

ICT Educator Webinar Series

Digital Media Employment Trends and How Upskillers Can Stay Marketable

May 1, 2020

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[00:00:00]

Welcome

STEVE: Good morning, everybody. I'm glad everybody could find a computer somewhere in their house and log in. We had a few hiccups with the sound this morning, but we'll see if the bandwidth holds up, and hopefully, it will.

THE ICT-DM SECTOR TEAM



Stephen Wright



Charlotte Augenstein



Markus Geissler



Richard Grotegut



Olivia Herriford



Paula Hodge



Ray Kaupp



Shawn Monsen



Wendy Porter



Steven Linthicum



Susanne Mata



Dennis Mohle



Duane Rinehart



Nicole Sherman

Welcome again to the ICT Educator Webinar Series. We do this every Friday at 10 o'clock, weather permitting, and we do it as a sector team. These are all the folks throughout the state working the various different regions, including Nicole Sherman on the bottom right, who is the producer of this series – and without her, you would not be sitting here, watching this series. I've got to tell you that.

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DIGITAL MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT

VIRTUAL LABS

We've had many webinars already, and we've been privileged to have a lot of wonderful people cover a lot of different topics. These are really enjoyable things. When Nicole is able to do this, she has each video edited, so all the oohs and ahs and the mess-ups are gone, and a complete transcript... The PowerPoints are there, anything you need to go back to find out if that particular piece of information is relevant to a grant you're writing or something you're doing in class. Our ambition is to make these really valuable resources available after the fact, as well as enjoying the real-time experience.

MAY 8

Using Virtual Labs for
Business Applications

MAY 15

Remote Employer
Engagement with Nepris

So, coming up in the near future, we're looking at next week, the Virtual Labs webinar. We have this NETLAB technology for IT labs. Well, it also, apparently, can work for Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, and some others, so we talk about how that conversion can happen for those of you who are looking to offer labs in those other disciplines in this remote environment.

And the week after that, we're going to be having the folks from Nepris come and talk to us about their business engagement platform. They've actually been doing it for years, but now it's a lot

more relevant to us, so we just want to see how they do it, how the few people who have used it talk about their experience with it. So, those are coming up.



PAUL FLAHARTY

Paul Flaharty is the District President for Robert Half overseeing Sales, Business Development, and Recruiting for Robert Half Technology (www.rht.com) and The Creative Group (www.creativegroup.com) consulting/freelance, and full-time placement operations in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles Metro Market.



JAY SEIDEL

Jay Seidel is an experienced professor of journalism and drone technology with a rich history working in higher education and technology. Jay has developed curriculum in 360-degree video, immersive storytelling and drone technology and is a licensed pilot skilled in journalism, photography, mapping, imaging, inspection, video production and editing, VR and Mixed reality production, and media relations.

But today is a very exciting day for me. I love digital media. I feel like we don't give it enough attention, considering how many students we have that are taking digital media.

But Paul Flaharty is joining just from the Creative Group, and he'll be telling us about the marketplace and what's going on, and where the opportunities are and where they've been trending, that sort of thing.

And then Jay Seidel, one of our own professors of journalism for the California Community College system is going to be talking to us about the work that he's done in looking at pathways that help embrace what we do now that works well into various different pathway-type structures that might work better. Jay, is that close to what you'll be covering? Yeah, he's smiling. OK, thank you.

And with that, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Paul to take us into what the Creative Group... Which, as you all know, is part of Robert Half – nationwide and huge. They have a wonderful website. If you're going to spend any time helping your students get started in digital media, just spend some time on that website. Paul, take it from there.

PAUL: OK. OK, great. Thanks, Steve. I appreciate it. I feel like this is obligatory, but this is day 49, reporting from my garage for work, so I'm just going to throw the disclaimer out there, like I do before every video conference... I feel like I live on a video conference these days, but at any moment, any one of my two children could very well bust into the garage and just jump on my lap, so if that happens, you've been warned. You know, it's an interesting time to be stuck in the house with two kids under 3 ½ years old. So, that's what's going on for me.

[00:03:37]

An Introduction

PAUL: So, as Steve mentioned, I work for Robert Half. My role is to oversee their creative staffing practice and their technology staffing practice for the Los Angeles metro market and for the Bay Area. I'm based in Los Angeles. I've been with Robert Half for 15 years in September.

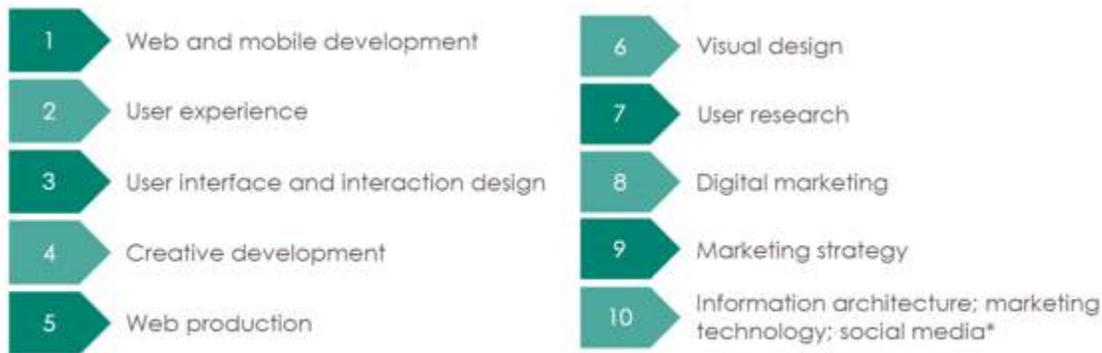
I wanted to talk to you all a bit about some hiring trends within the creative industry. A lot of the data that I'm going to speak to is (or was) compiled before COVID came into the picture, although I still believe the vast majority of what I'm discussing remains relevant today, and I'll also do my best to find opportunities to weave in some of the experiential data from how things have changed for my teams over the course of the past 7 weeks.

