

London is Burning: UK Technology Industry in Mental Health Crisis

A new report by Gigged.A.I reveals that the UK's technology industry is reaching critical levels of burnout due to skills shortages and failed digital transformation ambitions.

Temps de lecture : minute

20 September 2023

"And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done." Genesis 2:1-3

Even though theologians agree on the fact that "rest" doesn't equal "sleep" in this sentence, many agree that he stopped on this occasion to admire what He had created.

But the idea stays the same. Even God, the most powerful and omnipotent figure known to mankind, took a break on the 7th day. In order to respect God's accomplishment, most of the Abrahamic have decided to respect a day of Sabbath, a day to rest and contemplate God's creation.

So why should we work 24/7?

As most of UK businesses are currently taking part in digital transformation projects, 30% claim there is too much work to do and not

enough people to do it in order to successfully complete it. This overcharge of work is leading more and more people to burnout, resulting in a mental health and economical hazard all across the UK.

An alarming report

Gigged.AI, the AI-driven Talent Platform, has today released a 28-page report entitled, '*Digital Transformation in Crisis: The Impact of Skills Shortages, Talent Trends and Burnout on the UK's Technology Industry*'. The brand-new report, which surveyed 255 professionals working in or managing digital transformation, reveals that IT and technology professionals are reaching a crisis point when it comes to burnout.

A huge 90% of respondents said they are experiencing a tech skills shortage to some extent. These skills challenges are present across a wide sweep of technology & IT roles. However, the biggest gaps are to be found in software development (37%), a problem experienced by almost half of large companies (48%), cybersecurity (37%) and digital marketing (36%).

Things are getting even tougher with over half of respondents saying that the tech talent shortage has increased compared to last year, rising to 74% of those companies already experiencing it at a large extent. The reasons for such extensive shortage of talent include not being able to find qualified candidates and a lack of budget.

Mental health in crisis

A substantial 92% of respondents said they're experiencing some form of work-related stress, with over a third (36%) claiming to be "very" or "extremely" stressed.

- A third (33%) are doing an extra four to five hours work per week working outside their job description.
- A quarter (26%) have had to work whilst on holiday.
- 27% of respondents are regularly working outside of their agreed hours, particularly in large businesses (35%) versus small businesses (18%).

This kind of chronic pressure is having a significant impact on mental and physical health, wellbeing and workplace performance. Due to work-related stress, 37% of respondents report spending less time with their family, rising to 54% of those over 45. A quarter say they're less efficient because of the stress and a fifth have thought several times about leaving their job, which would make work even more insufferable for those who chose to stay.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents lay the blame on the tech talent shortage. This rises to a massive 80% when you look specifically at Senior Management.

Employers are also aware of the growing mental toll that tech shortages are taking on their IT and digital workers as 69% say they offer mental health support to employees. 69% of respondents say they'd use such services if offered. However, a quarter of those are unlikely to use support services say they don't want work to know (24%) or they worry others will think their mental health challenges will impact their ability to do their job.

Time for change

"These concerning figures reveal that the tech talent shortage is indeed causing alarming levels

of mental health stress for employees, and companies need to quickly assess their employee and hiring needs to ensure that their workforce is not leading to a severe and damaging case of burnout". said Rich Wilson, CEO and Co-Founder of Giggged.AI.

With talent shortages and burnout reaching crisis point, it's time for organisations and policymakers to think about more flexible ways to tackle these challenges.

- Over a quarter (27%) of those asked said they're creating training programmes to upskill current employees, in a bid to plug talent gaps.
- 80% report that their company offers employees the opportunity to take on additional digital responsibilities, with half of them hoping to take advantage of this.
- Nearly two-fifths (37%) of respondents also offer on-the-job training, and around a third are ramping up salaries and benefits for existing staff.

However, 24% of those asked are looking at more flexible options such as freelancers or consultants to fill the gap, and only 15% are looking at rehauling their approach to hiring.

There's also hope that technology could help in time to alleviate skills shortages. Generative AI in particular has been hailed for its ability to generate code and perform as a kind of virtual assistant, boosting worker productivity. Over half (52%) of respondents think tools like this will help alleviate tech skills shortages, although 44% have concerns about the ethical impact of replacing roles previously occupied by humans.

Article écrit par Paul Ferretti