

WORKING ANYTIME, ANYWHERE: EMBRACING THE E-COMMERCE REVOLUTION

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Executive Summary

New technologies have revolutionized everyday work and life in the 21st century. These technologies enable connectivity between friends and family as well as with work colleagues and supervisors at any point in time. Through the use of technology, the world of work has been transformed in ways one could've only imagined.

It is in the present world of work that E-commerce which means electronic commerce and is most commonly known as online jobs or telecommuting, rose to the limelight. The new spatial independence has transformed the role of technology in the work environment, offering both new opportunities and new challenges.

The paper focuses on situating E-commerce in the Philippines. It aims to comprehend E-commerce as a new type of employment and associates it to the current labor market in the country. It will show the gaps in terms of existing and emerging skills needs that needs to be addressed if the government wants to sustain, if not boost, the growth of E-commerce in the country.

The paper will also explain the opportunities and challenges that comes with E-commerce. In relation to this, it will assess the existing government interventions as well as the way forward to E-commerce.

Background

E-commerce, which began in 1995, is growing popular in an emerging economy nowadays. It requires the digital goods for carrying out their transactions. Digital goods are goods that can be delivered over a digital network (Laudon & Laudon, 2013). These goods range from tangible one such as products sold online as well as non-tangible ones such as the different type of services that can be availed online. E-commerce is most commonly known as online jobs or telecommuting.



We have been used to face-to-face interactions in our daily lives. From as simple as buying groceries in the supermarket and paying our bills, to as complicated as getting assistance or help in order to do something we need to do for work or personal life, we prefer the “human touch” in all types of customer service.

With the birth of online jobs, new jobs have been born as well. We were introduced to new ways of availing and providing services through the use of internet. Everything seemed closer and accessible. E-commerce is transforming interactions between enterprises, consumers and governments. As a result of changes brought about by the fourth industrial revolution, E-commerce is now growing rapidly in several emerging markets and developing economies. (UNCTAD, 2015)

The technologies designed to improve commercial transactions using the Internet have evolved as quickly. However, we have not yet achieved an ideal world of painless and secure transactions utilizing the Internet, as unresolved privacy issues of the purchaser have impeded the further development of the technologies (Almeida, A, & A, 2007).

E-commerce has been hailed by many as an opportunity for developing countries to gain a stronger foothold in the multilateral trading system. It has the ability to play an instrumental role in helping developing economics benefit more from trade. (World Trade Organization)

The growing use of the Internet, tablet devices, and smart phones coupled with larger consumer confidence will see that ecommerce will continue to evolve and expand. With social media growing exponentially in recent years, the conversation between businesses and consumers has become more engaging, making it easier for transactional exchanges to happen online. Internet retailers continue to strive to create better content and a realistic shopping experience with technologies like augmented reality. (Khan, 2016) With mobile commerce gaining speed, more users are purchasing from the palm of their hand (Miva & Miva, 2011). E-commerce could deliver a significant benefit to businesses in developing countries by increasing their control over its place in the supply chain, thus improving its market efficiency (Molla & Heeks, 2007).

In the Philippines, it was around 2012 when E-commerce made a fuss in the media. Filipinos found out about a new way of earning money and the best part of it all—in the comfort of their own home. All they needed is a working computer, high speed internet connection and the right set of skills. But thinking of it as a new type of employment, let alone a new type of industry is not accurate. There may have been only a few studies about E-Commerce but various articles about it can be found.

According to the Department of Labor and Employment, when speaking with the people making a living out of E-Commerce or online jobs they report that they have been earning online since mid-2000 (or maybe even earlier). This shows that the start of online-home based jobs in the country may not be clear as to when, but the benefits are evident and are clearly

seen on people who have engaged in this kind of business. (Department of Labor and Employment, 2014)

In a report of the International Labour Organization, E-commerce or telework as they called it, started in the 1980s. It may have taken a longer time for the Philippines to fully embrace this new employment trend but today it has grown into a significant part of our economy. Filipinos, as resilient as they always are, knew the advantages that comes with online jobs and are quick to grab it as a new and convenient way of earning money.

