oxfordshire youth

Digital Natives Project

Using Youth Work and Intel® Skills for Innovation to Address Digital Exclusion

Oxfordshire Youth

March 2025

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Introduction

Overview

Oxfordshire Youth has partnered with Intel® and Solutions Integrator Insight to launch the Digital Natives Project. This initiative will address digital poverty and expand digital readiness among young people facing economic disadvantage in OX4 in Oxfordshire. Whilst Oxfordshire as a whole ranks within the 10% least deprived places in England, the county contains 17 areas that rank within the 20% most deprived nationally.[1]

This paper seeks to understand the experiences of young people accessing digital technologies and the barriers that may be affecting and deepening exclusion including, but not limited to, affordability and access. We explore how young people engage with technology and what these experiences provide them with as they navigate education and work spaces. As a youth work organisation, we examine this with a holistic approach to young people's lives and understand how the intersections of young people's social, economic, housing, and personal circumstances come together as they navigate the complexities of the digital landscape.

By investing in training and resources, Intel®, the Intel® Skills for Innovation Initiative (Intel® SFI) and Oxfordshire Youth aim to create a model for how technology can empower young people, equip youth work practitioners with vital skills, and inspire community-focused innovation.

Why Oxfordshire and why Oxfordshire Youth?

Oxfordshire Youth (OY) is Oxfordshire's leading youth charity and, with our partners, we are endeavouring to ensure that best practice youth work is fully accessible and available to all young people. Oxfordshire Youth is uniquely placed at the centre of the youth work sector in Oxfordshire, delivering both grass-roots youth work and infrastructure support to the wider sector and training youth work practitioners.

Whilst Oxfordshire as a whole, ranks within the 10% least deprived places in England, the county contains 17 areas that rank within the 20% most deprived nationally.[2] With a youth work approach underpinning our work with young people and with the sector, the research focuses on understanding the needs of young people growing up in a county with increasing inequalities, and recommends approaches to address those needs in a way that meets young people where they are. The term digital native was coined in 2001 to describe "the first generations to grow up with this new technology.

"They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, video-games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. However, young people do not "inherently possess the skills for safe and effective use of technologies, and skills acquired informally are likely to be incomplete".[3]

Skills, knowledge and attitudes are essential to minimise the risks and maximise the benefits of participation in an online world. The youth sector can play a significant role in addressing this need for young people.

Methodology

This paper is the result of a series of one to one interviews with professionals across the youth sector and young people, focus group discussions, surveys with young people and youth work practitioners, and a review of publicly available secondary data.

One to one interviews, with teachers, school pastoral staff, and senior county government staff responsible for youth services, as well as key individuals involved in employability and across the private sector, also gave important perspectives.

85% of staff members across all of OY responded to a survey assessing competence, confidence, and priorities in digital skills and systems. This included 22 people working directly with young people across our different programmes and 23 people in support roles and working directly with youth workers and sector organisations. A further 10 respondents were surveyed from four other youth work organisations that OY partners closely with.

Surveys among youth work practitioners addressed:

- Confidence with digital tools within the organisation
- Confidence supporting young people with online skills and competencies
- A self assessment tool (the EU DigComp (Digital Competency) Framework) designed to measure digital competencies across five key areas.

"Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking."[4]

Focus group discussions allowed deeper conversations around the perceived needs of the young people they work with and an assessment of their own needs to strengthen their capacity to deliver support to young people in digital technologies.

Surveys were completed by 313 young people from years 7, 8 and 9 at a state secondary school in the OX4 area.

Group sessions in youth groups in the OX4 area focused on the main uses of technology, barriers to their use, and challenges associated with access to different types of devices. An in depth interview with a young person from Oxfordshire Youth's Young People Supported Accommodation Service revealed how limited access to devices and confidence using tech in school and in the workplace impacts on young people's experiences of education, access to employment opportunities, and identity.

Digital poverty and digital exclusion

Digital poverty is defined as “the inability to interact with the online world fully, when, where and how an individual needs to”.[5]
Individuals are considered in digital poverty when they:

- lack access to an adequate connection at home (i.e., download speed less than 10mbps); or
- lack access to the appropriate devices to get online at home (i.e., both a smartphone and a personal computer/tablet); or
- lack appropriate skills to effectively engage online in different settings (i.e., do not have full foundation, life and work essential digital skills – as defined by the Department for Education); or
- fail to regularly get online (i.e., at least once per week) due to either physical/space barriers or a lack of confidence or motivation (e.g., no safe space in the case of a child, no supporting equipment in the case of someone with a disability).

Digital exclusion has been a concern for decades, but a more significant awareness emerged in the context and aftermath of the covid-19 pandemic when schooling and much work shifted almost entirely online.

