

ECDL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS EDITION

New ICDL Launched in Zambia

European e-Competence Framework
for ICT Users Published

WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER 2013 ISSUE OF THE ECDL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER.

ECDL / ICDL IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD



NEW ICDL LAUNCHED IN ZAMBIA

4 September saw the official launch of New ICDL in Zambia. Over 40 delegates gathered in Lusaka, including ICDL representatives from Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

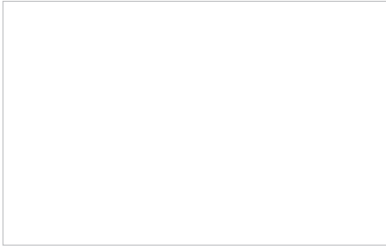
Guest of honour at the launch was the Deputy Permanent Secretary of Education, Mrs Christine Mayondi who was very enthusiastic upon hearing of the advantages that New ICDL will bring to the people of Zambia. She outlined that her office would write an introductory letter to education institutions across Zambia, encouraging them to adopt ICDL. Her sentiments were echoed by Mrs Priscah Chellah, a representative from TEVETA (Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority) who stressed the role that ICDL could play at primary and secondary level, in order to ease the skills deficit in higher institutions.

Encouraging centres to reach out to candidates about New ICDL with the use of social media was an important discussion point and one that must be utilised to make the maximum impact. Further presentations and breakout groups among delegates provided an opportunity for lively discussion about the benefits that a more flexible programme will bring to test centres and candidates.



EUROPEAN E-COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK FOR ICT USERS PUBLISHED

This CEN ICT Skills workshop project, funded by the European Commission and led by ECDL Foundation, has been running since December 2011. The first version of this reference framework for ICT user competences has now been approved for publication by the European Commission and CEN, completing an action of the 'Digital Agenda for Europe' in the process. The framework is another key step in contributing to reducing the persistence of digital illiteracy, a challenge outlined in the European Union's strategy 'e-Skills for the 21st Century'.



LAUNCH AND CELEBRATION OF NEW ECDL IN SWITZERLAND

New ECDL was launched by ECDL Switzerland at their Test Centre Day on the 24 September. 200 participants gathered in Zurich for the launch, which was also attended by ECDL Foundation Chief Executive, Damien O'Sullivan. Through discussion groups and presentations, the delegates were informed of the development process of the new ECDL. A portfolio of marketing materials, which was developed to support the launch, was also presented.

ECDL Switzerland took the opportunity to launch their new website, www.ecdl.ch/new, and were delighted with the positive feedback received from participants.



ICDL, A REQUIREMENT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN YEMEN AND SUDAN

The University of Science and Technology (UST) in Yemen has adopted ICDL for all of its students. Existing foundation-level computer courses have been cancelled from study plans, and now all students must obtain ICDL as part of the requirements for passing from second to third year.

UST was established in 1994 as the first private university in Yemen. It has a main campus in Sana'a and branches in the following cities: Aden, Hadramout, Hodeidah, Ibb, and Ta'izz. In addition, it has another branch for female students. UST has six ICDL accredited centres on its campuses. Current enrolment of UST exceeds 10,000 students.

Future University (FU) in Khartoum, Sudan, has also taken a decision to make ICDL a requirement for all of its students. FU is a private university, with the majority of its students being the children of Sudanese working abroad. FU has an active ICDL accredited centre for more than a decade now.



TECMEDIA AND IT SECURITY, COSTA RICA

Tecmedia IT Academy from Costa Rica, an Accreditation Partner of ICDL Latinoamérica, recently launched an IT Security course, based on the flexibility of ICDL Profile, for high profile government staff members.

The 5 week course is intended to train and certify them with digital skills, highlighting in particular the important role that IT Security plays in the functioning of any organisation that relies on technology.

If maintaining security and confidentiality fails because an organisation did not take enough precautions, it would be detrimental for the organisation's reputation. The essence of security is protecting information from unauthorised access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification or destruction.

Every organisation should have people trained in this field, although it is particularly crucial for governments that keep sensitive civilian and national-security data in their information systems.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR ICDL IN SOUTH AFRICA, SWAZILAND, LESOTHO, NAMIBIA & BOTSWANA

ECDL Foundation and ICDL South Africa have signed a new agreement appointing ICDL South Africa to manage the ICDL programme in the territories of South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho, as well as to conduct development work (on behalf of ICDL Africa) in Namibia and Botswana.

