SCALE UP

DIGITAL SKILLS FOR THE LABOUR MARKET

Scaling-up Skills for Strengthening Inclusion and Youth Employability

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Introduction

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, proficiency in digital skills has become a cornerstone of success across diverse sectors. As we delve into this comprehensive Digital Skills for the Labour Market Toolkit, we embark on a journey to bridge the digital skills gap and empower individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern professional world. From understanding the nuances of online research to crafting a strong digital presence and effectively utilizing social media for job searching, each chapter unfolds a wealth of insights and strategies.

This toolkit not only encapsulates the core digital competencies essential for the job market but also delves into the art of creating a robust online identity and employing effective communication in the digital world. As we explore the initiatives undertaken by the European Union to bolster digital skills and delve into the practical aspects of job searching and online presence, this guide aims to equip individuals with the tools necessary for success in the digital era when looking for a job.

Chapter 1: Understanding the Digital Skills Gap

In today's world, digital skills are as essential as literacy and numeracy. Over 90% of professional roles now demand a basic level of digital proficiency. However, a significant 44% of Europeans, including 37% in the workforce, lack these skills.

Basic digital skills in the EU
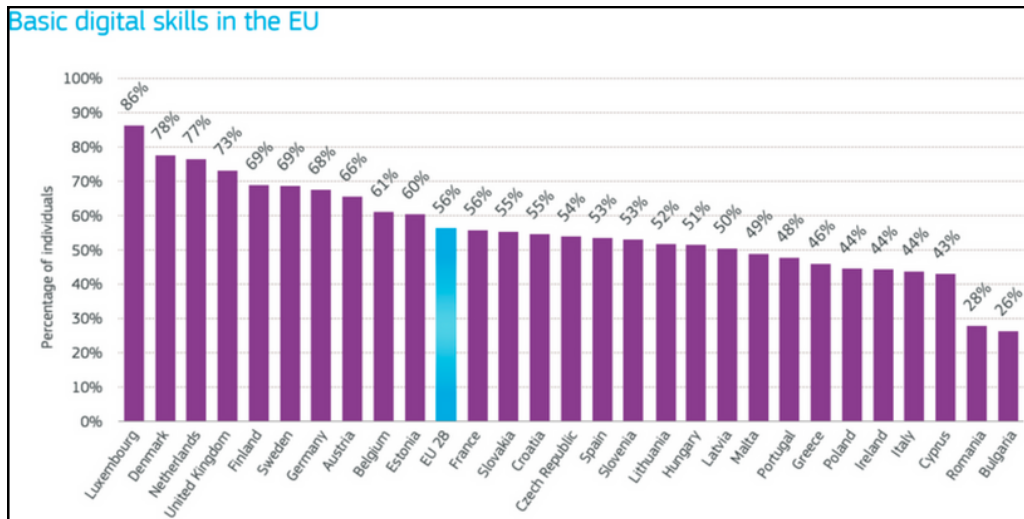
The EU has rolled out comprehensive initiatives to address this gap:

1/ EU Skills Agenda: a five-year plan to help individuals and businesses develop more and better skills and to put them to use. It sets objectives to be achieved by 2025 involving people 16 to 74 years-old, and different Programmes such as Erasmus Plus, InvestEU, and European Solidarity Corps.

2/ Digital Education Action Plan: aims to support the adaptation of the education and training systems of Member States to the digital age, in time frame 2021-2027. The Action Plan is a call for greater cooperation at European level on digital education to address the challenges and it calls out to a digital transformation.

3/ Digital Skills and Job Coalition: brings together member states, companies and organisations to fill up the digital gap. The Actions they can take are: training unemployed people, hosting massive open online courses (MOOCs) for teachers, offering coding classes for children or cutting edge training for ICT specialists.

4/ Upskilling Pathways Initiative: adopted in 2016, enables adults who did not learn to read, write, count or did not acquire digital skills in school to do so

later in life.

5/ Digital Opportunity Traineeship Programme: give up to 6,000 students hands-on experience in fields such as cybersecurity, data analytics, quantum or artificial intelligence as well as programming and software development.

Member States' Initiatives: 16 Member States have adopted digital skills strategies aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills or are in the process of doing so. Countries with comprehensive national digital skills strategies include Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland,

Portugal, United Kingdom.

Chapter 2: Digital Skills for Job Seekers

Defining Digital Skills

Digital skills encompass the ability to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks effectively. These skills are crucial for personal and professional fulfillment. Digital skills are a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities.

