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Future of Work

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Series VIII of The Solutions Agenda

A research / practitioner partnership between Professor Ann Dale, Community Research Connections Research Program, and Sustainability Solutions Group

Participants

Professor Ann Dale, Moderator, School of Environment & Sustainability, Royal Roads University
Karen Kun, co-founder of Waterlution
Giovanna Mingarelli, CEO and Co-Founder of PlayMC2
Craig Bennell, Professor in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University, Academic Director, 1125@Carleton
Michel Frojmovic, Lead, Community Data Program, Canadian Council on Social Development
Caroline van Bers, programme manager for The Integrated Assessment Society (TIAS)
Jeremy Murphy, Director, Sustainability Solutions Group
Rebecca Foon, Director, Sustainability Solutions Group
Yuill Herbert, Director, Sustainability Solutions Group
Chris Strashok, CRC research associate and associate, Royal Roads University Associate Faculty, Masters for Environment and Management program

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Ann Dale

Welcome everyone to the last conversation in our Solutions Agenda Project, http://www.sustainablecanadadialogues.ca on the **Future of Work**. We have a diverse panel, ages, professionals, entrepreneurs, academics, practitioners, all of whom are leaders in their field in their own way. For the e-audience, please do not hesitate to ask questions of the panel during our conversation. I would like to begin by asking each of you to introduce yourself and what you do professionally. Please don't forget you can add hyperlinks to any websites, and attach documents you wish to reinforce your points.

Let the conversation begin.

Chris Strashok

My name is Chris Strashok, I am a research associate with Ann and I also do both process and system simulation modelling. I have been lucky enough to work for myself out of my home for the last 6 years giving me the opportunity to be close to my wife and three children.

I am very excited to be talking about different modes of work and how this space could evolve in the future.

Jeremy Murphy

Hi folks!
I'm Jeremy Murphy, in Vancouver. I'm a Director with Sustainability Solutions Group and Co-Founder and Director with HiVE Vancouver coworking space.

I'm an urban planner, sustainability and climate change specialist, and facilitator. SSG does a lot of community plans involving climate change and sustainability angles. We work mostly with small to medium size towns.

The HiVE is in its 4th year of operation and has over 100 current members and over 400 members and alumni. We have a collection of sustainability businesses and NGOs, programming and tech outfits, web designers, bookkeepers, architects, you name it.

Michel Frojmovic

Peggy Taillon, the President of the Canadian Council on Social Development (http://www.ccsd.ca), asked me to step in today on her behalf. Peggy loves participating in these e-dialogues but is unable to make this one.

I'm a professional urban planner and project manager with 20 years experience in Canada and the world delivering public and non-profit sector projects in the areas of strategic planning, monitoring & evaluation and policy analysis. I've worked with CCSD since 2005, helping to build and deliver the CCSD's innovative Community Data Program (http://www.communitydata.ca), helping community sector organisations bring evidence into their work. I also founded a micro-enterprise called Acacia Consulting & Research (http://www.acaciaconsulting.ca), established in 1999, to help urban, municipal and community-based organizations make better use of data, information and knowledge in order to inform policy and effect change.

Since graduating from university in 1993, the diverse and unpredictable career path on which I've traveled has not involved a single "real" job (in my parent's sense of the concept).

Karen Kun

Hi, I am Karen Kun, from Waterlution, where we work with young leaders across Canada.

Giovanna Mingarelli

Hi everyone, I'm Giovanna Mingarelli: a tech entrepreneur, crowdsourcing enthusiast and digital nomad. I'm fortunate to have spent the last five years running two international, virtual

companies. The first, M&C Consulting, is a communications consulting company where I have spent the last three years working in between Ottawa, Canada and Geneva, Switzerland. My second company is a tech startup called PlayMC2 – our team is distributed between Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto - delighted to be here today!

Rebecca Foon

Hi everyone, my name is Rebecca Foon. I am a director with Sustainability Solutions Group and am also a cellist (I have also been working from home for the last 6 years). Thank you so much for taking part in this conversation - I am really looking forward to this dialogue on the future of work.

Ann Dale

Welcome, everyone, you can see the diversity of experiences among our panellists with their introductions. Just waiting for Craig and Caroline to introduce themselves.

Yuill Herbert

And Yuill Herbert, also working with Sustainability Solutions Group.... Currently on Hornby Island in the Juan de Fuca Straight with 12 degrees. A good place to work from!

Ann Dale

You are indeed evil, welcome, Yuill. It is about -15 degrees here, but we just cleared a small skating rink on the lake with a young friend!

Craig Bennell

Thanks, Ann. Very happy to be participating in my first on-line conversation. Looking forward to chatting with all of you over the next couple of hours.

My name is Craig Bennell. I am a Professor of Psychology at Carleton University and I have recently taken on the role of Academic Director in 1125@Carleton, Ottawa's Living Laboratory (http://carleton.ca/1125/).

In my academic life, I study policing. Most of my studies relate to police decision making in someway, either at a macro level (how do police agencies adapt to change to ensure their sustainability) or a micro level (how does a police officer make an appropriate use of force decision).

In my role as Academic Director in 1125@Carleton, I try to facilitate campus-community research collaborations. The goal is always to identify important problems that need to be solved and to bring relevant stakeholders together (usually from the campus and the community) to co-create more sustainable solutions.

As a university educator I'm very interested in today's conversation. I obviously feel some responsibility for preparing our students for the workforce and I think professors need to understand (much better than we currently do) what this means for how and what we teach our

students. Since taking on my role in 1125, I have become particularly interested in how we might go about complementing classroom learning with some of the core "design thinking" skills that may better prepare our students for the workforce.

