From Inclusive Design to Equitable Implementation: Learning and Employment Records

Overview

How can LERs achieve wide-scale adoption? What do people need to know to effectively use them? While these questions are being discussed among researchers, technology developers, funders, policymakers—and others exploring the integration of LER technology—they are still broadly unanswered among the most important stakeholder group: LER workers and learners, or end-users. Few end-users understand the value of this emerging technology and know how to access and use it to their advantage.

Building on the development of Inclusive Design Principles, this project prioritizes the inclusion of end-users as co-leaders. We aim to establish a LER Professional Learning Community with and for LER pilot end users. We will collaborate with LER pilot projects to engage end-users from existing pilots via the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's T3 Innovation Network and other partners, prioritizing Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) learners and workers. Our goal is to understand what is needed for learners to access and use LERs effectively, documenting issues related to implementation including access to digital devices, broadband, digital skills, and hidden costs. As a result, Digital Promise aims to co-create a toolkit for LER onboarding and orientation, including an inventory of digital skills and glossary of terms, designed for education institutions, employers, and others supporting LER implementation.

Project Objectives
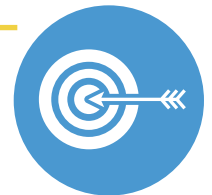
1. Establish the LER Professional Learning Community with and for LER pilot end-users
2. Develop a framework for engaging LER end-users in research and facilitate initial LER user research studies with partners; and
3. Surface and advance equitable implementation practices through targeted communications to technology developers, education and training providers, and others exploring the use of LERs in the new skills-based economy.

Expected Impact on LER End Users

In our recent research and development project, frontline workers demonstrated significant interest in the concept of LERs, but expressed uncertainty in terms of the value and use of the tool for promoting education and career opportunities. For this project, current and potential LER end users will gain:

- paid consulting experience to improve LER design
- access to information and resources related to LER use, including direct lines of communication with developers, providers, peers, and Digital Promise staff; and
- increased understanding of LER use, value, and challenges.

Ways to Get Involved

The premise of Digital Promise's Center for Inclusive Innovation is that existing research and development models for solving challenges in education often fail to meet the needs of the people they are designed to serve: historically marginalized populations, such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), as well as people experiencing poverty. For this project, we aim to prioritize learners as co-leaders alongside with LER pilots and technical advisors.

Technical Advisory Group

Digital Promise will be putting together a Technical Advisory Group to advise on:

- methods and tools to engage LER end-users in research, e.g. capturing perspectives, learning, challenges, and experiences in using this technology;
- identifying the digital literacy skills and technical terms that learners need to access and use LER technology; and
- developing a LER onboarding and orientation toolkit for current and potential end users. We will prioritize the inclusion of Black, Latina/o, and People of Color.

LER Pilot Projects

We define a LER pilot as an emerging project focused on developing use cases, harmonizing public-private data standards, and processes for sharing records between employers and education, training, military, or credentialing partners. We are currently seeking to recruit up to four LER pilots who are using real end user data in order to:

- support with recruitment for end-users for the LER Advisory and Professional Learning Community;
- participate in a preliminary LER user study; and
- contribute to the development of a LER onboarding and orientation toolkit for current and potential end users. Partners will be compensated for their participation.

LER End-User Advisory Group

We will be recruiting up to 8 end-user advisors from each pilot to co-facilitate professional learning community events. We will prioritize the inclusion of Black, Latina/o, and People of Color involved in LER pilot projects. Advisors will earn consulting rates to:

- attend planning meetings,
- review research materials and promotional materials for clarity and cultural relevance; and
- collaborate in planning and hosting professional learning events.
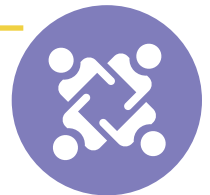
LER End-User Professional Learning Community Members

In collaboration with LER pilots and End-User Advisors, we aim to recruit a sizable cohort of LER end-users who are currently involved in LER pilots to be part of a professional learning community. Participants will receive stipends to engage in facilitated conversations, polls, and surveys to deepen our understanding of user perceptions of existing LER technology as well as perceived needs for additional tools, resources, and services. We will prioritize the inclusion of Black, Latina/o, and People of Color who are involved in LER pilot projects.