[00:04:39]

Overview of the Hiring Landscape

STATE OF CREATIVE HIRING — U.S. First Half of 2020

TOP AREAS FOR HIRING



PAUL: So, I thought I would start off by just giving an overview for the current hiring landscape for creative, where we are seeing our clients hire and what are the top areas for hiring.

Number one is web and mobile development, which will be a recurring theme over the course of my discussion, and the integration of technology in creative and the continuing merging of those two spaces.

Number two is user experience.

Number three, user interface and interaction design, followed by creative development, web production, visual design, user research, the broader digital marketing category, which I'll discuss, marketing strategy, and then, rounding out the top ten is information architecture, marketing technology, and social media.

So, in addition to these roles, we're seeing demand for the following skills within that overarching set of functional roles...

I would say number one would be digital strategy, which is companies that are searching for talent with experience developing business plans to reach a broader audience by leveraging data insights and tech tools.

So, I think that's a very relevant point to make in terms of the demand that we're continuing to see, even in light of all the companies on hiring freeze and some of the substantial reductions in force that we've seen after COVID. There's still been an emphasis placed by our clients on digital strategy.

We've had clients continue to come to us, talking about how they can realign their digital strategy. Not that this wasn't a primary focal point before COVID, but there's never been more of an emphasis placed on 'how do we structure our digital strategy such that we can not only reach a broader audience but retain and engage the audience that we have?' You know, trying to keep people on the site as long as we possibly can, if it's in the ecommerce space, by leveraging data insights and different tech tools.

So, that is one of the most common recurring requests for talent that we're continuing to receive. It's around this kind of digital strategy, blended with consumer engagement/consumer retention, which I think makes sense.

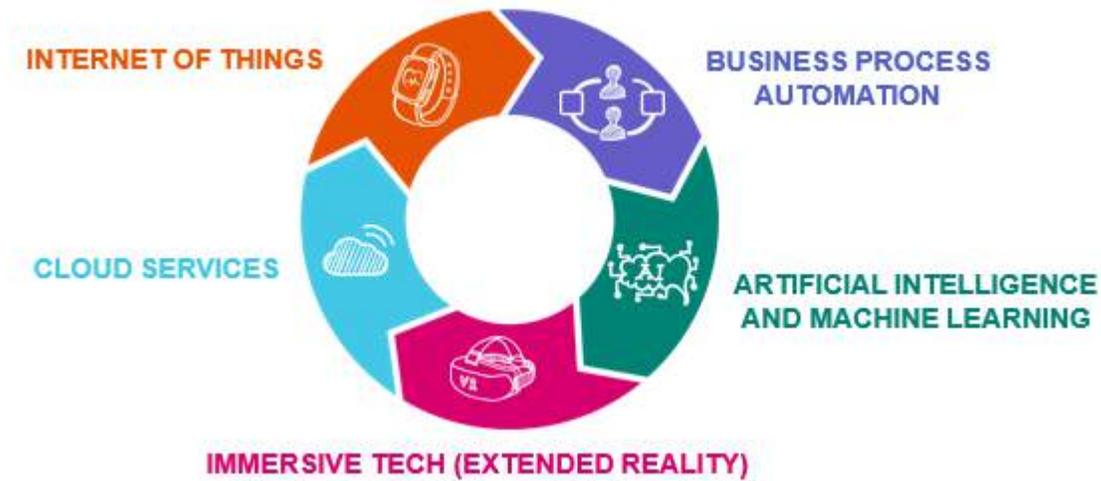
You know, we're also seeing still demand in content creation and content marketing – so, creative teams continuing to need professionals talented in the development and deployment of unique and interesting content.

As it relates to content creation, I'll also speak to another area of demand that we've seen that aligns with some of the widescale changes in the education space. With so many schools shutting down for the year and then, with there being some doubt on how the semester will go in the fall, we've seen a tremendous increase in demand for people to come in and do instructional design. We're basically taking all this curriculum that was meant to be taught in person and porting that over to a highly functional, interactive, user-friendly website, so people that can create that web content and, more specifically, folks that have experience with instructional design that can help these institutions to minimize the impact to the student body and all of these people that are now

learning remotely... You know, that's a major challenge that our clients are facing and that we're doing our best to help them with.

[00:08:45]

5 Transformative Technologies



PAUL: I think technology... You know, as I mentioned, there's such an influence on technology within the creative space, and I think it's good to consider some of the transformative technologies that we are seeing change and revolutionize the creative industry today and, essentially, consider how technology is impacting the industry as a whole. The Creative Group has identified five transformative technologies that we believe will bring significant change to organizations in terms of how people work both now and over the next several years.

One of those that's certainly been trending for a while is cloud services and the need to deploy technologies that can be utilized from anywhere and everywhere, which also extends into another transformative technology that we're seeing, which is immersive technology or extended reality.

When you think about the future of work and how the landscape will change, companies need to be able to develop tools for their user population that can be accessed from anywhere and can create as close to a similar – or, hopefully, as close to ideal – experience as what the company would have offered in the past, when people were working in these office spaces.

And in that reality, we believe that wearables will become more and more important, and AR/VR technologies as well. We also highlight the Internet of Things, which is in line with the wearables comment that I just made.

Business process automation, which is about ‘how do we get somewhat more thoughtful on getting the most efficiency and productivity out of our people?’ How can we automate out the repetitive tasks, maybe more menial tasks, within our world, such that we can have our creative people really focus on their true core skillset of creativity and innovation?

And I think that goes hand in hand with artificial intelligence and machine learning, which is certainly omnipresent within the technology world, and we’re seeing that blend over into creative as well.

[00:11:21]

Technological Change Drives New Creative Careers

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE DRIVES NEW CREATIVE CAREERS

- User experience (UX) designer
- Interactive art director
- Social media manager
- Virtual reality (VR) designer
- Creative technologist
- Avatar designer
- Voice design specialist



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PAUL: So much technology change driving new creative careers... I mean, the truth is, the technology has been driving growth and new careers in the creative field for years, but we believe it will continue to do so. Skillsets like the UX designer, the interactive art director, social media manager, VR designer, creative technologist... These are all examples of jobs that have only just emerged within the past two decades, and some of those roles are really, really new.

