

MAKING BETTER WORK



December 6, 2019

Here's to Betterness!

On behalf of our newly expanded [#MakingBetterWork](#) [SPR](#) + [BrightHive](#) [#WDQI](#) technical support team, we wish you a holiday season filled with (wait for it...) *betterness*, of course! Now that we've had our introductory webinar, you'll know that the WDQI community includes Round VII teams from California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, North Carolina, New Jersey Texas, and Wisconsin, as well as Round VI veterans Alabama, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, Mississippi, and Rhode Island – and friends and alumni from the wider workforce data ecosystem of which we are thrilled to be a part!

Time for "Best of"

December. A good time to reflect. At the risk of overdoing the listicle, we've crowdsourced a few of our most-loved best-of roundups (and invite you to share yours via Twitter using [#MakingBetterWork](#)). Enjoy.

- Best [books](#) of 2019 (comes with an NPR concierge!)
- Best [inventions](#) of 2019 (Time Magazine)
- Best [photos](#) of 2019 (@natgeo)
- Best [films](#) of 2019 (@Voxdotcom)
- Best [???](#) (you are welcome 🙏!)

#MakingBetterWork: Lessons From Our First Year

We looked at the numbers, here's what we learned.

- **You are readers above all.** You clicked on links to readable resources at least three times more often than you did on video, audio, or other multimedia content. This edition includes only one new (highly-recommended) video.
- **Especially in July.** The July edition had both the highest percentage and the highest number of opens and clickthroughs. Glad we were able to keep you engaged as our nation celebrated her birthday.
- **You opt for #FutureofWork and credential-centered content** most often. Thematically, resources that specifically addressed #FutureofWork or credentials drew your interest more than other resources – with the exception of the Opportunity Insights piece that received the highest number of clicks (see "Best of 2019" below).

- **You are curious.** Clicks were dispersed across many topic areas and content types. Even the most popular resources received only one or two clicks more than others. Polymaths. We knew it.

Round VII teams may shift these preferences. We'll keep track on our end and count on you to let us know what you'd like to see going forward.

Radar

Let us know whether you will be attending any of these convenings (or any other convenings not yet on our radar)!

- **National Skills Coalition's** Annual [Skills Summit](#), February 5-7, 2020 (Washington, DC)
- **National Association of State Workforce Agencies** (NASWA) [Winter Forum](#), February 12, 2020 (Washington, DC)
- **Data on Purpose** [Annual Summit](#) (Palo Alto, CA and online, dates TBD)
- **National Association of Workforce Boards** (NAWB) [Annual Forum](#), March 21-24, 2020 (Washington DC)
- **Council for Community and Economic Research** ([C2ER](#)) and the Labor Market Information ([LMI](#)) Institute Annual Conference and Forum, [June 3 - 5, 2020](#) (Columbus, OH)
- **Association of Public Data Users** (APDU) [Annual Conference](#), July 9-10, 2020 (Arlington, VA)
- **National Center for Educational Statistics** [STATS-DC](#) Conference (Washington, DC, dates TBD)
- **Community Indicators Consortium** Conference, (dates, location TBD)
- **National Center for Workforce Education** (NCWE) Annual Conference (dates, location TBD)
- **Data for Good** [Exchange](#) (New York, NY, dates TBD)

Money!

A little last minute but if you've got a great data project (in one of the 26 Knight communities) crying out for community engagement, the [Knight Foundation](#) is looking for you! Applications due **December 13, 2019**.

Jobs!

Our friends at the [National Skills Coalition are \(still\) hiring!](#) These are mission-critical positions (Senior Fellow, Workforce Systems/Senior Fellow, Workforce Data Policy/State Network Manager, [SkillSPAN](#))! Let's help them out by spreading the word and encouraging the most amazing job-seekers we know to apply!

Well-Wishes!

Yours in data, with an extra dose of cheer in honor of the holidays 🎄 🍷 🎁, the beginning of a new year 🌟, and the first time in a century "the 20s" will refer to the current decade! 🙌

Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff) &
Maureen Sarver (@maureensarver)

Have a Look



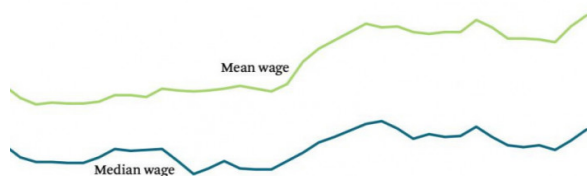
Frontline: In the Age of AI

Calling all #FutureofWork geeks! This two-hour Frontline special on AI explores the ways our world is being reshaped and reimagined by technology. It's riveting, so get your popcorn first. And if you just can't wait for the #FutureofWork content, skip ahead to minute 32 before you click the play button.