- 96-99% adults in the UK are internet users;
- Around 1.6 million households (roughly six per cent) had no broadband or mobile internet access at home in 2024.
- In 2022, 77% of this group did not own a connected device; 500,000 people in the UK were classed as being completely “offline” (defined as not using the internet in the previous three months).[6]

‘Digital exclusion’ is not a binary issue of having access to a device or the internet. Both remain crucial but the reality is far more complex.

Poor digital literacy and skills contribute to digital exclusion, and upskilling is an essential element of resolving this, but in practice, “digital exclusion arises from a complex interplay of factors including age, socio-economic status, disability, geography, educational attainment, literacy and language, and housing circumstances.”[7]

Proficiency in one device but not others can also have implications for digital literacy overall. Some services, such as applications for housing that involve a long form and uploading documents, are difficult to access from a phone.

More recently, attention has been paid to 'the extent and quality of access' and the tangible outcomes arising from the use of the internet. 90% of jobs are only advertised online; 80% of homework is only accessible online; increasingly there is a presumption that all services should be delivered online; and the government has published guidelines for foundational level digital literacy, digital literacy skills for life and digital literacy skills for work - a series of skills considered essential to engage successfully in daily life and in the workplace.[8]

Taken all together, digital exclusion means a reduced ability to exploit digital resources and transform it into tangible social benefits.[9]

Digital exclusion and poverty

Digital poverty is associated with deprivation and social inequalities more broadly. This association points to the existence of a 'double loop' of inequalities, where offline inequalities reinforce digital inequalities, which in turn reinforce further social inequalities.

The British Academy Digital Society 2022

Whilst an increasingly digital and hybrid world has, and is perceived to be, increasing accessibility, for many others it has instead served to widen the gap of digital exclusion and worsen intersecting disparities.

- 60% of those earning under £12,000/year are internet users
- Households on Universal Credit are nine times more likely to be behind on their broadband bills
- 30% of those living in households with a combined income below £20,000 do not have access to a laptop or computer, 10 points higher than the average
- Comparing individuals in similar roles, as an example for manual workers, the data evidences those with digital confidence are 1.4 times more likely to be earning over £35,000
- 1m people cut back or cancelled their internet packages in 2023 due to affordability issues in the context of the cost of living crisis.
- 16% of people using food banks have no internet access[10]

The shift to digitised services across the board "has intensified the social and economic exclusion among many groups".[11] A 2020 National Audit Office review finding that only around 20% of Universal Credit applicants were able to verify their identity online highlighted concerns that people with low digital skills might find it particularly difficult to provide the evidence required and submit claim applications.

Surveys in England suggest that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have a quiet working space, are less likely to have access to a device suitable for learning or a stable internet connection, and may receive less parental support to complete homework and develop effective learning habits. These difficulties may increase the gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.[12]

The type of device that people have access to has also become a key factor in accessing online opportunities. Deloitte LLP includes access to both a smartphone and a personal computer/tablet to get online at home as an essential element of digital exclusion.[13]

"Smartphone proficiency helps overcome digital exclusion, but it limits the breadth of people's digital skills. Service design will increasingly need to accommodate these inequalities of skills and familiarity with multiple tasks and devices."[14]

- **21% of all people are accessing the internet through a smartphone only**
- **31% of those in socio-economic grades DE are smartphone-only internet users**

Around 29% of internet users are classed as 'narrow users' by Ofcom, meaning they have only ever undertaken no more than 4 of 13 online activities, such as finding employment opportunities or watching TV. Smartphone-only users are more likely to fall into this category.[15]

The focus of this report is on the experience of young people aged 11-25, and particularly young people living in OX4 and other areas of Oxfordshire experiencing higher levels of deprivation. We focus on two areas in particular - the extent and impact of digital exclusion among young people in secondary education; and the extent and impact of digital exclusion on young people entering the job market.

Digital exclusion among young people

A digital native has grown up in a world surrounded by technology and is often adept at intuitively using digital tools. However, not all digital natives, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to the resources, training, or opportunities needed to harness digital tools for personal or community development fully.

In 2023, 99% of young people in England aged 16/17 indicated 'a strong affinity for interacting with others in the online world.' By the age of 11, 90% of children own their own mobile phone.[16]

However a closer look at the increasing dominance of the smartphone as the principle means to access online media, and how devices are being used points to an emerging skills gap among young people; while they may spend a great deal of time online, their range of knowledge of different hardware, software, and services may in fact be fairly limited, depending on their access to and use of different devices, operating systems and platforms.

Young people who are seen to be "always on their phone" face the assumptions that as digital natives, they will have functional skills needed on other digital devices. Without access to a computer or laptop however, they may miss basic skills such as using a mouse, and face significant disadvantages as they progress through school and into the workplace.

Furthermore, important information is increasingly communicated by schools to parents/guardians and students through apps and online portals, which means those with lower digital engagement are "less able to engage with their learning" and support their children.[17]

Digital exclusion and outcomes for young people at school

During the pandemic, we became more acutely aware of access to digital devices and the impact on learning, including the fact that some teachers and students depended solely on smartphones for remote learning. Since changes in the curriculum and Computer Science was introduced as a GCSE subject, computer and IT skills are no longer directly taught after Year 9 and in some cases Year 8.

