

Morten Jespersen

Ambassador of Denmark to Latvia

Navigating the Digital Age: Empowering Youth with Essential Tech Skills

In our modern societies, where technology plays an increasingly significant role, we face the challenge of equipping children and young people with the necessary digital skills to navigate in an increasingly technology-driven world. As technology continues to shape and transform various industries and our way of living, working, and communicating, our education systems must adapt accordingly.

While many young people have grown up with smartphones and social media as a natural part of their daily lives, it is important to recognize that digital proficiency goes far beyond basic device operation. Digital skills encompass not only the ability to navigate the internet and use apps but also the capacity to understand and critically evaluate digital content. Moreover, these skills involve knowledge of fundamental technological concepts like programming and data security.

Denmark has embarked on experiments introducing technological understanding as a novel subject in primary education. Encouragingly, these endeavours have shown students' enthusiasm for technological learning, particularly when afforded opportunities for hands-on engagement with tangible technologies like robots. Notably, even the youngest learners have demonstrated remarkable motivation when immersed in experiential learning environments.

These initiatives have paved the way for incorporating technological understanding into Denmark's educational curriculum, forming an important component of Denmark's new digitization strategy. The objective is clear: to equip children and young people with the proficiency to understand and innovate digital technologies, enriching their lives and the society more broadly.

As the digital revolution progresses, fostering digital skills among youth becomes increasingly important in light of the prevalence of misinformation and fake news. In an era where misinformation proliferates online channels, the ability to critically evaluate digital content and discern fact from fiction is paramount. By teaching digital literacy from a young age, we empower our youth to navigate the digital landscape with discernment and resilience, safeguarding them against the pitfalls of misinformation.

Moreover, as technology increasingly permeates all sectors of the job market, digital proficiency has become a prerequisite for many jobs. Whether in healthcare, retail, finance, or manufacturing, proficiency in digital competencies opens doors to a myriad of career opportunities and enhances prospects for success in a fiercely competitive job market.

Another significant aspect of teaching digital skills from a young age is the potential to help narrow the gender gap within the field of technology. As we strive for a more equitable future, it is imperative to address gender disparities in tech-related professions. Integrating digital skills

education plays a pivotal role in fostering gender equality by empowering girls and women to become proficient in technology and digital innovation. By encouraging greater female participation in tech education and careers, we move closer towards achieving gender parity in these key sectors.

As we bear witness to the relentless pace of technological evolution, one thing remains clear: digital skills are not merely advantageous—they are indispensable. Investing in the digital literacy of our youth is an investment in their future, preparing them to thrive in the digital age as discerning, adept, and engaged citizens.