



# Mastering Digital Credentials: A Beginner's Guide for Training Providers

Whitepaper

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**Credly**  
by Pearson

## TRAINING PROVIDERS

# Overview

The global job market is facing a chronic shortage of skilled workers and an unprecedented need for reskilling and upskilling. According to '[The Future of Jobs Report 2023](#)' by the World Economic Forum (WEF), a major cause is the advent of disruptive technologies such as digital transformation, automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

WEF forecasts that 6 in 10 workers will require training before 2027, but only half of the workers have access to adequate training opportunities today. This skills gap, however, represents an important opportunity for training providers.

The rapidly evolving landscape means training providers that adapt and stay current will be better able to equip learners with in-demand skills. By offering up-to-date training programs and their respective digital credentials that align with emerging skills and industry demands, they will ensure learners have the most relevant qualifications.

But the market is crowded. [The Annual Training Industry Benchmark Report](#) reveals that training providers face an increase in competition in their respective industries, with 36% of respondents marking it as one of their biggest challenges.

Considering this fierce competition, providers must find ways to innovate, deliver quality programs, and employ effective marketing strategies to stay ahead.

To address these needs, consider investing in digital credentials. This guide will explain how they address specific skills or competencies, setting you apart from competitors and attracting learners seeking specialized expertise.

It will also demonstrate how they provide valuable data on engagement, helping you improve your

training and promote its value. By embracing digital credentials, you can stay ahead of the curve and maximize the potential of your programs.

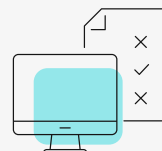
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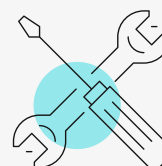
Learn about digital credentials and their diverse applications



Explore how digital credentials can benefit your organization, customers, and learners



Understand how to launch a successful credentialing program



Debunk common misconceptions around digital credentials

## What are digital credentials?

A digital credential is a tangible representation of a learner's competencies and skills. Every credential contains verifiable data that confirms what, where, and how someone earned that credential. They complement paper-based certificates, but because they're online, they're data-rich. And with **the right platform**, management, and integration, it's easy for institutions to create, issue and share digital credentials with their learners.

These digital credentials, or digital badges, can then be shared by badge earners on social media, embedded into an email signature, resume, or website, or linked to them for full visibility into their verified knowledge, skills, or abilities.

### The Role of Digital Badges for Training Providers

70M + credentials have been created and issued via **Acclaim**. A digital badge issued through Acclaim is a digital representation of a learning outcome, experience, or competency. These badges can be earned in a wide variety of environments and here are some examples of how you can utilize digital credentials for your learners:

- » **Course Completion:** Recognize learners' achievements and showcase their acquired skills and knowledge by awarding badges upon completion of various courses.
- » **Skill Badges:** Verify specific skills learners have acquired in a program or tool.
- » **Continuing Education Badges:** Award badges to those who complete continuing education programs or attend workshops and seminars. Badges recognize their dedication to professional growth and staying up to date on industry trends.

- » **Subject Matter Expert/Contributor:** Recognize individuals who contributed to the training program content and exam with their in-depth knowledge.
- » **Project Completion Badges:** Training providers offer badges to learners who complete projects, proving their competency and expertise. These badges can benefit those looking for employment in project-based industries.
- » **Leadership Badges:** Acknowledge individuals who have demonstrated leadership qualities and contributed significantly to an industry or sector community. These badges showcase their ability to guide and mentor others.
- » **Innovation Badges:** Reward learners who have showcased innovative thinking and problem-solving skills. These badges highlight their creativity and contributions to advancing their industry.
- » **Partnership Badges:** Establish badges to honor strategic partnerships or collaborations with organizations or industry leaders. These badges signify strong alliances and demonstrate the credibility and industry-wide acceptance of the program certification.

### See examples:



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## The Benefits of Investing in Digital Credentials

Having learned about the many applications and opportunities for digital credentials, let's look at the benefits to your organization and customers.

### Provider benefits

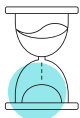


#### Drive Demand for Your Programs

Every time an earner shares their profile or digital credential, there's a measurable, organic impression of your brand, programs, and certifications. This digital credential sharing represents free marketing that engages new and existing customers and attracts individuals who want to upskill.

#### Add Value to Your Training Programs

Labor market insights, credential recommendations, and social sharing can cultivate lasting customer loyalty as learners recognize the ongoing advantages of their credentials. This is especially relevant for those who require regular training, as they are motivated by the knowledge that their credentials will yield long-term value.



#### Sets You Apart

By offering digital credentials, you can differentiate your organization from your competitors, and showcase your commitment to technological innovation while providing a unique experience for your learners.

