

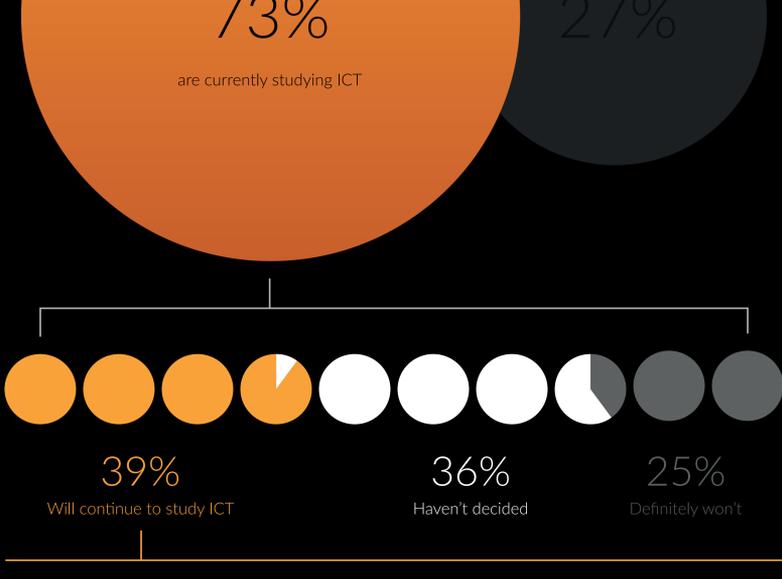
# Bridging the skills gap

National research into teenagers' perceptions of the tech industry

The tech industry is currently experiencing a skills gap crisis, which is only threatening to deepen. Much of the research in the past has focused on the perspectives of the recruiter, hiring manager or teacher but what about young people?

Questions have been raised over education, training and knowledge but are there issues at the grass roots level? Are we as an industry attracting enough fresh, new talent? Are we positioning the industry in the best light to young people? Does the gender gap start at school? Technically Compatible went directly to the source to find out.

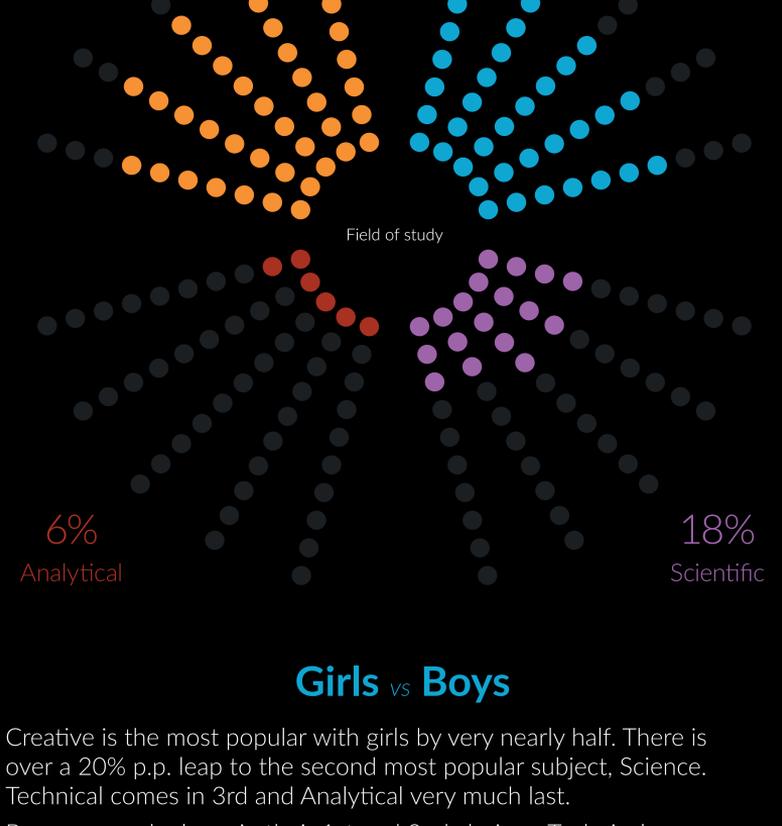
## Studying ICT



IT gender gap starts with an interest split at school. Of those planning to continue studying IT - 75% are currently boys but only 11% are girls.



## Academic interests

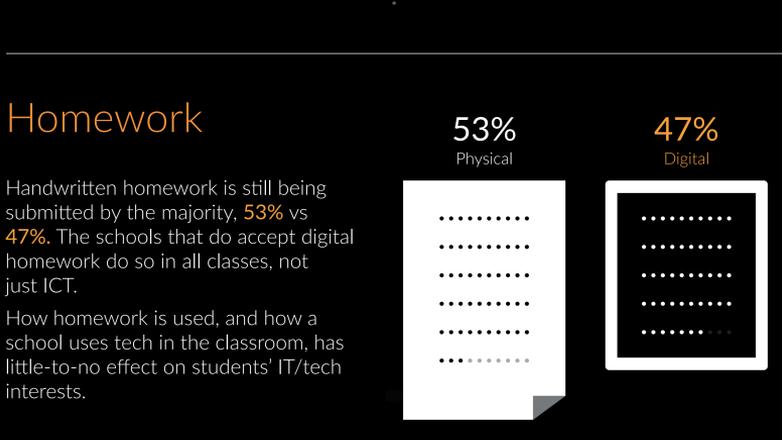


### Girls vs Boys

Creative is the most popular with girls by very nearly half. There is over a 20% p.p. leap to the second most popular subject, Science. Technical comes in 3rd and Analytical very much last.

