



CrowdLearn

Skills in online platform work

Konstantinos Pouliakas, expert, Cedefop
Department for VET and Skills

30 June 2022



Cedefop's CrowdLearn is...

01

FIRST systematic studies focused on the skills of online platform workers
– online freelancers & microworkers

02

FOCUSED explicitly on EU workers

03

SCIENTIFIC in-depth interviews & survey of
~2000 crowdworkers – Crowdlearn dataset

04

ROBUST typology of skills developed in crowdwork

05

FORWARD-LOOKING skills policies



Cedefop's CrowdLearn research questions

What skills do online platform workers need and develop?

Why do they engage in online platform work and how this affects skills?

How does skill development and matching take place?

With whom do online platform workers engage in skill formation?

What can VET policy do (barriers, mobility, validation etc.)?



Cedefop's CrowdLearn research steps

Phase 1 →

Literature review

Structured and systematic search across 3 databases:

- Web of Science
- Scopus (Elsevier)
- ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)



Phase 2 →

Stakeholder interviews

n = 30

45-60 minutes **synchronous online interviews** based on **semi-structured interview protocol**

- Target platforms Upwork, Fiverr, PeoplePerHour, Twago
- Recruitment via LinkedIn & platforms



Crowdworker interviews

n = 77

90 minutes **semi-structured, synchronous interviews with stakeholders** from

- Crowdwork platforms
- Clients
- Policy experts
- Unions/Professional associations
- Governments



Phase 3 →

Crowdworker surveys

n = 2,005

Online survey with crowdworkers

- Are ≥ 18 years
- Freelancers from 6 EU target countries (DE, FI, ES, IT, RO, UK)
- AMT microworkers follow-up (DE, ES, IT, UK, FR)
- Earned income in at least one target platform
- Tailor-made



Who crowdworks?

