Working to close the digital divide

How unions and union learning reps can support digital skills

unionlearn
from the TUC

Technology allows people to connect with government institutions and councils, and to be active in their local community and participate in democratic debates.

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Foreword

" Whichever way you look at it, having good digital skills is vital for work and life outside work. Unions recognised this long ago and have done a stellar job in supporting people in the workplace with improving their skills in using computers, making sense of the internet and harnessing email – to name just a few.

There are undoubtedly more and more demands for digital skills in both our private and our work lives. And there are a lot of benefits, too, from being able to communicate, take part in important campaigns or join a training course online when we know how to use the tools. But there is a large number of people who still need help with updating their digital skills and union learning reps are here for them. Union learning reps are champions of learning in the workplace but all of us can step up and be digital champions. "

Kevin Rowan
TUC Head of Organising, Services and Skills

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for unions and union learning reps (ULRs) to support digital learning and the benefits it brings for colleagues at home and in work. It sets out the case for change to encourage employers to support workers to gain digital skills and confidence. It contains ideas and good practice, and provides some tips developed from a range of unions and ULRs.

What are digital skills?

These are the skills needed to use basic technology such as phones, laptops, tablets and computers to carry out a range of everyday activities. In September 2018, the government issued a Digital Skills Framework[1] outlining the digital skills that all adults need. These are summarised below and can be found in more detail in section 9 of this guide, with examples from life and work.

Communicating: communicate, collaborate, and share information. Keep in touch with family and friends using emails, instant messaging, video calls and social media. Be able to post comments on forums, connect with online communities and leave feedback e.g. on shopping websites and for service providers about purchases or experiences.

Handling information and content: find, manage and store digital information and content securely. Use a search engine to find information, search for deals on comparison websites, be able to bookmark useful websites and services and store data on a device or in the cloud.

Transacting: register and apply for services, buy and sell goods and services. Manage transactions online such as completing a universal credit application, ordering shopping, booking travel, managing bank accounts, using digital government services and understanding how to buy and sell on the virtual marketplace.

Problem-solving: find solutions to problems using digital tools and online services such as video lessons. Use feedback from other internet users to solve a common problem and access support services such as a 'live chat' facility.

Being safe and legal online: stay safe, legal and confident online. Understand the risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online and the importance of working securely. Follow workplace guidelines and policies.

Why are digital skills important?

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important in all areas of our lives – at home, at work and to access learning – and many of us often struggle to keep up. Technology can improve accessibility and build a more inclusive society, helping us to communicate with others around the world. Confidence in digital skills can support people to do their jobs effectively, improve promotion prospects and increase job security. Many union reps will have access to flexible online learning programs and webinars that can be accessed via computers, tablets or smart phones. But all these benefits can be gained only if you're digitally confident.

This is also a social justice issue for unions. Technology allows people to connect with government institutions and councils, and to be active in their local community and participate in democratic debates. People on the wrong side of the digital divide are likely to be disadvantaged and living in low-income households. You need some level of digital confidence to access the services and information that many organisations offer, as paper-based alternatives are now fast disappearing. Schools, colleges and universities also expect a level of digital literacy to access their services and engage with learning and assessment. In addition, understanding how technology works allows people to keep themselves and their children safe online.

EVERYDAY DIGITAL
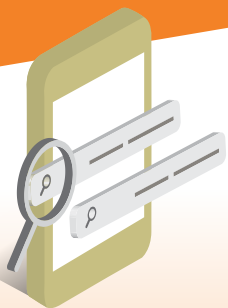
Can you search for information on the internet?

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[1] *www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework*

Many workplaces have an intranet to communicate company news, key staff documents and processes, job vacancies and opportunities to learn. An intranet enables organisations to keep all company information up to date and reduces the need for paper-based systems that often cost more, but workers need to be confident to access and benefit from it.

Things are changing fast. Over the next 20 years it's estimated that 90 per cent of jobs will require digital skills. Outside of work, digital confidence is needed to access local and national services, use social media, shop and bank online, search for jobs, solve problems, keep in touch with others and find news or information.

The digital divide is a term used to describe the gap between people who can use technology and those who can't. This division is caused by a combination of factors:

- **access** – the ability to go online and connect to the internet
- **skills** – being able to use the internet
- **motivation** – knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing
- **trust** – a fear of cyber crime, or not knowing where to start to go online.

Trade union-led learning centres around the country, unions and unionlearn working in partnership with other organisations already deliver opportunities for people to develop and improve their digital skills but there are still too many people on the wrong side of the digital divide.

Policy background

The government launched its Digital Inclusion Strategy in 2014, with an aim to get all UK citizens online and a commitment to "ensure adults in England who lack core digital skills will not have to pay to access the basic digital skills training they need, mirroring the approach taken for adult literacy and numeracy training". For 2020, the government plans a new 'essential digital skills' qualifications offer, based on its Digital Skills Framework and free to adults with no or few digital skills. [2]

Unionlearn recognises the value of digital skills for people's work and home lives. It aims to support unions and ULRs to help break down the barriers that exclude workers from accessing and using technology. The TUC discussion paper *Shaping our Digital Future* [3] also explores the potential impact of technology on jobs in the future and makes recommendations for government.

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[2] *www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy*

[3] *www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/shaping-our-digital-future*

The digital divide is a term used to describe the gap between people who can use technology and those who can't.

The need for change[4]

22%

11.9 million people do not have the essential digital skills needed for day-to-day life in the UK

8%

4.1 million adults in the UK are offline

53%

of UK employees do not have the digital skills needed for work

35%

people with a disability are 35% less likely to have essential digital skills for life, but in the workplace they are equally skilled

33%

one third of the workforce lacks cybersecurity skills

34%

only one third of employees say their workplace gives them digital skills support

Identifying the barriers that contribute to digital exclusion in your workplace is a good place to start. This knowledge and understanding will enable you to help colleagues, clients, family and friends to embrace technology and to help employers understand and address the digital challenges for their business.

