Introducing four workplace personas

future.now

Breaking down the workplace digital skills challenge into something that is actionable is a challenge. Knowing who needs what help and what will motivate them to build skills is critical. New analysis has informed the identification of four workplace personas, where certain characteristics correlate with different levels of digital capability. Each persona represents a sizeable segment of the working population, equating to between c.3.5 million and c.17.5 million people.

Over the next four pages you will meet four fictional members of the workforce that represent distinct groups requiring specific and targeted interventions. Each persona has different skill needs and different motivations to learn, and is described in some detail including:

- Who they are from a demographic perspective (e.g. age, region, sector of employment)
- Their digital ability and how it's changed in the last 12 months
- The digital tasks they can't do or 'deficits'
- Their outlook on life, including things like sense of job security

Most importantly, it draws out what help they might need to build their digital capability and confidence and build motives to keep learning.

Introducing:

Digitally lacking Lou	**c.3.5 million people (12%)**
Digitally safe Sam	**c.5.2 million people (17%)**
Digitally vulnerable zoom-er Zayden	**c.4.0 million people (13%)**
Higher performing digital Denny	**c.17.5 million people (58%)**

Don't forget these are indicative personas, they are gender neutral and are not intended to represent specific people in the workforce.

Figure 3: Segmenting the new data set into personas[22]

Report dataset – c.30.3 million

↓

Segmentation analysis

Digitally lacking Lou	Digitally safe Sam	Digitally vulnerable Zoom-er Zayden	Higher performing digital Denny
c.3.5 million people (12%)	c.5.2 million people (17%)	c.4.0 million people (13%)	c.17.5 million people (58%)
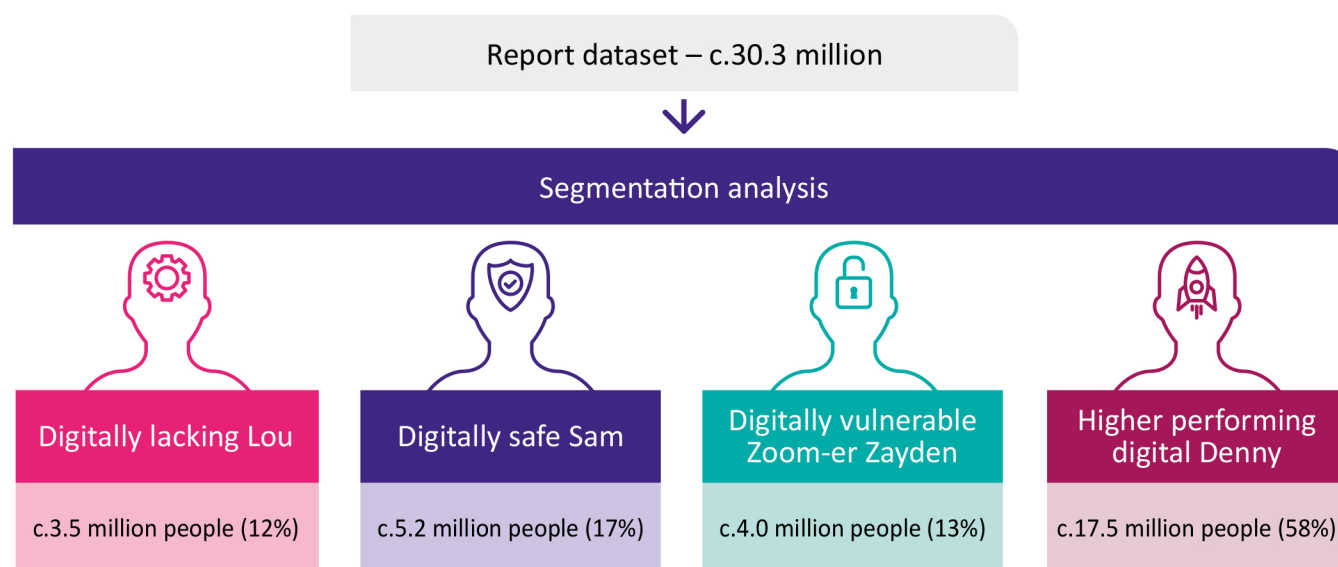
Population estimates based on ONS 2020 mid-year estimates for those 18+ in the UK.

Meet digitally lacking Lou

c.3.5 million people (12%)

Lou is more likely[23] to be older, a public service worker and less likely to be a middle or high earner.

They typically have a lower digital ability in their general life and work and feel less secure in both their job and their career prospects in an increasingly digital world.

Workers like Lou tend to be 45+, are slightly more likely to be female and less likely to have a degree or higher level of education. They are the least likely[24] to be able to do the majority of the EDS life or work tasks.

