

## Study highlights poor PC-user skills

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**Our representative study shows that 78% of the Swiss population overestimate their ICT skills. On average, participants only scored 46% on the short ICDL Base test.**

On behalf of ECDL Switzerland AG, the research institute meinungsraum conducted a survey of 2050 people between the ages of 15 to 64 in the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland in spring 2015. Participants of an online panel were asked how they use their PC and how they rate their own pc-skills. Additionally, 492 of them took a Sophia test consisting of practical tasks. This test contained three questions from each of the ICDL Base diagnostic tests.

### The Swiss know their weaknesses yet still strongly overestimate themselves

In the online survey, participants had to first rate their own skills in managing files, Internet/Outlook, Word and Excel on a scale of 0 to 10. Questions included: Can you create a short-cut? Can you insert page numbers as well as search for and replace text in Word? Overall, the Swiss population knows that they are better at filling in online forms than they are at calculating in Excel. Mostly, they recognise their weaknesses but people from all socio-demographic groups still overestimate their skills in all areas. The most realistic self-assessments are made by people with an ICDL certificate, students and digital natives (15- to 25-year-olds). These groups estimate their skills most realistically, but also achieve above-average test results. Participants between 50 and 64 years old, non-clerical workers, and French-speakers overestimate their skills most while at the same time getting the lowest score.

n = 2050 (492 test participants)

Self-assessment: Scale from 0 (very poor) to 10 (very good); 0–3 = very poor/poor; 4, 5 = insufficient; 6 = sufficient; 7–10 = good/very good  
 Test result: 0–35% = very poor/poor; 36–59% = insufficient; 60–74% = sufficient; 75–100% = good/very good

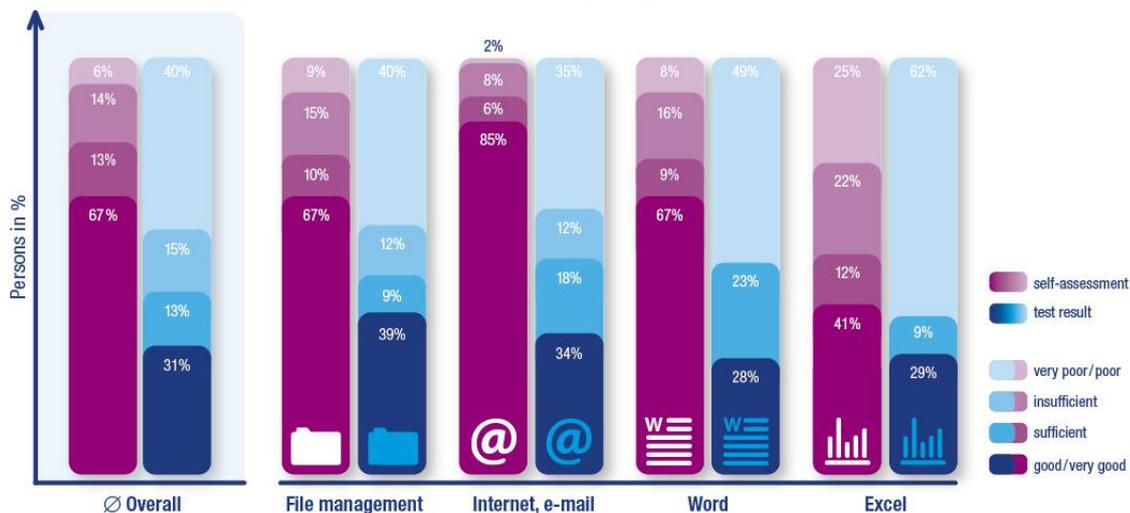


Figure 1 Comparison between self-assessment and test result

Figure 1 shows the self-assessment as well as the actually achieved test results. Barely a third of the participants manage a score of 75 % or more which is the cut-off score for ICDL certificates. The average result of all participants is 46%. With an average result of 34% Excel is clearly in last place, followed by Word with 47% and file management with 48%. First place goes to the module Online Essentials with an average result of 51%.

### Age, language, sex and education influence the test result

An overview of the groups with well above or below average results is shown in figure 2. The best results are achieved by 15- to 25-year-olds, people from central Switzerland and ICDL certificate holders. Participants who gained their skills in a structured way, that is as part of their education, in a course or with courseware get better results than those who are entirely self-taught. The test result is also positively influenced by spending a lot of time working at the computer. People who spend more

than three quarters of their working hours at the PC achieved an average result of 55 % whereas people who spend less than half their working hours at the computer only managed to achieve 35%. Additionally, people who regularly use a specific programme, do better on those questions – an effect shown most clearly with spreadsheets.

In the in-application test men reached an average of 50%, while women achieved 41%. An even greater difference can be seen between the two language regions: with a test result of 36% the French-speaking people are 13 percentage points below the average of the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

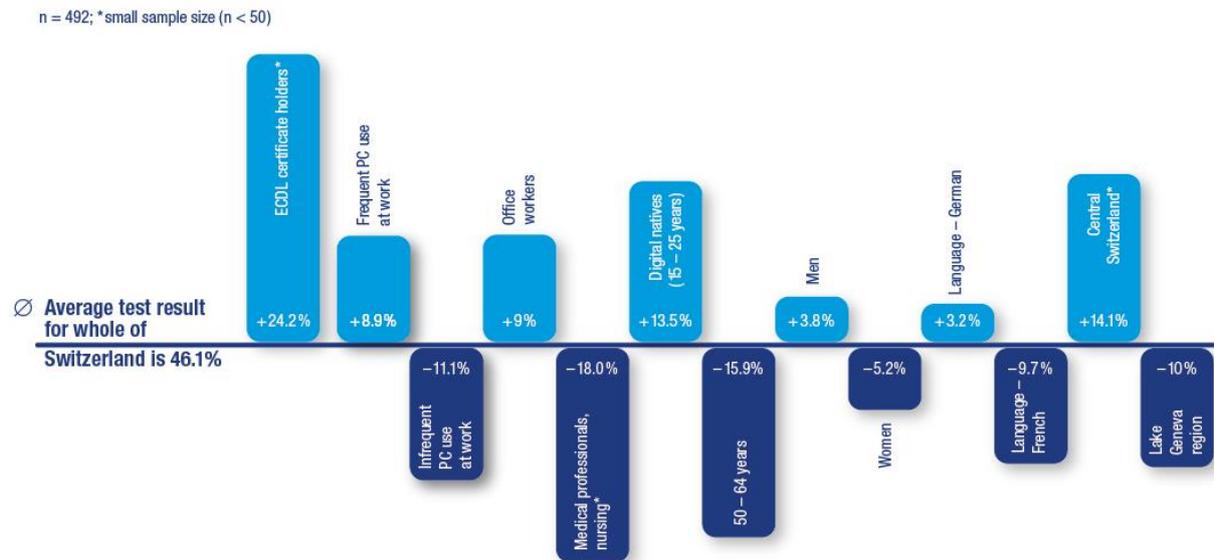


Figure 2 Test result: the greatest deviations from the Swiss average

Private use of PCs, e.g. for using social media, shopping online and watching videos, as well as the number of devices owned do not influence the test result. The average Swiss is well equipped with computers, laptops and smartphones and in his spare time uses his desktop computer or laptop one to three hours per day.

Apart from the surprising conclusion that the majority of the Swiss population has great difficulties in using the most basic computer applications, the study also showed encouraging results. So we see that structured studying and regular work with programmes results in better skills. PC-skills and training courses are seen as important by the great majority of participants and the lack of skills suggest that there is a real need for training.