Media Contact:
Christina Gordon
Director of Communications
202.524.4381
cgordon@changetheequation.org

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New Report from Change the Equation Finds American Millennials Lack Tech Savvy; Stresses the Value of K-12 Technology Literacy

Findings show millennials are largely unaware of their shortcomings and their impact on individual opportunity

Washington, D.C. (June 11, 2015) – Despite their presumed tech-savvy, the majority of American millennials struggle to use technology to solve problems at work and at home, according to a new report released today by Change the Equation.

The report, *Does Not Compute: The High Cost of Low Technology Skills in the U.S.—and What We Can Do About It*, is an original analysis of the 2012 Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which tests the key cognitive and workplace skills needed to participate in society. The report's key findings include:

American millennials are hyper-connected yet under-skilled. Millennials spend on average 35 hours per week on digital media yet according to Change the Equation's (CTEq) analysis, fifty-eight percent of PIACC test takers were unable to complete basic tasks such as sorting, searching for, and emailing information from a spreadsheet.

American millennials are unaware of the impact of their technological shortcomings. Ninety-one percent of millennial test takers believe that a lack of computer skills has not affected their chances of being hired, promoted, or given a raise. Employers have noticed otherwise, however. According to a recent survey, only 37 percent of employers found that recent college graduates are well prepared to stay current on new technologies.

The impact of low technological skill is considerable. According to CTEq's analysis, a person ranked at the lowest skill level earns on average nearly 40 percent less than a person at the highest level, even when other characteristics that affect earnings—such as race, gender, education level, math skills, and literacy skills—are held constant.

"Our findings go against the assumption that America's first generation of 'digital natives' are tech savvy," said Linda P. Rosen, CTEq CEO. "If we continue to leave young people to their own devices—quite literally—their low skills will become a dead weight on individual opportunity and American productivity. But there is a way to shift trajectory, and excellent STEM programs, both in and beyond schools, are showing the way forward."

In addition to its research findings, *Does Not Compute* highlights the successes of six high-quality, high-impact K-12 STEM education programs that are teaching young people to use technology to solve real-world problems.

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"Opportunities to learn problem solving with technology must become the rule rather than the exception," said Rosen. "As part of Change the Equation's Start with STEM initiative, business leaders are doing their part to bring high-quality STEM programs, like the programs mentioned in our report, to 1.5 million more young people nationwide in 2015. But business can't do it alone. Partnerships amongst business, government, educators, and other STEM advocates must be sustained and expanded to ensure that all young people in the U.S. have the opportunity to become tech savvy."

Download a copy of *Does Not Compute: The High Cost of Low Technology Skills in the U.S.—and What We Can Do About It* and accompanying infographics HERE.

About Change the Equation

Since 2010, Change the Equation has been championing the value of a good start through K-12 STEM education, as a means to build and inspire the next generation of America's workforce. The CEO coalition works at the intersection of business and education to ensure that all students are STEM literate by collaborating with schools, communities, and states to adopt and implement excellent STEM policies and programs. CTEq's coalition of members are working toward universal STEM literacy by advocating for state policies and practices that are known to produce STEM-literate high school graduates; ensuring high standards for all students; and supporting evidence-based high quality STEM learning programs.

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