

CAREER INFORMATION ON ONLINE JOBS

Online Job Markets

With increasing rates of unemployment among the youth and a market that is saturated with jobseekers, it is now evident that the traditional office jobs are no longer readily available and young people have to look for alternative ways of earning a living.

With the proliferation of the internet and advancements in technology, more and more job providers are resorting to use of the internet and online platforms to get the services required by their organizations.

Online jobs refer to work that is done via the internet and does not require a physical office or such like premises.

For young people who prefer flexible jobs where they can work from anywhere and at a time, the online jobs are very suitable.

They can also hold several jobs at the same time.

You need to be aware of the online job market as a trainee and graduate on how you can access online jobs.

You are also advised on the effective utilization of online job opportunities and the competencies required.

Types of online jobs

There are different types of online jobs available to job seekers.

Below are examples of jobs that you as a trainee can undertake.

Some of the jobs are also suitable to you as you undertake your training:

Online Juror:

Attorneys preparing for trial often create a mock jury to obtain feedback from individuals similar to those who may eventually sit on a jury.

Because it can be costly to have an in-person mock jury, cheaper online jurors are the logical alternative.

They might listen to audio and view video presentations, or read the material and answer questions.

Because lawyers seek people who match the profile of potential real-life jurors, online jury companies ask detailed questions of applicants.

To become an online juror, one needs to sign up with several jury companies, which includes filling out an extensive questionnaire. One also needs to meet certain qualifications, which vary among counties.

Data Entry:

Online data entry is a growing work-at-home field. New technology makes it easier for companies to hire independent contractors to work on data entry projects.

Data entry operators may access a company's infrastructure remotely or use crowd sourcing technologies.

Data entry can include fields such as basic general transcription; however, most transcription tasks require additional experience.

Website or Application Testing:

This involves giving opinions on what works and what doesn't on the web.

When companies are testing the usability of the new applications, they need people to try out their products and then give their feedback to the company.

User testers can also review websites or mobile applications that are still in development.

Such jobs do not require one to be very knowledgeable about the internet because some developers want a beginner's viewpoint.

Search Evaluator:

Search engine evaluators examine internet search results and give feedback as to whether they are accurate, relevant, and spam-free.

To do this, the evaluator must be knowledgeable about the current culture and the internet and possess good communication skills.

Sometimes a college degree is required or preferred, but direct experience is not mandatory.

This particular work-at-home opportunity requires some experience but pays a higher wage.

Proof-reader:

Proof reading jobs are suitable to persons who have an eye for spotting spelling errors or typos.

However, this job may require taking a proofreading course or some prior experience, or one is required to take a test before getting hired.

Micro Job:

A micro job is usually a small online task for which one receives an equally small fee, usually a few cents or dollars.

They are sometimes called short tasks.

These jobs are done by logging on to a company's website and selecting tasks, sometimes simply by clicking a link.

Jobs may also be found in online service marketplaces.

Here workers offer small services, usually for a set fee, and buyers browse the marketplace to find people offering the services they need.

Job opportunities include crowdsourcing projects, which are similar to data entry, where companies engage an army of virtual workers to perform a small part of a larger project.

Workers can also take advantage of reward programs and surveys, which are perhaps the original work-at-home micro-jobs.

Because the fee is so small and the task takes so little time, many tasks as possible.

Virtual Assistant:

As a virtual assistant, one is tasked with work that is similar to that of an office assistant.

Even though one will be working from home, they should be highly organized, efficient, and dependable.

Duties typically include filing and maintaining records, scheduling appointments and events, and answering phones.

Online course tutor: If one is knowledgeable in design, photography, health and fitness, business, personal development, music, fashion, technology, writing or another topic, thousands of students may be eager to learn from your course.

Product reviewer on YouTube: Most people check product review on you tube before making a purchase. One can offer to review and get paid for it.

Affiliate marketer: Affiliate marketing is the process of helping another website to sell their products or services via special affiliate links. When one signs up for a company's affiliate platform, they receive a unique link or links that will earn them a commission every time a user clicks on them (or buys something after clicking)

Blogger:

As a blogger, one can earn money by:

Placing ads on your blog, and getting paid every time a visitor clicks on them.

Writing reviews about other companies' products or services. Make sure they are relevant to your audience and that they are not you're only content.

Offering additional paid content within your articles (e.g., downloadable e-book, online consultations or related products).

Doing content marketing for your customers. You can either write articles for your client's blog or pitch guest posts to reputable platforms including links to your client's site. Your customer will pay you for spreading the word about their services and improving their ranking in search engines.

