Career Readiness Courseware & Credentials

READINESS REDEFINED

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS FOR THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

WIN LEARNING

OCTOBER 2024

ABOUT WIN LEARNING

WIN Learning is a leading partner with workforce and education entities in strengthening the digital ecosystem providing individuals with sustaining skills for their future.

 | 1000 Waterford Place, Kingston, TN 37763 | 888.717.9461 | winlearning.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology has transformed businesses across all industries and occupations where even basic tasks to get the job done have become increasingly digital. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need for increased technology skills and access to broadband and digital devices.

Due to this transformation, businesses need more digital skilled workers starting at entry and mid-level positions and more occupational contextualized skilled workers at even higher levels in their organizations.

Research proves a major lack of digital skills in the US. Employees without digital fluency tend to earn less, have fewer opportunities to advance in their careers, and often struggle to hold on to jobs.

There is a silver lining—Congress passed the Digital Equity Act in 2021 that provides $2.75 billion of funding towards solving this problem.

While efforts are focused on generating infrastructure and supplying technology hardware, opportunities to strengthen skills to use it have lagged. WIN Learning provides foundational work readiness courseware, assessments, and credentials to empower both workers and employers in bridging this digital divide.

THE DIGITAL DISPARITY

There is a nationally recognized disparity between the tech skills that employers need and the skills that employees have, as a majority of job listings today require some type of digital skill or fluency and over one-third of US workers lack the necessary knowledge to meet that need.

> 30% (or 1/3) US workers lack basic computing skills needed for entry-level jobs.[1]

THE DIGITALIZATION OF AMERICAN BUSINESSES

Digital skills and fluency are no longer limited to the technology field or for employees with college degrees. Technology has permeated businesses across industries and occupations including construction, agriculture, healthcare, food service, retail, and hospitality.

This disparity affects a range of occupations such as home health aides and janitors.[2] Companies now use a broad range of technologies in the workplace, from communication and employee management software all the way to virtual and augmented reality to train employees. For example, Walmart and Chipotle use augmented reality (AR) to train employees[3] and Costco utilizes machine learning in their bakery departments to help forecast food demand.[4]

[1] https://www.thirdway.org/report/americas-digital-skills-divide
[2] Urban Institute
[3] https://www.business.com/articles/best-augmented-reality-uses/
[4] https://builtin.com/articles/technology-grocery-store

There is a real impact to business as this skill gap affects both direct and indirect costs to business. When employers do not invest in upskilling and providing pathways to more opportunities, employees struggle to hold onto existing jobs or choose to leave. Turnover costs to employers directly impact the bottom line with costs up to $25,000 for workers who leave in one year and over $78,000 who leave after five years.[5] Indirect costs include bottlenecks to productivity, as workers with little or no digital skills are often put in roles that require technology for collaboration, communication, and processes.[6]

Businesses, workforce centers, and communities must invest in upskilling to support workers and the continuing evolution of today's job market.

92% of all job ads require some kind of digital skills[7]

Digital skills gap across industries[8]:

50%
In construction, transportation, storage

37%
In retail, wholesale, auto repair

36%
In hospitality

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCREEN

The accelerated technological and digital evolution of businesses have left behind a large majority of the US workforce; many employees have gaps in basic computing skills such as sending email, accessing spreadsheets, entering data, and using timecard software.

Though most people now own cell phones, it leads to "fragmented knowledge." Employees may be comfortable using a mobile phone, accessing photos, and texting, but they may not have the skills required by their employers nor may they own a computer or a laptop in order to gain those skills. According to the US Census Bureau, 23% of American households are in this category.[9]

Employees need the ability to navigate tools that were once analog and are now accessed remotely and online such as HR, payroll, collaboration, and communication software. Digital skills do not stop at work—search for work, banking, shopping, learning, and accessing healthcare is happening more and more online.