YOUNGER (MW) TO MIDDLE AGED (OF) MALES
MOSTLY HIGHLY EDUCATED

1/3 IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND

SECOND JOB FOR MOST CROWDWORKERS
 >50% INCOME FOR 1 IN 5 OF; 87% OF MW 0-20% INCOME

Figure 5. Educational attainment of microworkers and online freelancers

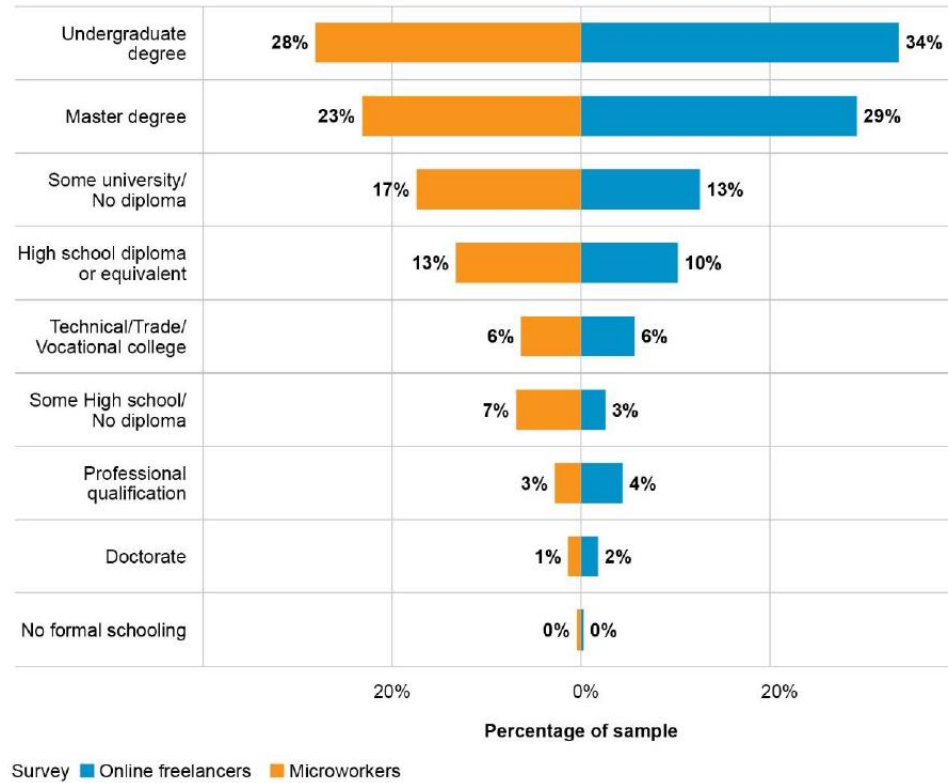
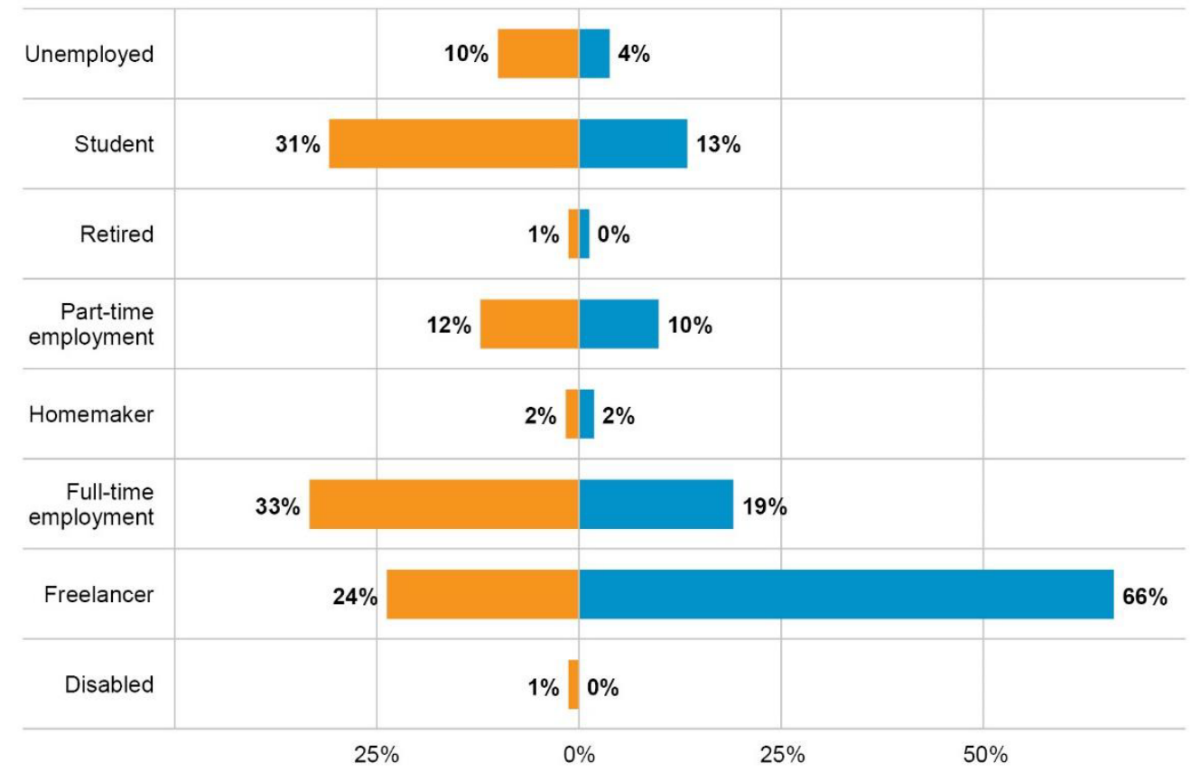


