

## Digital skills are 'life skills' and the internet should be a utility service: it's official

The [House of Lords Select Committee on Digital Skills](#) argues that digital skills (the skills needed to interact with digital technologies) are now *necessary life skills*, and *the government should define the internet as a utility service*, available for all to access and use.

They also state that it is 'not acceptable' for any group to be excluded from access to digital technologies. The committee says 'We must aspire for the vast majority of the population to achieve the level of digital literacy needed to fully participate in society.' (Split infinitives perhaps belong to an outdated form of literacy).

Other key points in their report:

- Individuals and businesses alike will need skills to protect themselves online.
- The workforce, and in particular women, will need to embrace technological change and acquire new and differing levels of digital skills.
- Clear leadership from the centre is required to join up and drive disparate initiatives.

The report proposes a 'Digital Agenda' to determine action in support of issues such as:

- Unimpeded access to digital technology (the facilitation of universal internet access: the internet is viewed as a utility)
- The right skill levels for all to use relevant digital technologies (to meet the government's [Digital Inclusion Strategy](#), calling for everyone who can be to be 'digitally capable' by 2020)
- A sufficient talent pool with the knowledge and abilities to keep infrastructure secure
- Basic numeracy, literacy *and* digital literacy for all school leavers.

The report supports a [broad categorisation of digital skills](#) into:

- *The digital muggle*: no digital skills required - digital technology may as well be magic
- *The digital citizen*: the ability to use digital technology purposefully and confidently to communicate, find information and purchase goods/services
- *The digital worker*: at the higher end, the ability to evaluate, configure and use complex digital systems
- *The digital maker*: skills sufficient to build digital technology, typically [the complex management process of] software development.

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