EUROPE FACING DIGITAL 'LOST GENERATION' THANKS TO 'DIGITAL NATIVE' FALLACY

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brussels, 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 position paper marks the latest step in ECDL Foundation's mission to empower all people around the world, including young people, with proficiency in digital skills and will reinforce extensive work with a range of partner organisations to develop better digital education and training policies.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The full position paper is available at:
  http://www.ecdl.org/media/TheFallacyofthe'DigitalNative'PositionPaper1.pdf
- Further information on the fallacy of the 'digital native' can also be found on our website:
  http://www.ecdl.org/digitalnativemyth

About ECDL

ECDL Foundation is the certifying authority of the leading international computer skills certification programme – ECDL / ICDL. The quality and reputation of our certification programmes are built on over a decade of experience in successfully delivering ICT certification programmes to millions of people in various languages around the world.

Our global success stems from our pioneering role in identifying and developing relevant programme content, our commitment to ensuring rigorous test design methodologies with an ongoing adherence to high quality standards.

ECDL Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that benefits from the unique support of experts from national computer societies and international organisations across the globe.

Contact Details

Tom Redford
Digital Communication Officer
Tel.: +32 2 772 8251
Email: tom.redford@ecdl.org