

Top Skills Employers Want in 2021

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20 Hard Skills That Will Be In
Demand in 2021 and Beyond

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INTRODUCTION

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with technological advancement, there has been a great shift in the professional world resulting in a wave of change in the employment sector.

According to the World Economic Forum in the [Future of Jobs Report 2020](#), the job market is constantly evolving with a great increase in technology-driven careers resulting in the emergence of roles that are more adapted to the new division of labor between humans, machines, and algorithms.

According to the report, it is estimated that, by 2025, 85 million jobs may be displaced by a shift in the division of labor between humans and machines.

Data from the Forum's Future of Jobs Survey shows that more companies expect to restructure their workforce in response to new emerging technologies.

This means some positions being occupied by humans and job functions being carried out by humans will be replaced by machines.

For job seekers, this means making conscious efforts and taking adequate steps to learn these new emerging skills required in this competitive work environment.

Determining the skills in-demand can help in choosing a clear and relevant career path that will give you a competitive edge over other candidates and job seekers.

To help you remain a competitive job candidate, here are some of the top skills you should prepare for in 2021 to land you that dream job:

1. UI/UX Design
2. Business Analysis
3. Software Development
4. Web Development
5. Mobile App Development
6. Digital Marketing
7. SEO/SEM Marketing
8. Data Analytics
9. Video Production/Editing
10. Video Animation
11. Project Management
12. Database Development/Management
13. Creative Copywriting
14. Content Writing
15. Customer Success Specialist
16. Cloud Computing

1. UI/UX Design

The “UI” in UI design stands for “User Interface.” A user interface is the point of interaction between a user and a digital device or product- like the touchpad of a smartphone. In relation to websites and applications, user interface considers the look, feel, and interactivity of the product. The user interface is a graphical layout of an application. It consists of the buttons users click on, the text they read, the images, sliders, text-entry fields, and every other item users interact with, like the screen layout, transitions, and every form of visual element.

UI designers are like graphic designers, they are concerned with aesthetics and ensure that the application’s interface is visually appealing to the users.

On the other hand, the term “User Experience” which is credited to Don Norman, a cognitive scientist and co-founder of the Nielsen Norman Group Design Consultancy, refers to the interaction between a user and a product or service.

In his words, here’s how Don Norman describes user experience:

“User experience encompasses all aspects of the end-users’ interaction with the company, its services, and its products.”

User experience is basically concerned with a user's experience with an application. Is the experience smooth or confusing? Is navigating the app easy and straightforward or does it feel like a struggle? User experience is determined by how easy or difficult it is for users to interact with the interface elements that the UI designers have created.

With the advancement in technology and an introduction to remote work, a lot of companies have had to move their businesses online and this creates a need for building products that will make this shift feasible and effective.

Organizations need more expertise to help them design and build more people-centric products and experiences and thus create job opportunities for candidates with the required skills.

As a job seeker, it is important to take advantage of this opportunity by advancing and expanding your skills.

Some available sites to learn these skills include:

- Interaction Design: Interface, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- Adobe XD Essential Training: Design, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- UX Design: 1 Overview, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- UI/UX Design Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)

- User Experience Research and Design Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)
- Introduction to User Experience Design, [available on Coursera](#)
- Interaction Design Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)
- Human-Computer Interaction, [available on edX](#)
- Design Thinking: UX and Advanced Topics, [available on edX](#)
- User Experience Design Essentials - Adobe XD UI UX Design, [available on Udemy](#)

2. Business Analysis

Business analysis is a research discipline of identifying and analyzing business needs and proffering solutions to business problems. Companies are constantly looking for candidates with strong investigation and problem-solving skills to make efficient business decisions. It is one of the hard skills that every candidate should have.