But beyond that, we're seeing some of the creative jobs of the future taking shape now, as in the case of something like an avatar designer or a voice design specialist. And it's likely some of you have these titles today or work with people that do, or perhaps you're trying to hire for positions like that.

Whatever the particular situation, what we hear from our clients and our candidates is staying relevant is a challenge in a field where technology change is constant and rapid. So, it not only requires keeping pace with emerging technology tools but also trying to get ahead of the curve.

[00:12:38]

The Changing Hiring Process



HOW WILL TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGIES CHANGE THE WAY CREATIVES HIRE — AND ARE HIRED?

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PAUL: So, we can take a look at a few technologies that creative professionals should monitor very closely as the landscape continues to change and think about ‘how will transformative technologies change the way creatives are hired, both now and in the future?’

We are already starting to see companies use AI to help screen and sort through resumes, which is a really interesting topic. There are also companies that are using VR to give candidates a glimpse into what it would look like to work for their organization and be part of their organization.

In the future, we can expect to see AI and other technologies continue to streamline recruiting processes. We don’t think that’s going to be the final end-all be-all for the hiring process because we know there will always still be that kind of personal interaction of understanding fit and making sure that you're bringing the right kind of cultural components into your organization, and that requires conversations. The technology isn’t quite there yet but, certainly, there are continued changes...

[00:13:58]

The Future of Work: 2 More Trends



**AI for
retention**



**Immersive
workplaces**

- Virtual teams and offices
- Always-on connections

PAUL: Two very relevant trends in the future of work... One would be using artificial intelligence for the retention of your staff, and another I’ve already mentioned, but I’ll get into in a little bit more detail, is the immersive workplaces, which is virtual teams and offices and always-on connections.

We believe the future of professional development may include AI-powered adaptive learning programs that modify training courses on the fly to suit different learning styles, and that AI could also be used to analyze which modules have the highest and lowest levels of engagement, and test different variations. So, the training and professional development is no longer this one-size-fits-all for companies, and it can help them to measure the ROI from training based on outcomes such as productivity, profitability, and turnover.

We also see AI being used to help people work smarter and become more engaged in their jobs. There's a company called Humanize, for example, that's developed smart badges that use sensors, AI software, and data analytics to track employee interactions in the offices. So, the technology is proving useful in helping companies better understand the relationship between team building and productivity.

From an immersive workplace perspective, it's companies looking at apps and devices, along with other technologies, that support mobile and remote working, and that's giving rise to virtual teams and virtual offices, as workers can be connected to company data and systems around the clock and from any time zone.

That's impacting new office designs, the amount of space that a company needs to take, and we feel creative professionals need to learn how to work with those new and still-evolving technologies and manage the always-on connection between people and process and data and things that help the business to operate today.

I mean, I think about, just when we finally do go back to work, thinking about the office space that we needed before compared to what we need moving forward... I mean, this, for me, is my first time working fully remotely. Some people I know on my team are absolutely loving it. Some people can't wait to get back into the office. It's really a mixed bag, but I think that forever changed will be the notion of 'what does a company need from an office space perspective?' How effective and how efficient can they be in a remote work capacity? And how does that change the landscape moving forward.

[00:17:07]

Preparing for the Future of Work



**HOW TO
PREPARE
FOR THE
FUTURE
OF WORK?**

**ADAPTABILITY AND
CONTINUOUS LEARNING
ARE ESSENTIAL.**

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PAUL: Which is a good segue into the question of how you prepare for the future of work. And I would say adaptability and continuous learning are absolutely essential.

So, one key takeaway is that technological change presents an opportunity for every worker to build new skills and gain an understanding of emerging technologies. In many ways, technology disruptions are creating a level playing field for professionals and businesses, because no one has the skills for the future of work, because some of these technologies are changing so rapidly, so companies are going to be looking for people who are eager to learn and experiment with these new technologies. So, you and your teams can take advantage of technology's disruption by learning about just-arriving innovations and getting appropriate training so that you can make the most of those technologies.

But, from my perspective, an important thing to keep in mind is it's an ongoing process and, in the future work place – and even in the workplace of today – being adaptable and being open to continuous learning and technology is essential to helping you keep pace with change.

When we first logged onto the call this morning and started talking, we were discussing a platform change that just occurred last week with Robert Half. The organization had been using Skype for Business for video conferencing, for internal video calls, for chats, for almost everything that we did over a video platform, whereas we made the transition to Teams, and that was a full-scale cutover from a massive enterprise organization that happened in the midst of all the rest of this change that we have going on.

And quite frankly, it's this whole new technology platform that everyone needs to learn and wrap their heads around in order to be effective and function internally. It's been a change that everyone has embraced, and there are so many new things that we can do with that technology to enhance and promote real-time communication, which, for me, is so incredibly important in this experience that we're having right now compared to previous downturns that I experienced with the company, because things are changing seemingly day to day, week to week.

People ask me so often, "How is the market? How is hiring feeling? Does it feel like we are at the bottom? Are we near the bottom? Are we past the bottom?" These are questions that I get asked every single day. The answers seemingly change so rapidly, but one thing I know is that these trends, they emerge so quickly with our teams that it's really important for my teams in Los Angeles to be communicating with my teams in the Bay because there are a lot of similar trends between the two markets, and we're using Teams now to do so much integrated communication and share so much content. It's not just messaging but also using the tool to integrate some of the work that clients are doing in one area that we can share with our teams internally, so we know what might be relevant and helping a client to stay afloat in the Los Angeles market that we might want to share with our clients in San Francisco.

[00:20:57]

Eager to Learn



88%

of creative professionals expect it will be **challenging to keep their skills up to date** as they advance their career.

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PAUL: You know, I think that, certainly, virtually all of the creative professionals that we're working with share that they're really eager to learn about these new technologies and embrace digital media and digital technology. We did a survey that said that 88% of creative professionals expect that it will be challenging to keep their skills up to date, but they all are incredibly open to it.



