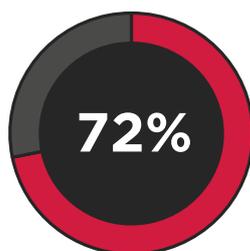


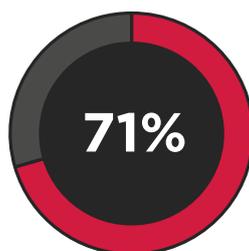
UK companies are facing a shortage of digital skills in their workforce which is hampering productivity

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) surveyed 1,465 business people from all regions of the UK online in January 2017 to understand which digital skills are most important to businesses, the impacts of skills shortages, and the barriers businesses face to fix these shortages.

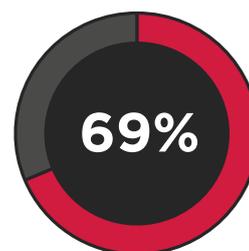
Four-in-five firms say digital and IT skills are more important to their business than two years ago. The skills most important to respondents include:



Basic IT skills



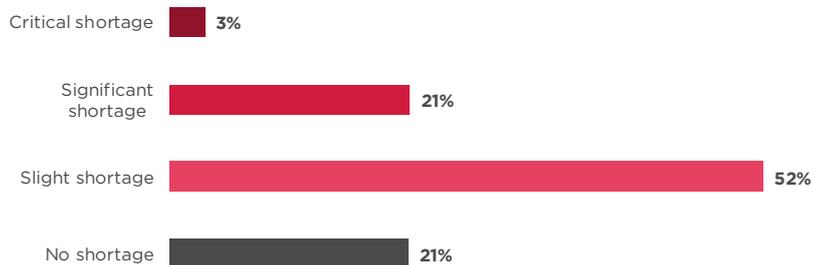
Communicating and connecting through digital channels



Management of digital information

More than three-quarters of respondents report a shortage of digital skills in their workforce...

Firms facing a **shortage of digital skills**



...with **52%** reporting increased workloads on existing staff...



...**29%** reporting higher operating costs...



...and **28%** reporting difficulties in meeting customer requirements



Businesses regard a lack of time for staff training (41%), difficulty in identifying appropriate training (32%), and the high cost of training (25%), as the biggest barriers to rectifying these shortages.

“The evidence is clear: better digital skills make firms more productive, and a lack of digital skills holds them back.

Businesses themselves need to do a lot more to tackle the digital skills shortages they face, and their leaders need to be alive to the fact that a failure to tackle this issue will have an impact on their bottom line. Too many firms are stuck in an unproductive cycle, where the failure to take action has serious consequences.

Training providers can give firms a helping hand, by engaging with companies on their digital needs and helping them to free up resources for growth. Government must help as well, by recognising that some of the high-level digital skills businesses need will come from overseas, so a pragmatic immigration system needs to be in place to provide firms with access to the workers required to fill the gaps.”

Dr Adam Marshall

Director General, British Chambers of Commerce