

Business, Innovation and Skills Committee
Inquiry on the Digital Economy

Written Evidence submitted by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals is the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. CILIP's vision is a fair and economically prosperous society underpinned by literacy, access to information and the transfer of knowledge.

Our 13,000 members work in all sectors of the UK economy including business and commerce, government, universities and colleges, research, schools, health and social care, charities and voluntary groups, the national libraries and public libraries

As our funding comes from member subscriptions and our own commercial activity we are able to act as an independent voice of the profession reflecting the knowledge and expertise within our membership. CILIP is a registered charity, no. 313014 and more information about us can be found at www.cilip.org.uk .

Executive Summary

- Digital skills are now necessary life skills not just skills required for work and not only for those in the “productive” workforce. The drive should be towards universal access and usage of the internet. Libraries, especially public libraries and those serving educational institutions, play an important role in addressing the literacies necessary for modern life which, as well as basic literacy, include digital literacy and other literacies such as information, finance or health literacy
- Today's workforce must not only be proficient in current technology but be sufficiently adaptable to learn and utilise tomorrow's technology as well.
- Traditional “softskills” such as communication skills, building relationships with others and critical thinking become increasingly important in a digital environment not less so. These skills also need to be recognised.
- Amongst SMEs a recent Lloyds Bank survey of digital maturity found almost 1.7 organisations have a very low level of digital understanding and capability. The Enterprising Libraries programme run by the British Library in partnership with others, including six major city library services, is an effective model to help address this deficit.

- In a world of immense growth in data and information resources, the skills and expertise of information managers needs acknowledging as they will be an essential component to future success in a knowledge driven digital economy. It is about focusing as much on the “I” in IT as on the “T”.
- We recommend a cross-industry Working Party to develop a National Knowledge & Information Skills Strategy to complement the Government’s National Data Strategy and Information Economy strategy to facilitate investment in the UK’s knowledge infrastructure. Key areas for action in a National Knowledge & Information Skills Strategy are to optimise the potential of libraries in:
 - Investing in connectivity and access to high-quality networked infrastructure
 - Promoting digital innovation and enterprise across the UK regions
 - Promoting digital literacy as a core competence for UK citizens
 - Supporting initiatives which overcome digital exclusion
 - Promoting information management as a competitive advantage for UK businesses

Written Evidence

1. Our main interest in responding to this inquiry is in the workforce skills necessary to support the digital economy and our submission focuses on Question 6: ***What actions could the Government take to ensure the availability of a workforce with the skills to support businesses in the digital economy.*** CILIP is also a member of the Libraries & Archives Copyright Alliance and we fully support their submission covering the UK’s intellectual property regime.
2. Our submission concludes with a series of recommendations.

Introduction

3. The digital economy is not really a separate sector but an increasingly dominant characteristic of the whole economy. We would agree with the recent report from the House of Lords Select Committee on Digital Skills that the digital economy is becoming synonymous with the national economy.
4. Digital skills are now necessary life skills not just skills required for work and not only for those in the “productive” workforce. Because of this the drive should be towards universal access and usage of the internet as a necessary step towards ensuring the availability of a workforce with the skills to support businesses in

the digital economy. Libraries, especially public libraries and those serving educational institutions, play an important role in addressing the literacies necessary for modern life which, as well as basic literacy, include digital literacy and other literacies such as information, finance or health literacy.

5. As change is happening so fast no person can be “educated” in systems, processes or technologies that will last. Instead we need to develop independent learners able to keep abreast of developments and equipped to cope with change. This is the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) as it is the only realistic way of meeting the challenge of constant change. Today’s workforce must not only be proficient in current technology but be sufficiently adaptable to learn and utilise tomorrow’s technology as well.

A digitally literate nation? The size of the skills shortfall

6. One essential of a successful digital economy is a digitally literate workforce and society. Go On UK have developed a definition and framework of core digital skillsⁱ (see table below) which all will need to live to the full in all aspects of their lives.;. Lacking one or more of these core skills links to a person’s employability and a recent research reportⁱⁱ by Citizens Online points to

“...evidence of a digital skills deficit emerging with many people only able to engage in very basic activities online and lacking one or more of these skills. These ‘core’ skills also link to employability, gaining personal benefit from the internet and the digital by default agenda” . (Bradbook and Power 2014, p5)

<http://www.citizenonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-Online-Digital-Skills-Systemic-Approach-White-Paper.pdf>

