Accelerating Higher Education's Digital Transformation Journey

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Digital Transformation in Higher Education

Digital transformation (Dx) is the process of optimizing and transforming the institution's operations, strategic directions, and value proposition through deep and coordinated shifts in culture, workforce, and technology.*

*EDUCAUSE definition, adapted from [Getting Ready for Digital Transformation: Change Your](#) [Culture,](#) [Workforce, and Technology](#)

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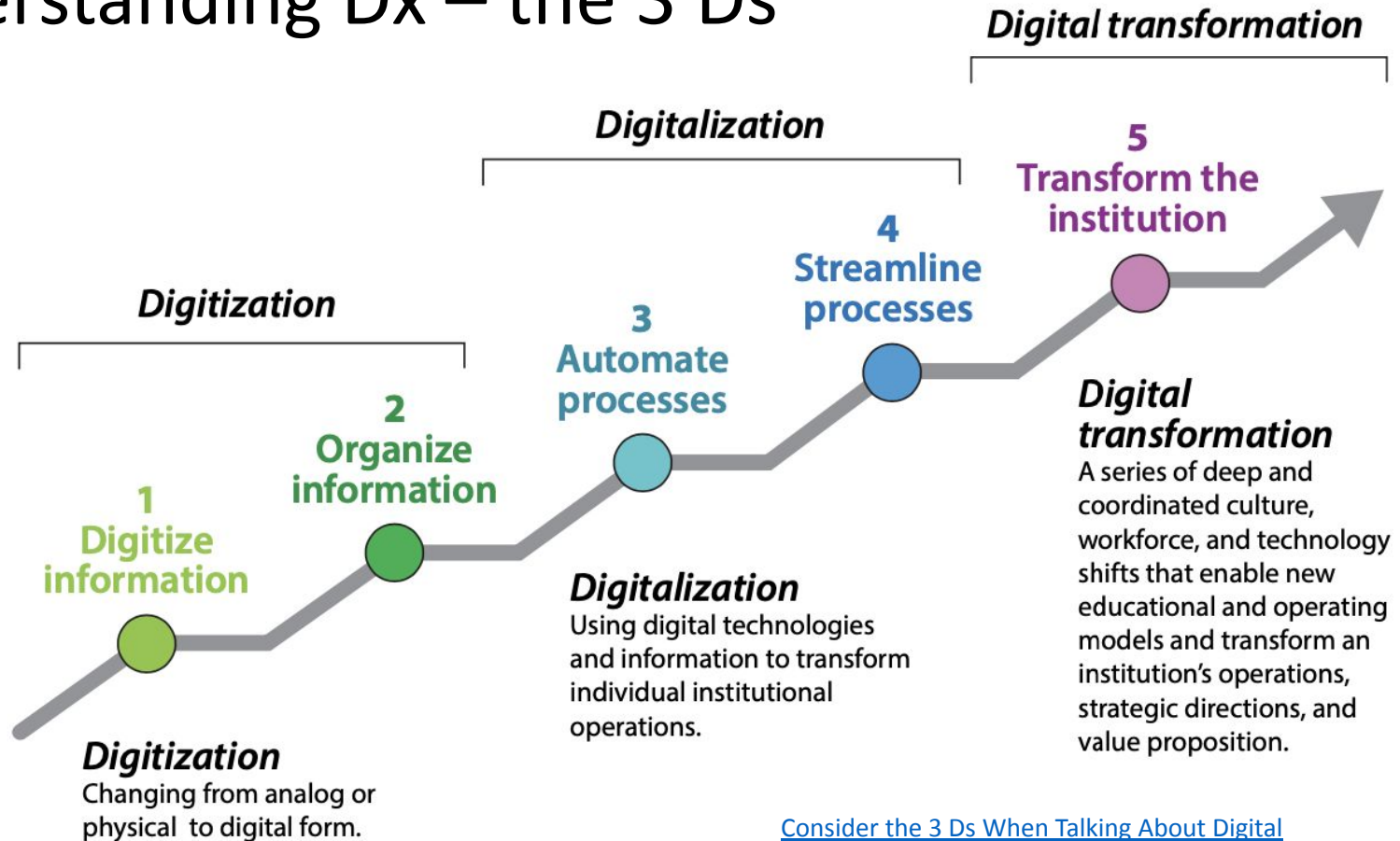
The Dx Equation

Intentional change in institutional value proposition or direction
+ Shifts in culture, workforce, and technology
=   Digital Transformation

It's More Than an "IT Thing"

Digital transformation...