Figure 7. Main employment status of microworkers and online freelancers

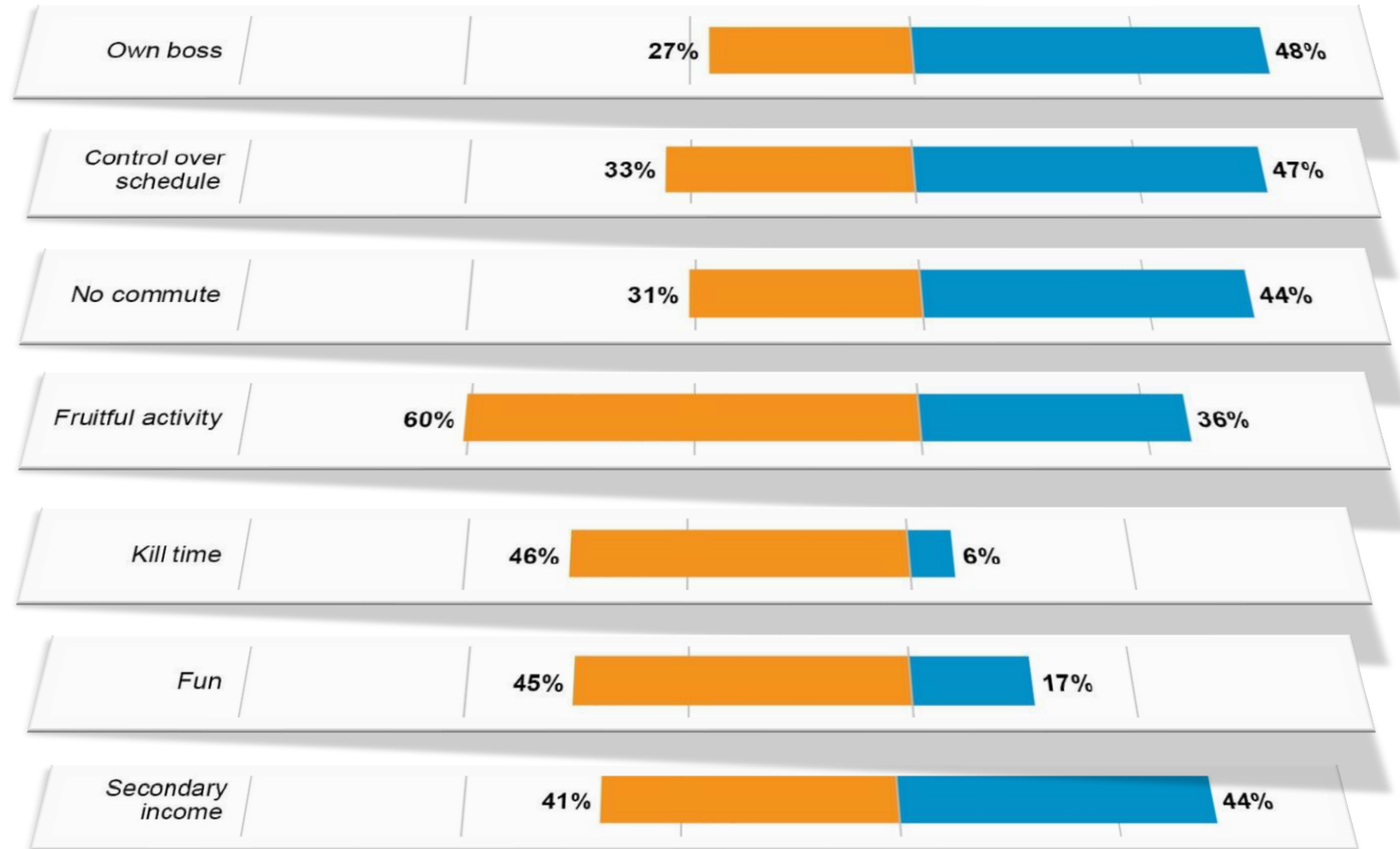


Why crowdwork?

Online freelancers

Micro-workers

Survey ■ Online freelancers ■ Microworkers



Reluctant platforms but new training market?

