



WP3 – INTERACTIVE INFOGRAPHICS FOR CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Developing digital skills

CALL-TO-ACTION ACTIVITY

THEMATIC AREA

Secure – skills for job retention

ACTIVITY TITLE

Developing digital skills

TYPE OF RESOURCE

Self-Help Activity



DURATION OF ACTIVITY (IN MINUTES)

180 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOME

Knowledge: State how digital skills are becoming essential in today's job market

Skills: Build skills set based on the acquisition and application of digital skills

Attitudes: Persuade the development of digital skills among peers and colleagues

AIM OF ACTIVITY

Digital skills and digital literacy in general are increasingly more important and relevant to access and thrive in current and future job-makers. Digital skills are required from candidates and job applicants in all sectors, not only those markedly IT-driven. Of course, as one can imagine, the more IT-oriented the role and position, the more sophisticated is the level of digital proficiency required by the employer. Nonetheless, the widespread integration of digital technologies in all markets and industries makes digital literacy a common required standard for most professions. Applied in a professional setting, digital literacy allows workers to:

- Gather and collect large set of data more efficiently
- Be more effective in the processing of (digital) information and extrapolate meaningful results
- Improve their productivity
- Ensure the quality of their outputs
- Make better informed decisions

By implementing this activity, you will be better prepared to:

- Understand the digital skills that are normally sought after by the labour market
- Identify the digital skills that are needed to pursue a career in your dream profession/occupation
- Know the basics to exploit digital means for job seeking

MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR ACTIVITY

EUROPASS' digital skills' SAT: <https://europa.eu/europass/digitalskills/screen/home>

European Qualification Framework: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework>

DigComp 2.2 (2022): <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415>

ESCO: <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en>

LinkedIn Skills Assessment:

- [Excel](#)
- [Word](#)
- [Outlook](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)
- General: <https://www.linkedin.com/skill-assessments/hub/quizzes/>

Good practices to set-up an engaging and appealing LinkedIn profile:

- How can I create an effective LinkedIn profile?
- 20 steps to a better LinkedIn profile in 2023

LinkedIn Etiquette: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-etiquette-best-practices-20-dos-donts-melonie-dodaro/>

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

The improvement of your digital skills, and the time and efforts that you need to invest to strengthen your level of proficiency, depends on a series of factors:

1. Your background and starting level – the more you already know about digital technologies, the smoother it is for you to orientate across the landscape of digital literacy and job-related competences
2. Your job aspiration and the very concrete digital skills-set required to perform the task – the more is specialised the career and professional pathways that you wish to pursue, the more narrowed down will be the digital competences (skills, knowledge and attitudes) that you need to acquire, master and perfect
3. Your ambitions and the level of proficiency that you aim for – the larger the gap between what you can currently do, and what you need to learn to access the portion of the job market that you're interested in, the greater the resources that you need to invest, including motivation, resilience, flexibility, and willingness to learn

In order to better navigate this self-empowerment journey, we recommend you to perform the following steps in the order that you see them listed:

Step 1 – Starting from the beginning: assessing your level of basic digital skills

The first step is envisioned to sustain you in being more aware of your starting level. Do not be afraid/embarrassed of what the output will be,

the objective of this activity is to support you in making a change for the better and realise where this change should point to.

Online you can find available several self-assessment tools (SAT) that might help you in getting better awareness of your current digital skills' level. In the context of this specific task, we recommend you to use the official EU'SAT for digital skills provided by [Europass](#) (see Materials section for reference).

The tool is very self-intuitive and easy to use. Before the test starts, you will be able to indicate: your dream job, your most recent occupation held, your most recent field of education (and related [EQF](#) level), this information will help the software to generate a personalised experience for the user. The test takes approx. 25 mins so make sure to reserve a bit of time.

It is worth mentioning the fact that the SAT from EUROPASS is structured based on the official European Framework of Digital Education and training for citizens (DigComp 2.2). DigComp 2.2 is a reference framework developed by the European Commission identifying the key digital competences that all EU citizens should acquire and consolidate to live and work in nowadays societies and economies. The framework includes a total of 21 competences, distributed across 5 training areas of interest:

1. Information and data literacy
2. Communication and Collaboration
3. Digital content creation
4. Safety
5. Problem Solving

Per each competence, there is an 8-layer progress model which helps learners in understanding their level of proficiency on that given competence.

Once you're done, you have access to the following resources:

- A brief report with your test results, and indication of your level of proficiency on each key training area of interest
- A personalised learning roadmap, and indication of concrete examples of learning goals based on the achieved test results

Please pay great attention to the training area where you score a low proficiency and take notice of the inputs recommended to increase your performance.