The agreement runs until 2018 and aims to bring digital skills to 100,000 individuals during that time, with ICDL South Africa opening a new office in

Johannesburg in response to increased activity in the Gauteng area.

The new agreement with ICDL South Africa is a significant step in the development of ICDL across Africa. The partnership empowers ICDL South Africa to bring their extensive operational expertise and experience to markets across Southern Africa, and to continue to act in a mentoring role in increasing access to ICDL in new territories.

ICDL AND PENNSYLVANIA'S INTERMEDIARY UNITS

Pennsylvania's 29 intermediate units were established in 1971 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The intermediate units are entrepreneurial, highly skilled, technology-rich providers of cost-effective, instructional, and operational services to school districts, charter schools, and over 2,400 non-public and private schools. Additionally, intermediate units are direct providers of quality instruction to over 50,000 Pennsylvania students.

Today, intermediate units continue to fulfil their mission of service by addressing traditional and emerging needs, serving as essential links for learning in Pennsylvania, and as a liaison between local schools and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

In 2003, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), located in the city of Pittsburgh, introduced ICDL to teachers in western Pennsylvania by getting it approved for continuing education credits needed for maintaining teaching certifications. They also introduced it to their staff, encouraging staff to complete the ICDL certification programme and rewarding those who did so with a 1% raise based on the knowledge that they could expect productivity to increase by at least 3%. In 2006, the AIU implemented ICDL in Pennsylvania State Corrections Institutions; helping soon to be released inmates obtain valuable computer skills.

Intermediate units that have recently implemented ICDL are the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, and the Capitol Area Intermediate Unit. These IUs offer education programmes in juvenile correctional institutions and have begun offering ICDL in those facilities based on the recommendation of the PACTT Alliance (the Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Training Alliance).

Jill Bargiel, a teacher at the Tuscarora intermediate unit, says that she particularly likes the flexibility that ICDL offers because students may be with the institution for just 60 days or they could be there much longer. Additional intermediate units expect to implement the ICDL during the coming year.

ICDL EXPANDS INTO TAJIKISTAN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

ICDL Asia Accreditation Partner, the University of Central Asia (UCA), has kicked off a major drive to expand the availability of the ICDL programme in Tajikistan through partnerships with several Government agencies.

UCA, which also offers ICDL directly to students at its School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) locations in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, is an educational institution founded by the Governments of the three countries, and His Highness the Aga Khan.

ICDL Asia General Manager Daniel Palmer, and UCA SPCE Deputy Director Gulnara Djunushalieva met with senior officials in Dushanbe, including the Deputy Minister of Labour, the Deputy Minister of Education, and experts from the Tajik Civil Service Training Institute.

SMEs make up 99% of all European businesses. Advice from Seth Godin on Why Small Businesses Fail

Source: Seth Godin: Why Small Businesses Fail

Agreements to formalise the adoption of the ICDL programme by these agencies are expected in the near future, with UCA providing Tajik language support and materials as well as enforcement of ICDL Asia quality assurance standards.



AQAS RECEIVES OFFICIAL DELEGATION FROM SUDAN

Advanced Quality Assurance Systems (AQAS), the ICDL National Operator in Sudan, has received in its headquarters in Jordan, a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Science and Communications in Sudan. The delegation comprised of the Director-General of the National Information Centre (NIC), Manager of Training Department at NIC, manager of Projects Department at NIC, and a consultant. The visit of NIC representatives lasted for several days. AQAS executive management and NIC delegates discussed different ways for cooperation between both parties.

AQAS has recently conducted a new ICDL awareness campaign in Sudan. In this campaign, anyone could sit for the ICDL diagnostic tests for free. Arrangements were made with the test provider (Specto Ltd.) to donate the diagnostics and the accredited centres to open their labs to citizens without any charge from either party. The campaign was highly publicised and was a great success.

FOR DISCUSSION



DEFINING 21ST CENTURY LITERACIES

8 September was International Literacy Day.

In fact, it was the 48th one since the UN started it in 1965. UNESCO deems literacy “a fundamental human right and the foundation for lifelong learning”, considering it vital to the success of individuals, communities and societies.