Providing information on in-demand skills

Upwork Find Jobs HOW IT WORKS LOG IN SIGN UP Post a Job

Here is a list of relevant online courses from online learning platforms, including Coursera, edX, Lynda.com, PluralSight, Simplilearn, Udacity and Udemy for the top 20 fastest-growing skills on Upwork in Q4 2018:

1. Hadoop: Hadoop platform and application framework (Coursera)
2. Dropbox API: Cloud Computing Applications, Part 1: Cloud Systems and Infrastructure (Coursera)
3. Genetic algorithms: Introduction to Genetic Algorithms: Theory and Applications (Udemy)
4. Microbiology: Introduction to Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (Coursera)
5. Computational linguistics: Natural Language Processing (Coursera)
6. Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP): CISSP Certification Training (Simplilearn)
7. Digital signal processing: Digital Signal Processing (Coursera)
8. Intercom: Digital Marketing Course: Learn Digital Marketing Automation (Udemy)
9. Interactive advertising: Digital Marketing Trends (Lynda.com)
10. Invision: Diving In with InVision Studio (Udemy)
11. Employee training: e-Learning Ecologies: Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning for the Digital Age Financial aid available (Coursera)
12. Kubernetes: Learn DevOps: The Complete Kubernetes Course (Udemy)
13. OAuth: Getting Started with OAuth 2.0 (PluralSight)
14. Autodesk Revit: CAD and Digital Manufacturing Specialization (Coursera)

Recommending training courses

SKILLSHARE Browse What do you want to learn today? Become a Teacher

PeoplePerHour Follow

Check out some great classes curated by PeoplePerHour to help you improve your XYZ skills.

Curated by Skillshare

- Mastering Illustrator: 10 Tips & Tricks to Speed Up Your Workflow**
DKNG Studios
46,995 Illustration
- Circular Logo Design with Draplin: Combine Type & Icons in a Classic Shape**
Aaron Draplin
28,813 Graphic Design

Facilitating peer-to-peer learning

RECENT THREADS UNANSWERED POSTS

- Books**
Latest Post: Richard L • 15m ago • in **Writers & Translators**
Hi all, I was wondering if anyone had a book recommendation that they could share, because, much as I... more
Reply: 2 • Kudos: 2 • by: Richard S / Community Leader
- Upwork is not for new people, seeking instant...**
Latest Post: Mary W • 2m ago • in **New to Upwork**
Why is Upwork flooding the Google job postings, when most jobs are not available to them unless they have... more
Reply: 1 • Kudos: 0 • by: Michael W / Active Member
- Only 3 invites even if payment method is...**
Latest Post: Oleksandr I • 20m ago • in **Clients**
Our recent job posting was restricted to only 3 invites despite showing our method of payment as verified... more
Reply: 2 • Kudos: 0 • by: Nubar D / Active Member
- project details not show how many proposals...**
Latest Post: Joanne Marie P • 11m ago • in **Freelancers**

FEATURED CONTRIBUTOR

Community Guru
Michael S
Member since Aug 29, 2017

44 Solutions 487 Kudos 414 Posts

TOP SOLUTION AUTHORS

- Petra R 41
- Preston H 20
- Mark F 8
- Kathy T 5
- Jennifer M 5

TOP KUDDED MEMB Chat with Community Bot

Providing a training marketplace

learn

In-Demand Skills, On-Demand Courses

Online professional courses, led by the world's top experts.

