

**Technical
Education
Networks**



Route: Digital

Digital

Roz Hicks, Head of media, Business and Digital Industries, City College Norwich
Laura Stewart, Curriculum Leader in Digital & Media, City College Norwich

Purpose of the day

- To facilitate and create a collaborative space for providers to discuss the design and delivery of DSS and DDA
- To share good practice & ideas to support qualification development
- Quality time to network and develop key links
- Hosts :
 - Roz Hicks – Head of Media, Business & Digital Industries, City College Norwich
 - Laura Stewart – Curriculum Lead for Media, Business & Digital Industries, City College Norwich
 - Kevin Hillary -

Review from Opening Session

We have heard from Nigel Duncan and Charlie Moss, plus a Q&A panel.

- What are the key takeaways for you individually from the keynote speakers this morning?

We have also had testimonials from two T Level 'Student of the Year'

- What one thing stood out to you the most from the student's presentations?
- Overall – what one thing might you develop in your organisation based on the introductory session & panel?

Review from CoP1 & CoP2

CoP 1 - Setting the scene:

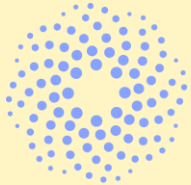
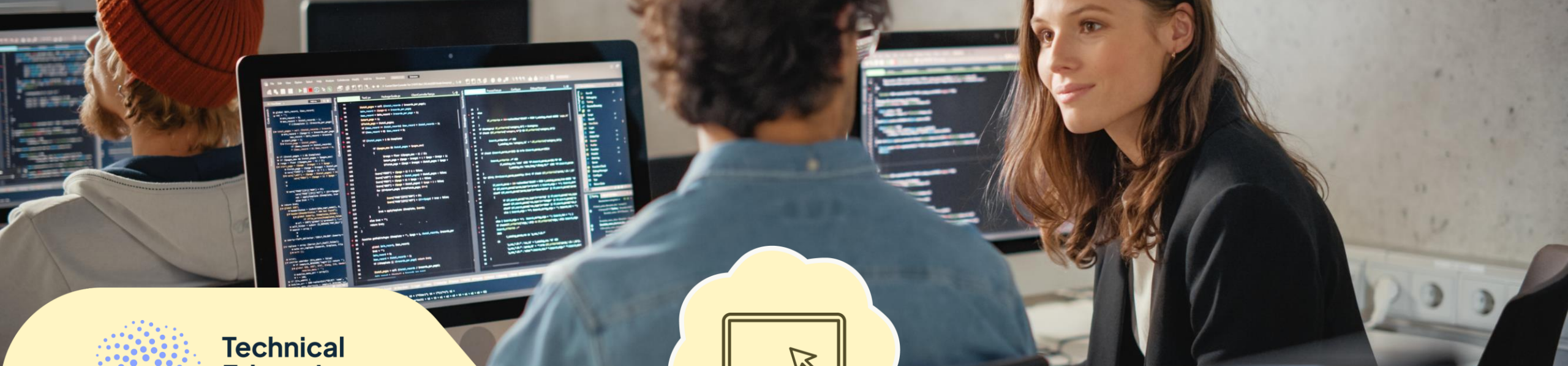
- Task & Finish Groups
- Ideas for Gatsby to create teaching materials (DSS & DDA)

Case studies:

- City College Norwich – yearly delivery plans and curriculum design
- Durham College – Notebook LM

CoP 2 – Developing Ideas:

- Challenges & Obstacles in delivery
- Year Planning/Delivery Planning
- Project Briefs & ‘live’ employer projects as IP hours
- Task & Finish Group updates
- Cisco Networking Academy