#### Derived Demand

As learners start to gain a competitive edge in

their current role or the wider job market using your visible training certifications, colleagues and other job seekers may search for them too.

#### Rich Data Analytics

The rich analytics within the digital badges provide details and trends on course engagement, program performance, and which badges are most accepted and shared. This helps you identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions to enhance your training programs to reflect learner needs and interests.



#### Enterprise-Class Flexibility and Security

Digital credentials offer the flexibility you need to implement a robust credentialing program. They ensure your certification earners receive digital credentials immediately with automated issuing. In addition, enterprise-class hosting, disaster recovery, and data security take the burden off your organization to manage the technology.

#### Protect Your Brand

Digital credentials provide a secure and tamper-proof way to verify the authenticity of a certification. This enhances the certification's integrity and credibility, which can help you build trust and a positive reputation in the industry.

[Learn more in our whitepaper '[How Digital Credentials Can Prevent Fraudulent Certification and Qualifications](#)']

#### Saves Money and Time

As digital credential programs eliminate the need for the physical production, distribution, and storage of paper credentials, they reduce costs and administrative burdens.



## Standardization and Consistency

Digital credentials provide a standardized format for presenting qualifications, ensuring consistency and clarity across industries. This helps avoid misinterpretation of skills and achievements.

*“Due to the rate of industry changes, lifelong learning is not only a key requirement of the next generation of people who will work in those industries, but a key requirement emerging for our existing customers today. We see learning as being key to the way that workers will be successful in the era of automation.”*

**Jessi Mielke**  
Certification Program Manager  
Esri

## Learner benefits

### Easy Sharing

Learners can effortlessly share digital credentials across social media, email, or digital portfolios, increasing skills visibility and reach across industry networks and potential employers. By showcasing their achievements and skills more prominently, they can differentiate themselves in a competitive job market and advance their careers.

### Encourage Continuous Learning

Digital credentials foster a culture of lifelong learning, motivating learners to pursue additional training and upskilling opportunities to keep their credentials up to date. With personalized learning paths tailored to their goals, learners are also prompted to fill their knowledge gaps with additional credentials. This reward pathway encourages and motivates learners, which can lead to elevated skills (and more courses purchased) across organizations.

## Boost Employability

The metadata within digital credentials provides detailed information about the skills, competencies, and accomplishments represented by the credential. By making it easier for employers to verify and understand the true value of the certification, it boosts learners' employability.

## Stackable Credentials

Learners can learn new skills and easily add new credentials to their profile with stackable credentials, helping them cater to the latest in-demand competencies to increase employment opportunities.

## Career Advancement

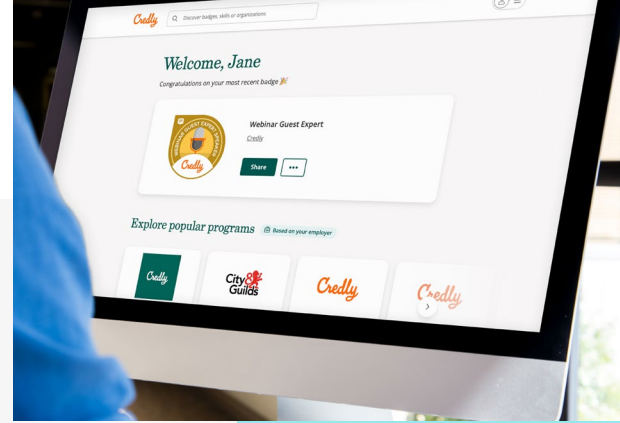
Digital credentials set learners apart in job applications, performance evaluations, and promotions, demonstrating their commitment to professional development and improving their career prospects.



## Networking Opportunities

Digital credentials enable learners to connect with peers, mentors, and industry professionals who share similar credentials or interests, facilitating valuable networking and collaboration opportunities.

# How Acclaim can help – an overview of the platform



The **Acclaim** platform incorporates a series of product features that deliver wide-ranging benefits for your training organization – from reducing administration workloads to building brand identity.

