

These four technical skills could make you more appealing to employers this year

Hiring managers are looking for skills in cloud computing, artificial intelligence/machine learning, social media, and product management.



Ebony Jean-Louis (right), a graduate of the Resilient Coders program, talks with a student in a recent cohort. Beyond technical skills, participants get coaching on soft skills such as interview prep. Courtesy of Resilient Coders

by Christine M. Johnson-Hall, For The Inquirer
Updated Jan 7, 2023

Despite what you may have read, robots are not coming for your job.

But if you're job-hunting or want to keep the job you have, then automation certainly is in your future, if it's not already here.

The pandemic drove technological innovation, supercharging remote work, transforming education, fueling e-commerce, accelerating automation and machine learning. Almost every business sector has felt the impact, and it's likely to continue. Workers from restaurants to executive suites now use apps and tools to streamline their processes.

Four job skills — all of which include automation — are now the most highly sought by hiring managers and companies: cloud computing, artificial intelligence/machine learning, social media, and product management, according to a "state of skills" report released Dec. 1 by the Burning Glass Institute, the Business Higher Education Forum, and Wiley. The Burning Glass Institute, based in Philadelphia, advances data-driven research on the future of work.

In some industries, up to a third of all job postings list these four skills, which the report calls "high-demand, durable, and accessible."

"They are showing up in surging numbers across the workforce, affecting an ever-widening diversity of jobs and industries and, together with similar skill sets, are entirely transforming work as we know it," the report said.

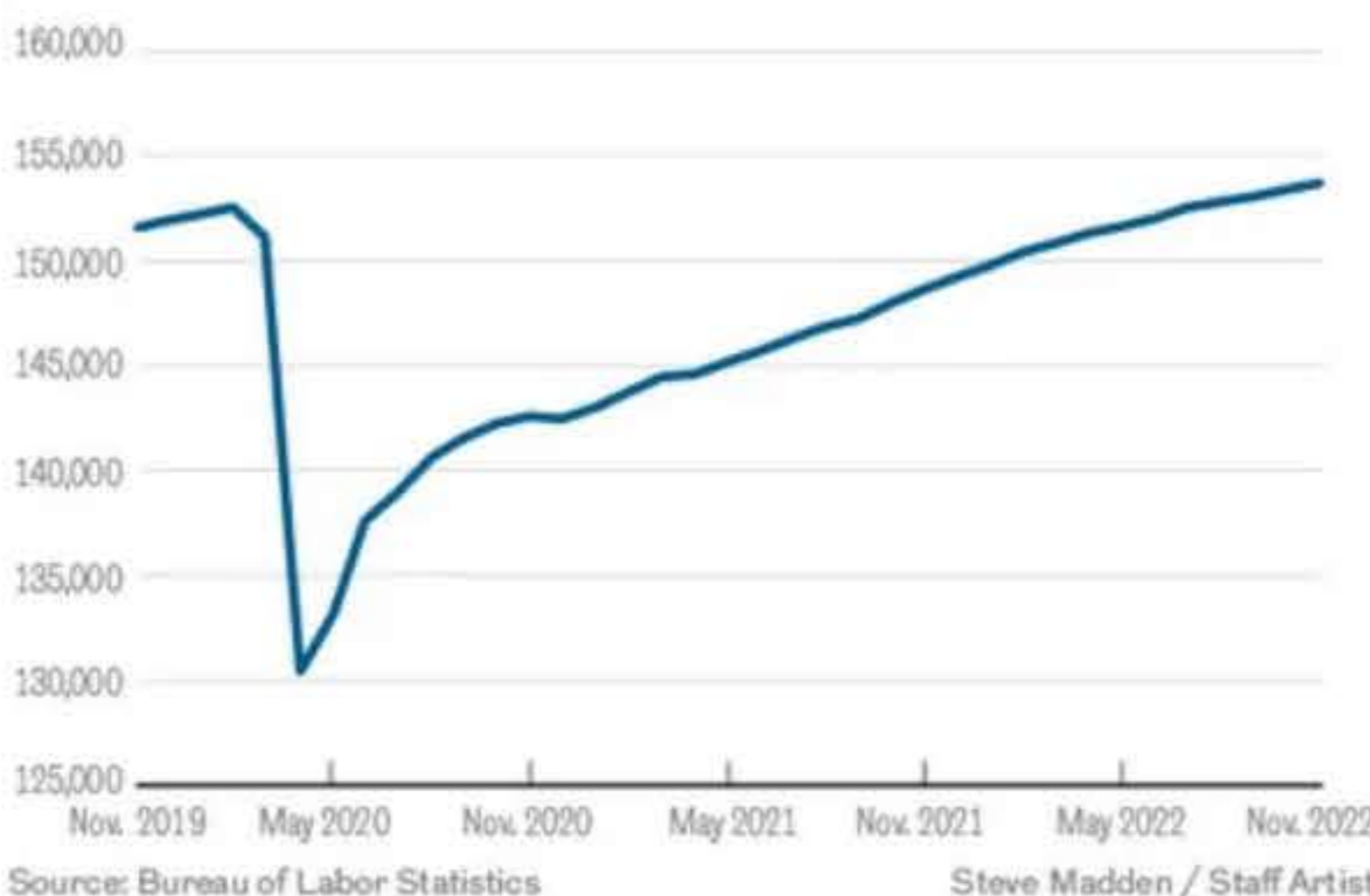
Automation uses traditional software to streamline and analyze data (think Calendly and Mailchimp). Artificial intelligence "understands" data (Siri and Alexa). And machine learning powers image recognition, statistical arbitrage, and predictive data to increase sales (eBay and Tinder).

