

# Future Skills Centre Podcast

## Episode 6: Gig Economy & Independent Workers

The nature of jobs is changing, with the growth of the gig economy and more work in all fields being tasked to contract workers, freelancers, and the self-employed. These independent workers lack the social support net that full-time employees benefit from. What are some ways to bridge the ‘support gap’ and ensure that people don’t fall between the cracks in these precarious job markets?

In our final episode of Season 1 of the Future Skills Centre podcast, we discuss this question and more with Armine Yalnizyan (Atkinson Fellow).

### Timestamps

**03:36–36:18** Armine Yalnizyan

### Links

Future Skills Centre and Conference Board of Canada links, such as recommended articles and webpages, social media handles, etc.

**Future Skills Centre Homepage:**

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**The Conference Board of Canada Homepage:**

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**The Conference Board of Canada Facebook:**

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**Old Gigs, New Gigs (Paper Authored by Carole Piovesan):**

<https://ppforum.ca/publications/old-gigs-new-gigs-are-courts-and-legislators-reinterpreting-an-age-old-debate-for-the-new-world-of-work/>

## Transcript

### Heather McIntosh:

Hi listeners. Before we begin, we just want to acknowledge that this episode was recorded prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Canada. As you well know this virus has had a dramatic effect on Canadians' ability to go to work and access training and education among so many other things. The conversations and opinions you will be hearing do not address COVID-related challenges specifically but are meant to provide instructive insights into how we can better prepare for the future of work more broadly. We hope you enjoy this episode. Welcome to the Future Skill Center podcast presented by the Conference Board of Canada. I'm your host, Heather McIntosh. As a member of the education and skills team at the Conference Board of Canada, my colleagues and I are constantly looking ahead gaining and sharing insights into the labour market of today and the future.

Together with our partners we inform and support local approaches to skills, development, and employment training to help Canadians transition in the changing economy. The Future Skill Center is a consortium made up of the Conference Board of Canada, Blueprint, and Ryerson University. Together, we're building a center that strives for research excellence and evidence generation. Like countries across the globe, Canada is facing wide-reaching demographic and technological changes that pose increasingly significant challenges to the world of work. In season one of the Future Skill Center podcast, presented by the Conference Board of Canada, we will explore some of the most crucial emerging challenges to the future of work. Each episode will unpack a unique challenge facing Canadians.

The gig economy is booming as more work in all fields is falling to contract workers, freelancers, and the self-employed. Well, people have done informal jobs for hundreds of years. The creation of technology like wireless internet, apps, and smartphones has fundamentally changed the types of jobs we can do and how we do them

in a very short period of time. These radical and recent changes have led to a number of questions. For instance, what is the gig economy? How does it differ from traditional jobs? How can we ensure that our laws are keeping up to date with the constantly changing technologies that proliferate in the gig economy? How can we ensure that our training systems prepare Canadians for this shifting economic reality? And how do we make sure that vulnerable groups are not left behind?

In this final episode for the first season of the Future Skill Center podcast presented by the Conference Board of Canada, we will be speaking about the gig economy in Canada chatting about the laws, technological changes and on the ground experiences that are fundamentally changing what it means to work in Canada. Armine Yalnizyan is an award-winning economist. Based in Ottawa, Ontario, her research has focused on income inequality and her current work as the Atkinson Foundation Fellow on the Future of Workers involves a deep dive into the understudied field of the gig economy in Canada.

Armine believes that the shift away from full-time office work in a single place may be the future of the labour force. The question for government is how to enforce minimal labour and wage standards when there aren't mutually agreed upon global standards. She also digs into the types of vulnerable groups who face the most challenges in the gig economy. To start off our conversation Armine told me about her unusual path to becoming an economist.

Could you tell me a little bit about your career trajectory?

### Armine Yalnizyan:

Well, I can tell you for sure that I've stumbled into it. Nothing was planned about it. The only constant throughout my career has been trying to understand why economics is as influential as it is, given its limitations, and given that its predictive ability seems not awesome. On the other hand, it does seem to have a lot of

predictive ability about human behaviour in some regards; but still, there's so many blind spots. I remember my very first course in economics, my professor introduced us to the idea of the work-leisure choice; and being 26 years old in my introductory course to economics I thought to myself "where's the unpaid labour vector?" Being a woman and knowing how much unpaid work got done, it's like how can you even have a model of the labour market where you don't count on unpaid labour? And here we are, almost 40 years later, and I'm still asking the same question.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine can you tell me about your current work as the Atkinson Foundation Fellow on the Future of Workers?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

