From Readiness to Results: Measuring Transformation in Digital Training

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the effectiveness of digital skills training for creating digital magazines. It compares participant responses before and after a webinar called "Craft & Click: The Art of Modern E-Magazine." The research examines how factors affecting readiness relate to learning results and the development of confidence. Data was collected from 162 surveys before the webinar and 151 surveys after it. These surveys measured aspects like technical preparedness, previous experience, clarity of content, and confidence after training. The findings show a significant rise in participant confidence, with a 12% increase, and a notable jump in satisfaction ratings. Sixty-five per cent gave the highest ratings after the webinar, compared to 32.84% before it. The research highlights that practical demonstrations, clear explanations, and logical content flow are very effective in teaching digital publishing. This paper adds to the growing field of digital literacy by identifying key factors that influence successful learning in specialised digital skills training.

Keywords: digital literacy, e-publishing, educational technology, training effectiveness, confidence development, digital magazines

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of publishing has opened new doors for content creators, educators, and organisations to create and share interactive media. Digital magazines, which combine visual design, interactive features, and multimedia content, have become a popular format in this arena. However, the technical skills and resources needed to create effective digital publications create a significant barrier for many aspiring creators. It is essential to understand the factors that contribute to successful learning experiences in digital magazine creation to build better training programs and support participants on their learning journeys.

This paper shares findings from an analysis of participant surveys conducted before and after "Craft & Click: The Art of Modern E-Magazine," a training program aimed at teaching digital magazine creation skills. By looking at participants' self-reported levels of preparedness, enthusiasm, technical resources, time availability, and prior experience before the webinar, along with their evaluations of training quality and confidence afterwards, we aim to identify patterns that may predict learning outcomes and point out areas to improve digital publishing education.

Our analysis reveals several key insights about the link between technical experience and learning confidence. Nearly 80% of participants felt prepared to learn about digital magazine creation, with high enthusiasm levels (76.54% rated 4-5 on a 5-point scale) and sufficient technical resources (81.48% rated 4-5) before the webinar.

After the webinar, confidence in applying the learned skills rose significantly, with 96.69% of participants reporting high confidence levels (4-5 on a 5-point scale).

The connection between prior experience and preparedness stood out, especially in the pre-webinar data. It suggests that previous use of digital design tools significantly affects participants' confidence in learning new, related skills. Nevertheless, post-webinar results show that effective training can close experience gaps. This is evident in the significant increase in confidence among all participants, no matter their initial experience levels.

By exploring these patterns of preparedness and their connection to training outcomes, we hope to add to the growing research on digital literacy acquisition. We aim to provide practical insights for educators and training developers in digital publishing. Understanding how learners approach new digital skills and how effective training can boost their confidence and abilities can guide more focused instructional design, better support systems, and ultimately more successful learning results in this fast-changing field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Webinars provide a unique mix of accessibility and interactivity. They let learners connect with both content and instructors in real time, no matter where they are. However, the success of these online sessions depends on how ready participants are to engage. Factors like prior knowledge, tech skills, motivation, and learning preferences are crucial in deciding whether students move from simple interest to real involvement.

2.1 Digital Literacy and Skills Acquisition

In today's educational environment, digital literacy is the ability to use and understand digital technologies. It is crucial for preparing for the modern workforce. Digital literacy includes using technology to create and share meaning, which is vital for participating in an online academic setting (Shanthi et al., 2023). Digital training acts as a key factor that helps individuals develop the skills and insights needed for smooth integration and active participation in digitally advanced environments (Heaton et al., 2019).

Studies in Malaysia show that critical skills, operational skills, visual and collaborative learning styles, and learning systems improve digital literacy. This, in turn, enhances academic performance and employability (Khan et al., 2022). Data literacy, problem-solving, and critical thinking are essential workplace skills that contribute to developing creative thinking (Mahmud & Wong, 2022). Research on digital citizenship skills among Malaysian undergraduates shows high levels of competence in online well-being, learning, and safety (Naidu et al., 2021). These findings emphasise the need for higher education institutions to include digital literacy and 21st-century skills in their curricula. This will help better prepare students for the changing demands of the digital workplace and support their ongoing career development (Khan et al., 2022; Mahmud & Wong, 2022).

