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Digital Platform Report

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Introduction

North Superior Workforce Planning Board and our partners recognize that in-person collaboration, engagement, and events will be significantly limited for some time. Shifting to digital programming is critical to continue delivering our mission of connecting community partners to improve the quality of life in our communities through workforce development. The challenge is making this transition without expertise or support. Although webinars are available, our staff, partners, and clients are struggling to adapt to digital programming due to their limited capacity to learn and work with the platforms, while still meeting project deliverables. They have clearly and consistently articulated the need to be taught the tools for their specific needs and have a resource available on demand to answer their questions and troubleshoot issues as they arise. Filling this gap for NSWPB and being able to share the resource with community partners presents an incredible opportunity to re-imagine and coordinate workforce development programs and services in Northwestern Ontario. Building this capacity will allow NSWPB and our partners to be resilient, rebuild and recover, restore connections, harmonize program delivery, and continue delivering our mission during and after COVID-19.

This project was scheduled to start in November/December of 2020, but it took a while to find and hire a digital platform specialist and delayed the start to June/July 2021. By the time Digital platform specialist was able to consult with all the stakeholders and conduct custom needs assessments to determine members' gaps, challenges, and opportunities in utilizing new technology, most of the organizations had equipped themselves to utilise digital technology and deliver their services to the community. This development led to change in the direction of the project to assist NSWPB in digital transformation/transition by doing market research on different solutions available and selecting the best fit technological solutions available at that time to bridge the technological gaps. Any organisations who would like to use digital tools could review this report and use the tools as required.

Some of the criteria used to select the software solutions was

- Requirements and research - What your company requires from a software solution are requirements. These criteria will assist you in determining whether a system is a good fit for your company. We researched different software solutions available in the market once we had the requirements.
- Vendor comparison - Use the data you gathered during your requirements gathering and research to help you get relevant, informative responses from potential vendors.
- Financial due diligence - Examine a system's capabilities and cost against your company's processes and needs, as well as its budget and projected savings, to ensure that it will benefit your company and is financially viable at this time. Consider the total cost of ownership associated with implementing a

project. We prioritized Not-for-profit discounts directly from the software supplier or <https://www.techsoup.ca/>

- Technology used, feature comparison and reviews with other similar software's
- Functionality and ease of use
- Software implementation and maintenance efforts.

This report has been developed to assist in digital transition i.e., using technology to deliver services and communicate with clients and partners.

In this report you will find all the relevant details which would address the following points.

- Boosting cyber-security practices
- Focusing on virtual benefits
- Addressing technology skill gap
- Managing HR data appropriately

Boosting Cyber-Security Practices

Hackers are constantly finding different ways to attack and reach sensitive data stored on computers. This has increased more due to privilege access provided to work from home to many employees which opens the door for hackers to attack easily. Phishing attacks are very common, and we must keep ourselves safe against it by following some best practices. This would allow the attacker to access your passwords, financial information, and Identity. Most of us will fall for these scams/attack because of how the attacker will make it look authentic and very urgent for you to address it. Raising cyber security awareness among the employees could minimize the risk of cyber-attacks.

1. Phone Phishing – Using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) scammers could spoof telephone numbers of legitimate companies to gather confidential information. Before providing any confidential information over the phone when you have an incoming call, you would need to call them back and before calling them back make sure the phone number is validated through their company website.
2. Email Phishing – Do not click on any email links from unknown sources. This could allow the attacker to take over your email account and all the passwords by installing a computer virus.
3. Spear Phishing – This type of phishing is to target an individual using social engineering i.e., the attacker would contact the victim imitating someone they already know personally or professionally to gather financial or personal information and trade or military secrets. You should always make sure to confirm that you are communicating with the individual before providing any confidential information.

Please find below some of the best practices to follow and safeguard against many attacks.