Essential Skills foor Job Seekers:

Among the digital skills, we have highlighted the most important and essential when it comes to job seeking.

1/ Online Research: Mastering effective methods for researching potential employers and industries online.

In the dynamic landscape of job hunting, mastering the art of online research is crucial for prospective employees. Effective online research not only allows job seekers to explore potential employers but also aids in understanding industry dynamics and job market trends. Here, we delve into comprehensive methods for researching potential employers, industries, and staying abreast of job market trends online.

Exploring Potential Employers

Company Websites: Unveiling the Essence

One of the primary avenues for online research is exploring the official websites of companies you are interested in.

These digital spaces serve as virtual gateways, offering a wealth of information about the organization's identity, values, and mission. The "*About Us*" section becomes a treasure trove, providing insights into the company's history, core principles, and future aspirations. Additionally, perusing recent news or press releases on the website unveils the latest developments and achievements, allowing you to align your aspirations with the company's trajectory.

LinkedIn Company Profiles: Navigating Professional Networks

LinkedIn emerges as a pivotal resource for job seekers, offering a unique vantage point into a company's culture, current employees, and recent updates. Company profiles on LinkedIn provide a panoramic view of the organizational ecosystem. By exploring the profiles of current employees, you gain valuable insights into the team dynamics and the skills valued by the company. Furthermore, following the company's official page ensures that you stay informed about any announcements, events, or shifts in the organizational landscape.

Glassdoor and Employee Reviews: Unveiling Work Culture

Navigating the landscape of employee reviews on platforms like Glassdoor offers an unfiltered glimpse into a company's work culture. These reviews, often anonymous, provide candid accounts of employees' experiences, shedding light on aspects like work-life balance, job satisfaction, and the overall work environment.

"The collective voice of current and former employees can serve as a crucial guidepost, helping you gauge whether the company aligns with your professional expectations.

In conclusion, effective online research is an indispensable skill for job seekers, offering a strategic lens into potential employers and the broader job market. By harnessing the power of official websites, professional networking platforms like LinkedIn, and employee review platforms, you not only gather information but also make informed decisions, ensuring that your career journey aligns seamlessly with your aspirations.

2/ **Basic Computer Literacy**: *Understanding and using common digital tools and applications.*

Understanding and using common digital tools, including word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation software. This includes the **Office Package** and its functions, communicating and receiving informations electronically, understanding of key information technology concepts and components.

3/ **Email Etiquette**: *Crafting professional emails and managing email communication.*

Effective email communication is a cornerstone of professional correspondence. Mastering the art of crafting professional emails involves a meticulous approach, encompassing key elements for seamless communication. Let's break down the **essential components** and best practices to enhance your email etiquette.

Elements of a Professional Email

Subject Line:

Keep it concise: Use fewer than 60 characters.

Clearly state the goal: Summarize the purpose of your email in one sentence.

Importance of a subject line: Facilitates easy retrieval and sets expectations for the recipient.

Salutation:

Tailor your greeting based on the relationship:

"*Dear*" for formal or unfamiliar connections (e.g., hiring managers or new clients).

"*Hello*" or "*Hi*" for familiar professional relationships (e.g., colleagues or managers).

Ensure proper salutation etiquette to establish a positive tone.

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Recipient Field:

Understand the recipient field distinctions:

To: Directly addressed recipients.

CC (Carbon Copy): Receives the same email but is not the primary recipient.

BCC (Blind Carbon Copy): Hidden recipients, maintaining privacy.

Body of the Email:

Mirror letter-writing structure: Introduce, elaborate, and conclude.

Tailor the length: Keep emails concise and to the point.

Include a closing remark, such as "Please let me know if you have any questions" or "Look forward to hearing from you."

Closing and Signature:

Select appropriate closing words: Regards, Best, Sincerely, Thanks, Kind regards.

Utilize email program features to set a fixed signature for consistency.

By incorporating these elements and adhering to best practices, you elevate the professionalism of your emails, fostering effective and respectful communication in the professional realm. Remember, each aspect contributes to the overall impression you leave on your recipients.

Chapter 3: Building a Strong Digital Presence

In the contemporary professional landscape, establishing a robust digital presence and optimizing your curriculum vitae (CV) for search engines are integral steps towards career success. This chapter outlines key strategies for creating a compelling digital footprint and an SEO-oriented CV.