Based on the identified areas where improvement is needed, search for tailored resources that can help you in strengthening your competences on the field. Many resources of this kind are available for free, and they are provided by highly reliable and trustworthy sources.

For instance, in the case your improvement area is “Safety”, you can look into the recommendations and guidelines on privacy and safety provided by:

- [Google](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- And other service providers ([Apple](#), [Meta](#), etc.).

Don't forget to ask your peers and colleagues to do the same: once you're done with your assessment, take some time to engage three maximum four of your colleagues, explain to them what this self-assessment is about, and discuss together your different results.

Step 2 – Understanding the in-demand digital skills in your professional field

Now that you know more about your level of digital proficiency, you should search for specific digital skills and knowledge that are commonly required by the job profile that you aspire to professionalise in.

Thanks to the ESCO platform of the European Commission, you can identify the full set of skills that apply to your future occupation, including digital skills. As of today, ESCO is the most large and comprehensive classification of skills, occupations and qualifications relevant for the EU labour market, and the EU education and training ecosystem.

In ESCO you will find registered more than 3.000 occupation and nearly 14.000 skills, for you can rest assured that you will find what you need for your specific case...

For instance, let's pretend that your ambition is to become a secondary school teacher. In this case, among the many things, you will be also requested to perform and gain familiarity with the following ICT-related competences, skills and knowledge:

- perform ICT troubleshooting
- ICT communications protocols
- ICT hardware specifications
- ICT software specifications
- develop digital educational materials
- teach digital literacy

If you click on the specific tag, ESCO will link you to the narrative and comprehensive description of the given competences, skills and knowledge for better understanding of what it deals with...

Take some time to discuss with your previous colleagues how they perceive their level of proficiency and “capability” with the skills, competences, and knowledge resulting from ESCO. You have the opportunity to learn from one another and be more aware of your complementarities and any gap that might apply to the entire group.

Step 3 – Getting familiar with job and profession-related additional knowledge and skills

Most traditional ‘intellectual’ occupations and jobs require as essential a medium/advanced level of use and understanding of Microsoft Office. MS is a suite of productivity software developed by Microsoft that includes several applications and functionalities:

- Word – as the name implies, Word is a writing application and it is widely used to generate text-based documents
- Excel – a programme used to process numeral data. In business organisations, Excel is typically used in financial forecasting, budgeting, sales review, and other kind of quantitative analysis
- PowerPoint – very useful for the creation of creative presentations. Typically, PowerPoint is used to synthesise in a visual and appealing format ‘raw’ data and information extrapolate from a previous file Word and or Excel. The use of PowerPoint-based presentations is very common in business environment

- Outlook – the email system generated by Microsoft. Outlook can be also used, and it's very beneficial in this way, to manage, arrange and schedule your agenda
- Access – it's a relatively complex database management system which help users to speed up the management and processing of fairly large amount of data
- OneNote – this is a streamlined version of Word, very reliable and effective to capture and note down ideas, notes, comments, etc.
- Teams – a collaboration platform that includes several collaboration functionalities (chat, videoconferencing, data sharing, storage of files, etc).

It's common that MS' applications are replaced by Google's equivalents:

- Word = Docs
- Excel = Sheets
- PowerPoint = Slides
- Etc

The main advantage of Google's applications is that they are available for free, as long as the user is in possession of a Google account, while instead Microsoft Office is available for a (small) fee. Besides that, the functionalities remain the exact same.

Most people seem to struggle and find difficulties with Excel – mainly due to the fact that the use of this application requires technical know-how and many practical skills. But rest assured that, an advanced use of Word and PowerPoint requires a lot of practice as well, at least if you wish to produce high quality and visually appealing content.

Note that, in case needed, Excel, Word and PowerPoint provide for users the basics of their functionalities. To access them, click on 'File' and navigate the 'Take a Tour' file.

Please proceed to test your proficiency with the most common MS' application by using the Skill Assessment from LinkedIn, a tool made available by the platform to help users assessing their level of skills on these and many other competences:

- Excel
- Word
- Outlook
- PowerPoint

Bare in mind that specific job profiles require to know and operate very well dedicated software that:

- Take time to master and gain familiarity with
- Might be available only under license – which are typically very much expensive

Make sure to double check if your aspired job demands the use of role/industry-specific software. This is typical in many instances:

- Designers and other professions working in media and creative industries make extensive use of graphic programmes such as Photoshop and Illustrator
- Engineers and illustrators make extensive use of programmes of technical drawing such as Autodesk and AutoCAD
- People working in finance make extensive use of the Bloomberg Terminal
- People operating in logistics, accounting, supply chain and engineering of business processes make extensive use of SAP
- Experts in the field of digital marketing, communication and sales make extensive use of analytics instruments and tools to monitor the performance of their online advertising
- Etc.