During a forum in celebration of the National ICT month for 2019, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) coined the term “OFW 2.0” which means “Online Filipino Workers” in reference to the continuously rising number of Filipinos who are engaged in E-commerce or telecommuting.

Types of E-commerce Models

According to Shopify Business Encyclopedia, there are four main types of ecommerce models that can describe almost every transaction that takes place between consumers and businesses.

1. Business to Consumer (B2C):

When a business sells a good or service to an individual consumer (e.g. You buy a pair of shoes from an online retailer).

2. Business to Business (B2B):

When a business sells a good or service to another business (e.g. A business sells software-as-a-service for other businesses to use)

3. Consumer to Consumer (C2C):

When a consumer sells a good or service to another consumer (e.g. You sell your old car of cellphone on Facebook to another consumer).

4. Consumer to Business (C2B):

When a consumer sells their own products or services to a business or organization (e.g. An influencer offers exposure to their online audience in exchange for a fee, or a photographer licenses their photo for a business to use).



Examples of Ecommerce

Ecommerce can take on a variety of forms involving different transactional relationships between businesses and consumers, as well as different objects being exchanged as part of these transactions.

1. Retail:

The sale of a product by a business directly to a customer without any intermediary.

2. Wholesale:

The sale of products in bulk, often to a retailer that then sells them directly to consumers.

3. Dropshipping:

The sale of a product, which is manufactured and shipped to the consumer by a third party.

4. Crowdfunding:

The collection of money from consumers in advance of a product being available in order to raise the startup capital necessary to bring it to market.

5. Subscription:

The automatic recurring purchase of a product or service on a regular basis until the subscriber chooses to cancel.

6. Physical products:

Any tangible good that requires inventory to be replenished and orders to be physically shipped to customers as sales are made.

7. Digital products:

Downloadable digital goods, templates, and courses, or media that must be purchased for consumption or licensed for use.

8. Services:

A skill or set of skills provided in exchange for compensation. The service provider's time can be purchased for a fee. (Shopify, 2019)

The Good and the Bad in E-commerce

An International Labour Organization report highlights a number of positive effects of E-commerce work.

1) Telecommuting provides greater working time autonomy leading to more flexibility in terms of working time organization.

Telecommuting can be very interesting and stimulating. This means having complete control of one's schedule. To maximize this, one should have the right entrepreneurial traits and a good daily organizational plan to handle this responsibility. Having a flexible schedule also means you can make time for your kids and family, if you have them, or pursue other personal interests.

2) Commuting time is reduced resulting in a better overall work-life balance.

Working outside the home not only takes a lot of time, especially if you have a long commute, but also job-related travel expenses. According to a study by the Boston Consulting Group, Filipinos spend about 16 days a year stuck in traffic, costing them about 100,000 Philippine pesos (\$2,000) a year in lost income. (Santos, 2019) Working from home means less hassle in terms of commuting which will not only save you time and money but much needed energy as well which you can use for work-related tasks instead.

3) Studies show that telecommuters have a higher productivity.

Telecommuting means being able to work when you feel most productive. You can arrange your schedule depending on your work and personal commitments. According to a research conducted by Cardiff University, telecommuters who work from home are more productive because they are willing to put in more hours and are more likely to go above and beyond what is required. (Felstead, Gallie, Green, & Henseke, 2017)

4) Higher incomes for some

Some successful workers said that as the result of online work they could afford to save some income and pay for private health insurance. In contrast to well-paying online work opportunities experienced by some telecommuters, the Philippine labor market often offered only low-paying jobs or no jobs at all. (Graham, et al.)

On the other hand, here are some of the several disadvantages in telecommuting.

1) Telecommuting increases the tendency to work longer hours.

In most cases, the primary way that telecommuters can increase their earnings is through working more hours. (Graham, et al.) Most telecommuters are engaged in a per hour or per

project basis. This means that putting in more hours will give you more income if you are paid by the hour. If your work is project-based, finishing a task sooner than expected will give the impression that you are good at what you do and will therefore attract more clients. Thus, fueling the need for working longer hours even further.