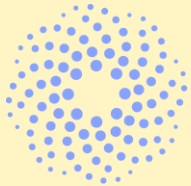
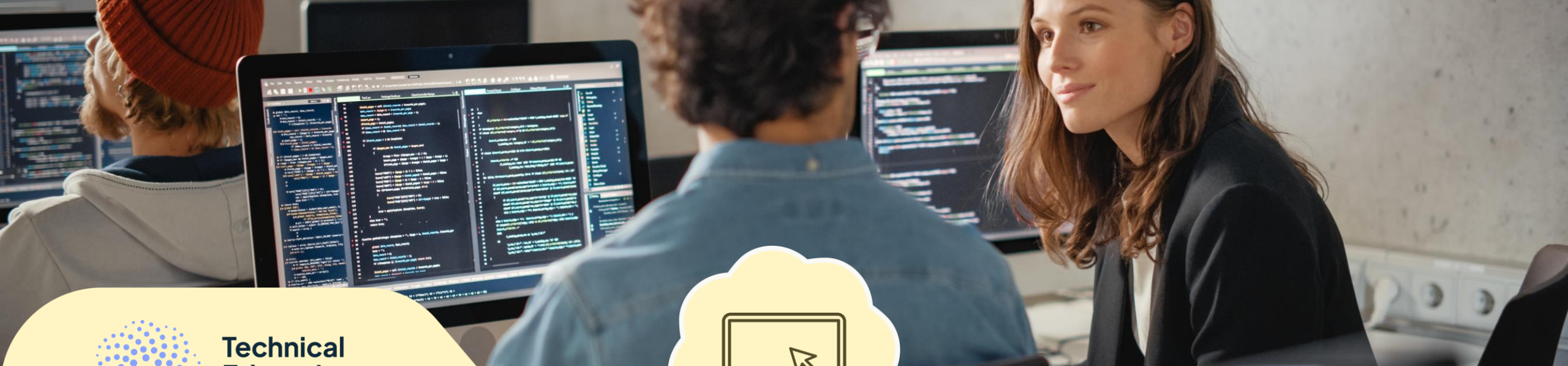


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Hot Topics

Occupational specialism

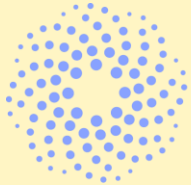
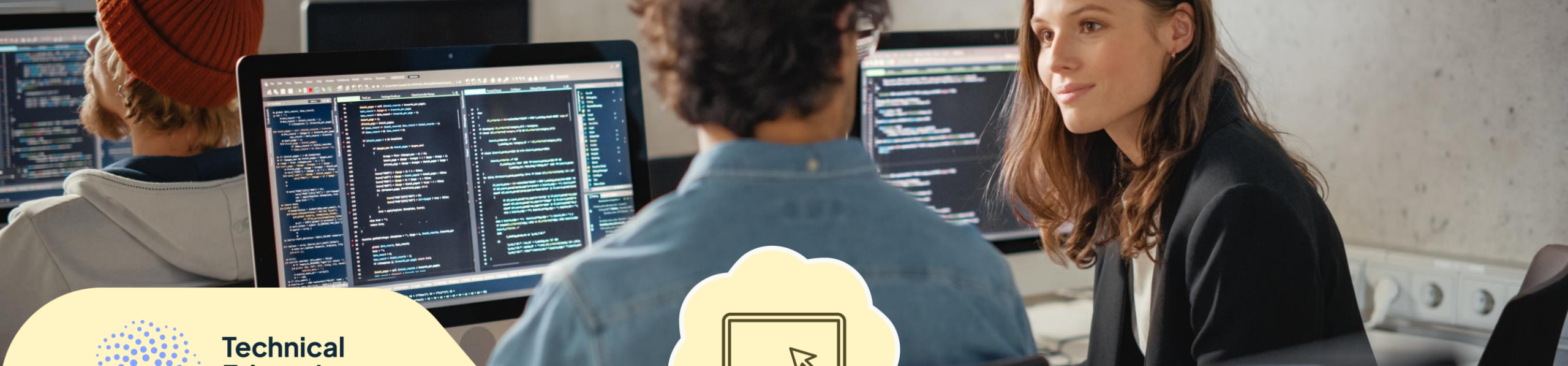