2.2 Effectiveness of Webinar-Based Training

While many studies have looked at e-learning as a whole, research specifically on webinar effectiveness is still emerging. According to Shanthi et al. (2025), the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift to online learning, with evidence showing that online training programs work well for undergraduates. Researchers have found that elements like webinar features, participant backgrounds, and ways to measure success can affect the effectiveness of the sessions. Partial and Cook (2018) pointed out that factors like technical reliability, instructor communication skills, and content organisation greatly influence participant satisfaction and learning. Webinars, which are live online seminars with audio and video, have shown potential for enhancing student learning when compared to both online classes that are not live and in-person instruction (Ebner & Gegenfurtner, 2019). However, satisfaction was lower during webinars than in face-to-face instruction (Ebner & Gegenfurtner, 2019).

Despite some challenges, webinars and online training have gained popularity in higher education and professional development (Peter et al., 2020). These insights indicate that online learning can be a practical option to replace traditional classroom teaching, especially during crises. Students enjoy the interaction in webinars but still favour in-person classes, suggesting that webinars work best as supplemental tools in blended

learning setups (Sypsas et al., 2015). Gegenfurtner et al. (2020) carried out a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of webinar training. They discovered that factors like chances for interaction, hands-on demonstrations, and clear instructional design greatly affect learning results. The research also suggested that webinars can match the effectiveness of face-to-face instruction when they include interactive features and clear visual demonstrations.

2.3 Digital Publishing Skills Education

Research on digital publishing education is limited but growing. Arola (2010) looked at how design literacy helps successful digital publishing projects. She found that combining technical skills with design principles works best. Rodrigo and Romero (2016) studied digital magazine creation in educational settings. They noted that guided learning experiences and having the right tools were key to success.

Choi and Kang (2019) discovered that learning digital publishing skills depends on both technical factors, like software availability and usability, and psychological factors, such as confidence and creative self-efficacy. Similarly, Beaumont's (2018) work on e-publishing education highlighted the need to match instruction to learners' prior experiences. It also stressed providing clear pathways for skill development.

Recent studies show the importance of digital skills education for undergraduates in Malaysia and Indonesia. Research indicates that Malaysian students typically have strong digital citizenship skills, especially in online well-being, learning, and safety (Mahadir et al., 2021). Comparative studies of Malaysian and Indonesian students show that Malaysian students have slightly higher digital competence levels (Kuntadi et al., 2022). Education in digital entrepreneurship has been found to improve students' soft skills, but leadership skills still need work (Zainal & Kelvin Yong, 2020). The significance of 21st-century skills, like data literacy, problem solving, and critical thinking, is emphasised for career readiness and lifelong growth (M. Mahmud & Shiau Foong Wong, 2022). These findings highlight the need for higher education institutions to include digital skills and 21st-century competencies in their programs. This will better prepare students for the changing job market and digital environment.

2.5 Research Gap

Few studies have specifically examined how initial preparedness characteristics impact learning outcomes in training for creating digital magazines. However, related research provides valuable insights into digital literacy, webinar effectiveness, and digital publishing education. Additionally, there are few comparative studies on pretraining expectations and post-training results in the field of digital publishing education. This study aims to close these gaps by analysing paired survey data that captures both pre-webinar readiness and post-webinar outcomes in training for creating digital magazines.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Context

This study examines information collected from participants in a webinar-based training course titled "Craft & Click: The Art of Modern E-Magazine." This course teaches how to create digital magazines. The webinar covered basic concepts, design principles, and useful methods for producing interactive digital magazines using readily available software tools. It included software demonstrations, talks from the instructor, and real-world examples in a single session.

3.2 Data Collection

Data for this study came from two surveys using Google Forms to assess participant experiences and perceptions regarding the digital publishing webinar. The first, a pre-webinar survey (n=162), aimed to evaluate their selfreported levels of preparedness, enthusiasm, technical resources, time availability, and prior experience with digital publishing software. This initial survey provided useful baseline information about the participants' readiness and expectations before engaging with the webinar content.

