

Project Insights Report

Evidence-based Insights for Public Service Professionals Navigating the Workforce of the Future



PARTNERS

Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada
Across Canada



LOCATIONS



INVESTMENT

2,581,960



PUBLISHED

July 2025



CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Richter, Manager, Policy

Executive Summary

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC) created an online platform, called Navigar, to better prepare its over 70,000 members for the future by providing future-oriented career information. This need for relevant information was clearly expressed by PIPSC members: in 2019, over 70% expressed a strong desire to see the institute expand its current training offerings to include both career planning and skills training. The project sought to design a web-based resource that could cut the time the institute's members spend researching new content, instead pointing them to the information they actually need. It created customized career plans for users, highlighting the information users would need to obtain the next job. Users can rely on the tool's predictive capacities to understand the skills required to do the jobs of the future.

The team designed the portal by partnering with IT experts to research and curate content from hundreds of sources, boiling it all down to the essential skills and tasks and allowing for more efficient search results. Research also focused on the impacts of artificial intelligence and the changing nature of work. This led them to design a tool that allows for a more predictive, rather than reactive, understanding of which skills are necessary for jobs of the future.

This project is a part of PIPSC's efforts to redefine the union of the future. Often, unions are thought of as "reactive" organizations that impede progress, rather than "proactive" stakeholders that encourage it. In this way, the union of the future possesses forward-looking tools that allow it to proactively see what's around the corner so that it is in a position to understand what is better for its members and the employers for which it works.

KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 More than half of the users (57%) of the Navigar platform stated that it had equipped them with knowledge to transform their career in the near future.
- 2 Through its partnership with Filtered (a learning tech company), the project team was able to optimize the platform, allowing users to reduce the time spent searching for information by 50%.
- 3 UI/UX design should be prioritized before building the eventual platform; this rule should apply to any projects seeking to build similar platforms.

The Issue

PIPSC is a union incorporated under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*. It represents over 70,000 professionals working in provincial and federal public sectors across Canada. Having served public sector professionals for a century as both a professional association and a bargaining agent, PIPSC can leverage its current strengths to adapt to new employment realities.

However, the Canadian public service does not have a centralized training and development strategy, and it struggles with atrophying skills, as government workplaces increasingly favour outsourcing emerging skills rather than upskilling the current workforce.

PIPSC conducted a major study of its members in summer 2019 to get a sense of member satisfaction with the institute and their level of support for expanded services. Seventy percent of PIPSC members expressed a strong desire to see the institute expand its educational and professional development offerings to include career planning and skills training. Members were similarly interested in training for core professional competencies that would improve their communications capabilities in their professional lives.

Career-related information in today's job market is constantly changing. Employees often have a difficult time finding the right level of information on how they can upskill and what their next career move should be. The arrival of generative AI makes this landscape even more complicated, as its use in the labour market has led to increased efficiencies while also calling into question the existence of many tasks, threatening jobs in the process.

While current research has shown that AI will also create jobs, workers remain worried about how automation may affect their professional outlook, and confused about which skills they will eventually need to stay competitive.



What We Investigated

In response to these trends and desires from members, the first phase of this project aimed to create an online skills development platform designed to provide insight into the future of work while giving members access to high quality training programs and career path guidance.

The platform's design was also influenced by the research done by the project team on AI's impact on the job market. In particular, the project asked the following:

- As artificial intelligence, automation and technological changes are introduced into a profession, what will be the changing nature of the skills required of professionals to perform their jobs?
- How will different professional occupations' tasks change as a result of the introduction of these changes?
- What tasks might be eliminated in different professions? What could be the resulting employment impacts of the introduction of AI, automation and technological changes to different professions?
- What new tasks might be created for different professions, and what will the corresponding skills and jobs be?

The platform was developed in short iterations and tested with a small group whose feedback informed the next round of development. In addition to insights on the future of work, the platform aimed to provide skills assessment tools and custom learning plans based on target careers and skills, with links to pre-existing training.

The initial phase of the project included beta and pilot testing the developed platform.

✓ What We're Learning

During development of the Navigar platform, 38 beta testers and 105 pilot testers provided feedback to inform further development. Quantitative survey data were supplemented through a few interviews with pilot testers and in-person discussions with PIPSC delegates at the annual general meeting. Pilot testers indicated that they had a relatively easy experience navigating Navigar.