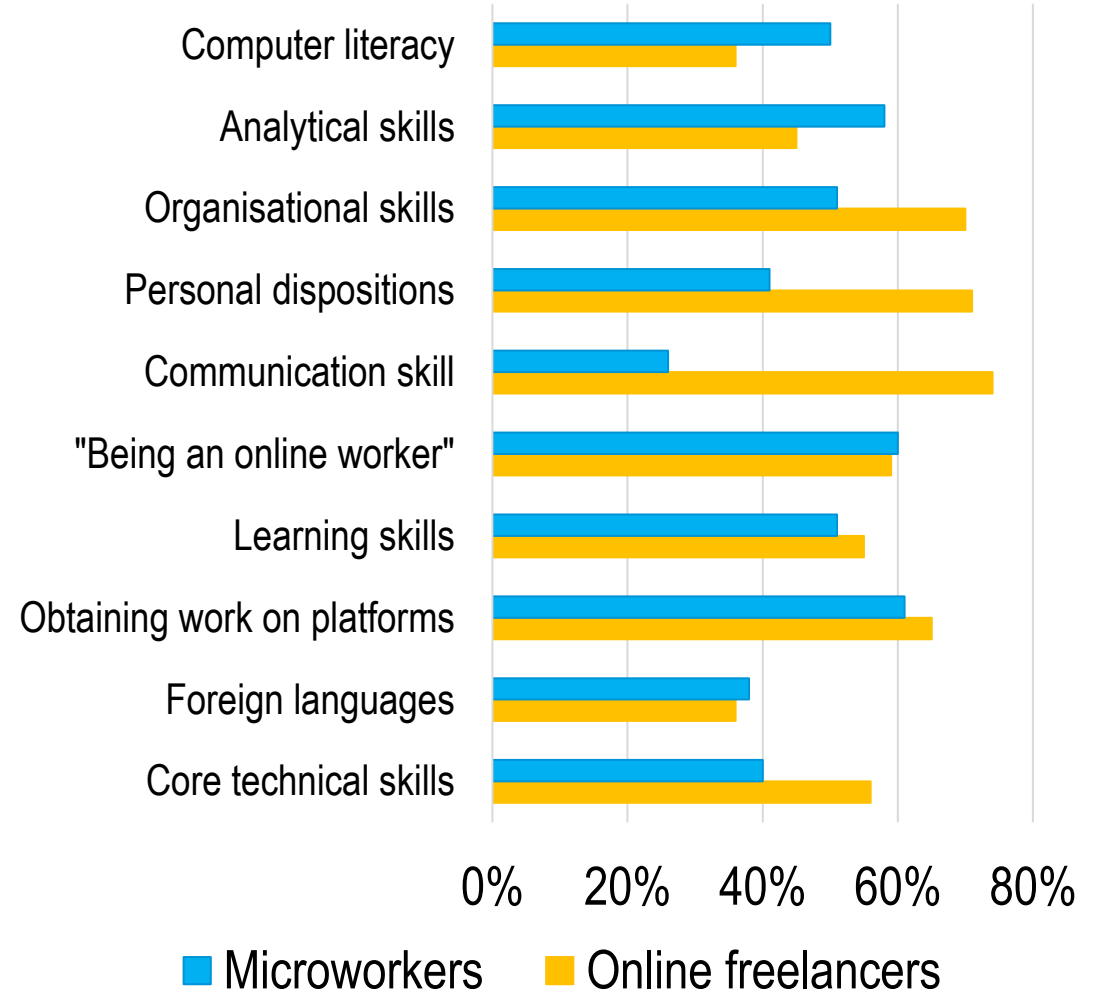
Browse Courses Sign In / Join

All Courses Digital Marketing Design and Branding Adobe Creative Cloud Storytelling and Voice Over Web and SEO Programs

