

Working in the gig economy

Statistical concepts and initial survey results

Over the last few years, Statistics Canada has contributed to international efforts to develop definitions of three core concepts that help measure the gig economy¹:

Gig work

Gig work is a form of employment characterized by short-term jobs or tasks which does not guarantee steady work and where the worker must take specific actions to stay employed.

Digital platform employment

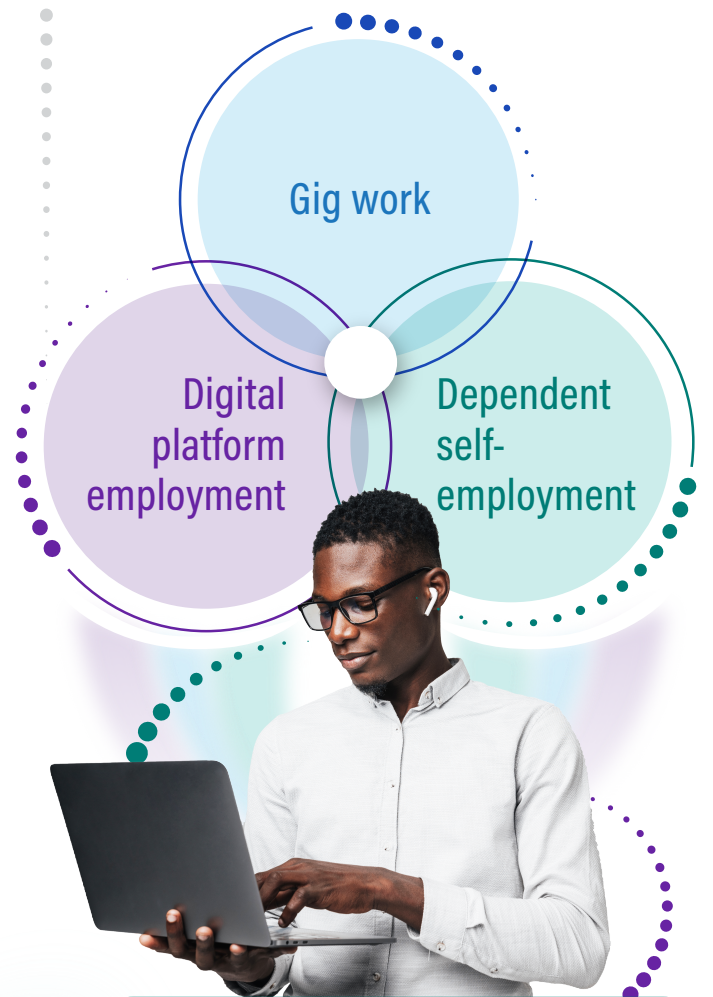
Digital platform employment refers to a situation where a digital platform or app mediates the exchange of work between a service provider (or a seller) and a client, and where the platform or app coordinates essential aspects of the work, such as facilitating the payment, assigning clients, or maintaining a user rating system.

Dependent self-employment

Dependent self-employment refers to self-employed workers who:

- Depend on another person or business such as a main client, a supplier, or an app for a large part of their commercial activity;
- And this other business, person, or app exercises control over key aspects of their work, such as their prices, their working time, or the supply of tools.

There is notable overlap between these three forms of work, but each can also occur on their own.



Supplements to the Labour Force Survey are collected as part of an effort to measure all three phenomena²:

In December 2023

- 468,000 people (1.7% of the population) used a **digital platform or app** to provide a service, sell or advertise goods for sale, or rent out accommodation over the previous 12 months, and were paid by that platform or app.
- Among them, 245,000 provided delivery services, 116,000 provided personal transport services and 65,000 sold or advertised goods for sale.

From October to December 2022

- An average of 871,000 Canadians had a main job featuring characteristics that matched the concept of **gig work**, including:
 - 624,000 people who were self-employed.
 - 247,000 who were paid employees.
- An additional 1.5 million people reported that they had completed gig work at some point during the previous 12 months.

From July to September 2022

- An average of 1 million self-employed workers without employees were **dependent on a single business relationship** for at least 50% of their commercial activity, including:
 - 427,000 who relied on a single main client
 - 235,000 who relied on another company or person subcontracting tasks, projects or clients
- Of the 1.0 million, 588,000 workers were in a situation where the other party exercised a large extent of control over a key dimension of their work, such as their schedule, the organization of their work, or the supply of tools or materials.

1. See [Handbook on Forms of Employment](#) and [Handbook on Measuring Digital Platform Employment and Work](#).

2. Estimates from the Labour Force Survey supplements are for the population aged 15 to 69 living in the provinces.

Sources: Labour Force Survey, Labour Market Indicators and Labour Market and Socioeconomic Indicators.