



Illustrative Case Study (L)

European e-Competence Framework (e-CF)

for ICT training quality improvement

ABOUT THE e-CF. The European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) provides a reference of 36 competences as required and applied at the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) workplace, using a common language for competences, skills and capability levels that can be understood across Europe. As the first sector-specific implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the e-CF was designed and developed for application by ICT service, user and supply companies, for managers and human resource (HR) departments, and for education institutions and training bodies, and other organizations in public and private sectors.

The framework was developed under the umbrella of the CEN ICT Skills Workshop through a process of close cooperation between ICT business and human resource (HR) experts, stakeholders and policy institutions from many different countries and at the EU level. Published by CEN for the first time in 2008 and followed by a further enhanced version 2.0 in 2010, the framework brings benefits to a growing community of users throughout Europe and overseas.

To support e-CF application within multiple environments, a series of illustrative case studies provide examples, benefits and hints of how to make best use of the e-CF.

The following case study illuminates the e-CF application from the perspective of an internet focused stakeholder network.

Key perspectives

- Specialised competences
- Specialist role development
- Matching education supply to demand

Summary

The Internet has established itself as a crucial engine of innovation and wealth creation, which enables companies to supercharge their performance and competitive advantage. As more small firms exploit the Internet they can gain unprecedented access to global markets previously enjoyed by only the largest corporations. To exploit this opportunity, companies require highly qualified specialized personnel that they must develop or recruit. Competent and capable Internet professional staff is key to achieving innovation and profit optimization pursued by SME companies.

Currently there is a wide range of offerings of internet-relevant training courses across the EU member states. However, these are structured according to national qualification frameworks and local market needs, which inhibits their comparison and recognition at EU level, subsequently hindering mobility across the EU.

In recognition of this situation, in 2010 various stakeholders in the field of internet-related jobs, such as ICT associations, training providers, chambers of commerce, universities, consultancies, etc. joined forces to form a European stakeholder network to foster collaboration and information exchange about e-Jobs, e-Skills and e-Competences. Access to further details can be found at the e-Jobs Observatory (<http://www.e-jobs-observatory.eu/>). By closely working with ICT SMEs, the e-Jobs Observatory identifies and specifies the skills, knowledge and competences required for the new Job Role Profiles of the digital economy, based on identified market needs, and formulated from the e-CF. The initiative is supported by the European Commission.

e-CF Value

The e-CF enabled the e-Jobs Observatory consortium to better comprehend the characteristics of Internet relevant e-competences and their interrelationships. By specifically identifying the necessary competences to specific Internet Job Role Profiles, based on a transparent and consistent methodology, a standard framework for the development of training modules has been established that simultaneously targets the education requirements of the market.

Challenges encountered

The skills differences between labour-market supply and demand are the result of isolated initiatives by many organizations within their specific countries. Developing training solutions based on a European standard requires successful collaboration among all workforce stakeholders, i.e. companies and training institutions. The e-Jobs Observatory create synergies between key players by deploying a successful application of the e-CF to Internet related Role Profiles. These are being developed from a number of perspectives of IT-related sectors, such as Green-IT, and computer-assisted ambient living.

Benefits highlighted

By using the e-CF, training institutions gain a deeper insight and develop a better understanding of how training offerings should be shaped to match market needs. In parallel, employers are able to define specific competences that are necessary to meet their organisational needs.

The method adopted

The e-Jobs Observatory have developed a methodology that allows for the application of the e-CF to various sectors. So far skills and competences have been identified for the following Role Profiles:

- Internet Hotline Operator
- On-line Community Manager
- Usability Specialist
- Web Marketer
- Web Seller
- Digital Animator / 2D-3D Specialist
- Web master
- Web Content Manager
- Web Content / Multimedia Developer
- Web Seller

Following the identification of skills and competences and their inclusion into a specific profile definition; the next step was the development of Training Guidelines, focused heavily on clearly defining learning outcomes and the assignment of appropriate ECVET weightings and credit points. This paved the way for a smooth transition from theory to practice; thus enhancing comparability and subsequent recognition and understanding throughout the EU.

Expansion to other examples

Following the successful application of e-CF in internet-related Role Profiles, the e-Jobs Observatory is currently enlarging its portfolio of Role Profiles in the following emerging fields:

- Green IT
- Ambient Assisted Living (AAL)
- e-Tourism
- On-line Commerce