Go ON UK – Basic Digital Skills Framework

Managing information

Find, manage and store digital information and content

Communicating

Communicate, interact, collaborate, share and connect with others

Transacting

Purchase and sell goods and services; organise your finances; register for and use digital government services

Problem-solving

Increase independence and confidence by solving problems using digital tools and finding solutions

Creating

Engage with communities and create basic digital content

(See full table at: <http://www.go-on.co.uk/get-involved/basic-digital-skills/>)

7. Go On UK has also recently published a digital exclusion heatmapⁱⁱⁱ which indicates the wide regional differences in digital skills across the UK. We must close this digital skills gap. Over 12 million people and one million small businesses do not have the skills to prosper in today's digital economy.
8. The following research findings are indicative of this:
 - In the UK around 22% of over 16s (11 million people) do not have basic online skills. We have become used to using the term “digital natives” to describe an assumed digital agility amongst young people but a surprising 6% of people in the UK who lack digital skills are amongst 15-24 year olds^{iv}
 - 25% of job postings are only online^v (Tinder foundation – Jobs report) and large number of employers say they would not even interview somebody for a job if they did not have basic online skills
 - Young people are often not able to transfer what they have learnt in one setting to another eg recognising that same information and digital literacy skills honed at university can be utilised in solving problems at work
9. Digital inclusion improves people's lives. It helps them save money, find work and improve their health. It enables them to become connected and play a part in their communities. It is an important building block of a skilled workforce and competitive economy, and a bonding agent for strong communities and a successful society.
10. The network of libraries in schools, colleges, universities, and healthcare institutions and the public library in every community are a powerful response to tackling digital exclusion. They provide access to the latest technology and skilled staff able to support users in developing digital skills and associated information skills. Many public libraries are part of the Online Centre network managed by the Tinder Foundation and focused on encouraging people to connect to the internet and become regular internet users. It is vital that this network of libraries is given the resources necessary to sustain this work. In particular BIS should support the Leadership for Libraries Task Force, jointly sponsored by the Local Government Association and DCMS, as public libraries are an important partner in delivering the aims and objectives of BIS and the Government in terms of supporting enterprise and as an important resource in developing a skilled workforce.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

11. It is difficult to generalise about SMEs as they are so varied. However Lloyds Bank's "Benchmarking the digital maturity of small and medium-sized organisations in the UK" (2014) found almost 1.7 million organisations have a very low level of digital understanding and capability – many make no use of the internet at all and do not have any web or social media presence.
12. One promising scheme that starts to address this is The Enterprising Libraries programme which is a partnership between Arts Council England, the British Library, DCLG and the Intellectual Property Office. It has established a network of Business and IP Centres in six major city libraries and in the BL itself focused on encouraging start-ups and supporting SMEs. The network is gradually being rolled out to more public library services in England. Enterprising libraries support local economic growth by turning libraries into spaces for the development of business ideas, providing coaching, advice, and IT support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.
13. It was recently reported that the network had helped create 1,692 businesses and 4,178 jobs between 2013 and 2015. The network created £38 million GVA (Gross Value Added), a payback of £4.50 for every £1 spent^{vi}

The future workforce

14. The evidence suggests the current supply chain will not be able to deliver the workforce required in the future: At a general level it is estimated that 745,000 additional workers with digital skills will be needed to meet rising demand from employers between 2013 and 2017 (O2. 2013 *The Future Digital Skills Needs of the UK Economy*), and that 90% of future jobs roles will require IT skills^{vii} (The Digital Agenda- ICT for jobs)
15. Further research into information skills (which includes digital literacy skills) in the workplace suggests that the traditional "soft skills" such as communication skills and building relationships with others become increasingly important in a digital environment not less so and these skills also need to be recognised.
16. There will, of course, be a need for specialist technologists as well as a need for a general digital competence amongst the workforce. Other advanced skills, notably data analytics will also be essential if the UK is to build on its leading position regarding big data. Social media is also being used in a variety of ways including customer relationship management and new techniques in crowdsourcing and participatory design and research are emerging
17. The predictions concerning the growth of data and information, enabled by technological development, are mammoth. It is suggested that The digital universe is likely to grow 40% a year into the next decade, almost doubling in size every two years with 44 zettabytes (44 trillion gigabytes) of it available in 2020.^{viii}

18. However with this explosion in the data and information being produced we need specialist Information Management professionals who are experts at managing and harnessing the information held within organisations as well as externally published information. CILIP define information and knowledge management as: “collecting, organising, storing and exploiting information, data, expertise and other knowledge assets which are held within an organisation, ensuring that these assets remain available for future use”. This includes important areas such as information governance (e.g. freedom of information, data protection, and copyright), data assurance and security. It is about focusing as much on the “I” in IT as on the “T”