2) In telecommuting, there is an overlap between paid work and personal life – which can lead to high levels of stress.

Most telecommuters are home-based which gives them the tendency to do work and personal things all at once. This could lead to disruptions in daily schedules as this setup is prone to time mismanagement. A disorganized schedule or a lack thereof could lead to overlaps which is very stressful.

3) Employment insecurity

Since telecommuting means working remotely, companies are also offered more flexibility and choices when it comes to hiring their online workers. Most online jobs don't have employment contracts therefore, that they don't offer the usual benefits that comes with employment such as social and medical insurance, paid vacation leaves, etc. Even when they do have contracts of employment, most of these contracts contain a clause that stipulates that there is no employer-employee relationship between the company and the online worker. Because of this, it is a lot easier for companies to replace workers once they find better opportunities such as lower wages in another country.

E-Commerce Marketing Skills

Five years ago, Practical Ecommerce published an article describing the skills critical for ecommerce entrepreneurs. The suggestions were, perhaps, counterintuitive: be able to write, know how to learn, and be a skilled listener. These skills were about the strategic capabilities that entrepreneurs require.

A. Technical Skills

Building on these skills, here is a set of tactical/technical capabilities that should help your ecommerce marketing succeed.

1. Writing

The ability to write is, essentially, the ability to communicate online. Every ecommerce product description, every blog post, every how-to article, every about us page, every video script is an act of writing. Done well, writing will help drive your ecommerce marketing. Done poorly it will bring laughter and embarrassment. Clear writing is a requirement for ecommerce marketing success.

2. Data Analysis or Analytics

Successful marketers examine facts and statistics to make good decisions about how to invest in marketing and promotion. This ability to consider facts and understand the implications of statistics is called data analysis. It is important for modern ecommerce marketing. E-commerce marketers that can more effectively use and understand data are more likely to succeed.

3. Testing and Data Collection

Closely related to interpreting and analyzing data is the ability to collect facts and statistics about your company's marketing performance.

In this example, measuring or collecting information about when respondents entered a contest makes it easy to see the impact that email marketing had. Thus, monitoring how the campaign did might lead to making better decisions in future campaigns.

If you can collect good information about how your marketing is performing, you are more likely to make good decisions based on that information.

4. Design

Graphic and website design are digital marketing fundamentals. The way an ad, an article, or even a product detail page looks can have a significant impact on how the marketing message or even the product is perceived. How your site, your ads, and your brand materials look matters for ecommerce success.

5. Development

The ability to write code can be a huge advantage for marketers. This ability may be as basic as understanding HTML and CSS so that you can do a better job of posting articles in WordPress. Or it might be the ability to develop your own marketing tools and reports.

By some estimates, half of all digital marketing jobs require at least some technical expertise. This is the case because so much of what is done online requires at least an understanding of coding.

Learn to code and you will have more control over your marketing. With more control, your chances for success increase.

6. Advertising

Ecommerce advertising must be planned, created, purchased, executed, and measured. And it must be done in many channels, using many forms of media, including pay-per-click advertising on search engines and on social media sites, display advertising, native advertising, mobile advertising, video commercials, and more.

The effective ecommerce marketer understands how advertising works and seeks to get the very best possible return on investment.

Ad management is a high-end marketing skill that can take a long time to learn and even longer to master. But it is worth the effort. Advertising can drive sales and profits.

7. Digital marketing

Business without marketing is dead. You can have the coolest products in the world, most unique and high standard services and sell them at the most favorable prices, but who cares if no one knows about it?

A telecommuter needs marketing skills to attract new customers, grow social media audience, plan promotions, and more. Most marketing skills can be learned for free or through respective training platforms and developed on practice.

One classic type of marketing is **Email Marketing**. To paraphrase the Direct Marketing Association, an email address can define you online. It is, to an extent, your digital name, and email marketing may be one of the best ways to reach ecommerce customers. You can communicate directly to consumers who know your business and are interested in your products. Learning to effectively market via email may be the single best thing you do for your ecommerce marketing.