In their Children's Media Literacy report 2024, Ofcom emphasises the fact that children need access to a device that can connect to the internet and which is suitable for learning to complete homework and learn online.[18]

Between 2022 and 2023,the proportion of young people aged 8-11 who used laptops or netbooks to go online dropped from exactly half to just over a third (36%), while for 12-15s, the number decreased from 65% in 2022 to 54% in 2023.[19] 34% of all parents of school-aged children in the UK report that their child doesn't have continuous access to a device at home on which they can do their online schoolwork.

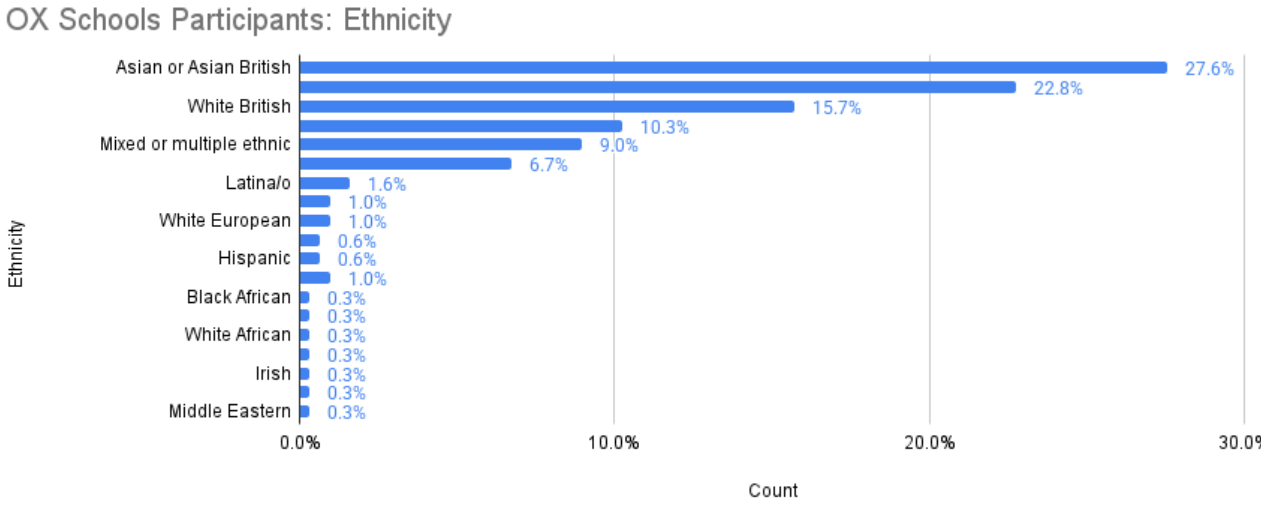
Strategies to manage this include sharing a device with others in the household, doing an educational activity that doesn't involve going online, borrowing a computer from the school, or using a less suitable device.[20] The spaces in which people access digital technologies and the internet also matter: when children have to share confined home spaces with siblings, parents, carers, or other relatives, it can make online learning more difficult than it would be for a child with a private room and a desk on which to work.

National figures are mirrored in our survey findings.

Participants:

- We surveyed 313 students in years 7, 8 and 9 from schools in OX4.
- Some participants chose not to answer every question: where this is the case, percentages are out of the total responses to that question.
- Over 80% of young people surveyed lived within the OX4 area
- 46% identify as cis-male and 49% identify as cis-female
- Over 2% identify as gender non-conforming (Genderfluid, genderqueer, non-binary, trans man, and trans woman)

Figure 1: Demographic data of OX4 surveyed pupils.



Findings:

- 89% of young people in years 7, 8 and 9 (aged 11-14) have their own smartphone.
- 39% have their own tablet.
- 55% have continuous access to their own laptop or computer.
- 9% don't have any access to a laptop or computer at home.
- 19% said they do not use a laptop or computer.

When asked about the devices they use for their school work:

- **Less than half (48%) of pupils used a laptop or computer, either exclusively or in addition to another device, to complete homework.**
- 46% of pupils are using a smartphone to complete schoolwork. Of these, 34% are only using a smartphone to complete their schoolwork.

- 3 out of 10 pupils are using a smartphone (either completely or partially to complete their schoolwork).
- **One in eight (15%) of respondents said they used only a smartphone to do their homework or their schoolwork.**
    - A further 42% use their smartphone in addition to another device (laptop/computer or tablet/ereader). This means that nearly 3 out of 5 young people are using a smartphone to complete some or all of their homework.

- **16% of students do not have access to wifi at home.**
- 16% rely on free WiFi to stop running out of data.

