Europe Facing Digital 'Lost Generation' Thanks to 'Digital Native' Fallacy

B'Kara, 14th January 2015

Young people can't build their digital skills without support through training and education. That's the main point in the latest position paper from ECDL Foundation, 'The Fallacy of the 'Digital Native': Why Young People Need to Develop their Digital Skills', which was published today.

The paper tackles, head-on, the fallacy of 'digital natives' who can intuitively learn computer skills simply by picking up a tablet or laptop. Using the findings of extensive academic and industry research, it shows the extent of the problem, and the danger for Europe's economy of a digital 'lost generation'.

Damien O'Sullivan, CEO of ECDL Foundation, said, "The new digital divide is a divide between those who have skills for their lifestyle, and those who have skills for the workplace. That will be the differentiator between those who will have access to jobs in the future, and those who might struggle.

"This paper makes a strong argument, based on broad evidence, against assuming young people will be able to get on fine without proper education and training in digital skills."

Even though digital skills are essential to almost every job these days, the actual abilities of employees and young people are, in many cases, shockingly low. For example, a recent study in Germany revealed that only 20% of respondents could successfully apply a paragraph style in a word document. A study in Italy found that 42% of young people were not aware of the security risks that can be involved in wireless Internet access, while research in Australia revealed that 45% of young respondents were only 'rudimentary' users of digital technologies.

The full position paper is available at:

www.ecdl.org/media/TheFallacyofthe'DigitalNative'PositionPaper1.pdf

Further information on the fallacy of the 'digital native' can also be found at:

www.ecdl.org/digitalnativemyth

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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