19. CILIP is working with other professional associations in an Information Management Alliance to make the case on the value of good information management (IM) to organisations of all types. The IM Alliance plans to commission research to demonstrate the economic returns from good IM. A report by Cap Gemini in 2008^{ix} (Cap Gemini, 2008 p7) suggested that better exploitation of information resources within the UK would yield a potential gain of £44billion in operating profit per annum and a £21billion saving in administrative costs. There is little to suggest that things have improved much since that report, although it is pleasing to note that UK central government, and more recently the NHS and Public Health England, have developed knowledge and information strategies.

Recommendations

20. In our submission to the Spending Review 2015, CILIP proposed the development of a National Knowledge & Information Skills Strategy to complement the Government’s Information Economy Strategy. This would incorporate digital literacy, information literacy and the critical information management skills needed to survive and thrive as an organisation in a digital economy.

Specifically in regard to digital literacy and the digital economy we proposed, as we do here the following:

Key areas for action	What can HM Government do
Invest in connectivity and access to high-quality networked infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="810 1675 1401 1783"><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to promote investment in the rollout of high-speed broadband to communities across the UK <li data-bbox="810 1823 1401 1930"><input type="checkbox"/> Provide ongoing investment to install, maintain and develop public-access wifi across all library service points <li data-bbox="810 1971 1401 2000"><input type="checkbox"/> Invest in the modernisation of existing

	library and information service points to provide a future-proofed digital network
Promote digital innovation and enterprise across the UK regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Promote the role of library and information professionals in supporting digital innovation in their communities <input type="checkbox"/> Invest in the provision of maker spaces in libraries to foster local innovation, start-ups and enterprise
Promote digital literacy as a core competence for UK citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support library and information professionals in helping their users to develop digital skills, literacy and confidence <input type="checkbox"/> Support and promote amongst business and develop further the Basic Digital Skills framework developed by Go On UK <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to promote digital literacy within the school curriculum, supported by skills library and information professionals
Support initiatives which overcome digital exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Promote collaboration between the library, information and knowledge management professions and large-scale initiatives to tackle digital exclusion such as Dot Everyone <input type="checkbox"/> Continue the work of the Government's UK Digital Inclusion Charter beyond 2016 <input type="checkbox"/> Support the development of a unified digital presence to promote engagement

21. We would also add our recommendations around Information Management as it is so integral to achieving success in a digital economy

Key areas for action	What can HM Government do
<p>Promote information management as a competitive advantage for UK businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="810 271 1401 409">□ Support the training and development of qualified library and information professionals, including the recognition of professional qualifications <li data-bbox="810 454 1401 562">□ Encourage employers to develop apprenticeships and traineeships in knowledge and information management <li data-bbox="810 600 1401 721">□ Promote research into the economic and competitive ROI (return on Investment) for UK SME and PLC investing in knowledge and information management

Conclusion

22. We trust this evidence will prove useful to the BIS Committee in their deliberations on this important issue.

If you wish to follow up any of the points made in this submission then please contact:

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ⁱ Go On UK. 2014 *Basic digital skills framework* <https://goon-uk-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/Basic-Digital-Skills-Framework-FINAL.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Dr Gail Bradbrook, Dr Gerald Power. Citizens Online. 2014 *The case for a systematic approach to digital skills*

ⁱⁱⁱ Go On UK *Digital Exclusion Heatmap*. 2015 http://www.go-on.co.uk/resources/heatmap/?utm_source=heatmap_info_page&utm_medium=heatmap&utm_campaign=rh_nav_bar

^{iv} IPSOS Media CT (BBC). 2013. *Media literacy: understanding digital capabilities follow up*

^v Tinder Foundation. 2012. *Online jobs report* <http://www.tinderfoundation.org/our-thinking/research-publications/online-jobs-report>

^{vi} British Library. 2015. *Enterprising libraries: engines of innovation and economic growth*
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/British_Library_Enterprising_Libraries_infographic.pdf

^{vii} European Commission. 2012. *Digital agenda ICT for jobs*
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/12_digital_agenda_ict.pdf

^{viii} [The Digital Universe of Opportunities: Rich data and the increasing value of the Internet of Things. EMC/IDC, 2014. Available at:
<http://www.emc.com/leadership/digital-universe/2014iview/index.htm>])

^{ix} Capgemini. 2008. *The information opportunity report: Harnessing information to enhance business performance*