Digital Competencies in Hungary

In today's information society, digital competencies are increasingly valued in the job market, with work productivity heavily reliant on employees' ability to comfortably use new technologies. High-value-added jobs typically require some form of digital competence, making these skills essential for economic convergence. **Ensuring the population possesses these abilities is key to Hungary's economic progress.**

How is Hungary Performing?

In 2010, only 58% of households had broadband internet, significantly lagging behind the EU average.[1] **By 2023, this figure had risen to 93%**, aligning closely with the EU level. However, there are stark regional differences: in the Northern Great Plain, the proportion of households with internet access is 10 percentage points lower than in the capital, Budapest, where it stands at 98%.[2]

Demographic disparities are also evident: 75% of those with basic education use the internet daily, compared to 97% of those with higher education.[3] Age-wise, nearly 100% of 16-24-year-olds use the internet, while this figure drops to 78% among 55-74-year-olds.[4]

The way we use the internet matters as well: the majority of the population primarily uses it for communication and entertainment. Only 43% of Hungarian internet users read online news sites, and 18% listen to podcasts.[5] One in four internet users utilizes online administration services, and **just one in five takes advantage of online educational materials or courses**. This latter figure falls below the EU average,[6] partially due to lower purchasing power.

Online shopping is another good indicator of digital openness. In 2020, 60% of the domestic population made an online purchase within a year. The coronavirus pandemic underscored the importance of the online world, pushing this indicator to 70% by 2023, matching the EU average.

In 2022, the proportion of **students studying in the ICT field in Hungary was 6.8%**, exceeding the EU average of 4.5%. However, the proportion of those **employed in the ICT sector in Hungary is only 4.2%**, compared to the EU average of 4.8%.[7]

Both the state and companies share the responsibility for developing digital competencies. In this regard, Hungary is performing relatively well: in 2022, 18% of Hungarian companies with 10 or more employees provided IT training to their workers, compared to the EU average

---

[1] **HCSO (2024)**

[2] **HCSO (2024)**

[3] **HCSO (2024)**

[4] **HCSO (2024)**

[5] **NMHH (2023)**

[6] **HCSO (2024)**

[7] **European Commission (2023)**

of 22%.[8] This is notable considering the higher prevalence of simple assembly tasks that do not require IT skills in Hungary.

Overall, 64% of the Hungarian population possesses at least basic general digital skills, compared to 61% of EU citizens. Among the V4 countries, Hungary has no reason to be ashamed, as Hungarian digital competencies surpass those of Poles and Slovaks, with only the Czechs, who are outstanding even by EU standards, ahead of us.

Percentage of the Population with Various Levels of Digital Skills (2023)
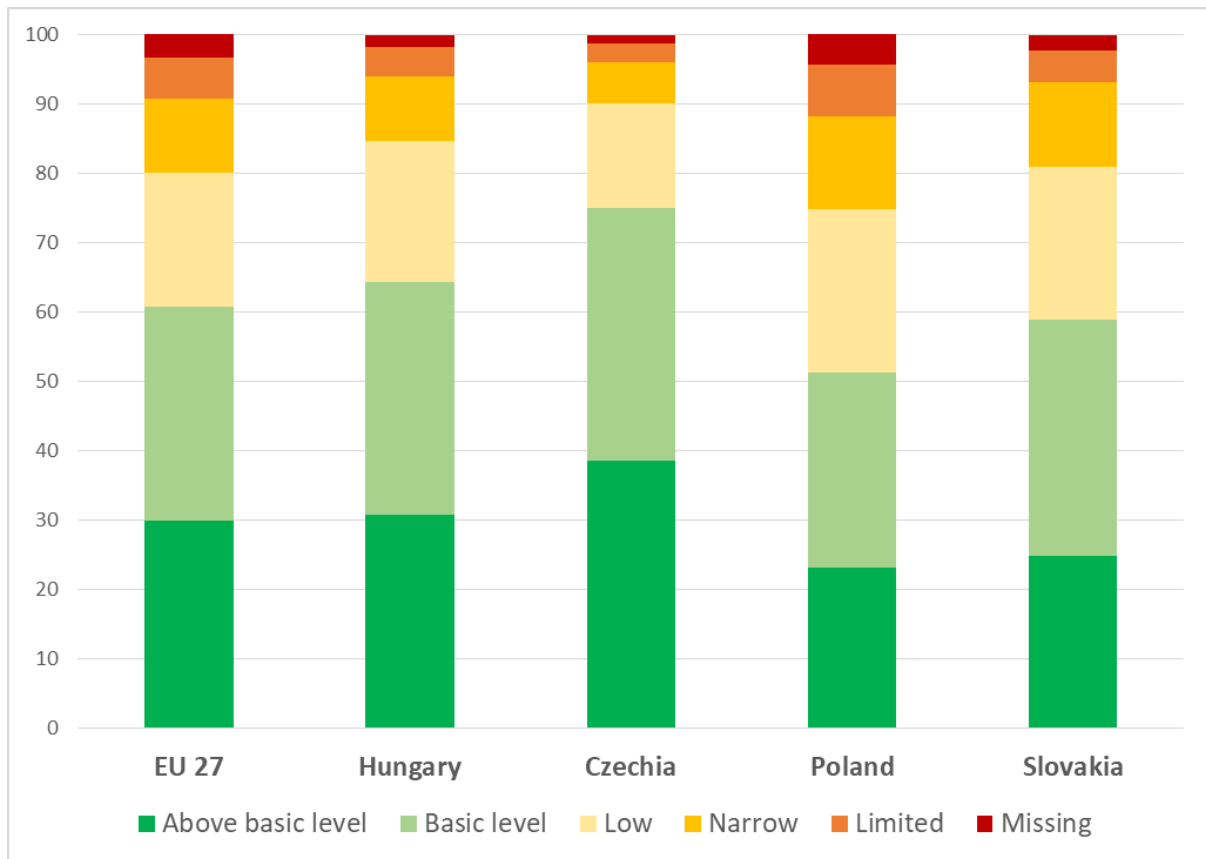
Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2024)

While it is a popular argument that digitalization has democratized knowledge, it is evident that **different social groups use digital devices for various purposes**, encountering different "realities" on the web. The differences in digital competencies among various demographic groups are striking. Reducing these disparities is essential to alleviate social inequalities and support those living on the periphery. As digital skills will become a kind of entry threshold in the future labor market, if we do not ensure everyone reaches a minimum level of IT knowledge, further social polarization is inevitable.

Both the European Union and the Hungarian government recognize the importance of developing the digital competencies of the population. **Positive steps include the introduction of new vocational training programs that enhance IT knowledge**, the

---

[8] **Eurostat (2024)**

introduction of the "digital culture" subject in high schools, and providing free laptops to students.