Yeah, the point of this title [Future of Workers] is because, in the year and a bit that I was working with the federal government on the changing nature of work, I was noticing how there was a virtual cottage industry that had sprung up on the future of work, and so did the Atkinson [notice the trend]. And we were talking about how rare it was to hear people talk about the future of work by centering on workers. It was always about the jobs, the tasks, the occupations that were going to disappear. And it was always pretty dystopic, rather than a more...I don't mean that the opposite of dystopia is utopia. I'm not a technological utopian, but I do believe we have more control to shape the nature of the future of work than we give ourselves credit.

And so when I joined the Atkinson we decided we would put workers firmly at the center of all discussions about the future of work in technology and that we would focus on how we can encourage people to see the power that they do have in shaping their future.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine your research has mainly focused on income inequality in Canada if I understand correctly. What does income inequality have to do with the gig economy?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

Well, it's not a straightforward relationship but the minute you lift the hood under both concepts you see the relationship between the two. First of all, a very recent study from Statistics Canada shows us that there's a disproportionate number of people who are in the lower-income brackets. As workers that do gig work, they tend to be less educated and they tend to have within their ranks over-representation of recent immigrants. We know from other research that about half the people that do gig work, that's their only source of income; and the other half are side-hustling. So it's either supplementing their income or it's the unique source of their income and then they're not well-to-do.

So, what it tells you about the relationship between income inequality and the gig economy is that the gig economy is providing opportunities that did not exist earlier for people that are trying to either have an earned income or are trying to supplement what they've got. So, it's expanding job opportunities right now. The flip side of it is that it also opens up competition. It not only broadens and deepens markets; it adds, it pours people into markets, sometimes at the global level. So it adds more precarity to earnings and, of course, the nature of the gig economy is that it's on-demand. So there's two problems that go with that. First of all, you never get benefits, it's just pay-for-work; and secondly, the nature of the pay is suppressed. Sometimes people don't even get paid in money. They get paid in gift cards, which is the case for Amazon and Mechanical Turk workers.

For a lot of them, they get paid in Amazon gift cards. So, it's very hard to track what's going on but we do know that there's, on the one hand, more flexibility and opportunity, on the other hand, more precarity and less opportunity to grow your career. It's all fast turnaround, fast work.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine is gigging as we see it today good for the Canadian economy and workforce?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

I think it's a trend that you have to keep your eye on because it does create opportunities for people that can't earn otherwise; and it does open up flexibility for people with either chronic or episodic disabilities, or young parents to be able to make work not the single focus of their devotion. It gives them the flexibility to do the other things that they need to do, or that they can't work full-time full-year. So it's a great option so long as people aren't being exploited; and therein lies the rub. Because it is a really fast track to exploitation. There are no rules in the gig economy. It's very difficult to enforce basic labour and human rights.

It is very easy to become exploited and have no recourse for enforcing your human and labour rights because you're misclassified as an independent contractor rather than as a worker so you can't access employment standards. Or because the world of work is so atomized because there's so many people doing very short hits. Some jobs might be five minutes long and you stack them up; but like who's going to enforce all of that? So the enforcement of existing legislation is difficult. And the third factor is that increasingly the platforms—which are how we are matching people to the demand for work—are increasingly global. So it might be that your employer is in another country; the platform through which you guys met is in a second country; and you are in a third country. Whose rules apply?

So this is really permitting the explosion of a Wild West mentality. Wherever you get the inability to enforce rules or to apply them you get exploitation. So it's something we really need to be monitoring: the pace at which [this market] is growing, who's involved, are workers being more exploited, or are they being given more opportunity? Both things are true; but in what measure? And this whole tendency towards on-demand everything for consumers is leading to more tendency to on-demand work for workers. We need to see that the two sides of that coin can lead us to be more satisfied as consumers and less satisfied as workers.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine could you define the gig economy?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

The truth is nobody can define the gig economy. There's hundreds of definitions of the gig economy which is why we're having so much difficulty measuring what is happening there. Official statistics will define gigs in some ways. Individual surveys will define gigs in other ways. Essentially, it can be people working for cash in their neighbourhood, like dog-walking or babysitting. It can be people working regularly, but not predictably, like musicians or anybody else working in the arts and creative fields. It can be people working on term and contract for, you know, write me a code, set me up a website. It can be people doing micro-tasking, you know, tell the bot whether it's definition of this picture was correct, and you tell the bot, that was not an elephant, it was an antelope. Things like that that aid in machine learning. It can be filling out surveys to drive traffic to certain websites.

