When coding is not solely for coding experts. A Silver Code event in Ljubljana

It has been generally admitted that coding is complex, therefore suitable only for those who know, the experts on coding. Why is it so?

Thinking about the algorithms behind the complex Facebook or Windows or, shall we say, the European Commission's programmes assisting numerous stakeholders and project managers all over Europe, it is complex, indeed. But on the other hand, problems can be less complex and writing algorithms can be less complex as well. Smaller problems can be defined, problem solutions can be thought of, algorithms can be written. Hence, coding is not solely for experts, those who know, nor are they solely for young talented men. On the contrary, in today's society it should be for all: children, women, older people etc. Digital natives (born after 1990) might be quicker than digital migrants in this field, but not necessarily. The point is that everybody should start understanding the secrets of coding, at least as not to get annoyed and helpless when strings get corrupted.

Are digital inclusion/exclusion new concepts?

In the framework of the **5th European Code Week** and the **Silver Code EU project** an introductory training was developed and run for and with students of Slovenian Third Age University as well as general audience. Digital inclusion versus digital exclusion was discussed. Silver Code project is co-funded by European Union.

The concepts of *digital inclusion/exclusion* stem from the concept of social inclusion/exclusion, the names of which were coined back in 1960. In those days, social inclusion was mainly economic, the concept having been related to alleviating poverty. There was low unemployment rate (3%), so weak and fragile individuals were to be brought back and included in society. Today, due to numerous social interruptions, many social ties broken, and many people excluded, social inclusion has become a massive need.

Social inclusion/ digital inclusion are both about equality and social justice

What about *digital* inclusion? Like social inclusion it is about *equality and social justice, social fairness*. In addition to that, it is about *the level to which our lives are interconnected with the lives of other people*. It is also about more equal access to economic activities, paid work, education, health, accommodation, transport, culture, active citizenship, new technologies in general.

Today's *social exclusion/ digital exclusion* are not only about economic precarisation but also about *relational precarisation* (unstable and interrupted relations*).*This is really bad, since *interconnectivity* is at the core of today's societies.

Digital inclusion further accelerates and makes possible *active ageing*, older people's being connected with other generations. This is important as to avoid *separation within society.*

Digital exclusion harms everybody, both *digital natives* and *digital migrants* (older generations) argued **Dušana Findeisen.**

Let's finally forget about stereotypes. Older people are interested in coding

Karina Sirk introduced the findings of a research on coding for older people conducted in Slovenia, targeting older respondents. It was equally conducted in Romania, Italy, Bulgaria, Portugal, Austria, Poland within the Silver Code EU project. 43 % of the Slovenian respondents expressed their interest in coding,

The interest of older people in coding was confirmed also by the participants in the introductory training on coding. The participants were interested in changing algorithms, defining problems, searching for solutions. They were interested in computational thinking. Some of them were experienced (one of the participants was specialised in skeletal muscles and had been working over a longer period of time with programmers). They understood binary counting. Some of them were already able to write algorithms. They were interested in the coding game of paving the streets in Blatni Dol, an imaginative Slovenian village who's Mayor did not have enough money to carry out the task. How this problem could be solved by writing a computer programme was the question asked by **Katja Koren Ošiljak**, an ambassadress of the **European Code week.**