Thinking digitally in a digital world: A digital strategy for the Career Development Sector

Introduction

This document sets out the CDI's digital strategy. This strategy describes a vision for digital working and the capabilities which all of those operating in the career development sector require to function in an increasingly digital world.

Our vision

"To embed digital literacy in every aspect of the work of career development practitioners."

Context

We have three imperatives for setting out a digital strategy. These are:

1. As a thought leader for the career development sector
2. As a guardian of the occupational standards for the UK career development workforce
3. As a business operating in a competitive commercial environment

This strategy addresses all three imperatives. The context for this strategy remains the rapid change in the use of digital technology across all areas of business.

The worldwide web (Henceforward referred to as the web) will be 30 years old in 2019 and in the period since its birth has transformed our lives. We are now connected in ways previously unimagined and most of us use a variety of digital applications to keep in touch with family, friends and work colleagues. We use email and social media for sharing information and photographs, for marketing products, services and ourselves. But the web is not the only digital influence on our lives. We now use many digital applications to manage our lives and businesses for example electronic diaries, games, cameras, databases, and word processing. Technology enhanced learning is now the norm in many educational institutions. In countless ways, these applications can help save time and money and make us more efficient. Young people are now born into a world where smart phones are the norm and digital applications are common place. They think digitally.

The CDI believes that now is the time to examine the way that those working in the career development sector use digital technology and thinking to underpin their work. We are also keen to explore the potential for digital technology to enhance and add value to the services we provide.

This strategy sets out a vision for the sector: to come together, imagine new ways of working using digital technology and to set out future training and development needs.

Mapping this strategy to other CDI documents

This strategy supports and draws upon the following documents:

- Career Professionals in the 21st Century: A Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in the UK Career Development Sector
- Qualification in Career Development Handbook 2017/18

A word on the terms used in this paper

Throughout this paper several terms are used which require clarification:

Digital literacy refers to the capabilities required for living, learning and working in a digital society (Jisc 2015)

Digital career literacy refers to the digital career management skills required to manage one's career.

1. The CDI as a thought leader for the sector

Research (McKinsey 2015) indicates that the main barriers to organisations developing the digital skills needed for operating in a twenty first century environment are digital talent and leadership. This issue presents specific challenges for the CDI. Career development practitioners work at the interface between education and business and have a role to play in ensuring that the economy has a pipeline of individuals who have the necessary skills to operate in the emerging high tech and digital industries. It is therefore important that career development practitioners understand the need for the workforce to develop and continually update their skills to meet these demands. The CDI therefore needs to enter the debate about digital skills not just in the services delivered directly to clients but grounded in a wider understanding of the digital world.

The CDI will be exploring opportunities for the sector to investigate a range of topics which impact on our business for example how we:

- Develop an innovative digital culture
- Respond to and utilise the 'Internet of things'
- Utilise artificial intelligence to deliver services
- Exploit 'big data' to understand our impact
- Understand the impact of digital technology on the economy
- Address any issues of social inequality that the rise of digital technology might introduce
- Support the organisations and individuals who are our clients to respond to this changing world

We will be doing this in several ways for example:

- A regular article in *Careers Matters*
- A LinkedIn discussion forum
- Webinars lead by thinkers in this area
- Workshops at conferences and events
- A task group to map the work and develop approaches and strategies to support the practitioner

2. The CDI as a guardian of the occupational standards for the UK career development workforce

Developing digital talent and leadership requires an understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to implement the strategy. This requires the CDI to ask several questions:

- What digital capabilities are required by the career development workforce?
- What digital competences exist within the sector?
- What are the best approaches to meeting any skills gaps?

What digital capabilities are required by the career development workforce?

There is some guidance on the type of digital capabilities required to be able to operate digitally in a professional context. Jisc[1] has set out a framework of competences which have been designed to support those working in the Higher Education Sector and there is much to be learned from this

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[1] Jisc is the UK's higher, further education and skills sectors' not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions.

framework. The competences are set out under the six broad categories below and described in more detail in appendix 1.

- ICT proficiency and productivity
- Information, data and media literacies
- Digital creation, problem solving and innovation
- Digital communication, collaboration and participation
- Digital learning and development
- Digital identity and wellbeing

On initial examination it seems that individuals working in the sector need to be able to demonstrate capability in all of these areas, but further investigation will need to be carried out so that we can understand how digitally technology is impacting on the daily working lives of the sector workforce.