Writing for other blogs and media outlets that pay guest contributors.

The most significant benefit of blogging is that one does not need any budget to start it, only good writing skills and expertise in a niche topic or some sort of unique experience.

Benefits of online jobs

The benefits of engaging in online jobs include;

- i. Online jobs are generally cost-effective. Your only expense, basically, is your internet fees
- ii. They save lots of travel time
- iii. There are many online opportunities that provide one with income
- iv. Online jobs offer huge flexibility: one is able to attend to other personal obligations as they do online jobs.
- v. Not limited by age: Since online jobs require minimal physical exertion, age is typically not much of an issue
- vi. You can try different jobs. This will minimize monotony by switching to different jobs
- vii. Available 24/7 and is not restricted by one's geographical location.

Skills and competencies required for online jobs

Effective utilization of online job opportunities is largely determined by the possession of certain skills and competencies that young people need to acquire. These online skills include;

Media literacy: - Media Literacy is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

Online writing: - Format of writing that include texting, instant messaging, emailing, blogging, tweeting, posting comments on social media sites such as Facebook.

Online discourse: - exchange of ideas and viewpoints mediated by a computer mediated communication medium via a discussion board, a career management system or any other synchronous and asynchronous collaboration tool.

Online presence: - existence of an individual or institution that can be found via an online search. Example of an individual who has a LinkedIn or Facebook profile. There is need to leverage and enhance one existing web presence to boost your exposure and reputation and market themselves and/or their institution online. One way is to design and built a compelling website or a blog.

The Ajira Digital Project

To take advantage of the lucrative online job market, we shall discuss the Ajira Digital Project, as an example of a program aiming at preparing the youth to undertake online jobs.

The program seeks to position Kenya as a choice labour destination for multinational companies as well as encourage local companies and public sector to create digital work.

The government digitization projects already create lots of viable micro work that can be completed by digital workers.

Access to digital work will build wealth and grow the middle class across the country. A larger middle class means more opportunities for businesses and direct growth of GDP.

The main objectives are to raise the profile of digital work; Promote a mentorship and collaborative learning approach to finding digital work; Provide Kenyans with access to digital work, and finally Promote Kenya as a destination for online workers.

The guiding principles of the Ajira Digital Program are:

Private sector first - value generation through the private sector

Sustainability - orchestrate the ecosystem to self-regulate and grow organically

Eliminate brokers - generating more value to the youth

Promote the domestic economy - realization of a knowledge economy

The components of the Ajira digital program have been designed to address the main challenges that hinder the youth on benefiting from digital job opportunities:

- Access to dignified work - growing the local demand, Government becoming an anchor client and positioning Kenya as a choice labour destination for multinationals globally
- Education and Skills for the dynamic, always changing online jobs
- Access to Infrastructure - Innovation Hubs, Kazi Connect Centres, Studio Mashinani, Y254 TV Channel
- Awareness - Building trust and confidence

The key project interventions are:

Training: The project targets to train youth on online work. The training aims to equip the youth with basic soft skills and introduction to online work skills, digital marketing and basic financial management skills across selected counties. The project targets to train experienced online work freelancers. with an aim of equipping the selected online work freelancers with skills to scale up and develop their businesses into agencies and source for more work to share with new online workers. The experienced freelancers are ultimately expected to handhold the new online workers through one month mentorship.

Mentorship: Upon successful completion of the training, the youth are transitioned to one month mentorship through handholding by the experienced freelancers. The mentorship is aimed at enhancing the trained youth's skills on online work thereby increasing their access to online jobs.

Emerging Technologies in Career

- Emerging technology is a term generally used to describe a new technology, but it may also refer to the continuing development of an existing technology.
- It can have slightly different meaning when used in different areas, such as media, business, science, or education.
- The term commonly refers to technologies that are currently developing, or that are expected to be available within the next five to ten years.
- The term is also used to refer to technologies that are creating, or are expected to create, significant social or economic effects.

Examples of emerging technologies

Artificial Intelligence (AI): this refers to the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings. The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience.

5G Networks: these are the next generation of mobile internet connectivity, offering faster speeds and more reliable connections on smartphones and other devices than ever before. The networks will provide wireless connections at the speed and latency needed for complex solutions like driverless vehicles.

Cloud computing: this refers to the practice of using a network of remote servers hosted on the Internet to store, manage, and process data, rather than a local server or a personal computer.

