

Key competencies and employability skills in digital content management

Jorge Franganillo



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Facultat d'Informació
i Mitjans Audiovisuals

Abstract

This report explores the evolving dynamics of the digital content management sector's labor market, with a focus on the escalating need for specialized and cross-functional skills. It delineates pivotal positions including web designers, web analysts, and social media managers, emphasizing the significance of self-direction and initiative in thriving within this competitive landscape. The imperative of proficiency in technological instruments like *WordPress*, artificial intelligence (AI), and methodologies such as SEO and digital analytics is accentuated, alongside linguistic and communicative competencies, with English as a fundamental prerequisite.

The document elaborates on the University of Barcelona's master's program in Digital Content Management, which equips students for the vigorous sector via practical projects and partnerships with real organizations, culminating in a capstone project that potentially acts as a professional launchpad. It offers strategic counsel for job-seeking, underscoring the necessity of a digital portfolio and proactive online engagement. Furthermore, it discusses the significance of professional networking and perpetual skill enhancement on platforms like *LinkedIn*.

The report presents freelancing as a feasible career path, with extracurricular internships being instrumental in accruing relevant experience. It scrutinizes highly-regarded cross-functional skills such as creativity, autodidacticism, negotiation, and leadership, in addition to analytical acumen vital for data scrutiny. Concluding, the report presents survey findings that mirror the most sought-after skills pertaining to AI, offering an exhaustive perspective on bridging the gap between academic preparation and industry requisites for Digital Content Management graduates.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative component consisted of an integrative synthesis of insights provided by two alumni of the master's program in Digital Content Management. These insights were gathered during a professional guidance session held on 3rd April 2024, at the University of Barcelona's Faculty of Information and Audiovisual Media. The session's focal points included an analysis of the current digital content management job market, identification of the most sought-after skills by employers, evaluation of the master's program's efficacy in preparing graduates for the industry, and strategies for job searching, including recommendations for useful tools and professional networking tips.

To augment the qualitative data, a quantitative online survey was conducted, garnering responses from 8 additional program alumni. The survey aimed to ascertain their views on the relevance of various soft and hard skills within their professional roles, particularly those pertaining to the utilization of AI tools.

The collected survey data were subjected to statistical analysis, yielding a summary that encapsulates the trends and perceptions of the participants. Furthermore, an analytical commentary on the results was developed to offer a nuanced understanding of the competencies and skills deemed essential in the field of digital content management.

This methodological framework was designed to not only elucidate the theoretical and academic aspects of the competencies and skills but also to capture the practical realities encountered by industry professionals. Consequently, it provides a comprehensive and contemporary perspective that serves as a valuable resource for prospective graduates and employers within the sector.

1. Digital Content Management job market

The domain of digital content management is expansive and dynamic, presenting a spectrum of roles such as UX/UI specialists, web designers, web analysts, SEO strategists, and social media managers. The surge in demand for these professionals is a direct consequence of the digital shift that corporations are undergoing, although it is accompanied by substantial competition.

Graduates from the Master's program in Digital Content Management are expected to distinguish themselves through their **self-reliance** and capacity to undertake **autonomous, multidisciplinary projects**. While the program lays a robust groundwork, the employment landscape needs continuous self-directed learning and development. A proactive, self-taught approach and **personal initiative** are paramount for success.

Despite being a nascent professional category, graduates benefit from their status as digital natives with a solid **computer science background**, attributes that are highly prized by employers. Nonetheless, they are confronted with the paradox of job listings that require **extensive experience** and **multilingual proficiency**, which may seem at odds with their youthful stage.

To bridge the experience gap, it is imperative for students to seize the internship opportunities offered by the Master's program to curate a **portfolio of projects**. This portfolio could manifest as a personal website, a presence on platforms like *Behance* or *NicePage*, or a showcase in the projects section on LinkedIn. A meticulously assembled portfolio can compensate for the absence of extensive professional experience, showcasing the candidate's competencies and the caliber of their work.

2. Most valued and in-demand skills

Within the competitive sphere of digital content management, organizations seek professionals who possess not only **technical ability** but also essential **cross-functional skills**.

Collaborative capabilities are crucial, as participation in extensive, interdisciplinary projects is commonplace. Employers prize individuals who can engage in effective teamwork and assimilate knowledge from colleagues.

