



PRESS RELEASE

World Information Society Day: ECDL Foundation calls for governments to address the digital divide

Brussels, May 17th 2008 – From large organisations and national education systems to refugee camps in Burundi and street children in Vietnam, the ECDL Foundation network works with local communities, governments and international organisations to narrow the digital divide gap across the world. Today, ECDL Foundation welcomes the celebration of World Information Society Day, which highlights the urgent need to bridge the digital divide and recognises the profound impact that Information and Communication Technologies have on people's lives, and calls for national and international organisations to work together towards achieving sustainable programmes to raise the levels of digital literacy around the world

Since its inception in 1996, nearly 8 million people globally, have enrolled in the ECDL/ ICDL programmes, however, the digital divide persists to threaten developing countries and prohibits the achievement of the UN [Millennium Development Goals](#). Indicative of this disheartening situation is the fact that 83% of the global population¹ does not use the internet.

"Technology alone will not bridge the digital divide; people all over the world need to acquire digital literacy skills before they can reap the benefits of the Information Society," Damien O'Sullivan, CEO of the ECDL Foundation goes on to say "we are proud to provide programmes that enable people to avail of societal and economic benefits of ICT, however we call on governments in both developed and developing countries to address this divide and work together with appropriate support from international organisations to achieve this. In particular, governments must play a key role in ensuring specific funding (at national and international level) is allocated directly to support the training of those with poor IT skills".

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About ECDL Foundation

ECDL Foundation is the global body of the world's leading end-user computer skills certification programme. It's a not-for-profit organisation dedicated raising the level of computer skills in society and providing access for all to the Information Society. Known as ICDL outside of Europe with nearly 8 million Candidates participating in a range of programmes, ECDL Foundation has set the global benchmark in end-user skills certification.

About World Information Society Day

In 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society called upon the United Nations to declare May 17th World Information Society Day. In 2006 the UN, passed a resolution to this effect, to focus global attention annually on reaching the enormous benefits of the digital revolution in information and communication technologies to all humanity.

¹ International Telecommunications Union 'ICT Levels around the world' 2006.