- Relies on institutional leadership to understand and champion the changes
- Builds on the core values of higher education and of the institution
- Involves a foundational shift such as changes to the underlying business model and approach
- Requires changes that are holistic in nature
- Enables an institution to differentiate itself
- Involves continuing effort–it's not a "once and done" solution

Understanding Dx – the 3 Ds

Digital transformation

5
Transform the institution

Digitalization

4
Streamline processes

3
Automate processes

2
Organize information

Digitization

1
Digitize information

Digitization
Changing from analog or physical to digital form.

Digitalization
Using digital technologies and information to transform individual institutional operations.

Digital transformation
A series of deep and coordinated culture, workforce, and technology shifts that enable new educational and operating models and transform an institution's operations, strategic directions, and value proposition.
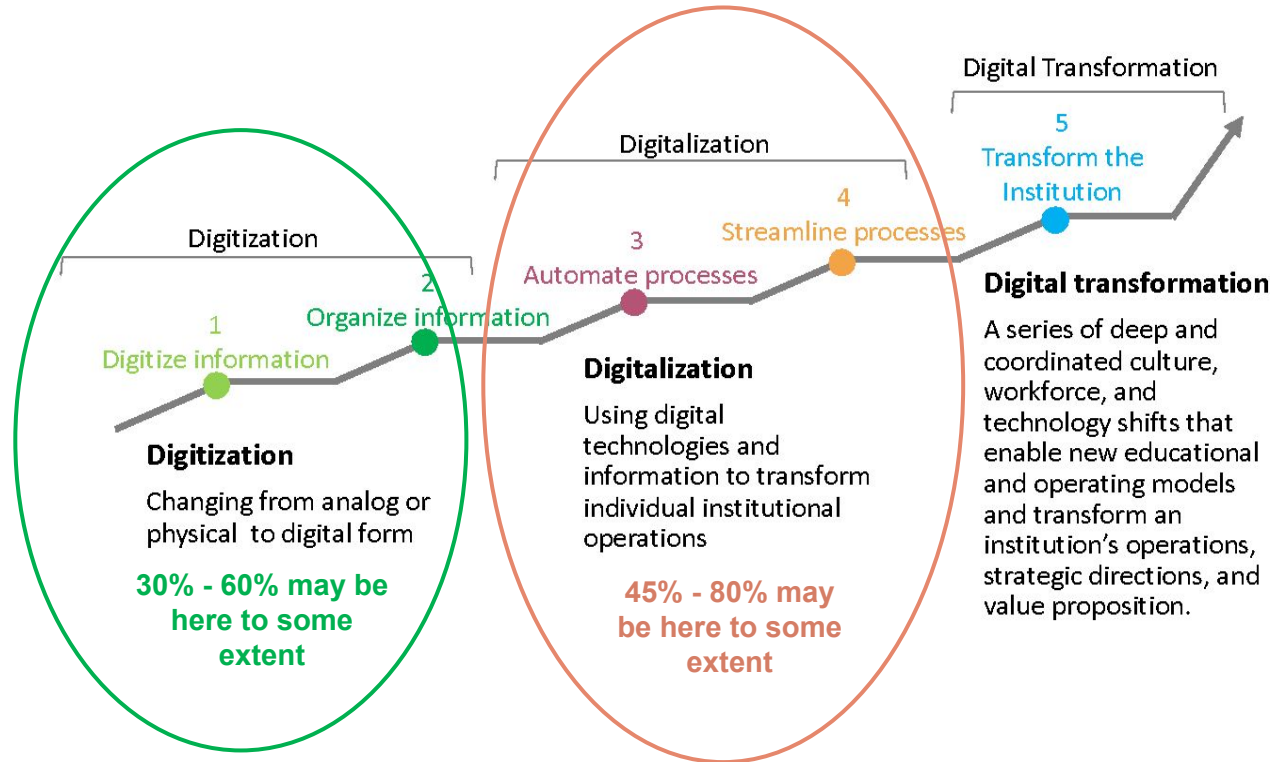
Consider the 3 Ds When Talking About Digital Transformation