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Lunch & Networking

Session 2 starts promptly at 13:30pm

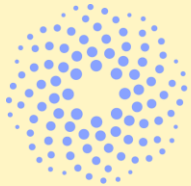
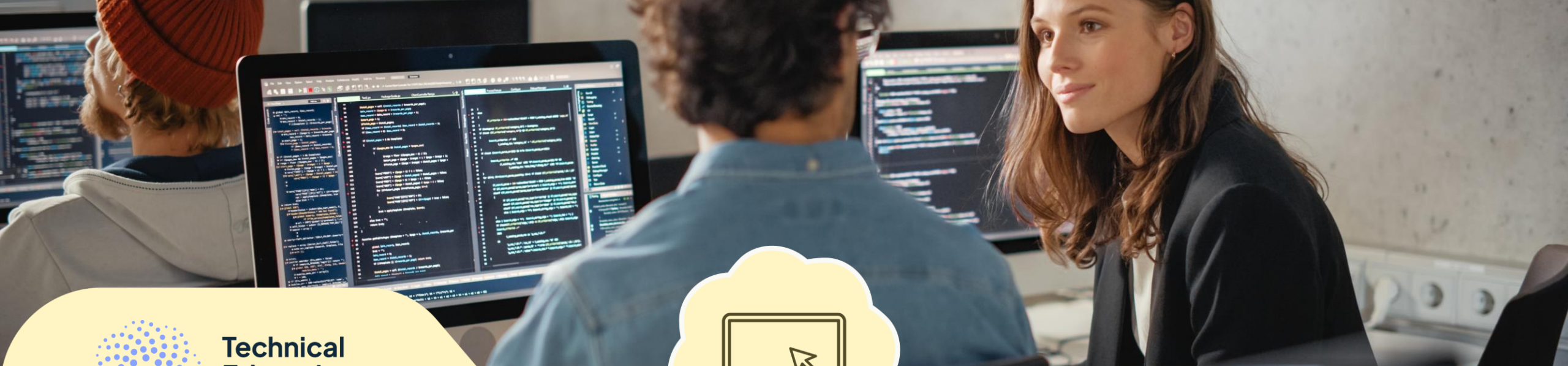


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Welcome Back

Digital DSS-DDA



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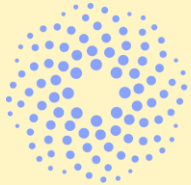
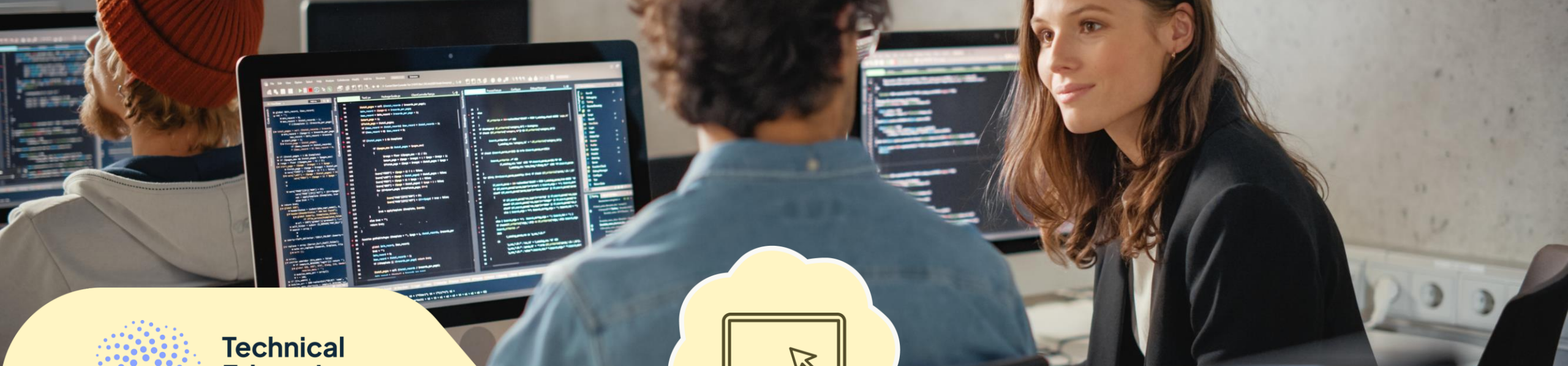
Resources

Digital Support and Security / Data Analytics

Cisco Packet Tracer – Kevin Hillary

Questions

- **What are your initial thoughts on this resource concept?**
- **What's your initial reaction to this resource proposal?**
- **Are there other resources that you would like to be developed?**



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Visual Curriculum Models

Friday 6th March 2026

Lauren Waller, AoC

Curriculum Models

Gatsby undertook some work with AoC in 2023/24 to create macro sequencing curriculum models for four T Levels in Construction, Digital, Engineering & Manufacturing, and Health & Science.