 [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org)

Have a Think

Mean and Median Wages, 1979-2016

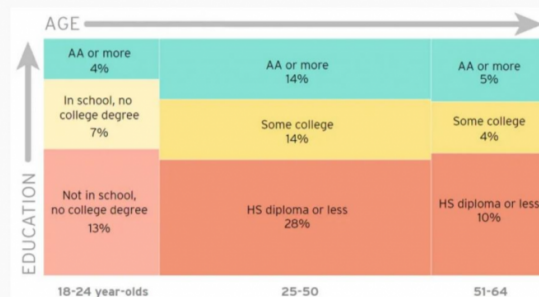


The Data Says: It's Complicated

No single silver bullet solution exists that can solve our skills and earnings problems. Why? Because no single or dominant cause explains stagnating earnings or rising inequality in the US. Solving these problems is why we all get up in the morning.

 [brookings.edu](https://www.brookings.edu)

Clusters of the low-wage population



Meet the Low-wage Workforce

More than 53 million people, or 44% of all workers ages 18 to 64 in the United States, earn low hourly wages. More than half (56%) are in their prime working years of 25-50, and this age group is also the most likely to be raising children (43%). Do these national figures reflect the low-wage workforce in your state/community? Your workforce programs?

 [brookings.edu](https://www.brookings.edu)

Georgia's Public Colleges to Offer New Type of Degree

The [Nexus Degree](#) is a new kind of credential that blends education, training (and credentials), work, and stackability, so that credits earned fulfill the requirements of two year and four-year programs across participating post-secondary education institutions. Data challenges? Yes. But each instance of this broader trend toward learning across institutions builds the case for and enhances the value of LDS.

 insidehighered.com

High-Quality Instruction Meets Work-Based Learning: A Model for Rebooting Vocational Education?

P-TECH has spread to 10 states and 17 countries since its founding in Brooklyn in 2011. By the end of 2019, there will be 220 P-TECH schools. With 93,000 students nationwide, it is one of the most extensive career and technical education programs in the United States. Measuring student progress across P-TECH's multiple work and learning systems and shaping policy around what works calls for exactly the kinds of integrated data systems we're all working on.

 politico.com

Guide to Key Initiatives for the Connected Learn and Work Ecosystem

Our friends at Credential Engine have created this handy inventory of over 30 credential-related initiatives seeking to boost ease of use, effectiveness, and transparency in the ecosystem.

 credentialengine.org

Will the Future of Work be Ethical? – TechCrunch

Will tomorrow's leaders, despite good and ethical intentions, ultimately use their high-tech tools to exploit others ever more efficiently, or to find a better path forward? What role for policy? For data?

 techcrunch.com

New Policy Group Focused on College and Careers

The NewDEAL Forum and the Alliance for Excellent Education have created the NewDEAL Forum Education Policy Group, comprising experts from the public and nonprofit sectors. Its focus will be on the intersection of education and the workforce.

 insidehighered.com

Have A Resource

Which Policies Improve Social Well-being the Most? A Unified Welfare Analysis

This project examines 133 historical policy changes in the U.S. spanning the past half-century, from social insurance (e.g. health and disability insurance), to education and job training (e.g. preschool spending and college subsidies), to taxes, cash, and in-kind transfers (e.g. housing vouchers and food stamps). Researchers calculated the benefit each policy provides its recipients (measured as their willingness to pay) and the policy's cost to the government, creating a ratio that enables comparison of benefit across the policy intervention. The conclusions might surprise you. [#dataviz version](#) | [PDF version](#)

 policyinsights.org

Best of 2019

As a community, here are the resources you liked best in 2019 (by percentage, since the mailing list has grown over time). If you missed one, here's your chance to catch up. If not, by all means, share the wealth!

Announcing the Urban Institute Data Catalog

Whoa. [LODES](#), [EITC](#), there's even an [education data portal](#). And then there's [this terrific narrative](#) about how Urban came to "really open, open data." We're guessing there may be lessons in it for others. (October Edition)

 medium.com

Future of Work - Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

The Future of Work poses pressing questions for workforce, employers, and our state. As automation increases, will there be enough jobs? How will workers fare as they turn to short-term, "gig economy" jobs, without the safety net of health insurance and retirement plans? The State of Washington's Future of Work Commission was among the first to launch, and to publish. (May Edition)

 wtb.wa.gov

Automation and Artificial Intelligence: How machines are affecting people and places

