



Project Insights Report

What We Know and What We Need to Know about Adapting Experiential Learning to the Digital Economy



PARTNERS

Carleton University



LOCATIONS

Across Canada



INVESTMENT

\$27,359



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☰ Executive Summary

Managers play an important role in the growth of the digital economy and whether that growth exacerbates inequities or contributes to more equitable outcomes. This project reviewed the management literature on the digital economy to better understand what knowledge and skills managers need to bring about a more equitable version of the digital economy, and how managers could learn these critical skills.

The project uncovered that to adequately respond to its key research questions, more research is needed in a number of areas, including the macro impacts of the digital economy and its benefits. In terms of skills, researchers identified a need for an increased focus on cooperation and collaboration, as these skills are essential for realizing the potential of a digital economy. Many postsecondary institutions with business schools are already designing learning environments and experiences that will help students acquire cooperation and collaboration skills and the knowledge needed to manage multi-stakeholder partnerships.

KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 Most management research on the digital economy to date has been focused on specific themes rather than on understanding its macro effects.
- 2 Opportunities afforded by the digital economy and ideas about how the digital economy could bring about a guaranteed minimum revenue are also under-studied.

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More research is needed to examine how business schools could adapt their curricula to help managers acquire the collaboration and cooperation skills needed to drive more equitable outcomes in the digital economy.

▶ The Issue

The digital economy provides an opportunity to improve productivity, access education and expand entrepreneurship; however, new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics and blockchain, are massively disrupting the nature of work and industries, in some cases exacerbating inequities. Managers have a key role in supporting employees, organizations and sectors in adapting to the rapid changes in the digital economy, but not enough is known about the skills and knowledge managers need to contribute to a digital economy that furthers equity.



🔧 What We Investigated

This project conducted a review of the management literature on the digital economy. The review was guided by the following key research questions:

- How can the digital economy contribute to the greater good?
- What skills, knowledge and habits of thought are needed to manage this more equitable version of the digital economy? How will managers learn these critical skills?

- How will higher learning institutions design programs that will allow for the management learner to acquire this knowledge and these skills?

✔ What We're Learning

New approaches to research are needed

Management research on the effects of the digital economy has largely focused on five themes: managing precarious work, managing inequality, managing disruption, managing social and psychological impacts, and managing change. Most research focuses on one theme, leaving many of the macro impacts under-studied.

More research is needed on gig work

New forms of work brought about by the digital economy—such as zero-hour contracts, non-standard work, contingent work, on-call work, job-sharing, platform-mediated work, app work, atypical or informal employment arrangements, project-based work— are transforming traditional full and part time employment models and have also received limited attention in management research.

More research is needed on the benefits of the digital economy

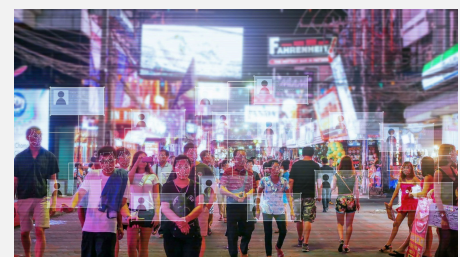
Potential benefits of the digital economy—such as producing technology-complementing skills, extending social protections, reducing revenue disparity and increasing brand value through collaboration and cooperation—are also under-studied.

Changes are needed in business school curricula

More research is needed to examine how business schools need to adapt their curricula to bring about a digital ecosystem that helps the many rather than blindly maintaining a digital economy that benefits the few.

★ Why It Matters

Digital innovations have radically changed how organizations, businesses and countries collaborate and compete. Managers are key employees in firms with the capacity to influence how the digital economy is operationalized. However, training is needed to build capacity among managers to build teamwork and collaboration skills for multi-stakeholder partnerships. Many postsecondary institutions offering education in business are already designing learning environments and experiences that will help students acquire these skills and the knowledge needed.



**State of Skills:
Unleashing AI into the Skills
Development Ecosystem**

To reap the benefits that AI has to offer, its adoption and deployment should be a collaborative and inclusive process that recognizes and addresses genuine concerns individuals have about AI and technology more broadly.

[Read Thematic Report](#)

Have questions about our work? Do you need access to a report in English or French? Please contact communications@fsc-ccf.ca.

How to Cite This Report

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