

# Executive Summary



**Global Survey:**  
Companies are  
unprepared for  
the arrival of a true  
digital workplace

Access to work emails on mobile devices, using voiceover IP at work or tracking company news on social media are second nature in today's world. Some might say that together these elements are enough to constitute a digital workplace. We disagree.

## Executive Summary

### A dramatically changing workplace

In 2013, Avanade explored the four technology trends that were driving changes and opportunities in the way that we work and pushing organizations to redesign the processes they used to conduct business (see [Work Redesigned: a strategy for seizing new opportunities](#)). Today the focus has shifted to the impact of digitization on both the workplace itself, and the roles that people will play within that digital workplace.

Will the traditional office as we know it exist in the future? What will the digital workforce of the future look like? What are the business benefits of a truly digital workplace? In our latest research, we explored these topics and others. We wanted to understand how companies define a digital workplace, the benefits that leading-edge companies are realizing, the challenges that they foresee or may have encountered, and the changes that they anticipate on the horizon.

The key question that remains is: Are organizations ready? Based on our research findings, the short answer is no.



To start with, there is widespread confusion in the marketplace about what a digital workplace actually is. Eighty four percent of respondents incorrectly believe that email and social media capabilities are all that is required for a digital workplace. We define a digital workplace as one that empowers employees — regardless of their location — to drive business advantage by using digital tools and intelligent context. Simply put, employees can access the information and resources that they need anytime and from wherever they are, in order to do their jobs more effectively. It can even provide the intelligence to make relevant information find the employee at the relevant moment. And the benefits are real.

### The journey to digital has already started and is generating business benefits

The research showcased the compelling business results realized by organizations that have adopted digital tools:

- 67 percent of respondents cited increased productivity.
- 53 percent saw increased employee engagement.
- 43 percent experienced revenue growth as a direct result.


Eighty-eight percent of companies that are self-described as more profitable than their competitors have adopted at least one technology solution associated with a digital workplace — such as data and analytics and social collaboration tools. This compared to 79 percent of less profitable companies.

The findings also showed that companies are starting to build their digital future step-by-step. Interestingly, although respondents acknowledged the eventual demise of the traditional office, employees at only one in four companies (28 percent) can access software and applications seamlessly outside of a physical office location today. That said, a majority of companies have already taken small but important steps, adopting building blocks such as connectivity solutions (73 percent) and data and analytics tools (62 percent), among others.


Additionally, respondents indicated that they are planning to invest in building their digital workplace in the next 12 to 24 months. The focus will be on social collaboration (69 percent), business insights and information (77 percent) and IT infrastructure (78 percent).


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 What did 67% say drove an increase in productivity? **A digital workplace.**

 Creating a **digital workplace** takes four years. **Have you already started?**

 Are email and social media the same as a **digital workplace**? **Think again.**

 Today's teenagers will have jobs that don't exist today. **Will you be ready to hire?**

 Organizations are building digital workplaces today. **Will you be left behind?**

## Will your organization get left behind? And what can you do about it?

A clear insight from the research is that companies believe an entirely new work environment is on the horizon. In fact, 91 percent of respondents believe that today's teenagers will be working in roles that do not exist today and another 72 percent agree that the traditional office will be obsolete within four years. Nearly a third (31 percent) of respondents also believe that their company's technology diminishes creative thinking.

Despite the clear path ahead, half of respondents (48 percent) indicated that the cost of digital workplace solutions is likely to make their route to a fully digital workplace a four-year journey. What can companies do to speed adoption and transformation?

## Change the game with a connected workforce

Realizing technology investments with strategic objectives is the critical first step. For example, 75 percent of respondents indicated that digital workplace capabilities (such as tools that prioritize company email or proactively suggest products to customers) would significantly benefit their organization. Yet only 44 percent of companies have adopted these tools.

More specifically, 63 percent of companies wrestle with enduring issues such as retention and recruitment that can be addressed through investments in social collaboration capabilities. Yet 73 percent of companies aren't making investments in social collaboration technologies a top priority, and 31 percent aren't making them a priority at all. Being able to attract and retain the right talent to grow your business, including a younger, more mobile and socially connected workforce, is more important than ever given the war for talent in the marketplace.



Is your organization at risk of being left behind? Our "Views from an IT Adviser" section outlines specific steps you can take in order to realize the benefits from digital workplace solutions.

## Views from an IT Adviser

To realize the business benefits of a truly digital workplace, organizations need to use digital workplace technologies to create intelligent context around people – effectively tailoring business processes and work to the context of the employee's industry, role, location and tasks.

To do that, we recommend the following steps to help you manage your journey to a digital workplace:

**Focus on context:** Set clear goals on what benefits a Digital Workplace has to achieve and focus first on key workforces or teams such as sales or field services. Determine what specific information, tools and intelligence they require to make them as effective as possible in their roles.

**Deliver a great user experience:** Enable employees with "anywhere, anytime, on any device" accessibility to the information that they need. Develop consumer-grade applications for getting the job done.

**Manage the change:** Emphasize the clear benefits for employees of a digital workplace, using analytics, gamification and recognition. Set clear expectations and track the results of digital workplace deployment.

Avanade is at the forefront of leveraging new technologies like Windows 10 and the intelligent context offered by technologies like Office Graph to drive real business value and employee engagement for our clients. We recommend a digital workplace workshop and assessments, which bring key stakeholders into targeted discussions. This approach helps participants better understand business goals, share the journeys of other leading organizations and showcase the power of the possible, including live demos of capabilities available today.

For more information, visit [www.avanade.com/digitalworkplace](http://www.avanade.com/digitalworkplace)

## Survey Methodology

The Avanade Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research ([www.wakefieldresearch.com](http://www.wakefieldresearch.com)) as an online survey to 500 C-level executives and IT decision-makers in the following countries Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. The survey was conducted between May 14 and May 28, 2015 using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



### About Avanade

Avanade helps clients realize results in a digital world through business technology solutions, cloud and managed services that combine insight, innovation and expertise focused on Microsoft technologies. Our people have helped organizations in all industries improve business agility, employee productivity and customer loyalty. Avanade combines business, technical and industry expertise with the rigor of an industrialized delivery model to provide and deploy high quality solutions—on premises, cloud-based or outsourced. Avanade, which is majority owned by Accenture, was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 25,000 professionals in more than 22 countries. Additional information can be found at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com).

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