Personal initiative, inventiveness, and the capacity to **conceive novel ideas** and solutions are greatly valued. Firms are on the lookout for those who can introduce groundbreaking concepts, lead pioneering projects, and exhibit proactive innovation, thereby securing a competitive edge. Such proactivity is synonymous with ongoing learning and self-enhancement.

Autodidacticism is vital to remain abreast of technological progress, with video tutorials serving as a recommended resource for continual self-updating. **Negotiation** abilities and **leadership** skills gain prominence alongside professional growth and maturity. Leadership is esteemed not just for its directive capacity but also for safeguarding professional autonomy and judgment, particularly in cooperative settings like team meetings.

Technically, a robust grasp of **WordPress**, advanced **SEO expertise**, and familiarity with emerging **artificial intelligence (AI) applications** are critical. AI, as a tool, augments rather than supplants professional efficiency and output.

Numeracy is also coveted for **data analysis** and accurate interpretation of web analytics, notably in marketing-related fields where scrutinizing engagement metrics and other quantitative data is pivotal.

Proficiency in foreign languages, especially **English**, has transitioned from a bonus to a **necessity** in the globalized workplace. Knowledge of an **additional language** can serve as a key differentiator. Moreover, adeptness in **oral** and **written communication** is imperative. The industry highly regards the ability to craft compelling narratives and communicate with efficacy.

Problem-solving and **decision-making** stand out as competencies for professionals adept at resolving issues. Often, solutions to prevalent problems are discovered through simple online inquiries, indicative of the capacity for independent operation. Keeping pace with the constant evolution of **digital tools** is indispensable.

Lastly, the duality of in-person and remote work modalities must be navigated with proficiency. The rapid interaction enabled by on-site work and the flexibility afforded by telecommuting are both essential. Excelling in both settings is crucial for the effective execution of **teamwork**, which now demands adeptness both face-to-face and in virtual environments.

3. Career preparation

The master's program in Digital Content Management is meticulously crafted to furnish students with the requisite competencies to navigate the contemporary job market's challenges. The curriculum is centered on **hands-on, applied** learning, encompassing disciplines such as UX/UI design, web content creation, digital analytics, SEO, digital marketing, and social media management.

The pedagogical approach is anchored in **experiential projects** and **case-based learning**, simulating real-world professional quandaries. Collaborative ventures with organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières or Phill Farmacias

offer tangible scenarios for students to implement their acquired knowledge and contemplate corporate requirements.

The program advocates for engagement in **intricate, long-lasting projects**, fostering a culture of disciplined, **step-by-step progress** and profound engagement with tasks. This immersive methodical approach is vital in the professional sphere, where projects typically unfold in sequential stages, demanding steadfast **commitment** and **diligence**.

The master's thesis stands as a pivotal element of the academic journey, mandating the **synthesis** and **application** of the entire program's **knowledge base** into a conclusive project. While students may exit the program with limited work experience, barring that gained from academic internships, the expertise garnered through project involvement and the thesis is esteemed by employers. This experiential learning is acknowledged as a valuable asset within the employment community.

4. Job search recommendations

Securing employment within the digital content management industry can present challenges, yet students can adopt multiple **strategies** to enhance their prospects:

- **Build a solid portfolio.** It is imperative for students to curate a digital portfolio that exhibits their projects and competencies. Whether it's a personal website, a profile on design platforms such as *Behance* or *NicePage*, or the projects section on *LinkedIn*, a current and well-structured portfolio is an invaluable asset in job hunting.
- **Cultivate a professional online persona.** A candidate's online identity should mirror their professional persona and distinguish them from the competition. A potent, strategically positioned personal brand can be pivotal in competitive scenarios.
- **Diligence in the master's thesis.** The master's thesis transcends an academic obligation; it is a chance to showcase dedication and the capacity to undertake significant projects. A meticulously prepared thesis can unlock doors to funding and professional acclaim.
- **Leverage internship opportunities.** Both curricular and extracurricular internships are fundamental for acquiring hands-on experience. Often, internships may lead to job propositions or, at the very least, provide invaluable experience.
- **Embrace originality and unique talents.** Instead of striving for universal excellence, students should concentrate on honing and promoting the unique skills that render them indispensable in their desired roles.

