**Type of Contribution: POSTER**

**Digital skills of young people and active participation in society**

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**Introduction**

Today's society is characterized by high usage of information and communication technology, which led to both changes in the information environment and changes in specific skills needed to function in society. Basic human abilities needed for active living and participation in society were defined as basic literacy and included reading, writing and computing, which were in the center of education all around the world. Still, a number of scientists and governments came to realize that digital forms of information and communication require different set of skills, which are called digital literacy, information literacy or digital skills.

**Theoretical framework**

Van Dijk and Van Deursen’s (2014) research, which is the starting point for this paper, uses the term digital skills, which are consisted of operational skills, formal skills, information skills, communication skills, content creation skills and strategic skills. Digital media requires more skills than basic reading, writing and computing: in order to fully use the potential of digital media, one should be familiar with working with hardware and software, communicating and performing transactions of goods and services (Van Dijk and Van Deursen, 2014).

Digital skills are considered to be the key to the information society and are essential for economic, educational, political, cultural, social, spatial and institutional participation in society (Van Dijk and Van Deursen, 2014). Active participation in society includes understanding social situation and social problems and actively involving in the process of problem solving, which in today’s society depends on information access. That is especially important for young people, as especially vulnerable group, who must learn how to use the potential of digital media and bypass their negative sides. In order to do so, teaching digital skills should be in the focus of education on all levels.

**Methodology**

This poster presents the research on digital skills of high-school students in Zadar, Croatia and their active participation in society. The aim of this paper is to research digital skills of young people in Croatia, and to research whether students with more developed digital skills are more likely to actively participate in society (political participation, cultural participation, creating media content etc.). The survey was given to final year high school students in different schools, and includes students aged from 17 to 19 years old. Turning eighteen years old in Croatia means a person is an adult by law, and is able to take responsibility for its actions. It also includes adult responsibilities like voting on political elections. The presented results are part of student Master thesis on the Department of Information sciences, University of Zadar.

**Research questions**

This research will answer to three research questions:

1. How high school students estimate level of their digital skills through self-assessment;

2. Does active participation in society (especially political, culture activities, creation of media content…) depend on level of development of digital skills;

3. Does gaining information online correlates to increasing active participation in society.

**Results and conclusion**

Since digital skills are very important for both professional and personal life of an individual, it is important to conduct research to gain better understanding on level of digital skills and their implication on active participation. This research results would show perceived level of digital skills of high school students, and should present ways in which they participate in society.

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