For these routes, we want to update the models based on changes in delivery and decoupling of core assessments and create an additional document to support the curriculum model.

Curriculum Models

On your tables will be copies of the existing curriculum model and a blank model. Please can colleagues:

- discuss these on your table and update on the models as clearly as you can
- add any useful information to the model you think will be helpful, especially for a new teacher wanting to use the model
- include names, emails and provider names on the back of the model(s) identifying who has contributed to these. We'll want to capture this in the information should we need to follow up before publication.

Curriculum Model Example

T Level Digital Production, Design and Development

Digital



Supporting Document

On your tables will be an example of the supporting documents for Year 1 and Year 2 of the T Level and a blank version. On the blank versions, please can colleagues:

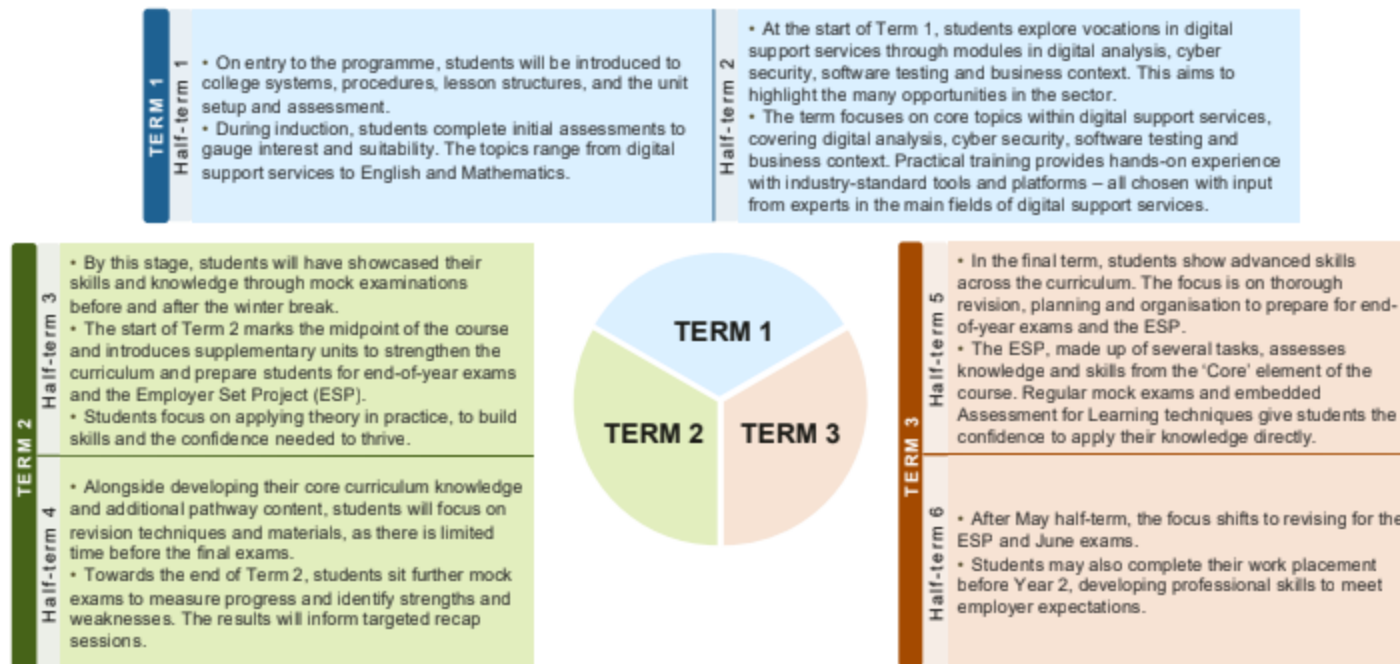
- discuss these on your table and update with the key information as clearly as you can
- add any useful information you think will be helpful, especially for a new teacher wanting to use the documents
- include names, emails and provide names on the back of the model(s) identifying who has contributed to these. We'll want to capture this in the information should we need to follow up before publication.

