



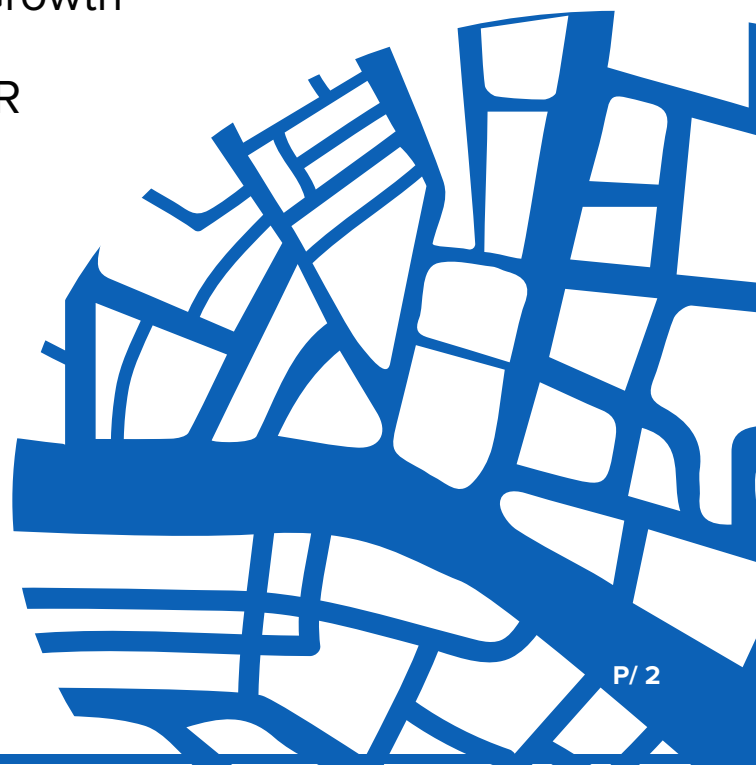
PATHWAYS TO DIGITAL AND DATA READINESS

The Journey of Nonprofits

CANADIAN
CENTRE FOR
NONPROFIT
DIGITAL
RESILIENCE

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About Us

Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resiliency

CCNDR works to create a digitally-enabled nonprofit sector, where Canada's nonprofits use data and tech to multiply their impact. It was co-founded by The Digital Governance Council, Imagine Canada, Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund, NTEN, SETSI, and Tamarack Institute, alongside 180 supporting organizations and 200 individual advisors.

Learn more at ccndr.ca

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Introduction:

Navigating the Nonprofit Digital Landscape

In today's technological landscape, digital readiness is essential for nonprofit organizations to remain effective, relevant, and impactful. It empowers them to leverage digital tools and strategies to reach a wider audience, streamline operations, and maximize their social impact. Without digital readiness, nonprofits risk falling behind in a rapidly evolving world where digital connectivity is a cornerstone of communication, fundraising, and advocacy efforts.

Navigating a system devoid of clear pathways poses a significant challenge for nonprofits. The absence of well-defined routes and guidelines can be like navigating uncharted waters, resulting in uncertainty, inefficient use of time, and a risk of missed opportunities.

The Youth Employment Nonprofit Digital Data Readiness R&D consortium is at the forefront of efforts to enhance digital and data readiness within the nonprofit sector. Through the establishment of a dedicated research and development consortium, the initiative is focused on prototyping, testing, and evaluating interventions aimed at bolstering the digital skills-building ecosystem. A pivotal outcome of this collective effort has been the development of the following ecosystem map, providing invaluable insights into current pathways, gaps, and opportunities for growth and improvement.

