Today, an emerging learning economy is changing all that as learning becomes a currency for success and life satisfaction. To understand how the future of learning is unfolding, we needed to understand the signals on the map where learning is occurring and the processes that are driving it. These signals provide the basis for understanding how and why learning takes place and what it means for our lives. They help us to identify the key players and stakeholders, and to see how learning is being transformed by new technologies and platforms.

**What you will find on the map:**

The map is a visual representation of the key trends in the emerging learning economy and will contribute to our understanding of the changing world.

**How to use this map:**

Looking ahead to the future is a way to make better choices today. This map helps us to see it at a glance, showing us the trends that are shaping the future of learning and work. It will help us to see patterns and trends that are emerging, and to anticipate what the future might hold.

**Future forces:**

These are the underlying technological and social shifts that are shaping the learning landscape of today and driving the formation of the new learning economy. They are the key factors that are influencing the way people learn and work, and they will continue to shape our future.

**Innovation zones:**

The map identifies eight future zones within which learning and work are occurring and will shape our future. These zones are driven by the key forces identified above, and each one represents a unique combination of technological and social trends.

**Profiles of working learners:**

The map introduces us to four working learners who are exemplars of the new learning economy. Their stories illustrate the key trends and forces that are shaping the future of learning and work.

**Signals of the future:**

The future is already unfolding today in innovative ways across the country and indeed across the globe. This map includes leading-edge examples of how these new learning and working environments are shaping our lives and the future of work.
FUTURE FORCES
RESHAPING THE WAY
WE WORK, LEARN, AND LIVE

Behind the emerging learning economy are underlying trends that are integrating learning exchanges into every aspect of our daily lives—from what we eat for breakfast to a new task we undertake for pay to the way we share moments with a friend or a family member. These future forces are driving the budding learning economy.

learning commons
Digital resources are not subject to the “tragedy of the commons”—the more they’re used, the more valuable they become. New commons, especially commons of learning resources, lay the groundwork for all kinds of new exchanges.

maker mindset
A do-it-yourself ethos is creating an entrepreneurial approach to working, learning, and living. This maker mindset becomes a do-it-ourselves ethos as digital and physical spaces bring us together in new ways.

digital natives
Those born after 1990 are growing into adulthood as natives of a digital world, with smart devices and a World Wide Web at their fingertips. From media literacy to computational thinking, they are pioneering a new economy of digital skills.

coordination platforms
Platforms designed to match people with tasks and resources, for money or simply for engagement, are forging new ways to work and learn. These platforms will rapidly increase the marketplace choices for working learners.

collaborative tools
From scientific research to global work teams to online music groups, digital media have boosted our ability to collaborate. The result is rapid growth of knowledge resources and responses to solving problems.

human-machine symbiosis
Smart machines are replacing some kinds of human labor while augmenting others. Machines are rewriting the rules for how we work, learn, and even manage our households.

decoded brain
Advances in neuroscience and behavioral science are generating new techniques and tools for optimizing learning and organizing work tasks. These tools, in turn, are changing the way we think about the entire enterprise of working, learning, and living.
Learning and work are changing. Michael Harris 24, Seattle, Washington

Learning is earning. Simon Bierech 28, Newark, New Jersey

working learners are the drivers and beneficiaries of the learning economy. who are they? how do they manage their time, skills, and resources? what are they working on? in this section, we introduce the concept of working learners and tell their stories—four working learners who are fictionalized from research on the skills, interests, and experiences of fast learners who are working today. 

a nation of working learners

Carole Fletcher 20, Ankeny, Iowa

coming home to roost.

From retail clerk to community change agent.

Alejandra Gomez 15, Green Valley, Arizona

Miguel paternain

From student to venture-backed back-backer.

Simon Bierech 28, Newark, New Jersey

The gameplan.

Personalized accounting to standout specialist.

In a world of big data, advanced analytics, and growing reputation markets, feedback is getting more nuanced. in learning, work, and social contexts, feedback is a major driver of change. in a world of big data, we are learning more about what we need to know, what we should be doing, and how we can improve. in the gameplan, we introduce the concept of algorithmic matching and explain how it can help us make better decisions in our work and social lives.

digital-physical worlds

Moving from one decade to the next is more than a new address, a new kind of job, or a new workplace advance. it’s a shift in what we know we need and what we know we can achieve. the digital-physical worlds are where the learning economy and the digital world meet. in this section, we introduce the concept of digital-physical worlds and explain how it can help us understand what is happening in the learning economy.

unbounded resources

In the digital age, we are seeing a paradigm shift in how we think about the entire enterprise of working, learning, and living. in the past, our lives were divided into separate spheres of work, learning, and social life. in the digital age, these spheres are merging and becoming more integrated. in this section, we introduce the concept of unbounded resources and explain how it can help us understand what is happening in the learning economy.

innovation zones in the learning economy

The learning economy is a complex system with many different components. in this section, we introduce the concept of innovation zones and explain how it can help us understand what is happening in the learning economy.

solutions networks

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personalized experiences

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dynamic reputations

The learning economy is a complex system with many different components. in this section, we introduce the concept of dynamic reputations and explain how it can help us understand what is happening in the learning economy.
We think about the entire enterprise of working, learning, and living. Optimizing learning and organizing work tasks. These tools, in turn, are changing the way we communicate, think, and live. Platforms designed to match people with tasks and resources, for money or simply for personal satisfaction. Those born after 1990 are growing into adulthood as natives of a digital world, with smartphones and a World Wide Web at their fingertips. From media literacy to computational thinking, they are pioneering a new economy of digital skills.

