

MAKING BETTER WORK

May 3, 2019

Happy [International Tuba Day](#)!

Who knew? We're not sure whether any of you happen to have been in a marching band or hold a fondness for the tuba, but here's [our small gift to you](#) in honor of this largest and lowest-tone brass on its special day, courtesy of Oregon's own.

The second question.

We've had so many good conversations in the past few of months about how to connect longitudinal data systems to the expressed needs and priorities of states and communities. One stands out as an 'a-ha' moment we thought we'd share.

A WDQI stakeholder said, "Our state has placed a priority on all things automation and the Future of Work. There's talk of a commission or task force to advise the governor on the issue. We know data is key but aren't sure how to engage."

We asked, "What are the key questions your colleagues and state and local leaders want to know?"

They replied, "What jobs are going to be automated and when."

"And if the answers from experts are nuanced variations of 'a lot and fairly soon,' what would your colleagues want to know then?" we asked.

"They'd want to know how we transition workers – *what kinds of programs and interventions work and in what kinds of industries and occupations.*"

And that's just one of the ways longitudinal workforce data systems can help us navigate the #futureofwork.

About #FutureofWork...

We emphasize #FutureofWork as a meta-frame for WDQI and *Making Better Work* for so many reasons. As the community grows, it's important to revisit some of them.

- **Nearly every state team reports that #FutureofWork, in its myriad of forms, is top-of-mind among state and local leaders and policy-makers.** We curate resources, reports, and data stories intended to help WDQI teams participate in these conversations effectively, and connect emerging needs to bread-and-butter workforce policy and programs. That's why we regularly feature a wide range of reports, studies, and tools like those below, of which we hope a few resonate in your particular context. Speaking of which, here's **Washington** State's [Future of Work Task Force 2019 Action Plan](#), which may give you some ideas about data needs and solutions in your own state.
- **Many of the #FutureofWork resources we share offer innovative approaches to working with, analyzing, and presenting or displaying data** (online or [analogue-style](#)) that could be integrated or replicated by stakeholders with shared interests. By featuring these resources, we hope to encourage effective practice, boost engagement, and reduce duplication of effort – so everyone moves forward faster.
- **Videos, in particular, can suggest new data applications** – like the student data app featured in the [Estonia video](#) – and provide context for teams designing or enhancing products like dashboards, report cards, and research studies that explain design choices and reveal the people and processes that help the technologies and tools scale. (Estonia might like some of **Mississippi's** [tools](#), birds-of-a-feather speaking...)

As WDQI tools, reports, dashboards and other public-facing resource emerge, we will feature them here and in our community webinars, podcasts, and convenings – all in service of a bright future for workers, firms, and communities everywhere.

Let us know how we're doing and what you'd like to see more (or less) of!

Yours in data,

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

Have a Look



VICE Special Report | The Future of Work & Automation (Official Trailer)



VICE Special Report | The Future of Work - Jobs and Automation in Estonia Clip

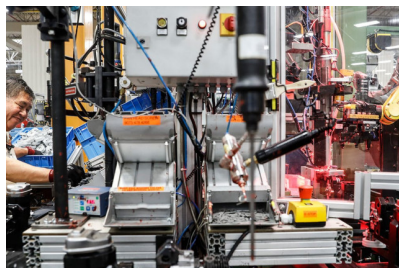
A country of 1.3 million, Estonia is a [giant in technology innovation](#). Home to [Skype](#), [Jobbatical](#), and the

[VICE News Tonight](#) just 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](#) on 'How Automation is Radically Changing American Jobs' – and then head over to the piece on Estonia (no really, you'll thank us.)

 youtube.com

first [e-residency program](#) in the world, its approach to government services is mind-blowing. [Full disclosure, Kristin is an E-Resident of Estonia.] Take a peek into the country's approach to education, health, and justice data – and the (snow)bots, of course. A country in the cloud indeed.

 youtube.com



Giving Wisdom to Machines

Rather than fret about how many jobs future technologies will destroy, let's focus on how to shape them so that they complement the workforce of tomorrow, argues Thomas Kochan (see podcast below) and Lee Dyer. We've got data, programs, and employers-in-need. We're in.

 theconversation.com



Summary and Scenario

You're going to want to spend a little time with this one. It summarizes the results of two expert convenings (hosted by [Institute for the Future](#) and supported by [Lumina Foundation](#)) on how technology could shape work and learning for future generations. Participants discussed essential skills and skills acquisition approaches, as well as accountability across sectors and institutions. Scenarios and graphic recordings are hard to peel your eyes from, and the thought-provoking collection of resources made us want to dance. We especially liked "Beyond Organizations: New Models for Getting Things Done" (Reminded us of data governance and collaboratives...).

 iftf.org

CyberWork and the American Dream | Programs | PBS SoCal

Should we be "good and panicked" as [Astro Teller](#) ([X](#), [Alphabet's](#) Moonshot Factory) argues or are we facing just the latest in a series of technological shifts? Recent [PBS SoCal documentary CyberWork](#) features future-of-work luminaries such as [Andrew McAfee](#), [Elizabeth Cobbs](#),

[Robert Gordon](#), [James Manyika](#), and [Andrew Ng](#), as well as a raft of experts in education, innovation, and workforce issues, and some fantastic old-timey footage of brick-like cordless phones and some of the first NASA space missions. Got an hour? It's a fun ride that explores serious issues in digestible ways – a good lesson for us more generally – even if it brings back memories of a high school science class or two.



