Life in the Skills Lane:
Getting ready for the future of work

THE FOCUS

Automation, the rise of part-time and contract work, artificial intelligence, and other major shifts are transforming work in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). **How might we equip workers, especially youth, with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in this new reality and engage employers, governments, and educational institutions in the solutions?**

WHAT WE KNOW

Sources: Canadian Federation of Independent Business; Maru/Matchbox; RBC; Oschinski & Wyonch.

Canada's workforce cannot meet current or future labour demands. There is a mismatch of available labour and the skills sought by employers.

- As of August 2018, there were approximately 400,000 private sector jobs in Canada that went unfilled for at least four months because employers had not found suitable candidates. This is the highest since 2004.

- Some estimates suggest that within the next ten years, over 25% of jobs in Canada will be heavily affected by the automation of job functions and 50% will undergo significant changes to the skills required.

There are no certainties about who will be affected by automation and technology, but the impacts will likely vary by sector.

- One in four young people aged 18 to 34 believe artificial intelligence (AI) is already a threat to the job market.

- Industries at highest risk supply only 1.7% of Canadian employment, or approximately 310,000 jobs.
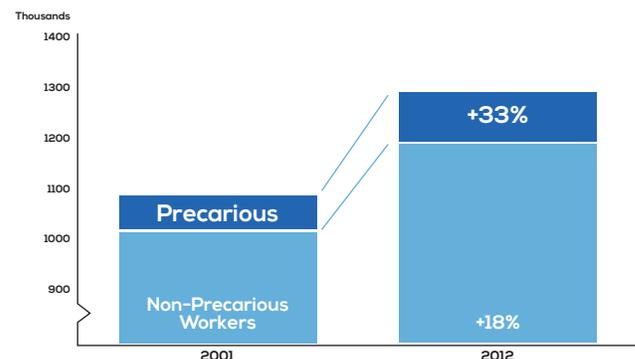
WHY IT MATTERS

Sources: Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity; Brown & Thomas.

Work and workers are already being affected by technology-driven shifts such as automation of routine tasks, the rise of the "gig economy", and the rapid pace of change.

- Half of the skills that were being learned 5 years ago are irrelevant in today's workplaces.

- The rise of the gig economy (short-term freelance or contract jobs) has occurred alongside an increase in low-income precarious employment, which has been growing twice as fast as non-precarious employment since 2001.

Precarious service workers, Toronto CMA
Source: Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity

Thousands

	2001	2012
Precarious		+33%
Non-Precarious Workers		+18%

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MYTHS

"Robots are going to replace humans in the workforce."

Jobs won't necessarily disappear, but automation does mean that jobs are going to be done differently.

- The Canadian economy is expected to add 2.4 million jobs over the next four years, all of which will require a new mix of skills.

"Young people just need to learn tech skills like coding."

The most in-demand and commonly-cited skills in job postings are foundational skills such as communication, growth mindset, collaboration, empathy, and creativity, alongside digital literacy.

- Approximately one-third (32%) of young people believe that in 10 years they'll be working at jobs that haven't been invented.

"If you go to school, you're guaranteed a good job."

The path between education and employment has not been updated to the rapidly changing skills and employment landscape.

- While 83% of Canadian education providers feel that youth are adequately prepared for the workforce, only 44% of youth and 34% of employers feel the same way.

WHAT IS BEING DONE

YouthConnect

Since 2016, CivicAction Leadership Foundation, LinkedIn Canada, Ryerson University, and the City of Toronto have hosted YouthConnect, an annual event that brings together youth who face barriers to employment, employment service providers, and employers to bridge the gap between youth and employment opportunities and equip youth with digital job search skills.

RBC Future Launch

RBC Future Launch is a 10-year commitment to help Canadian youth prepare for the jobs of tomorrow. As part of this commitment, RBC's Career Launch Program (CLP) is a one-year paid internship that is designed to bridge the gap between academia and employment. CLP associates focus on key skills for the future of work and receive targeted coaching, mentorship, and network-building opportunities.

Let's Learn Tech Online

The Toronto Public Library partnered with Cisco Networking Academy and Toronto Employment and Social Services to provide free, interactive, self-paced courses on Linux, Internet of Things (IoT), and cybersecurity that are helping residents develop career-advancing skills.

GLOSSARY

Automation:

Emerging technologies such as advanced robotics and artificial intelligence are expected to impact employment by accelerating the rate of automation, in which routine tasks performed by workers are converted into tasks performed by machines or computers.

Youth:

Researchers and governments define "youth" differently. For this discussion, it may be useful to think of youth as someone that is under the age of 29 and in a time of transition (e.g. entering high school or a post-secondary institution or from school to work).

Precarious work:

Work that is characterized to varying degrees by employment relationships that are temporary, casual, part-time, and often lack benefits and labour protections. Work that is part of the "gig economy" often meets these criteria.

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