

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

***Fixing the Skills Gap: Addressing Existing Labour Shortages in High Demand  
Occupations and Understanding Labour Shortages: Addressing Barriers to Filling Low-  
Skilled Jobs***

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**Introduction**

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Namir Anani, President and CEO of the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), Canada's leader in Labour Market Intelligence (LMI), workforce solutions, and policy development for the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. I also have with me Sandra Saric, Director of Talent Initiatives.

Despite a challenging global economic environment, the information and communications technology sector in Canada remains resilient in its ability to create jobs and economic growth. A sector that now spans across multiple facets of our daily lives including work, business, learning, leisure and health.

ICTC's 2011 Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) report points to a jobless rate of 3% for ICT workers, which is significantly below Canada's average unemployment rate of 7.5%. The ICT sector boasts a contribution to GDP of approximately 5%, which is equivalent to \$61.3 billion dollars annually. This value to the Canadian economy is however much greater when you factor in those ICT workers in other sectors of the economy such as finance, health, manufacturing, and public administration.

While traditional industries remain an important focus of the economy (oil and gas, mining, energy, forestry and agriculture), the relentless pace of technology and consumer expectations is rapidly shaping the ICT sector. In the next 5 years, a whole new breed of technologies and related services will dominate the ICT landscape, spanning several key areas, among them: the mobile arena, cloud computing, and the creative online content. These segments will potentially have the greatest contribution to the economy and will require fast-tracking as part of the Digital Strategy.

The global mobile industry is dominated by the half-trillion US\$ business of wireless telephony, and has entered a long period of steady single-digit growth that will see increasing emphasis on content, services, and machine-to-machine communication as part of the value chain. In terms of the creative content and apps world, by the end of 2011 global app downloads reached a cumulative total of 30 billion.

A recent TechNet commissioned study in the US revealed that the App Economy has created 466,000 jobs in the US since 2007, the year iPhone was introduced. The impact of mobile apps on the Canadian economy has the potential to be huge and generate enormous benefits to Canada's mobile industry.

Cloud computing on the other hand is also creating new business paradigms in targeted consumer services, and in the way data is stored and exchanged. According to Network World,

“the number of job postings in the cloud computing industry is growing so rapidly that there aren't enough qualified workers available to fill the positions.”

The need for cyber security human resources will also continue to grow in Canada as ICT expands in organizations, government, and personal banking.

While there are currently few leaders in this landscape, the above ICT industries will be dominated by the SMEs due to the low cost of infrastructure, and limited barriers to entry in this arena.

We estimate that by 2016 approximately 106,000 ICT jobs will need to be filled in Canada with demand for critical jobs far exceeding the supply. This figure will be further compounded if we account for the new emerging ICT sectors. Canada is also competing in an increasingly tight labour market, emerging global economies such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa (BRICS) are achieving unprecedented economic growth using new energy, telecommunications and information technologies.

### **Prerequisites for success:**

Our ability to prepare tomorrow's workforce and nurture innovative talent in key sectors of the ICT economy will be vital in ensuring Canada's competitive advantage in an increasingly global, connected and fast paced environment. Among the prerequisites for success will be:

- Preparing our youth as early as high schools for the new business paradigm, and accelerating their integration into industry.
- Encouraging all potential human capital resources in Canada to partake in ICT, including women (representing more than 51% of the Canadian population), aboriginal talent (Canada's fastest growing youth demographic).
- Attracting the right global talent with advanced ICT skills to fast track priority sectors of the ICT economy.
- Enabling enhanced LMI research in emerging industries, on a national, provincial, and sectorial level with better measurement of progress, economic output, and talent needs.

### **Conclusion**

Given the fast ramp-up and increased global competition in these emerging ICT sectors, Canada would benefit from establishing a national task force (Digital Compass) over the next 3-5 years made up of select industry leaders & associations, start-ups, academia, and policy makers with the aim of nurturing, connecting, and guiding SMEs to establish successful businesses that embrace transformational technological shifts and enable the commercialization and economic success of the future.

Thank you and I look forward to answering your questions.