Each year, the day has a different theme, putting emphasis on what role literacy can play to address world issues. In 2008, the focus was on Literacy and Epidemics with an emphasis on HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria. For 2009, the theme was Literacy and Empowerment with emphasis on gender equality.

A quick glance at the UN's Millennium Goals shows encouraging progress. Gender gaps in youth literacy rates have narrowed, from 90 literate young women for every 100 young men in 1990, up to 95 women in 2010. More children than ever are attending primary school; 90% in developing regions in 2010, up from 82% in 1999.

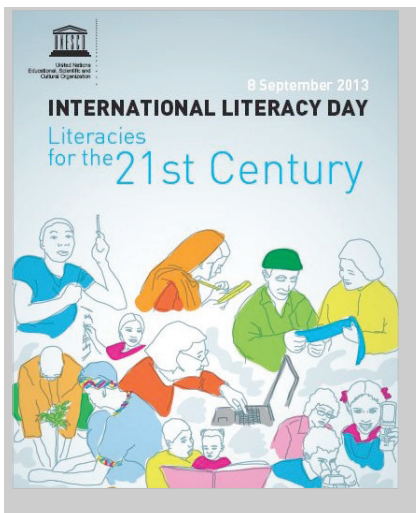
It's not all good news. A staggering 123 million people age 15 to 24 do not have basic reading and writing skills, and 61% of those are female. The UN – and all of us – still have a lot of work to do before 2015.

So what does all this mean for this year's observance?

This year the theme was Literacies for the 21st Century. UNESCO describes this as “the need to realize basic literacy skills for all as well as equip everyone with more advanced literacy skills as part of lifelong learning.”

It's more of an abstract theme than previous years, which they admit on the day's webpage. They pose the question: “Is it possible to determine in a diverse world a minimum set of basic literacy skills?”

Digital, trans- and plain old literacy



EU report on online behaviour of 0-8 year olds shows children have digital footprints from a very young age

Source: "Young children and their internet use" – www.eukidsonline.net



There has been regular hijacking of the word literacy in the last two decades, diluting its meaning and scope. David Buckingham noted many examples in his 2008 essay *Defining digital literacy - What do young people need to know about digital media?* We've had everything from visual literacy to cine-literacy, information literacy to digital literacy. The latest one seems to be transliteracy.

We use the term 'digital literacy' often, and it seems to be the literacy du jour for the 21st century. However, there is no agreed definition for it between academics, educators, governments and bodies such as UNESCO.

UNESCO's definition of 'literacy' itself is considered functional; as in 'mastery of simple cognitive and practical skills.' We consider digital literacy on the same lines, defining it as the proficient skills in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that empowers individuals, organisations and society.

However, Buckingham feels digital literacy should be much wider in scope. He wants it to entail a critical evaluation of all digital platforms and media, from computer games to the internet, along a framework of representation, language, production and audience.

He criticises "popular guides to digital literacy... [which] still tend to focus on technical «know-how» that is relatively easy to acquire, and on skills that are likely to become obsolete fairly rapidly."

We'll have to challenge you on that one, David. In our experience, the core computer skills that make the fabric of digital literacy do not become 'obsolete'. Our ECDL / ICDL programme is 17 years old; that's older than some of the people taking the ECDL exams. In that time, software is updated, computer screens get thinner and printers go wireless; but anyone digitally literate would be unfazed by these changes.

Buckingham's framework sounds more applicable to media studies and semiotics than the 21st century literacies that UNESCO is promoting. Instead of looking to the world of academia, let's look at the world that UNESCO works in and makes changes in.

Digital literacy in the 21st Century Digital literacy, in the media and politician's speeches, is usually mentioned in the same breath as Digital Divide.

The Digital Divide is the inequality between countries, regions, groups and classes in terms of their access and knowledge of ICT. It has been declared bridged by some commentators, saying that more people are online, of every age and education, due to increased access to smartphones and tablets. This hardware is relatively affordable and easy to use, and much less intimidating and costly than a PC.

This, unfortunately, is only half the story, and was illustrated recently by some surprising statistics. In the United States, the biggest economy in the world, 1 in 5 citizens don't use the internet, and 2 in 5 don't have home broadband.

Mashable's report on the issues behind these statistics highlighted communities and schools in particular. They discovered that limited access to PCs and broadband is leaving young people without the basic digital skills for further education and later employment. They can't apply for college or a job online because they have no PC access, and can't type anyway. They have smartphones, but can't afford the high data tariffs. There's a huge reliance on public libraries and open Wi-Fi.