After the webinar, a post-webinar survey (n=151) was conducted to assess their views on the training quality. This survey looked at various aspects, such as content organisation, demonstration effectiveness, technical delivery, pacing, fulfilment of expectations, and the participants' confidence in applying the skills they learned. By comparing the results from both surveys, insights were gained into the overall impact of the webinar on participants' learning experiences.

Both surveys employed a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) for quantitative items, and the pre-webinar survey also featured an open-text field for participants to list specific software tools they had previously used.

3.3 Research Questions

The study looks at these research questions:

1. How do factors like preparedness, enthusiasm, resources, time, and experience before the webinar relate to participants' confidence and satisfaction after the webinar?

2. To what degree does the webinar training boost participants' confidence in creating digital magazines?

3. Which parts of the webinar training, such as explanations, organisation, demonstrations, technical quality, and pacing, have the most significant impact on participant satisfaction and confidence?

4. How does past experience with digital publishing software influence participants' learning experiences and outcomes?

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis used descriptive statistics and compared survey responses from before and after the webinar. Specific methods included:

1. Calculating means, frequencies, and percentages for all quantitative items.

2. Comparing ratings from before and after the webinar to identify changes in confidence levels.

3. Analysing rating distributions to spot shifts in participant attitudes.

4. Ranking webinar aspects based on participant satisfaction.

5. Examining the relationship between prior experience and learning outcomes.

The main limitation of this analysis is that it relies on self-reported data rather than objective measures of skill acquisition or performance. Also, not being able to perfectly match individual responses from before and after limits our ability to track learning progress. Despite these limitations, the large sample size and detailed survey items provide valuable insights into the training program's effectiveness.

RESULTS

4.1 Participant Characteristics

The study included 162 participants who completed the pre-webinar survey and 151 who completed the postwebinar survey, representing a 93.2% retention rate. The pre-webinar survey revealed that 67.90% of participants reported high levels (4-5 on a 5-point scale) of previous experience with digital publishing or design software, with 99.38% specifically mentioning Canva as their primary tool. Other software mentioned included Flipping Book (7.41%) and Adobe InDesign (4.94%).

Table 1:

Software	Mentions	Percentage
Canva	161	99.38%
Flipping Book	12	7.41%
Adobe InDesign	8	4.94%

4.2 Pre-Webinar Readiness Factors

Pre-webinar survey responses revealed generally high levels of readiness across all measured factors (Table 2 and Table 3).

Table 2: Student Readiness Assessment Across Five Dimensions

Question	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5
1. Preparedness	2	6	25	72	57
2. Enthusiasm	2	6	30	74	50
3. Equipment	4	5	21	73	59
4. Time	4	7	28	67	56
5. Experience	3	13	36	66	44

Table 2 outlines the five readiness factors evaluated: preparedness, enthusiasm, equipment, time availability, and experience. It also includes their corresponding scores, measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents the lowest level of agreement and 5 signifies the highest.

Table 3: Pre-Webinar Readiness Factors

Question	Average Rat	Respondents Rating: 4-5
1. I feel prepared to learn about digital magazine creation.	4.09	79.63%
2. I am enthusiastic about developing skills in digital publishing.	4.01	76.54%
3. I have access to the necessary software and equipment.	4.10	81.48%
4. I have allocated sufficient time to participate.	4.01	75.93%
5. I have previous experience using digital publishing software.	3.83	67.90%

Table 3 indicates that “Access to necessary software and equipment” was the strongest readiness factor (average rating 4.10), while previous experience with digital publishing software was the lowest (average rating 3.83).

Still, all factors received relatively high ratings, with more than two-thirds of participants reporting high levels (4-5) across all factors.

The pre-webinar rating distribution across all items showed a strong positive skew: 32.84% of all ratings were 5 (excellent), 43.46% were 4 (good), 17.28% were 3 (neutral), 4.57% were 2 (poor), and 1.85% were 1 (very poor).