Take a leap in your career and search for available business analysis courses on the following sites:

- Business Analysis Foundations, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- Learning Digital Business Analysis, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)

- Business Analytics Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)
- Business Statistics and Analysis Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)
- Introduction to Business Analytics: Communicating with Data, [available on Coursera](#)
- Business Analytics, [available on edX](#)
- Business Analysis Fundamentals, [available on Udemy](#)
- Fundamentals of Business Analysis, [available on Udemy](#)

3. Software Development

According to IBM research, software development refers to a set of computer-related activities dedicated to the process of creating, designing, deploying, and supporting software. It involves conceiving, specifying, designing, programming, documenting, testing, and bug fixing involved in creating and maintaining applications, frameworks, or other software components (Wikipedia). There are three basic types of software development which include; system software, application software, and programming software. **System software** involves providing core functions such as operating systems, disk management, utilities, hardware management, and other operational necessities. **Application software**

involves helping users perform tasks on applications like mobile apps and on the web. **Programming software** involves creating programming tools to be used for developing other software. Software development is a broad field that constitutes other key areas that will be discussed subsequently.

4. Web Development

Web development is the process of building and developing a website for the Internet (World Wide Web) or an intranet (a private network). Web development is not concerned with the design of the website, but rather, the coding and programming that enables the website to function.

Web development has three basic functional areas: client-side coding (frontend), server-side coding (backend), and database technology.

Frontend development refers to everything that the user interacts with. It involves converting data to a graphical interface, through the use of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, so that users can view and interact with that data.

Backend development is basically behind the scenes actions that ensure the smooth running on the client-side. It is responsible for storing and organizing

data, and ensuring that everything on the client-side runs smoothly. It does this by communicating with the frontend.

Database technology takes information, stores, organizes, and processes it in a way that enables users to easily and intuitively go back and find details they are searching for, organize, edit, and save them.

The frontend, backend, and database technology all work together to build and run a fully functional website or application, and these three layers form the foundation of web development.

Web development today is a skill in-demand, thanks to the emergence of new web technologies and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) which let websites “plugin” to other useful features.

Find available courses on web development:

- Introduction to the SQL, [available on Khan Academy](#)
- Introduction to Computer Science and Programming, [available on MIT OpenCourseWare](#)
- Programming for Everybody, [available on Coursera](#)

- Getting Started with the Web, [available on Mozilla Developer Network](#)
- Introductory guides for these top programming languages: [python](#), [Ruby](#), [JavaScript \(MEAN\)](#), [NET Core](#), [Java](#), and [React](#).

5. **Mobile App Development**

Mobile App Development involves creating applications to run on mobile devices, such as Android devices, iPhones, and the Windows 10 platform.

Mobile development encompasses developing apps for phones, tablets, smartwatches, and all other kinds of wearable devices that run some kind of mobile operating system.

As mobile devices are becoming a major part of our lives, mobile development is arguably the future of mobile technology and job candidates ought to take advantage of this and learn a skill in mobile development.

Find available courses on mobile development on:

- Mobile App Development, [available on Udemy](#)
- ios App Development Course, [available on Coursera](#)
- Certificate in Computer Science and Mobile Apps, [available on edX](#)
- Cross-platform Mobile App Development, [available at Charles Sturt University.](#)
- Mobile App Development with React Native, [available on Harvard-edX](#)
- Developing Android Apps by Google, [available on Udacity](#)
- Android App Development Courses, [available on google developers training](#)

6. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a form of marketing that utilizes the internet and other digital media platforms and devices to promote products and services. Digital marketing takes advantage of popular digital media channels like email, social media, and search engines to help businesses connect with their target customers in all possible regions.

As the era of word-of-mouth marketing is fast becoming out of place, a lot of businesses are seeking to promote their products and services online and this is where digital marketing comes in handy. Digital marketing seeks to sell goods, services, and products online.

This is a skill that is fast becoming an in-demand skill, as a lot of brands are moving their businesses online.