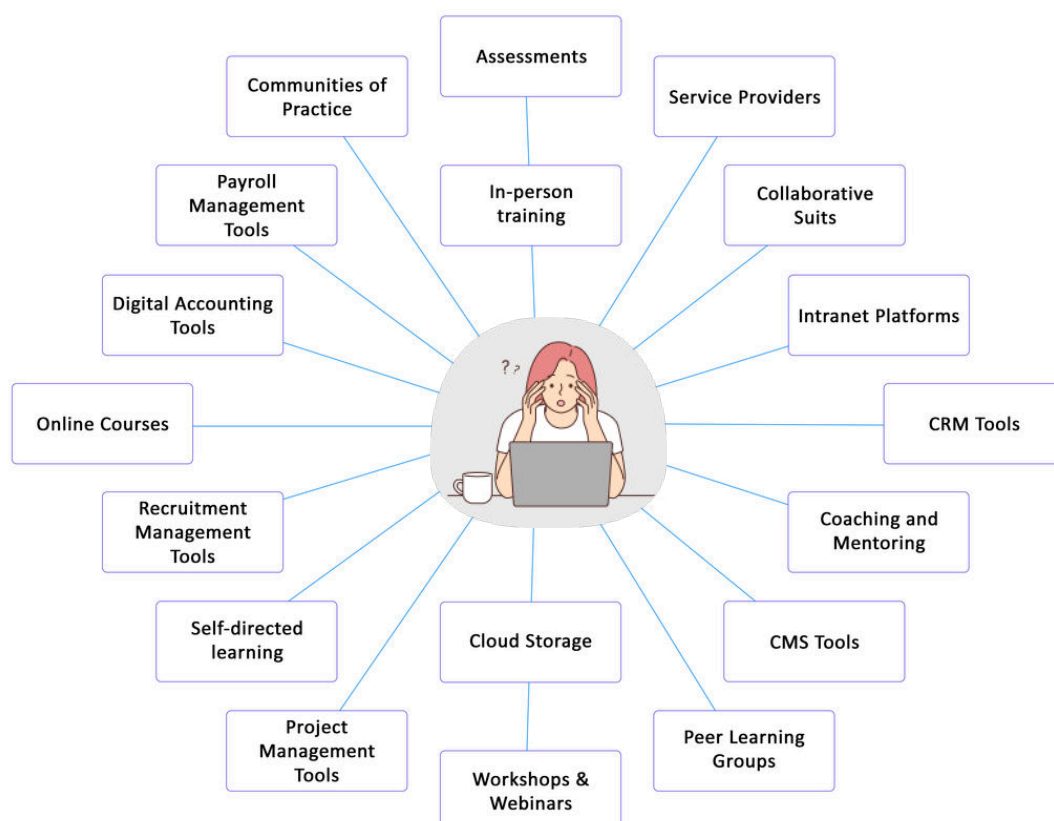
In the pursuit of enhancing digital and data readiness within the nonprofit sector, the Pathways to Digital and Data Readiness report emerges as a beacon of guidance. This document delves into common personas and examines strategies and resources currently available to empower nonprofits.

By providing a clear roadmap and actionable insights, this report serves as an invaluable resource for nonprofits seeking to navigate the complexities of the digital era. Its findings not only empower organizations with the knowledge to leverage digital tools effectively but also pave the way for a more connected, impactful, and future-ready nonprofit sector in Canada.

The Current Digital and Data Readiness Landscape

The current landscape for nonprofits navigating the realm of digital and data readiness can be likened to a person standing amidst a sea of options, each one disconnected and lacking a clear path forward. When nonprofits find themselves in the position to upgrade skills or integrate new technology, they often turn to an online search engine. However, this presents a considerable challenge. Many nonprofits struggle to articulate their precise digital and data readiness needs. Moreover, they face a knowledge gap in evaluating whether the organizations listed in their search results can provide the caliber and type of support they require.

While a myriad of entities such as nonprofit capacity-builders, for-profit consulting firms, and individual practitioners offer a spectrum of data and digital readiness solutions, the dilemma lies in the fact that nonprofits have limited visibility into the existing support landscape. This hinders their ability to assess the efficacy of potential interventions effectively. Consequently, nonprofits find themselves in a challenging position, deciphering tools and strategies for their organization within a fragmented ecosystem. This reality underscores the pressing need for a more streamlined and accessible support framework tailored to the unique needs of nonprofits.



Persona Profiles:

Charting the Digital Readiness Journey

Persona 1: Olivia, Nonprofit Operations Visionary



Olivia is an accomplished executive at a nonprofit organization, deeply committed to achieving digital and data readiness. Her driving force is the desire to enhance her organization's operations and ultimately amplify its impact on the community. While Olivia is open to innovation, she tends to be risk-averse, preferring proven approaches over untested methods. Collaboration is at the heart of Olivia's approach; she believes in the power of shared knowledge and resources, valuing the wisdom gained from those who have undertaken similar initiatives. Olivia is acutely aware of the pivotal role that data plays in informed decision-making. She's willing to invest in robust data collection, analysis, and reporting, recognizing it as a cornerstone of the organization's success.

Persona 2: Max, Project-Focused Nonprofit Leader



Meet Max, an enterprising executive at a nonprofit with a specific project in mind and the funding to bring it to fruition. Max possesses a clear and vivid vision for the digital and data project, which he articulates with clarity and conviction. He excels at discerning the key objectives and outcomes essential to project success, working closely with technology partners to craft a precise plan for achievement. Max is characterized by his open-mindedness and willingness to embrace novel ideas and approaches. He understands the value of investing time and effort into building his own skills and knowledge. Max is unwaveringly results-driven, channeling his focus towards tangible outcomes and meaningful impact. He remains adaptable, always ready to refine his approach to ensure the project's ultimate success.

