get online, to computing and web editing.

At the moment, ECDL Foundation is actively engaged in the development of a new module that defines the essential skills and knowledge in the area of computing in a way that complements the acquisition of digital literacy through the existing modules.

Details about the new ECDL Computing module will be communicated in due course.

- You can download the [position paper](#).
- You can download a [brochure](#) summarising the main topics of the position paper.
- [E-Skills at School](#)

ECDL Malta operates the ECDL certification programme on behalf of the ECDL Foundation which is the certifying authority of the world's leading end-user computer skills certification programme.

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