Some individual barriers are common to all adult learning, such as lack of time, fear of the unknown or feeling unable to change, adapt or learn new skills. A lack of confidence in literacy and numeracy can also stop people engaging with technology. Unions and ULRs can inspire and motivate members through informal discussions, tasters, roadshows and a range of other activities. The speed at which technology is changing can be daunting. And technology has a whole new vocabulary, which can make people feel excluded – there is a jargon-busting glossary on page 20 and you could copy or adapt this information for leaflets or posters in your workplace.

Other barriers for workplaces or individuals:

- **infrastructure** – lack of access to equipment at home or work, or poor or unreliable internet connectivity
- **accessibility** – disadvantage, including poverty or physical or mental health conditions

- **cost** – affording devices, a broadband subscription or monthly fees for mobile data
- **lack of confidence** – negative experiences of using technology
- **reluctance** – to admit a lack of skills or knowledge to managers at work or to family and friends.

Unions and ULRs can support workplaces to face up to the challenge of digitisation and help workers to adapt to changing working practices. Start with a positive attitude towards technology and try to understand the challenges and barriers for individuals. Some people are non-users and others may be narrow users –using technology only in a very limited way. As with all skill areas, people may have spikey profiles and be good at the skills they use regularly at home or work but have gaps that may cause them to avoid some tasks or prevent their progression. Be careful not to make assumptions: for instance, not all young people have high digital skills; office-based workers may, for example, be confident with Word but not able to use Excel. You may find potential digital champions who never use their skills at work.

The case studies in section 6 will provide you with ideas and tips to get started.

Can you keep
your smartphone
safe and secure?

Getting online and using mobile devices presents risks as well as rewards. Unions and ULRs can play an important role in helping members learn how to keep themselves and their families safe and take steps to protect their personal computer and mobile devices.

As a ULR, it's important to be aware of digital safety and you can use the checklist on page 27 for yourself and to help others. This covers the basics such as ensuring authenticity, keeping information secure, privacy settings, checking for secure websites and recognising suspicious links.

There's lots of advice available about staying safe online that you can download and share in your workplace – but it's important that it comes from a trusted source. A useful website is Get Safe Online *www.getsafeonline. org*, which provides unbiased, factual and easy-to-understand information on online safety for both individuals and businesses. It includes information on potential risks and protection against fraud, online abuse and identity theft. You can signpost people to get more information or download top tips to make posters for your workplace.

Learn My Way *www.learnmyway.com* offers short courses on online safety, while unionlearn with Wranx have a free introduction to online security course at *www.unionlearn.org.uk*

The variety of information about staying safe online is potentially overwhelming for new users. Perhaps you could focus workplace activities on one aspect each month, for instance:

• password awareness
• online fraud
• common scams
• phishing.

Many people are concerned about their children using the internet unsupervised and some may be unaware of the potential risks this can bring. Running a session for parents and carers may also be a way to motivate people to get involved with digital learning. The BBC's *www.bbc.com/ownit/take-control* offers bite-sized learning and practical advice for children and their parents and carers. It covers a range of topics including online bullying, children's mental health and using social media safely.
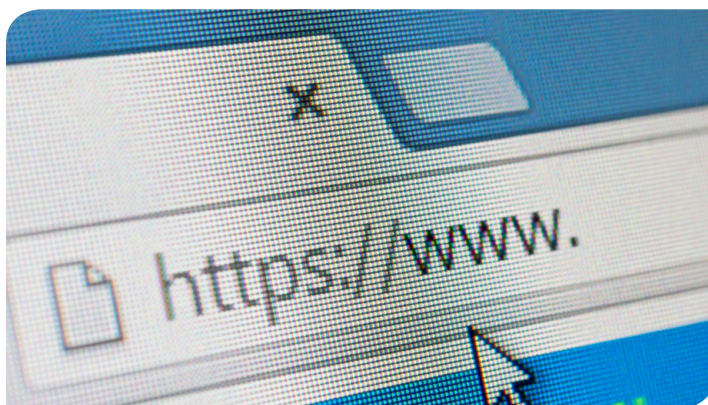
If the failure to close the digital skills gap continues, the UK economy could forfeit as much as £141.5bn of the GDP growth promised by investment in intelligent technologies over the next ten years.

REPORT BY ACCENTURE, 2018

www.consultancy.uk/news/18895/digital-skills-gap-could-cost-uk-1415-billion-in-gdp-growth

Making the case to employers

Engaging with this agenda can help businesses now and with their preparations for the future. You can use the national statistics and government ambitions outlined in the introduction to this guide to help you make the case and to raise awareness of the benefits of improved productivity when staff are digitally confident. Also, the risks of online security issues – and potential cost and reputational risks – if staff are not properly trained.

A learning agreement – a collective agreement between unions and an employer setting out how the parties will work together on learning issues – can be very helpful. Visit *www.unionlearn.org.uk* for more on learning agreements. Also, check out the union learning Climbing Frame *https://climbingframe. unionlearn.org.uk,* which has a useful section to support unions to work with employers.

Image: Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk

You can also work with colleagues to make a note of the key issues in your workplace. It may be helpful to think about the following questions:

What is the level of confidence in digital skills in your workplace?

You can undertake short skills surveys. UNISON used this approach on a large scale, see the case study on page 16. It has made generic surveys available that can be adapted to suit different workplaces. You can also use the checklists in this guide to develop your own surveys.

What are the minimum digital skills required for all workers?

Make a list of all the skills currently needed in your workplace. This could include using the intranet, online payslips, online HR systems, e-noticeboards, e-learning, accessing data or all staff emails. If new equipment, digital tools or systems are introduced, is the correct level of training made available for everyone or is a level of digital skills assumed?

How does a lack of digital skills and confidence affect the business?

Gather some examples by asking people in your workplace about their issues with digital skills needed at work. Look for the barriers, for avoidance or at how a lack of digital skills can prevent progression for people who are otherwise well qualified. Think about the excluded groups, for instance people working offsite who may not have access to wifi, equipment or opportunities to develop digital know-how.

Change management: what plans are there for digitisation in the next 5 years?

Find examples of employers who are leading the way in this area by sharing strategic plans with unions and working together to prepare workers for any planned changes. Ask employers and management for information.