93% of managers in the creative industry believe their staff is **eager to learn** about new technologies

94% said they expect their teams will be **quick to adapt** to new technologies

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PAUL: 93% of managers believe that their staff is really eager to learn about new technologies, and 94% said they expect their teams to be able to quickly adapt to these new technologies. Clearly, Robert Half felt the exact same way, or they wouldn't have rolled out a completely new internal communication and collaboration platform during a pandemic.

But to me, it shows that these new technologies are coming, and the creative field is eager to embrace them, which I think bodes well for people's preparedness to do these jobs, moving forward. But I know that Jay is going to talk a bit about upskilling. I wanted to briefly just touch on five strategies for teaching skills of the future.

[00:22:14]

5 Strategies for Teaching Skills of the Future

The infographic consists of five numbered items, each with a colored circular icon above it. Item 1: A purple circle with a white icon of a person standing next to a presentation board. Item 2: A teal circle with a white icon of a computer monitor. Item 3: A pink circle with a white icon of a brain with gears inside. Item 4: An orange circle with a white icon of a stack of money. Item 5: A light blue circle with a white icon of two stylized human figures.

- 1. In-person training, seminars and classes**
- 2. Online courses**
- 3. Knowledge transfer from consultants and external SMEs**
- 4. Reimbursement for professional certification costs**
- 5. Mentoring**

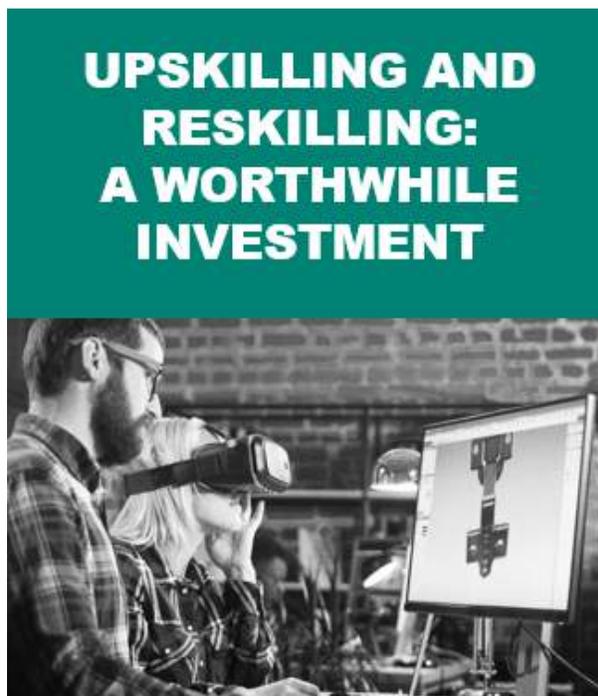
PAUL: There are several strategies you can use. They're not all high tech, but the top five strategies that we're seeing employers use are in-person trainings, seminars, and classes.

Obviously, the in-person component is a little bit more challenging now, but getting your team whatever training, seminars, and classes you can on these new and emerging technologies such that they feel more prepared when the technologies are actually presented to them in a professional capacity.

Of course, there are still online courses that are heavily promoted within our clients' environment.

Knowledge transfer from consultants and external SMEs – that’s one of the really nice parts about working for a staffing and staff augmentation firm, is that, when there’s a new technology that we need to be well versed in as quickly as possible, we can bring candidates in that are using those technologies on a day-to-day basis with a company that’s maybe a bit more bleeding edge, and they can train us and talk to us a little bit more about what they’re seeing day to day.

Of course, there are still companies reimbursing for professional certification costs and, of course, setting up whatever internal mentoring you can such that you can transfer skills internally within your organization. You need to make sure you're taking advantage of all of the skills and assets that your internal team brings to the table today.



- Coding
- Data analytics
- AR and VR
- CRM systems
- Voice technology
- Animation
- Video

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PAUL: But certainly, we believe that upskilling and reskilling is a very worthwhile investment and, certainly, any opportunity there is to get more training in fields like web application development, data analytics, AR and VR, CRM systems, voice technology, animation, and video are really critical.

SOFT SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE WORKPLACE



- **Strategic thinking**
- **Leadership**
- **Communication**
- **Collaboration**
- **Intellectual curiosity**
- **Empathy**

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PAUL: But I would just highlight in all of this that soft skills are essential to the future workplace. Just a couple weeks ago, I did an interview on robotics process automation and machine learning, and there was the question around ‘how do employers go out and find people that can help them stay relevant or continue to tap into these new trends within the industry?’

In a lot of scenarios, the answer is sometimes these people don’t exist, which is a point that I already touched on, so really what the organization needs to try to prioritize is thinking about the individuals within their current team that have the right strategic thinking, leadership, communication, cross-functional skills, intellectual curiosity, and empathy. You know, those are the people that have the ability to work cross functionally and take their really strong soft skills in order to learn something new, like a new technology or digital media platform quickly, and then learn as much as they need to, to be dangerous.

We talked so much about these apps, and when employers can’t find people with the apps, they’re going to have to create the talent because it’s not available in the open market. So, if you’re thinking, ‘Well, how do I interview for a job like that?’ or, ‘How do we hire for a job like that if there

are so few people that actually have exposure to those apps?’ then, in a lot of scenarios, it’s not about hiring them. It’s about building them or creating them from scratch.

[00:25:58]

5 Ways to ‘Future Proof’

- 

1.
Anticipate tech changes in your workplace
- 

2.
Put career development on the front burner
- 

3.
Elevate your soft skills — especially emotional intelligence
- 

4.
Nurture your inner leader
- 

5.
Be flexible — and BOLD

PAUL: And I guess I would just close with some examples of how you can ‘future proof.’ So, how do you prepare yourself to be as relevant as possible in light of all of these changes in the creative space and in the digital world?

Robert Half had a report that they released, which was called ‘The Jobs in AI Anxiety Report.’ It basically looked at professionals at every level and the changes that they needed to make in order to stay relevant and marketable in their positions.