Some parts of the sector are already embracing digital solutions to deliver their services for example, the National Careers service in England which is focussing on a 'digital first' approach and Careers Wales. Research will need to be carried out with the full range of members working in the four home nations in the UK to determine the implications for practice.

What digital competences exist within the sector?

Once a framework of digital competences has been developed it will be necessary to conduct a training needs analysis to determine what the level of these skills are in the existing workforce. This activity will identify the strengths and areas of development in the workforce and will identify individuals who can support a digital skills training strategy.

What are the best approaches to developing and embedding digital literacy?

There are a number of approaches which could be used to develop digital literacy. These are:

Mapping digital literacy competencies to the Blueprint and the QCD learning outcomes to ensure that new practitioners are taught the skills needs to work within the sector.

Developing a programme of continuing professional development which is appropriate to the needs of the sector will require innovation as it is likely to require digital training approaches such as the design of MOOCS (Massive open online courses), collaborative online approaches such as webinars and digital classrooms.

Identifying digital champions requires individuals who are digitally proficient to become 'digital champions' and support the ongoing, work-place development of digital literacy skills. These individuals may require some coaching but this role is an informal one and will not require formal training and development training.

Including digital literacy as a focus for discussion at all levels of the CDI governance structures. This might require identifying someone with the digital portfolio at PSC, the Council and the Board or within our proposed new regional structure.

These will be explored and confirmed during the training needs analysis however whatever the outcome what is clear is that the approach which the CDI adopts will need to embed digital literacy within all our activities.

3. The CDI as a business

Like any other business operating in a competitive environment, the CDI needs to consider the use of technology both as a solution to its business needs and as a cost to the organisation.

The CDI will:

- Ensure that it maintains its digital infrastructure to ensure that it can connect with its members and stakeholders.
- Invest in the necessary digital hardware (computers, smart phones, WiFi networks, blue tooth devices such as printers) and other digital 'capital' such as a website, and social media presence.
- Investigate digital alternatives where these make the service that they provide to members and the wider sector more resource effective.
- Provide opportunities for paid and voluntary workers to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to use digital technology as an effective approach to deliver and manage the organisations business.

Of course, ensuring that the CDI has a comprehensive digital infrastructure will be met through the normal cycle of upgrading equipment, and staff training to use new equipment and approaches.

Implementing this strategy

This document began with a statement about the need to develop digital literacy in every aspect of our work. This requires a long-term vision and plan to implement fully. The CDI Board will be approving an action plan which will set out objectives over a three-year period from January 2018 until December 2020. This strategy will be reviewed and updated annually in line with new trends and developments in ICT technology.

The following sections set out an idea of the broad areas of our three-year action plan.

In the first year it should be possible to:

1. Publish the final digital strategy and three-year action plan including a clear accountability structure
2. Agree a new budget heading for 2018-19 for the digital strategy
3. Agree and implement a procurement strategy for the research to identify digital competences and training needs
4. Identify and agree the need for a digital literacy group which would span all parts of the organisation to be convened to take forward the strategy
5. Agree a publication schedule and commission articles on digital literacy in each edition of *Career Matters*
6. Establish a Linkedin group which could be used as a platform for discussion and dissemination
7. Consider a conference theme: 'working as a digital practitioner'

In the second year it should be possible to:

1. Agree a programme of discussion events/ publications and other 'thought leader activities'
2. Undertake and report back on the research and training needs analysis to include a new framework of digital competences for the career development sector
3. Map the new digital competence framework on to the Blueprint and QCD learning outcomes
4. Scope the development of MOOCs, webinars and online learning platforms
5. Identify digital champions

In the third year it should be possible to:

1. Develop and begin to implement a training plan including new MOOCs, online resources and a webinar series
2. Coach/train digital champions
3. Evaluate the project

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The new digital literacy action plan will include a process of monitoring, review and evaluation which will feed in to the organisation's cycle of continuous improvement. Reporting on the progress of the strategy and plan will take place through regular Board and Council meetings and to the membership through articles and updates in the fortnightly News by Email and *Career Matters*.

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Appendix 1. Digital competences

The following capabilities are based on the framework of digital competences outlined by JISC. They can be used to support several development activities for example undertaking a training needs analysis, mapping to existing occupation standards for career development practitioners, and to inform the development of job descriptions.

