

Digital Single Market

Blog post

Tuesday, 19 April, 2011

Youth engagement to make the Digital Agenda a reality

Published Tuesday, 19 April, 2011

Updated Wednesday, 1 July, 2015

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Last week, we had the pleasure to spend a morning with Vice-President Neelie Kroes and a set of energetic and inspiring young people who have contributed to the digital society so far through their business, research, or engagement in civic society.

We asked them advice about **how to make sure our policies take into better account youth' needs and how we can work better together in order to help each other**. Indeed, what can they do to help us work better and reach young people through our actions? How can we help them overcome barriers and obstacles they have encountered in their professional life? Here are the main lessons we learnt from them:

First, **language matters**. We, as Commission, really have to make an effort to use a clearer language that can reach out and engage our citizens. Right, we cannot use a "blog language" in our official documents. But still, there is much room for improvement. EU policies have to reach everyone, not only experts. This also calls for a better targeting of the audience.

Second, "Every European Digital" is the right aim, but **we need to insist more on the issue of user-centricity and of a more pro-active approach to co-design** if we want to make it concrete. Social networks can obviously be of much help. The first context where we need more co-design is education. They mentioned some interesting initiatives and projects spread across the world. They should be scaled up. What is clear is that the use of technology in education must be bottom-up, if it aims at mainstreaming, and that we need greater investments in teachers' training and development, as well as better, location-based applications provided by schools. They thought this is a [clear visualisation](#) ^[1] of how a social learning path should look like.

Third, **digital skills are needed to have citizens aware of the new technologies and able to**

use them in a creative and confident way. We can call them digital literacy, media literacy, ICT skills, but maybe the most important element is to have digitally competent citizens, who can exert their critical thinking in the digital society.

Fourth, **we can do more to involve citizens in the design of our public consultations.** What about discussing with them the design of the questions? We do not need to gather all physically in Brussels, but simply use better interactive platforms and ask our stakeholders act as "multipliers" on the social networks.

Fifth, **we all agree that cyber-security and Internet-safety are essential** to get "Every European Digital". But let's make an effort to provide a better argumentation of cyber-security, that is to explain why an application or service is dangerous rather than safe. And then, of course, it is still a matter of digital competence on the web.

Sixth, not surprisingly, those young people ask us **to make European funding more accessible to young researchers and small companies.** We are working hard to make future research programmes more responsive to these challenges. And in the short term, we are working to at putting all relevant information on funding opportunities in one page, so that users can easily find information they are looking for.

So, what next? The young people we met guaranteed Vice-President Kroes their commitment to the Digital Agenda. So, we will ask them for advice soon again. And, of course, we want to see them active at the [Digital Agenda Assembly](#) [2], on 16-17 June, in Brussels.

You can see the pictures of the event [here](#) [3] and read [Neelie Kroes' blog post](#) [4] dedicated to the meeting with these "Young Advisors".

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[1] <http://www.slideshare.net/TribalCafe/social-learning-6244151>

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/daa/index_en.htm

[3] <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/photo/photo.cfm?id=6000&siteLang=en>

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