Caroline van Bers

Good morning/afternoon to everyone,

My name is Caroline van Bers and I am joining you from Germany where it is dinner time, but that's ok because this dialogue allows me to eat and read at the same time. I am working from home as well. My work is generally in the promotion of sustainable development in multiple contexts and arenas. For the past 10 years I have worked with the Integrated Assessment Society. We support the practitioners and scientists that use integrated assessment methods and tools to address complex socio-environmental issues with the longer term objective of sustainability. My particular interest is the food sector but I have also worked a great deal in water management and climate change adaptation.

I hope to bring the European perspective to the discussion today. This is my first e-Dialogue so many thanks to Ann for inviting me.

Ann Dale

Thank you everyone.

The nature and mode of work is continually shifting, what skills will young people need to respond to this shifting landscape?

Giovanna Mingarelli

Great question, Ann. To start, I think there are three things we should pay attention to when thinking about what skills young people will need to respond to the shifting nature of work, which are highlighted in a recent report by PwC http://www.pwc.com/en_CA/ca/directorconnect/directors-cut/publications/pwc-millenials-in-the-workplace-2014-05-en.pdf about millennials in the workplace.

Work/life flexibility: Millennials - these are people between the ages of 15 and 30 - put high value on learning and development opportunities, being thanked and appreciated for their efforts and being provided with flexibility in terms of how and when they work.

Use of technology: Social media is at the core of Millennial daily engagement. It's how they connect and network, mobile or otherwise. What this results in is a group of young people wanting to be part of a diverse team, learn new things every day, have more flexibility to manage their lives and interact with people through social media.

Ongoing feedback/appreciation: Millennials often look for immediate feedback and approval in the work they're doing - so it's good to create positive feedback loops, whether that be in person or virtual.

Michel Frojmovic

What skills will young people need? Certainly, a whole heap that were never taught in school. Aside from the usual tech-savviness, other tougher skills include:

1. Ability to work both independently (with limited supervision) and collaboratively (in teams)
2. A high degree of adaptability - applying skills in creative ways, not being hung up on official job titles
3. A capacity to live with uncertainty - no clear career path, no fixed retirement date and no pension

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Rebecca Foon

Totally agree, and to add to these:

Forward thinking, being brave to take intelligent risks, striving for continual innovation, being open and looking for ideas everywhere and sharing these ideas (through exchange and re-interpretation with others which can lead to unexpected and innovative outcomes) and being committed to continually challenging oneself around pushing the boundaries and definition of sustainability forward and finding innovative ways of doing so within ones work...

Craig Bennell

I see it mentioned here, and have heard many speak of it recently...this ability/willingness to take risks seems to be a key ingredient...not sure that this is more important now than it was in the past, but I certainly hear more about the value of taking risks. Is this an important skill? I'm curious what the entrepreneurs think of this.

Karen Kun

I agree, always has been needed, Craig, yet I feel smaller government budgets (where a lot of employment has existed in Canada over last many decades as one example), and more competition in business is making this more and more important.

What I would like to see: in classes (let us say University), that 1/3 or a course is taught, next 1/3 project ideas are shared, developed based in the course material, working groups take these on, and finally the last third is about the students leading the course (being asked to creativity enliven the topic. I know devil in the details and am using broad brush strokes yet this type of gradual student leadership (and collective leadership as they work in teams).

Michel Frojmovic

The ability to handle a Risk-Taking environment is a huge deal. Young professionals entering a fluid work environment, where job security and a retirement pension are assumed to be historical artifacts, must contend with a continuous level of background risk. Depending on personalities, this can be very disruptive. Entrepreneurial risk-taking - doing things in a way that

no one else is doing - is another level of risk-taking that is necessary in a competitive work environments in the non-profit, public and private sectors. Again, the demands posed by risk-taking can be very distracting from other priorities.

Caroline van Bers

Re. Risk taking. I agree but the higher the risk the higher the potential loss or failure. In any case I do not know to what extent that this has a place in a healthy work environment.

Karen Kun

Building off of Michel's points and connected to what I shared just now, I think the working independently is HUGE yet many don't truly know what that means. I believe a lot of emphasis needs to be placed on self-direction and trying new things...as young as possible (this increases risk tolerance). Another piece is cross-sector dialogue and skills (hosting, facilitating, convening) complex conversations, and building on that is a wide cross-section of people in your network.

Michel Frojmovic

Great point Karen. In many ways, the old folks (anyone over 40?) are underutilizing the next generation. We're too often imposing traditional workplace models, because that's what we inherited. That traditional model can act as a bit of straitjacket.

Craig Bennell

Craig here. I think Michel's comment "a whole heap that were never taught in school" reflects the sorts of skills that are now essential. Things change so quickly...to stay cutting edge young people will need to be able to adapt equally quickly...and regularly seek opportunities to continue their learning. Traditional training (i.e., what they learned in college or uni) will only take them so far. It applies to my job (as my grad students continually teach me the newest stats methods that I never heard of in grad school) and certainly the policing profession (where officers in the field now weren't trained at all in areas such as national security, interacting with the mentally ill, etc.). Imagine the pace of change is even quicker in other sectors (e.g., IT).

Michel Frojmovic

Clearly, what the contemporary workplace demands of young people is incredibly daunting. Amazingly, I meet so many young professionals and recent graduates who fit quite comfortably into this new dynamic. At the same time, we risk creating a divide between those who can achieve the impossible, and everyone else who may be more risk-averse, and less mentally/psychologically equipped.

Ann Dale

Michel raises a key point, underutilization. I often refer to under employment, over employment and unemployment, and often think of how Norway to address this issue, Caroline, I believe it is Norway, moved to a four-day week, with very little opposition?

Caroline van Bers

Yes Ann. In Norway the average work week is 33 hours and in the Netherlands employees also have the option in most cases of a 4 day work week. It has been very successful and people are generally happy with this. To what extent this influences the labour force and employment, I cannot say but look into it.