Language with universal appeal

Discover a new world

Inclusion

Explore more

At your fingertips

World at your fingertips

Explore

Be confident online

Find out more

Personalised

Convenience

Enhancement

Get connected

Connected

Empowerment

www.bbc.co.uk/learning/overview/about/assets/bbc_media_literacy_unified_language_research_2014.pdf

Make sure management is aware this is not a quick-fix and people will need time and support to learn new skills and gain confidence.

Getting started

Listen to what workers want and consult them from the outset through setting up learner forums, surveys or having informal chats. This will help you ensure that you offer learning opportunities that are relevant to your colleagues. The words and phrases in the box above can help you with conversations and to make publicity with wide appeal. As with literacy and numeracy, unions and ULRs can gain the trust of individuals, making the case for the benefits of gaining digital confidence for life and work.

Once you have motivated people in your workplace to get digital, you can help them decide what works best for them – learning online or face-to-face. Either way, there is a lot of choice. Consider the different merits of informal learning, accredited learning and

digital badges *www.openbadges.org* to recognise achievement.

The real-life examples in section 9 of this guide can be adapted to start conversations with individuals about their skills. You can use them in group activities or at the beginning of a learning course to identify starting points for developing skills.

Unionlearn has a digital SkillCheck tool at *www.unionlearn.org.uk/skillcheck*. It's free to use after a quick registration process and results can be printed out to inform a learning plan or to help with signposting. If you work with a provider that uses bksb for initial assessment in literacy and numeracy, you can use its tool, ICT NOW *www.bksb.co.uk/products/ict-assessment-resources/*.

For an informal or light-touch approach, you can organise taster sessions or open days that entice people to 'give it a go'. Make it clear that it's for absolute beginners to find out more – not to sign up for a course but rather

Can you use WhatsApp to talk to friends and family?

a fun activity, perhaps with tea and biscuits. You could focus on one aspect of digital skills such as surfing the net. Or run sessions where technology is not the focus, such as researching family trees, learning a language or doing arts and crafts, but where digital resources are useful too. Session leaders can then help and encourage people to explore relevant websites, forums or video demos online as part of the session. If you don't have access to a room with computers, you can plan sessions using mobile phones.

Developing digital skills – tools and resources to help you

The TUC and unionlearn provide information, develop resources and share good practice to support digital skills. Visit their websites to keep up to date with all the latest developments. There is a directory of union-led learning centres at *www.unionlearn.org. uk/learning-centres*. Your own union may have advice, courses and qualifications or be involved in projects to support digital skills.

The union learning **Climbing Frame** *https:// climbingframe.unionlearn.org.uk* has a comprehensive section on digital skills. It's a good place to start as it has information on free bite-sized learning as well as longer courses leading to qualifications. It links to many resources, apps and websites for support and information on digital skills.

BBC Make It Digital *www.bbc.co.uk* provides a range of formal learning activities and resources.

Digital Unite *www.digitalunite.com* provides resources and services to support people on their digital journey, from the complete beginner to those helping others to get online. It offers resources, training and support to help digital champions, including free technology guides covering a range of digital technology from computer basics to internet security, digital photography and using smartphones

and tablets. The guides are useful for ULRs supporting other learners, or to improve their own confidence and skills.

FutureLearn *www.futurelearn.com* has a range of online, flexible courses exploring technology trends like big data, cyber security, data science and digital marketing, plus learning to code or developing programming skills – from beginner to advanced level.

iDEA *www.idea.org.uk* helps develop digital, enterprise and employability skills through free online challenges, with badges and records of achievement.

Khan Academy *www.khanacademy.org/ computing* has a range of free online courses at all levels.

Learnfree *www.gcflearnfree.org* has courses including free online tutorials in basic digital skills.

Learn My Way *www.learnmyway.com* is a website of free online courses to help people develop their digital skills and encourage them to progress onto further learning. It offers courses on using computers and other devices, email, online forms, Facebook, online public services and more.

The Online Centres Network *www.onlinecentresnetwork.org* is made up of more than 5,000 centres that help people use digital technology to access essential services and take advantage of the opportunities the internet provides. Every centre is different, with some in libraries, community venues, leisure centres or shopping centres, as well as in more unusual locations such as pubs and cafés. Many centres also run outreach sessions.

If you don't have access to a room with computers, you can plan sessions using mobile phones.

Opportunities for digital learning should be accessible for everyone but at the same time be aspirational to develop digital skills to level 2 and above. Individuals can also use their digital skills to access a range of courses online, which can offer the flexibility to fit in with busy working lives – offering a whole new world of learning possibilities for people with different starting points and different goals.

Courses and qualifications

There are many courses available both online and through local and national providers that lead to a range of qualifications, including the examples here. To support people in developing their digital skills and understanding at higher levels, it's best to organise specialist information, advice and guidance. Some digital skills courses are free at lower levels and the government plans to offer further free qualifications from 2020. Advanced learner loans are available to support learning at higher levels: *www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan*

Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills. In partnership with the Skills Network, unionlearn offers funded qualifications through distance learning at *https://unionlearn.theskillsnetwork.com*. Distance learning allows people to study completely flexibly so can suit work-based learners. This certificate develops knowledge, understanding and competence in a range of different IT skills, particularly for people who use IT in their current job role or are looking to enter a role where these skills will be needed.

Functional Skills qualifications in ICT (information and communications technology) are available at Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2: *www.gov.uk/government/publications/ functional-skills-criteria-for-ict*. If your members are already familiar with Functional Skills in

Possible pathways to improve digital skills

Use Checklist to identify skills	Talk to a ULR or digital learning champion about next steps	Use Climbing Frame to access bite-sized learning	Take a qualification such as ECDL
Informal taster	Check skills with unionlearn's online SkillCheck	Develop skills informally to fill gaps	Feel more confident at work
Use Learn My Way to develop skills	Find a union learning centre or local college	Take a qualification such as ITQ	Access the National Careers Service for next steps
Workshop on internet safety	Check out the Get Safe Online website for tips and support	Start using the internet to access products and services	

Can you apply for
a job online?