Olivia's Journey

As the pandemic reshaped the way we work, Olivia began to recognize the immense potential in streamlining tasks and adopting online digital processes to enhance efficiency. Eager to propel her organization forward, she presented the idea of digital streamlining to the executive leadership team, who wholeheartedly supported the initiative. Here's a glimpse into Olivia's pursuit:

Step 1 - The Search: Olivia initiated her quest by turning to a search engine in search of nonprofit service providers. However, the abundance of information proved to be overwhelming, leaving her uncertain of which direction to take.

Step 2 - Identifying Potential Service Providers: Uncertain of how to evaluate whether a service provider was the right fit, Olivia faced a significant challenge. With no clear benchmarks for comparison, the decision-making process became all the more daunting.

Step 3 - Navigating the Fragmented Ecosystem: As Olivia delved deeper into her quest for digital transformation, she encountered the harsh reality of a fragmented ecosystem. While the multitude of service providers held promise, it also created a labyrinth of choices. Each offered a distinct set of solutions, but without a standardized framework for evaluation, Olivia found herself in a perplexing situation.

Step 4 - Diverse Perspectives, Limited Guidance: Seeking insights from her professional network, Olivia hoped to benefit from the experiences of peers who had navigated similar paths. While the conversations were illuminating, they also underscored the diverse perspectives within the sector. What worked seamlessly for one organization was not necessarily a fit for another. The absence of standardized metrics or benchmarks made it arduous to assess the suitability of various service providers.

Step 5 - The Challenge of Integration: Olivia soon realized that integrating digital processes into her organization's existing infrastructure presented a formidable challenge. Compatibility issues, varying levels of technical support, and disparities in data handling capabilities emerged as significant hurdles. The straightforward transition she initially envisioned had transformed into a complex puzzle, with pieces that didn't quite align.

To be continued...

Quick Facts

Olivia is an executive at a Nonprofit or Charity who wants to achieve digital and data readiness. She is:

- Driven by a need to improve organization's operations and outcomes;
- Risk-averse - While willing to try new things, they are not likely to take on significant risks or invest in untested approaches.
- Collaborative -Willing to work with others to share knowledge and resources to learn from the experience of others who have implemented similar initiatives;
- Data-driven - They recognize the importance of data in making informed decisions and are willing to invest in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Max's Journey

Max, the determined executive at a nonprofit, embarked on a digital and data project with unwavering resolve. With a clear vision and ample funding, he was poised to bring his ambitious idea to life. Max partnered with a service provider recommended by a trusted colleague, who lauded the expertise of a skilled solopreneur known for delivering stellar results.

As the project kicked off, Max was filled with enthusiasm and anticipation. The solopreneur consultant proved to be a dedicated professional, zealously immersing himself in the project. Together, they made significant progress, each milestone bringing them closer to Max's envisioned success.

However, fate had a different plan in store. When things were in full swing, the solopreneur fell unexpectedly ill, requiring an extended recovery period. Max found himself in a challenging predicament. Once on a promising trajectory, the project faced an abrupt halt.

Max's optimism was momentarily tested as he grappled with the reality of the situation. The clock was ticking, and the pause in the project threatened to derail the carefully laid out timeline. The setback highlighted a critical vulnerability in Max's approach - relying on a single individual, no matter how skilled, could potentially lead to unexpected disruptions.

Undeterred, Max quickly mobilized. He reached out to his professional network and began a thorough search for a backup service provider who could seamlessly step in and ensure continuity. To his surprise, the search proved to be more challenging than expected. The proprietary software used by the initial developer was not commonplace in the market. Finding a provider familiar with the specific technology posed a unique challenge.

Several firms expressed interest in the project, but most were unfamiliar with the specialized software. Restarting the project would require a significant investment of time and resources to familiarize a new team with the proprietary system. The situation underscored the importance of considering the long-term viability and accessibility of technology solutions in critical projects.

To be continued...

Quick Facts

Max has a project in mind with some funding as well as:

- A clear vision of what he wants to achieve with the digital and data project and can articulate this vision to others;
- The ability to identify the key objectives and outcomes he wants to achieve and can work with technology partners to develop a plan for achieving these goals;
- An open mind to new ideas and approaches and is willing to invest the time and effort needed to build their skills and knowledge;
- A willingness to adapt and adjust their approach as needed to ensure results-driven success.