- Hands shaking
- Man in suit
- Woman with charts
- Man with microphone

Skills for digital workers

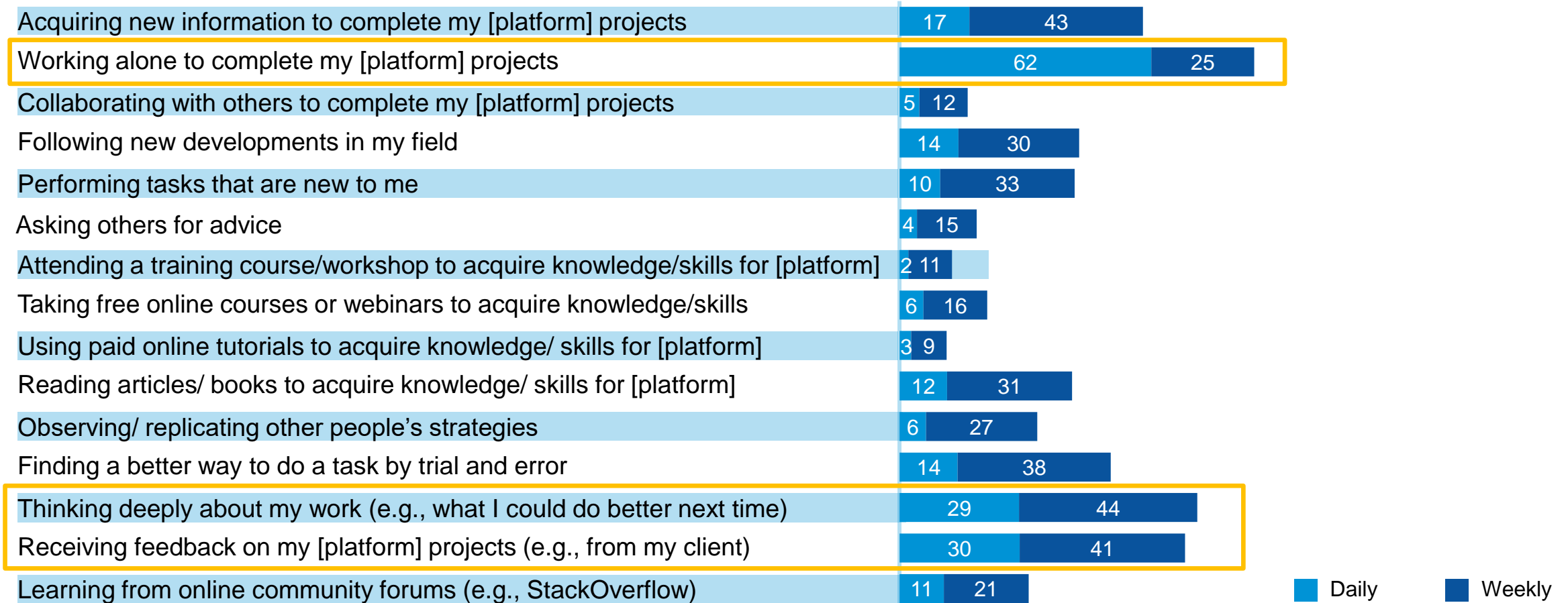
Skills developed in online platform work



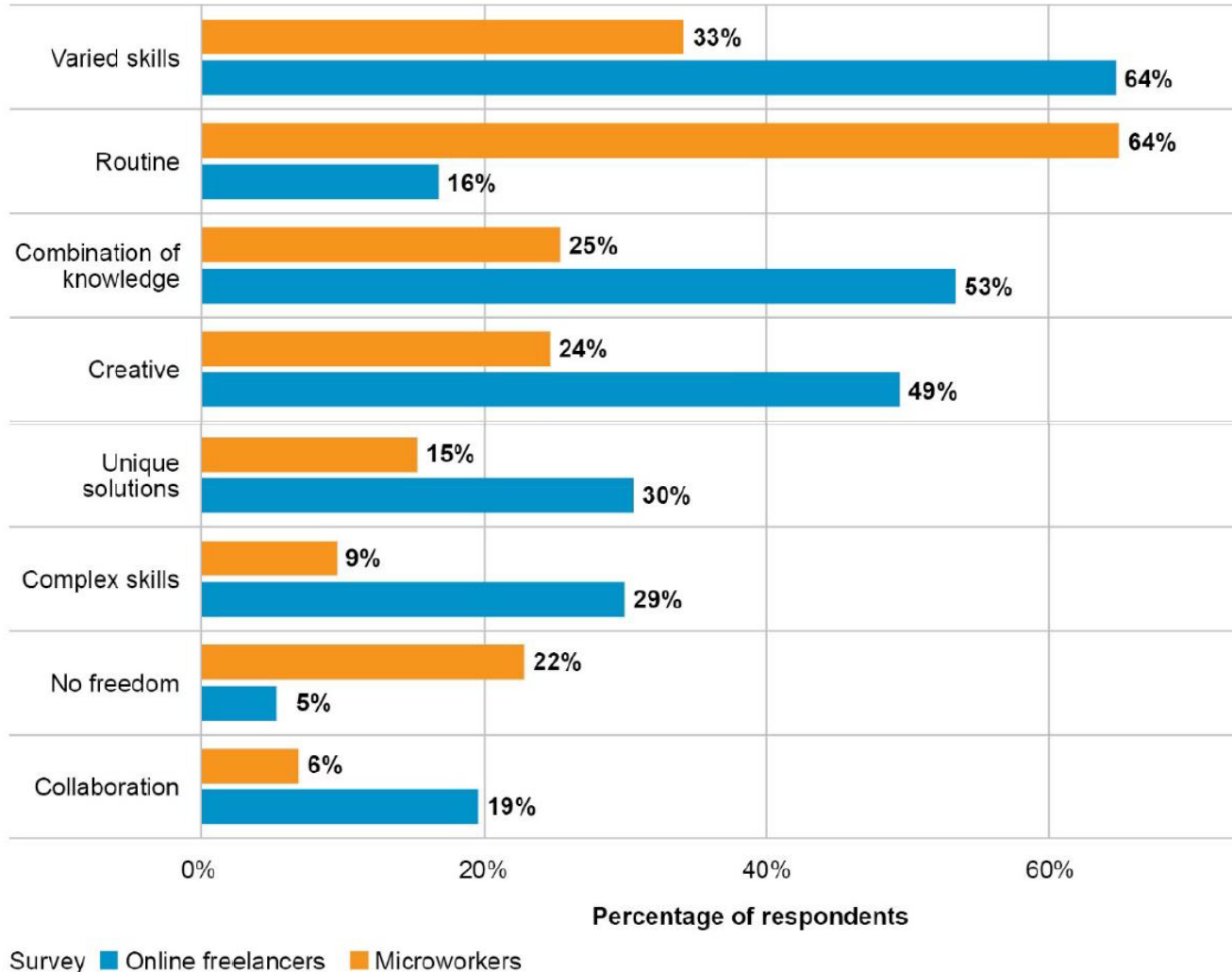
Learning largely informal & self-directed

