Summary of DOD's Emerging Digital Workforce

The Department of Defense continues to struggle to define, identify, develop, assign, promote, and retain digital talent. Moreover, each service's approaches to managing their digital workforce differ in terms of relative maturity, although they share common challenges related to people, processes, and technology.

This report summarizes recent DOD digital workforce trends as an update to our 2021 report. We expanded our definition of AI talent to include data, analytics, software, and AI, referred to here as the "digital workforce," to be more aligned with Department needs and current workforce planning efforts.

Five Trends Characterize the State of DOD's Digital Workforce

Conducting 25 interviews across DOD organizations, we identified five trends:

1. **Digital talent career fields and specialized experience identifiers lack common criteria and are inconsistently applied**, creating missed opportunities to leverage this much-needed talent.
2. **Prioritizing the ability to identify digital talent varies** within and across organizations, which affects the DOD's ability to understand force readiness related to data, analytics, and AI capabilities.
3. **Digital talent teams are increasingly experimenting with ways to bring in and keep those with data analytics talent**, but there is no centralized way of sharing lessons-learned and best practices.
4. Services are in alignment that **there is a need to prioritize and invest in training for universal data/digital "fluency,"** however; there is less alignment on defining fluency and on the availability and scale.
5. **Inconsistent organizational ownership of digital talent** makes service-level comparison and coordination an increasingly difficult challenge.

Given that digital readiness is a priority, there is an opportunity for DOD to incorporate lessons-learned from ongoing efforts to systemically tackle current challenges.

For more information:
- Download the report:
  https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/dods-emerging-digital-workforce