4.3 Post-Webinar Satisfaction and Confidence

Post-webinar survey responses demonstrated exceptionally high satisfaction across all measured aspects (Table 4).

Table 4: Post-Webinar Aspects Ranked by Satisfaction

Aspect	Average Rating	High Rating (4-5) %
Practical demonstrations	4.65	96.69
Clear explanations	4.63	96.69
Organisation and progression	4.62	96.69
Length and pacing	4.62	96.03
Fulfilled expectations	4.61	96.03
Technical quality	4.58	96.03
Confidence in application	4.588	96.69

The practical demonstration of applications and examples received the highest average rating (4.65), while technical quality and confidence in application tied for the lowest ratings (both 4.58). However, the differences between aspects were minimal, and all aspects received extraordinarily high ratings overall.

The post-webinar rating distribution across all items showed an even stronger positive skew than the pre-webinar responses: 65.00% of all ratings were 5 (excellent), 31.41% were 4 (good), 3.50% were 3 (neutral), 0.09% were 2 (poor), and 0.00% were 1 (very poor).

4.4 Comparison of Pre-Webinar Preparedness and Post-Webinar Confidence

A direct comparison between participants' initial preparedness to learn about digital magazine creation and their post-webinar confidence in applying what they learned reveals a significant positive transformation (Table 5).

Table 5: Confidence Comparison: Pre vs Post

Metric	Pre-webinar	Post-Webinar	Change
Average Rating	4.09	4.58	+0.49 (+12.0%)
High Ratings (4-5)	79.63%	96.69%	+17.06
Top Rating (5)	35.2%	60.9%	+25.7%

The average rating increased from 4.09 to 4.58, representing a 12.0% improvement. The percentage of participants reporting high confidence (ratings of 4-5) increased from 79.63% to 96.69%, a 17.06 percentage

point improvement. Most notably, the percentage of participants giving the top rating (5) increased from 35.2% to 60.9%, demonstrating a substantial shift toward the highest level of confidence.

4.5 Rating Distribution Comparison

A comparison of the overall rating distributions between pre-webinar and post-webinar surveys reveals a significant shift toward more positive ratings (Table 4).

Table 6: Rating Distribution Comparison

Rating	Pre-Webinar	Post-Webinar	Change
5 (Excellent)	32.84%	65.00%	+32.16%
4 (Good)	43.46%	31.41%	-12.05%
3 (Neutral)	17.28%	3.50%	-13.78%
2 (Poor)	4.57%	0.09%	-4.488%
1 (Very Poor)	1.85%	0.00 %	-1.85%

The most dramatic changes were the 32.16 percentage point increase in 5-star ratings and the 13.78 percentage point decrease in neutral ratings. The near elimination of negative ratings (ratings of 1-2) in the post-webinar survey suggests that the training effectively addressed the needs of even those participants who had lower readiness levels before the webinar.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Transformation of Confidence

One significant finding of this study is the substantial increase in participant confidence from pre-webinar preparedness (4.09) to post-webinar application confidence (4.58). This 12% increase supports Bandura's (1997) theory that mastery experiences, such as completing a well-designed training program, enhance self-efficacy. The increase in top ratings (5) by 25.7 percentage points further shows the positive effect of the training on participant confidence.

This transformation in confidence is especially noteworthy since previous experience with digital publishing software was the lowest-rated readiness factor (3.83). Despite differing levels of prior experience, nearly all participants (96.69%) reported high confidence after the webinar. This suggests the training effectively filled experience gaps. This finding supports Cercone's (2008) argument that adult learning environments should cater to diverse prior experiences while providing clear paths for skill development.

5.2 Effectiveness of Practical Demonstrations

The highest-rated part of the webinar was practical demonstrations of digital magazine creation (4.65). This aligns with earlier research on effective webinar design. Gegenfurtner et al. (2020) found that demonstration based learning works well in webinar contexts, as it offers concrete visual references for participants to follow. Similarly, Wang and Hsu (2008) noted the importance of clear visual demonstrations for transferring technical skills in online settings.