Take the next step in your career, find available courses on digital marketing here:

- Fundamentals of Digital Marketing, [available on Google](#)
- Digital Marketing Specialization by University of Illinois, [available on Coursera](#)
- Digital Marketing Fundamentals by the University of Edinburgh, [available on EdX](#)
- Digital Skills: Digital Marketing, [available on FutureLearn](#)
- Free Digital Marketing Basics Course, [available on Udemy](#)
- Digital Marketing Association Certification Course, [available on Udemy](#)

7. SEO/SEM Marketing

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) are two broad fields under digital marketing.

Search Engine Optimization involves improving a web page to increase its visibility for relevant searches on various search engines like google. It is the practice of increasing the quality and quantity of website traffic, as well as exposure to your brand or business through non-paid search engine results. The better visibility a page has in search results, the more likely it is to garner attention and attract prospective customers for the business. SEO is concerned with making the content of a web page attractive by editing its texts, graphics, and videos.

The whole idea of search engine optimization is to create relevant content that will increase the overall traffic to the website.

Search engine marketing on the other hand is a paid SEO Strategy used to boost a brand's visibility, so the brand can appear in top positions on search engines. Advertisers bid on keywords that users of search engines such as Google might enter when looking for certain products or services, which gives

the advertiser the opportunity for their ads to appear alongside results for those top search queries.

As a lot of businesses are moving online, brands are prioritizing digital channels to connect with target customers and drive bottom-line growth for their business. As a result, the demand for high-quality digital marketing talent, which includes search engine optimization and search engine marketing, has continually become more prominent.

If you're eager to start learning the fundamentals of SEO and Search engine marketing, or you're ready to take your existing skills to the next level, check out these great resources.

- Free SEO training course, [available on Hubspot Academy](#)
- SEO 2020: Complete SEO Training, [available on Udemy](#)
- Google My Business by University of California, [available on Coursera](#)
- Search Engine Marketing Fundamentals by University of California, [available on Coursera](#)
- SEO toolkit course, [available on SEMrush Academy](#)
- SEO Essentials Certification, [available on Moz Academy](#)

8. Data Science & Analytics

Data analytics is the process of analyzing data to discover useful information, informing conclusions, and supporting decision-making (Wikipedia).

The role of a digital marketer has evolved as brands no longer rely on intuition in making informed business decisions. Brands have become more data-driven throughout the decision-making process, as a result of the availability of tools for tracking and measuring data.

With this data-driven mentality, the skill set required by digital marketers has evolved, becoming a combination of a creative enthusiast and a data strategist.

As data science has been recognized as one of the most in-demand skills, marketers must now understand the influence that analytics will play within their day-to-day duties.

If you are interested in taking the time to explore some of the necessary tools for marketing analytics, here are a few recommendations:

- Analytics: [Google Analytics](#)
- Social listening: [Sprout Social](#), [Meltwater](#)
- Data visualization: [Google Data Studio](#), [Tableau](#)

- Event tracking: [Segment](#), [Amplitude](#), [Hotjar](#), [MixPanel](#), [Google Tag Manager](#)
- Data enrichment: [Clearbit](#), [LeadGenius](#), [Lotame](#)

With the increased demand for highly-skilled data analysts, there's a barrage of new resources to help you get up to speed.

The best marketing analytics courses in 2020 include:

- Marketing Analytics by University of Virginia, [available on Coursera](#)
- Learning Data Analytics, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- The Complete SQL Bootcamp, [available on Udemy](#)
- MicroMaster Program in Marketing Analytics by Berkeley University, [available on EdX](#)

9. Video Production/Editing

Video production is simply the process of creating video content either for film production, video advertisements, or news production.

Consumers have an insatiable appetite for video content, and as a result, video production continues to be a priority for companies.

Creating and editing videos is the essence of the media digital world. This skill would certainly boost your career as it is one of the most in-demand skills in Nigeria.

The ability to record, edit, and produce a video is a valuable modern skill. You can learn the basics of video editing at home with a camera, a computer, a good microphone, and video editing software. Many professionals use paid applications, but you can also choose from several free programs if you're just starting.