Key Features	Benefits
Customization and branding	Create a unique badge template that reflects and ensures a consistent brand identity across all digital credentials.
<u>Certificate maker</u>	Issuers can offer customized, printed certificates alongside Acclaim's digital credentials, giving organizations full control over digital certificate creation to better highlight learner achievements.
Badge management and automation	Effectively issue, monitor, and manage digital badges to meet the provider's needs. You can issue badges individually, in bulk using a spreadsheet, or through Acclaim's API. All these methods can reduce manual work and lower labor costs.
<u>Integration</u>	Acclaim can be integrated with various learning management systems (LMS), HR systems, and other enterprise tools to streamline the process and align it with your organization's workflow.
<u>Metadata mapping</u>	Embedded metadata in each badge ensures verifiable and secure credentials, detailing the issuer, badge earner, achievement, and earning criteria, helping learners to tell their stories.
<u>Social sharing</u>	Learners can share their credential badges on social media, email, and online platforms, showcasing their accomplishments to networks and potential employers. Badges also extend brand reach and highlight the value of your credentialing programs.
<u>Analytics</u>	Acclaim provides insights into the performance of your digital credentialing program through various analytics and reports, helping you measure engagement, reach, and impact on your organization's objectives.
<u>Blockchain</u>	Blockchain technology adds security and verification to digital badges, making credentials tamper-proof and verifiable, increasing credibility and value.
Recommendations	Issuers can recommend relevant courses, certifications, or training to help learners further their skills and knowledge in specific areas.



## The Steps to Launch a Successful Digital Credentialing Program with Acclaim

- » **Define Goals and Metrics** - Set digital credentialing goals to align the program with your strategic aims.
- » **Onboarding** - Utilize the onboarding resources and support from Acclaim's Customer Success team to set up the program and ensure credentials are aligned with industry standards and best practices.
- » **Establish a Governance Plan** - Appoint someone (with a backup) to handle control, authority, and credential creation.
- » **Get Buy-In** - Engage internal stakeholders to articulate the credentials' potential to get leadership buy-in.
- » **Determine Level of Access** - Make sure all relevant users have access to the system and master the platform.
- » **Design Credentialing Framework** - Begin a pilot credential using well-designed taxonomy.
- » **Create Badge Template** - Develop high-quality badge templates, including elements like verified skills, clear criteria and more.
- » **Market & Launch Program** - Develop a marketing strategy to raise awareness and drive interest.
- » **Issue Badges** - You can issue one badge at a time, in bulk using a spreadsheet or by tapping into our API.
- » **Integrate With Existing Software** - Integrate Acclaim with existing systems like learning management system (LMS) and HR software.
- » **Measure Your ROI** - After the program launches, track your metrics like learner engagement and credential issuance for program evaluation.
- » **Be Ready to Adapt & Change** - Use analytics to make data-driven decisions and continuously improve the program.

## Common Misconceptions about Digital Credentials

Now that you're familiar with digital credentials and their benefits for you, your customers and learners, you might still need some clarification. So, let's address some commonly asked questions:

### 01 Do I have to offer multiple programs to get started?

Not at all. Even if you just offer one course or program, Acclaim can help. In fact, starting with just one program lets you get familiar with the Acclaim platform. You can develop your marketing content, build awareness, and get buy-in. Once launched, you can review the data, make necessary adjustments, and expand your curriculum. [\[Discover how ICF started a successful pilot program with Acclaim before an expansion\]](#)

### 02 How does Credly by Pearson ensure data protection?

We prioritize data security and privacy, adhering to stringent data integrity processes to instill confidence and security in every issuing organization using our platform. We hold multiple ISO certifications, maintain GDPR compliance, and implement robust security protocols to safeguard the privacy and security of our customers, as well as their employees, members, students, and users. [You can learn more about our data protection approach here](#)

### 03 What support options are available post-launch?

Our dedicated customer success team is always on hand to help. Additionally, you can find an extensive collection of [resources, guides, and FAQs on our website](#), as well as exclusive monthly drop-in sessions for our customers.

### 04 How soon can I begin my credentialing program?

Our team is prepared to identify the best solution for you and collaborate on a timeline. Keep in mind the resources you have available, and any planning completed beforehand.

## Drive Visibility and Demand with Digital Credentials

We hope this guide has shown you that the benefits of digital credentials can be far-reaching to training providers. Investing in an innovative digital credential program demonstrates that you align with the skills sought by employers and prioritize meeting the needs of your learners, which helps elevate your brand with your target audience. In addition, digital credentials offer flexibility, security, and streamlined processes to save costs and build trust. For more information, visit our [Resource Center](#).



## Want to learn more?

Acclaim is the network of choice where 3,500+ certification, assessment and training providers and employers issue their credentials. With a notable 76 Net Promoter Score, our secure, user-friendly, and data-rich platform is a reliable choice for supporting your organization and learners. To explore how digital credentials can contribute to your organization's growth and commercial goals, schedule a demo now.

## About Credly by Pearson

Credly by Pearson is helping the world speak a common language about people's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Thousands of employers, training organizations, associations, certification programs, and workforce development initiatives use Credly to help individuals translate their learning experiences into professional opportunities using trusted, portable, digital credentials. Credly empowers organizations to attract, engage, develop, and retain talent with enterprise-class tools that generate data-driven insights to address skills gaps and highlight opportunities through an unmatched global network of credential issuers.