Supporting Document

T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Support and Security: Year 1



This document offers an overview of the key curriculum themes and skills that students will develop through each of the two years of the T-level.



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Supporting Document

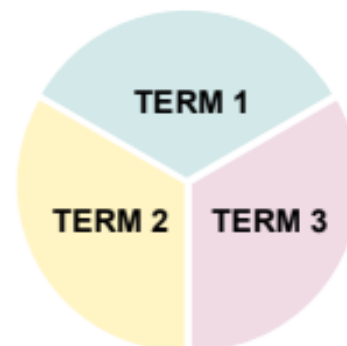
T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Support and Security: Year 2



This document offers an overview of the key curriculum themes and skills that students will develop through each of the two years of the T-level.

TERM 1 Half-term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On entry to Year 2, students are reintroduced to college systems, procedures, lesson structures and classroom etiquette, with reminders of appropriate behaviour, motivation and work ethic. During induction, students review the previous year's grades and work placement, and the key skills and knowledge they developed. 	Half-term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the start of Term 1, students explore careers in digital support services, focusing on networking and servers, digital security, and research techniques. Through dedicated modules, they gain insight into network infrastructure, server management, cybersecurity protocols and advanced research methodologies. The curriculum prioritises these core subjects, providing practical exposure to industry-standard tools and platforms to build students' proficiency.
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TERM 2 Half-term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By this point, students have shown their skills through mock projects before and after the holidays. Term 2, the course midpoint, introduces additional practical and revision sessions to strengthen preparation for the final exams. Students focus on applying theory practically in areas such as networking and servers, digital security, and research techniques. They then refine their skills through practical exams and revision.
Half-term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alongside developing their core curriculum knowledge and additional pathway content, students focus on revision techniques and materials in preparation for the end-point synoptic assessment. At the end of Term 2, additional practical exams measure students' progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses to inform targeted recap sessions.

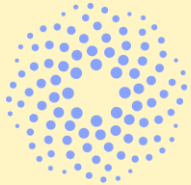
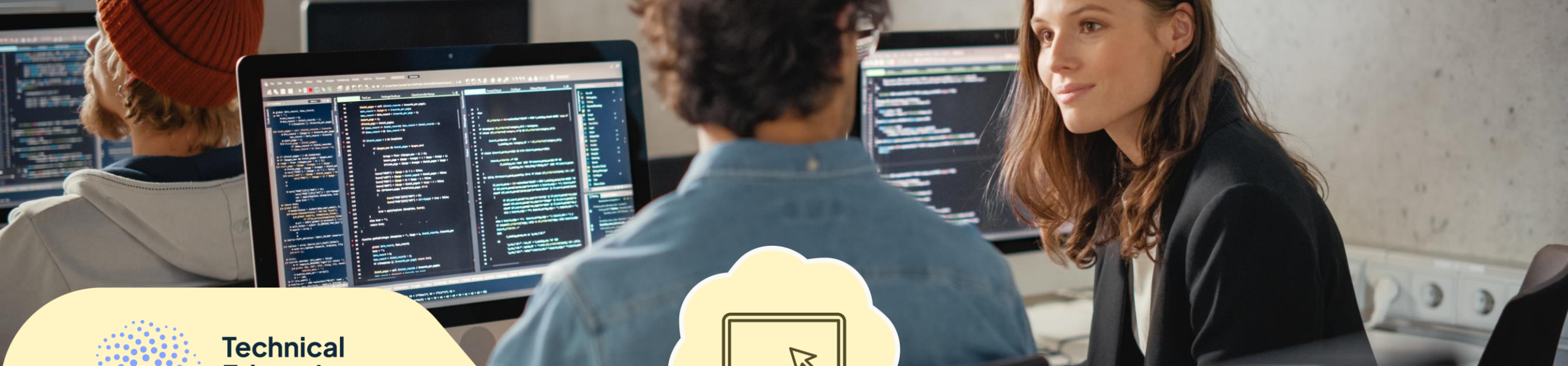


TERM 3 Half-term 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Term 3, students put all course knowledge into practice to ensure they can meet the synoptic assessment criteria set by the awarding body. The synoptic assessment is a practical, task-based project graded at pass, merit or distinction. It focuses on meeting required performance outcomes.
Half-term 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End-of-programme celebrations and final assessments mark the culmination of students' T-level journey! Students can reflect on two years of growth and achievement. Awards for academic excellence, technical skill, creativity and overall contribution are presented at a graduation ceremony. Students leave with a strong foundation in digital production, design, development, a professional portfolio and industry contacts, ready for success in their digital careers.