Professional Social Media Profiles

- **Profile Completeness:** Completing all sections of your LinkedIn profile is crucial. This includes the summary, work experience, skills, and education. An optimized profile enhances visibility in search results, increasing your chances of being noticed by potential employers.

- **Professional Photos**: Selecting a high-quality and professional profile picture is paramount. This visual element creates a positive first impression and adds credibility to your profile.

- **Compelling Headlines**: Craft attention-grabbing headlines that succinctly communicate your professional identity and aspirations. This concise statement serves as a quick introduction to your profile.

Monitor Your Online Presence

- **Google Search Results**: Regularly Google yourself to assess your online presence. This proactive approach allows you to manage and mitigate any potentially negative content. Actively curate your online narrative.

- **Privacy Settings**: Adjust privacy settings on social media platforms to control the visibility of personal information. Maintaining a professional online image requires a mindful approach to privacy.

SEO-Oriented Curriculum Vitae

- <u>Layout:</u> Organize your CV into sections such as summary, skills, work experience, and education. Tailor the content based on the job vacancy you are applying for.

- <u>Strategic Placement of Keywords</u>: Integrate keywords naturally throughout your CV. This not only aligns with the employer's needs but also enhances the document's search engine optimization (SEO) potential.

- <u>Tailor Each Job</u>: Customize your CV for each job application by incorporating keywords from the specific job description. This targeted approach enhances relevance and increases your chances of standing out.

- <u>Use Standard Fonts and Formats</u>: Ensure compatibility with applicant tracking systems (ATS) by using standard fonts and formats. This guarantees that your CV is easily readable and parsed by automated systems.

- Optimize File Name: When saving your CV as a file, use a clear and descriptive file name. For instance, "YourName_CV_IndustryKeyword.pdf." This simple yet crucial step aids in file organization and retrieval.

- International Job Applications: If applying for a job in a different country, conduct research on job application norms specific to that country. Adapt your CV accordingly, considering cultural variations. Notably, in Spain, CVs typically do not include a picture.

Be Aware of Your Personal Social Media

- Profile Privacy: Customize privacy settings on personal accounts, such as Instagram, to restrict access to approved followers. Maintaining control over who sees your content contributes to a professional online image.

- Mindful Posting: Exercise caution in your personal account posts, even in a more casual setting. Avoid content that might be deemed unprofessional or misinterpreted by potential employers.

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- <u>Customized Privacy Settings on Facebook</u>: Leverage granular control over privacy settings on Facebook. Review and customize settings for posts, friend requests, and search visibility using your email address or phone number.

- <u>Highlight Professional Elements</u>: On personal Facebook profiles, emphasize professional or community involvement. Showcase volunteer work, attendance at industry events, and the sharing of relevant articles to bolster your professional image.

- <u>Public vs. Private Tweets</u>: Twitter's option to choose between public and private tweets allows flexibility. For professional engagement, consider maintaining a public profile and curate content accordingly.

By conscientiously implementing these strategies, you can enhance your digital presence, optimize your CV for discoverability, and present a cohesive and professional image to potential employers.

Chapter 4: Integrating Social Media & Online Communication Skills

In the era of digital connectivity, leveraging social media and honing online communication skills are pivotal aspects of a successful job search. This chapter provides insights into the strategic use of platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, along with tips for effective virtual networking.

LinkedIn in Job Searching

- Optimized Profile: Ensure your LinkedIn profile is complete and optimized. A comprehensive profile serves as a dynamic representation of your professional identity.

- Keywords: Incorporate relevant keywords in your profile. Recruiters often use keywords to search for potential candidates, making this a critical element for visibility.

- <u>Skills and Endorsements</u>: Add key skills to your profile and seek endorsements from colleagues and connections. Endorsements enhance your profile's credibility and demonstrate your proficiency.

- <u>Networking</u>: Strategically connect with professionals in your industry, alumni, and recruiters. Expanding your network opens doors to new opportunities and provides valuable insights.

- <u>Engage with Content</u>: Actively engage with industry-related content by liking, commenting, and sharing posts. This not only increases visibility but also fosters connections within your professional community.

- <u>Connecting with Industry Professionals</u>: Follow companies of interest. This keeps you informed about company updates and may lead to the discovery of job postings in your feed.

Twitter and Job Search

- <u>Strategic Use of Twitter:</u> Follow relevant accounts, including companies, industry leaders, and job search platforms. Twitter serves as a dynamic platform for real-time updates.