Most institutions will want to start with Simplification

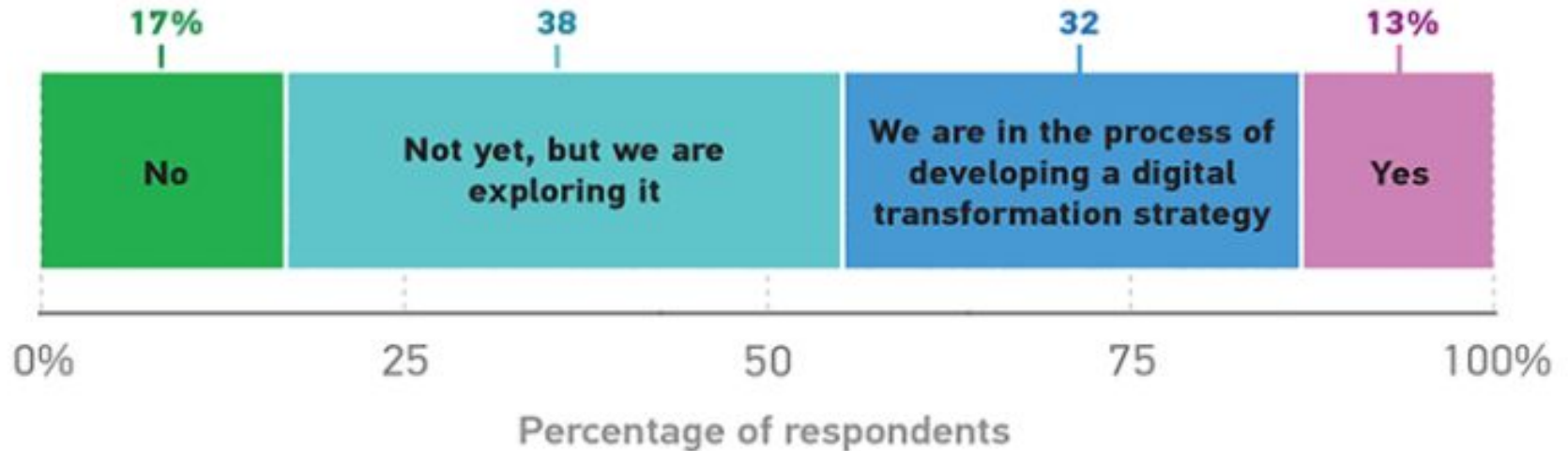Simplification paves the way for innovation

Digital Transformation

Digitization

1 Digitize information

2 Organize information

Digitization
Changing from analog or physical to digital form

30% - 60% may be here to some extent

Digitalization

3 Automate processes

4 Streamline processes

Digitalization
Using digital technologies and information to transform individual institutional operations

45% - 80% may be here to some extent

5 Transform the Institution

Digital transformation
A series of deep and coordinated culture, workforce, and technology shifts that enable new educational and operating models and transform an institution's operations, strategic directions, and value proposition.

"This effort simplified the company's systems and processes to reduce costs and risks. Without a powerful operational backbone, Philips' leaders would be consumed with executing and maintaining core processes instead of imaging, developing, and commercialized digital offering that help people live healthier lives."

Level of Institutional Engagement in Dx

17%

38

32

13%

No

Not yet, but we are exploring it

We are in the process of developing a digital transformation strategy

Yes

0%   25   50   75   100%

Percentage of respondents

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Dx Is Getting More Important

75% of higher education IT leaders who responded to our Dx survey believe that Dx will become more important in the next two years.

Grand Challenges for Higher Education

Student Success

- Persistence, retention, completion
- Engagement
- Outcomes

Financial Health

- Enrollment
- Costs
- Funding
- Natural disasters

Reputation and Relevance

- Affordability
- Political climate
- Teaching
- Academic programs
- Research
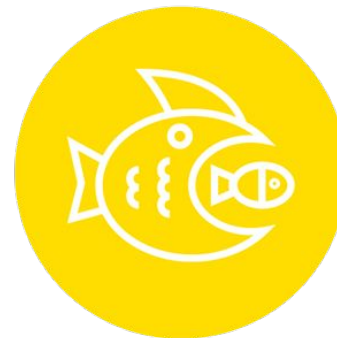
External Competition

- Alternative credentials
- Employer-based learning
- Talent
- Global higher education