It can be making a video or writing a piece of software or even writing a student's essay. All of these are definitions of gigs. Some of them are highly professional and require huge skills; and some of them require very low skills and anybody can do them. And they all fall into this category [of the gig economy]. Some of them you could find the job from a bulletin board or poster on a telephone pole and some of them you get through the platforms that are exploding in number and scope and reach. It's the platform economies that are creating the very first real-time global labour market for a lot of skills. If you have the same skills in the language [of the person asking for the work] anybody can do the job from anywhere. So these are brand new things [to connect demand with supply of labour].

The one consistent thing is we are paying more attention to the gig economy because there's more ways for consumers and employers to consume and employ without commitment.

It's one-off. It's on-demand. And everybody wants that. Nobody wants commitment, nobody wants long term contracts and long-term relationships.

We know that the use of people to do labour in various ways is going to change because of this trend away from long term employment relations towards shorter term contracts between consumers and workers, and between employers and employees. What is really important about that is it's very hard to protect workers in that environment, because employment standards and our traditional labour legislation is not sufficient to protect people from being exploited. Now we have to look at other legal frameworks, such as contract law. Every time you click "I accept", those terms of service are a contract; and nobody is governing the language that can protect workers or consumers.

The only people protected through the terms of service are the people that provide the app. And so that's a whole new area of law and legislative framework that we're just starting to look at, to protect people from exploitation. We're going to have to get cracking on that.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine, you just made reference to an app. Is the gig economy directly related to technological platforms?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

The gig economy goes far beyond tech platforms. Why we're paying attention to it is because tech platforms have made so much more work "gig"-ified. They have made so much more work on-demand in nature, which means more flexibility for the consumer and sometimes for the worker. And also more exploitation of the worker because they don't have any of the traditional benefits with work, not even the traditional benefit of having an employer, because the consumer's not their employer. So who did they go to for recourse when something goes wrong? Nobody. Historically, we look at regulation and legislation to provide limits on bad behaviour, to minimize the way bad actors actually foul the nest for everybody. That's very difficult to do in the gig economy because the whole nature of the gig and on-demand economy is shifting risk away from the consumer or even the so-called employer (which is the app for the

worker). So something goes wrong—if you're injured on the job, or you're not paid as an independent contractor—it's very difficult for you to seek recourse. You have almost no legal channels. The apps themselves make it very difficult to pursue any kind of compensation for bad actors. This is a real issue going forward if this sphere of work is going to expand. It means risk-shifting means that more workers are paying for the costs of bad actors whether they're employers or consumers.

**Heather McIntosh:**

I'd love to know your thoughts on how do you foresee or how do you understand the future of work with regards to the gig economy.

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

I think what we forget about when we think about the future of work is that the technology that drives this stuff is not as important as the big elephant in the room, which is demographics. Population aging is happening in every rich country in the world. The countries with the biggest purchasing power, that drive global trade and global growth, are all aging more rapidly than the countries without money and with the younger populations. That has a lot of spillover effects. There's a lot of cascades that come from that. One of them is that companies that are not seeing growth in their sales are buying other companies to meet shareholders' desires for returns, [desires] that are unrealistic in an era of slowing growth because the rising share of elderly populations means slowing economic growth.

In Canada, 56% of GDP is driven by household spending. As the population ages, households spend less at the aggregate level; and that's a major drag on the economy. And so businesses are going to be looking for ways of cutting costs so that they can maintain returns to their shareholders, and they will also engage in more mergers and acquisitions to be able to boost their bottom line. Those are one-time wonders, but they still deliver to shareholders what they want. And usually, what it means when you do mergers and acquisitions is, you're cutting labour costs somewhere along the line. So there's going to

be this irony: the best thing for an individual company is going to be suicide for the...for the labour market at large. It's going to continue to put downward pressure on work [and earnings] and I think that will lead to more efforts to do more on-demand hires by employers.

Because these workers are being squeezed, they themselves are going to want to have more convenience and cheaper and faster service for the same price point. So also as consumers there's going to be this drive for more on-demand employment, basically.

Both of these pressures are going to, I think, lead to more on-demand employment, which is the area [of work] that we govern the least well, and the area which permits the greatest exploitation of workers. But the irony is, it doesn't come from technology. It comes from us, and our demands to be able to make more returns for our shareholders and get more for our dollar as consumers. So, it literally pits us as consumers against ourselves as workers.

