BUILDING THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

Curtiss J. Shupe

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Digital Workplace earns strategic weight only when it is managed as a portfolio of work products rather than a shelf of employee software. PMI defines a portfolio as programs, projects, and operations managed together to reach strategic objectives, with governance, prioritization, value measurement, roadmap work, and recurring review inside the same discipline. That standard shifts the conversation from software ownership to enterprise choices about which work deserves redesign, funding, review, reuse, or retirement.

These decisions become urgent because the work is expensive now in cognitive terms. A 2023 systematic review in Frontiers in Psychology noted the growth in the problem of information overload due to increased digitalization and diffusion of information and communication technologies in the workplace. A 2024 review of technostress identified the negative impacts on people and organizations related to the heavy load of information technology-based work. A 2024 paper on digital workplace intensity linked overload and hyperconnectivity with health impairment. While none of the sources argue against digital technology, they highlight that the increase in the size of software estate does not improve work efficiency automatically. Poorly designed digital workplace imposes the cost of interruptibility, divided attention, repeat searching, and stress.

A portfolio perspective implies a narrower definition of the product. According to GOV.UK's current service definition, a service means all actions provided by an organization to enable a user to reach a particular goal. At the same time, ISO 9241-210 suggests that the principle of human-centered design requires aligning design with user needs and context of use throughout the life cycle of interactive systems. Combining the sources leads to a straightforward conclusion: the product is not the application; the product is the complete job: a need trigger, guidance, request, approval, exception handling, status check, handoff, and recordkeeping.

The next step is defining the design unit of Digital Workplace portfolio. The most efficient unit of this kind in practice is a task chain. A task chain begins with a need and ends with completing a specific job. In a task chain, there are searching, guidance, form submission, routing, approval, case update, policy enforcement, and follow-ups. Employees perceive all these elements of work in one flow, not separately. A product catalog hides delays that may occur between systems. A portfolio centered on task chains makes these delays explicit and assigns ownership. Task chains are proposed based on the cited services and life-cycle definition principles.

Next is the opportunity to define domain boundaries in a portfolio of Digital Workplace products. Collaboration and coordination can be defined as one domain. Workflow and approvals can be considered another domain. Guidance, searching, and in-process instruction should be another domain. Request submission, case visibility, and identity verification may represent their domains or be combined as shared building blocks for the other domains. According to PMI's standard, portfolio management work involves defining components, organizing components for evaluation and selection, ranking of components, sequencing components, and review against strategic goals. The presented domain model is developed for practical purposes – to allocate product ownership for recurring work, consistent rules, shared data, and high reuse potential.

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Defining boundaries and roles for domains becomes important from both economic and design perspectives. OECD guidance on designing digital services encourages adopting a common approach regarding toolkits, components, platforms, databases, guides, manuals, and standards to avoid repetitive development efforts. Applying this principle to Digital Workplace implies that routing patterns, status pages, notifications rules, request forms, searching modules, and policy enforcement processes should not be repeated in every department. Consistent components reduce the burden of development and maintenance, minimize policy inconsistencies, and simplify learning processes. Reuse should not be a collateral benefit but a core economic concept in portfolio design.

A roadmap for Digital Workplace can begin with identifying drag factors in the current process instead of starting from the loudest requests. GOV.UK guidance on measuring services recommends analyzing digital journey from the very beginning of work, applying analysts for measurement purposes, and evaluating completion rate. For the purpose of Digital Workplace portfolio design, the completion rate means the ratio of completed digital transactions to attempted transactions. This definition can generate much more meaningful input signals for creating roadmaps compared to the general idea of a feature queue. Approval delays, unnecessary routing steps, double entries, policy issues, poor searching, request abandonment, and "where is my case" contacts demonstrate inefficient work in practice.

Based on the identified inefficiencies, digital work leaders can prioritize projects and initiatives. PMI portfolio management standard highlights governance responsibilities of ranking projects, selecting initiatives, and providing funding. The specific scoring model proposed below helps product owners understand which tasks and functions can contribute to the portfolio and which are just irritants. The proposed priority factors include task chain frequency, time loss, number of teams involved, exposure to control activities, rework, help demand, and the potential of sharing one solution in many workflows.

The business value of digital workplace solutions increases dramatically based on this category assignment. Approval patterns can reduce costs and time needed to handle expense claims, access requests, manager approvals, procurement reviews, and policy exceptions. Guidance and request patterns can reduce help contacts associated with "what happened to my ticket?" questions. Identity checks can facilitate timely access for newly hired workers and reassignment cases. Proper guidance at the right moment in the job flow can reduce rework. All these claims should be tested, validated, and confirmed with baseline values and follow-up measurements before implementation.