Craig Bennell

I vote for a 4 day work week! Extra time with family and more time for fun...I think you'd come back to work more energized and ready to work hard. Thinking back to the first question...this ability to balance life and work is also key I think...and increasingly so...not only to increase work productivity, but for general well-being.

Chris Strashok

For sure! That is the main reason I created a space for myself to work from home. We also homeschool our children. So as a family unit we around each other alot, creating more space for connection and bonding.

Jeremy Murphy

It's interesting that many, if not all, of us work from home, at least part time. I split my work between the HiVE and home. I feel that this is a luxury that not many people have. It may increasingly be the case with increased connectivity, but there is no replacement for face-to-face interaction and most employers require presence.

Michel Frojmovic

There are two very polar opposite forces at work - the highly collectivist/structured 4 or 5 day work-week with 6 weeks of guaranteed holiday enjoyed by all citizens concurrently, and the extreme-flex environment of working wherever and whenever you want, as long as the job gets done. It would be ideal to have both from which to choose.

Karen Kun

I know many large banks in Canada have been experimenting with flex-time and had successes and failures.on the whole, form what I have heard, is that 4-5 set hours of availability need to be in place for large institutions/departments to function.

Ann Dale

Craig, you reminded me of something. When I was in university we thought by 2000 that even in traditional workplaces people would be able to work from choice, either from home or the office, ideally a combination of both. I am hearing how important working from home is for all of us, but we need an individual/collaborative balance.

From the 1980s, when a civil servant, my staff were always able to work one day a week from home, as I did. I knew their productivity and I would argue their creativity increased. I was one of the few managers who trusted their people, this was the argument, how can you assess their productivity? When I was considering leaving government in the early 1990s, I was being interviewed for a senior positions and I stated how important it was to have a work place with flexible and adult like options, and was told it was not possible. I then left government, and for other reasons.

Craig Bennell

It seems to me that the soft skills are becoming increasingly important...being able to adapt, be flexible, work with a range of people in a range of settings...whether physical or virtual. Being able to keep up with the fast pace of change, technical or otherwise.

Chris Strashok

Craig, I completely agree that soft skills are becoming more and more important. Our schooling system was designed to teach hard skills in the exact same way so that individuals can come out of school and be able to participate in well defined industries that had a specific skill set. As we are all seeing this is not the case any more.

I think when we are talking about soft skills we need to focus on the development of the person, helping them to mature into a fully functioning adult (which I know is vague) so they have the ability create their own path.

Karen Kun

Karen here - what I currently see if three types of young people (in general, the age I am referring to is 20-30 year olds)

1. those that have sensed how to be ahead of the curve and spend time with entrepreneurial ventures (their own or others)
2. those that believe they will apply for jobs in their field and sooner or later be successful and
3. those that are aware or becoming aware of point 1, yet are not entirely sure how to position themselves (especially if they are not/have not been digital/business focused as this is where a lot of entrepreneurs spend time).

Jeremy Murphy

I agree with Karen. People really don't know what it means to work independently and take the lead on their work. As a small company with expectations of workers to become owner/members (we're a workers cooperative), we need future Directors who are capable and understanding of what it means to be self-directed.

(Also, Hi Karen - it has been a while!)

Yuill Herbert

The general trend of reduction of and backlash against unions and unionised workplace means the decline of stable, lifelong jobs for everyone. This, I think, results in winners and losers. Those who are adaptable, ambitious and have access to resources will accumulate wealth and the others will be at the mercy of the currents of the labour markets. One of the key tasks facing young people is therefore redefining security of work for these times and understanding the role of unions in achieving that security. I think one of the skills that is therefore critical is the ability to work collectively and to build social movements in some form to reclaim the way in which markets and societies allocate work. Otherwise even those who are successful in the fractalised workplace are at threat from de-stabilised societies in which there is work available, but it is marginal and insecure work.

The most important skill, if I can call it that, is the ability to see beyond each individual situation to the collective.

Jeremy Murphy

I feel like the answer to the question depends on the sector. Tech will have different needs than construction or defense or retail.

There are a few qualities that come to mind that I feel will be typically useful for most vocations, however:

-good communication: well-spoken, articulate conversation will be an asset in an increasingly dumbed-down literacy.
-ability to effectively use social media: full effect, understand audience, understand messaging
-business and emotional intelligence: ability to relate to/understand different generations, types of workers
adaptability, flexibility
-diverse skill sets (tech, software, communication, facilitation, ability to find efficiencies without losing quality)

Caroline van Bers

I agree with most of what is being said. I see that young people are fearful of losing their jobs (those that have one) and tend to be more obedient, in addition to all the other skills and qualities mentioned. The alternative is of course going independent but that often requires an entrepreneurial nature which is not natural to everyone and can only to some extent be learned. And I guess this is something we are addressing later in the discussion so I will not say more than that now.

Karen Kun

Caroline - I agree, not everyone is meant to be an entrepreneur and there will continue to be jobs in the future, yet the landscape is changing. I think schools need to play a role in student self-discovery--which is trying out ideas, as projects first and potentially as companies (or NGOs). Developing entrepreneurial skills, so that one can pivot or lead, while in a job are also crucial for the future of productivity. I think it would be very useful for 24-25 years old (roughly) to be able to say, with confidence "I am an entrepreneurial thinker", or "I am an entrepreneur",

or "I am great, with these skills, within this type of team". In my world, I see it taking (in my opinion) way too long for that self-discovery and a lot of turmoil in process (as young people try to be something they are not)

Chris Strashok

For me I also think the evolution of new ways of working are linked to how our education systems evolve or in some cases do not evolve.

Jeremy Murphy

I think it's interesting that the conversation is focusing on millenials and young people - maybe we're thinking of what work looks like way into the future - but things are changing for older workers too. Expectations on their technical savvy is increasing, their workplace dynamic is changing, their social norms are changing... This is a lot to adapt to.

