

Driving Digital Transformation at NWU

Future-focused initiatives shaping a digitally confident university

As NWU continues its digital transformation journey, key initiatives in digital capability, responsible AI, and data literacy are helping to build a more connected and future-ready university. Together, these efforts support staff and students in navigating an increasingly data-driven and AI-enabled environment.



BUILDING DIGITAL CONFIDENCE FOR AN AI-DRIVEN NWU

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HUMAN-CENTRED AI AT NWU

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HBUILDING A DATA DRIVEN NWU

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Building Digital Confidence for an AI-Driven NWU

Equipping the NWU community with practical digital skills to navigate, adapt, and thrive in the age of artificial intelligence.

Digital transformation at North-West University (NWU) is focused on empowering staff and students with the digital skills, tools, and systems needed to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven environment. Through initiatives such as the Digital Academy and AI@NWU, the university promotes continuous learning, innovation, and the effective use of technology across teaching, learning, and operations. This approach ensures that digital capability is not only developed, but meaningfully integrated into the way the university works and delivers value.

Enterprise systems form the backbone of daily operations at North-West University, supporting key functions such as finance, human resources, student administration, and institutional services. As the university continues its digital transformation journey, strengthening these systems remains essential to enabling a more efficient and responsive environment.

The Enterprise Systems team plays a central role in ensuring that these platforms are stable, secure, and aligned with institutional priorities. Through

structured governance, proactive system management, and continuous improvement, the team supports critical processes that impact both staff and students across all campuses.

A key focus area is improving system efficiency and user experience. By introducing automation, reducing manual processes, and enhancing data accuracy, the team aims to simplify workflows and improve turnaround times. These improvements contribute to more reliable systems and better decision-making across the institution.

In addition, new digital solutions are being implemented to support evolving university needs. These include platforms for electronic tender management, rental management, examination processes, and quality enhancement. Together, these initiatives contribute to a more integrated and digitally enabled environment.

System performance and reliability remain a priority. Through proactive monitoring, infrastructure enhancements, and database optimisation, the team works to minimise downtime and ensure con-

sistent access to essential services, particularly during high-demand periods.

Security and compliance are also key considerations. By implementing secure access controls, multi-factor authentication, and single sign-on, the team ensures that systems remain protected while maintaining ease of use.

Ultimately, strong enterprise systems enable more than just operations. They support better service delivery, improved data integrity, and a more seamless user experience across the university.

Through continued collaboration and a strong focus on improvement, the Enterprise Systems team remains committed to supporting the university's long-term digital goals. By working closely with stakeholders and adapting to changing needs, the team ensures that systems remain relevant, effective, and aligned with the broader direction of NWU.

EXPLORE THE DIGITAL ACADEMY

Build your digital skills with training, tools, and practical resources.

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Human-Centred AI at NWU

A human-centred approach to artificial intelligence that prioritises ethical use, critical thinking, and responsible innovation.

Artificial intelligence is transforming higher education, but at North-West University, the focus remains clear: technology must serve people. Through a human-centred approach, AI is positioned as a tool that enhances thinking, supports learning, and strengthens academic integrity.



RESPONSIBLE AND CONFIDENT AI USE

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. **Empower people**
AI at NWU is designed to support staff and students through training, tools, and clear guidance that build confidence and capability.
2. **Demystify AI**
Understanding what AI can and cannot do is essential. It is a powerful tool, but it cannot replace human judgement, care, or critical thinking.
3. **Think first, then use AI**
Human ideas come first. AI should enhance thinking, not replace it. Responsible use begins with independent reasoning.

Prof Anné Verhoef explains that NWU's approach to artificial intelligence is grounded in empowering people. Staff and students are supported through training, guidelines, and structured resources that enable them to use AI confidently and responsibly. Rather than replacing human capability, AI is positioned as a partner that enhances learning, teaching, and innovation. At NWU, this approach is supported through the AI Hub, where initiatives are guided by clear governance structures, policies, and ethical frameworks. Through the work of the AI Hub, the university ensures that AI initiatives are guided by clear governance structures, policies, and ethical frameworks. This coordinated approach allows NWU to embrace innovation while maintaining accountability and responsible use across academic and administrative environments. A key

priority is to demystify artificial intelligence. Prof Verhoef highlights the importance of understanding both what AI can do and what it cannot do. While AI can assist with prediction, automation, and efficiency, it cannot replace human judgement, care, or critical thinking. This awareness ensures that human intelligence remains central in all academic work.

Through this human-centred approach, NWU ensures that artificial intelligence is implemented in a way that remains aligned with institutional values. Innovation is not pursued for its own sake, but rather to enhance teaching, learning, and research in a meaningful and responsible manner. Ethical use remains central to all AI initiatives at NWU.

Prof Verhoef emphasises that transparency and accountability are essential when engaging with AI tools. By encouraging responsible use and critical reflection, the university protects academic integrity while enabling innovation. This balanced approach ensures that innovation continues to grow, while human thinking remains at the centre of everything we do.



Prof. Anné Verhoef
Director of the NWU AI Hub

AI Hub | North-West University



EXPLORE THE AI HUB AT NWU



From data skills to a data-driven university

How NWU is building data confidence through its Train the Trainer initiative

As North-West University continues to strengthen its digital maturity, data literacy is becoming an essential capability across academic, administrative, and support environments. Through the Digital Academy, this initiative is helping staff build confidence in how they understand, interpret, and use data in their daily work.

Digital transformation is not only about systems and platforms. It is also about people. For NWU to become a more integrated and analytics-driven institution, staff need to feel equipped to engage with data in practical and meaningful ways. This initiative responds to that need by building confidence step by step.


At the centre of the programme is a

structured learning journey that introduces participants to data fundamentals, governance and quality, analysis and interpretation, visualisation, storytelling, and AI readiness. The goal is not to turn staff into data scientists, but to grow a more confident and capable university community.

A key strength of the initiative is its train-the-trainer model. Instead of centralising expertise, NWU is developing a distributed network of data champions across faculties and divisions. This approach supports more sustainable knowledge sharing and ensures that guidance is available closer to where staff work.

Improved data literacy supports better decision-making, stronger governance,

and more responsible innovation. It also provides a critical foundation for future AI adoption, where good data practices play a central role. As the initiative grows, more staff members will have the opportunity to participate and benefit from the programme. This marks an important step towards building a more connected, confident, and data-driven NWU.

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