English and maths, you could consider adding this qualification to your offer.

The European Computer Driving Licence
(ECDL) *www.ecdl.org* is a qualification widely recognised by employers and covers the skills of using common applications such as Microsoft Office. It can be taken online or through a local education provider.

The **ITQ** is a nationally recognised qualification available through several awarding organisations at Level 1, 2 and 3. It is designed for people using technology at work, in education, when looking for work or in their leisure time. ITQ is based on a national framework of 15 skills that covers the core range of everyday IT-user skills, for example word processing, spreadsheets and database management.

OpenLearn
www.open.edu/openlearn/science-maths-technology has free, online courses on a range of subjects.

The Open University
www.open.ac.uk/courses/ has a range of flexible courses to study at higher levels.
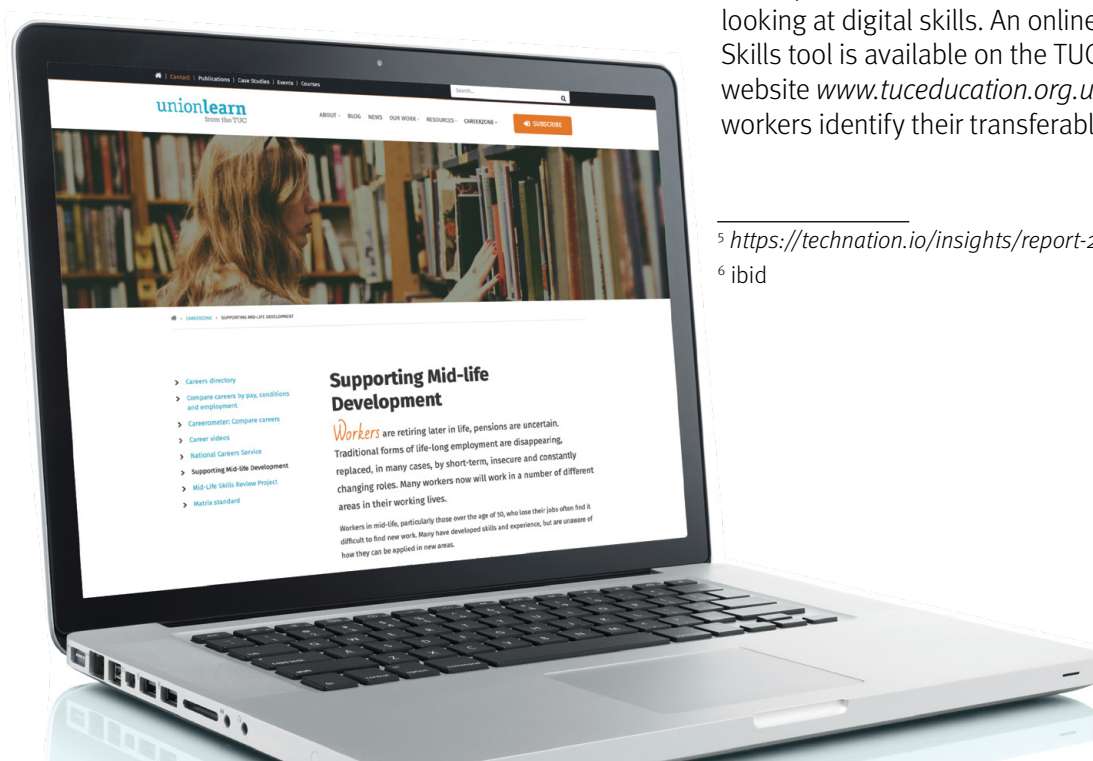
Digital careers

You can support people to think about a career change where their new digital skills will be valued or used to develop specialist skills such as web design and game development, digital marketing or online publishing. Between 2014 and 2017, employment in the digital tech sector increased by 13.2 per cent.[5] Also, more sectors are becoming digitised and many digital jobs are within traditional industries.

Unions can also help to address the gender imbalance in the sector by encouraging women to develop their skills and consider careers. Nineteen per cent of people who work in the tech sector are female, compared to almost half across all UK jobs.[6] Both the Wise Campaign *www.wisecampaign.org.uk* and Code First Girls *www.codefirstgirls.org.uk* provide information, advice and training to encourage more women into technology careers.

Unionlearn values the skills of older workers and provides guidance to support mid-life development reviews to give people space to think about their lives and careers, to take stock and to locate specialist help *www.unionlearn.org.uk/supporting-mid-life-development*. Part of this review could involve looking at digital skills. An online Value My Skills tool is available on the TUC Education website *www.tuceducation.org.uk* to help workers identify their transferable skills.

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[5] *https://technation.io/insights/report-2018/*

[6] ibid

Can you see your
digital payslip?

Other useful websites in alphabetical order
include:

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills
https://ada.ac.uk is a specialist college to
prepare for a career in technology.

Bubble *www.bubble-jobs.co.uk/career_portal/*
provides support to find careers in the
digital sector.

Careerzone *www.unionlearn.org.uk/careerzone*
is unionlearn's one-stop-shop for career
information.

Digital apprenticeships
www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-apprenticeships
for information and guidance on digital
apprenticeships.

National Careers Service
*https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/
course-directory/home* provides information
and advice on career pathways and learning
opportunities.

Prospects *www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-
work-experience/job-sectors/information-
technology* provides jobs and work experience
information for students.

Unions can also help to address the gender imbalance in the digital sector by encouraging women to develop their skills and consider careers.

Unions and ULRs can offer support, information and inspiration to colleagues and employers to engage with digital learning at all levels. The following examples show how some unions are already working to support workers in gaining digital skills and confidence. And for the latest union case studies on digital skills visit *www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies*
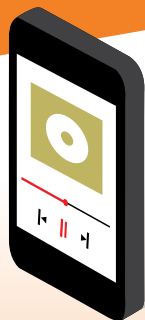
UNISON
the public service union

UNISON support for digital skills

Digitisation across the public sector has prompted UNISON to launch a Digital Inclusion project to support workers experiencing digital change in the workplace by providing them with digital skills development. Funded from the Union Learning Fund, the project is training digital champions, using Digital Unite's Digital Champions Network, to encourage members' engagement with this agenda. It aims to create a learning culture through a mixture of informal digital champion support and more formal learning opportunities offered through the branch learning network.