Available video production and editing courses available on top sites include:

- Social Media Video for Business and Marketing, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)

- Connecting with Your Audience Using Video, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- Social Media Video Strategy: Weekly Bites, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- The Complete Video Production Bootcamp, [available on Udemy](#)
- Complete Filmmaker Guide: Become an Incredible Video Creator, [available on Udemy](#)
- Mastering Final Cut Pro, [available on Coursera](#)

10. Video Animation

Video animation is the process of capturing sequential, static images and photos and playing them in rapid succession. Animation basically manipulates figures to make them appear as moving images.

Video animation is fast becoming an in-demand skill. As a lot of people are getting bored with video adverts, advertisers are creating a twist to advertising by infusing cartoons and comic videos in advertising videos.

This increased demand is also due to the growing need for visual effects in television, movies, video games, and online outlets. Animation skills are most commonly required for creative and technical occupations, such as computer software engineers, multimedia artists, graphic designers, and web developers.

Find available courses on video animation here:

- Animation and CGI Motion, [available on EdX](#)
- Introduction to Programming and Animation, [available on Coursera](#)
- Interactive Computer Graphics by the University of Tokyo, [available on Coursera](#)
- Simple Character Animation: Walk cycle in AE with No Keyframes, [available on Skillshare](#)
- Explore Animation, [available on Class central](#)

11. Project Management

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to achieve goals and meet specified success criteria at a specified time. The concept of project management is to plan, carry out, and monitor a particular project from start to finish before handing it over to the client.

As people are getting increasingly busy handling some of their projects, outsourcing becomes a port of call and this is where project managers come in handy.

The best available courses in project management include:

- Business Fundamentals: Project Management, [available on FutureLearn](#)
- Project Management: Beyond the Basics, [available on FutureLearn](#)
- Fundamentals of Project Planning and Management, [available on FutureLearn](#)
- Foundations of Project Management, [available on FutureLearn](#)

- Project Management Principles, Practices and Systems, [available on FutureLearn](#)
- Introduction to Project Management by the University of Adelaide, [available on EdX](#)
- Project Management Principles and Practices Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)
- Project Management Foundations: Schedules, [available on LinkedIn learning](#)

12. Database Development and Management

Database development and management explain all aspects of database design, access, implementation, application development, and management, as well as data analysis for business intelligence.

Every company needs a database to create and maintain its records as well as tracking changes. They need people to develop this database and manage it, especially if it's a large company. This skill requires a lot of expertise in data mining, sorting, and management.

This niche is rare and so are its specialists and it is important to take advantage of this, by taking courses in database development and development.

- Database Design and Management, [available on Udemy](#)
- Introduction to Databases and SQL Querying, [available on Udemy](#)
- Database Management Essentials by University of Colorado, [available on Coursera](#)
- SQL Essential Training, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)

13. Creative Copywriting

Creative copywriting is the act of writing texts to market a product or service, or any other form of marketing.

Creative copywriting isn't all about writing, but writing to promote a product or service in a way that resonates and is appealing to the target customers.

Creative copywriting requires a lot of creativity and strategic brainstorming of

the client's brief and discovering the unique selling point of the product or service to be used as a marketing strategy.

Find available courses on creative copywriting here:

- Copywriting Secrets: How to Write Copy That Sells, [available on Udemy](#)
- [Copyblogger Membership](#) by Copyblogger
- [The Ultimate Guide to No-Pain Copywriting \(or, Every Copywriting Formula Ever\)](#) by Copyhackers
- [Copyhackers Free Worksheets](#) by Copyhackers
- [The Definitive Guide to Copywriting](#) from QuickSprout (by Neil Patel and Joseph Putnam)
- [3 Tip Mini Copywriting Course](#) by Copywrite Matters
- [A Free Copywriting Course \(Learn Copywriting in a Few Minutes\)](#) by Kopywriting Kourse
- [Quick Course on Effective Website Copywriting](#) by CXL Institute

14. Content Writing

Content writing is the process of planning, creating, and editing relevant content for websites. It includes writing blog posts, articles, speeches, newsletters, posts on social media platforms, scripts for television shows, and podcasts.