Next Steps

The models and documents created today will be given to Gatsby to work with their publishers to create new documents and hopefully published on the Technical Education Networks website.

Please ensure your name, email address and provider are included on the back of the models you have been working on should we need to follow up to clarify any suggestions made.



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Networking & Discussion

Alex Gifford and Richard Hanke-Hill

Occupational Specialism DSS (NCFE vs Pearsons)

Pearsons (current + future)

- Updated to newest industry requirements (2025 spec)
- More detailed cyber and security-specific outcomes
- Termly provider monitoring = tighter quality assurance
- Better-aligned occupational specialisms for support/security roles
- Broader teaching resources and continuous updates (Pearson's Digital Engagement Hub)

Provides the *current, active, and future-proofed* qualification for the Digital Support & Security T Level

- NCFE (Legacy)
- Good Foundational digital knowledge
- Broad occupational routes
- Withdrawn and no longer updated
- Less Frequent Monitoring (Once a Year with Provider)

Occupational Specialism DSS (NCFE vs Pearsons)

NCFE (*older version*)

- Applying procedures and controls to keep digital security
- Supporting users, fault diagnosis, problem resolution
- Setting up infrastructure or cabling depending on pathway
- Cyber security as optional specialism from 2023

Pearson (*new specification*)

- Cyber security principles and secure configuration
- Risk assessment and remediation advice
- Designing, implementing, and testing secure network systems
- Applying legal, ethical, and regulatory frameworks
- Real-world scenario-driven Integration Projects in year 2

Occupational Specialism DSS (NCFE vs Pearsons)

NCFE Support V's Pearsons Digital Support Technician

NCFE Content	Pearson	Notes
Communication in digital support services, Customer interaction, problem solving	Analysing user needs Providing support Collaborative solution building	Pearson Modernises terminology Integrates collaboration into assessed tasks
Fault Analysis and resolution methodologies	Integration project Problem Solving workflow (Define requirements, design, test evaluate)	Pearson uses a single Integration Project for practical assessments
Understanding roles in digital services	Professional Practice in support roles (Legal, Ethical, Secure operations)	Pearsons add stronger regulatory emphasis

Occupational Specialism DSS (NCFE vs Pearsons)

NCFE Cyber Security V's Pearson Cyber Security

NCFE Content	Pearson	Notes
Maintaining digital security of an organisation & data	Applying procedures and controls to maintain digital security	Direct mapping
Risk assessment & proposing remediation (Fix)	Security risk analysis & mitigation within Cyber Security ESP tasks	Pearson increased depth and scenario based evaluation
Evaluating reliable sources & threat intelligence	Cyber Security knowledge discovery & evaluation outcomes	Direct mapping

Occupational Specialism DSS (NCFE vs Pearsons)

NCFE Cyber Security V's Pearson Cyber Security

NCFE Content	Pearson	Notes
Install, configure, test & manage infrastructure (physical & virtual)	installation, secure configuration, test plans, virtualisation tasks	Pearson retains NCFE focus but add more explicit security operations
Applying procedures & controls for digital security	Security is embedded in all Pearson infrastructure outcomes	Stronger Integration under Pearsons model
Discovering & applying reliable sources	Integrated research competencies in ESP & Integration Projects	Very similar expectations

Occupational Specialism DSS (NCFE vs Pearsons)

NCFE Network Cabling V's Pearson Network Cabling

NCFE Content	Pearson	Notes
Install & test cabling in line with technical and security requirements	Pearson Network Cabling Installation, standards compliance, secure set-up tasks	Direct continuation
Apply digital security procedures (NCFE crossshared component)	Pearson emphasises secure network deployment across all Network Cabling tasks	Equivalent but Pearson adds more structured documentation and assessment
Research & knowledge evaluation	Research components within ESP and written justifications build more into Occ spec	Matching expectations

