Digitization of Work

By late 2020, nearly 57% of American workers were remote at least part of the time. Though many have and will return to more frequent in-person work, employee and employer sentiments and plans point to the potential durability of remote work trends:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Sentiments and Plans</th>
<th>Employer Sentiments and Plans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87% want remote work at least 1X/week</td>
<td>87% are adjusting their real estate strategies, including pulling back from premier business districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nearly half of workers report saving money and time by working remotely</td>
<td>78% see remote collaboration as an enduring workplace trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-in-3 would not work for an employer who required them on-site, full time</td>
<td>61% see low-density workplaces as the future reality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued adoption of remote work could impact real estate markets, migration and transportation patterns, and economic development opportunities. However, these impacts will differ across households, businesses, and communities based on varying abilities to work remotely and a host of cost and quality of life considerations. Planning for a resilient future requires considering the effects that remote work may have on communities and how these impacts may be shaped by policy.

Digitization of Services

E-Commerce

New and emerging delivery models have opened the door to real-time fulfillment of a wider range of goods and services in a growing number of U.S. locations. Recent trends and forecasts include:

- E-Commerce accounted for 15.7% of U.S. retail sales at the height of the pandemic—up from 11.4% pre-pandemic—and global forecasts project a 25% share by 2024.
- An estimated 80% of global consumers are now using contactless payment systems.
- May 2021 data indicated “sales for meal delivery services grew 17% year-over-year.”
Digital Healthcare

Telehealth services in Delaware increased significantly during the pandemic, with claims for primary physician services delivered by telehealth increasing from approximately 10,000 in 2019 to just under 200,000 in 2020. As a result of the Telehealth Access Preservation and Modernization Act, telehealth will continue to be a healthcare option for Delaware patients.

Digital Government

While governments digitized services and operations during the pandemic as a public health measure, increased digitization in other sectors points toward a growing and continued expectation for digital delivery of public services. Digitization can optimize services, facilitate public engagement, and better communicate and track the purpose and outcomes of policies, while also enabling recovery from destructive events. Core components of resilient digital governments include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Digitized Government</th>
<th>Why does it matter in the context of resilience?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Government Outreach</td>
<td>Cultivates collaborative work, streamlines communication among stakeholders, and gathers information from traditionally hard-to-reach demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Accessibility</td>
<td>Enables greater engagement with government activities and resources through venues such as digital public meetings and digitized services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimized Government</td>
<td>Simplifies and speeds government processes, frameworks, and metrics to make government more responsive to citizen needs and help agencies access concrete data to plan for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-Driven Policy and Assessment</td>
<td>Allows governments to collect higher quality data on the implementation of specific policy initiatives to better track, evaluate, and communicate outcomes</td>
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</table>

Opportunities to Plan, Invest, and Act on Digitization

Most signs point toward digitization being a significant and growing part of the lives of businesses, households, and organizations. Planning for a resilient community might involve consideration of the following digitization characteristics and leverage points:

1. *Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity,*
2. *Digital Capacity and Awareness,*
3. *Reinventing Processes and Policies,* and

With these characteristics and leverage points in mind, the July 2021 Recover Delaware Roundtable invited stakeholders to discuss opportunities for shaping resilient digital communities in Delaware.
About the Institute for Public Administration

The University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration (IPA) addresses the policy, planning, and management needs of its partners through the integration of applied research, professional development, and the education of tomorrow’s leaders.

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10 U.S. Census Bureau, “E-Commerce Retail Sales as a Percent of Total Sales,” retrieved July 12, 2021 from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/ECOMPCTSA