As one exasperated teacher exclaimed;

"They're all over Twitter but don't know how to save a Word document."
Another teacher admitted that he had more access to computers when he was in high school in the late 90s than his students do now.

This situation severely limits these young people's prospects for education, employment and contribution to society, and it's a pattern appearing around the world. If the digital divide has been bridged by technology, it has not bridged this social divide.

Imagine the sense of scandal if it emerged these young people left high school unable to read or write; the original concept of literacy. Literacy is the foundation of education; everything else is built on the premise that we should be able to express ourselves through written language, and understand the expressions of others.

The platforms for expression have evolved from paper and books: now we have social networks, blogs, online magazines and forums. E-commerce, e-government and soon 95% of jobs, will require computer skills, or digital literacy. Access to hardware is not enough.

Digital literacy is a human right; and not a post-grad or an extra-credit college course or a MOOC. It's the right to engage in society, e-commerce, education and employment; to realise and push the full potential of these institutions. And when that right is extended to all populations – with no gaps in gender or region or age or ethnicity – that's when we'll consider the planet literate.

We applaud UNESCO's call to recognise the Literacies for the 21st Century, and continue to work toward a day when such as call is no longer required.

Until then, hope you had a nice International Literacy Day

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND REPORTS



Join the startup manifesto movement.

Supported by 9 of Europe's most successful tech entrepreneurs.

Sign the Manifesto

EDUCATION AND SKILLS ARE TOP PRIORITIES FOR EUROPE'S TECH ENTREPRENEURS

Teachers should be made digitally confident and competent, universities should be encouraged to add digital components to their curriculum, and EU countries should offer a digital certificate course to provide basic digital skills to graduates. These are some of the 22 key measures from the Startup Europe Manifesto put forward by a group of leading European tech entrepreneurs. The objective of this action plan is to overcome roadblocks that are threatening Internet-driven economic growth and to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in Europe. So far, 3000 people have signed the Startup Europe Manifesto.



BECOME A SUPPORTER OF THE SAFER INTERNET DAY 2014

Safer Internet Day will be celebrated worldwide on 11 February 2014 around the theme 'Let's create a better Internet together'. Organisations interested in this campaign are invited to [register online](#) to become a supporter of Safer Internet Day 2014. All kinds of activities will be organised to raise awareness on online safety in over 100 countries across all continents. On the same topic, the London School of Economics released a [new report on children's online safety](#) which recommends the development of education packages for parents that would be aimed at specific age groups. This report looks at emerging policy priorities for online safety regarding children from birth to eight years old.



EC ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR A SINGLE TELECOMS MARKET

The European Commission recently announced the Connected Continent legislative package in order to turn Europe into a global digital leader. The proposed measures include an EU-wide protection of net neutrality, the abolishment of roaming charges in the EU, and simpler rules to encourage cross-border investments. Europe currently risks missing out on the opportunities that ICT can deliver for growth and employment because of the absence of a genuine single market for electronic communications.

DIGITAL DIVIDE AND A £2 BILLION SKILLS GAP

A Social Digital Research Symposium led by the LSE, Ofcom and Tinder Foundation and comprising academic institutions and charities is attempting to address digital exclusion in the UK. Go ON UK says that around 16 million people in the UK aged 15 and over do not have basic online skills but 90 per cent of all jobs are set to require ICT literacy by 2015.

Dr Ellen Helsper at the LSE told ComputerworldUK. 'We hope to have an impact with the government and regulators who are really trying to make sure that the population of the country is digitally skilled and capable of being engaged with the information society that we are moving towards.' This dovetails nicely with a new survey undertaken for O2 which shows that government and the education systems need to invest much more in digital education if we are to plug the forthcoming skills gap. The report estimates that Britain will need 750,000 skilled digital workers by 2017 and that if the UK can't support that growth the skills gap in the digital marketing industry could end up costing the UK up to £2bn a year.

Businesses must proactively seek out opportunities to collaborate to maximise the digital growth opportunity and harness the potential of the next generation. As digital natives, young people possess valuable skills that will be the future fuel of our economy, but not enough is being done to harness them.

Source: BCS (<http://www.bcs.org/content/conWebDoc/51314>)