In some other instances, beside specific software, you also need highly sophisticated hardware that might not be accessible to you before you take on the position. See the case for instance of sound engineering, healthcare, etc.

You are recommended to check if any software/hardware is required in your aspiring job by consulting (again) the ESCO portal. For instance, the knowledge of Photoshop is recommended for the following occupations:

- graphic designer
- webmaster
- user interface developer
- animator
- digital media designer
- user interface designer
- animation layout artist
- special effects artist
- print studio operator
- e-learning developer
- ... and many more

If you have any regress experience with any of this job-specific software, please consider to use the Skills Assessment feature of LinkedIn to test your knowledge and proficiency: <https://www.linkedin.com/skill-assessments/hub/quizzes/>

Once again, go back to your group of colleagues and peers, and ‘challenge’ them to take on the same assessment. Discuss the results at groups level and try to reason together if the team covers all necessary knowledge, skills and technical know-how. If not, try to consider all together if any countermeasure is needed.

Step 4 – Establishing your e-reputation

As of today, LinkedIn has reached 1 billion users and it establishes the most large, robust and promising professional and networking social media platform. Since its advent and later consolidation, LinkedIn had a considerable impact on how people seek for new job opportunities, and employers scout for new talents.

If you’re not on LinkedIn yet, it’s time for you to consider it.

The platform makes available tons of user-generated content on how to set up an engaging and appealing LinkedIn profile. In the context of this infographic, you’re recommended to look into these two pieces of content:

- How can I create an effective LinkedIn profile?
- 20 steps to a better LinkedIn profile in 2023

Pleaserememberthat,ifdigitalmannersareamustinalldigitalenvironments, this is even more relevant on LinkedIn. You are recommended to act and react accordingly...

Not by chance, netiquette is indeed among one of the key digital competences included in DigComp2.2.

Step 5 – Aiming at the right target

Finding a job online is per se a digital skill. Besides establishing and managing your presence on LinkedIn, there are also other more ‘traditional’ approaches that you can deploy to get in contact with the right people and get notice.

Every official webpage of a business or organisation has usually a section that is called “Work with Us” (or something similar). In this section you will find all the job vacancies available on that organisation and related job announcements.

The job announcement is usually composed of three main sections:

- The description of the job
- Roles and responsibilities that come with that position
- Requirements of the candidates (preferences on education background and regress work experience, etc.)

The webpage of the job announcement has typically an automated submission system of the application – where the applicant is required to upload the CV and brief cover/motivation letter.

There is nothing wrong in following the application step as it is. At the same time, you wish to be very much strategic in your job seeking. Once you know that a vacancy of interest is open, you are recommended to experiment with a different approach.

Go back to the homepage of the business/organisation website and search for the 'Team' webpage, or more in general, the section of the website where you find available the name, surname, contact and pic of the people working in that organisation. Rather than submitting your CV in the automated system, send a direct email to at least the following contacts:

- The general HR of the company, a professional that is typically in charge of the general recruitment process of the organisation
- The Senior persona (i.e., Manager) directing and leading the process, area, function, etc. that you are applying for
- Any other person that you think will be interested in your application

Interviews are always carried out in multiple stages. The first stages are conducted by the general HR and have the aim to introduce the candidate to the general structure of the organisation, and help the HR to better understand your personality, who you are, and more in general, how you carry yourself. If you succeed in your general interview, the HR will link you to the person that is responsible for the area, function, etc. that you will be working in. This person is a direct superior of yours and he/she is interested in knowing how much you know about technical matters that are relevant for that job. Hence, it makes sense for you to introduce yourself to both.

Once you have their contact, send them an email and make sure to:

- State a clear object referring to the open position
- Attach CV, cover and motivation letter

The same principle can be applied to job searching on LinkedIn, but making sure that the first contact with the people of interest is always mediated by an email (direct messages are typically seen as too unprofessional, regardless of how formal the tones are).

If you go even beyond, you can 'exploit' in favour the online presence of your potential interviewers by scouting their social media profiles.

You are recommended to check their LinkedIn profile of course, so that you have exposure on what they are invested in from a professional standpoint of view, but if you have the opportunity, you are also recommended to

check their other profiles where they might have posted ‘lighter’ content: it makes sense for you to better understand their character and personality when there are outside of work, what are their hobbies and interests, what they look like in non-professional settings...

This simple trick will help in building a personal and more ‘human’ connection with them and find common ground of interest and dialogue.

Share Step 4 & 5 with somebody that you think might need them (a friend or familiar that is currently for a new job occupation, etc.) and guide him/her through all Tips & Tricks to successfully navigate the e-Labour market.





Lotus

Resilience in VET Education



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project Number: 2022-2-IE01-KA220-VET-000099488