

[Home](#)[About us](#)[News and Speeches](#)[▶ Speeches](#)[▶ Announcements](#)[Publications](#)[Consultations](#)[Research and Analysis](#)[Partner organisations](#)[Science](#)[Innovation](#)[Higher Education](#)[Further Education](#)[Skills](#)[International](#)[Government Office for  
Science](#)

# Investing in our future

We're creating a single website for everything to do with BIS but, while we do that, you'll find information in three places.  
> **Find what you're looking for**

You are here: [Home](#) > [News and Speeches](#) > > **Basic computer training**

## Review calls for basic computer skills training for all adults

Report by Baroness Estelle Morris calls for more support for 11.6 million who need basic computing skills training in England

**16 June 2009**

An independent review published today recommends an entitlement for all adults in England to access free training in basic ICT skills.

The review, carried out by Baroness Estelle Morris, was commissioned by Government to assess whether the nation's basic computing skills needs are being met.

Baroness Morris's findings indicate there are an estimated 11.6 million adults who lack basic computing skills in England and that the elderly, those socially excluded and those with few qualifications are most at risk of being left behind in a world that becomes ever more digital.

The review, which has also informed Stephen Carter's Digital Britain Report, to be published later today, outlines the importance of digital skills to the health and wellbeing of UK citizens as well as the wider economy. It calls for a more focused strategy to address the skills gap that has been identified.

In advising how best to address the gap in computing skills of adults in England, the review proposes an 'entitlement' to digital life skills for all adults made up of:

- A social marketing campaign, driven through Stephen Carter's Digital Britain strategy, to highlight the benefits of getting online;
- A helpline and website with online learning models as well as links to a range of resource, provided by broadcasters and other commercial suppliers and
- Access to a diverse range of computing skills providers to learn the basic skills needed to get online such as using a mouse and keyboard, using email and using the internet.

Baroness Estelle Morris said:

"We must be ambitious about the level of ICT skills in the community. Increasingly, those who are not ICT literate will find themselves excluded as technology impacts on more parts of our lives.

"The Government set high standards in 1997 and progress has been made. The ICT infrastructure has been transformed and skill levels have increased – particularly amongst the young. We need to be careful though, that we don't settle for that. It is vital that all citizens, no matter what their age or their background, are given the chance to develop basic ICT skills.

"If this is to happen, the Government needs to have a clearer focus, be less bureaucratic and not as complex. It must work with its partners from the voluntary and private sector to persuade people that they need to learn computer skills and make it easy for them to do so.

"The Entitlement proposed in this review is a step towards achieving that."

Kevin Brennan, Minister for Skills in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, said:

"Being able to use a computer and access the internet is a basic skill for work and life in the digital age. That's why we already invest £9million in UK Online, which includes 6,000 centres around the country offering free or low cost access to ICT. I welcome Estelle Morris' findings and will look seriously at how we can do more to improve basic computer skills for adults most in need – including the unemployed, those at risk of redundancy and older people – as well as those in jobs."

Stephen Carter, author of the Digital Britain review, commented:

### Related downloads

 [Independent Review of ICT User Skills - Baroness Estelle Morris, June 2009](#)

 (311 KB)

"Digital life skills are a foundation for participation and employability in a digital society. Soon, everyone in this country will be connected to broadband so it is crucial every person has the basic skills and confidence to make the most of the opportunities broadband will bring.

He added:

"I have outlined the importance of Baroness Morris's findings in the Digital Britain Review and look forward to seeing her recommendations being taken forward for the benefit of those who are in most need of ICT training."

In making recommendations, Baroness Morris took account of existing funded provision of ICT skills and found there had been a 50% reduction in the number of adults taking up funded ICT training. Although research indicates the number of digitally excluded adults has reduced over time, it is apparent that the gap is widening for those most at risk: adults over 65, those who are socially excluded and those with few or no qualifications.

Government will consider further how it responds to Estelle Morris's recommendations as the Digital Britain programme taken forward.

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. [Download the The Independent Review of ICT User Skills here](#)

2. The review was commissioned by John Denham, when Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and announced in the Learning Revolution White Paper as follows: "To support the growing importance of digital skills at home and in work, we have asked Baroness Estelle Morris to chair an independent review of ICT Skills for Adults to provide a wider understanding of the current position. The review will address both the user skills required to participate effectively in the digital society and the best delivery mechanisms to engage and upskill adults."

For further information, please contact the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Press Office on 020 7215 5951.

[ShareThis](#)  [PDF this page](#)  [Print this page](#)  [RSS](#)