The digital divide also disproportionately affects persons of color, and workers from both low-income and rural communities. Populations at risk for digital exclusion include: individuals living in households with incomes at or below 150% of the poverty line, 60+ years of age, veterans, individuals living with disabilities, racial and ethnic minority groups, people residing in rural areas, and those incarcerated in a non-federal correctional facility.[10]

[5] Roberts, Pasha. "The CFO and CHRO Guide to Employee Attrition." Workforce Solutions Review 6, no. 1 (January 2015): 8–10
[6] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/the-new-landscape-of-digital-literacy/
[7] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NSC_DigitalDivide_execsummary_Feb2023.pdf
[8] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/the-new-landscape-of-digital-literacy/
[9] https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/acs/ACS-39.pdf
[10] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/closing-the-digital-skill-divide/

Just like the lack of upskilling costs employers' money, it also costs workers money and creates barriers to further education. Even one digital skill can earn an employee an average of 23% more, resulting in $8K more per year. Increasing this skill set can provide support to getting new jobs and open up future opportunities.

This issue does not just affect older workers. Even youthful "digital natives" who have grown up using technology struggle with the right digital skills for professional use. 58% of millennials lack problem-solving skills in a digital environment.[11]

Upskilling current and future employees sets in motion benefits to individuals, families, companies, and communities, creating a more confident and resilient workforce. Solutions are needed that "use contextualized learning models that help workers see the real-life implications of their new digital skills and apply them during the learning process."[12]

14 million
urban households and 4 million rural households do not have internet access

32 million
adult workers cannot use a computer and less than 10% of these workers are receiving adult education services

1/3
of adult workers and one-half of African American/Latino workers do not have digital skills or have limited skills

50%
of Americans are not comfortable using technology to learn

Government backed resources now exist to provide necessary skill-building opportunities. The Digital Equity Act of 2021 is providing $2.75 billion to target communities and individuals lacking access to technology and/or the skills to use it. The legislation is inclusive to "covered populations," including people of color, low-income individuals, rural residents, veterans, individuals living with disabilities, and more.

WIN LEARNING'S DIGITAL SKILLS SOLUTION LEADS TO TRANSFORMATIONAL OUTCOMES BY BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS FOR ALL.

WIN Learning career readiness solutions include courseware and assessment in academic skills, soft skills, and digital skills to prepare job seekers for 21st century employment. The courseware is focused on technologies and processes most used in the workplace, supporting workers needing foundational skills and digital natives needing career contextualized scenarios.

[11] https://www.edweek.org/leadership/u-s-millennials-know-technology-but-not-how-to-solve-problems-with-it-study-says/2015/06
[12] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/the-new-landscape-of-digital-literacy/

The Digital Skills solution targets foundational and functional technology skills required by most occupations. The five core skill sets measured by the Digital Skills Assessment were derived from research into different states' standards for digital literacy and the most prevalent technology skills and tools as defined by the US Department of Labor's O*NET occupations database. Employers and workforce stakeholders were consulted for feedback on the most current needs in the field for technology skills improvement.

The online, self-paced course consists of five scaffolded learning modules:

- Computer Operations
- Internet Browsing
- Digital Communications
- Digital Documents
- Digital Security

Each module has instructional content, a knowledge-check quiz, practice exercises, and a posttest to recap the learning material.

Computer Operations

Computer Operations	Common Software Applications
Parts of a Computer	Basic Computer Operations
Operating Systems	Professional Use

Internet Browsing

The Internet	Browser Basics
Connecting to the Internet	Searching the World Wide Web
World Wide Web	Professional Use

Digital Communication

Methods of Communication	Instant Message and Text Basics
Email Basics	Social Media Basics
Video Conferencing Basics	Professional Use

