



ICT student numbers on the rise again. European firms bound to adopt digital technologies faster in the future

BRUSSELS (December 18th 2015) - The gap between the number of job seekers in Europe and the number of unfilled digital jobs is forecast to shrink, according to the latest research from analyst Empirica. This is one of the findings unveiled at the conference *'Transforming Europe towards the digital age'* in Luxembourg on the 15th December 2015. The Digital Entrepreneurship Scoreboard 2015, which shows how all EU 28 countries fare in the digital transformation of their businesses, was also released at the event.

The shortage of trained candidates will reach 756,000 by 2020. This is down from an estimated 820,000, forecast at the beginning of this year.

The revised estimate reflects an increase in the number of ICT students, Empirica found. The number of ICT students has been in decline in recent years.

While the largest companies are managing to digitally transform themselves, most European firms across a wide range of industries are still lagging behind, according to new data presented in the Scoreboard.

Only 1.7% of European companies make full use of advanced digital technologies such as big data analytics, cloud, social media and mobile solutions. Adoption rates differ from country to country: from 1.2% adoption in Italy to 2.6 % in the UK. Overall 41% of European businesses do not use any of these technologies.

Big data presents a huge opportunity to European businesses. However, the percentage of firms making smart usage of big data analytics remains limited ranging from only 4.3% in Spain to 14.3% in the UK.

This constitutes a big, untapped potential concluded the Digital Entrepreneurship Scoreboard. Across all sectors, digital can drive productivity and innovation, by allowing European organisations to reach new markets and customers, automate and streamline business processes and create completely new business models, products and services.

Policy matters: countries with sound policies are well placed in the digital age. Nordic countries are world-class players due to virtuous circle combining high RTD expenditure, adapted financial instruments and top class skills.

With an introduction by Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska, the Digital Entrepreneurship Scoreboard measures national progress in the digital transformation of European industry throughout the 28 EU Member States. It features individual country reviews, identifies key success factors and proposes country-specific policy recommendations.





“Digital transformation and new disruptive business models are driving the fourth industrial revolution and this is a great opportunity for Europe. The Scoreboard will be the political compass for future policy measures, to create a stable business environment and boost significant business investments” said Kirsi Ekroth-Manssila from the European Commission, DG GROWTH.

The eSkills for Jobs campaign, run by DIGITALEUROPE and European Schoolnet, is part of the European Commission’s efforts to adapt Europe’s economy to the new digital reality. The digital transformation is a process championed in the European Commission’s Digital Single Market strategy. The skills needed to transform traditional industries mean that eSkills will be needed more widely than ever.

The narrowing of the skills gap is *“excellent news, after eight years of hard work led by the European Commission to address this problem,”* said John Higgins, Director General of DIGITALEUROPE.

However, he added: *“We certainly shouldn’t be complacent. Over three quarters of a million unfilled digital jobs in 2020 is still a big problem that will require more work to address.”*

Tackling the shortage of digitally trained job seekers is one of the key topics being addressed at the event in Luxembourg on the 15th December 2015. Another important topic is digital entrepreneurship, with the WATIFY campaign providing delegates with an update on how it is trying to encourage entrepreneurs across the EU.

The WATIFY campaign is also part of European Commission’s strategy to foster digital transformation of industry across the EU. The campaign is managed by Deloitte, DIGITALEUROPE and EBN.

“Europe has to compete at the high-end and ensure its traditional industry fully captures the value of digitalisation,” said Vincent Fosty, a partner at the Belgian arm of DELOITTE.

Since its launch last year the WATIFY campaign has held 187 events across 20 different countries, reaching an audience of over 18,000 people. And WATIFY-branded videos have been viewed nearly 300,000 times on YouTube and Facebook.

The Luxembourg event also unveils the latest **e-Skills Manifesto**, a document which highlights the importance of digital skills for the European economy, as it embarks on the digital transformation that is reshaping economies around the world.

“The e-Skills Manifesto comes at a time when there is a heightened sense of urgency to equip citizens for the jobs of the future,” said John Higgins.

The latest Manifesto includes a special introduction by Andrus Ansip, Vice-President of the European Commission, and contributions from a cross section of eSkills experts including senior corporate leaders, policy makers, leading market researchers and country experts who provide a comprehensive analysis of the digital transformation, its challenges and opportunities, in Europe and beyond.

“To fully benefit from the digital transformation, Europe must support the recognition for digital skills and qualifications, raise its level of ICT professionalism and develop a pool of talented e-Leaders,” said Kirsi Ekroth-Manssila.

The e-Skills Manifesto is a blueprint for making this happen. Now in its fourth edition, the Manifesto is based on a broad cross-section of perspectives and is a stepping-stone on the road to developing a policy framework that will deliver a digitally literate workforce and a technologically advanced and competitive European economy.

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