



A DIGITAL SKILLS TOOL KIT FOR LOW SKILLED ADULTS
FOCUSING ON WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

DESKTOP RESEARCH

P1 – CIVIC - UK

Project Coordinator: CIVIC COMPUTING

Project Number: 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036712

Project information

Project acronym: eSkills4all

Project title: A DIGITAL SKILLS TOOL KIT FOR LOW SKILLED ADULTS
FOCUSING ON WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR
MARKET

Project number: 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036712

Sub-programme or KA: KA2 Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of
Good Practices

Project website: <https://eskills4all.eu/>

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 1.1 UK's current scene in relation to the project's concept | 4 |
| 1.2 CIVIC..... | 4 |
| 1.3 General Aims..... | 5 |
| 1.4 Purpose of this Document & General Aims | 6 |
| 2. Demographic Data at UK Level | 6 |
| 3. UK current scene at National Level | 6 |
| 4. UK current scene at European Level – Participation in EU programs | 7 |
| 5. Conclusions | 7 |
| 6. References | 8 |

1. Introduction

1.1 UK's current scene in relation to the project's concept

Unemployment in the UK is something the that Government takes a massive interest. Trading Economics shows that the current economic position of UK unemployment is reducing and was reducing steadily throughout 2017:



(Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-kingdom/unemployment-rate>)

Trading Economics also shows that the UK's current unemployment rate is at a 42-year low and has been forecasted to remain at 4.3% into March 2018 and that the long term unemployment rate has reduced from 2.1% in 2014 to 1.1% in 2017.

Although these are positive figures, there is still a known gap in the market that eSkills4all can fill. We will be focusing on adult Women who have been out of unemployment for a number of years who have an interest in gaining numeracy, literacy and in particular IT skills. These women may feel that they are not up to date with the current ever changing working environment and have no understanding of the general skills required in most jobs. This course will provide a training course that these Women and even Men can complete so that when they want to get back into the labour market they can confidently say that they have the skills and experience required to fulfil the job at hand.

1.2 CIVIC

Civic Computing (CIVIC) was established in 2001, in Edinburgh, Scotland and is one of the largest suppliers of digital work to the Scottish Government. CIVIC is known for innovation in product development: we were first to develop a Java CMS over 10 years ago (Content Control), we were first to market a solution for compliance

Project Number: 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036712

with EU legislation on Cookies (Cookie Control), and we recently launched on a new social media tool (Ffora) targeting mainly youngsters seeking personalised content.

In the context of the service provision to SQA, CIVIC develops services and tools also for parents and teachers. As a consequence of its work for SQA, CIVIC wants to introduce new services for educational publishers in ELT and language teaching in general where it believes there is great potential for CIVIC to unleash its creativity and serve the needs of the educational publishing sector in terms of innovative digital offering. In this regard, the present project is an excellent opportunity for CIVIC to acquire first hand experience on the creation of resources, from initial conception all the way to validation with adults. Project results will be used by CIVIC to generate sales as they will be part of the case studies presented to prospective customers from the educational publishing sector. As such, CIVIC has significant interest not only in developing results of high quality but also in maintaining them.

We have considerable experience in content led projects with the following public sector organisations:

- Scottish Government
- Scottish Parliament
- Scotland Office
- Sportscotland
- Central Government Centre for Procurement Expertise (CGCOPE)
- Transport Scotland
- Registers of Scotland
- Scottish Qualifications Authority
- NHS Scotland

1.3 General Aims

CIVIC are involved in this project because we have a vested interest, as well as experience in developing online solutions, training courses, training manuals and delivering these training courses.

Once we have developed and launched a website, training for the clients is required to teach them how to edit and add content and images. In some cases, more technical training is required where we train clients on how to edit the structure of the website. Larger organisations tend to want to train employees of all departments and these employees are predominantly low skilled women of similar ages to our target market (25 - 40yo). Therefore we have experience in conducting this training and understand how to make it as simple as possible, providing a step by step training manual for them to refer to at any time.

We also support gender equality which is demonstrated in our equal pay and equal opportunity policies and procedures. Our workforce ranges in age, from those in their twenties to those in their sixties and

two thirds of our workforce are female, with a representation at management level. Therefore, we are very interested in contributing to help women enter the labour market.

