

Responding to youth unemployment. Education, skills and opportunities in the digital age

Contribution to 2017 CAPP International Conference by Cagliari Group

Easter 2017: The Holy Father's Urbi et Orbi Blessing: "... Risen *Lord*, who never ceases to fill the European continent with with your blessings, give hope to those who are going through moments of crisis and difficulty, due especially to the great lack of jobs mainly for young people."

The problem of youth unemployment is felt in all parts of Europe with different levels of intensity but fortunately there are some signs of recovery.

One area in which there are evident signs of growth is related to digital technologies.

"The *Internet is a gift from God*," Pope Francis said on 27 January 2014, during the 48th World Communications Day. "*Do not be afraid to make yourselves digital citizens*".

The number of professionals working in the IT field is on the increase given the continuous and stable growth in the areas linked to computer language appliances where the developer for example, is perhaps the most widespread profession.

However to make an accurate evaluation, it would be helpful to know something more about the different activities and responsibilities associated with the profession of developer, seeing there are also several different pay levels.

One of the main problems is a general inability to define computer science precisely. It is not a particularly homogeneous category, even if it often seems so from the outside. There is such a variety of skills, abilities, training and careers, ambitions, technologies, cultural differences and much more with clear differences in salaries, opportunities to work abroad and so on.

The following is the IT situation, especially in Italy: researchers, system engineers, junior, senior, general, and specialised developers, consultants and product developers etc, are all put into the same melting pot.

Apart from the salary, the best opportunities today are found in the creation of Apps for the *mobile* industry, development of *video games* and the Internet.

It should be remembered that although pay levels are currently lower than those of other countries, notably the USA, the developer is certainly a profession with good growth potential both in terms of the employment level and in terms of future incomes for those already working in this sector achieving very substantial figures, especially the average salary of an analyst developer.

According to LinkedIn (the free social networking web service, mainly used to develop professional contacts) based on a survey of 260 million curricula and occupations that did not even exist five years ago, the iOS and Android programmers are the first and second choices among the most sought after professionals in the 'Information & Communication Technology

(ICT) market.

It is not hard to see why: the use of appliances on mobile devices continues to evolve with continual growth worldwide.

An App on its own dies. It needs assistance and updates. There is no lack of work perhaps even too much. Well made appliances cost as much as a car depending on which model you want. To get to the top one must continue to develop and improve. Study a lot and follow those with experience, without allowing oneself to be too captivated by the limelight.

There are two obstacles facing professional growth: knowing how to give continuity to ideas and passion by transforming them into a business as well as an occupation, and the ability to find the right way, is paradoxically because of an over-abundance of opportunities.

Stay in Europe or migrate to Silicon Valley? Open a start-up in New York, where new businesses are tax-free for 10 years, or go to London, making £400 a day in consultancy fees? These are real dilemmas for the under thirties. It is difficult however, find classic programmers over 40 who want to change back to the mobile.

In the past decade, Ireland has become the hub of the information industry. It is here that the big American multinationals decided to open their European headquarters. The reason is simple: the tax system which the Emerald Isle offers companies, is one of the most favourable in the world, with income tax for companies blocked at 12.5%, against a European average of 25.5%. To this we must add the present strong economic recovery: the GDP grew by 5.2% in 2014.

"When Ireland was on the brink of bankruptcy, the government made important reforms without cutting back on research and development" and the results are obvious as Giovanni Adorni Braccesi Chiassi, Italian Ambassador in Dublin told *"Il fatto quotidiano.it"*: *"Businesses are growing in a stable manner and this explains why three years ago unemployment was at 15% and is now at 9%."* In the last few years, he added, we have seen so many professionals in *information technology* - computer engineers, programmers and web developers who have decided to move to Dublin.

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