UI/UX design should come before platform development

The project experienced several delays because the platform itself was being created at the same time as the UI/UX team was designing how users were supposed to interact with it. This caused problems because neither team's work could inform the other. As a result, delays ensued in both work areas. The UI/UX and development did not always align, which meant the platform had to be re-built. Beginning with UI/UX design would have provided a framework on which to build the platform, thus potentially using resources in a more efficient way.

Rigorous and repeated testing is critical to successful IT-related projects

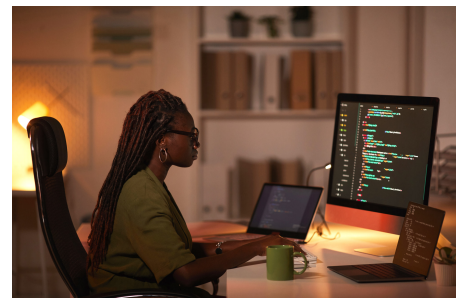
Projects designing online platforms, like Navigar, have many moving parts, and the potential for things to not work as expected is significant. The best way to counter this is to have protocols in place to deal with the myriad issues that arise between the interdependent systems that make up the platform. Thus, rigorous testing and user feedback at every step of the development process are crucial to the success of these systems, and project managers should expect this and plan accordingly. When bug issues did arise for the Navigar team, they were able to address them quickly because they had done consistent testing and had thought to create protocols for times when specific technical problems would arise. This led to a clear decision-making process when engaging with IT partners to address these types of problems.

The platform succeeded in creating a positive experience and useful content for users

While the project is still being evaluated for longer-term outcomes, such as whether users were able to increase their knowledge of future-oriented skills and whether the platform increased users' job security, the initial results were trending in the right direction. Fifty-nine percent of users indicated that the training materials were relevant, and 57% stated that Navigar equipped them with the knowledge to transform their career in the future. Over 60% of the users that engaged with Navigar intend to continue using it in the future.

★ Why It Matters

Creating platforms like Navigar is not a simple undertaking —such platforms are complex and difficult to create. Oftentimes, there is no blueprint to follow. This was the case with Navigar, which proved to be substantially more complex than the team originally thought, leading to delays in the platform's release. The end result has proved to be an important and useful tool for PIPSC members thus far, cutting down substantially (in many cases, up to 50%) of the time needed to obtain information. Furthermore, it has succeeded in obtaining additional investment and incorporating additional training content.



Workers in the public sector need more relevant information on training and the skills they need to compete in the job market of the future. Unions are a part of that, and workers need them to be proactive to changes in the labour market, rather than reactive. One way to do this is by funding analytical tools that engage with data on labour market changes, like AI, and incorporating those tools into their plans for training members. In the end, employers benefit from unions that have a better understanding of how tools like AI can be used to increase both productivity and the employees' skill sets at the same time.

State of Skills: Digital Tools in the Skills Ecosystem

There is considerable promise in the role digital tools and virtual career services can play in improving access to training and career development, particularly for those with geographic barriers or constraints such as family care or other work responsibilities.

[Read Thematic Report](#)

Policymakers should consider the potential of tools like Navigar to bring employers, unions and workers together around a platform that addresses each of these stakeholders' questions around the skills and knowledge that will be required in the labour market of the future.

What's Next

The process evaluation performed by the project team is an important first step in understanding how to effectively plan large-scale platform development. Further evaluation of subsequent expansions of Navigar will explore increases in user knowledge of emerging skills and trends in the digital age, and satisfaction of users with the assistance provided.

Navigar was designed so that PIPSC could expand its catalogue to include more training providers, which would provide members with broader training best suited to their needs. In October 2024, Navigar was launched to the IT Group (PIPSC's largest member group, at 23,000 members) through the IT Training Fund, a \$4.75 million training fund negotiated in their most recent collective agreement. The training catalogue was expanded to include goFLUENT (language training) and Pluralsight (technology training) to complement Skillsoft (Percipio) and the Canada School of Public Service's training catalogue. This "learning bundle" supports skills growth through Navigar Training Plans focused on targeted knowledge and competencies.

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

Richter, S. (2024). Project Insights Report: Evidence-based insights for public service professionals navigating the workforce of the future, Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada. Toronto: Future Skills Centre. https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/evidence-based_insights/

Evidence-based Insights for Public Service Professionals Navigating the Workforce of the Future is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

The Future Skills Centre acknowledges that the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee share a special relationship to the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory,' where our office is located, bound to share and protect the land. As a pan-Canadian initiative, FSC operates on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, the name given to the North American continent by some Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to work in this territory and commit ourselves to learning about our shared history and doing our part towards reconciliation.

© Copyright 2025 – Future Skills Centre / Centre des Compétences futures