Ann Dale

That is a pretty impressive list of critical skills that are needed, and I wonder if I would thrive in such a work place if I was younger, as believe it or not I used to be very shy? It seems to me that you are all collectively engaged in a very different workplace than the one I entered (and I am not going to say how long ago), and that there is a great degree of creativity and innovation needed. Creative work, as a researcher and a writer, and one who works beside a beautiful lake in the bush, is often lonely. Yuill mentioned the ability to work collectively, to me that also involved collaboration, thus, is access to collective work spaces some of the time important? Another question, and our second.

What are the constraints of such fluidity in the changing workplace?

Yuill Herbert

Neoliberal globalisation (particularly the loosening of restrictions of investments) is a significant challenge as capital can shift production (and work) around the globe with very little transaction costs, again creating insecurity. Insecurity and the quiet and loud stress on family, mental health and so on imposes is a major constraint particularly as the economy begins to contract. But perhaps living with this type of insecurity is intrinsic to the human condition, a skill that we have evolved over millennia.

The internet is broadly touted as opening a window in new opportunities for work. But I know that much of the programming, design and other associated projects are undertaken as piece work by a globally competitive job market that drives wages down.

Mechanisation or automation is another threat. Even in my relatively short lifetime tasks which previously were undertaken by people have been replaced by machines or computers- and to whose benefit I wonder? For example, airplane check-in, cash registers in grocery stores, Tesla's robotic factory, farms on the prairies, feller-bunchers in forestry, even lighthouses. One can argue that for every job that is eliminated a new one springs up, but is that the case?

Caroline van Bers

Hallelujah, Yuill, You have summarized the current situation very accurately. The role of atomization combined globalization cannot be underestimated.

Craig Bennell

I'm curious about the degree to which employers are starting to care about those things, Ann (i.e., reduced commuting times, GHG reductions, etc.)? I still have the view that employers value productivity over all else and that it's hard to convince them using any other metric but this. Am I wrong? Is this changing?

Chris Strashok

I would be interested if anyone knew anything about this as well. As with you Craig I still have the view the productivity is the main driver and as you mentioned Ann it appears that employers only feel that an employee can be productive when they can be monitored.

Karen Kun

This question comes down to leadership in the company, as leaders know how to make connections with their team members with one goal being trust building. Leaders also know how to communicate. Leaders also want to develop other leaders. In my opinion, productivity is important (and Canada not doing very well here as of late), yet leaders sharing with team the end goal and collectively figuring out how to get there, while sharing why productivity is important, then setting your team free...to flourish and not be controlled.

Michel Frojmovic

You said it Karen! The ability to trust your team to deliver quality work without seeing them is part of the revolution that is happening. It's revolutionary because it turns on its head the work environment that we've lived with for over 200 years.

Ann Dale

Michel, I always choose to trust someone until proven wrong, and I can think of no thing more disempowering than to start from a negative rather than a negative. It is the same as with young children, I expect them to be decent, no matter what age, you try to bring people up to the highest denominator, not the lowest. In many decades of working and trusting my teams, my employees and my colleagues I have only been disappointed 4 times. Everyone has a work plan with deliverables, how they choose and when they choose to deliver them should be up to adults.

Yuill Herbert

The UK Public service had a very progressive tele-working program set up that involved setting up significant areas of hot desks in major office buildings in London and allowing people to work

from home for if I remember correctly up to three days per week. Ironically, it was driven by the high cost of providing office space in London... It does illustrate how there can be different drivers to get at the same thing.

Collective pensions is an interesting idea- in a sense I guess this is what CPP is. But in the same way there are co-working spaces, could there not be co-retirement plans like you suggest- another project!

Giovanna Mingarelli

I think collective workspaces are definitely important - just as much as the ability to connect virtually via platforms like Google Hangout or Skype. The key is finding the right set of tools to enable us to do our work and to also feel connected and supported by our peers and colleagues. Part of this is changing the way we interact with one another on a day by day basis.

According to a recent study, co-written by Pennsylvania State University's Aparna Joshi in the Journal of Applied Psychology, it's argued that people working in virtual and remote scenarios can be really supported with more one-on-one time to review their work - or to just touch base about how things are going.

If it's available to us, we can also make time to connect socially with our co-workers or colleagues out of office hours - during events after work or on weekends. Planning retreats regularly is also a great way to keep people connected.

Karen Kun

Thumbs up to you Giovanni for continually backing up what you are talking about with research (I am not that organized).

Connected to G's point above...I think young people need to understand schedules...and with self-direction how to fit a productive week into 37-40 hours a week. Many may choose to work more, yet understanding what you can accomplish in that time period is important. With that, knowing what stage of life you are in (and your personality) of the "saying yes" phase and the "No" phase. Earlier stages (projects needing buy-in, wild ideas to be tested, early career), one likely needs to say yes to a lot to get exposure and experience. Yet there is a transition, while I think many struggle with making, which is BEING FOCUSED and learning to say no. There is a balance between taking a lot on (which is great and usually can connect many dots) and being focused. These would all be elements I would see schools bringing in self-discovery processes.

Giovanna Mingarelli

Thanks, Karen! Yes, I completely agree that people need to have a real understanding of their personality (i.e. motivation, planning skills, disciple and even space) in order to be healthy, happy and productive in the workplace - virtual or otherwise. Learning these skills early on in school could definitely be useful to young people in grappling with the future of work.

Chris Strashok

Those are great points Giovanna. When I think of it most of the contact I have with my colleagues has to do with work. Nobody just calls me up to say how is it going or ask about my weekend. This is in contrast to when I worked in an office and there was always this "water cooler" talk that brought a social element to the space.

Thanks for that.