Digital Documents

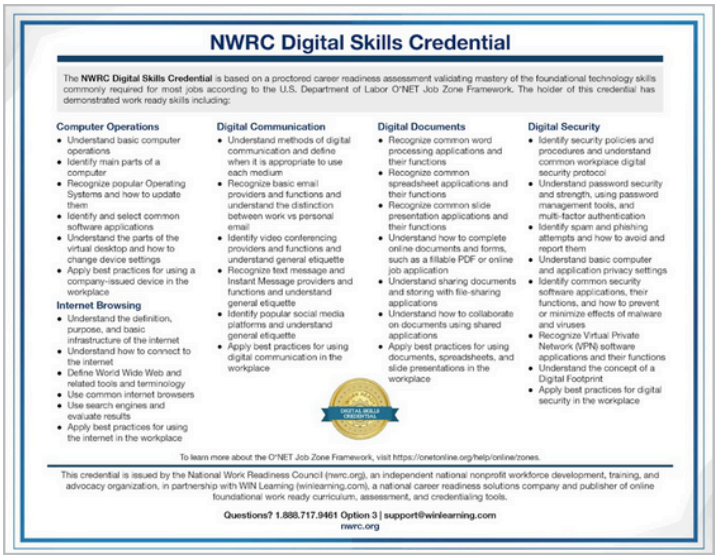
Word Processing	Completing Online Documents
Spreadsheets	Sharing Documents
Slide Presentations	Document Collaboration
	Professional Use

Digital Security

Security Protocols	Security Software
Passwords	VPNs
Spam and Phishing	Digital Footprint
	Professional Use

Upon successful completion of the courseware, learners are prepared to take the proctored Digital Skills Assessment to earn the nationally recognized National Work Readiness Credential – Digital Skills, endorsed by The National Work Readiness Council. The National Work Readiness Council is a national nonprofit workforce development, training, and advocacy organization. Earning the credential validates to employers that the job candidate has the necessary technological skills to be effective in the workplace.

With courseware that is multilingual, accessible, and mobile-friendly, employees can grow and hone their digital skills anywhere, anytime as provided by their local employer, employment training center, education system, among other entities supporting an informed community.



NWRC Digital Skills Credential

The **NWRC Digital Skills Credential** is based on a proctored career readiness assessment validating mastery of the foundational technology skills commonly required for most jobs according to the U.S. Department of Labor O'NET Job Zone Framework. The holder of this credential has demonstrated work ready skills including:

Computer Operations
- Understand basic computer operations
- Identify main parts of a computer
- Recognize popular Operating Systems and how to update them
- Identify and select common software applications
- Understand the parts of the virtual desktop and how to change device settings
- Apply best practices for using a company-issued device in the workplace

Internet Browsing
- Understand the definition, purpose, and basic infrastructure of the internet
- Understand how to connect to the internet
- Define World Wide Web and related tools and terminology
- Use common internet browsers
- Use search engines and evaluate results
- Apply best practices for using the internet in the workplace

Digital Communication
- Understand methods of digital communication and define when it is appropriate to use each medium
- Recognize basic email providers and functions and understand the distinction between work vs personal email
- Identify video conferencing providers and functions and understand general etiquette
- Recognize text message and Instant Message providers and functions and understand general etiquette
- Identify popular social media platforms and understand general etiquette
- Apply best practices for using digital communication in the workplace

Digital Documents
- Recognize common word processing applications and their functions
- Recognize common spreadsheet applications and their functions
- Recognize common slide presentation applications and their functions
- Understand how to complete online documents and forms, such as a fillable PDF or online job application
- Understand sharing documents and storing with file-sharing applications
- Understand how to collaborate on documents using shared applications
- Apply best practices for using documents, spreadsheets, and slide presentations in the workplace

Digital Security
- Identify security policies and procedures and understand common workplace digital security protocol
- Understand password security and strength, using password management tools, and multi-factor authentication
- Identify spam and phishing attempts and how to avoid and report them
- Understand basic computer and application privacy settings
- Identify common security software applications, their functions, and how to prevent or minimize effects of malware and viruses
- Recognize Virtual Private Network (VPN) software applications and their functions
- Understand the concept of a Digital Footprint
- Apply best practices for digital security in the workplace

To learn more about the O'NET Job Zone Framework, visit https://onetonline.org/help/online/zones.

This credential is issued by the National Work Readiness Council (nwrc.org), an independent national nonprofit workforce development, training, and advocacy organization, in partnership with WIN Learning (winlearning.com), a national career readiness solutions company and publisher of online foundational work ready curriculum, assessment, and credentialing tools.

Questions? 1.888.717.9461 Option 3 | support@winlearning.com
nwrc.org