The success of practical demonstrations also supports Knowles' (1984) principle that adult learners focus on problems and gain from seeing practical applications of new knowledge. In the context of digital magazine creation, which is highly visual and technical, demonstrations seem especially valuable for building participant

confidence and comprehension.

5.3 Importance of Clear Explanations and Logical Progression

Clear explanations of concepts and techniques (4.63) and well-organised, logical content progression (4.62) ranked second and third in ratings for the webinar. This finding supports earlier research on instructional design for technical skills training. Partial and Cook (2018) found that how content is organised greatly affects webinar effectiveness, while Ebner and Gegenfurtner (2019) identified clear explanations as crucial for participant satisfaction.

The high ratings for these elements suggest that the webinar successfully applied principles of scaffolded learning, where concepts build on each other in a logical order. This method is vital in technical fields like digital publishing, where foundational knowledge must be established before introducing more advanced techniques (Rodrigo & Romero, 2016).

5.4 Role of Initial Readiness in Learning Outcomes

The pre-webinar survey showed generally high levels of readiness across all factors measured. Access to necessary software and equipment was the strongest factor (4.10), while previous experience was the lowest (3.83). These high readiness levels likely helped lead to successful learning outcomes, as participants were prepared to engage with the training content.

However, the significant boost in confidence and the near-elimination of negative ratings in the post-webinar survey suggest that the training was adequate even for participants with lower initial readiness. This finding shows that well-designed training can offset variations in prior experience and preparedness. It aligns with Choi and Kang's (2019) observation that psychological factors, like training-induced confidence, can help overcome some obstacles in digital publishing education.

5.5 Rating Distribution Shift

The significant shift in rating distributions from pre-webinar to post-webinar surveys, especially the 32.16 percentage point increase in 5-star ratings and the 13.78 percentage point decrease in neutral ratings, shows that the webinar exceeded participant expectations. This finding supports previous research revealing that welldesigned training can transform learners' attitudes and confidence (Zimmerman, 2000).

The virtual elimination of negative ratings (1-2) in the post-webinar survey is particularly noteworthy, as it indicates that the training effectively met the needs of participants with lower initial readiness. This finding underscores the effectiveness of the training design and delivery in addressing diverse learner needs, a key principle of adult learning theory (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

5.6 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study carry several theoretical implications for understanding how digital skills are acquired and how training works. First, they support Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory by showing that a welldesigned training experience can significantly enhance participants' confidence in applying new skills. Second, they align with Van Dijk and Van Deursen's (2014) sequential model of digital skills acquisition, as participants moved from operational understanding (through clear explanations) to creative application (through practical demonstrations) within a single training session.

Additionally, these findings support Knowles' (1984) principles of adult learning, especially regarding the importance of practical application and building on prior experiences. The effectiveness of clear explanations, logical progression, and practical demonstrations aligns with these principles, suggesting they are particularly relevant in digital publishing education.

5.7 Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study for digital skills training design and delivery are numerous. First, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating high-quality practical demonstrations that clearly show participants how to apply new concepts and techniques. Second, they emphasise the value of clear explanations and logical content progression, particularly in technical domains like digital publishing.

Additionally, the findings suggest that training programs should be designed to accommodate participants with varying levels of prior experience, as even those with lower initial readiness levels can achieve significant confidence gains through well-designed training. The near-universal positive ratings in the post-webinar survey indicate that accessible, well-organised training can effectively bridge experience gaps and build confidence across diverse learner populations.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

This research focused on how participants shift readiness and confidence levels in a digital magazine creation training program, shedding light on some important findings regarding digital skills acquisition along with training effectiveness.