5. Effective tools and resources for job searching

The pursuit of employment in digital content management can be optimized through judicious use of appropriate **tools** and **resources**:

- **Internship and Employment Platforms.** Use the university's platform, such as *GIPE* (the University of Barcelona's application for student placements), and delve into opportunities on *LinkedIn* and other specialized job portals. These platforms enable students to seek paid internships and vacancies that resonate with their interests and skill set.
- **Direct engagement with companies.** Proactively approach companies via their websites or email. Proposing to work or intern can unveil opportunities not found through conventional job search avenues.
- **Specialized job boards.** Favor niche, specialized job boards over broader ones. These platforms often feature less competition and listings more attuned to specific student profiles.
- **Employment services.** For graduates, the Faculty provides a dedicated job offer information service, known as SIOF (which stands for Servei d'Informació d'Ofertes de Feina, or Job Offers Information Service, in English). This service, along with similar platforms, can be a treasure trove of employment listings. Regularly subscribing to newsletters and job alerts ensures staying informed about emerging opportunities.
- **Online presence and active networking.** An active digital footprint is crucial. Maintaining dynamic profiles on *LinkedIn* and *YouTube* is recommended not only to foster a digital presence but also to stay conversant with new technological tools via educational content on these platforms. An up-to-date *LinkedIn* profile and engaging with industry peers can bolster visibility and expand professional networks.
- **Posting relevant content.** Sharing industry-focused posts and commentary on *LinkedIn* and other social networks can exhibit expertise and enthusiasm for the field, potentially swaying employer decisions.
- **Application initiative.** Do not hesitate to apply for job openings, regardless of the number of applicants or partial fulfillment of criteria. Employers often seek candidates who approximate the ideal profile, even if not perfectly.

6. Professional establishment and consolidation

Forging a career in the digital content management sector is contingent upon an amalgamation of **experience**, **skill sets**, and **networking**:

- **Freelance vs. conventional employment.** Venturing into freelancing immediately post-graduation bears risks due to the absence of a robust

contact base and experience. It is prudent to contemplate freelancing after cultivating a substantial network and garnering industry experience. Conversely, traditional employment can lay a foundational bedrock of expertise and insights.

- **Extracurricular internships.** Pursuing extracurricular internships offers a pathway to accrue professional experience pre-graduation. Despite potentially modest economic terms, these internships can pave the way to enduring job prospects and provide a competitive edge in the employment market.
- **Skill versatility.** The master's degree imparts a diverse skill set, applicable across various career junctures. The adaptability to apply these skills in disparate contexts is an invaluable trait.
- **Certifications and proactive learning.** Attaining certifications from free courses like Google's on SEO or web analytics training not only distinguishes a candidate but also underscores their dedication to ongoing education and skill specialization. These credentials, recognized by employers, signify a proactive approach to professional development and a commitment to staying ahead of industry requirements. Investing in such learning opportunities is a strategic career move, demonstrating initiative and a deep interest in one's professional domain.
- **Engagement in projects and real-world cases.** Experience with project work and the case method equips students to address complex, multifaceted challenges; key competencies for professionals aspiring to cement their standing in their respective fields.