Robotics: This refers to the automation of routine processes by using machines to make businesses faster, less expensive and more efficient

Biometrics: Biometrics is physical or behavioural human characteristics that can be used to digitally identify a person to grant access to systems, devices or data. Examples of these biometric identifiers are fingerprints, facial patterns, voice or typing rhythm. Each of these identifiers is considered unique to the individual, and they may be used in combination to ensure greater accuracy of identification

3D printing: 3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, is a method of creating a three dimensional object layer-by- layer using a computer created design.

Virtual reality (VR): Virtual reality is an artificial environment that is created with software and presented to the user in such a way that the user suspends belief and accepts it as a real environment. On a computer, virtual reality is primarily experienced through two of the five senses: sight and sound.

Drones: a drone refers to an unpiloted aircraft or spacecraft. Another term for it is an "Unmanned Aerial Vehicle," or UAV.

The Role of Social Media in Career Development

Social media refers to websites and applications that are designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently, and in real-time.

Examples of social media include; Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, linked in and Pinterest.

With increased use of technology, social media applications are becoming very popular and they offer unlimited possibilities for the enhancement of career guidance and counselling services. Social media can play the following roles:

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Social media for networking: Technologies such as social media can help trainees build relationships with employers, develop their digital identities and showcase their skills. While platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are commonly used for personal interactions, there is a huge benefit to using such tools when it comes to one career. These benefits include;

Increasing exposure: Nowadays some employers has tendency of performing some form of online search before meeting candidates. A visible online professional profile is essential for an individual seeking employment. This allows any potential employers to review such public profile ahead of any meetings. Also, it allows for employers to easily find such individuals, which can present countless opportunities.

Establishing a personal brand: When creating a professional profile one should establish a brand for him/herself. By putting a professional voice for oneself, it increases the likelihood of someone coming across such profile when looking for someone with such skill set.

Being active: The principle way of successfully developing a strong brand and gaining valuable exposure is to consistently use your chosen platform and to cultivate relationships. Routinely engaging peers is vital currency for an individual's career.

Approaching people: Social network provides an easier way of approaching someone than it would be to do so at a social gathering. This can be achieved by introducing oneself to a potential employer who has a public profile on a professional social media platform.

LinkedIn

You start building your profile by including all of the experience on your resume, relevant keywords and skills, accomplishments and Web links.

Follow organizations you are interested in and stay current on news, announcements and opportunities.

Join groups relevant to your field and follow discussions and thought leaders to learn about current trends.

Search for alumni who work at your target organizations and reach out to see if they would be willing to provide advice.

Twitter

Using Twitter you can learn about industries, follow thought-leaders and organizations, share content you curate or create, establish connections and build your professional brand.

Create a professional profile that highlights your top skills.

Show knowledge and interest in your field by tweeting links to relevant articles or samples of your work.

Search for jobs by location, job titles, or social recruiting resources.

Facebook

Build one network by networking with professional associations and alumni organization pages on Facebook.

Always be professional while discussing with people and organizations through answering questions, commenting, messaging and linking to informative content through wall posts or status updates.

Follow the pages of employer organizations to stay abreast of news and job postings

Pinterest

For industries that value creativity or design, like graphic design, the arts, marketing or PR, this platform provides a visual way to display one's talents.

Career development opportunities

a) Acquisition Soft skills

Soft skills are sometimes referred to as transferable skills or professional skills.

As this term implies, these are skills that are less specialized, less rooted in specific vocations and more aligned with the general disposition and personality of a candidate.

Every job role requires some interaction with others, whether they are colleagues or customers, so soft skills will be important to most employers.

Soft skills required by employees include:

- Communication
- Self-Motivation
- Leadership
- Responsibility
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving
- Decision making
- Ability to Work under Pressure
- Time Management
- Flexibility
- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

There are many online programs that employees can enrol in to acquire and develop the above soft skills. The online programs are fairly cheap, accessible and flexible and people can learn at their own pace. As we stated above, soft skills enhance ones employability and advancement in a career.

b) E-Mentorship programs

Today understanding of education requires acquisition of knowledge through experience, not ready presentation of it.

In today's setting, the need has emerged to create environments that enable learners to learn by doing and living.

In such learning environments, mentoring practices are seen to become increasingly widespread.

Mentoring means training and counselling of a relatively less experienced and competent person on occupational and personal development by a more experienced and skilled one.

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in mentoring practices has led to changing of the classical mentoring and rising of the concept of electronic mentoring (e-mentoring).

