

The National Police of Colombia Certify Their Digital Skills to the International Standard: e-Citizen

Background to the Project

ICDL Colombia has worked hand in hand with groups of civil servants, such as the National Police to train and certify them with digital skills. The Colombian National Police have, in this respect, been pioneers in Latin America, by becoming internationally certified with the e-Citizen certification. An improvement in digital skills should lead to a more modern and efficient police force. This helps to raise levels of efficiency in the provision of online services and the subsequent strengthening of the technology strategies of the national police force.

Objective

In 2011, the National Police force of Colombia set a more ambitious goal than any other group in Colombia, or another country in Latin America. This goal was to train and certify the largest number of public servants in the region (50,000), using the e-Citizen programme, so that they would be able to use the Internet more productively, and use newly acquired e-skills to improve efficiencies within the force.

As part of the government's national ICT strategy, the National Police force took on the challenge of becoming internationally certified as digital citizens. It was an opportunity to respond to the increasing demand for public servants to become digitally literate.

The rapid increase in the use of ICT in Colombia required the members of the police force to be at the forefront of institutional change and challenges when it came to the use of technology. It was their responsibility to offer better services to the public in terms of security, and to strive for improved community relations.

Members of the National Police force had the opportunity to participate in internationally recognised training and certification, enabling them to strengthen their performance by providing a more professional and effective service to the public.

Project Description

The Director-General of the police force, represented by General Oscar Naranjo, and under the 2011 Directive 147, encouraged all officers to certify their digital skills. He said it was part of the mission of the police force to use the Internet more safely and more efficiently.

As part of the process of improving ICT skills within the force, it was proposed that the digital skills of around 50,000 policemen would be certified by 30 December 2011. The Directorate-General of Telematics and the Chief of Strategic Communications assumed the responsibility for the achievement of this goal. Such was the interest and success of the project that the initial goal of 50,000 certificates was reached by late November 2011. As a consequence of this success, the National Police and ICDL Colombia decided to aim for 100,000 members of the National Police to be certified by February 2012. Currently over 70% of all police officers in Colombia have participated in the internationally recognised e-Citizen certification.

Benefits to the Police Force of e-Citizen Certification

Police officers now:

- Have more opportunities to progress professionally through the ranks of the force if they improve their ICT skills. It boosts their competitiveness and their potential for promotion
- Have experience using virtual e-Learning
- Have become a more active part of the network: downloading, creating, publishing and sharing information and facilitating similar changes in their communities
- Possess skills in the productive and responsible use of Internet and use them to ensure citizens' security
- Now use the Internet with confidence and contribute to increased transparency in the security forces, while promoting and exercising the public's rights and freedoms
- Securely update the information of their branch online and encourage trust and confidence of the Colombian security forces
- Streamline and simplify procedures and services to citizens, according to principles of good governance and administrative efficiency
- Make arrangements, payments and secure transactions on the Internet to optimise cost and time, and encourage the reduction of paper in public administration
- Additionally, the delivery of policing services in Colombia has become more innovative and police officers are more confident in the use of new technologies