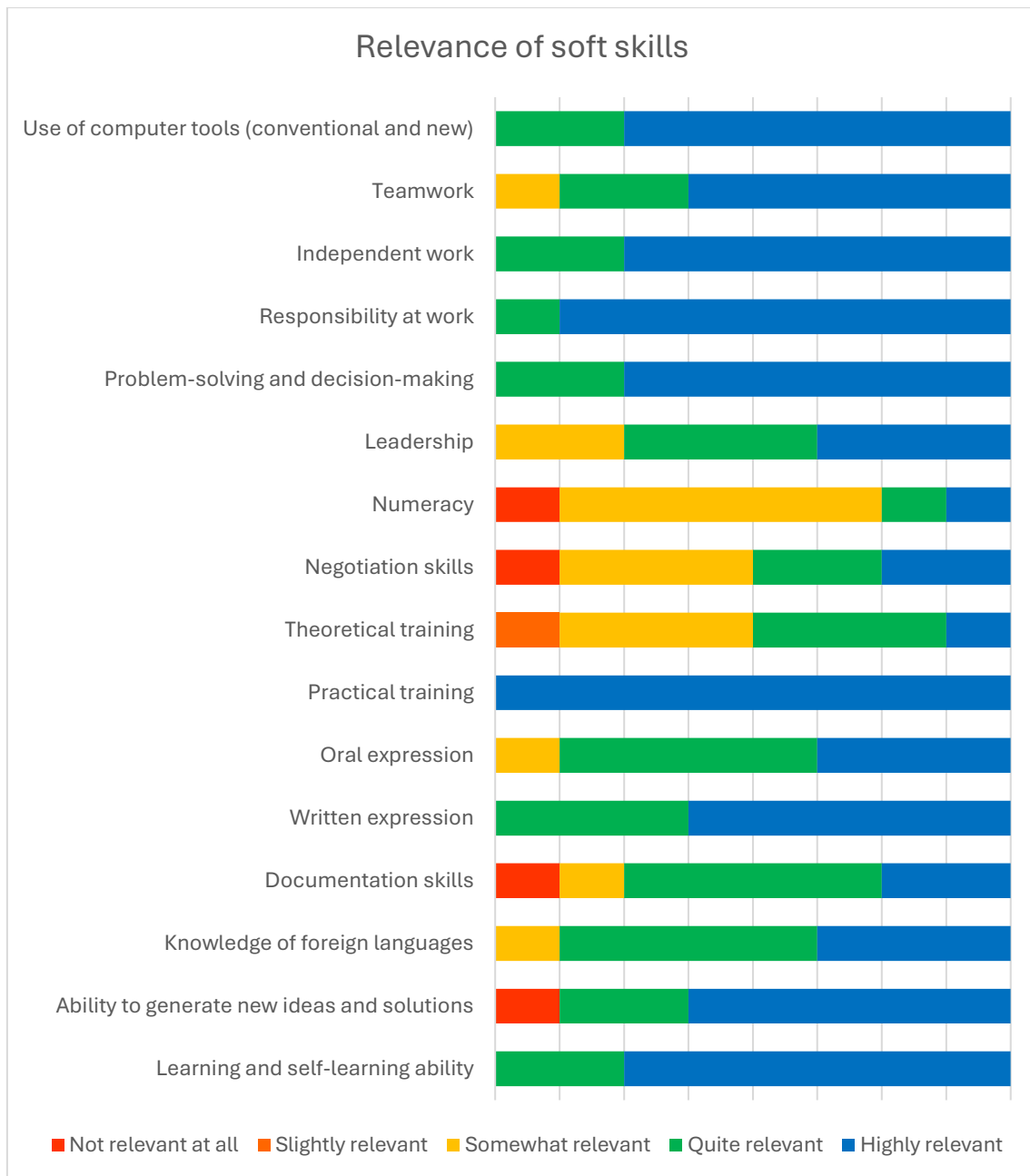
7. Soft and hard skills: a quantitative perspective

The ensuing analysis delves into the essential skills and knowledge pivotal for effective performance and career advancement within digital content management.

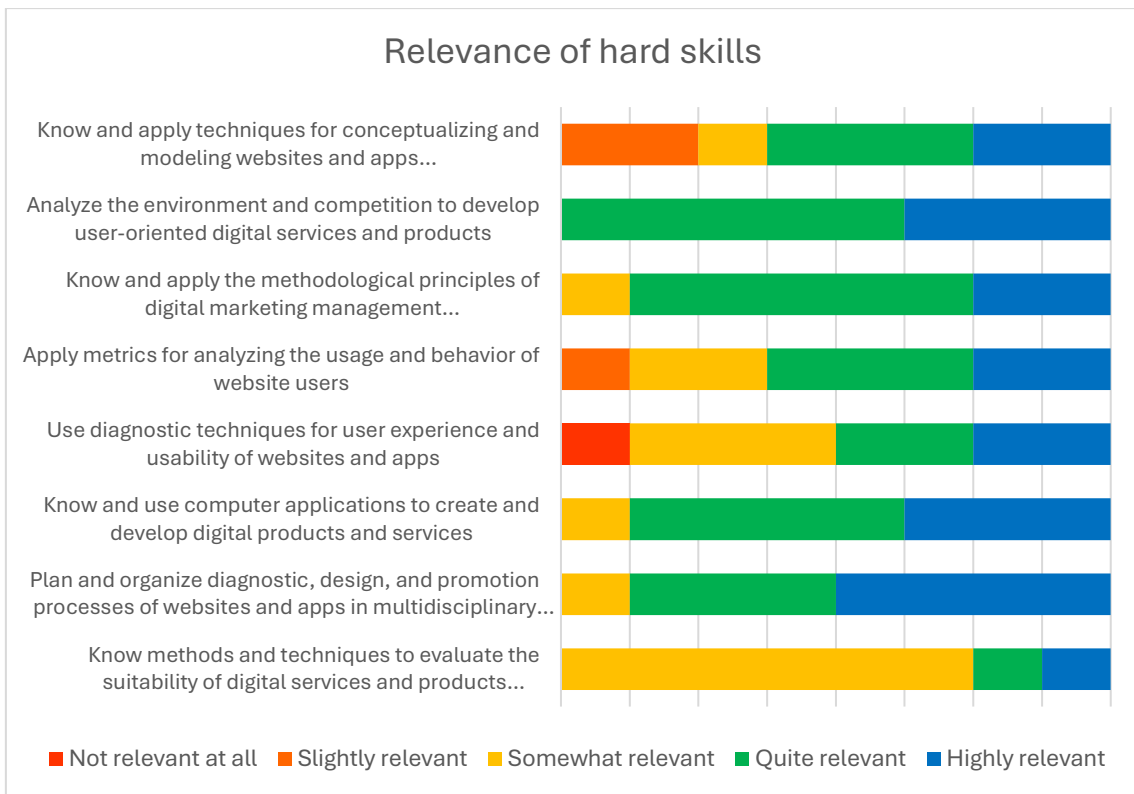
This statistical compendium, derived from industry professional feedback, underscores the workplace's most pertinent skills and the role of AI as an ancillary instrument in fundamental processes like content generation, data analytics, and experience personalization.