And based on what we uncovered from them is that... You know, we believe that employees need to anticipate tech changes in your workplace, whether the likelihood is that they’re coming at you, fast and furious, today... You know, you can’t really ask... We occasionally have people ask for the pace of rollout for these technologies to slow down, but a lot of times, the answer is from our business transformation team is we just can’t because we’ve got to just keep up with the pace of the market.

If you can put career development on the front burner and make sure that it’s not always about just kind of the blocking and tackling of the day-to-day work but making sure that the professional

development and career development continues to have a primary place in how an employee invests their time.

We already mentioned the soft skills. Elevating your soft skills, especially your emotional intelligence, is critical, nurturing your inner leader and really working on your leadership skills.

And the last thing I would say is just be flexible and be bold and embrace this change. Don't fight it. It's coming, but people are openminded to it, and I think that there's a huge opportunity for the creative space to continue to grow, and for creative professionals within that space to grow, based on all this change. It really represents a massive opportunity for the industry and the professionals.

[00:28:12]

Q&A – Creative Hiring Market Changes

STEVE: Wow, Paul, I mean, you sure succeeded in scaring the crap out of me!

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's exciting!

STEVE: It is! I mean, that's one thing we all learn. I jotted down 'experimental mindset' because, certainly, if anything has defined my ability to stay fresh as I get older, it's that experimental mindset and to keep trying new things.

But I was curious – is there a list of the apps that are in demand, because a lot of what we do is piecemeal-type training in the community college system? There might be a course on this app or that app or whatever, and somebody might decide, "Hey, I need to take that – where is it?" And they go, "Oh, wow, the community college has it!" And we'd be happy to provide training in a lot of these apps if we just knew what the hot list is. Is there anything like that out there that you could point us to?

[00:28:57]

PAUL: Sure. So, I'll grab some of the data points from our Jobs in AI Anxiety, Steve, and I'll send that over to you in conjunction with our deck. It was a bit more neutral in terms of... Like, it didn't focus on one particular vendor or product within the application space, although the overarching products suite was in the realm of AR and VR, certainly collaboration tools/collaboration portals. I touched on CRM, which I think is important. There's a variety of different machine learning tools and artificial intelligence tools that are out there on the market.

I mean, part of the challenge with that is... Maybe I would tell the people on the phone to focus really heavily on this one AI platform, and then, a week later, something else would come out that would be talked about as the next big thing. I mean, I mentioned what we're doing with Teams. I think having a really good working knowledge of a platform like Teams...

To me, the more ubiquitous the platform, the more adoption the platform has today, the more comfortable I would feel investing a lot of time in learning it, but I'll send you over all the data that we have, Steve, and hopefully, we can point the attendees in the right direction as it relates to particular technologies that they might want to do a deep dive into.

[00:30:25]

STEVE: That would be a terrific advantage. I was also taken by the fact that the creative side of things, very often, we think of creativity and whether it's wrapped in arts or whatever... Kind of like the blank piece of paper and the mind. And you've spent so much time talking about the apps that allow us to communicate this to other people and share it on the web and everything else, and the technological sophistication that a creative person, who might actually be kind of old school art oriented, has to have to survive in today's world. Can you just comment a little bit more on that? I mean, has life really changed?

PAUL: It absolutely has. You know what's so interesting, though? In the same discussion, I would tell you that, from the technology side, there were tools... When you think about front-end web design and web development, if we're talking about design for the purposes of the discussion that I just had, it's more web design than kind of traditional graphic design.

But even on the technology side, we're seeing a lot of the tools that were previously used predominantly by people that had computer science degrees that were coders become much more user friendly for people that have degrees in design and art. It's not as much about the code anymore as it is about your ability to use the app and still incorporate your design aesthetic into your ability to create functionality.

So, in some ways, the creative tools are becoming a little bit more technical, and the technical tools are becoming a little bit more creative. As the platforms advance, they're kind of racing to the middle a little bit.

So, I guess I would just say that because, even technology platforms that might have previously seemed that they were totally relevant to the technology professionals in the world but not the

creatives, and maybe those technologies would scare the creatives away, newer versions of the technologies are becoming more user friendly, so even non-computer science people are going to be able to use them and function effectively with those tools. That's the only comment I would make to that, is don't be scared by things that sound very technical that, maybe in previous worlds, you would have thought would be owned by your IT department. In a lot of places, that front-end web developer skillset is very much straddled between the tech and the creative department based on the changes with the tools.

[00:33:00]

STEVE: Well, it's been very insightful. And rather than taking a lot of questions right now that I know lots of people have, we have kind of a two-part presentation today, and I want to shift gears now to Jay, because what we've heard from Paul is the market. I joked kind of that it's scary – more technology awareness and app skills than I expected.

Now, Jay has spent some time looking at what we have and what we can make and what's on the shelf. How do we organize that? What are strategic alternatives for that? So, Jay, if you'd like to go ahead now and share your deck, we're going to take a quick look at what the faculty has been saying and talking about doing this. I think, if we leave a little time at the end, we can compare and contrast a little bit. This could be a real learning opportunity for us. Go ahead, Jay.

[00:33:51]

JAY: Sure. First off, I've got to say that was great from Paul to hear. As a faculty member, I've been writing curriculum for VR, mixed reality, and AR components, and courses that train in that, so it's good to hear a mention that immersive is on the horizon. I was thinking it too, but to have that reaffirmed is always good.

Also, like Paul, I've just got to give the disclaimer that this is my kitchen, so I guess I'm going to switch to the deck because there may be people moving in and out behind me.

[00:34:28]

Digital Media Training Statewide

JAY: Just a quick intro... I teach at Fullerton College. I've been teaching for coming up on 20 years. I'm a journalism instructor and a journalist by trade, but what's interesting is, from that, when I was presented with a project and asked to get into this project, I was doing journalism... I've always been a digital geek. I've always been on the digital side, the multimedia side, and that sort of aspect of it, so it's not just been words, but the words and the storytelling is pretty much the backbone for a lot of these components in general.