During a focus group with young people from year groups 7 and 8, their attitudes towards using different types of technology were pragmatic. All owned smartphones. Most told us they had access to a shared laptop, but in several cases these laptops didn't work any more, "so I do my homework on my phone". When asked whether they would use a phone by preference, they talked about the interruptions that notifications on their phones presented, "you know, all the pings, they're really distracting", preventing them from concentrating on their homework.

One young person also spoke about the quality of work they could do on their phone, "especially powerpoints, yeah, you don't get the same options on a phone". Access to a laptop was a way of compartmentalising the social, fun elements of life (gaming, socials, messaging, creating videos and photos) for which they used their phones, from learning (homework and schoolwork on a laptop).

For a young person already struggling with the impacts of living in poverty, this translates to arriving in school with work incomplete or missing altogether, falling behind in their learning, manifesting too often in anxiety and behaviour challenges, and contributing to absenteeism (ICT Teacher in OX4). The attractive, addictive, nature of smartphones also plays a role in this dynamic: "if my phone pings I will always stop my homework. It's more interesting, I'll just get detention tomorrow" (Year 8 student).

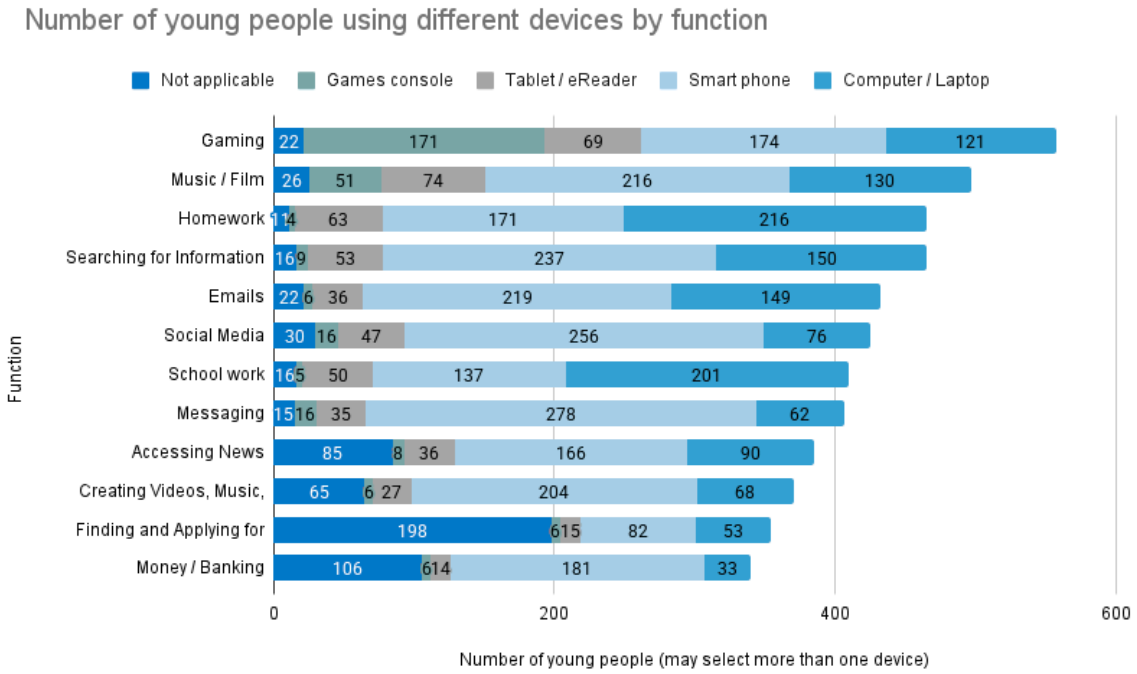
"We often see cases whereby there is one device for a family or multiple children to use for school work. Some kids are having to use their consoles to even access some of the learning material and things like that." [21]

Sharing a computer in the home was clearly complicated, with the challenge of navigating who got priority access. "I have my own computer but my mum works and if she needs it she gets to use it before me" (Year 7 student); "my older sister is doing her GCSEs so she gets to use it first if she needs it" (Year 8 student).

There were just over 44,000 pupils in state funded secondary schools in Oxfordshire in the 2023/24 academic year. 11.7% of pupils across Oxfordshire are eligible for Free School Meals, representing a population of approximately secondary 5,200 pupils eligible for a subsidised or free laptop/tablet.

While ensuring young people in school have access to a laptop/tablet they can use at home is an essential element of reducing digital exclusion, such programmes need to also provide a means to keep the computers upgraded and fully functional, and replace or refurbish them once they have become redundant. Without such systems in place, young people will automatically revert to what is working and available to them instantly - their smartphone.

Figure 2: Number of young people using different types of digital devices by function.



Many young people with access to smartphones are capable of using them for a range of purposes. And yet, still there are issues with the suitability of this device in terms of access, confidence and skills, particularly as they progress through secondary school.