Craig Bennell

For all the value that comes with being able to work virtually, I find that this sometimes creates challenges when it comes to collaboration...for me, there's nothing like face to face time to work collectively on a problem.

Chris Strashok

Yes I enjoy the freedom of working from home but I find any time that I have face to face time with the people I am collaborating with I feel recharged and energized with new ideas to move forward with.

Michel Frojmovic

I too have worked from home for 20 years. I do find that face time offered by tools like Skype, or Apple's "FaceTime", or any videoconferencing facility all help create synergies. Though none fully replaces being in the same room as another colleague.

Caroline van Bers

I agree with Craig and this is to some extent done at the University of Maastricht where students have led seminars for more than 15 years. Have a look http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/... cation.htm

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Karen Kun

I too work from home and couldn't not manage my life any other way (I have the balance I need) - yet a key piece here and a super large topic (again in my opinion) is when kids come into the equation. As this is where working from home makes life way more manageable. A bit like entrepreneurship -- it is not for everyone.

Jeremy Murphy

Workplace fluidity has pros and cons, for sure. People typically love working at HiVE because it offers a mix of atmospheres: professional, relaxed, social. But it is not for everyone, for example those who require high security, those who engage in work that makes a lot of noise. The people who are able to work here enjoy the exposure to new people, the opportunity to

brainstorm new ideas with people in totally different sectors and the ability to get almost any business development and support service you need in-house.

Ann Dale

Craig, you remind me that someone once taught me that freedom comes from discipline. I find that working from home requires a greater degree of discipline than a structured office, and yet, there is no free lunch. The benefit for me is that my productivity is much higher, my creativity seems far less constrained, and yet, I miss the more personal collaboration that my technical skills and technology can't quite meet. I wonder if any of us are tracking the reductions in GHG emissions we save by working from home?

Rebecca, can you pick up on the creativity aspect? You are both an urban planner and I don't want to embarrass you, but an internationally acclaimed cellist. My dear colleague won a Juno award for best instrumental album last year. How does the shifting work place foster/hinder your creativity?

Rebecca Foon

This might also tap into the introvert/extrovert phenomenon - where some people thrive in group settings, and some people thrive at home in the comfort of their own space when it comes to being creative - and of course many of us have a mix of both....so nothing is black and white.

With regards to music, the music industry has completely shifted since mp3s and home recording studios became ubiquitous.
Home recording studios allow for many more people to be creative and record their music, due to the fact that it is simply cheaper to record....and anyone can distribute their music or art for free via the internet. So way more people today are making music than 20 years ago...

This has also had huge implications for artists, as music just does not sell the way it use to - so many musicians can no longer make a living making music...or need to find an innovative model to distribute their music that people will support...like Thom Yorke's model for his last solo record through bit torrent.

Yuill Herbert

When I think of the current trajectory of work, it seems to be broadly dominated by insecure, service-oriented jobs with pockets of innovation and creativity for a very small percentage, particularly as resources are depleted- for example the collapse of the forestry industry in Canada. I think therefore we need to redefine work- we need structures and support in doing so, both in formal education and culturally, and in conjunction with this material expectations. There are signs of this everywhere- young people taking up farming perhaps the most visual one. But I think perhaps, and Ann may agree with this, one of our sources of direction in this journey can be Good Work by EF Schumacher: “It is no longer possible to believe that any political or economic reform, or scientific advance, or technological progress could solve the life and death problems of industrial society. They lie too deep, in the heart and soul of every one of us. It is there that the main work or reform has to be done –secretly, unobtrusively.”

Jeremy Murphy

Some of the challenges with fluidity I can think of include:

-lack of continuity, loyalty, longevity, follow through

-social media and electronic communication encourage laziness – must make a true effort to stick out and do quality work

-high failure rates of new ventures, high instability in certain sectors = turnover

Rebecca Foon

I agree that education is key to helping students acquire the diversity of skills that are useful perhaps even critical in this continually shifting landscape. I would also add that time seems to be a major constraint now and in the future. Especially when considering key issues like climate change and that we are simply running out of time....
and that we need to be continue to develop and move on innovative work models that address critical issues society is facing.

I think the landscape of ethics also comes into play here - as youth are being presented and growing up with contradictory information and values, shaping different ethics which has implications for the future of work in general...

Yuill Herbert

I also wonder if we will seen the decline of the 'expert' as people will be required to shift from job to job. Or will some jobs, with expertise that society values, for example in medicine, be ring-fenced as stable life time work in which people can collect knowledge and experience over their lifetime, while those in the rest of the economy bounce from one short term undertaking to another? Conversely, bouncing from one short term position to another in a particular field may build a diverse perspective, inhibit stagnation and actually result in a more profound level of expertise. For example, planners like us who have gained 'shallow' experience working with many cities, versus a planner who works for many years in one city and knows it inside out. Both have value, it seems.

Karen Kun

One thing that has either slipped by me or not mentioned yet which I would like to place as high on skills is global worldview and sadly, I see this as lacking in Canada...for the most part. We are a large country and think provincially a lot. Back-packing to me is no longer the answer (great, yet not sufficient experience), a work abroad term, year (also good, yet not enough), today's young people must relatively seamlessly move around the world, to work on a self-directed project, assist a friend in another country get something off the ground...multiple languages, depth of food knowledge (as a major connector), customs, nuanced understanding of local politics, this is where I see Canada lacking and in our young people too

Michel Frojmovic

Or hitch-hiking across Canada! There are forces at play that are creating a very controlled and fear-driven environment.

Craig Bennell

I agree that universities need to think more about how we can change the way we educate students to allow them to develop core skills around leadership, independence, confidence, and risk taking. The sort of model that Karen discussed is very appealing. Challenging though, especially given the growth model that most universities seem to adopt (higher costs = take more students/tuition = larger class sizes = challenges in delivering the right sort of education to maximize student success in the long run). Can be very frustrating!

