

News

Key competencies for the post-crisis world

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The extensive disruption caused by the digital transformation is currently accelerating at an unprecedented rate. Over the coming months, everything is set to change, transform and be redefined: communication, customer relationships, business processes, supply structures, value chains and, especially, the working world. We were already preparing for new job profiles, careers and professions – such as big data scientists or SEO managers – at some point in the future, with 2030 often named as a likely year. When the economy restarts (hopefully soon), it will be IT experts who are in demand. The post-coronavirus economy will be digital.

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It is becoming painfully clear that we are behind when it comes to developing digital expertise – a key competency for the digital transformation. We may be familiar with the new job titles and know which competencies we expect to be in demand, but we are lacking skilled staff for the digital economy.

Even in the “old economy”, there was a significant shortage of qualified personnel in many areas, which held back innovation across a range of industries and threatened our ability to compete. According to the industry association [Bitkom](#), there were over 100,000 unfilled positions in the IT sector in late 2019, more than double the figure a year earlier. There was particular demand for programmers – one in three companies in Germany had at least one vacancy in this area – and that situation will worsen as a result of the changed conditions. Nobody knows how the employment market will develop in a global recession, but we can safely assume that IT experts, for example in the fields of coding and software engineering, will continue to be essential. IT expertise will be the key competency in the period after the crisis. Without it, there cannot be any digital solutions.

The realization that you should have invested in the necessary training does not help anyone. Most importantly, it should not be an excuse for resignation now, or for continued inaction. It is never too late to learn, and both companies and public institutions must launch an educational offensive for the post-coronavirus economy. Simply dumping piles of laptops and tablets at school gates and then relying on the ingenuity of teachers and pupils is by no means enough, and could even be counterproductive. We need consistent concepts. IT must finally become

an essential element of our school curriculum – a core subject like German, maths or English, and not just an optional extra for a handful of nerds. The point would be not only to ensure that pupils have fundamental knowledge of everything from coding to blockchains, but also to give them an idea of the breadth of new professions and opportunities. Traditional educational institutions and companies both need to play a major role in this process, of course. To put it simply: those that need specialist staff must invest in appropriate training.

In the field of academic IT training, [XU Exponential University](#) and adesso are cooperating on a joint programme of higher education that meets those new requirements. The adesso School of Coding and Software Engineering aims to close the gap in IT expertise and address the lack of specialists using a practice-oriented approach. Students enrolled in the programme spend an average of three days per week learning at the university. The focus is on putting what they have learned into practice, through experiments and prototype development – for example in hackathons. On the other two days, students build up practical experience in specific projects at companies. Because the concept is fully compatible for online learning, it meets the requirements of the new situation in our society.

In the digital world, IT training cannot be limited to schools and universities. After all, IT is not a fixed body of knowledge and skills. Lifelong learning, which has in the past often been relegated to sabbaticals or required internal training, must become an integral element of our professional lives. And we must put the necessary conditions in place now. The challenges created by the digital transformation in terms of education and training will only increase over the coming weeks and months– one more reason not to hesitate any longer.

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approx. 4,840 Letters