Almost a quarter (24%) of people like Lou are not able to do 25 or more of the 29 life tasks

Nearly two thirds (60%) are not able to do 14 or more of the 17 work tasks

Digital abilities

Lou is more likely to be able to access salary and expenses information digitally. Like the overall workforce[25], Lou is careful with what is shared online and can also use the internet to help solve problems.

Digital deficits

Lou would benefit from digital upskilling across a number of digital tasks, including:

- Updating computer systems to prevent viruses
- Building a professional online network
- Sharing information across multiple devices.

Outlook on life

Lou is less likely to feel secure in their job and about future career prospects but more likely to believe that their digital ability has improved over the past 12 months.

How to help

Lou has a low level of digital skills and may also be less motivated to learn.

1. **Help Lou to find new motives to build digital skills** – Bring to life how building these skills has benefits in both social and work life. Take time to acknowledge fears and worries.

2. **Create a structured learning path** – Use online, openly accessible, bite-sized content. It may not be easy for people like Lou to invest much time at work in learning, so being able to access on personal devices too can be helpful.

3. **Personal support from a workplace mentor** – This can help Lou to build confidence and appetite for learning – knowing where to go for support is vital when getting started.

In real life

Alison manages a Manchester-based homeless centre, organising activities to create structure and routine for visitors and help them build confidence.

Alison uses a personal laptop for online shopping and banking and another one for work. She understands the basics of Excel and email, but her role is mostly paper based. Alison attended the Lloyds Bank Academy to get help to digitise the centre, despite feeling out of her depth.

Within a year, the centre reduced paper forms by over a hundred a week, savings hours at a time. With forms now online, she can work from home, reducing her commute and creating more time to support the homeless. Alison uses her new digital skills to access grants, local opportunities and support.

Meet digitally safe Sam

c.5.2 million people (17%)

Sam is amongst the younger generation of middle-earning government, education or medical workers.

Sam is more likely to live in an urban area. Sam has good digital security practices at work and is more likely to be a desktop user but lacks sufficient knowledge in more specialist digital abilities, for example tasks related to communicating, handling information and problem solving. Sam is more likely to be female, aged 25-34 and to earn between £25,000 and £39,999.

Nearly a fifth of people like Sam (18%) are unable to do the majority of life tasks, which is in line with the average workforce

They are **more likely to be unable to do the majority of work tasks (48%)** (14 or more out of 17 work tasks)

Digital abilities

Sam is the most likely to be digitally safe, particularly when it comes to recognising and avoiding suspicious activity, not sharing data/intellectual property without consent and keeping their online accounts safe using different passwords. Sam is also more likely to be able to use the internet to help solve problems.

Digital deficits

Although generally safe online, Sam is less likely to be able to set privacy settings on social media and other accounts. Sam generally lacks deeper digital abilities and is less likely to be able to:

- Manage digital records and financial accounts through digital systems
- Build a professional network online
- Use digital tools to improve productivity and to work more efficiently.

Outlook on life

Sam is less likely to have thought about growing and progressing their career through digital training. People like Sam are most likely to have used a desktop computer or a device belonging to an employer.

How to help

Sam tends to have an average level of digital skills but perhaps low motivation to learn.

1. **Help Sam to find new motives to build digital skills** – Sam would benefit from understanding more about the benefits of digital upskilling for their productivity and efficiency in work. This could be linked to career progression to help motivate Sam as well as fostering greater engagement and work satisfaction.

2. **Trial a peer-coaching model** – At work, people like Sam are typically more desktop-based so have opportunities to learn on the job from colleagues via peer-coaching. Identify champions within teams who could provide support to others. Consider a campaign around life / work hacks, highlighting ways to make life easier, save money and save time through technology.

3. **Share real-life success stories** – Spotlight real-life examples of people who have developed digital skills, how they have benefitted personally and professionally and why. FutureDotNow has a bank of examples if you need inspiration.

In real life

Nicky is a customer services manager, working either in a call centre or from home, dealing with banking queries.

Working remotely has made her job harder, as she must escalate queries via specific systems, so responses are not instant. She has received warning communications from her organisation about the rise of fraud and scams, so she is extra vigilant with customer security, and doesn't rush through emails – she tries to apply this to her personal life too.

Nicky loves the virtual element of her job; however it is more time consuming, and she worries about online safety, which is why really she values her organisation's refresher training on the do's and don'ts.

FutureDotNow

Meet digitally vulnerable Zoom-er Zayden

c.4.0 million people (13%)

Zayden is more likely to be aged between 35-44 and to work in the services sector.

They are more likely to have digital skills linked to hybrid working, such as using collaboration tools to meet with people or accessing and sharing information across different devices, but are less likely to have safety skills online. Zayden is most likely to be educated to degree level.