Ann Dale

Okay, what are the new structures that are needed? What about a new system of collective pensions among young entrepreneurs. How can we convince employers about the benefits, especially with respect to reduced commuting times and GHG reductions?

Jeremy, a question from our e-panel, can you name any other collective work places you know of? I can think of the Hub in Ottawa, the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto.

Jeremy Murphy

Certainly, there are hundreds of them across the globe, the largest network of which is the Impact Hub (formerly Hub): http://www.impacthub.net/.

There are several here in Vancouver including Suite Genius, Network Hub, Waterfront Profile and some less official examples. There are plenty popping up in the states as well. Some have specific markets in mind like sustainability professionals, artists, makers, etc.

Michel Frojmovic

A number of them have popped up in Montreal's Mile End, often located in older industrial buildings designed for the textile industry (former sweat shops, essentially) supporting an emerging software development/gaming industry. An example: http://www.station-c.com/

Jeremy Murphy

I find with the e-platforms and collective workspaces, there is a lot of drive and oomph at the beginning, but it takes superwoman strength to keep them rolling so they don’t die off.

Korice is right - making a successful co-working space is a lot of work, and it is very difficult to profit. Owning your space, instead of leasing, can make a big difference in the long run. CSI in Toronto has been successful with this. You need dedicated board members and staff to make it work.

Yuill Herbert

Beckie, I wonder if you can comment on how the internet is working for musicians? Are there new mechanisms to sell music and are they working for musicians in general? What is future of work for musicians in this changing context?

Rebecca Foon

Sure, as I mentioned musicians are definitely having a harder time making a living selling their music now with the internet and downloading. Innovative models addressing this issue keep emerging however....

Have you seen this: Nipsey Hussle announced that he is making his new record available for free on iTunes however 100 hardcopies of his new album is available to purchase for $1,000 apiece (which gets you a bunch of things including a listening session). Innovative? Maybe controversial? Definitely Interesting to see how artists are continually responding to the challenges at play...

Ann Dale

Craig and Chris, you are right, I can't believe it is 2015, and employers are still insisting on people being physically at a desk, for however many hours a day. And forgive me, my beloved university, which is a leader in on-line learning, wants its professors to be physically located in Victoria, British Columbia. I am exempt only because I am so old and crabby:) This is such old-fashioned thinking, my employees always exceeded their planned outcomes, why, because they were given the most precious gift, the gift of managing their own time.

Sorry for the digression. Moving to our third question. What innovative work models do you know of--and why are they innovative? We have already touched on a few, collective work places, 4 day work weeks, think of some of the barriers you have mentioned, what are the ways around them?

Craig Bennell

I'd be interested to hear from Giovanna, Karen, and others about the work models they use in their own organizations, particularly when the team is distributed across locations, or a hub-type approach is used, like in your case Karen? How does it work? What are the pros and cons of that distributed model?

Karen Kun

Happy to share how we do it at Waterlution. We all work from home and try and meet up at my house once every two weeks (I wish it was every week, yet not enough time). Each week, team shares their priority list via email with everyone (which is a dynamic document, for their own time management and for me to see what they are doing and suggest changes if something moves up the urgency ladder). When we had paid Hub Managers across Canada we came to see how important it was to have these people be full-time. We thought part-time role would work yet too hard to manage with time zones and need to speedy responses at time. Now we have our leaders in 10 cities as those running the Hubs. While I love this, ideally we would have

full-time person/people in each city as the "growth" person...as our local teams cannot meet all the demand. Finally and most importantly, we work on deliverables. I trust my team. As long as I get a note saying "I will be offline for next hour or two, if you need me call my cell"...I cherish that they can go to gym when needed in day, do groceries at off peak times, pick up a friend at airport. And I trust them to complete needs and work the hours they say they work. A bigger convo, yet I do think this approach could work in large orgs too, yet depends on the leader running teams. And finally, I travel quite often, so I can see others. More economical for me to travel then to bring everyone to Toronto. And finally, always looking for conferences, opportunities where others will pay airfares and we can also gather.

Giovanna Mingarelli

One great work model (which I live by most of the time) is **digital nomadism:** people can work anywhere, provided there's a good Wi-Fi connection. Victoria Yershova, who runs Digital Nomad Hub, says there are three types of digital nomads — freelance professionals (programmers, writers), online entrepreneurs and remote employees who started out in the office but are now roaming the world. I fall into the second category:

Through M&C Consulting, I spent the last three years working in between Ottawa, Canada and Geneva, Switzerland. I would spend about a month and a half in each country, back and forth, with clients in each country. With the support of local consultants, it was a fairly easy process to manage. In Ottawa, I also have virtual office space and a remote secretary to help triage my calls and schedule. I also often work out of Ottawa's Living Labs at 1125@Carleton or coffee shops, which can be nice (or not, if it's too loud).

One pitfall here is drawing a delineation between work and leisure time. Going back to Karen's point, it's easy for the work day to never end – you need to create a set schedule for yourself, with delineated tasks (its easy to use platforms like Focuster (Beta) to help with this).

While this a great model, there are definite downsides, like late night work meetings: when I would begin work in Geneva at 8:00 am, that was 2:00 am in Ottawa – so the work days were always off. Alternatively, at times I would need to take a call at 6:00 pm EST - which was midnight in Geneva!

There are three important things to ask yourself if you're considering this kind of work model:

Do I have the discipline to work on my own? Motivation do I have the motivation to do what it takes to propel my business forward? Can I make space for work AND myself, as a digital nomad?