The subsequent charts offer a visual depiction of this information, furnishing a lucid and measurable outlook on prevailing trends and the labor market's exigencies.

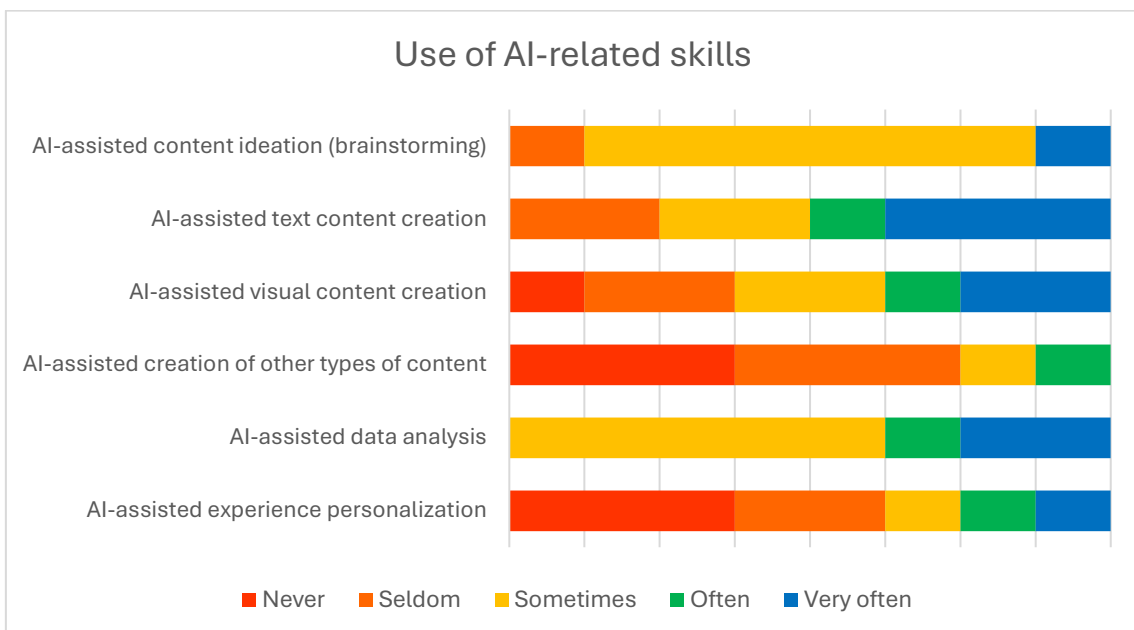
In your current or most recent job, how relevant are these **soft skills**?



In your current or most recent job, how relevant are these **hard skills**?



In your current or most recent role, how often do you use these skills related to the use of **artificial intelligence** as a supportive tool?



8. Conclusion

The digital content management sector demands a multifaceted skill set, blending technical expertise with soft skills like creativity and leadership. The University of Barcelona's master's program in Digital Content Management strategically prepares students for this dynamic field through practical projects and real-world collaborations. While traditional employment offers a solid foundation, freelancing emerges as a viable path with gained experience. Continuous learning, a robust digital presence, and a well-crafted portfolio are essential for success. The industry's shift towards AI and data analytics underscores the need for ongoing skill development, positioning graduates to meet the evolving demands of the digital landscape.