Guidance itself is an important function that deserves product-level attention. ISO 9241-210 emphasizes that design should be aligned with user needs and context of use throughout the life cycle of interactive systems. According to the GOV.UK service definition, guidance should be an integral part of a service along with policy, support, and follow-up. The proposed management recommendation states that a digital workplace product is imperfect if it manages workflow and records but forces users to navigate away from the workflow to read rules and instructions. Guidance must be available on the go in terms of policies, short instruction, examples, and

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readiness confirmation. The quality criteria include a reduction in errors, failed requests, searching and re-searching, and help contacts.

Life cycle management is another area that needs special attention in Digital Workplace portfolios. Many projects fail in treating release as a finishing step in developing a product. The cited PMI standard mentions authorizing the use, controlling, measuring value, communicating results, handling risks, and ongoing reviews in the same life cycle management framework. ISO 9241-210 also reflects the idea of life cycle in design. The recommended portfolio model for Digital Workplace involves discovery, framing, domain identification, roadmap placement, release, launch review, telemetry analysis, consolidation, and product retirement. Each new product launched into the portfolio must have a retirement strategy since the lack of it makes portfolios accumulate inefficiency and duplication over time.

Another aspect that differentiates portfolio from a list of applications is a consistent measurement approach. GOV.UK requires cost per transaction, take-up, completion rate, and satisfaction as the key performance indicators of digital services. The organization is required to measure the cost-per-transaction regularly and publish user satisfaction data monthly for existing digital services. A 2025 government evaluation playbook emphasized that headline indicators are not enough to determine whether a change had the desired impact or savings. These sources provide valuable guidance for Digital Workplace portfolios on measurement. Adoption level is necessary but insufficient to prove business value.

Telemetry that covers task completion and rework in addition to adoption level becomes crucial in a portfolio of Digital Workplace solutions. Indicators of interest include approval latency, handoff count, exception rate, rework, time-to-access, proficiency time, search reformulation, and help contacts per journey. These indicators are developed to measure the efficiency of the work process facilitated by digital workplace products. The telemetry dashboard that reports adoption level but not cycle time, completion rate, and rework is valuable as evidence of software presence only.

The link between digital workplace portfolio and business value chain needs to be stated operationally. The value of the portfolio increases due to the following effects: reduced cycle times mean faster decision making; fewer handoffs imply less waiting time and less coordination costs; better completion rate contributes to fewer rework cases; shared components mean savings on repetitive work and maintenance. Finally, better case visibility means fewer help contacts and faster access to information and tools needed to start working. These statements are based on established relationships in business operations and do not require any validation. They can be measured in a portfolio review cycle.

Governance plays a central role in maintaining consistency in Digital Workplace portfolio. The cited PMI standard suggests organizing regular portfolio reviews involving a governance team. OECD also encourages adopting governance mechanisms to address accountability, quality, security, and coherence. The current proposal combines the ideas and applies them to the management of Digital Workplace products. Each domain needs a responsible person who develops a roadmap, sets up a release plan, establishes measurement criteria, and regulates local variations. Local

exceptions must be justified with relevant data, policies, and user needs. Otherwise, the portfolio tends to evolve into an inconsistent product mix.

Finally, a coordinating control layer is needed on top of digital products to ensure proper alignment among workflow state, rules, telemetry, and guidance. This is not another product but the element facilitating integration. This element is not explicitly mentioned in the cited sources but implied in their recommendations. The PMI standard refers to ongoing reviews and governance. OECD emphasizes component consistency and coherence. ISO suggests following user needs and contexts during designing throughout the life cycle. The control layer becomes the effective instrument that allows seeing where the process fails, how many conflicting rules exist, what kinds of local variations drive up costs, and whether duplicate pathways remain in place.

As a result of the proposed management practices, employee experience would be significantly improved thanks to changes in the work process. Workers would no longer spend time finding instructions, waiting for approvals, entering data multiple times, and looking for job status. Searching for relevant policies would also disappear from the list of problems. Technostress, digital workplace overload, and information overload research provides additional weight to this point since poorly designed digital workplace may deteriorate well-being and work performance. Removing burdens of interruptions, overload, and hyperconnectivity from digital work is a better strategy for improving worker experience than simply improving user interfaces.

Four major recommendations for Digital Workplace managers emerge from this article. Domains of work should be funded, not licenses. Guidance should be embedded into task chains, not stored separately in repositories. Every product released to the market should have telemetry for measuring cycle time, completion, satisfaction rate, rework, and cost. Retirement targets should be assigned from the very beginning so each new product triggers removal of one old product. The recommendations are not based on a single source but rather on the synthesis of portfolio management, human-centered design, service measurement, and economics of shared components.

The composition of Digital Workplace products is likely to change over time, especially with the emergence of new technologies. OECD research on AI and work indicates that artificial intelligence can enhance productivity and quality of jobs. However, AI brings several challenges such as loss of agency, possible bias, and data security and privacy concerns. Thus, the portfolio will remain dynamic in terms of search, drafting, summarization, guidance, and routing assistance. While the specifics of technologies may change in the future, the proposed portfolio management approach remains applicable. Consistent design of product boundaries, reuse, governance, and measurement will work regardless of technology.

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