Mark Muro, Robert Maxim, and Jacob Whiton roll up their sleeves and dig deep into workforce data, to reveal how automation and AI will affect the people, places, and jobs over the next few decades. The authors also point to policy and program responses that will be needed going forward. Finally! A report that does more than admire or problematize the #FutureofWork. (February Edition)

 brookings.edu

Data Collaboration for the Common Good: Enabling Trust and Innovation Through Public-Private Partnerships

The critical role of data in solving complex problems is indisputable. But data is often distributed across multiple stakeholders, public and private, who lack an architecture and process for sharing it. This summary version of the longer report, offers a set of recommendations about partnerships, data sharing, and governance that you will find familiar. We thought seeing your practices advocated by McKinsey for the World Economic Forum might be confidence-inspiring for you and your data partners. (July Edition)

 weforum.org

Measuring Credential Attainment Comprehensively: States Making Progress, Still Struggling

This 50-state scan from WDQC reveals that states are making progress collecting data about non-degree credential attainment, including certificates, industry certifications, and licenses. States differ in their approaches – how they integrate administrative data, for example – and the majority are working towards identifying "credentials of value" to help focus financial aid, workforce or other investments in talent development. (March Edition)

 nationalskillscoa...

Connected Data Yields Real-World Results

A must read, this JFF report for the US Department of Labor features our own WDQI Round VI Grantees Massachusetts and Missouri, along with Kansas (a WDQI alum twice over), in a collection of case studies about linking data in support of shared goals under the TAACCCT (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training) initiative. (April Edition)

 irp-cdn.multiscreensi...

Helping Stakeholders Use Data to Tell Stories, Inform Policy: Rhoda Island Data Hub

From time to time, we receive inquiries about the tools and resources states are developing to help their colleagues in government better understand and use LDS. Here is an example from Rhode Island, courtesy of the [Data Hub](#). (September Edition)

 ridatahub.org

VICE Special Report | The Future of Work & Automation

[VICE News Tonight](#) aired a special report on The Future of Work on HBO (April 19, 2019). Even if you don't subscribe, there's a lot to be learned from the trailer and the short clips available online. In just a few minutes, the clips effectively communicate the magnitude of the workforce transitions we face – the ones we are building better longitudinal data systems to help navigate! The rich visual imagery grounds the narrative in real jobs people like us actually do. Click

through to the short trailer above, and to this [two-minute, fact-filled clip](#) about 'How Automation is Radically Changing American Jobs' – and then head over to the piece on [Estonia](#) (no really, you'll thank us.) (April Edition)

 [youtube.com](#)

Have a Listen

ETA Webinar: Using Evaluation & Evidence

Tuesday, December 17, 2019 2:00 PM ~ 3:00 PM ET

This webinar shares evaluation and evidence information and activities as it relates to the Department of Labor's Strategic Plan and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act). Register [here](#).

 [workforcegps.org](#)

Our Very Own #WDQI #MakingBetterWork Podcast Now Has Nine Episodes!

If you haven't subscribed, pull out your mobile device and do it now!

[iTunes](#) * [Stitcher](#) * [GooglePlay](#)

Search for **Making Better Work** on Google Play (a quirk of the platform).

Again, we hope these new communication channels will bring your work further into the public domain so that kindred spirits in different parts of the public data ecosystem can find each other. It's a big job but somebody's got to do it. Why not us?

Information Wants to Be Shared

This is the 11th edition of *Making Better Work*, the perpetual beta newsletter of the longitudinal workforce data community.

We'd love your continued help in making it great (and your generosity of spirit when we don't quite get there). Our interviews and conversations with you over the past few months, together with our observations and encounters with the field, have led us to the following themes which will guide our editorial choices next year.

- **Impact** (Products, legislation, key policy decisions and more – what difference is WDQI making in your state, community?)
- **Governance** (In the words of one of our subject matter experts, "It's everything.")
- **Ecosystem** (How do we better align public data efforts and work with nonprofit, foundation, university, and other partners more effectively to address critical workforce and education issues? How do we do this consistently, ethically, and responsibly?)
- **Themes that run through WDQI events and activities:**
 - Federal legislative mandates (WIOA – and evaluation, HEA, Perkins, etc.)
 - Non-degree credentials – such as certificates and industry-recognized credentials (increasingly called "credentials of value" and the main focus of our May newsletter)
 - Future of Work – using data to help policymakers, institutional leaders, and the rest of us navigate it

We've already amended this list based on your feedback, so keep it coming.

Just in case you've received this from a friend or colleague and don't know how to find us, we've provided our contact information below.

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Know someone who needs this newsletter? Forward it or send them here.