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[Home](#) > Digital agenda and digital natives: Connecting in the Hague!

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Menu

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"Students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach."



--- Posted by Prabhat Agarwal, DG INFSO, Project Officer

"Students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach."

So begins Marc Presky's [famous essay](#) [2] in which he coined the term "Digital Natives" -- those born typically after 1980, and raised in the connected digital world. Presky's main focus was on the revolution of the teaching world. But when we designed the Digital Agenda for Europe, we knew that we had to reach out to our own Digital Natives in Europe. Right from the beginning, and across a much wider set of policies.

And so we did.

In our house, it started with Neelie Kroes' [visit to the Campus Party](#) [3] Europe last year, followed by a [special event at last year's ICT conference](#) [4], and then continued in the recruitment of a [Young Advisors Group for the Digital Agenda](#) [5], and in the launch of a [special grant for young researchers](#) [5] under the Future and Emerging Technologies scheme. In parallel, our colleagues from DG Education and Culture launched a whole series of initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe. This series of initiatives is called "[Youth on the Move](#) [6]", another key flagship of the [Europe 2020](#) [7] strategy for growth and jobs.

Last week, our latest stop was the Hague.

Constantijn van Oranje and myself met with some 50 local university students for an interactive talk on what the Digital Agenda could mean for them. Most of them were enrolled in European Studies classes, and the discussion was exciting and concrete.

Facebook & privacy, Spotify & the internal market, the possibilities of Open Data, Silicon Valley & the European landscape, all the way to how to make your first million as an online entrepreneur, and even to what our future could look like in 2025.

Of course, we don't have all the answers, and this was not just a road-show of the Commission's policies. It was a chance to explain how we see things from our perspective: ***No matter how EU policy is prepared and adopted, the way this is done must be more open and easier to follow and understand***, says a [EU paper from 2001](#) [8]. I hope we honoured this during our discussion.

But the really interesting part was listening to what those students are concerned with most, and how they see the challenges of the digital revolution. I personally come away with one message: ***it's time that we connect up the Digital Natives across Europe***.

To be continued.

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[2] <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>

[3] <http://www.flickr.com/photos/campuspartyeuropa/4527241607/>

[4] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/cf/ict2010/item-display.cfm?id=3549

[5] <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/neelie-kroes/youth-engagement-will-make-the-digital-agenda-a-reality/>

[6] http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/about/index_en.htm

[7] http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

[8] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0428:FIN:EN:PDF>