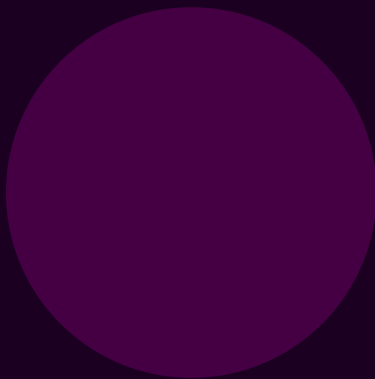**For Labour Market & Education Policymakers**

Applying Behavioural Insights to Labour Market Challenges:

Empowering Students with Labour Market Information

Future Skills Centre   Centre des Compétences futures

THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM

The opportunity

Students' choices about post-secondary education (PSE) are influenced by many factors, including the desire to find a job they like with strong prospects and good wages. Given that students care about their employment outcomes, labour market information (LMI) can be a valuable tool to inform PSE decisions.

While much attention has been paid to the quality and availability of LMI, there has been less focus on making it clear and useful to non-experts. Behavioural insights can play a pivotal role in filling this gap. The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) partnered with the Future Skills Centre and the Government of British Columbia to determine **what LMI to provide students and how to provide it.** The goal was to help students **make better, more informed decisions about PSE.**

What did we do?

1. **Reviewed the existing evidence base** (35+ studies) to build on what works.

2. **Conducted 21 interviews with high school students and teachers** to identify key barriers and enablers for PSE.

3. **Conducted two randomized controlled trials with 7,200+ youth** to determine what LMI data points are most influential & interesting, & to understand how financial aid information interacts with LMI.

4. **Ran a qualitative study** in three classrooms in British Columbia to validate findings & deepen our understanding with BC youth.

Why it matters

- **The right LMI can have a strong influence on choices about educational and career pathways;** our study found that carefully selected and presented data about labour market outcomes generated a 19% relative increase in people choosing a higher opportunity occupation.

- **LMI is more helpful for decisions about what type of PSE to do than whether to do PSE at all;** the existing evidence base suggests that key barriers to participation are unlikely to be addressed by LMI.

- Combining evidence about what students want to see and what LMI is most influential, we found that **educational and skill requirements, a holistic job outlook, salary range, and at most one to two other data points** is likely to work best.

- **Students prioritize non-traditional LMI to understand if a career is a good 'fit';** present LMI that provides a "review" from experienced workers, or a "day in the life" testimonial.

Best Practices for labour market and education policymakers

Design Principles for Presenting LMI

Take a facilitated, in-classroom approach

Alternatively, use a personalized, interactive web-based approach.

Use visual approaches, especially video

Use graphs and tables for numeric LMI, with very simple, clear explanations to aid interpretation.

Simplify language & avoid jargon

Prioritize simplicity over precision, keep everything to a Grade 6 reading level.

Seek input from equity-seeking groups

To boost inclusion, hear what data is valuable and meaningful to different groups of students.

Share localized, disaggregated data

Where possible, enable students to filter data to the places they want to live.

Engage trusted messengers in LMI delivery

Find ways to engage teachers, parents, and experienced workers in disseminating LMI.

Provide personally relevant financial aid information with LMI

Where possible, combine LMI with personalized information about student financial aid to help address affordability concerns.

Regularly test & seek feedback

Establish an ongoing improvement process that includes regular data collection.

Principles in Action: LMI 'Mock-up'

Job information

Learn more about different jobs as you think about your career!

Interested in being a journalist?

Here are some things you should know:

1. What would you do in this job?

Journalists research, investigate, interpret, and communicate news and public affairs online and through newspapers, television, radio, and other media.

Journalists work on a freelance basis or are employed by radio and television networks and stations, newspapers, magazines, or online platforms.

2. What does a regular day look like?

A news reporter might find news stories locally, nationally or internationally and conduct interviews.

An **investigative reporter** might research developments in a field such as medicine and draft articles.

3. What education or qualification do you need?

Journalists usually require a **Bachelor's degree in Journalism** or a related field, like communications.

Alternate requirements may include a Bachelor's degree in English or history with proven writing skills, experience working on school newspapers, or external writing work while in school.

4. How long will this take? How much will it cost?

The amount of time may vary, but in general a Bachelor's degree in Journalism takes around **4 years.**

Tuition costs vary between programs, but a Bachelor's degree in Journalism can cost about **$18,000** total ($4,500 per year). These costs do not include books, supplies, housing, or other living costs.

5. What's the overall job outlook?

ABOVE AVERAGE
AVERAGE
BELOW AVERAGE

Why this rating?

These ratings are developed by expert analysts who include factors like:

- How easy it will be to get a job based on predicted openings and competition

- How much the job will pay

They look at current data and projections over the next 10 years

Where do these numbers come from?

This data is based on the 2021 Labour Market Outlook.

6. What's the salary for this job?

Bar chart showing salary figures: Low $32,389, Average $55,143, High $95,249.
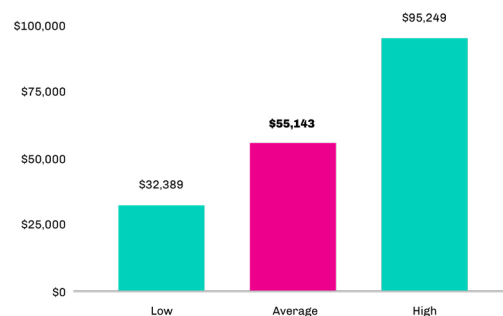
What do we mean by average salary?

The average is the mean of all the incomes earned by the number of individuals for this particular position. Salaries are based on hourly wage data and assume a 40-hr work week, though hours worked may vary between jobs.

How are low and high salaries calculated?

- "Low" refers to a salary that is in the bottom tenth of salaries that people earn for the job.

- "High" refers to a salary that is in the top tenth of salaries that people earn for the job.

The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada, and is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

BIT Canada opened its doors in 2019. Since then, we have generated social impact across the country by applying evidence about human behaviour to the design of programs, policies, technology, and communications.

We partner with all levels of government, nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector to deliver evidence-based solutions and rigorous evaluations. Some of our clients include the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, Ville de Montréal, Ontario Securities Commission, WoodGreen Community Services, United Way-Halton Hamilton, the Daymark Foundation, East Toronto Health Partners, and Sun Life Financial.

Over 70+ projects, we have helped these clients achieve results in a wide range of areas, including:

- Making workplaces more equitable,
- Protecting investors from dark patterns and high-risk gamification tactics,
- Reimagining the delivery of employment services,
- Identifying policy mechanisms to reduce emissions, and
- Helping accelerate the diagnosis of complex mental health issues.

We also help organizations build their own research and evaluation capacity. From setting up a new behavioural science function to growing a mature, interdisciplinary team, we bring BIT's global expertise and experience to Canadian organizations. Contact us: bitcanada@bi.team

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