ICT proficiency and productivity

Capability in this area is defined as:

- The confident use of devices, applications, software and services and the ability to stay up to date as technology changes
- The use of ICT-based tools to carry out tasks effectively, productively, and with attention to quality including to solve problems and achieve complex tasks

Information, data and media literacies

Capability in this area is defined as:

- The capacity to find, evaluate, interpret, manage, curate, organise and share digital information.
- An understanding of the rules of copyright and open alternatives e.g. creative commons; the ability to reference digital works appropriately in different contexts.
- The capacity to collate, manage, access and use digital data in spreadsheets, databases and other formats, and to interpret data by running queries, data analyses and reports. The practices of personal data security.
- An understanding of how data is used in professional and public life; of legal, ethical and security guidelines in data collection and use; of the nature of algorithms; and of how personal data may be collected and used.
- The capacity to critically receive and respond to messages in a range of digital media – text, graphical, video, animation, audio - and to curate, re-edit and repurpose media, giving due recognition to originators. A critical approach to evaluating media messages in terms of their provenance and purpose.
- An understanding of digital media as a social, political and educational tool, and of digital media production as a technical practice

Digital creation, problem solving and innovation

Capability in this area is defined as:

- The capacity to design and/or create new digital artefacts and materials such as digital writing; digital imaging; digital audio and video, digital code, apps and interfaces, web pages.
- An understanding of the digital production process, and basics of editing and coding.
- The capacity to use digital evidence to solve problems and answer questions, to collect and collate new evidence, to evaluate the quality and value of evidence, and to share evidence and findings using digital methods.
- An understanding of digital research methods; an understanding of different data analysis tools and techniques.
- The capacity to adopt and develop new practices with digital technology in different settings (personal and organisational; social and work-based); to use digital technologies in developing new ideas, projects and opportunities.
- An understanding of innovation, enterprise and project management in digital settings.

Digital communication, collaboration and participation

Capability in this area is defined as:

- The capacity to communicate effectively in digital media and spaces such as text-based forums, online video and audio, and social media; to design digital communications for different purposes and audiences; to respect others in public communications; to maintain privacy in private communications; to identify and deal with false or damaging digital communications.
- An understanding of the features of different digital media for communication, and of the varieties of communication norms and needs
- The capacity to participate in digital teams and working groups; to collaborate effectively using shared digital tools and media; to produce shared materials; to use shared productivity tools; to work effectively across cultural, social and linguistic boundaries.
- An understanding of the features of different digital tools for collaboration, and of the varieties of cultural and other norms for working together.
- The capacity to participate in, facilitate and build digital networks; to participate in social and cultural life using digital media and services; to create positive connections and build contacts; to share and amplify messages across networks; to behave safely and ethically in networked environments.
- An understanding of how digital media and networks influence social behaviour.

Digital learning and development

Capability in this area is defined as:

- The capacity to participate in and benefit from digital learning opportunities; to identify and use digital learning resources; to participate in learning dialogues via digital media; to use learning apps and services (personal or organisational); to use digital tools to organise, plan and reflect on learning; to record learning events/data and use them for self-analysis, reflection and showcasing of achievement; to monitor own progress: to participate in digital assessment and receive digital feedback; to manage own time and tasks, attention and motivation to learn in digital settings.
- An understanding of the opportunities and challenges involved in learning online; an understanding of own needs and preferences as a digital learner (eg access, media, platform and pedagogy)
- The capacity to support and develop others in digitally-rich settings, to teach, to work in a teaching or curriculum team, to design learning opportunities, to support and facilitate learning, to be pro-active in peer learning, all while making effective use of the available digital tools and resources.
- An understanding of the educational value of different media for teaching, learning and assessment; an understanding of different educational approaches and their application in digitally-rich settings

Digital identity and wellbeing

Capability in this area is defined as:

- The capacity to develop and project a positive digital identity or identities and to manage digital reputation (personal or organisational) across a range of platforms; to build and maintain digital profiles and other identity assets such as records of achievement; to review the impact of online activity; to collate and curate personal materials across digital networks.
- An understanding of the reputational benefits and risks involved in digital participation.
- The capacity to look after personal health, safety, relationships and work-life balance in digital settings; to use digital tools in pursuit of personal goals (eg health and fitness) and to

participate in social and community activities; to act safely and responsibly in digital environments; to negotiate and resolve conflict; to manage digital workload, overload and distraction; to act with concern for the human and natural environment when using digital tools.

- An understanding of the benefits and risks of digital participation in relation to health and wellbeing outcomes.