Envision Possibilities:

The Ideal Support Ecosystem



ASSESSMENT

Maturity Assessment

Free data maturity assessment tools as an onramp for nonprofits to evaluate their level of maturity in managing their data assets effectively.

Nonprofits leave with a report that can be shared with an expert in the community of practice

CONNECTION

Tools

Free tools that help connect nonprofits to services and tools.

Community of Practice

A community of technical advisors who review assessment reports and provide advice.

Vendor Connections

A database of approved vendors, training programs, and volunteers. Opportunity to expand into vendor certification and vendor standards.

SERVICES & TOOLS

Service Providers

A community of technical advisors who review assessment reports and provide advice.

Digital Tools

Digital and data tools to streamline operations, facilitate teamwork, and optimize data management for organizations.

Assess, Connect, Access

In this visionary approach, we propose a three-stage framework that guides nonprofit organizations toward digital readiness, assess, connect, and access.

1. Assess

To kickstart their journey, nonprofits will have access to free data assessment tools, providing an initial evaluation of their digital and data proficiency. This step serves as an essential onramp for organizations to understand their current level of maturity in utilizing digital and data tools effectively.

2. Connect

This stage is designed to foster meaningful connections. Here nonprofits have access to free connection tools that facilitate linkages to essential services and resources.

3. Access

At this juncture, nonprofits will be introduced to a curated selection of service providers, collaborative suites, intranet platforms, CRM tools, CMS tools, cloud storage solutions, project management tools, recruitment platforms, digital accounting software, and payroll management systems. This diverse array of services and tools aims to cater to the multifaceted needs of nonprofit organizations, ensuring they have access to the resources necessary for seamless operations.

Bridging the Gap:

Identifying Areas of Improvement

In today's dynamic digital environment, nonprofits grapple with leveraging technology and data to fulfill their missions effectively. Below are the missing links we've identified, shedding light on critical areas for improvement in supporting nonprofits' journey towards digital and data readiness.

Access

Missing link - Amid this wealth of assessment options, there exists a need for a centralized resource that provides clarity and guidance regarding the diverse assessment avenues available. This resource would showcase the array of assessment tools at nonprofits' disposal and offer guidance on selecting the most appropriate tool based on their specific needs and goals.

Connect

Missing link - As nonprofits progress, the connection stage is designed to foster meaningful connections. This is where nonprofits gain access to free connection tools that facilitate seamless linkages to essential services and resources.

Missing link - A vibrant Community of Practice will also be established, comprising technical advisors who specialize in reviewing assessment reports. These experts will be pivotal in helping organizations prioritize which areas to focus on, providing invaluable guidance and support.

Missing link - Service Provider Connections tool designed to help nonprofits connect with the resources they need to improve their digital capabilities. This tool provides access to a network of approved service providers, training programs, and volunteers who can help nonprofits build their digital capacity and achieve their goals. As we look ahead, we also see the potential for expansion into Service Provider Certification and establishing Service Provider Standards.

 **What missing links do you fulfill as a service provider?**
Let us know by tagging us @CCNDR on LinkedIn.

Empowered Personas: Navigating a Streamlined Ecosystem

Analyzing the disparities between the current state and the envisioned ecosystem reveals a stark contrast. Currently, nonprofits face a fragmented landscape, navigating a myriad of options with limited guidance. The lack of streamlined pathways often leads to uncertainty, inefficiency, and missed opportunities. With access to the missing links in our envisioned ecosystem, our personas' journey would be radically transformed.

For Persona 1, the Executive at a Nonprofit or Charity aiming to achieve digital and data readiness, the journey would be marked by clarity and efficiency. Armed with free data assessment tools, they would seamlessly evaluate their organization's digital maturity. The Service Provider Connection Tool would connect them with approved service providers, ensuring compatibility and reliability. The Community of Practice would provide invaluable guidance from technical advisors, streamlining decision-making. With these missing links, our Persona 1 would experience a streamlined journey, equipped with the right tools and knowledge to propel their organization towards digital readiness.

For Persona 2, the Executive at a nonprofit with a funded project in mind, the journey would similarly be enhanced. They would have access to the same assessment tools, providing a clear understanding of their project's digital and data requirements. The Service Provider Connection Tool would introduce them to specialized providers who can meet their unique needs. The Community of Practice would offer insights from experienced peers, enabling them to make informed decisions. With these missing links, Persona 2's journey would be characterized by confidence and efficiency, ensuring their project's success.