UNISON has created paper-based and digital learning surveys that ULRs can use to assess the specific learning needs of individuals in the workplace, ranging from skills to use online human resources (HR) systems through to changes to social care systems that include cloud-based case management. The survey questions are linked to the government's digital framework and include questions about digital skills and automation/digitisation of the workforce.

Blackpool Health Branch is supported by Jane Eyre, the branch's lead learning rep. Jane

emailed all staff in the Trust to advertise and explain the role of digital champions, and to invite interested people to a training day. Eighteen workplace volunteers signed up, including clinical staff and staff working for Atlas (an external company providing facilities management for the hospital) and a volunteer from Compass (an external company providing domestic services at Blackpool Victoria Hospital). The champions spent half a day together learning about digital exclusion in the workplace, reflecting on their own skills to support people to learn and creating resources,

> "Since becoming a digital champion, I have been able to support my colleagues and customers with confidence. Supporting learners gives me great satisfaction, especially when learners do not think they can use digital and I watch them grow with confidence and eagerness to learn more."
>
> LINDA SLASOR, ULR AND DIGITAL CHAMPION, NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL BRANCH

EVERYDAY **DIGITAL**

Can you stream music online?

UNISON ULRs Jane Eyre (left) and Linda Slasor (right) supporting colleagues with their digital skills.

Images: Mark Pinder
pinder.photo@gmail.com

such as an NHS-specific learning survey, which they can use in their roles. Using the Digital Unite resources, Jane created a six-week Computers for Beginners course, which runs at lunchtime and in the evening, offering bite-sized digital learning especially for Compass staff. At the start of the year, Compass and the UNISON branch signed their first learning agreement together and this digital learning programme has been the first activity as a result of that agreement.

Linda Slasor, the branch ULR and Digital Champion at **Newcastle City Council Branch** runs sessions for members and non-members across the council who don't routinely use

digital technology but where aspects of their roles are becoming digitised. Newcastle City Council has moved many of its services online, requiring frontline staff to have the skills to support people to carry out activities such as paying council tax online. Linda has produced a paper-based digital learning survey, which supports her to assess the type of digital learning her colleagues need.

To find out more about how to get started with a digital learning project, access free resources and find generic surveys to adapt to your workplace visit:

https://learning.unison.org.uk/branch-education-team/digital-champion/

URTU Learning

The road transport union URTU is helping members keep pace with new technology and automation in road haulage, logistics and distribution.

With the help of the union, learners new to IT use the popular Learn My Way package to catch up on exploring the internet, using email and accessing online public services safely and securely. Once they have got to grips with the basics, they can then move on to advanced qualifications with signposting help from their ULR.

The URTU team has developed a dedicated website *www.urtuulr.com* to make it easy for members to find out about a range of useful resources, learning opportunities, skills checks and interesting links. It has also developed a

quiz to prepare members taking the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) and introduce them to digital skills.

> "HGV drivers, warehousing staff and fork lift truck drivers have seen massive changes creeping into those industries but traditionally they have never had the opportunity to engage with digital learning. We want to make sure that the membership and all the staff in those workplaces are able to move with the changes, rather than be displaced or replaced by them."
>
> JEFF LATHAM, ENGLAND AND WALES PROJECT MANAGER, URTU

TUC North West

TUC North West: delivering assisted lifestyles living at scale (DALLAS)

Funded by NHS Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group, the aim of the DALLAS programme is to improve health, wellbeing and access to health information through improving digital skills. Digital champions, staff and volunteers from third sector, unions and workplaces across Liverpool attend a one-day training session delivered by Merseylearn, the learning team within Merseytravel, to enable improved access to online health care and other resources. After the training, digital champions engage individuals within their own organisations and workplaces to introduce digital skills using learning tools such as BBC WebWise, Learn My Way and unionlearn's SkillCheck initial skills assessment tool.

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

Supporting digital skills at Tesco

Trish Baldwin from Usdaw works as a customer assistant at Tesco's Hall Road Superstore in Hull and won unionlearn's 2018 ULR of the Year Award for supporting learners with digital needs.

Over the last two years Trish has done a massive amount of work with her members around digital skill needs. Working closely with store management and fellow ULR Tracy White, Trish identified staff in store struggling with technology. Lack of digital skills was putting Trish's members at a disadvantage both at home and at work, with more and more Tesco systems going online. A series of events showcasing technology allowed people to complete a digital skills assessment and then go on to a series of workshops themed around work systems such as online payslips, ordering uniforms and using Tesco's intranet. Trish then signposts on to other free learning such as Usdaw's Get Online or Learn My Way.

> "At this store we have a lot of people in their 50s and 60s who don't have a smart phone, don't know how to use a computer. We decided we would set up a learning centre with computers so that people who are not comfortable with computers can play. We have got Get Online with Usdaw and it's been really successful."
>
> **TRISH BALDWIN, ULR, USDAW**

> "The use of technology is becoming more important in our colleague's lives, but not all our colleagues are that confident to use technology. But the work that Trish and our team at the store has done has been fantastic, and colleagues have really welcomed it, and the help they have received."
>
> **GAVIN O'NEILL**, TESCO STORE DIRECTOR, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Trish Baldwin receives her ULR Award from TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady and Skills Minister Anne Milton MP.

Image: Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk.

Usdaw digital champions

Usdaw trains digital champions to use their skills and experience to help friends, colleagues and members of their community to make the first steps to get online. It's a voluntary role and they support friends and colleagues to:

- raise awareness
- promote digital inclusion in their workplace
- run one-to-one or small group sessions
- keep up to date on new opportunities

- demonstrate how to stay safe online
- signpost learners to improve their digital skills
- advise learners on sources of equipment and connectivity
- share good practice with other digital champions
- keep records on learners' attendance and progress.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Lifelong-Learning/Digital-Champions

Digital skills start a learning journey at Kuehne and Nagel

Mike Rockey, a Unite ULR, wanted to find a course to improve his own digital skills and in the process encouraged 15 colleagues to join him. He arranged a Level 1 introduction to computers course accredited by NOCN to be delivered in the workplace by DA Training. Mike negotiated time off with his employer and the course was delivered in two full days.