Content writing isn't just about "writing". It involves keyword research to improve the readability of your post. Content writing also involves carrying out extensive research on the selected topic before writing. To be a successful content writer, you have to understand the audience for whom you are writing. If you know who your readers are, you can write what they want to read. You write for your audience and not for yourself or your company or brand.

Excelling as a content writer also involves checking out what your competitors are writing on. Content writing also involves creating outlines which give you a better structure for your writing. Content writers also have to exhibit a high level of creativity in crafting catchy titles, as the headline/title is probably the first thing readers see before making the decision to read the entire content.

Find available courses on content writing here:

- Good With Words: Writing and Editing Specialization by University of Michigan, [available on Coursera](#)
- Complete Web Content Writing Masterclass, [available on SkillShare](#)
- Become a Better Blogger: Content Planning, [available on Skillshare](#)
- Content Marketing Certification Course, [available on HubSpot](#)
- Writing for the Web, [available on Open2Study](#)
- SEO Training, [available on Udemy](#)
- Learning to Write for the Web, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)

15. Customer Success Specialist

Customer success involves predicting customer challenges or questions and proactively developing solutions to those problems and answers to those questions before they arise. It is a long-term professional and step-by-step strategy for maximizing customer values.

A customer success specialist is involved in developing and maintaining long-term relationships between an organization and its customers.

These professionals are driven to uncover the root cause of a problem, quickly analyze potential solutions, and make clear and informed recommendations. The best customer success specialists demonstrate excellent communication, organization, and time management skills, and can effectively handle several diverse and complex problems at the same time.

The survival of a business depends largely on keeping the customers satisfied, hence customer success is a skill that is and will always be relevant.

Find available customer success courses here:

- Customer Success Management Fundamentals, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- Customer: How to Manage Customer Feedback, [available on Udemy](#)
- Sales: Customer Success, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)

16. Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is the delivery of computing services, including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence over the internet (“the cloud”) to offer faster innovation, flexible resources, and economies of scale. (Microsoft Azure).

Whilst the traditional idea of local storage for files has stuck around in some parts of the world, the notion is slowly changing, and cloud computing services are becoming more prevalent.

Cloud computing services use networks of remote servers hosted on the Internet to store and manage data rather than using a personal computer or local server. Developers involved in cloud computing software development develop the software that powers cloud storage applications, such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), OneDrive storage, and GitHub ([Hyperiondev.com](https://hyperiondev.com)).

Today, companies are built and run on the cloud. They need talent who have the skills to help them drive technical architecture, design, and delivery of cloud systems like Microsoft Azure.

Skills in cloud computing are in great demand due to the increasing number of companies moving business functions to the cloud—the global network of remote servers. Cloud engineers are the people responsible for developing and managing these cloud computing systems so end users can easily store files and back up their data.

The introduction of cloud computing in Nigeria has recorded a significant increase as a result of the loss of data stored or backed up in physical or local servers as well as the growing or fluctuating demand in bandwidth.

If you're eager to start learning cloud computing, or you're ready to take your existing skills to the next level, check out these great resources.

- Learning Cloud Computing: Core Concepts, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- Learning Cloud Computing: Cloud Security, [available on LinkedIn Learning](#)
- Distributed Systems & Cloud Computing with Java, [available on Udemy](#)
- AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner Ultimate Exam Training 2020, [available on Udemy](#)
- Cloud Computing Specialization, [available on Coursera](#)

- Cloud Computing Basics (Cloud 101), [available on Coursera](#)
- Cloud Computing Concepts, Part 1, [available on Coursera](#)
- UMGC and USMx's Cloud Computing, [available on edX](#)

As the world and the workforce continue to evolve rapidly, it is quite clear that we all need to develop alongside it, if we're going to keep up with the changes. Whether you are looking to advance your career, or you are a learning and development professional seeking to fill your company's skill gaps, these lists are a great start to conduct an informal audit and begin to skill up in the gaps.