Since the advent of the internet and the rapid evolution of technology, times have changed as have our notions of literacy. The United Nations plays a key role in bridging the digital divide, both among, and within, countries. Given the role ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) plays in our every day lives, be it private or professional, a key solution to bridging the digital divide is making sure that every citizen is part of this digital age, i. e. digitally literate.

In the 21st century, ICT touches so many parts of our lives that, to a certain extent, a person's social inclusion depends on his or her level of digital competence. Applying for a job without even the basic ICT skills will prove to be difficult. ICT is a sector booming with jobs, thus both men and women, young and old, who have acquired these skills, will have significant opportunities in front of them, giving them a chance to improve their daily lives and achieve their full potential as citizens in a rapidly changing society. The use of internet-based platforms such as facebook and other new media in the Arab Spring has also clearly demonstrated that digital literacy offers many opportunities for both social and political change.

Being part of the digital age, however, requires overcoming more than one barrier; buying a computer, for instance, can be quite a challenge compared to buying a book and pencil. Moreover, next to having access to ICT and internet (an environmental factor), being digitally literate (an individual competence) also requires one to have the necessary skills to navigate this interconnected world, i.e. efficiently and effectively, search for, retrieve, and evaluate information. When surfing the internet, for example, one must have an understanding of the strong currents and dangers below the surface of the water; the seemingly trustworthy dolphin might actually have a false identity turning out to be a corporate shark manipulating information for advertising purposes. At all times one has to stay focused and vigilant because posting information, especially personal, as well as searching for information on the world wide web can have ethical implications. Contrary to good journalism or the academic world, there is seldom a watchdog to guide and help us in finding the right wave of online participation.

Education, including lifelong learning, as well as providing digital media users with ethical guidelines are crucial tools to uncover the hidden forest and achieve global digital literacy. As Eduardo Ulibarri, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN and Chairman of the UN Committee on Information, points out; "The more communicated a society is, the more opportunities it will generate. Here lies the urgency of opening the gates of information and communication to the largest possible number of people." These opportunities will then undeniably foster "national development, social fulfillment, and human dignity"

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