

Increase in gender gap in the digital sector - Study on Women in the Digital Age

This new study on Women in Digital Age reports that there is a growing gap between men and women's participation in the digital sector in education, career and entrepreneurship.

Download and read full study (study reference: SMART 2016/0025)

The study, launched by the European Commission, found that, despite the growing demand of ICT specialists and digital profiles, the percentage of Europeans with ICT-related education is decreasing. Although this is a common trend for both genders, there are lesser women than men who are taking up ICT related jobs and education.

The main findings of this study are:

- There are four times more men than women in Europe with ICT-related studies. There is a decrease in women taking up ICT related higher education when compared to 2011.
- The share of men working in the digital sector is 3.1 times greater than the share of women.
- The annual productivity loss for the European economy of women leaving their digital jobs to become inactive is calculated to be about EUR 16.2 billion
- Although female owned start-ups are more likely to be successful, there is decrease in participation, leadership and investment in the entrepreneurial digital sector.

Data trends and qualitative analysis suggest that gender inequality in the digital sphere is essentially a result of the persistence of strong unconscious biases about what is appropriate and what capacities each gender has, as well as about the technologies themselves which requires a fundamental cultural change.

The Digital Education Action Plan announced by the Commission is a step towards addressing this gender gap by encouraging girls and boys to take up ICT related education and be able to adapt to the needs of the digital age.

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel has announced actions that will be implemented in the course of the next two years to facilitate more women to be able to participate in the digital sector through digital skills, higher education in ICT related areas and startups.

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