They are less likely to be able to do the majority of the EDS life or work tasks

46% are not able to do 14 or more of the 17 work tasks

12% are not able to do 25 or more of the 29 life tasks

Digital abilities

Zayden has good communication and problem solving skills. They are most likely to use digital collaboration tools and to manage an online professional network, such as LinkedIn. Using appropriate tools, Zayden is more likely to be able to manipulate/analyse data and improve their own productivity to work more efficiently.

Digital deficits

Despite their technical skills, Zayden is less likely to be safe online. This is particularly the case in relation to the ability to set up privacy settings on social media and other accounts, updating computer systems and being careful with what is shared online.

Outlook on life

Like the overall workforce, Zayden is likely to have improved their digital skills over the last 12 months, to manage money better online and not have thought about growing and progressing their career through digital training.

How to help

Zayden tends to have an average level of digital skills and an average motivation to learn. With significant talent demands further up the digital skills pipeline, people like Zayden could be natural candidates for more advanced digital roles, if they can be encouraged and supported to improve their safety online.

1. **Bring digital skills/future of work into career discussions** – Highlight potential new career paths that could align with interests and emphasise the need for a higher level of digital skills, with cyber security being a stepping-stone.

2. **Provide access to online learning resources** – Using an element of benchmarking can help Zayden see how they rate against others. It could also be a gamified platform.

In real life

Sarah is a secondary school teacher, with a Masters degree. She is proficient with collaboration tools, and uses them creatively to engage students, and connect with parents and colleagues.

Sarah uses school systems and forms, but has struggled to engage with other digital resources due to capacity. She only recently discovered the privacy best practice she should be using for confidential information. She dreads IT updates, as it eats into her time, and as not much school paperwork is being digitised, there is little incentive to invest her time in digital platforms.

At home, Sarah values Internet Banking as it saves her time, but finds social media overwhelming on top of a heavy workload. She uses WhatsApp but most friends aren't on Facebook or Instagram anymore.

Meet higher performing digital Denny
c.17.5 million people (58%)

Denny is more likely to be a higher earner, based in London or the South-East of England and under 45 years of age.

Denny has higher levels of digital competence and probably requires less intervention. As well as having strong digital abilities in work, they have strong technology skills in life and are most likely to have used games consoles such as PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo in the last month. Denny is more likely to earn above the average UK salary, tends to hold a bachelor's degree or higher and is more likely to be employed in the Technology or Financial Services sectors.

They are the most likely to be able to do the majority of the EDS life or work tasks

15% are not able to do 14 or more of the 17 work tasks

Only 7% are not able to do 25 or more of the 29 life tasks

Digital abilities

Denny has a strong set of essential digital skills, most notably in transactional and safety tasks. When online, they are more likely to be able to identify risks and set privacy settings on social media and other accounts. They are also more likely to be able to manage a professional online network through the likes of LinkedIn and to manage records and accounts through digital systems.

Digital deficits

Denny doesn't have any clear digital deficits. However, it is important people like Denny do not allow complacency to set in. The 17 digital tasks represent non-exhaustive examples of various basic work tasks and there is room for Denny to grow further and learn more digital skills. They could support others who lack digital skills, which is also another way to consolidate their own digital knowledge.

Outlook on life

Denny is the most likely to have thought about growing and progressing their career through digital training in the next 12 months. They are also the most likely to feel secure in their job and about their future career prospects.

How to help

Denny tends to have higher digital skill level and higher level of motivation and could benefit from more advanced digital skills training or acting as a mentor or coach to others in the workplace.

1. **Pay it forward** – People like Denny could provide support and coaching to colleagues. They could be encouraged to share their views on 'top tips to make life and work easier' and 'what's new in digital' to encourage openness and nudge people towards shared and continuous learning.

2. **Consider qualifications** – This group could be offered the opportunity to complete digital qualifications or certifications. Formally recognising their skills may be an added motivator and would be transferable between employers.

3. **Building the talent pipeline** – Look for opportunities for people like Denny to be involved in digital transformation projects. Exposing them to future opportunities aligned to digital may help motivate them to build more advanced digital skills, and encourage them to explore more advanced digital skills training.

In real life

Duggs is a community worker, formerly working in local government. Digital skills are his secret weapon for community engagement. Duggs is confident online, using email and video calls throughout his career, and using technology at home to make life easier and save money. He is never far from his phone, so always feels connected.

Digital makes it easy to set up volunteer groups – Duggs can connect volunteers instantly, which was invaluable during the pandemic. He can share volunteer schedules and key documents easily. On Facebook, he curates content and connects like-minded people to discuss local issues. Building the community online reduces costs (from physical space hire) and has allowed the network to grow – those who cannot help physically can still get involved online.

FutureDotNow