

MAKING BETTER WORK

June 10, 2019

Happy Ballpoint Pen Day!

In keeping with our precedent of saluting [holidays big and small](#), today we celebrate the ubiquitous ballpoint pen.

In 1943, László and György Bíró (of Argentina) filed a patent for the writing implement with the European Patent Office which was purchased by the British Parliament so that the altitude-friendly pens could be produced for [use by the Royal Air Force](#) during World War II. Rights to the originally-named "Birome" were eventually sold to [Bic](#) and the rest is [history](#).

Hats off to the Biro brothers who, on June 10, 1943, helped make possible [June 6th, 1944](#).

Data Stories

This month we feature a collection of multimedia data stories. Recognizing that many of you are working on simpler, more engaging, and increasingly interactive ways to share data (this means you [Rhode Island](#), [Maine](#), and [Iowa](#)...), our intent is to provide examples that can inform and inspire. One is from New Jersey's own [Heldrich Center](#).

We've also included a well-worth-the-time video from Aspen's [Future of Work Initiative](#) launch event for [Automation and a Changing Economy](#) – a report we shared last month.

Finally, we've curated a collection of articles on automation and jobs in key sectors and occupations, many of which the workforce system provides training for today and will be the subject of questions from policy-makers that your data can help inform going forward. Take a deep breath, the robot-scary stories are giving way to more nuanced analyses. Finally.

Many of these resources are mobile-friendly, so grab your headphones and sneakers and head outside, as the days grow longer and warmer. (A bevy of reports and papers you will be eager to peruse has also come our way but we are saving them for the height of summer when lemonade, prose, and stillness hold more appeal.)

Yours in data,

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

Have a Look



Age of Automation: Trends and Opportunities for Workers in a Changing Economy

Get yourself some popcorn and pull up a chair for this triple feature. (Earbuds and a cell phone will also work but watching with colleagues would be nicer...)

- Part one features former U.S. Sen. [Heidi Heitkamp](#) and Rep. [Haley Stevens](#) discussing the ways automation manifests today and the challenges and opportunities it presents.
- Part two begins at 54 minutes when [Mark Muro](#) (Brookings Institution), [Erica Groshen](#) (Cornell University, former BLS Commissioner), and [Spencer Overton](#) (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies) take the stage for a discussion of how the impacts of automation will likely be experienced by different industries, communities, and people. Several papers we've queued up for next month are mentioned. (If you really can't wait, [here's one](#) co-authored by Erica Groshen on the autonomous vehicle industry to start with.)
- Part three begins at 1:35, when [Portia Wu](#) (Microsoft, former ETA Assistant Secretary), [Kristen Silverberg](#) (Business Roundtable), [John Hiatt](#) (University of California Berkley Labor Center), and [Scott Rutherford](#) (McKinsey & Co) debate the optimal roles and responsibilities of large institutions including government, labor, higher education, and the private sector.

[Lauren Weber](#) (Wall Street Journal) and [Alastair Fitzpayne](#) (Aspen Institute) host and facilitate Q&A – you'll likely see folks you know in the audience. There is a lot in this session highly relevant to data stewards like you, which is why we encourage joint viewing. We'll leave you with this teaser from Erica Groshen, "Why do we love data? Because it empowers us to make good decisions...It is infrastructure just like roads and bridges..."

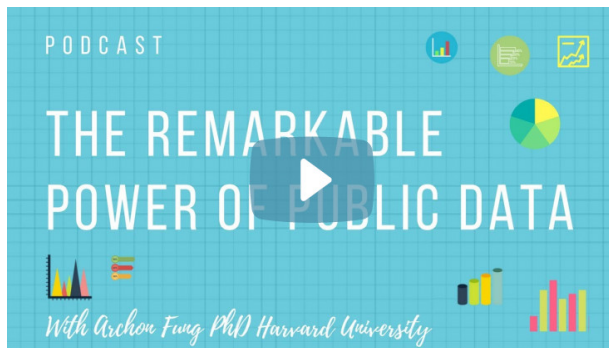
 aspeninstitute.org



Ron Painter ([NAWB](#)) and Matt Sigelman ([Burning Glass](#)) Discuss Trends in Workforce Data

Work with workforce boards? Couldn't make the [NAWB Forum](#) this year? We've got you covered with this brief survey of goings-on in the field – and a discussion about why our data matters. Longitudinal systems come in around minute 32. Listen for it – and no fair skipping ahead.

 [youtube.com](#)



The Remarkable Power of Public Data

In this recorded video chat, Harvard Professor [Archon Fung](#) and author and environmentalist [Katie Patrick](#) reveal the power of adjacency as they discuss the importance of data in a non-workforce context. Listen for the four value propositions and the difference between access and engagement. The transcript is available [here](#).

 [youtube.com](#)



How Automation Will Impact the U.S. Economy

We've already shared the [Automation and Changing Economy](#) report, but here's a quick video re-cap that also provides a nice precursor to the collection of stories below.