Initially, the research did show a quite notable change in confidence levels with perceived readiness levels in the range of 4.09 and application confidence spiking to 4.58, thus seeing an improvement of 12% on self-assessed capabilities. Moving forward, the other participants also showed a similar pattern of responding with high satisfaction to all dimensions of the webinar, with the most satisfactory practical demonstrations scoring 4.65, with the accompanying detailed explanations scoring 4.63, and the orderly progression of 4.62 on the content, all holding near the highest levels. The participants also demonstrated a high transformation in sentiment, which was greatly aided by the stunning 32.16 percentage point rise in 5-star ratings and virtually no negative feedback regarding the post-webinar evaluation, thus showcasing the impact and the range of feedback participants were engaging with on these broader experiences. The program helped close the experience gaps and boosted confidence post-webinar, as 96.69% of the participants reported strong confidence levels despite their varying prior experience. The research also identified crucial initial readiness factors that facilitated successful learning outcomes, particularly participants' access to necessary software and equipment, which scored 4.10, and their preparedness to learn, rated at 4.09.

These findings contribute to our understanding of digital skills acquisition and training effectiveness in the context of digital publishing education. They highlight the transformative potential of well-designed training and identify key factors that contribute to successful learning outcomes.

Limitations

Every piece of research comes with its unique limitations, which apply here as well. For starters, this research relies on self-reported data while ignoring more objective measures of skills and performance. Participants' perception of their confidence and the training's effectiveness may not always correspond to the objective level of skill improvement.

Second, the inability to exactly match individual pre- and post-data for responses limits the scope of tracking overarching learning patterns over time. While the summary statistics have their own merits, a more detailed analysis of individual change patterns would considerably fortify the collective insights.

In addition, this is a single case study involving a specific training program and a single group of participants. While this allows for in-depth analysis of this particular group, it simultaneously hinders the application of the findings to other contexts or populations.

Lastly, the scope of this study, alongside other limitations, is expanded by a lack of follow-up data, leaving the

confidence achieved after training, as well as the application of the skills learned, in a temporal context. Longitudinal data would allow for analysing the effectiveness of the training and provide more context.

6.3 Future Research Directions

The findings and limitations of this study reveal important gaps in our understanding of digital publishing education that warrant further investigation through multiple research avenues. Future research should prioritise longitudinal studies that track participants' skill application and confidence levels over extended periods, as such investigations would provide crucial insights into the durability of training effects and illuminate how learning transfers from structured educational environments to real-world professional contexts. Comparative research examining different training designs and delivery methods represents another essential direction, with studies comparing webinar-based training to self-paced courses or blended learning models offering the potential to identify the most effective pedagogical approaches for digital publishing education and optimise instructional design for diverse learning preferences.

The integration of objective skill assessments alongside self-reported data would significantly enhance our understanding of actual learning outcomes, moving beyond perceptual measures to concrete evidence of competency development through tasks requiring participants to create authentic digital magazine elements. Additionally, conducting in-depth analyses of experience gaps would help clarify how training programs can most effectively bridge differences in participants' prior knowledge and experience levels, and identify specific instructional strategies that successfully support learners with limited background knowledge. Research exploring software-specific factors would provide valuable insights into how tool familiarity influences learning trajectories, especially given the prevalence of Canva experience among participants and the need to understand how this background affects approaches to mastering alternative digital publishing platforms.

These interconnected research directions would collectively build upon the current study's contributions while advancing toward a more comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding of digital skills acquisition in digital publishing education contexts. Such investigations would not only validate and extend current findings but also provide evidence-based guidance for educators and training designers seeking to optimise learning outcomes in this rapidly evolving field.

6.4 Closing Remarks

In an increasingly digital publishing landscape, understanding how to train individuals in digital magazine creation effectively is crucial for educational institutions, professional development programs, and content creation organisations. This study demonstrates that well-designed webinar training can significantly transform participants' confidence and capabilities, even when they begin with varying levels of prior experience.

The findings highlight the particular importance of practical demonstrations, clear explanations, and logical content progression in facilitating successful learning outcomes. By incorporating these elements into digital skills training programs, educators and trainers can effectively bridge experience gaps and build confidence across diverse learner populations.

As digital publishing continues to evolve, so too must our approaches to teaching the associated skills. This study provides a foundation for understanding effective training design in this domain, but ongoing research is needed to refine our understanding and adapt to changing technologies and learner needs. By continuing to investigate the factors that contribute to successful digital skills acquisition, we can develop increasingly practical training approaches that empower individuals to participate fully in the digital publishing landscape.

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