Another important type of marketing in the digital age is **Social Media Marketing (SMM)**. Social media marketing is an important part of any promotion strategy. Popular social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and others) provide great coverage of a telecommuter's target audience. It's an important tool of establishing your brand: working with social media, you increase audience loyalty, communicate with clients and work with feedback. Besides, SMM is often used for direct sales. Proper use of SMM boosts your profit. (B., 2019)

8. Marketing Automation

Marketing automation can reduce marketing expenses, increase conversion rates, boost average order value, and, in some cases, even improve shopper experience. For your ecommerce marketing, find the automation tools that work for you and master them.

9. Search Engine Optimization

Search engine optimization is the process of making your web pages easy for web crawlers to access and index. The idea is that if Google, Bing, and other search engines can easily find and catalog what is on your page, it can more easily list your site on the appropriate results pages.

The SEO aim is not to trick search engines with fake content or keyword stuffing, but rather to help search engines locate and understand your content. Done well, SEO will help make your site easy to find, which can lead to marketing success. (Roggio, 2016)

10. Entrepreneurial skills

There is an increasing trend toward small businesses in today's society. The Internet makes it easy for people to set up their own businesses and reach a broad demographic of customers. Entrepreneurship requires innovation, a strong knowledge of the industry or market, and adaptability in business. (TEACH, 2018)

Being enterprising and entrepreneurial involves spotting an unexploited opportunity and making the most of it: essentially, identifying a gap in the market and filling it. However, it can also be about trying something new or improving a process to increase efficiency or boost results.

Enterprise and entrepreneurial skills are effectively a combination of other competencies and abilities, including:

- commercial awareness;
- creative and innovative thinking (in fact, it could be argued that entrepreneurs take an innovation and make it commercially viable);

- problem solving and analytical skills (an entrepreneurial solution usually starts with identifying a problem and spotting trends);
- adaptability and flexibility;
- influencing skills (gaining agreement and support from prospective clients is essential);
- negotiation, persuasiveness and selling skills;
- leadership;
- drive and being results-oriented; and
- resilience in the face of obstacles. (TargetJobsUK, 2019)

11. Virtual Assistant Skills

Also known as virtual professionals, virtual assistants are remote administrative assistants. VAs typically work from home, performing tasks that an administrative assistant or secretary would normally do. For example, they might schedule appointments, make phone calls, plan travel arrangements, manage email, perform social tasks (such as sending thank you notes to clients), or conduct database entry.

Some virtual assistants have more-specific jobs based on their particular skill sets. For example, a virtual assistant might do bookkeeping, conduct online research, or create presentations using raw data. Virtual assistants are often independent contractors; that means they work for themselves, and the company is their client. Virtual assistants can generally work for multiple companies at once. (Doyle, 2019)

To be a virtual assistant, one needs to have (or be willing to learn) a marketable skill—something you can offer to clients in exchange for fee.

B. Essential Skills

As E-Commerce is profitable and therefore highly competitive, the skills needed not only include technical skills but essential skills as well. Listed below are the most essential skills in E-Commerce:

1. Focus on customers

E-Commerce will cease to exist without its customers. This is why customer service skills are an integral part of your online store success. Poor service can put all your customers off, while good service increases their loyalty and makes them come back. A telecommuter shouldn't be afraid of complaints and disgruntled clients. Instead of looking at things negatively, every difficult case should be taken as an opportunity to master one's communication skills. Learn the lesson and use this as a chance to improve customer service skills. (B., 2019)

2. Time Management

Most telecommuters start their career as an additional source of income apart from their respective main full-time jobs. On the other hand, there are also some who engage in online jobs full time. Whatever is the case, it shows how vital it is for a telecommuter to plan their daily schedules carefully. Skills in time management will guarantee that everything from adding products and editing descriptions to order processing and delivery is made in time because a good online store runs like clockwork.

This also works for other online jobs which are mostly project-based. It is essential for telecommuters to meet their deadlines to satisfy their customers. As most online jobs platforms have a rating system for their workers, it is important for telecommuters to accumulate good ratings and reviews to encourage new platform users to choose them.