1.4 Purpose of this Document & General Aims

This document aims to present the unemployment status and digital skills in the UK for both men and women (25-40 years old) with a special focus on women.

2. Demographic Data at UK Level

The Office for National statistics provides the data published on 13th December, that confirms there is a higher percentage of men (4.4%) that are unemployed than women (4.1%) in the UK. This evidence provides the conclusion that we may look into targeting men as well as women in the eSkills4all programme.

The UK Government wrote a publication called 'Digital Skills Crisis'. Within this it highlights that almost 90% of new jobs require digital skills and 72% of employers state that they are unwilling to interview candidates who do not have basic IT skills.

Some 4.5 million of the 12.6 million people in the UK who do not have basic digital skills are actually in work and therefore have employers who could help them develop their skills needs. Lloyds Banking Group's most recent Business Digital Index survey showed that as many as 1.2 million small businesses in the UK lack basic digital skills. The economic and social case for investing to close the digital skills gap could not be clearer.

3. UK current scene at National Level

OECD (2017) states, 'Over a quarter of workers in the United Kingdom have only low skills, which holds back labour productivity and job quality'. They note that the government has started to simplify vocational education and training with a levy on large businesses. Low-skilled workers participate less in lifelong learning, therefore, introducing targeted re-training programmes should boost competencies more broadly.

One of the points raised in this report to improve productivity and job quality of low-skilled workers is to 'Introduce individually targeted programmes for low-wage and low-skilled workers to improve their lifelong learning opportunities'. Again, this confirms the need in the UK for our eSkills4all programme. This concludes that the eSkills4all project is greatly needed and will target this large percentage of workers who are not only unemployed, but are in a job and do not have all the skills required. This also does not seem to only be an issue with our target audience, but with all of the population ages 16 to 65.

The Government has also identified a number of specific initiatives which bear on the digital skills agenda:

- a new national curriculum in computing in September 2014 and reformed GCSEs/Alevels in computer science;
- reforming apprenticeships in software development;

Project Number: 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036712

- investment in doctoral training in aspects of data;
- investment in the employer-led Tech Partnership;
- the 'Cyber Streetwise' online safety campaign; and the Shadbolt Review on the accreditation of computer science degrees.¹³

During their current Digital Skills Crisis inquiry, they added:

- a new broadband Universal Service Obligation by 2020, giving everyone the legal right to request broadband at minimum speed from a provider at a reasonable cost;
- establishment of a Digital Engagement Council (to be chaired by Ed Vaizey) by early 2016 [replacing the previous Information Economy Council];
- investment of £3 million to extend the network of Master Teachers, helping to increase teacher capability to deliver the new computing curriculum, which was launched in September 2014;
- launch of the digital Degree Apprenticeships, the first cohort of apprentices started in September 2015, with over 40 employers and nine universities collaborating to create a curriculum that meets industry sector needs;
- confirmation in the Autumn Statement 2015 of funding for the Ada National College for Digital Skills.
- There is also a new Institute for Coding to support high level skills; and funding of computer science courses through a competition managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

4. UK current scene at European Level – Participation in EU programs

OECD have created questionnaires (PIAAC) that people can take to gain an understanding of their level of adult skills. These questionnaires are split up into the following categories:

- Literacy
- Reading Components
- Numeracy
- Problem solving in technology-rich environments

These can be found here - <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/samplequestionsandquestionnaire.htm>

This information can be used to help the eSkills4all partners gain an understanding of previous work done and what kind of questions we might ask when we contact our target audience.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, it is clear that there is a real need for a training programme that will help these low skilled people to gain experience and confidence, particularly when it comes to Digital Skills needed within a job and therefore the eSkills4all programme will be welcomed by all.

6. References

Office for National Statistic. Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment#timeseries>

(Accessed: 12/01/18)

OECD (2017). Source: <http://www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/United-Kingdom-2017-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>

OECD (2016). Source: <https://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/building-skills-for-all-review-of-england.pdf>

OECD - <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/samplequestionsandquestionnaire.htm>

OECD - <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-kingdom/long-term-unemployment-rate>

House of commons. Digital Skills Crisis (2016) Source:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsstech/270/270.pdf>