So, I got to explore this from... Part of going into this project, I should say – I'll explain the project... But I kind of did my own... As a community college instructor, I kind of worked through my own things that I needed to, as far as a lot of territorialism, a lot of... I'll explain it. A lot of people are like, "Oh, well, journalism is over there, and the art and graphics are over here, and broadcast is over here, and IT is over here." A lot of people are working in their silos.

But going through this project, talking with Steve, I've seen this idea that there's so much crossover. We all know that. But it's the idea of kind of changing and evolving our structure (kind of like Paul was saying, this idea of growth) is that we have to grow and understand that there's a lot of multidisciplinary crossover that we are not in our own specific silos anymore, and we can be a lot more effective in teaching traditional students as well as upskillers by embracing that, understanding that, and moving forward.

So, part of the project was to identify these crossover related programs that are maybe in different disciplines. Various colleges call it a different thing, and they house it in different departments and different divisions, but yet they all have their related components. With those related components that are needed in the digital media market, these skillsets need to look to create some kind of connected pathway or some kind of illustrated route that students, instructors, faculty,

administrators, and counselors can look at and say, “Aha! Here’s what you can do to get these skills in order to make you marketable or hireable in the media world.”

[00:37:14]

The Project

- Identify digital media faculty across the state and invite them to take part in the project. Faculty were from the following areas:
 - Digital Photography
 - Adobe Creative Cloud
 - Intro to Visual Communications
 - Writing for Media/Storytelling
 - Basic Video Production & Editing
 - Word Press/Web Design
 - Graphic Design
- The purpose of the project was to finalize recommended courses for traditional students and upskillers and promote to digital media faculty statewide.
- Faculty provided input on course descriptions and student learning outcomes for introductory courses in the above areas.

JAY: So, the project itself... 7 areas were identified: Digital Photography, Adobe Creative Cloud (I’ll get to that one in a second), Introduction to Visual Communications, Writing for Media and Storytelling, Basic Video Production and Editing, WordPress, Web Design, and Graphic Design.

Since we are the largest community college system in the United States and we all have our different districts... We were just talking earlier, at the beginning, and Steve was saying how large this state is... That we all have our little nuances on our own campuses.

These were identified as some universals that were at the majority of the campuses in some capacity. Maybe not all, but at some capacity, they are there. They were kind of looked at from a general perspective, so then we can kind of connect the more specifics...

[00:38:16]

STEVE: If I may, just a little bit of background here... When we were struggling with digital media, we were trying to find a demand in the market data that would help us. And one of the things we looked at, almost as if stumbling over it, is what the heck are all our students taking.

JAY: Yeah.

STEVE: So, they fell into these categories. Nicole did the original work to kind of chop that up. But we were just astounded at the number of students and faculty that are offering and taking these kinds of courses, and we thought, 'Well, what is there about this?' People are voting with their feet, and for some reason or another, they feel a need to take these courses.

So, that was what first got our curiosity up because this was the first time we've ever flipped the paradigm of looking at the labor market information, saying, "Where should we go?" And we looked at 'what are people taking, and why are they taking it?' I just thought I would provide that background because these were not just arbitrary selections. There was a huge number of students taking each and every one of these.

[00:39:12]

JAY: And these are all skillsets that are learned in these classes and are all relatable in value to the market. So, it was the idea of putting it all together. The idea was looking at this, reaching out to faculty across the state at community colleges, and kind of saying, "Can we do this? Is this viable? Is this something that we could do? What do you think would be some course descriptors? What do you think would be some student learning outcomes from these courses that we could use to kind of, in a sense, connect all these courses into one united pathway?"

[00:39:58]

The Numbers

- Approximately 40 digital media instructors were contacted statewide to act as a focus group.
- The 27 colleges were identified and selected to provide a wide perspective of the state. Size of digital media programs had no influence or impacted on the selection. Faculty were selected and emails were sent.

JAY: So, the idea was we reached out to about 40 instructors, and about 30 gave feedback of some capacity. Some were a little bit more invested. Some were a little bit more passive. And we reached out to about 27 of the colleges, and that was kind of an arbitrary 'who is more involved' and maybe just identified if they were from northern California or from the Central Coast, from the Central Valley, from Southern, from San Diego...

So, we tried to get a pretty good swath of input and to see also what different campuses were doing, and I got to see, looking at the different colleges and looking at the different digital media programs, I got to see how... You know, like I said at the beginning, everybody is a little different, but yet it's all the same, or it's all similar. But you get schools that have larger programs. Some schools have smaller programs. It really didn't matter if it was larger or smaller. I just wanted to get some input from faculty across the state.

[00:41:16]

The Product

The image displays a collection of digital media course materials. On the left is a 'Digital Media' course overview page with sections for 'Related Subject Areas' (Digital Photography, Creative Design Applications, Intro to Visual Communications, Basic Video Production & Editing, Web/Interactive Design, Graphic Design), 'General Course Descriptions' (Digital Photography, Web/Interactive Design, Creative Design Applications, Graphic Design), and 'Train in Tomorrow's Skills Today'. The infographic includes sections for 'Skills Courses', 'Job Titles', 'Career Outlook' (103,709 jobs in California), 'Salary Projections' (\$72,117 in California), and 'Job Growth' (7.1% in California). On the right is a flyer titled 'Become a Better Communicator' and 'Communicate in Multimedia', featuring a photo of a person at a computer and a call to action: 'Contact your California Community College and Regional Occupational Program (ROP) counselor today. Start your training at home.cccappi.org'.

The Product

Draft flyers were created to promote Digital Media to upskillers, traditional students/parents, and counselors

JAY: So, what happened was we put out content. I put out general descriptors. I drafted up some course descriptors that I kind of cobbled together from the various course descriptions from curriculum from throughout the state for digital media classes, like digital photography and web design. I cobbled it together and then put it out to the faculty as kind of a focus group to say, “What do you think? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What works with this?”