 [cheddar.com](#)



Self-driving trucks begin



Will robots ever be better



Exclusive: Amazon rolls out



Robocrop: world's first

mail delivery test for U.S. Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service on Tuesday started a two-week test transporting mail...

 reuters.com

caretakers than humans?

First [Paro](#), now Jennie, Buddy, and ElliQ. We've got some tough choices ahead if we don't find a way to support care-taking.

FC fastcompany.com

machines that pack orders and replace jobs

Amazon.com Inc is rolling out machines to automate a job held by thousands...

 reuters.com

raspberry-picking robot set to work

Autonomous machine expected to pick more than 25,000 raspberries a day, outpacing human workers...

 theguardian.com

Maryland's most common occupation is vanishing.

More than 80,000 people work as cashiers in the state's grocery and department stores, pharmacies and boutiques. For now.

 baltimoresun.com

Have a Listen

Hey Managers! Your Workers Are Ready for Retraining.

Alison Beard interviews Joseph Fuller in this short but packed HBR Ideacast. In a refreshing take on the #FutureOfWork, Fuller [discovered](#) that contrary to what bosses believe, many employees are excited about new technologies and willing to be trained in new skills. But they don't always know what they need to learn or how to access and pay for it. Organizations can do a better job of identifying their skills gaps and engaging current workers in new roles. Read the accompanying article, share it with colleagues, and then tighten your seat belts — this kind of research should move us much closer to the day boards, policymakers, and workforce professionals see our data as essential for making the training firms need and workers want affordable and accessible.

 hbr.org

The Future of Work for Regular People?

Yes Andrew Yang is running for President. But that's not why we're sharing this interview with Freakonomics' Stephen Dubner. Rather, it's Yang's assessment of the workforce landscape we thought you might enjoy. Workforce and the future of work (in the context of automation) *is his issue*. Agree or disagree with him, his analysis is clear, crisp, and instructive.

 freakonomics.com

The #MakingBetterWork Podcast

What?! You haven't downloaded the app yet? Podcasts are a super way to learn about what your colleagues are up to in context and in a casual (and mobile) way. Once we talk with all of the WDQI states, we will begin scheduling guests who can speak to all things public data, credentials, governance, and more. If there is someone, in particular, you'd like to hear from, by all means, let us know. In the meantime, you know what to do...

- [iTunes](#)
- [Stitcher](#)
- [Google Play](#)

Have a Story

A Story-Centered, People-Powered Campaign for Change

Everyday people's perspectives, voices, and questions intended to promote a fair transition to the future of work.

What can we learn from this? How might we use some of these approaches to address the need for framing and engagement raised by the panelists at Aspen's [Age of Automation](#) event?

 futureofwork.oecd.org

Still Out of Work: Examining and Addressing Long-term Unemployment in New Jersey

This nifty new report from the [Heldrich Center for Workforce Development](#) explores long-term unemployment (LTU) in New Jersey using storytelling software that combines text, data, videos, and images. The report details the concept of LTU, and then uses data to examine New Jersey's LTU rates in terms of educational attainment, gender, race, and age. It explores some of the challenges of LTU, including age discrimination, diminished confidence and emotional issues, and unrealistic expectations, and concludes by offering strategies and policies to assist LTU job seekers.

 heldrich.rutgers.edu

Have a Think

The Why and What of Everyday Chaos

Those of you who have participated in our annual convenings will recognize the name David Weinberger, author of [Too Big to Know](#). The book's subtitle includes the phrase "when the smartest person in the room is the room" – that's the bit we love and have borrowed many times over to frame WDQI events and activities. In this brief, intimate, home-based video, he introduces his new book, *Everyday Chaos*. He argues we have long counted on conceptual models to guide our decisions about what kinds of data we count and track to help us achieve our goals, and that A.I. and machine learning offer an alternative: these technologies can handle so much data and operate in such complexity that they can find patterns, reveal correlations, and solve problems people cannot possibly understand. Under this model, strategy emerges, as the result of constant testing and shifting — [mvp](#)-style. This is a new way of understanding how the future happens. It's a big idea, which is why we feature it as our think piece this month. Consider how it applies to our data-centered efforts to link supply and demand, build career pathways, and identify what works over time. In a departure from many talks on the same topic, it's quite bullish of the promise of machine learning to make things better — with important caveats involving effective data stewardship and ethical practices. It's short, so try your best not to multitask this one. There's too much to miss. 🧐 (Want more? The official book launch took place at the [Berkman Klein Center](#) for Internet & Society at Harvard on May 14, 2019. [Video](#). [Audio](#).)

 youtube.com

Have A Go

Introducing Contracts for Data Collaboration: New Project on Legal Conditions for Data Sharing

This brief little gem is both a preview of coming attractions (read: governance) and an introduction to new resources and networks we will draw from as we explore multi-agency partnerships and data collaboratives that go beyond building state-level longitudinal data systems. We're guessing you will have much to contribute to a conversation about contracts (read: MOU, data sharing agreement, data use agreement, etc.) and find common cause with other data stewards even if not in the same (applied) field of practice.

 medium.com

Information Wants to Be Shared

This is the fifth 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 this 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 policy makers, 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.