Occupational Specialism DDA (NCFE vs Pearsons)

Pearsons (current + future)

- Fully updated for 2025 industry needs
- Broader business-digital context
- Stronger alignment with occupational standards
- More rigorous assessment
- Clearer documentation & support infrastructure

Pearson's occupational specialism is far more detailed, requiring learners to develop more operationally robust and industry-aligned analytics capability

NCFE (Legacy)

- Solid digital foundation
- Broader business-digital context
- Withdrawn
- Less analytics-specialised

Occupational Specialism DDA (NCFE vs Pearsons)

NCFE Network Cabling V's Pearson Network Cabling

Content	NCFE (Digital Business Services)	Pearson (Digital Data Analytics)
Data Sourcing	Understanding data & digital systems	Source, organise, format data securely for analysis
Data Prep	Data system manipulation (broad)	Blend data from multiple sources
Analysis	General data handling	Analyse structured & unstructured data to support business outcomes
Communication	General reporting skills	Interpret data & communicate results to different audiences
Legal/Ethical	Included at high level	Specific apply legal, ethical & professional principles content area
Research	Discover/evaluate sources	Dedicated content area for reliable sources of knowledge

Dates for your diary

Industry Associates Training Programme and Event 29th April 2026

Gatsby have an in-person event in London for FE Leaders/Teaching and Learning leads and stakeholders to share findings and implementation of the Industry Associates training programme pilot

Please contact FEworkforce@gatsby.org.uk for more details or speak to Rory on the Gatsby stand.

Next Community of Practice meeting

- 24th June 2026 at 3:30pm

Route Reflections & Next Steps

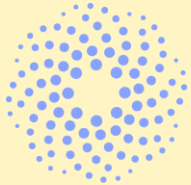
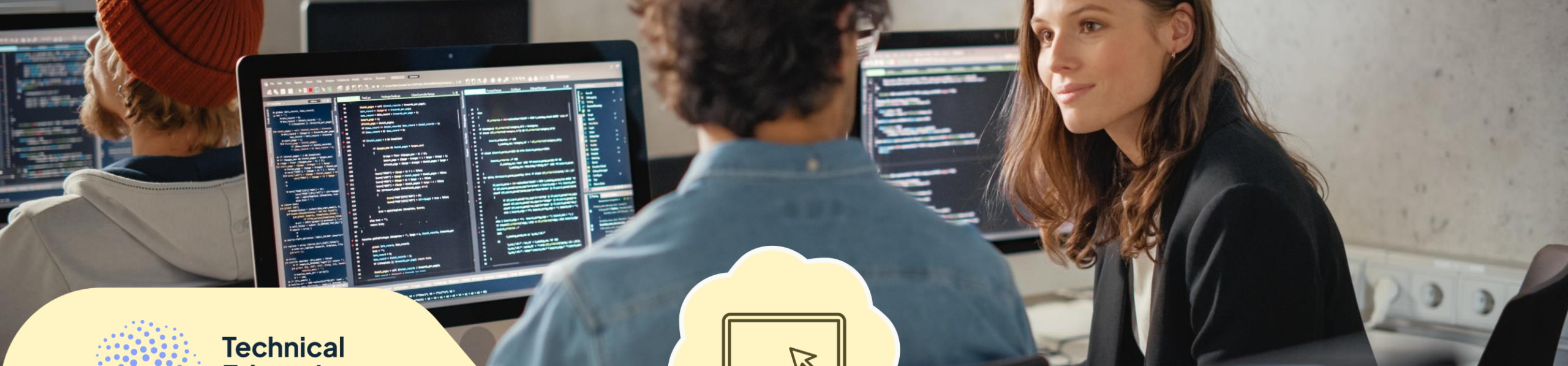
Before you leave today

We would really value your feedback before you head off. It takes just two minutes and helps us improve future events.

Please scan the QR code now to share your feedback.

T Level Communities of Practice
Exchange Conference Evaluation





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Thank you for attending