COVID-19

- Crisis mitigation
- Health and safety
- Digital transformation

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EDUCAUSE 2021 Top IT Issues

Three Paths for Higher Education's Emergence from the Pandemic

Restore   Evolve   Transform

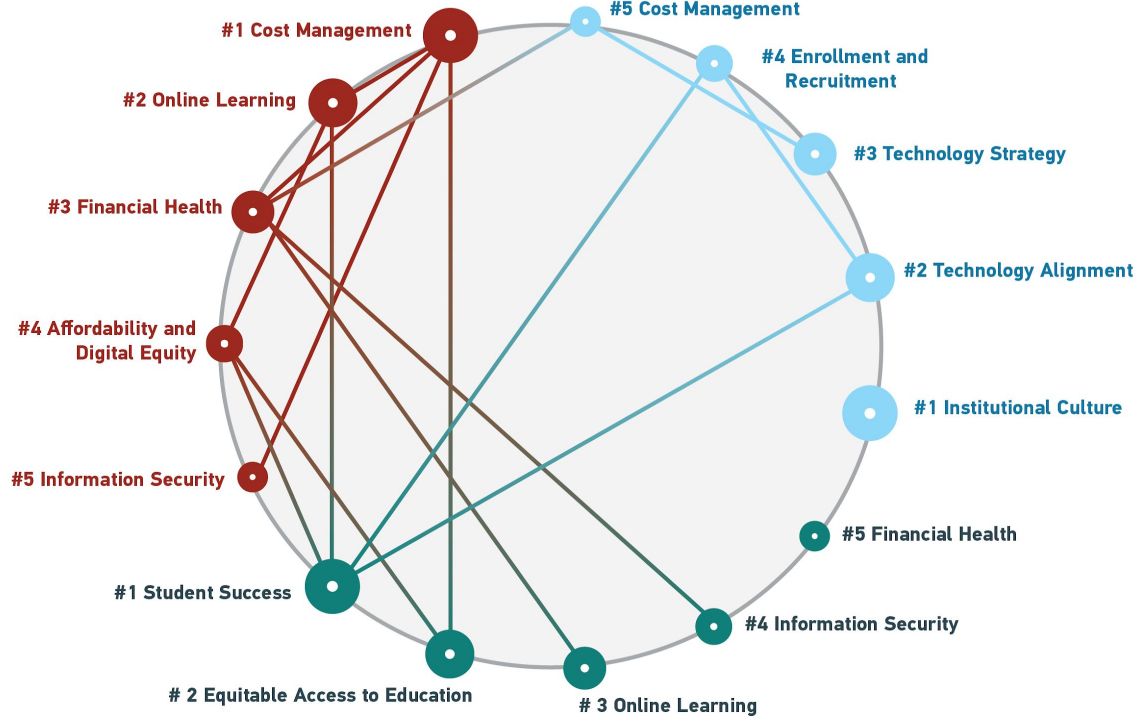| RESTORE	EVOLVE	TRANSFORM
#1. Cost Management Reducing institutional costs and increasing workforce effciency	**#1. Student Success** Advancing student support services to help students attain academic and career goals	**#1. Institutional Culture** Contributing to a culture of transformation
#2. Online Learning Strengthening online and hybrid education	**#2. Equitable Access to Education** Providing technologies, support, and policies for diverse users	**#2. Technology Alignment** Identifying and applying sustainable digital strategies and innovations
#3. Financial Health Revising budget models and IT governance	**#3. Online Learning** Progressing from emergency remote teaching to online learning	**#3. Technology Strategy** Developing an enterprise architecture that keeps pace with strategic change
#4. Affordability & Digital Equity Providing increased support for students' technology needs and enabling technology availability	**#4. Information Security** Developing a cybersecurity operations strategy	**#4. Enrollment & Recruitment** Exploring and implementing creative holistic recruitment solutions
#5. Information Security Providing information security leadership	**#5. Financial Health** Partnering to develop new funding sources	**#5. Cost Management** Focusing on digital transformation

"There will never be a return to what we knew as normal"

The Pandemic and the Acceleration of Dx

Dx is a series of focused journeys

Restore

#1 Cost Management
#2 Online Learning
#3 Financial Health
#4 Affordability and Digital Equity
#5 Information Security

Transform

#5 Cost Management
#4 Enrollment and Recruitment
#3 Technology Strategy
#2 Technology Alignment
#1 Institutional Culture

Evolve

#1 Student Success
2 Equitable Access to Education
3 Online Learning
#4 Information Security
#5 Financial Health

What kinds of digital transformation journeys might we expect to see?

