

LARA NORTON



Job: Digital Communications Officer

Company: Department for Education Digital

As a digital communications officer, my role is to build the DfE digital community. This is both internally by promoting collaboration, producing digital newsletters, and building a positive culture, and externally through building relationships with stakeholders, finding good content for social media and planning and promoting events with the wider digital community.

Enthusiastic

Organised

Ambitious

The skills I use most in my job...Communication

- Organisation
- Time management
- Stakeholder engagement

The most interesting thing I've worked on in my career so far... I'm working on a project to build collaboration amongst the digital teams that involves regular events for people to share what they have been working on. It is particularly interesting as I get to talk to lots of different people from different digital teams, and find out about the challenges they face, how they work, and then bring them together with colleagues to discuss these things. It really allows me to appreciate all the work that goes into what our digital teams do.

What inspired me into digital and tech... I didn't actually specifically choose to work in digital - in fact I never saw myself working in a digital role! I joined DfE digital as one of my placements on a generalist fast track scheme. Despite not choosing digital, I have found it an incredibly inspiring environment to work in, and am now keen to build a career in digital in the future. Everyone is so passionate about what they do, it is a flexible and open environment that allows for challenge and change, and there is real value in what is being produced every day. Although I haven't been in the role long, I have had so much opportunity to get involved and make a real impact, and I find that incredibly motivational.

My educational background is... I studied History at university before coming into this role as my first full time job. This my first placement as part of a three year graduate scheme with the Civil Service, and since starting I have had training in areas such as copywriting and agile.

What advice I'd give to girls thinking about a career in digital and tech... Don't get bogged down with you don't know enough about digital to consider a career in the tech sector! This is what I thought when I found out I would be working in a digital department, and yet none of the worries and fears I had about being unprepared or not knowledgeable enough have come true. My actual day to day role is not particularly technical, and I don't need to be an expert in computer science to do my job well. Yet I still get to work in a digital environment, with innovative tech, and with opportunities to learn and develop skills I never thought I would be able to. Don't impose limitations on yourself that aren't there, and remember to take on learning opportunities wherever possible!