1. Do not use the same password for all the applications. Make sure to reset password every 30 days or a maximum of 90 days.
2. Do not connect your work devices to public Wi-Fi as they will not be most of these networks are not monitored, and you would not be protected against any attacks.
3. If your work device like your Laptop/Computer/Mobile, is lost or stolen, please reset all your passwords and report it to your supervisor at the earliest.
4. Do not plug-in any unknown USB devices to the work computers it could contain Malware or Virus. If you would want to then use a dedicated USB drive for work and will be connected only on computers used at workplace.
5. Never leave your work computers logged-in and unattended.
6. Do not send any sensitive information over emails without encrypting them or you should send them using OneDrive, Dropbox etc. links.

7. Do not download any attachments without reading the complete email and confirming it is from a known source. These attachments can contain Virus or Malware.

Focusing on Virtual Benefits

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 many organizations have focused towards providing services virtually and some of these changes will remain permanently as it has assisted them to improvise on their service delivery and reach out to more clients even when they are physically in different parts of the world. Virtual services have many advantages such as less commute time which gives organizations more time to focus on planning and delivering services. Virtual events/meetings could be recorded for quality improvement and meeting minutes. As we are moving towards using Digital platform for communicating with Colleagues, Partners, and Clients we have found the following Software's helpful in our transition.

1. **Microsoft Office 365** – Microsoft Office 365 has been the leading platform for communication, collaboration, and content sharing in organization. Not only does it include Microsoft Office tools like Word, Excel etc., but It also has tools like Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Bookings to schedule online Meetings. Microsoft Office 365 is leading in terms of transformational technologies or approaches delivering on the future needs of end users as per the report published by Gartner (<https://www.gartner.com/doc/reprints?id=1-27M5EERU&ct=211011&st=sb>).

Scheduling meetings would always be a challenge because we would need to confirm the availability of all the persons required for a meeting. We can overcome this challenge by utilizing the Microsoft Bookings which could be used to schedule services or Microsoft Team online Meetings. North Superior Workforce Planning Board used this software to Schedule meetings, where the clients could check the availability of the NSWPB Staff and schedule a meeting at their convenience. If the staff has already a meeting scheduled, these times would not be available. Double booking and time taken to schedule a meeting is reduced. For more information, please click on the link below.

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/microsoft-365/business/scheduling-and-booking-app>

2. **Bitwarden** – Password Managers are a necessity these days very much required so the users could save all the passwords in one secure place, which would allow the user to remember only one strong password. This is an open-source software which uses end-to-end AES 256-bit encryption which is the strongest encryption standard and unbreakable with the current computing power. The passwords are stored using Salted Hashing and PBKDF2 SHA-256 technology is used to safely store the passwords, which gives added

security. This software could also be used to share confidential documents among the subscribed users in the organization. For more information, please click on the link below.

<https://bitwarden.com/>

3. **Miro** – This is a whiteboard tool which could be used between Teams or Partners to collaborate during and after the meetings. This software could be integrated with your existing tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc. It hosts many pre-built templates like Business Model Canvases, User Story Maps, Fishbone diagrams, Mind Maps etc. For more information, please click on the link below. <https://miro.com>
4. **Remo** – This is a virtual event platform which could be customized depending on the event. This platform has virtual tables and guests could move freely between the tables and network with all the participants on that table. This could be used for professional networking or remote team collaboration. For more information, please click on the link below.
<https://remo.co/>
5. **Survey Monkey** – This tool is used to conduct market research using surveys. This tool could be used to run customer satisfaction survey, employee engagement, community engagement etc. It has some survey templates which could be used as a starting point and work towards developing surveys of our interests. For more information, please click on the link below.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>
6. **MailChimp** – This tool is used to engage with the community stakeholders, partners, and the media. This is an email marketing tool to share all the information about Key events, reports, community engagement etc. For more information, please click on the link below.
<https://mailchimp.com/>
7. **Monday.com** – monday.com is a flexible platform that teams use to create multiple or single dashboard to plan, run, and track processes, projects, and everyday work. This tool will help business/service provider to move workflows into a system and assist in automation of some or all the tasks. This tool also allows us to integrate with our existing tools like Microsoft teams, Microsoft Office 365, Adobe creative cloud, Survey Monkey, Mailchimp etc. For more information, please click on the link below.
<https://monday.com/>
8. **Adobe Creative Cloud** – This package contains multiple software to assist in Multimedia and design. This tool helps in creating Marketing material to be posted online or sent as an email. This package consists of the following applications.