- <u>Job Search Hashtags:</u> Leverage job-search-related hashtags, such as #JobSearch or industry-specific ones. Following these hashtags can lead to the discovery of job postings and networking opportunities.

- <u>Engaging with Industry Influencers</u>: Engage with influencers by retweeting their content, replying to their tweets, and sharing industry insights. This enhances your visibility within the professional community.

- <u>Staying Updated on Job Opportunities</u>: Set up job alerts on Twitter. Creating specific searches for job-related keywords ensures you receive notifications when new tweets match your criteria.

Chapter 5: Ensuring Privacy and Security Online

In an age dominated by digital interactions, understanding and managing privacy and security online is paramount for maintaining a positive professional image. This chapter delves into the nuances of privacy settings, the concept of a digital footprint, and the impact of online activities on your overall professional image.

Privacy Settings

Each social media platform comes with its own set of privacy settings. It's essential to navigate and understand these settings to have control over the visibility of your profile, posts, and contact information. By managing these settings, you can ensure that your personal information is shared only with the intended audience, fostering a secure online environment.

Digital Footprint

A digital footprint is the trace of online data left by an individual's activities. This encompasses social media posts, comments, photos, and other interactions on the internet. Digital footprints are often permanent and can be uncovered by potential employers during the hiring process.

Employers frequently conduct online research on candidates, making it crucial to curate a positive digital footprint. A positive online presence contributes to an enhanced professional image and can positively influence how you are perceived in a professional context.

Professional Image

Your digital footprint is an integral part of your professional image. Positive and relevant online activities not only showcase your skills and interests but also contribute to a favorable perception by potential employers. Conversely, a negative digital footprint, marked by unprofessional behavior or content, may raise concerns and adversely impact your professional image.

By being mindful of your online presence, managing privacy settings, and curating a positive digital footprint, you can actively contribute to a professional image that aligns with your career aspirations. This chapter provides insights into navigating the digital landscape responsibly to safeguard your privacy, enhance security, and cultivate a favorable professional image.

Chapter 5: Ensuring Privacy and Security Online

In the dynamic landscape of job searching, leveraging specialized platforms can significantly enhance your prospects. This chapter explores key platforms tailored to facilitate job searches, focusing on opportunities within the European Union and beyond.

EURES: Targeted Mobility Scheme

EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal, plays a pivotal role in assisting EU citizens in finding job opportunities, traineeships, or apprenticeships in other EU countries, as well as Norway and Iceland. The Targeted Mobility Scheme underlines the commitment to cross-border mobility, promoting access to diverse professional experiences within the European community. Stay connected with @eures_targeted_mobility_scheme.

EU Youth Portal

For young individuals navigating the complexities of living, learning, and working in Europe, the EU Youth Portal emerges as a valuable resource. Offering comprehensive information at both European and country levels, this platform is a hub for opportunities and initiatives that cater to the interests and aspirations of the youth. Explore more at EU Youth Portal.

Digital Skills & Jobs Platform

The Digital Skills & Jobs Platform serves as a central hub for individuals keen on advancing their digital skills and exploring job opportunities in the digital realm.

Chapter 6: Navigating Job Platforms

Providing open access to a wealth of high-quality information and resources, this platform is a go-to for anyone interested in the broader spectrum of digital skills and jobs. Additionally, you can assess and enhance your digital skills through interactive tools available at Digital Skills & Jobs Platform.

Eurodesk Opportunity Finder

Eurodesk Opportunity Finder is a versatile platform offering a diverse array of information and resources. Tailored for those interested in digital skills and jobs, it provides an opportunity to explore various avenues and gain insights into the ever-evolving landscape of digital employment. Dive into the wealth of resources available at Eurodesk Opportunity Finder.

By strategically utilizing these platforms, you can navigate the job market, access targeted opportunities, and stay abreast of developments in the digital skills domain. This chapter acts as a guide, directing you toward platforms that can be instrumental in shaping your career trajectory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this Digital Skills Toolkit serves as a comprehensive roadmap for individuals seeking to enhance their digital literacy and fortify their position in the job market. As we navigate through the intricacies of online communication, social media integration, and job searching platforms, the overarching goal is to empower users to not only acquire essential digital skills but also to wield them strategically.

By understanding the significance of a strong digital presence, optimizing professional profiles, and embracing effective online communication, individuals can position themselves as competitive and agile contributors in the digital age. As technology continues to reshape the professional landscape, this toolkit stands as a beacon, guiding individuals toward a future where digital proficiency is not just a requirement but a powerful asset.