Proper time management will not only save energy and reduce the risk of burnout, it will also help in maintaining work-life balance. (11 Skills All eCommerce Entrepreneurs Should Upgrade in 2019)

3. Creativity

To generate sales, you should be able to generate ideas first. Creativity is significant for eCommerce as it allows your store to stand out from the crowd of competitors. When you write a product description, a text for ads, an email to a customer, whatever – creative thinking is essential. There are various techniques and tools aimed at development of creative thinking, but sometimes real business process works better than anything else.

This E-Commerce skill is necessary when you face some obstacles. When you solve some complicated problems, creative thinking will help you avoid negative consequences.

4. Critical thinking and strategy

A telecommuter should be ready to make good business decisions and recognize opportunities when they appear since catching a promising trend is priceless.

For online business, the primary goal is not only to quickly make some immediate profit, but also to stay in this business and grow your venture. This is why it is of utmost importance that current issues are solved and a long-term strategy is developed. In connection with this, it is also important to anticipate potential problems and assess risks to avoid problems that are possible to prevent. (11 Skills All eCommerce Entrepreneurs Should Upgrade in 2019)

5. Independent and Self-Motivated

There is no way for an employer to check on the physical expressions of telecommuters. At the same time, there is no one checking in on online workers employed in their respective online businesses. This means that self-motivation is very important. Telecommuters should be independent thinkers who do not rely so much on external source of motivation as they will most likely spend a great deal of time on their own. An independent and self-motivated telecommuter needs no constant praise or reminders for targets and deadlines. (Bridges, 2019)

6. Flexible or Adaptable

A telecommuter should be able to adapt to frequent change. If a change is being introduced, the right attitude should be to accept the change rather than resist it. For employers of online platforms, online workers with this skill are preferable as there is no time to coach them through various shifts and changes. Having a telecommuter who welcomes the challenge of navigating new frontier is essential. For those engaged in online businesses of their own, it is also important to adapt to stay relevant in the digital marketing scene. (Bridges, 2019)

7. Results-oriented

Results-oriented people like to approach situations with goals and deadlines in mind. They create plans and strategies to tackle big projects, acknowledge the importance of finer details, and execute tasks systematically. In this way, they are more likely to deliver quality work and have more control of their time overall.

Likewise, these individuals take initiative as problem-solvers. They know that it is more efficient to troubleshoot on their own and ask for assistance only when necessary. While screening candidates, check for previous experience of working long hours with little results to show for it. And, if you want to assess their problem-solving abilities, ask how they overcome obstacles or how they've improved an established method or approach. (Bridges, 2019)

8. Collaboration skills

Although independence is one of the most important skills for telecommuters, being cooperative is actually just as vital to completing bigger projects. Due to the nature of the position, however, this is one trait that many business owners tend to overlook. But the fact that they work almost exclusively online cannot remove the human element, because there are still people involved in the equation. Fortunately, there are several IT tools that facilitate collaborations for those working remotely.

Collaboration skills are crucial if you are working towards a mutual goal, such as larger projects that require a group of professionals from all over the world. Furthermore, strong collaborations can help telecommuters to traverse through challenges that come with things like fixed deadlines and multiple clients.

9. Reliability

Generally, pleasant work relations are based on a foundation of trust. It is vital for employers to have telecommuters that can be trusted. This is especially important with projects, because if one slacks off, the whole group will suffer and, consequently, so too will the project. Clients also prefer hiring reliable telecommuters to save them from the hassle of always having to follow up on their requests.

10. Positive Attitude

Positive people know to maneuver through stressful situations. In most cases, people who are enthusiastic and optimistic will transform failures into lessons that will aid in delivering better results in the future.