Ann Dale

Giovanna, and I would add do I have the courage? I love the concept of [b]digital nomadism, and wonder how we can expand it more. I am privileged to share space with both Giovanna and Craig at 1125@Carleton, which is where I met Karen. Another point, how does one avoid the hyper connectivity the digital world gives us, which I find can lead to hyperactivity on my part--another balance. To create boundaries between my work and personal life, I use hard exercise at the end of when I have achieved my outcomes, and then exercise as a boundary. Another small thing that improves my virtual life, without interruptions, I do believe that one is probably 1 and 1/2 times more productive, and without any external validation you can work for very long

hours. I now create a short and long list, and when I have completed my short list for the day, I stop, hopefully avoiding more crabbiness with dear colleagues:)

Caroline van Bers

In general, knowledge based organisations, like many of ours around the table, are in a better position to institute flexibility wrt. flexible hours and flexible locations. And it is often the smaller organisations that are more flexible, as I was able to be when I ran a consultancy with 11 staff. The university in which my office is now located (we are an association within it) is not so flexible. It is funded by the state and therefore has to abide by its rules so it is basically about getting around those rules (with the director turning a blind eye or helping to create a legitimate arrangement to make this possible), and the staff do sometimes succeed. I suspect it is the same in Canada.

Michel Frojmovic

In the non-profit / social sector the willingness to embrace the concept of a virtual work place is an innovation born out of necessity. (And, by necessity I mean having to choose between lease payments and institutional existence). A wide world of possibility is opened up once a CEO and/or Board are willing to let go of the perception of bricks and mortar as a necessary condition for organisational continuity and status. The absence of job security and pensions are a different story. As a country, we are far from having figured out that conundrum as yet, other than discussions regarding a more robust CPP.

Ann Dale

Michel, with respect to pensions, I am going to throw this one back at Yuill. Why can't a scheme be set up with a cooperative such as VanCity, in which independent entrepreneurs, practitioners, artists could pay into, and have the security of collective investments which spread the risk. Wynne in Ontario is proposing such a scheme, because of the lack of federal movement on creating a national scheme. Why should some have access and not everyone, reminds me of a paper we wrote, Sustainability for some and not all?

Yuill Herbert

Not a bad idea at all, but wouldn't your last line discourage against such an endeavour as it would discriminate in favour of those entrepreneurs with the resources to invest in it, versus a truly collective scheme which needs to operate at the level of government. Which makes me think the idea of a guaranteed national income is the way to go. That would change the future of work!

Ann Dale

Yuill, a very very elegant quote, thank you for sharing. Interiority versus exteriority, or a dyanmic balance? My head is spinning with all the wonderful ideas, and Korina, in our e-audience, introduced the idea of collective e-spaces with some links which we will pick up on when we

publish our conversation. As well, the tension between the freedom of the individual working from home and the collective.

Moving to our last question, what opportunities do you foresee in the next decade for young people?

Jeremy Murphy

Some things that come to mind:

- many new kinds of work/jobs are be created to explore. A lot of these are in trans-disciplinary fields that are splicing together different types of new sectors, or bridging old and new sectors.
- ability to lead in tech innovation to offer any workplace an advantage/something of value.
- opportunity to combine intergenerational thinking and experience for application in new creative ways.
- acceptance of entrepreneur model: more and more impetus to start up, less fear of failure.
- social impact work: do the work you love. This seems to be increasing in availability and popularity.

Karen Kun

I agree with all that Jeremy shares here (hi, from earlier to you, J). And, I think young people need to think about their unique offering in the world -- what will that be? what gives you energy, what does a meaningful life look like? Back-cast, how will you get there (it is this part that will help on the "how will I make a living" part of the equation)? I think as the world is changing, being more driven by your unique contribution to the world (which may pay you in an institution or outside, part of the self-discovery journey and we need both) and less career-ist. Influencing the system is a large part of the future and this connects to life's work. What is one's life work? And I think if this is being asked, supported, experienced, reflected on in teenage, early 20s years, we will have a more cohesive bunch of young people confidentially setting their own path.

Craig Bennell

Every time I find a way to balance work and life, Ann, I have another child and it all goes down the tubes! It's massively important though. I like your approaches...much more tangible than mine. I'm going to try the short and long list...right now, I just go with very long, long lists.

I think the opportunities out there for young people are amazing, and although educational institutions (perhaps universities more than colleges) are not moving as quickly as we might to better prepare students, I do think that more and more initiatives, like 1125@Carleton, are springing up on and off campuses that provide young people (students and non-students) with an opportunity to develop the skill sets we spoke of earlier in the conversation. We need more of these spaces/places to complement that important work that is being done in the classroom. This mixed approach to education (including mentor-based learning opps) will go a long way in overcoming some of the barriers that have been highlighted.

Caroline van Bers

On the one hand, it is heartening to see all of the new opportunities that have arisen in the last decade allowing esp. young people to express their creativity and entrepreneurship by starting their own (e)business. Necessity is the mother of invention and some of this is being stimulated by a less secure economy and fewer traditional' work opportunities for young people (and older people as well).

On the other hand, there will be a lot more competition for fewer jobs, so we really need to be thinking in terms of bigger transitions and I am hoping it will be in the direction of Ostrom's regional economy or the social economy, but there are these monoliths of neo-liberal capitalism still blocking our way. It is still difficult to see around this.

Michel Frojmovic

I recently hired a recent graduate for a particular project. Her CV was incredible! It consisted of a melange of degrees I'd never heard of, and a knowledge of tools that did not exist 10 or even 5 years ago. She was basically a modern day librarian, but without the horn-rimmed glasses, without the books, and with no desire to "shush" anyone.

New careers are being created monthly- but the career counselor down the hall at high school or university does not know about them.