Completing coursework and essays on their phones is not only physically challenging, especially as young people progress through school, it can also be hugely demoralising not to see their completed work in full as they scroll through sections on the small screen. Not only are the physical aspects of this device used in schools challenging, but it also leads to feelings of isolation, feeling singled out or made to feel different to your peers which is ‘so disheartening’.

> *"Do you know how hard it is to write a five thousand word essay on your phone? Your thumbs cramp, it's hard, it's so difficult. And then, you don't even get the chance to see all of your work in one go and view it in full… you're always playing catch up… no one likes being the poor kid that can't have a laptop or their parent's won't get them a laptop, and that's really difficult".*
>
> *[interview with young person]*

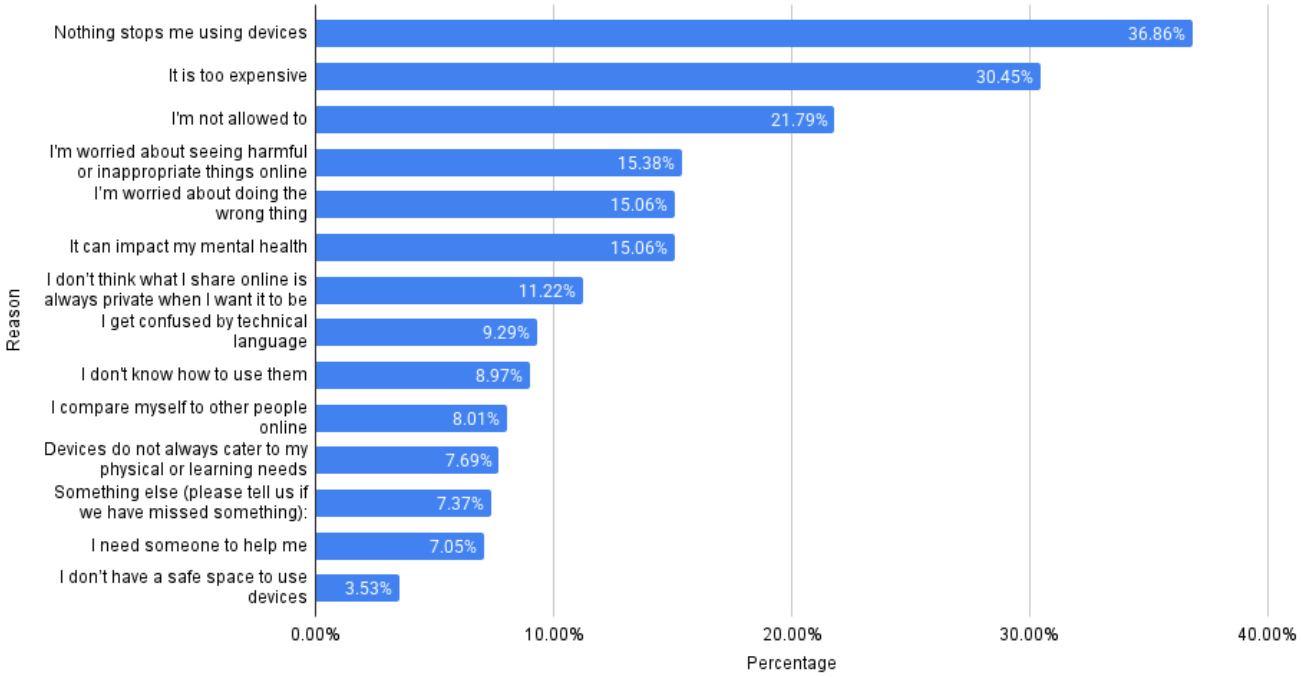
When describing completing their A Levels and writing coursework, they said 'you can see that [my work] was being screenshotted on a phone', and 'it didn't matter what I did, everyone else's work was always going to be a better quality than mine. It's so disheartening'.

In addition to access to devices, we asked young people in Year groups 7, 8 and 9 what other barriers existed that impacted on their use of digital devices and technology (Figure 1). 35% stated cost, one third made reference to parental rules controlling the time they spent on devices while another third said there were no barriers to their online access. For many, barriers were very personal - fear of seeing inappropriate or harmful content, concerns around the impact it was having on their mental health and self esteem (e.g. comparing myself to others I see online), and uncertainty around privacy.

These responses suggest young people recognise some of the risks associated with online access, but also lack certainty around how to manage those risks. These concerns are reflected in national level data.[22]

- 81% of 12-15 year-old internet users have had at least one potentially harmful experience online in the past 12 months
- A third of 17–19-year-olds (32%) say the internet has a negative impact on their mental health and nearly half of young people (44%) say they feel isolated
- Nearly 3 in 5 (58%) young people in the LGBTQ+ community have experienced hate speech online

Figure 3: Which factors sometimes stop you from using digital devices? (young people may select more than one)



Digital exclusion among young people entering the workplace

Basic digital skills are increasingly important factors in social mobility in young people. The rate of change in the digital landscape is accelerating daily with significant developments in Generative AI and increasing digitization of services from social benefits to shopping. The Covid pandemic saw a jump in the pace of change as work practices shifted online, with people becoming accustomed to holding meetings and conducting work online, recruiting and inducting new hires through online meeting platforms.