11. Strong Communication Skills

While communication skills are essential for flourishing in the workplace, it is even more important for telecommuters. A majority of the remote work interface involves online correspondence, so communication skills are a must. Telecommuters should be able to communicate clearly and concisely through all channels. (Bridges, 2019)

Government Initiatives

I. Republic Act No. 11165 "Telecommuting Act"

The Telecommuting Act promotes "telecommuting," or the partial or total substitution of computers and/or telecommunication technologies for the employees' commute to work. Under this flexible work arrangement, employees would be allowed to perform their work in the comfort of their own homes or in any other place outside the office, as long as they have computers and/or telecommunication technologies with internet connection. (Logronio, 2019)

II. Taxes

On 5 August 2013, the Bureau of Internal Revenue issued Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 55-2013 entitled Reiterating Taxpayers' Obligations in Relation to Online Business Transactions. This memorandum circular reminds online businesses doing online retailing and shopping advertising and auction, to pay their tax obligations. While the BIR mandates for the payment of tax in this kind of e-commerce business, the government currently does not have a clear legislation covering other types of IT business especially those with foreign employers. (Department of Labor and Employment, 2014)

III. Consumer Protection

On the side of consumer protection, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) issued Joint Department Administrative Order (JDAO) 01 which prescribes the "rules and regulations for consumer protection in a transaction covered by the Consumer Act of the Philippines (R.A. 7394) through electronic means under the E-Commerce Act (R.A. 8792) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). The JDAO took effect on 13 November 2008. (Department of Labor and Employment, 2014)

IV. Protection of Personal Data

Another government measure is the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Department Administrative Order No. 8 "Prescribing Guidelines for the Protection of Personal Data in Information and Communications System in the Private Sector." (Department of Labor and Employment, 2014)

V. Trainings Conducted

The Rural Impact Sourcing Program by the of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) aims to promote and develop the online freelancing industry / home-based outsourcing through advocacy workshops and technical trainings in the rural areas. This is intended to create meaningful ICT-enabled jobs in socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the country. (DICT, 2018) The courses offered by DICT are:

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1. Digital Marketing and E-Commerce
2. Social Media Marketing and Advertising
3. Search Engine Marketing and Advertising
4. Content Writing
5. Web Development
6. Virtual Assistance
7. Graphic Design

Most Common Home-Based Jobs in the Philippines



According to the Bureau of Local Employment, listed below are the types of online jobs in the country:

- **Encoder/Transcriptionist**

Data entry jobs are probably the most common online home-based job. All that is needed is to enter data as instructed in a word processor or a spreadsheet. Others may require online research.

A more technical type of data entry job is the medical or legal transcriptionist. This type requires a more technical background, i.e., familiarity with medical and legal terms is needed. One would have to listen to audio recordings and transcribe them according to the prescribed format. Encoders/Transcriptionists are usually paid per word or per length of audio recording.

- **Online Teacher**

Most common are online English teachers needed by non-native English speakers usually from Asian countries. A working computer, earphones with microphones, and stable internet connection are needed since the teacher will have to converse with the student online and teach him or her basic and conversational English. Most online teachers are paid per class/session per student.

- **Internet Entrepreneur/Online Seller**

Born entrepreneurs take advantage of this online home-based job by marketing and selling items online. While stores and malls offer a wide range of items to choose from, online market provides the same, which is more convenient and accessible.

- **Customer Service Assistants**

Just like Customer Service Representatives in the IT-BPM sector, Customer Service Assistants do the same job. The only difference is that they are working from home.

- **Virtual Assistants**

Virtual Assistant is a collective term for online/web-based workers providing support to various companies. There is a general virtual assistant who is required to provide administrative assistance such as data entry, social media management, research, airline and hotel bookings, and events management, among others.

- **Web Developer/Programmer**

A Web Developer designs, codes and modifies websites, from layout to function to make it visually-appealing in design and user-friendly in navigation.

- **Online Writer/Editor**

For writers, online writing and editing is a good fit. Instead of doing writing as a hobby, one can do blogs and write online articles at a price. There are also others who look for online editors to edit and proof papers and reports.

- **Online Trading or Stock Market**

Investing in the stock market is the newest and probably the most rewarding online job. While others earn from it by acting as financial advisor to various clients, others also do it for himself or herself. The earnings in this kind of venture depend on the performance of the stock market. (Department of Labor and Employment, 2014)

- **Online Gaming**

Online gaming also known as E-Sports is on the rise. People can now earn money through this. There have been competitions locally and internationally dedicated to online games. E-Sports even made it historic Southeast Asian (SEA) Games debut in 2019. There are also discussions about including E-Sports in the Olympics.