The course covered using Microsoft Office and, says Mike, "created a buzz around the depot". It boosted confidence in digital skills and also meant that employees from different parts of the company were able to learn new skills together. The course has been so well received that Mike is negotiating a learning agreement and has planned further courses.

Desire for transferable skills prompts digital uptake

Mary O'Brien, project worker for AEGIS, works with several offices in the financial services sector. She finds there is a real interest in learning digital skills especially when there are staff changes or risks of redundancy. "Many employees in this sector use computers but in a very limited way and don't have transferable skills to apply for other jobs," says Mary. "I

work with a team of ULRs to support staff to develop their skills and gain confidence and qualifications." Over 130 employees have undertaken digital training in the last year with the help of Mary and her team. All learning takes place on site through workshops or more formal courses organised with local colleges.

Redundancy inspires digital training

When staff at Walstead Grange were faced with redundancy, Unite rep Dave Lovelidge arranged an in-house course run by DA Training and funded through the printers' union. This helped

boost staff morale as well as develop their basic digital skills. Eleven members – including Dave – benefited from the course and gained a qualification.

7 | Some useful terms explained

Accessibility Ensuring individuals of all abilities can access and engage with websites and apps to achieve their goal.

Application A computer program that performs a particular function such as word processing, spreadsheets, a database, presentations or email.

Blended learning A combination of face-to-face and online learning.

Blog Short for weblog. Where individuals share their experience, advice, stories and insights in an informal style. See *www.unionlearn.org.uk/blog*

Browser Software used to search and retrieve information from the internet. Examples of browsers are Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari and Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge.

Cloud A computer with internet connection to the cloud means you can save your data and use digital services in 'cyberspace' – rather than taking up the storage capacity on your device.

Cookie A small file that websites place on your device so they can recognise you the next time you visit their website.

Download Data such as files, images or music taken from a web server and stored on a local device such as a laptop or phone.

Firewall A firewall is software that keeps a private network secure by preventing unauthorised web users or illicit software gaining access when the network is connected to the internet.

ICT Information and communications technology.

Internet/Web The internet is a worldwide computer network made up of many interconnected networks. The terms internet, net, World Wide Web and web are often used interchangeably (although technically, the web is a subset of the internet).

Internet service provider (ISP) A company that provides connection to the internet and any related services.

Intranet An internal network that functions like the internet but users normally have to register and log in to use it.

Open source Freely available software for use or for improvement and redistribution by users. Many online learning resources are open source.

Operating system The program a computer runs on that provides the framework for all other programs to run on, Windows for example

PDF (portable document format) PDF files will print exactly as they appear on the screen. You need the free Acrobat Reader program to open a PDF file.

Phishing Sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to try and get people to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers.

Podcast The term comes from a combination of the words iPod (a personal digital audio player made by Apple) and broadcasting. It allows you to listen to audio files such as plays, comedies or documentaries on computers or personal digital audio players.

QR code A quick response (QR) code is a barcode that can be scanned by a mobile device with a camera. Unlike a conventional barcode, which only contains a number, a QR code can contain many different types of information.

Router A device that directs information around a computer network.

Screen reader A device that reads text aloud from the screen to make it accessible to users with visual impairments.
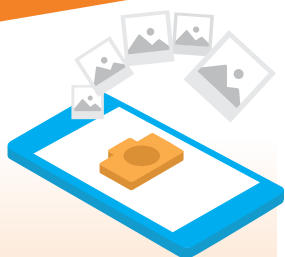
Can you manage your digital photos?

Search engine Software such as Google or Safari that searches the internet for relevant information or websites.

Social media Websites and applications that can be used to create and share content or to communicate with others online such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Teleconference A meeting that uses telephone technology to hold meetings over distance where people all dial into the same number and can hear each other – sometimes called 'virtual meetings'.

Upload Putting a file from a device onto a web server.

USB A cable that fits into a USB port to connect a computer to other devices.

Videoconference A meeting that uses web and video technology to hold meetings over distance where participants can see and hear each other – sometimes called 'virtual meetings'.

Virtual learning environment (VLE) A system that supports online learning.

Webinar An educational or informative presentation that is made available online, usually as either video or audio with slides.

WiFi Wireless networking technology that uses radio waves to provide high-speed internet and network connections.

EVERYDAY DIGITAL

Can you compare energy supplier prices online?

Useful organisations

AbilityNet *www.abilitynet.org.uk* is a charity that helps older people and disabled people of all ages use computers and the internet to achieve their goals at home, at work and in education. It provides a range of solutions around seeing the screen, using the keyboard and mouse, hearing sound, reading and spelling.

Age UK *www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/ work-learning/technology-internet* works to help older people overcome barriers and get online. It offers computer training courses and guides to help people stay safe online and make the most of the internet.

The Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) *www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-skills-partnership* brings together public, private and charity sector organisations to help increase the digital capability of individuals and organisations in England in order to create a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone.

Doteveryone *www.doteveryone.org.uk* is a think tank that champions responsible technology for the good of everyone in society and fights for a fairer internet: one we can all understand and help shape for the future.

The Good Things Foundation *www.goodthingsfoundation.org* is a social change charity, helping people to improve their lives through improving digital skills. It runs an online network of 5,000 organisations around the UK that provide millions of people with access to technology and support in using it.

The Learning and Work Institute *www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/ uploads/2017/01/Digital-Capability.pdf* works to increase digital skills for all, particularly for excluded groups. It has developed a Citizens' Curriculum that uses resources relevant to the user to deliver ESOL, digital, civic, health and financial capabilities. Its digital capability framework shows how providers can develop a learners' digital skills.

One Digital *https://onedigitaluk.com/* is a collaborative digital inclusion programme to deliver digital skills' training through digital champions and sharing practice. Its network of digital champions provide personalised and ongoing support to help people in their communities learn new digital skills and benefit from being online.

