



A Guide to Improving your Digital Skills

We live in a digital world. We stream TV shows and movies; our phones are major players in our lives and do everything from controlling the heating in our homes to paying for parking, and now our working lives are following suit.

A [report](#) by Burning Glass, which was commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, revealed that digital skills in the workplace are no longer optional, they are a requirement. Luckily, we recognise this. With many of us trying to upskill to further our careers or job prospects, or to get a promotion at work, we're starting to wonder what digital skills we need. But the term 'digital skills' covers a broad range and the requirements differ from job to job and from role to role.

So, whether you're looking for an entry-level office job, or working as a graphic designer, marketer, or web developer, you'll need specific skills.

But how do you get them? This guide will give you useful tips for gaining those skills you need, no matter what your role.

Make sure you have the baseline skills

According to Burning Glass, **82%** of job vacancies require digital skills. They were particularly keen to stress the importance of baseline digital skills; those well-known productivity software tools, such as Microsoft Office's Word, Excel and Outlook, all which are extremely common in the workplace. For this reason alone, they are an important key into the job market.

As the report was released before the pandemic hit, it couldn't comment on the rise of social communication tools such as Microsoft Teams, Slack and Facebook for Business – new digital tools we must get our heads around. But, as they look like they're here to stay, we reckon it'll be useful to be familiar with these too.

So, the first question to ask yourself is: do I have these baseline skills? If not, don't worry – there are many quick and easy training courses that will easily build up your knowledge, such as our [Microsoft Office courses](#).



Discover what skills are needed for your desired role

If you have a promotion in mind, or a new role you want to aim for, find out what digital skills are attached to it. With the job market being as competitive as it is right now, the difference between someone who has the skills and someone who doesn't is meaningful. Though many companies are happy to provide training, they will naturally gravitate towards those candidates who already have the skills, or are on their way to getting them.

The required skills will vary massively depending on the job. It may be Adobe and Illustrator if you're a graphic designer, or the use of social media, understanding of SEO and basic web design if you're in marketing. You may need to learn computer programming and networking if you're moving into IT.

How do you find out what you need? Thankfully, there are many useful resources out there.

Job descriptions



Keep an eye on job descriptions. Whether it's internal, or listed on websites such as Indeed or LinkedIn's job ads, they should be clear about what skills are needed. Alternatively, if you're after a way of improving your current role, talk to HR or a relevant manager to see what they recommend.

Career websites



Career websites are a great place to look. A useful example is [reed.co.uk](https://www.reed.co.uk), which offers useful career advice and clearly lays out the skills needed for different jobs.

Career advisors, networking and magazines



Job fairs, recruiters and careers advisors at school or universities are also helpful. You could also build connections on LinkedIn and connect with people in similar roles, or keep up with news in the sector by subscribing to relevant magazines or newsletters.

Find the training you need

Whether it's an e-learning course, a short course, or a degree, finding your training is the next natural step. Some of the recommended outlets, such as reed.co.uk, will help you understand what level of training you need and where you may find it. It will also be worth asking colleagues or peers what courses they took, and keeping an eye on relevant magazines and newsletters, as they often advertise training.

But overall, the type of training you require will depend on the skills you need. Online learning platforms, such as [FutureLearn](#) and [LinkedIn Learning](#), are offering a wide range of different courses and degrees and are a good place to start. Alternatively, online training providers offer a range of digital skills courses and packages, from Microsoft Office to [Digital Marketing Skills](#).

But you may need something meatier, especially if you're aiming for a high-level digital skill, so make sure you do your research thoroughly before choosing a route.

Practice, practice, practice

It doesn't stop at the training. Once you've completed your course, the only way you can benefit from what you've learnt is to put it into practice. This not only helps you use your newly acquired skills, it helps prevent you from forgetting them! Some courses may provide post-training activities to help embed the learning, but it may be that you just have to grasp opportunities (or even seek them out) to make sure you get the important practice.

Believe us, it's the only way you can truly gain those digital skills.



We're here to help

We may not offer degrees, but we do offer a range of digital skills courses, which are a fantastic starting point. Check out our [Microsoft Office courses](#) to help you gain those important baseline skills, or our Digital [Business Skills Suite](#), suitable for anyone looking to improve their marketing skills.