TVET Capacity

Registered Programs

The existing related TRs were identified based on the Most Common Home-Based Jobs in the Philippines listed above:

Table 1. Skills Needs vs. TESDA TRs

Skills	Sector	Corresponding TRs
Encoder/Transcriptionist	IT-BPM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Transcription NC II
Internet Entrepreneur/ Online Seller	Wholesale and Retail Trading Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services NC II
	Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warehousing Services NC II
	Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography NC II
Customer Service Assistants	Wholesale and Retail Trading Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services NC II
Web Developer/Programmer	IT-BPM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Development NC III • Game Programming NC III • Programming (.Net Technology) NC III • Programming (Java) NC III • Programming (Oracle Database) NC III
Virtual Assistants	N/A	No available TRs

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Online Writer/Editor	N/A	No available TRs
Online Trading/Stock Market	N/A	No available TRs
Online Gaming	N/A	No available TRs
Online Teacher	N/A	No available TRs

It is noticeable that while there are some corresponding TRs for the online jobs listed above, more effort is still needed to fully address the skills needs brought about by this new type of employment.

For the encoder or transcriptionist, a wide array of sectors is now in need of this type of service and not only in the medical field. On the other hand, there are no TRs related to the following:

- Virtual Assistants;
- Online Writer/Editor;
- Online Trading/Stock Market;
- Online Gaming; and
- Online Teacher.

For the Internet Entrepreneur/Online Seller, Customer Service Assistants, and Web Developer/Programmer, there are related TRs. However, TESDA does not have TRs that address the technical skills that are much needed to thrive in this type of employment namely:

1. Writing
2. Data Analysis or Analytics
3. Testing and Data Collecting
4. Design
5. Digital Marketing
6. Marketing Automation
7. Search Engine Optimization
8. Entrepreneurial skills
9. Virtual Assistant Skills

Way Forward

E-Commerce or Telecommuting can play a part in policies that aim to promote inclusive labor markets and societies. (International Labour Organization, 2017) This empowers the Filipino workers who live in the provinces as they now have an option to not brave the horrible traffic in Metro Manila to get a decent paying job. It also shows how technology could help in addressing the gap in the salary between those working in the big cities and those working in rural areas.

To fully harness the potential of telecommuting as a means of addressing unemployment in the country and improve the working conditions of the workers involved, training and awareness initiatives are needed for both employees and managers on the effective use of technology for working remotely. (International Labour Organization, 2017) These trainings aside from providing them technical and essential skills, may as well provide them with information on the potential risks such as how to avoid scams and identify theft. They should know how to effectively maximize the flexibility provided by this arrangement.

In a recent study conducted by International Labour Organization entitled, “Working anytime, anywhere: The effects on the world of work,” one of the findings is that some country examples indicate that Telecommuting is a particular type of employment that increases the labor market participation of certain groups, such as older workers, young women with children and people with disabilities (PWDs). (International Labour Organization, 2017) This strengthens the need for TESDA to come up with training programs directed to this particular type of employment as an initiative staying true to its slogan, “TESDA Abot Lahat.”

The required skills include both essential and technical skills. TESDA has to look into the skills requirement for online jobs, to augment the capability of those who are engaged and those interested individuals to work online. Conduct of sectoral/industry consultations should be undertaken to further validate the skills requirements. However, it will be challenging for TESDA to involve the industry as there is no established association yet.

A whole of government approach is needed to maximize the potential of this new type of employment. As a developing country with a dynamic labor force, proper policy initiatives should be geared towards skills upgrading and the protection of our workers. Governmental initiatives and national or sectoral collective agreements are important for providing the

overall framework for a sound strategy for E-Commerce. However, the framework also needs to provide sufficient space for developing specific arrangements that serve the needs and preferences of Filipino workers as well as catering to the fast-changing world of work.

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