We are heading into an era of slowness. It's either slow or no growth because of population aging, because of geopolitical tensions, because of shifting supply chains globally and because of climate events that are dragging down production in places that are devastated by climate events that may never come back again. All of those things are contributing to slowness and, even if we get through this really kooky political period, by the time we get to the other side of it we've got an even older population in every country. China is aging more rapidly than Canada because of their one-child policies from the 1980s. South Korea, which is an industrial giant and a tiger from the emerging nations, is aging more rapidly than Canada.

Canada is actually not aging as rapidly as other places and if we continue to encourage immigration, we may slow down that process because that's the push and pull of the global north aging and the global south looking for opportunity. There's an opportunity here to actually close global inequalities but there's also an opportunity to exploit people. So we'll see

which direction it goes. We could actually... population aging might actually be, in terms of the future of work, the secret sauce to delivering inclusive growth if a) we make good on the promise of boosting the economy from the bottom up by up-skilling Canadians who have been historically marginalized and sidelined from economic activity; and if b) we make good on bringing in immigrants not as temporary foreign workers but as future citizens.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine does the gig economy affect certain vulnerable groups differently?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

The gig economy doesn't just affect different groups differently. It attracts different groups differently. It permits people who are often systemically blocked from work in many areas—women with young children, people with disabilities, recent newcomers that might have a little bit of issues with language but have the skills—it permits people to engage in ways that they can't engage in the face-to-face labor market often. So it provides them with opportunities. But the gig economy is about on-demand labour and on-demand labour never gives you the opportunity to ask for more. It never gives you the chance to ask for benefits. It never gives you the chance to work with others to improve your lot because all the work is atomized.

Because of all of those factors, it is guaranteed that those workers are not going to get ahead. So it's fine for the moment and we see actually in the data that we do have people who will register with platforms to do online work or they will enter gig work after a period of unemployment or when their wages are falling, and they'll... they'll do it for a little while. And then they opt out because their wages continue to fall. It gives them income when they have no income. It supplements their income when their income is low. But there's no future in it.

**Heather McIntosh:**

How is legislation keeping up with the shifting landscape of work in Canada?



**Armine Yalnizyan:**

You know, in Ontario, we had the first labour review in 25 years. Same with the federal government. It takes a long time to review labour legislation and enshrine statutory rights for workers. You don't do it every day. In both cases, the review did not touch on digital labor. It did not touch on the new wave of labour. So I don't know how long it's going to take for legislation to catch up; but it's really important to understand that labour standards and labour law is not the only way to protect workers in the gig economy because so much of their work is done on a contract basis. On a purely transactional basis. Not on an employer-employee relationship basis. All of our labour laws and employment standards are designed to stabilize long term relationships and reduce long term exploitation; but when you got a hit [microtask through a platform] that might last for five minutes how do you enforce those rules?

So a different type of law [legal framework] needs to be brought into play, and we're just starting to understand what the significance of that is. We're starting to examine how terms of service legislation would govern standard contract language. There are no standards in terms of service language right now. Right now those contracts only protect apps. They do not protect the consumer or the worker. That could change. We could actually introduce some minimum standards in terms of service to reduce exploitation of workers and to protect consumers from bad platforms.

There's another aspect that we are just beginning to touch on as we look at the nature of this work. Whereas the workers are atomized (there's millions of people doing tiny tasks for short periods of time, often the platforms are associated with giant corporations. One example would be Amazon's Mechanical Turk.

There is a subgroup of interest in how we govern the sprawling global entities that command so much market share in all of the countries in which they operate. So another area that might be ripe for examination is antitrust legislation.

You know, Mark Twain used to say history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes. We're in a mighty rhyming moment right now. Antitrust legislation kind of surfaced a little bit over a hundred years ago and we're starting to look at this remarkable concentration of corporate power that just seems to be accelerating in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008–09 and because of things like population aging and the forces that are at play.