E-mentoring has advantages of:

- Greater access,
- Reduced costs,
- Equalization of status,
- Decreased emphasis on demographics
- Records interactions between the mentor and the mentee.
- Today's ICT tools offer a number of alternatives that can be used to provide top-level interaction in e-mentoring.
- The tools can be both synchronous and asynchronous.
- The ICT tools that can be used include; telephone calls, social networking sites, instant messaging applications and video- conferencing applications.

Skills enhancement

As work environments continue to change with increased use of technology, its important that employees continue to re-skill and up- skill in order to perform their work more effectively.

Today's work environments also need people who can perform different tasks as some jobs continue to become obsolete.

E.g. an employee is expected to type and print documents without depending on secretaries and copy typists.

Some of the ICT skills required include:

Basic Operation of ICT Hardware – Including printers, scanners, photocopiers, smartphones, tablets and projectors.

Safe Internet Usage – Such as using search engines for research purposes or updating company social media accounts.

Typing – The ability to use a word processing program (such as Microsoft Word) to create letters, agendas and minutes. In some roles (such as medical or legal secretarial work), audio transcription skills will be required.

Document Creation – The ability to use software (such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher or Adobe Creative) to produce professional documents like PowerPoint presentations, letters, leaflets or posters.

Email and Calendar Management – The ability to use an email solution (such as Microsoft Outlook) to communicate with internal and external contacts, keep calendars up to date, and

book meetings. In some specialist ICT roles, employees will need an in-depth knowledge of email systems, to create and manage user accounts.

The good news is that an employee does not have to back to school to learn these skills but can access different training programs available on the internet to acquire the skills.

Tips on how to behave on online platforms

How can a person's online behaviour damage their chances of getting a job?

Be precise: Being misunderstood is quite common in online interactions; escape the miscommunication trap by double checking that what appears perfectly clear to you is not confusing your readers. The best way to test your messages for clarity is to read them aloud before you send them; this way, you will be able to see if they make sense.

Avoid emoticons and "texting" writing: Using emoticons and writing in "texting" language that is by using abbreviations might be considered too casual or even childish; refrain from them as much as possible. Online discussions require professional writing; smiley faces or linguistic shortcuts are more appropriate for chatting with your friends or instant messaging.

Netiquette

The rules of etiquette are just as important in cyberspace as they are in the real world and the evidence of poor netiquette can stick around to haunt someone for a long time.

To help young people use the internet responsibly, it's important if they are made aware of the rules that ought to be observed while they are interacting through the internet.

Encourage them to follow these basic rules of netiquette to avoid damaging their online and offline relationships.

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Netiquette Tips for Online Interactions

The following are some netiquette tips for online communication;

Use a professional email address: The name one uses on their email accounts should portray seriousness and professionalism. Some email accounts names may make potential employers dismiss you as not being serious or professional. For example; cheekyboy@gmail.com or babygirl@yahoo.com

Your online profile: To get more insights into the personalities of job applicants, many employees are now resorting to checking the information you have posted online including the personal information on your online profile and your profile pictures. Ensure that your profile information should match what you have provided on your curriculum vitae and you use appropriate photos for your profile.

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Don't Assume Privacy: Keep in mind that your company and personal email may not be private. Your company has the right to read anything sent from the office, so never write and send personal or highly sensitive information from work. Personal email from home may be forwarded, so don't put anything in writing that could cause a problem

Avoid Offensive Comments: avoid offensive comments in your online communication. This includes racist, sexist, or negative remarks about another person or company. If you receive an offensive email, don't reply or forward it to anyone. Never use online platforms to say anything that can be misconstrued or misinterpreted if it gets back to your boss or potential employers.

Don't Shout: Remember that when you type in all capitals, your communication comes across as shouting. Some people think it makes their message easier to read, but that isn't the case. Use a font size and style that is easy on the eyes when read in standard case letters.

Edit Your Messages: Edit your communication before you hit the send button. Use spellchecker and go over all business emails to make sure you have proper grammar. You always want to present yourself as a professional in all correspondence. Check personal email after you finish writing it to make sure it gets your intended point across. Dropping or adding a single word can change the meaning of a sentence.

Reply with Caution: Know the proper way to reply to the emails or messages you receive. Pay close attention to the sender and the others in the “to” and “cc” fields. It is courteous to respond as quickly as possible.

Avoid the urge to hit “reply all” before looking to see who is listed in the header. Your response may confuse others on the list or you might wind up sending unnecessary

information to people you don't know. The only time you should click "reply all" is if you are sure everyone needs the information you are sending.

Watch Your Tone: Maintain a positive tone in your email communications. Remember that snarky remarks may come across as mean-spirited rather than funny.

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