And the interesting thing is... You know, there were campus-specific directives sometimes. “Oh, no, you need to do this because we have this.” Yeah, but if you look at it from a larger perspective, if you look at it away from your campus silo, which you're immersed in day to day, and you look at it from a broader perspective, then we can kind of craft these descriptors.

So, there was good input on it. There was input on the one I referenced about the Adobe Creative Cloud that I wanted to make a note... It brought in the fact that maybe not so much product specific. Maybe not Adobe specific... So, there was some discussion about that, but good input on

the descriptors that could be used across the state, and then two student learning outcomes for each course that were proposed, since we were required to have student learning outcomes.

So, we created these draft handouts and draft flyers for traditional students, for counselors, to help educate counselors and let them know of these digital media pathways, so they can better direct students.

And then, ultimately, what we were talking about for workforce development, the idea of upskillers... So, the professionals that are coming back to learn these skills and to see how these skills can benefit them in the workplace and give them advancement and give them more employment opportunities.

[00:43:40]

The Results

- A course description for each of the 7 categories was determined and agreed upon.
- 2 student learning outcomes (SLOs) were defined for each course.
- Some faculty suggested coordinating wording with the established TMCs in the digital media area.
- Some faculty raised questions regarding certificates and the potential desire to unify wording of certificates to connect with this pathway.

JAY: As I was saying, the results... We put this stuff together. As far as faculty goes, there was a broad range of input. There was an effort to connect with the transfer degrees that were already established, and the transfer degrees that were already in the process. I think it was the Graphic Arts transfer degree. I don't know if it actually has been approved. They've been through the TMC process at the state...

So, a lot of stuff was connected to that. We connected the CID course numbers to the classes that were identified to have a CID number, and they were able to... So, then we could actually kind of, again, make it something that's a little bit more statewide adaptable.

Some questions that were raised from faculty was the fact that... The concern with their own numbers and how it increased workload, and 'is this a directive from the state telling us what to do on our campus?' I respect and appreciate that, and I was saying, "No, this is more of a kind of outline, a pathway that we, at our various campuses can connect to and the workforce can utilize and draw from.

- Nearly all faculty (approx. 90%) said they feel a digital media pathway will be beneficial for their students and programs.
- The faculty felt there is indeed overlap in courses, but some expressed concern over software/app specific courses.
- All agree that promoting and marketing to upskillers will be a key part of this pathway.
- Some expressed that they are hoping that this pathway will be promoted and marketed by the state and not just be left solely to the individual campuses.

So, the campuses and the faculty were, again, concerned about maybe their specific autonomy and thought this was a state directive, but once that was reassured that this was just something to benefit them, then the idea was that it was something that they saw would benefit. They just were concerned about increased workload, as all instructors would be concerned about as well.

Most of the faculty, about 90% of the faculty, that were connected agree that it was beneficial for students and programs. Having some kind of unified pathway with all these crossover on related courses made sense. It just makes sense because, even though they might be housed in different departments and different divisions, it made sense if we can kind of unify them in some way for students to understand these are related skills, and if you learn these skillsets, then you can have success in the digital media field.

They agree that promoting and marketing to upskillers was a key part in the pathway, meaning that we get inundated often with the traditional students, the right-out-of-high-school students. We hear that maybe from many of our campuses, and the focus is on what our new transfer numbers are from incoming freshmen as far as fresh 18-year-olds.

And that's great, and we can embrace them, but the other thing is, being in the CTE workforce and training employees, we can market and reach out to train these employees on the skills that they need. As Paul was saying, adapting and growing and embracing these new skillsets will be beneficial for the workplace and make people more successful in the various fields.

The other thing, too, that was a concern voiced by a few people: 'Is this something that the state is introducing? And are they just going to dump it and leave it? Or is this something that's going to be kind of continued?' And I was reassuring them that this is something for the ICT program that the pathway is going to be there, and this content will be available to them to create and use and market and promote in northern California campuses, southern California campuses, however you need to kind of tweak it to your own campus, but the backbone of the infrastructure is there, and it's going to be statewide available.

Like I said, it was kind of this pathway that... I'll give you a little personal insight. So, I went through this as a journalism instructor, and I thought... Our foundation was not always in the digital world. It is now because journalism has evolved so much, but it was one of those things that I got to look at the way we do things at our campus and the way I was seeing how other things were done at other campuses, and there were a lot of similarities. I've always been a big advocate for multidisciplinary collaboration.

So, I told you I've been writing curriculum for VR. We had a VR storytelling class, and we were doing some AR and mixed-reality stuff, and I'm working with our Digital Arts programs for their Maya application and adding it to their Maya backbone for photogrammetry, and then we're working with our CIS programs with their Unity and building that into their gaming development program.

So, a lot of the stuff that we're creating... I'm a big advocate for multidiscipline growth and a multidiscipline program and certificate development, just at Fullerton. So, the idea to see this program and reach out to different campuses and see what different campuses are doing and see that they have similar components, similar pains, similar kind of structures at their campuses, but there's a lot of people in the digital market/digital education field that want to create more multidisciplinary things.

So, I say that because this is something that I noticed across the state from the faculty that I talked to. I didn't talk to every digital instructor out there, but the ones that I talked to, the ones that I got input from, the feel and the impression was this is something that's needed and that we all know that we can develop and create this pathway and really grow digital media and harness the skills that people need.

If you guys are at instructors and you're at your campus saying, "Oh, that might not work at my campus," or, "Well, you didn't talk to me," you will see that this will possibly benefit your campus and be something that can benefit your students.

[00:50:37]

Questions

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JAY: I think that's it, and I know we'll probably talk about it. I know Steve and Nicole might chime in on the program.

STEVE: We'll go ahead and take some questions in a moment, so please put them in the chat box if you want. Jay, thank you so much for the work that you did and sharing. You know, sometimes it's a little embarrassing to expose the chaos of our system. There's good and bad in having a totally decentralized community college system.

On the good side, it means that people can create locally and come up with stuff that's unique to their region and their intellectual curiosity and what they want to do. And on the other side, it's really hard when you have 115 college campuses doing different things, so it's hard for us to market that.