% of respondents

Frequency of use of workplace learning activities over the past 3 months



Artificial intelligence at what cost?



Microworkers subject to routine work

- standardisation
- task dis-embedding
- functional downgrading
- communication void

Routine work inhibits learning/skill formation

Hidden face of AI ('ghost work')

Gigification of work

Algorithmic skills matching

- Algorithmic vetting
- Algorithmic ranking
- Client feedback/ratings
- Limited portability

Algorithmic (micro)learning

- Bite-sized, quick, algorithmically-determined learning
- Micro-certificates / badges

Lock-in effects of **platform work**

% of respondents (online freelancers)

I could easily switch to another platform without negatively impacting my income

5%

Strongly agree

12%

Agree

25%

Neither agree
or disagree

41%

Disagree

16%

Strongly disagree

Policies to promote skills in crowdwork



Labour market
integration

- Policy-makers should collaborate with platforms to experiment with **subsidized 'micro-internships'** in platform work



Continuing
professional
development

- VET providers to offer short online courses and workshops that meet crowdworkers' **'just-in-time' learning needs**



Education &
vocational
training

- Focus on **developing people's' self-regulatory learning skills,** capabilities and mindsets
- **Continued focus on digital skills** in formal education

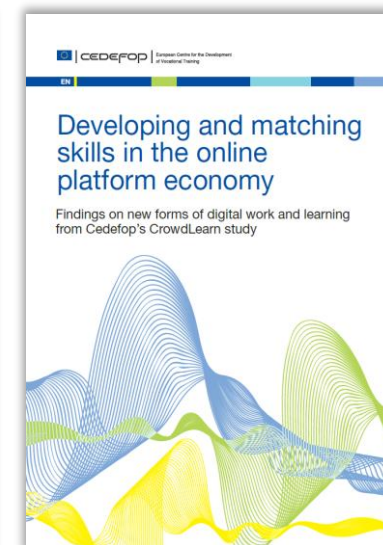


Skills
matching

- Consider adopting **portable portfolio functions** to allow workers to display/advertise/transfer qualifications and work experiences
- Engage with platform companies to examine ways of **overcoming obstacles to cross-platform portability**

Thank you

Konstantinos.Pouliakas@cedefop.europa.eu



www.cedefop.europa.eu

Follow us on social media



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training