- Transforming credentials
- Strategic enrollment management
- Programming for lifelong learners
- Curriculum reform
- Student outcomes
- The student experience
- Hybrid learning models
- Teaching and learning innovations

- Alignment with and impact on employers and the local region
- Institutional efficiency
- Addressing social justice issues like equity, the digital divide, racism, mental health, and social discord

The Dx Journey | A Roadmap

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The Dx Journey | A Roadmap

Digital transformation is the future of higher education.

But the future doesn't just happen. It's the result of a process—one that requires strong leadership and a commitment to institutional change to be successful. We're here to help you lead your team through the digital transformation (Dx) journey.

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The Dx Journey roadmap at a glance

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Three phases for your Dx Journey

Your path to Dx starts here.

We take you through the Dx journey in three phases. Using our resources, you'll be able to learn about Dx, create a plan for your institution, and put that plan into action.

THE JOURNEY

PHASE 3 **Do**

PHASE 1 **Learn**
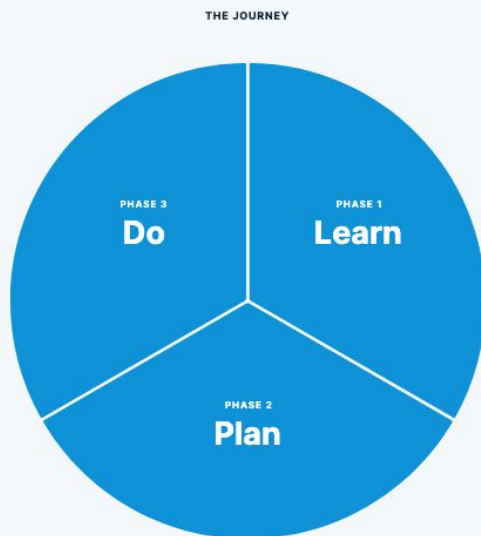
PHASE 2 **Plan**

PHASE 1

Learn

Understand what digital transformation means for higher education and for your institution. We'll start with definitions and identify signs that Dx may already be happening at your institution.

→ **New to Dx? Start Here.**

PHASE 2

Plan

Prepare for Dx by assessing your institution's capabilities, setting goals, developing a roadmap, and getting colleagues across campus excited to be part of institutional change.

→ **Preparing for Dx Initiatives? Start Here.**

PHASE 3

Do

Put your plans into action by launching strategic initiatives that will make your institution more competitive, flexible, and responsive. Evaluate their impact and adjust course accordingly.

→ **Ready to Implement? Start Here.**

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Start by Learning about Dx

Resources
- Dx definition
- Major Dx signals
  - How to foster a **culture** that embraces Dx
  - The effect of Dx on the **workforce**
  - How to use **technology** to transform the institution

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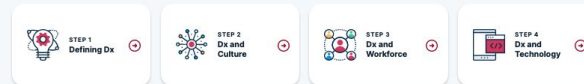
Then begin Planning your Dx journey

Resources
- Dx Maturity Assessment and advice
- Online Dx workshops

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Now, start your Dx journey

Coming soon
Resources
- Dx strategy implementation framework
- Dx case studies

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Do

Put your plans into action by launching strategic initiatives that will make your institution more competitive, flexible, and responsive. Evaluate their impact and adjust course accordingly.

Coming Soon

We have great things planned! More materials are coming soon to keep your institution's digital transformation on track.

Already on your Dx journey?
Tell us your story. Share a case study or other resource with the higher ed community.

CONTACT US

Preview:
Six Steps for Designing your Dx Strategy

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Six Steps for Designing your Dx Strategy

Purpose
Step 1: Define the **Purpose**. Why are you engaging in Dx? What institutional goal, challenge, or need are you addressing?

Context
Step 2: Identify the **Context** that is fueling this need to change

Impact
Step 3: Describe the **Impact** in terms of the anticipated change to the institutional value proposition. How does it address the **Purpose?**

Outcomes
Step 4: Describe the **Outcomes**. What will change in the next 6 months? In the next 1-3 years?

Outputs
Step 5: Describe the **Outputs.** What will you implement, and what shifts will be needed in culture, workforce, and technology?