TUC Education *www.tuceducation.org.uk* is a great source of support for union reps' learning and skills with eNotes (bite-sized online modules), courses and webinars.

Unionlearn *www.unionlearn.org.uk* is the learning and skills organisation of the TUC, assisting unions in the delivery of learning opportunities – including digital skills – to workers. It also offers tools for ULRs to provide advice and guidance for further learning pathways and changing careers.

Key documents and references

UK Digital strategy, March 2017. *www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy*

The Economic Impact of Digital Inclusion in the UK. A report for Good Things Foundation, September 2018. *www.goodthingsfoundation. org/sites/default/files/research-publications/ the_economic_impact_of_digital_inclusion_in_ the_uk_final_submission_stc_o.pdf*

TUC Discussion Paper, Shaping our Digital Future, September 2017. *www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/ shaping-our-digital-future*

Tech Nation Report. *https://technation.io/insights/*

Delivering Better Learning Agreements: A guide for union reps and officers, March 2012. *www.unionlearn.org.uk*

Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2019 *www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.asp*

The checklist and skills examples here are an ideal place to start conversations with individuals. They can also be used in surveys and questionnaires or as a group activity to identify levels of digital confidence. The details have been adapted from the Department of Education's Essential Digital Skills Framework.[7] They cover a lot and you'll probably want to start small, perhaps choosing one section at a time – especially for potential learners with fewer skills or experience. You can use them in any order: for example, people may be enthusiastic to learn about digital communication and social media; or if you are bargaining with an employer you could start with staying safe and legal online.

Remember to consider additional support needs that some members may have in the workplace. For example, some people may need adaptations or adjustments to their computers such as increased font size on a web page. You can find factsheets, webinars and advice to improve accessibility at *www.abilitynet.org.uk.*

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[7] *www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework*

Getting started (foundation skills)

I can:

- turn on a device
- use the available controls on my device
- make use of accessibility tools on my device to make it easier to use
- interact with the home screen on my device
- understand that the internet allows me to access information and content and that I can connect to it through wifi
- connect my device to a safe and secure wifi network
- connect to the internet and open a browser to find and use websites
- understand that my passwords and personal information need to be kept safely as they have value to others
- update and change my passwords when prompted to do so.

Communicating

Communicate, collaborate, and share information

I can:

- understand the importance of communicating securely
- set up an email account
- communicate with others digitally using email and other messaging apps
- use word processing applications to create documents
- share documents with others by attaching them to an email
- communicate with friends and family using video tools
- post messages, photographs, videos or blogs on social media platforms.

Skills for life
Examples

I can:

- set up a group on messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp or Messenger, to talk to friends and family
- use word processing software to create a CV or a letter
- send photographs and other documents to friends and family as an email attachment
- set up and use video-telephony products such as Facetime or Skype for video communications with friends and family
- be a member of and manage personal networking sites, such as Facebook
- post appropriately on social media, and visit and post to forums such as Mumsnet or Reddit.

Skills for work
Examples

I can:

- understand and conform with my organisation's IT and social media policies
- comply with my organisation's security protocols when accessing my email or working remotely
- use digital collaboration tools to meet with, share and collaborate with colleagues
- use professional online networks and communities
- use the email address book of my organisation to send emails to colleagues and use the 'cc' option when requested
- work remotely using a virtual private network when provided by my employer, and use the requested authentication to connect
- use different document formats such as PDF to make it easier to share documents with colleagues
- use document sharing though web-based applications such as Google Docs to work on a document in collaboration with colleagues
- use video-conferencing products such as Skype and Facetime to communicate with colleagues on conferences and calls.
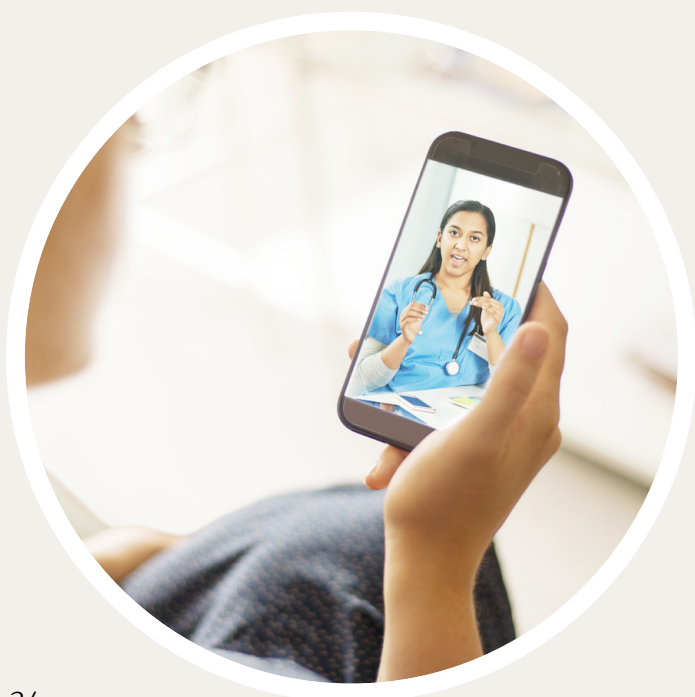
Handling information and content

Find, manage and store digital information and content securely

I can:

- understand that not all online information and content that I see is reliable
- evaluate what information or content may, or may not, be reliable
- use search engines to find information and make use of search terms to generate better results
- use bookmarks to save and retrieve information on my web browser
- access information and content from different devices
- understand that the cloud is a way to store information and content in a remote location
- organise my information and content using files and folders on my device or on the cloud
- use the internet to legally access content for entertainment including films, music, games and books.

Skills for life
Examples

I can:

- understand that not all entries in online encyclopaedias, such as Wikipedia, are true or reliable
- search for news using a browser such as Chrome, Internet Explorer or Safari
- use a cloud storage account for a music or photo collection (from legal sources such as Apple iCloud or Instagram) and access the collections from different devices such as a laptop or a smartphone
- stream music from legal sites such as Spotify or Apple Music, or watch streamed movies from legal sources such as Netflix or Amazon Prime.