But what you've done, and what tried to express to people here, is the value of kind of a strategic... I think of it as journalism is the trunk of the tree, and then the various branches of communication devices... And I think what Paul shared with us today is how the... Well, I don't know. I don't want to carry the analogy too far, but the apps are the fruit of that tree.

I mean, there's a whole lot of different apps out there now that people need to know, and you almost wonder – are the apps still rooted to the core narrative, Paul? Is it important that people understand... I think I'm setting you up, but it is it important that people understand what the

message needs to be before they choose the app? And how does that all fit into an enterprise or an employer's approach to digital media?

[00:52:07]

PAUL: Yeah, I mean, it's an interesting question. I mean, I think that it's good to have some sense of your message, some consistency therein. But like I mentioned, our foundational message as an organization hasn't changed from when COVID started to where we are right now, but our messaging has changed in terms of the direction that we're giving to people on a daily and weekly and hourly basis.

So, I think that, to a degree, understanding your core message, understand if you're thinking about it from the perspective of a brand, for example, or from an organization... I mean, there's always a significant advantage if you understand the culture and the tone and the overarching theme of your message.

But I do think that there's so much change that the apps themselves, they're always going to be interchangeable as well, and you find a way to make the app work for you. In my opinion, nothing is static. It's all subject to change, kind of day by day, and certainly, that is inclusive of the messaging as well.

[00:53:33]

STEVE: OK. I appreciate that. I mean, I think we have a lot of different populations that take courses at the California community colleges. A lot of them are mid-life upskillers who have different professions. They come in and take a little digital media or something like that. There have been a lot of students that just jump into digital media-type courses and don't take any of the other hybrid-type skills that they probably should have to get a job.

So, we're always struggling with how to communicate, and the pathway concept is something that we try to help people understand that it's not just this one thing you like but maybe these other things that go with it to help you become more marketable. Curriculum has become a bit of a

cafeteria-type thing in the community college system – take what you like – and we’re trying to do the best we can to give students guidance, whether they’re 50 years old or 20 years old.

So, that’s some of the thinking behind that work that Jay did, and with your up-to-date market perspective right now, I mean, I’d be curious to know what some of the questions are out there. I’m totally going to have to think about this myself. There’s a lot going on! Anybody else want to share a thought or ask a question? 49 of you is a pretty good showing, so there’s a lot of interest in this one, Paul and Jay.

[00:54:54]

JAY: Thanks. I just want to chime in there with what Steve was saying about journalism being the trunk. Like I said, while I was working on this project, I went on my own personal little journey while I was learning this project, too, and I really saw... You know, there were things that I thought I knew. Like, “Oh, yeah, digital media relates to journalism, and yeah, we do stuff through journalism and digital media.”

But through learning these different programs and looking at the different commonalities, I myself realized this is a broader topic. This is a broadly connected area, so Steve can attest to the fact that I was reluctant at first, doing the project, because I thought, “I don’t know if journalism fits. Are you really?”

But I really see how this has really connected in the digital world. And the storytelling, the content creation, the elements that are put together... So, I guess I use that as a personal example. If I can see that as an instructor that’s been teaching in my discipline for 15-plus, almost 20 years now that many of you that are out there, maybe you’ve just been working in your discipline-specific area and maybe haven’t ventured out from your own patio, basically, that you can see where a lot of these things can cross over and a lot of these things can be related, and the skillsets can be complementary to each other and greatly benefit the workforce and greatly benefit students that are just coming in, so we can work on these united pathways.

[00:56:35]

STEVE: You know, I'm probably dating myself by saying I think I remember Marshall McLuhan wrote *Medium is the Message*. I'm thinking nowadays it would be updated to 'the app is the message' because maybe the apps are driving the reality as it's flipped around a little bit there. We communicate what we can communicate based on what app should do. As Paul was saying, though, we learn how to make the app work, so obviously, it's a little tug-of-war there. It's great.

Paul, I look forward to any indication you can give us to what are the most popular apps, and we'll share that with our community college system at large, probably in our newsletter or whatever, because that creates kind of a hit list. One of the things we do is cherry-pick and offer things that, if faculty has an interest in a skill or we bring in somebody who knows how to do that, we can just go ahead and teach that. And we're teaching everything online now, so that's a new capability that everybody has!

In addition to that, I think it's worthwhile, and I hope the various faculty groups who are involved with all the different segments of digital media and journalism and everything like that will look at the hybridization of these things or the cross-disciplinary value of learning how to communicate. We have a lot of people in midlife who are technologically obsolete. They come to us to try to learn how to do something new, and I think helping them understand how their business message can be connected to digital media is something where we create a lot of value in the community, and I get people up to speed that way, in addition to helping people get jobs in digital media as a primary occupation. And we do both.

It is 11 o'clock now. Nicole, do you see any outstanding questions we should address?

[00:58:18]

NICOLE: Kevin is asking about the distribution mechanism for this information pretty broadly – faculty, students, K12, parents... So, we have... Go ahead.

STEVE: I was just going to say, I mean, it's recorded, edited, put online, chapterized, transcribed, the presentation package is included and everything, and we'll have that link out, and we'll send

it to everybody who was on the call today, as well as putting it on our website, and probably we'll do an article about this in our newsletter. So, we'll aim for maximum distribution.

And of course, if anybody here who is on the call wants to take this further about what we're talking about, digital media and the different apps, and you want to form some kind of ongoing committee or group or whatever, we're happy to host that. That's the role of ICT/Digital Media sector, so we're here to help, and wherever we can integrate the thinking and thoughts from people like Paul from the industry, who understand what's happening right now, and you guys who understand what's available on our campus, and we can find ways to mix that up a little bit, that's the goal. That's the purpose.

And with that, I think we're going to say thank you to Paul and to Jay and see you all next week, hopefully. We'll be talking about some lab technologies for business operations that are remote – it'll be really interesting.

Take care!

PAUL: Thank you, Steve. Thanks, Nicole.

NICOLE: Thank you! Have a good weekend.

JAY: Thanks.