Inputs
Step 6: List the **Inputs,** including resources needed and Dx Signals that you will rely on or build

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Dx Strategy-on-a-Page, part 1

Purpose

Context

Impact

Outcomes

Change to Value Proposition

Connection to Mission/Goals

Short Term

Long Term

Evidence

Dx Strategy-on-a-Page, part 2

Outputs

Project/Initiative Objective

Culture Shifts

Workforce Shifts

Technology Shifts

Inputs

Dx Signals You Will Rely On

Dx Signals to Be Improved

Resources Needed

Dx Strategy Example: Aligning IT with Institutional Mission to Support Innovation, part 1

Purpose: As part of an institutional effort to align all departments with institutional strategy and goals, IT will create a multi-year IT transformation plan.

Context: Increasing pressure to attract and retain students | New focus on areas of institutional differentiation | Decreased revenue leading to need for more financial and operational efficiencies | Need for ability to make quicker adjustments based on changing situations

Impact

Change to Value Proposition
Having a clearer focus on shared goals will allow the institution to focus efforts on innovation in areas that differentiate it. This sharper focus on what differentiates the institution will also create a clearer choice for students looking for an education in our particular areas of expertise.

Connection to Mission/Goals
By directly aligning IT priorities with institutional goals, IT will be better positioned to support and adapt to changes brought about by this change to value proposition.

Outcomes

Short Term
- Better understanding within IT of institutional strategic goals and priorities and primary drivers and levers of change
- Review of existing IT projects and decision-making processes
- Review of IT governance structure analyzed

Long Term
- Overhaul of IT governance structure if necessary
- Development of stronger IT business liaison structure for better understanding of campus needs
- Development of more strategic relationships across the institution

Evidence
- Better stakeholder buy-in through better change management
- More transparency of decision-making
- Decrease in time spent on IT projects without a direct connection to an institutional goal

Dx Strategy Example: Aligning IT with Institutional Mission to Support Innovation, part 1

Outputs

Project/Initiative Objective
Develop a multi-year IT transformation plan that highlights connections between IT projects and initiatives and specific institutional goals.

Culture Shifts
- Cross institutional collaboration in planning IT work
- Overcoming fear that changes will lead to job loss
- Better transparency across the institution for how IT decisions are made, with more stakeholder contributions into the process

Workforce Shifts
- May lead to shifts in the types of position needed if we determine that some work under way now does not need to continue
- Increase in business liaison competencies
- Increase in communication skills among IT staff
- Greater focus on vendor negotiation and management and less on technology management

Technology Shifts
- Project management tools may be needed

Inputs

Dx Signals You Will Rely On
- Academic curriculum redefined to better serve student needs
- Leaders willing to adopt new strategic directions
- Adept at change management

Dx Signals to Be Improved
- Focus toward institution-wide goals and away from siloed goals
- Focus on institutional differentiation
- IT investments and initiatives fully aligned with institutional priorities through governance
- Emergence of new levels of cross-organizational alignment and collaboration
- Investments and technology implementations specific to Dx projects informed by user experience

Resources Needed
- Campus leadership time to engage in the project
- IT staff time to engage with new ideas and learn new skills
- New collaboration and knowledge management software

Summary

1. Digital transformation is a series of focused journeys, not a destination
2. Dx is about more than technology, and it must have an objective of transforming the institution itself
3. A lot of initial Dx work centers on preparing existing infrastructure and culture for transformation
4. We reviewed a framework to help institutional leaders plan a Dx initiative at their institutions
5. Dx is happening faster, and is more important, since the pandemic
6. EDUCAUSE has Dx resources at dx.educause.edu

Resources

[The Dx Journey | A Roadap](#)

Articles:
- [Getting Ready for Digital Transformation: Change Your Culture, Workforce, and Technology](#)
- [Digital Transformation Signals: Is Your Institution on the Journey](#)
- [Driving Digital Transformation in Higher Education](#)
- [How Colleges and Universities are Driving to Digital Transformation Today](#)
- [Consider the Three Ds When Talking about Digital Transformation](#)
- [Integrative Leadership: A Necessary Ingredient for Dx](#)

Tools

- [Dx Signals Checklist](#)
- [Dx Institutional Self-Assessment](#)
- Dx Strategy Design Framework (coming soon as part of the [Roadmap](#))

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Contact us

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