In both cases, access to the missing links would not only bridge the current gaps but also elevate the entire journey. The personas would navigate a well-defined pathway, leveraging the support ecosystem to maximize their digital and data readiness. This transformation would empower them to achieve their organizational goals with greater precision, effectiveness, and impact.

Fostering Growth & Collaboration

To create a thriving ecosystem for digital readiness in nonprofits, it is imperative to cultivate strong partnerships and collaborations across various sectors. Here are some strategic proposals to facilitate collaboration between nonprofits, government entities, and the private sector, along with recommendations, best practices, and potential policy changes to drive growth and improvement:

1. Establish Collaborative Platforms:

Develop online platforms or forums where nonprofits, government agencies, and private sector entities can come together to share ideas, resources, and best practices. These platforms serve as virtual meeting spaces, fostering dialogue and enabling cross-sector collaboration.

2. Foster Knowledge Exchange Programs:

Implement initiatives that encourage knowledge-sharing between nonprofits, government bodies, and private sector organizations. This could involve mentorship programs, workshops, and seminars where expertise and insights are exchanged, benefiting all parties involved.

3. Create Incentive Programs for Private Sector Engagement:

Encourage private sector companies to actively engage with nonprofits by offering incentives such as tax breaks, recognition, or access to specific resources. This can motivate businesses to invest in initiatives that support digital readiness in the nonprofit sector.

4. Develop Joint Funding Initiatives:

Collaboratively establish funding programs that pool resources from nonprofits, government agencies, and private sector partners. This joint approach ensures a more substantial financial backing for digital readiness initiatives and allows for a broader reach.

5. Advocate for Policy Changes:

Work collectively to advocate for policy changes that support the growth and improvement of digital readiness in nonprofits. This may include advocating for increased funding for digital infrastructure, promoting data privacy and security regulations, and encouraging the adoption of digital best practices.

6. Encourage Pro Bono Services from the Private Sector:

Encourage private sector professionals to offer their expertise pro bono to nonprofits, providing valuable insights and technical assistance in areas like digital strategy, data management, and technology implementation.

7. Establish Cross-Sector Task Forces:

Form task forces comprising representatives from nonprofits, government entities, and private sector organizations. These task forces can focus on specific digital readiness challenges, working together to develop solutions and drive improvement.

8. Foster a Culture of Collaboration:

Promote a collaborative mindset within the nonprofit sector, emphasizing the value of partnerships with government and private sector entities. Encourage organizations to actively seek out opportunities for joint initiatives and resource-sharing.

By implementing these strategies and advocating for necessary policy changes, nonprofits, government entities, and the private sector can forge stronger alliances, driving growth and improvement in digital readiness. These collaborative efforts have the potential to create a dynamic ecosystem that empowers nonprofits to achieve their missions with greater impact and effectiveness in the digital age.

Unite for a Digital-Ready Future:

Join Us in Empowering Nonprofits

As we embark on this transformative journey towards a digitally empowered nonprofit sector, your involvement is crucial. Together, we have the power to revolutionize the way nonprofits navigate the digital landscape, driving positive change and impact. Here's how you can take action:

Engage and Connect:

Participate in our collaborative platforms where ideas, resources, and expertise converge to shape a stronger future for nonprofits. Your voice matters, and your insights can drive meaningful progress.

Share Your Knowledge:

Contribute to our knowledge exchange programs. Your expertise can be a guiding light for others seeking to enhance their digital and data readiness. Together, we can uplift the entire community.

Lend a Helping Hand:

Offer pro bono services or resources from your expertise to nonprofits in need. Your contribution can make a significant difference in their digital journey.

Spread the Word:

Amplify our message. Share this initiative with your networks, colleagues, and partners. Together, we can expand our reach and impact, reaching nonprofits everywhere in Canada.

Together, we can bridge the gaps, eliminate the missing links, and create a seamless pathway for nonprofits to thrive in the digital age. Your involvement is the catalyst for this transformation. Join us today, and let's shape a future where nonprofits are digitally empowered and ready to make an even greater impact on the communities they serve. The time for action is now!

Gratitude, Collaboration, and Continued Success

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to the Youth Nonprofit Employment Research and Development Consortium project. Your dedication, expertise, and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping the success of this endeavor.

By working together, we have achieved remarkable milestones and made significant strides in enhancing the digital readiness of youth nonprofits. Your insights, feedback, and tireless efforts have enriched the outcomes of this report and laid a solid foundation for future initiatives.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to this important cause. Here's to continued success in our collective efforts to empower youth nonprofits and make a difference in the lives of young people.

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