



Shocking Gaps Between Self-Assessed and Actual Digital Skills Reaffirm Value of Certification

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People risk falling victim to a widening digital skills gap thanks to poor awareness of digital skill levels. ECDL Foundation's latest position paper has examined the results of five digital literacy studies conducted in Europe, which find that people routinely overestimate their digital skills, and lack abilities in areas that are key to workplace productivity.

The paper, which was launched today, looked in detail at the results of studies carried out by the ECDL National Operators in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Switzerland. Even in countries that rank highly on international indexes for quality education systems and use of digital technologies, gaps were found in skills such as word processing, spreadsheets, and using everyday online tools. In one study, conducted in Austria, 94% of participants described their skills as "average" to "very good", but only 39% of them achieved a corresponding test result.

Damien O'Sullivan, CEO of ECDL Foundation said, "We are facing a new digital divide between people who have vital skills for the workplace, and people who don't. This paper shows how widespread the problem is. We are seeing poor digital skills in countries that are recognised for having very digital societies. What I find even more worrying is that people don't even know the extent of the problem or where they themselves are missing ICT skills. The findings of this paper make a strong case for structured training and certification of digital skills, to make sure that the workforce and businesses are ready to benefit from the opportunities that technology offers."

Each of the studies asked participants to rate their digital skills. This self-assessment was then put to the test using practical questions, and the results were compared. Even though countries like Switzerland or Denmark are highly-ranked for the quality of their education systems and on international indexes such as the Digital Economy & Society Index, significant gaps between self-assessment and actual performance were found across most categories of essential computer skills. The results point to the importance of providing evidence, such as certification, for any assessment of skills.

This paper continues ECDL Foundation's extensive work on raising digital competence standards worldwide, and builds on our previous papers on the fallacy of the 'digital native' and computing and digital literacy in schools.

The full position paper is available at:

www.ecdl.com/mt/docs/MeasuringDigitalSkillsPaper1.pdf

In Malta, ECDL Malta is responsible for operating ECDL certification programmes on behalf of the ECDL Foundation which is the certifying authority of the world's leading end-user computer skills certification programme.

For more information about the ECDL programmes view our website www.ecdl.com/mt.

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