- **Adobe Photoshop** is a graphics editing program for 2D, 3D, and motion graphics. In addition to its array of features for graphic designers, Photoshop offers measurement and analysis tools built with scientists and engineers in mind.
- **Adobe Photoshop Lightroom** is a photo processor and image organizer for viewing, optimizing, and retouching images.
- **Adobe Illustrator** is a vector-based drawing tool built for professional artists and designers.
- **Adobe InDesign** is a page layout program built for professional print designers to create rich, complex documents. InDesign content can be exported in a variety of formats, so you can publish the same documents across print and electronic media.
- **Adobe Premiere Pro** is a timeline-based video editing program with editing support for multiple high-definition video formats.
- **Adobe After Effects** is a postproduction tool for creating and editing motion graphics and visual effects in film and video.
- **Adobe Audition** is digital audio software for recording and editing audio files in a multitrack, nondestructive environment.
- **Adobe Dreamweaver** is a professional development tool for designing, coding, developing, and publishing web pages and web-based applications.

For more information, please click on the link below.

<https://www.adobe.com/ca/creativecloud.html>

9. **Hootsuite** – This is a Social Media Marketing & Management Dashboard tool which will allow publishing marketing materials into all social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram using a single tool. It also allows us to interact with all our social network users on a single platform. This tool will allow us to analyze our performance across all our social networks.

For more information, please click on the link below.

<https://www.hootsuite.com/>

Addressing Technology Skill Gap

When the pandemic forced people all over the world to shift their lives even more online, it revealed the value of digital skills. Understanding and applying technology is no longer a "nice to have", but rather a requirement for anyone seeking employment. Numerous educational technology innovations are beginning to show promise in improving education and addressing skill gaps. As and when new products are implemented all the users would have to be trained to use them. To assist the employees in using the tools/software referenced in this paper, we have created the following Training Manuals. We've also signed up for online training and development classes so that our employees can learn about any topic at their own pace.

1. Meeting Etiquette – This document is to assist all the Microsoft Teams meeting attendees in following some standard procedures like how to raise hands, when to un-mute the mic, how to change background.
2. Miro – This document is developed to assist users in how to connect Miro application with Microsoft Teams meeting and how to use the application.
3. Microsoft Teams – This document was developed to assist users in configuring how to setup Microsoft Teams project and connecting different tools like forms and setup workflows. This document also assists on how to provide Guest access to projects and collaborate with developing documents with internal and external users.

Udemy Online Courses – This is a great tool for organization for training and development of the staff which focuses on professional and personal growth. As all the courses are attended online and at your own pace, staffs could complete it even while working remotely. Training on following topics is offered in Udemy and all the staff members can take advantage of learning something new.

Cloud Computing	Leadership & Management
Data Science	Marketing
Design	Office Productivity
Development	Personal Development
Finance & Accounting	Project Management & Operations
IT Operations	Sales
	Workplace & Human Resources

Managing HR data appropriately

Making sure all the Employee records are kept safe is a critical function of every business as we would have to follow all the provincial and federal privacy policies and making sure the data doesn't reach scammers and hackers. NSWPB HR data is managed by a third-party HR services organization "Ceridian". All the communication between the NSWPB and Ceridian is highly confidential and only authorized users can access/review the data. All the HR data collected in paper format is always stored in a cabinet with safety lock.