Skills for work
Examples

I can:

- understand and conform with my organisation's policy for IT use
- synchronise and share information across different devices including computers, tablets and mobile phones
- search for information requested by a supervisor using browsers such as Chrome, Internet Explorer or Safari
- manage a calendar or appointments system on multiple devices, including work computer and phone or tablet.

Transacting: register and apply for services

Buy and sell goods and services, and administer and manage transactions online

Skills for life
Examples

Skills for work
Examples

I can:

- set up an account online, using appropriate websites or apps, that enables me to buy goods or services
- access and use public services online, including filling in forms
- use different payment systems, such as credit/debit card, direct bank transfer and phone accounts, to make payments for goods or services online
- upload documents and photographs when this is required to complete an online transaction
- fill in online forms when required to complete an online transaction
- manage my money and transactions, such as my bank account, online and securely through the use of websites or apps.

I can:

- set up online accounts for public services such as with my local council or a government department
- set up online accounts with retailers to order and pay for goods online such as through Amazon or eBay
- use travel websites and apps to book tickets and make reservations
- make a GP appointment online
- complete online forms to apply for a television license or road tax
- set up and use online and telephone banking through websites or apps, keeping access information secure
- upload a CV to an online recruitment site
- complete an online application form, for example for a job.

I can:

- complete digital records for absence, holidays or expenses online
- access salary and expenses information digitally including password-protected payslips
- submit requests for annual leave, record absence from work or submit expenses claims online
- review my own payslip and salary payments when received digitally.

Problem solving

Find solutions to problems using digital tools and online services

Skills for life
Examples

Skills for work
Examples

I can:

- use the internet to find information that helps me solve problems
- use the internet to find sources of help for a range of activities
- use chat facilities (where available) on websites to help me solve problems
- use online tutorials, FAQs and advice forums to solve problems and improve my skills in using devices, software and applications.

I can:

- use the internet to find specific information related to life tasks, for example finding a recipe or information to organise travel plans
- use the help, FAQ section or chat facility of a manufacturer's website or other related content to work out how to fix an issue with a device
- find out how to do something by using a tutorial video such as those on YouTube.

I can:

- use the internet to find information that helps me solve problems at work
- use appropriate software to present information to others
- use appropriate software, including a spreadsheet, to manipulate and analyse data to help solve problems at work
- understand that different digital tools can improve my own and the organisation's productivity
- use the internet to identify alternative ways of resolving a problem encountered at work such as checking out a business competitor
- use spreadsheets to plan the cost of a project
- use analytic tools to monitor website usage and spot trends that enable decisions to be made about marketing tactics.

Being safe and legal online

Stay safe, legal and confident online

I can:

- respond to requests for authentication for my online accounts and email
- keep the information I use to access my online accounts secure, using different and secure passwords for websites and accounts
- set privacy settings on my social media and other accounts
- identify secure websites by looking for the padlock and https in the address bar
- recognise suspicious links in emails, websites, social media messages and pop-ups and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments could put me and my computer at risk
- make sure that any information or content is backed up frequently by making a copy and storing it separately either in the cloud or on an external storage device.

I understand:

- the risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online and the importance of working securely
- that viruses can damage my computer and that security software should be used to prevent this
- that my online activity produces a permanent record that could be accessed by others and used both now and in the future
- that others can capture and use my data and that I can protect and secure my personal data against such threats through privacy settings
- that I must not share other people's data online without their consent
- why it is important to keep my computer systems and security software up to date and that I allow them to be updated when prompted
- why I cannot take and use content (images and documents from the web) that belongs to others without their permission because I know that online material is subject to copyright and intellectual property legislation.

Skills for life
Examples

I can:

- make sure that online login information is not shared with anyone
- ensure my posts on social media are not offensive or inappropriate
- ensure that nothing is posted on social media about others, including children, without their permission
- use a second device to receive codes when a website provides dual factor authentication and input the code to access the associated account
- create passwords using three random words or with at least eight characters, using lower- and upper-case letters, numbers and symbols
- apply privacy settings to Facebook to ensure only friends can see posts and shared content
- activate pop-up blockers on my web browser to reduce the threat from malicious sites
- set automatic updates in the settings menu for the computer operating system and security software
- use search tools to find and access images and other online content that can be used by others
- use an external storage drive and copy any new documents on to it at the end of the day.

Skills for work
Examples

I can:

- follow organisational guidelines and policies for choosing login information including choosing secure passwords and changing them when prompted
- apply my organisation's policies on IT use and social media
- use specific procedures to report suspicious emails to my organisation's IT support staff
- follow specific organisational guidelines to allow updates of software
- use open source sites that provide content that can be used in my workplace
- follow specific organisational guidelines to allow backing up of content from work-based devices.

Making your own checklist

In the simple example below we've taken some of the skills for life and work from the 'Transacting' skills list above and turned them into a quick checklist to ask people what they can do. You can make checklists that suit your colleagues, members and workplace, focusing on work or life/home skills – or a mixture of both. You can go through a checklist face to face, or give them out to people to fill in their own time and return later.

Name:			Date:
Checklist	**Yes, I am confident**	**I have some experience**	**I have no knowledge or experience**
I can set up an online account with a retailer to order and pay for goods online			
I can use travel websites to book tickets			
I can make a GP appointment online			
I can make annual leave requests online			
I can review my payslip when received digitally			

Other options to consider:

- Use your union's and any other relevant logos.
- Let people know what will happen next.
- Give contact information related to any questions – ULR names, phone numbers and email addresses, for example.
- Let people know where to return forms if they're taking them away.
- Are you offering any incentives to people to complete the form?

- Give a deadline if you have one.
- Let people know how the information will be used. Bear in mind GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) law.
- Monitor equality and diversity, if appropriate, to help you include everyone.
- Use pictures to make your form look interesting.

Image: Squaredpixels

There are still too many people on the
wrong side of the digital divide.

unionlearn

This title may also be made available, on request, in accessible electronic formats or in Braille, audiotape and large print, at no extra cost.