So, I think there's an opportunity here to see also the role of how we govern mega-corporations that have multinational reach, because so many of the platforms are essentially creating global labour markets where no single jurisdiction's laws hold sway over how workers are treated. So we're going to have to come up with some international way of governing, again, the bad players, the ones that arbitrage between jurisdictions to get the least possible responsibilities and maximize their rights to use and abuse people.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine we're hearing of some groups coming together to take action against gigging platforms. For instance, looking to unionize. Is that the solution?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

I think we should expect to see more collective action and more attempts to find pathways to collective action because people are starting to realize there's no... there's no pathway here. I might be getting some money but I'm not getting benefits. I have no control over my hours. I don't even have control over my rate of pay. So that will lead to more people looking for ways to protect themselves and they will know that the best way of protecting themselves is in numbers. You know, people may try to organize themselves as they are doing for Uber Black drivers in GTA or actually the attempt to organize Foodora bike and car food deliverers.

It might be the case in Canada again with the class action suit that is trying to prevent Uber from resolving all disputes in the Netherlands, by requiring drivers who might be disputing an

underpayment by a few hundred dollars having to pay \$19,000 to have the case heard in the Netherlands and then get there and pay for the travel and legal costs. Is that legal?

There's obviously a class action going forward with that, which I think is a brilliant collective strategy/ It might be from workers, as they have done in California, lobbying and getting the government to change legislation to provide tests to make sure that workers cannot be misclassified as independent contractors, because the onus is on the employer to prove —when a worker comes forward with a challenge—that they are, in fact, independent contractors and not employees.

And so there's a three-part test that California brought in which does provide broad-based protections. We're going to have to do this in numbers. We can't do it one by one.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Armine, if giggers working for a specific tech platform don't like the work or the conditions. Why might they choose collective action instead of moving on to a different job or company?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

So why do people choose to work for Foodora rather than something else? Choose to be an Uber driver rather than a cab driver with different regulations different governing bodies? Because the online apps are providing such competition to the consumer. They're providing cheaper, faster, more convenient and they're creating a market demanding that. So it's literally pitting ourselves as consumers against ourselves as workers that the demand for "fast", "convenient", "no commitment" is growing by leaps and bounds. It's part of this "me-first" culture. That's the sea we swim in. So yes, somebody can walk out with their feet and, in fact, lots of people are doing that; but on the other side is this seemingly boundless appetite for on-demand workers.

And people are seemingly thinking "well, I can do it as a side hustle. I can make a little bit extra." The turnover in the industry is shocking. But there seems to be a never-ending stream of people that are willing to try it. So it's a question of supply and demand. The demand for it is

growing. The supply for it seems to be bottomless. And even though people will walk with their feet because they can't get anywhere, or try to organize, There seems to always be somebody waiting in the wings who is a little bit more desperate, or a little more chippy about it. It's like "I don't need this. but I'm gonna do it for right now" until you find out "well, there's no other thing to go to"; and that's when people start organizing. It's "I've done it for this long. I didn't think I needed it. But I need it, I'm reliant on it and I can't make a go of it."

**Heather McIntosh:**

OK, that makes sense. So it's really like the supply and demand is the...

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

To my mind, that's the key and the more the gig economy grows, the fewer opportunities... Like that's what we're all looking to monitor is: "Is this growing?" Right now our labour force or official labour force statistics are not showing a massive growth, but we've got so much anecdotal evidence that says "what's wrong with these stats?". They just don't seem to line up with anecdotes. Of course, multiple anecdotes are not statistics, right? We know that. But the recent study, a study by the [United States] Federal Reserve that was replicated by the Bank of Canada, shows that the prevalence of it is much bigger than we see in our official labour force statistics.

So we know we have a measurement problem somewhere and we don't want our measurement to finally catch up to reality at a time when this is out of control. And we have a lot of difficulty to govern it because the taste for cheap or free and fast and on-demand is boundless. It is a boundless appetite.

**Heather McIntosh:**

In Canada and internationally it sounds like...

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

Everywhere. Everywhere. Like who doesn't want cheaper or free? Who doesn't want, like, "this, in a few minutes"? You got what you want delivered to your door. I mean, there's a joke out there that most of the apps are just basically your mom doing what your mom does. Cooking the food for you and bringing it to you. Like you don't even have



to move. Let me bring it to you on your couch. It's like, are you kidding me? This is the new market. Yes, there is a boundless market for this.

**Heather McIntosh:**

And drive you everywhere.

(CROSSTALK)

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

And take you where you need to go. It's like soccer moms.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Yeah.

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

Of course, that isn't all there is and that's why you do not want that attitude to migrate over to things like accounting, architecture, software development, legal services, medical diagnostics. All of these things are possible with apps. Same thing with, for example remote handling of dangerous bombs. Like getting robots to do that. And realizing you can drive remotely these [autonomous] vehicles, so now mining companies are using them. In Alberta, most of our remotely driven trucks are driven from Calgary; but technically they could be driven from Bangladesh. There's nothing stopping them. And they don't even need to be consistent jobs. They could be putting that [demand for labour] out into a hiring hall every day: who wants to do this work today?