INNOVATION ZONES

These are the underlying technological and social shifts that are building our learning commons. These tools are rewriting the scripts for how we use digital resources into learning, productivity, and innovation. From scientific research to global work teams to online music groups, digital media have transformed the way we do business and the way we live. Platforms designed to match people with tasks and resources, for money or simply for personal satisfaction. Those born after 1990 are growing into adulthood as natives of a digital world, with smartphones and a World Wide Web at their fingertips. From media literacy to computational thinking, they are pioneering a new economy of digital skills.

THE LEARNING ECONOMY

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unbounded resources

In the digital world, we can expect “unbounded resources” to mean “unlimited access” to information and instruction that we can convert into learning, productivity, and innovation. If we analyze the role of matchmaker—they find us taxis, individuals, institutions, and opportunities that match our unique profiles. Over the next decade, employers, all with a simple swipe of a finger. Companies will match us with what we want. Companies will match us with task performance, our reputations, our social networks, and even our learning styles. Perhaps the most important, these matching algorithms and tools are rewriting the scripts for how we use digital resources into learning, productivity, and innovation.

algorithmic matching

An algorithm is a computer program, often one that solves a problem or discovers a hidden pattern. Today, algorithms frequently take on the role of matchmaker—they find us taxis, individuals, institutions, and opportunities that match our unique profiles. Over the next decade, employers, all with a simple swipe of a finger. Companies will match us with task performance, our reputations, and even our learning styles. Perhaps the most important, these matching algorithms and tools are rewriting the scripts for how we use digital resources into learning, productivity, and innovation.

Learning commons

A learning commons is a place where learners who share common interests and goals can meet to learn and share resources. Learning commons are often located in community centers, libraries, schools, or other public spaces. They provide a space for learners to connect with others and share knowledge, experiences, and resources. Learning commons can be informal or formal, and they can take many different forms. They can be physical spaces or digital platforms.

INNOVATION ZONES IN THE LEARNING ECONOMY

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PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES

Personalized experiences are tailored to the individual needs and preferences of learners. They allow learners to engage with content and activities that are relevant to them, and to progress at their own pace. Personalized experiences can be created using a variety of tools and techniques, including adaptive learning, personalized feedback, and gamification.

Algorithmic matching

Algorithmic matching is the process of matching individuals with opportunities, based on their strengths, preferences, and goals. This can be done using algorithms to analyze data and make predictions about what would be best for an individual, or by using human experts to match individuals with opportunities. Algorithmic matching can be used in a variety of contexts, such as job placement, education, and healthcare.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic growth is driven by innovation and change. The digital economy is driving new forms of economic activity, such as the sharing economy, and is changing the way that work is done. Businesses are using digital technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and create new products and services. The digital economy is also creating new opportunities for workers, such as the gig economy, where people can work on a temporary or part-time basis.

LEARNING ECONOMY

The learning economy is a new economic paradigm that emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and continuous development. In the learning economy, learning is not just a matter of acquiring knowledge, but of developing skills and adapting to change. The learning economy is supported by a range of digital technologies, such as social media, online learning platforms, and mobile devices.

LEARNING ECONOMY IN PRACTICE

In practice, the learning economy is characterized by a focus on lifelong learning and continuous development. This is supported by a range of digital technologies, such as social media, online learning platforms, and mobile devices. The learning economy is also characterized by a shift away from traditional models of education and training, and towards more flexible and personalized learning opportunities.

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LEARNING IS EARNING in the national learning economy
THE LEARNING ECONOMY

HOW TO USE THIS MAP
Looking ahead to the future is a way to make better choices today. This map helps us see, at a glance, the major forces that will be shaping our future. It's a guide to understanding what's possible and to charting a path toward it. What you will find on this map...

**What you will find on the map**
- The map is designed to help you see the big picture and start sifting the key stories from the future in more depth. Whether you look at the big picture or delve deeper into the stories, the map should help you think about the future.

### What you will find on this map

**Digital natives**
- Share the world with skills and resources, for money or simply for enjoyment, fitting new work and learn. These platforms will quickly exceed the markets and social spaces for learning.

**Future Forces**
- These are the underlying technological and social shifts that are driving the learning economy.

**Innovation Zones**
- The map identifies eight new zones within which working learners and innovators shape their futures over the coming decades, with a focus on how they will change the landscape.

**Profiles of Working Learners**
- The map introduces us to four working learners who, with help from some of the available pathways of the young working learners, will shape the future.

**Signals of the Future**
- The future is quietly shifting across the country and indeed around the globe. This map includes leading-edge signs of how these changes are creating new opportunities for learning and life satisfaction, and how they will ultimately support the future economy.

The Learning Commons

**What to do with the map**
- Once you've had a chance to get familiar with the map and the emerging learning economy, you can start to work for what you envision.

### Explore the Opportunities in the Learning Economy

- **1. Identify the Learning Economy:** Scan across the map to identify the sectors and industries that are expanding and converging, and that are shaping the future of learning.
- **2. Build a Strategy for Success:** Whether you’re working alone or with a team, you’ll need to build a strategy to navigate the future. Identify new learning opportunities and partnerships, and make a path that fits with your needs. Plan around your strengths and weaknesses to consider different scenarios and uncover unexpected paths.
- **3. Try Out the Future:** You can use the signals on the map to immerse yourself in the future today. Choose a few trends that seem immediately useful for your situation and try new approaches. Think about how you might work, learn, and live in the future—and by these means, try out the future today.

The Learning Commons

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  - Digital resources are not subject to the “tragedy of the common”—the more they are used, the more they contribute. Digital resources, centrally managed, will build a learning commons that can be accessed online.

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