Skills Revolution 4.0

This little piece by Manpower argues that automation is *creating* jobs and not just destroying them, but that's not why we've included it. Rather, we thought some of the background content would be of interest to you (especially those working on occupational data quality): the list of manufacturing jobs and how they will morph into new occupations (we're thinking of you here, **Indiana**); the brief discussion of learning, upskilling and adjacencies, suggesting the need for new ways of collecting/analyzing career path data; and the evolution of talent strategy discussion as a context for employer engagement around data. This is light and fun to read, and provocative, too for those in the longitudinal data business.



Digital Janitor? Why Digital Alone is Not the Answer and How We Can Do Better

This tiny gem of a piece asks whether we should be designing quality into the digital economy's new middle skill jobs. [Note, scroll down for a bevy or similar questions and ideas.]



Meet the millions of young adults who are out of work

Our friends at Brookings – [Martha Ross](#) and [Natalie Holmes](#) – just published this first-of-its-kind view of the 2.3 million 18 to 24 year olds who are out of work in 119 large cities and counties across the U.S. It challenges the oft-cited "strength" of our current labor market and offers the kind of data-rich, narrative-based, human-centered analysis that we hope to see more of!



Eight Strategies for Staying Relevant, Shrinking Skills Gaps

[Michelle Giovannozzi's](#) list applies as much to workforce training providers as to the university-based professional education system of which she is a part. It's an ecosystem approach – employer engagement,

MIT Starts University Group to Build New Digital Credential System - EdSurge News

Credentials – especially credentials that have value in the labor market, aggregate to certificates and degrees, and can be easily verified – are a topic of increasing importance

cross-sector collaboration, innovation, and *data* all play important roles in addressing skills gaps and building strength for the future. (We're thinking of your advanced manufacturing work here, **Alabama!**)

 evollution.com

in workforce. Our friends at [Credential Engine](#) were the first to launch a major market place in this area. Now there's a new kid on the block: a partnership of nine universities from five countries exploring the use of blockchain technologies. Yours for sharing.

 edsurge.com

National Science Foundation Launches Beyond-the-Career-Path Experiment

The federal agency is conducting a two-phase experiment to design tools for better understanding career trajectories of employees (and the rest of the federal workforce). NSF has posted its methods and approach as [an entry in the challenge.gov](#) platform (Career Compass Challenge), providing a rare glimpse into a large-scale, evidence-based upskilling effort designed to contribute to the field of workforce advancement as it unfolds.

 insidehighered.com

Have a Think

The Future of Work in Riverside, CA

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) has launched a new initiative, in partnership with the [Bertelsmann Foundation](#), to explore the potential impact of the [Future of Work](#) in three US communities: Las Vegas (NV), Orlando (FL), and Riverside (CA). The projects seek to engage residents, firms, and civic leaders in a conversation about their experiences and priorities in the context of technology-driven change all around them. [Data is a critical piece of the story](#) – economic and labor market information, but also education data, workforce data, program and outcome data. And that's why we're sharing information about the effort here. We suspect a lot more projects like this on are on the horizon and will lead to questions that longitudinal data systems can help answer.

 youtube.com

The Re-Bundled Worker - The Craftsmanship Initiative

As is likely evident, in each edition of *Making Better Work*, we try to include something that goes a little deeper, engages our humanity a little more, or challenges us a little differently than most of what is delivered to our inboxes every day. This piece, among several from the [Craftsmanship](#)

[Initiative](#) we've shared, explores how can we prepare for the challenges the workforce of the future will face – from unbundling higher education to supporting disadvantaged workers around the globe.

 craftsmanship.net

Have a Listen

You had me at longitudinal.

There I was listening to [Stephen Dubner](#) during my usual Saturday errand-running when I heard it: longitudinal survey. Alexa kindly increased the volume and I was soon absorbed in [Freakonomics Radio](#) Episode 295, "When Helping Hurts." I'd heard it when it first aired a couple of years ago, but my ears were less attuned to phrases like "evidence-based policy" then. The story centers on a research project that began in the 1930s and continues today, the [Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study](#). In addition to its topical relevance – the impact of mentoring on educational attainment, and economic and social mobility – it's a master class in how to work with longitudinal data and why transparency is essential to good public policy.

 freakonomics.com

The Magic is in the Mix: Why Business, Education, and Government, and Workers Need To Work Together To Shape The Future Of Work

Since we're on the theme of longitudinal change, who better to round out our playlist than Thomas Kochan, Co-Director of the MIT Sloan Institute for Work and Employment Research and expert in the field for four decades? His wide ranging conversation with Jacob Morgan grounds our conversations about the future in the context of the past, and points to ways we can actively shape policy rather than just respond to change.

 thefutureorganization...

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

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

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

Information Wants to Be Shared

This is the fourth 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.