The World Economic Forum found that 'broadening digital access is expected to be the most transformative trend' in the global labour market by 2030, with 60% of employers identifying this as a trend likely to drive business transformation. Within those who identify technology as a trend, AI and information processing technologies (86%), Robots and autonomous systems (58%) and Energy generation, storage and distribution (41%) are expected to have the biggest impact. And yet, as we understand the digital divide, there are gaps in more essential skills prior to understanding the complexities of AI, energy generation and robotics.

One of the areas that the workplace is experiencing the consequences of the digital divide, is around the appropriate use of technology. Even where young people may be equipped with the knowledge of how to write an email or use an inbox, they are not necessarily equipped with the knowledge of etiquette and appropriate use in a work context.

> *"I have apprentices of 17 or 18 years old and I have had to put it in writing to them. "You check your emails twice a day."* [interview with talent manager]

It seems there is a disconnect between technological skills and the effective use of them in the workplace: "the operational element to it is missing" [talent manager]. For young people, 'digital natives', those for whom technology has always been present (if not always accessed), there has not been a clear sense of boundaries between technology in their personal and professional lives. There is no longer a clear shift from how young people are using devices to communicate as they grow up and enter into the professional space. Appropriate use of language and etiquette is expected of young people, as they are seemingly well-experienced in using technology.

> *"I am honestly stunned by the realisation that I have always assumed that a young person I see staring at a phone screen could be anything other than tech savvy or know how to use and manage digital devices in a social or work setting."* [Business owner and member of the Oxford Technology and Media Network]

Coming into a different work environment, one young person talked about the challenges of seemingly basic tasks like writing emails and copy, and feeling frustrated, anxious and self-conscious about 'getting it wrong' and 'seeming stupid' to their colleagues and line manager.

"Digital exclusion is a moving target. As technology develops, people currently confident using IT at work and home will need to keep refreshing their skills to avoid being left behind. We can't assume younger people are digital natives who won't need to develop new skills. We need to ensure everyone and all age groups have the digital skills they need to operate and the opportunities to keep developing those skills as technologies change." [23]

90% of jobs are only advertised online. Without access to laptops or tablets with keyboards, many young people struggle to create CVs and apply for jobs online. Youth work practitioners within this space are often supporting them with this. NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) staff in Oxfordshire are consistently seeing "young people who can't apply for jobs because they don't have the means to do it. They don't all have the equipment to do that".

One young person explained that until their most recent position, their lack of access to laptops or desktop computers had indeed not impacted them from applying for jobs in hospitality.

"Every job I've ever applied for, every CV I've ever written, has been on a phone" [interview with young person]

While young people have adapted to the limitations of using their smartphones, there are significant questions around the types of jobs that young people are able to apply for when they have limited access to digital skills and technology.

Speaking about the digitisation of the workplace, one talent manager we interviewed described witnessing a trend of young people in the workplace not being equipped to use some of the foundational skills around emails, online meetings and data management. It seems that as the workforce has become increasingly digitised, those already in work have established those skills early on in their careers and early on in the digitisation process. Yet, for young people, digital natives, these are not skills they are being taught or expecting to use in the workplace.

- Around 82% of jobs require baseline or basic digital skills as 'near universal requirements'
- Among 18- to 24-year-olds, almost one in two (48%) can't do all 20 Essential Digital Skills for Work tasks

"No one teaches you, at least no one taught me, like how to write an email and how to articulate yourself." [interview with young person]

A youth work approach

A Youth Work Approach to Addressing Digital Exclusion

Young people access digital spaces as part of their daily life, whether communicating privately, socialising, looking for work or entertainment or to do their homework. Youth workers need to be able to engage and support young people in this space. There are two elements to this:

1. Many youth work organisations are looking at how to deliver Digital Youth Work through digital media and channels (NYA, JETS 2020).
2. As Digital Natives, digital technologies are an ever present element of young people's lives, but this does not mean that young people are aware of or equipped with the digital competencies linked to economic and social opportunity.

Youth work practitioners need to be able to support young people to access and use digital spaces in a way that is safe and appropriate. This requires youth workers themselves to become competent and confident in the use of digital technology and digital media. [26]

What is Youth Work?

Youth Work is "a distinct educational process adapted across a variety of settings to support a young person's personal, social, and educational development." Youth work as a distinct pedagogy is designed to meet young people where they are, and aims to support them to "explore their values, beliefs, ideas, and issues; enables them to develop their voice, influence, and place in society; acquires and/or facilitates the learning of a set of practical or technical skills/competencies that enable them to realise their full potential." (National Youth Agency).

