

Preparing for the Future of Work: Towards a Typology of Digital Skills Initiatives

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Abstract

Governments, businesses, and educational institutions need to collaborate and make significant investments in order to address the growing digital skills crisis. In Europe, hundreds of digital skills initiatives have been launched with different forms of government and private industry support in the last five years alone. Consequently, digital skills initiatives have come to encompass a wide array of interventions. In this context, this paper proposes a typology of digital skills initiatives that was developed based on the analysis of over 300 initiatives listed in the European Commission's repository of best digital skills initiatives. The proposed typology consists of four categories: target group, digital skills, learning format, and sponsoring organization. In terms of target group, digital skills initiatives tend to target one or more of five distinct groups: the general public, educators, adults, seniors and youth. In terms of digital skills, digital skills initiatives tend to focus on general digital skills or specialized digital skills. In terms of learning format, digital skills initiatives tend to offer training and/or a learning resource. In terms of sponsoring organization, the initiatives tend to be sponsored by organizations that are either affiliated or unaffiliated with a technology vendor. The typology is followed by a presentation of mini cases, which highlight different archetypes of the proposed typology. The paper closes with a discussion of practical implications for policy makers, administrators, and scholars interested in digital skills initiatives and the future of work.

Keywords: future of work, digital skills, digital skills gap, digital skills initiatives, typology

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