Mastering these skills will increase job seekers' salaries and mobility, the report concluded. At entry level, those with artificial intelligence/machine learning skills can make \$15,000 more than other hires.

In the uncertainty of 2020, jobs fell off a cliff and then built a slow, steady recovery and remained somewhat resilient. Recent layoffs at Twitter, Amazon, Meta, and other tech companies suggest there may have been some over hiring, but these evolving tech skills remain in demand.

The Economy Continues To Add Jobs

Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 263,000 in November. Notable job gains occurred in leisure and hospitality, health care, and government. Employment declined in retail trade and in transportation and warehousing.



For many companies, "the workforce they have may no longer be the workforce they need," said Matt Sigelman, Burning Glass Institute president and a coauthor of the report. "When the average role has seen 37% of its skills replaced in five years, it's likely that most of a firm's workers are at least a few skills behind the leading edge."

"Upskilling" and retraining will be important to keep the workforce relevant and happy and businesses competitive, he said.

At the same time, companies still want workers with foundational skills — "the ability to set and achieve goals, manage projects, make sense of data, communicate effectively, and work well with teams," the report found, adding that these skills are "in high demand, lead to higher pay, afford workers greater mobility, and increase in value over time."

"Workers and learners are in the catbird seat," Sigelman said. "Companies have to get ahead of the curve, skate to where the puck is going."

The smartest companies, he said, are "developing a supply chain of talent."

Resilient Coders, a nonprofit based in Boston with a branch in Philadelphia, describes its mission as providing training and mobility to young people of color in what has been a white-male dominated field. Temple University graduate Ayanna Lott-Pollard runs one of the nonprofit's tech boot camps from offices in CIC Philadelphia in University City.

"Our personal why is to change the landscape of a generation. To nullify poverty," said Lott-Pollard, the executive director in Philadelphia.

People ages 18-30 interested in learning to code [apply online](#). Resilient Coders is scheduled to hold an invite-only recruitment day Jan. 7. Its next cohort launches Feb. 13. Resilient Coders accepts 45 students per cohort, with two cohorts a year. Classroom training is full-time and all virtual, and students are paid \$2,000 a month during their 20-week boot camp.



Recent graduates of the nonprofit coding training include (from left) Jerry Lafume, Erica Mendez, Rodas Ghideli, Anthony Salmeron, and Stacy Lafume. Students prepared a full-stack web application to show off on Demo Day. Courtesy of Resilient Coders

They learn object-oriented programming principles that are the building blocks to Cloud skills, Lott-Pollard said. Students prepare a full-stack web application to show off at its remote Demo Day.

Companies partner with the coders to develop their soft skills, conduct interview prep, and hold mock interviews.

Graduates of the program typically earn the title junior software engineer, commanding annual salaries of up to \$94,000 out the door, Lott-Pollard said. They have landed jobs at companies including Amazon, Audible, Wayfair, Constant Contact, Athenahealth, and Humana, as well as a host of start-ups.

Locally, Independence Blue Cross and MacGuyver Tech serve as partners. Companies pay Resilient Coders a \$15,000 placement fee per graduate hire.

"We believe in making sure people get a chance. Resilient Coders does a great job of standing students up and getting them prepared," said Steve "Mac" McKeon, CEO of MacGuyver Tech and MacNerd (which designs secure, transparent, and powerful utilities on the blockchain) in Delaware County. MacGuyver Tech hired five Resilient Coder graduates helping it to double its all-remote workforce to 23.

McKeon is also a member of Diversity in Blockchain, a nonprofit group committed to creating equal, open, and inclusive opportunities in the blockchain industry.

Job recruiter Brady Myers helps veterans and first responders find jobs at places ranging from mom-and-pop shops all the way up to NASA. Myers works for CoreHire by Radius 180, a spin-off of Radius 180 managed IT services, based in Cherry Hill.

He specializes in IT, engineering, and government staffing and partners with [Skillbridge](#), a program helping military members find career options when they leave active service.

Myers said companies that don't act quickly are missing out. He was able to match a software developer with a company that offered "amazing benefits, a hybrid schedule, allowed dogs in the office," and a good salary. From interview to offer: one week

Published Jan. 7, 2023