Youth work also provides a uniquely safe and non-judgemental space for young people to develop skills and the confidence to engage with technology they are unfamiliar with in a supportive environment and based around their self-determined interests and needs. Youth work is a proven methodology / pedagogy of accessing and supporting young people who may struggle to engage in formal settings.

Digital youth work (Youth work online) vs providing support with using tech

"Technology and the online world is not new and with 90% of young people spending time online in England, and with technology part of their everyday lives, the internet and digital opportunities that this area of work presents are essential to remain relevant, engaging and resourced for current and future generations to come." [National Youth Agency]

As many of our lives become more embedded in online spaces, youth work must also adapt and continue to meet young people 'where they are'. Digital Youth Work is the proactive use and integration of digital tools, media, activities and topics in youth work. It's not a separate discipline within youth work. It can be embedded within all areas of practice to improve accessibility and engagement, as well as enhance outcomes for young people. It is also not about replacing face-to-face delivery. Incorporating digital delivery into all youth work services can enable youth workers and organisations to engage young people in new ways, offer more flexible opportunities and increase accessibility to youth work.[27]

Youth work today, whether delivered online or face-to-face, requires youth work practitioners to develop their own skills and confidence to support their young people using digital technologies, from accessing services online, to accessing online safely and creating a context for young people to build the confidence and their experience of using evolving technologies, mitigating social and digital divisions.

Youth support workers at Oxfordshire Youth recalled a young person who was embarrassed to admit that they did not know how to use a laptop. However, with the trust and support of their youth worker, she felt more able and confident to share this with them, allowing her to be supported in developing her digital skills, and thereby able to access online support services around Education, Employment, Training (EET) and housing support.

As many of the young people within our service navigate the complexities of social housing systems, universal credit and benefit management, it is repeatedly found that this is made harder without access to a laptop or computer. Despite many services seemingly available on smartphones, they are not accessible to use or navigate effectively. One youth work practitioner told us that young people they work with find it impossible to complete housing applications on their phone, and ultimately depend on them to support them in their applications with a laptop.[28] Using a phone risks mistakes and thereby hindrances to applications, slowing their path to independence and secure housing.

With the trusted relationship of a youth support worker, young people are empowered to ask for help and can have access to devices and tangible support to navigate these complex systems. It is important that youth work practitioners are equipped with the skills and confidence to provide this support and signpost to services that can help.

What's next?

The Digital Natives Project

Oxfordshire Youth have partnered with Intel® and Solutions Integrator Insight to deliver the Digital Natives Project. The project will have two phases of delivery to address the needs outlined above in our research: working with young people and the youth work sector.

Following delivery, impact and evaluation, a final report will be produced outlining the recommendations, successes and improvements for continuation work.

Addressing needs within the Youth Work Sector

The Intel® Skills for Innovation (Intel® SFI) initiative with Oxfordshire Youth is addressing digital inequality by empowering youth work practitioners to integrate technology into their work. Youth workers ability to do youth work effectively requires an element of digital literacy both to record their work safely (online case management/CRM, GDPR) and support young people, whether managing appointments, applying for a job, writing a CV to access opportunities and dealing with challenges, considering whether content is appropriate or harmful, being critical information consumers.

Support to young people increasingly involves recognising where young people may not have the skills they need to work effectively online. Young people who have struggled in school and have not had access to keyboarded devices may feel embarrassed at their lack of computer literacy.

Intel® SFI includes professional development for Educators that includes accessible methods for upskilling professionals. Oxfordshire Youth is working with youth work practitioners to better understand their needs and will pilot elements of the professional development in Intel® SFI to support this process.

Progression Coaches (supporting young people in our Young People's Supported Accommodation Services) and youth workers have indicated a number of areas whereby our youth workers need further training to be able to support young people with administrative tasks and navigating digital technologies.

Priorities include:

- Keeping you and your young people safe online (safeguarding, AI, phishing/scams, data protection/privacy)
- Getting the most out of G drive / G suite (Sharing, folder organisation, profiles (passwords), shortcuts)
- Using project management software (Monday.com)
- Problem solving and generative AI
- Working with spreadsheets

These areas will be the focus of the initial pilot workshops with youth work practitioners. The EU Digital Competency Framework data will help with assessing the impact of training on their knowledge and skills.