**Heather McIntosh:**

For how much?

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

So we are entering a whole new era and we don't...Our rules and regulations even our culture is not... We've got this kind of split personality in our culture we want it cheaper, we want it faster, we want it now, and we want everything like that. On the one hand, on the other hand, we want good jobs. It's like we're in a pickle.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Yeah. Security, pensions...

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

That's right.

**Heather McIntosh:**

Medical. All that stuff.

**Armine Yalnizyan:**

Yeah, we want secure jobs that have got rights attached to them and good benefits or at least access to medical benefits and things that you need every day. So like which. pathway are we going to prioritize as we move forward, as both consumers and workers? I mean, there's a little bit of a war between the two sides of ourselves. If you go back to the concept that the population is aging and that not only will we need to up-skill Canadians to meet the void in all these retirements...Like it's an historic level of exits from the labour market. We have never seen so many people about to exit. And sure some of them will work longer than historically, but we're still looking at over 25% of the population being over the age of 65. So something's gotta give, right?

And people are taking retirement and we don't have enough bodies ready to come in. So that means we're going to have to import part of the solution. But one of the big stories of the last 15 to 20 years has been the shift in the way we import solutions to our labour market and skill shortages, from immigrants who are permanent residents and on track to become citizens, to temporary foreign workers who come in through many different types of programs. And currently, for every single economic immigrant we bring in, we bring in two temporary foreign workers through different channels. An immigrant is a permanent resident. For every single. economic immigrant we bring in who comes in and lives here as a permanent resident and can become a citizen, for every single one of those people, we bring in two temporary foreign workers. The chances of transitioning to permanency are very, very low [for temporary foreign workers] and even though they might be here for two years, four years (the definition of what they're doing isn't temporary), they are not allowed to stay.

That is a brand-new phenomenon in the way Canada has been built and how it builds its future and how it addresses labour market needs, either for skills or just bodies. So, that lends itself

to the gig economy. It lends to the sense of you're not permanent, this is not a long-term thing, it's a temporary thing. So we're actually changing the titre of acceptance of temporariness.

We're building a culture that is permanently temporary in some way and that will change our approach to what is good and what is bad about different jobs. What kind of work are we creating? What is the definition of decent work? Does it have to be permanent? Does it have to come with benefits like drugs, dental, and vision or pensions or days off or vacations? Maybe not. But when you start changing people's approach to what is a good job, you're in trouble for all the Canadians that live here, right? If you're accepting that a growing share of the labour market that is meeting our labour needs are not allowed to even dream of becoming part of Canada; and that's cool because we're addressing labour shortages?

You're changing the nature of the very future of Canada and how we can create decent work for everybody. And that's part of what we mean by, you know, [worrying about whether or] why is the gig economy growing? Because we're getting used to everything being permanently temporary. That's a very hard basis on which to build a career, a life, a family, a community, a country. We should be very careful for what we wish.

**Heather McIntosh:**

The gig economy may not be completely new, but it has no doubt cause some shifts in our understanding of work skills and the relationships between employers and employees. In this episode, the perspectives on technology law and social issues surrounding the gig economy all emphasize that the world of work is changing.

It's up to us to work on this together, tackle this challenge with an open mind, and continue thinking outside the box. If you enjoyed this episode you should check out Carole Piovesan's recent report on the gig economy published through Skills Next. A series of short papers by the Diversity Institute in partnership with the Public Policy Forum for the Future Skill Center. Carole's papers called "Old gigs, New gigs: Are courts and legislators reinterpreting an age-old debate for the new world of work?"

Skills Next papers present the current knowledge on important issues and identify under-researched opportunities for policymakers to explore. To learn more or access the series for free go to [fsc-ccf.ca/research/skills-next](https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/skills-next). That's [fsc-ccf.ca/research/skills-next](https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/skills-next). The Future Skill Center podcast is presented by the Conference Board of Canada and hosted by me, Heather McIntosh. It is produced by Noah Snyderman and Kevin O'Meara. At the Conference Board of Canada, we master complexity through our trusted research and unparalleled connections delivering unique insight into Canada's toughest problems so leaders and communities can build a stronger future. Learn more about us and our work at [conferenceboard.ca](https://conferenceboard.ca).

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