Here are a few links to stories about “The Future of Work”:

1. CBC`s Spark with Nora Young (Podcast). http://www.cbc.ca/radio/spark/221-the-future-of-work-workplace-science-rethinking-recruiting-and-the-resume-the-automated-workforce-live-work-homestead-design-the-information-economy-1.2847867
2. Globe and Mail. Report on Business. A series of articles. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/the-future-of-work/
3. Time Magazine. A series of articles. http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1898024_1898023_1898169,00.html

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Ann Dale

As academics, I think we have 'heard' loud and clear about the mismatch between post-secondary education and the new skill sets that are required. My university is a cohort-based model, which demands unprecedented collaboration between students, an important skill. Seems to me we all have a long way to go, however, perhaps offering a self-designed and organized practicum placement, either internationally or domestically, for which they have to find their own funding. If they can't, then write about what worked and didn't work. Reminds me Karen and Giovana when I first met you and both of you stated how ill prepared students were for becoming entrepreneurs!

Giovanna Mingarelli

There are 9 million Millennials in Canada - many of whom are digital natives. It’s predicted that by 2020, Millennials will make up 50% of the workforce globally. I see young people having the flexibility of different work models (like collective workspaces, digital nomadism, remote work,

and the like) as well as new tools and motivations to engage in the workplace. A McCann World Group Study of Millennials (2012) from all corners of the world identified the three key motivations that connect Millennials globally, these are: justice, authenticity, connections and community - many values which will likely help enrich traditional workplaces.

I also see the booming Internet of Things industry could result in youth having access to many more intelligent tools and insights from myriad data sets and analytical tools to do their work, with increased efficiency and speed. While tools and information can make work more efficient, we'll need to continue to be mindful that Millennials often gravitate to organizations and employers who are not only supportive of a good workplace environment, but who are also seen to be engaging in social activities that have meaning. This is resulting in a greater need for employers and organizations to highlight and build corporate social responsibility campaigns into the fabric of the work they do.

Jeremy Murphy

This is interesting. I wonder how true it is? Or perhaps, if these words mean the same things to milennials as they do to people of older generations. Justice, in a time where fairness is in question perhaps more so than ever before. Authenticity, in a time where it is sometimes difficult to find accurate information, despite the deluge of it, and quality information, despite (or perhaps due to) the deluge of 24 hour news. Connections and community in a time when in-person communities are drifting apart, despite increased proximity, and in a time when virtual connections rule. These are significant challenges to overcome and/or adapt to.

Michel Frojmovic

That's an astute observation Giovanna. I do see expressions of those three values - justice, authenticity, connections and community - in the under 30s I work with. Not that they're absent from the over-30s crowd, but I see them most explicitly with a younger generation aiming to extract from their careers intangibles other than status and stability.

Jeremy Murphy

I think one important opportunity is that work is becoming more social in many sectors. There seems less of a need for formality and work/social divide. However, this means that employees need to know how to strike a balance between professionalism and appropriate social behaviour. You need to be able to work, relax and party in manners that abet good work relationships and products.

Caroline van Bers

Here is a quote from the **We Economy** that may be relevant for this discussion:

http://www.we-economy.net/

"Elements of the We Economy

- The sharing economy matches idle resources with needs. Access to use is more important the individual ownership Instead.
- The maker movement is democratizing innovation and making it possible for virtually anyone to develop, manufacture and sell products.
- Co-creation and broader participation in the development and production of solutions is possible in digital networks
- The circular economy sees business as an ecosystem where everything and everyone are ultimately interrelated and interdependent.
- Social enterprises work to make services and goods accessible to as many people as possible – rather than maximizing profits.

A lot of experimentation is going on, and not all companies and business models will have staying power. However, looking at the big picture, it's hard to imagine that elements of these approaches will not become part of the new normal way of doing business. "

Ann Dale

Well, we are coming to the end of this conversation, and the last in a series of e-Dialogues we have been leading over the last two years. We will be convening people virtually and in person on February 27th, to begin drafting The Solutions Agenda, a 10-page action agenda for Canadian decision-makers if they are serious about sustainable community development. Your contributions have been invaluable and we value the time you have taken out of very busy schedules. And thank you, Caroline, for coming all the way from Germany:)

Any last comments or words of wisdom before we convene?

Chris Strashok

As we approach the end of the dialogue, I thought everyone might be interested in see a 'word cloud', capturing the main thoughts and ideas of the conversation. The sizing of the elements in the word cloud indicate the amount of references. It's obviously a tool that works very much on the 'overview level', but it works as a visual summary.



Michel Frojmovic

Thank you for organizing this particular e-dialogue. It was a pleasure to share in the discussion. There are so many important questions that are still to be explored in this area. The future of work is equal parts thrilling and terrifying. We all need to play a role in limiting the terror and sharing the benefits of the thrill.

Jeremy Murphy

Nice to hear from all of you. Best of luck in your respective places and sectors of work!

Giovanna Mingarelli

Agreed! Thanks so much Ann for including me - this was a really great conversation. I enjoyed learning from you all!

Craig Bennell

I must say, as a first time participant/visitor to any type of virtual conversation, that I found this experience wonderful. What a great way to share lots of ideas and information quickly - from people all around the world. Thanks for sharing everyone...really informative and thought provoking. And thanks for having me Ann, and for moderating the discussion. Looking forward to the next conversation!

Chris Strashok

Thanks for participating everyone. I look forward to collaborating with all of you again sometime in the future.

Caroline van Bers

For me as a first timer to the dialogue I also found a good way to cover a lot of ground on a key topic in our lives. It would be very interesting to revisit this again in a year or two just to see how the world of work has changed and our perspectives on it. Thanks a lot Ann and Chris for facilitating this. Look forward to the next event.

Rebecca Foon

Totally agree, thank you all so much for participating in this wonderful dialogue!

Ann Dale

Well I am now off to help an 11-year old from Vancouver who is determined to make a rink on our lake. I do not know how people with young children hold it all together--your generation is so wonderfully competent in different ways.