Engaging young people in a youth work setting

“In Oxford we're in a pocket of poverty within the city. There's a higher percentage of newly accepted students who don't actually have access to a laptop or a computer at home. All of them have phones, you know, they all have phones, but obviously in terms of using your phone for, like, digital skills within industry or within school, they're not doing it. So, you know, they can all find how to cut your cake on TikTok, but not, not how to do a spreadsheet or start a website, things like that.” (ICT Teacher in OX4)

"Through the SFI program, we have seen remarkable improvements in student engagement and learning outcomes, thanks to the innovative use of technology in the classroom. This comprehensive approach to education ensures that students are not only prepared for the digital world but are also inspired to pursue careers in STEM fields. The collaboration with Intel's SFI program has enabled us to provide our students with cutting-edge tools and resources, preparing them for the future workforce. The program's emphasis on technology integration and skill development has transformed our educational approach, making learning more engaging and effective." Luigi Pessina, Director, Global Education Programs

The Intel® Skills for Innovation (Intel® SFI) initiative empowers educators to integrate technology into teaching, fostering innovation and engaging students. Reaching over 140,000 teachers in 150 countries, it emphasizes essential skills for workforce readiness. The program includes design thinking, computational thinking, AI, and more, aligning with Intel's RISE goals to prepare students for the evolving job market.

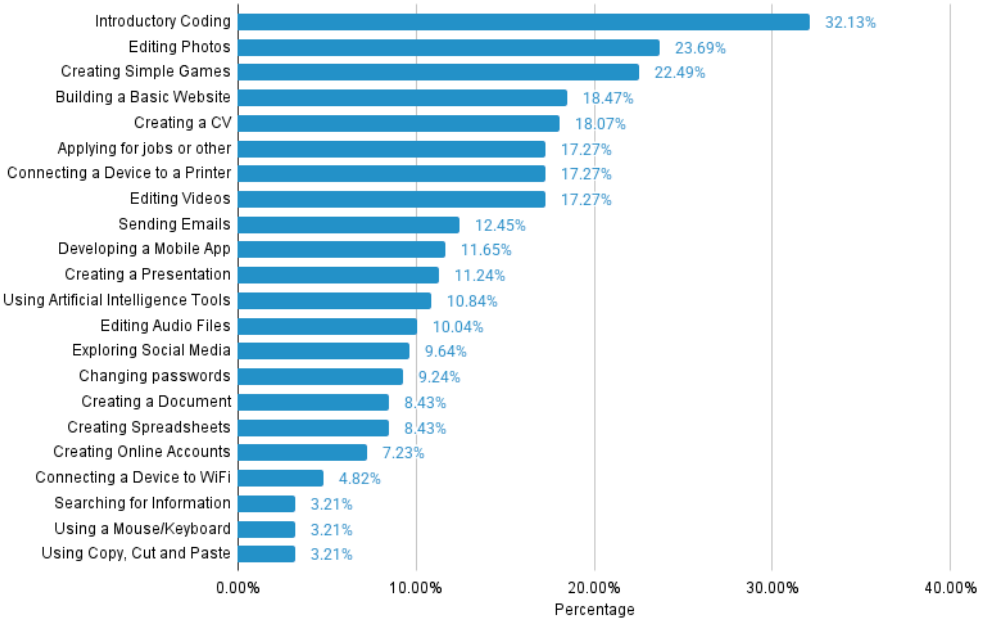
The Digital Futures workshops offer opportunities for engaging young people aged 13-18 in developing digital skills in a youth work setting, integrating elements from The Intel® Skills for Innovation (Intel® SFI) initiative. A youth work context offers particular advantages in addressing digital exclusion as experienced by young people.

- Away from a school setting, there are fewer pressures on time and meeting demands of a curriculum; the focus is on the experience of the young person rather than the learning outcome
- Youth work can expose young people whose home environment offers limited access and exposure to new digital opportunities
- A youth work approach places an emphasis on things that matter to the young people, combining exposure to tech environments, building friendships and positive relationships, and having fun.
- Within this context it is possible to engage young people to consider issues around eSafety and privacy, bullying and peer-to-peer relationships online

The Intel® Skills for Innovation (Intel® SFI) curriculum contains starter packs (similar to lesson plans) that can be adapted to deliver learning experiences where digital skills and media are both content and approach.

Oxfordshire Youth will deliver two week long Digital Futures workshops, to a total of 20 young people aged 13-18, using a youth work approach and integrating Intel SFI content to engage them in activities to enhance their digital skills. Figure 4 shows the areas that young people were most interested to learn more about, which will be integrated into the workshops, along with visits and engagement with local businesses focusing on tech.

Figure 4: What do you want to learn more about?



Programme Delivery:

The young people will use laptops supplied by Insight and funded by Intel during the workshops. At the end of the workshop each participant will be eligible for a free refurbished laptop computer supplied by the Getting Oxfordshire Online project to ensure they can continue to develop their digital interests and skills.

Elements of the workshop

- Building their own website around a topic that they cared about
- Learning how to video edit with a green screen
- Creating a game for their website
- Visiting and connecting with a local business to see how Artificial Intelligence and tech is powering their work.
- Using Virtual Reality headsets to create augmented reality experiences.

Throughout the week, basic digital skills and online safety will be embedded as intrinsic to these sessions. Following the workshops, participants will also have the opportunity to take part in the Oxfordshire Youth Young Leaders Programme: an accredited Level 2 qualification in leadership and team skills.

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oxfordshire youth

Digital Natives Project

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March 2025