Boys are much closer in their 1st and 2nd choices. Technical - 40% and Creative - 30%. However Scientific is a whole 17% p.p. lower.

Showing the Creative and Scientific elements of the tech industry could be key to attracting more girls.



## Homework

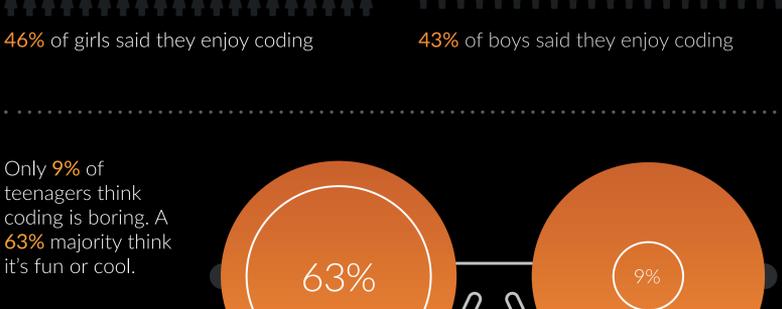
Handwritten homework is still being submitted by the majority, 53% vs 47%. The schools that do accept digital homework do so in all classes, not just ICT.

How homework is used, and how a school uses tech in the classroom, has little to no effect on students' IT/tech interests.

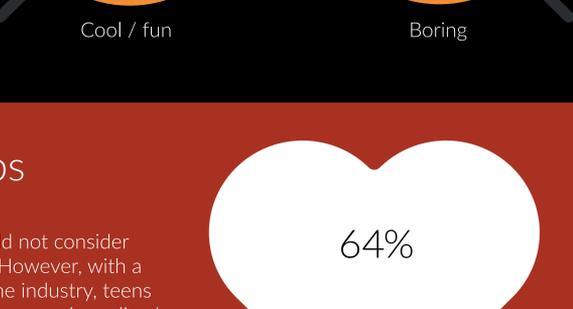


## Coding

Only 14% of school kids regularly code in their own time.

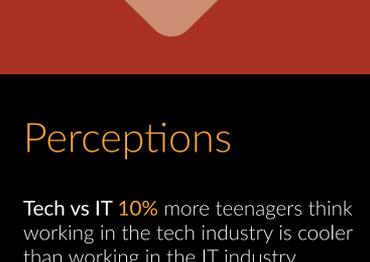


Only 9% of teenagers think coding is boring. A 63% majority think it's fun or cool.



## Coding clubs

64% of teenagers would not consider attending a code club. However, with a parent or guardian in the industry, teens are 25% more likely to engage in coding/tech activity outside of school.



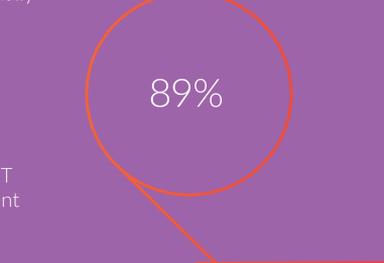
## Perceptions

Tech vs IT 10% more teenagers think working in the tech industry is cooler than working in the IT industry.

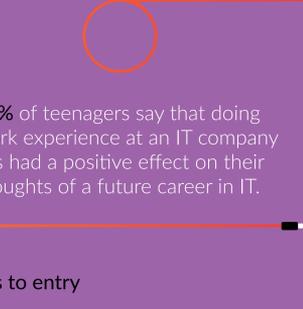
Geek chic 73% aren't bothered about being called a geek.

## Career options

66% of girls want to do IT work experience compared to 54% of boys.

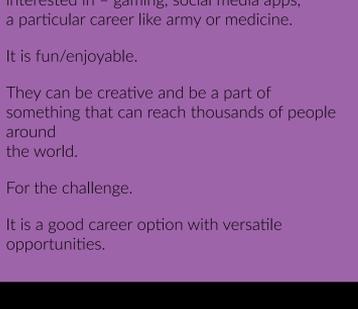


89% of teenagers would definitely or potentially consider IT as career path. No difference between the sexes when it comes to not considering a career in tech.



## Work experience

82% have had no experience working in an IT company but 66% of teenagers said they want work experience in IT.



67% of teenagers say that doing work experience at an IT company has had a positive effect on their thoughts of a future career in IT.

## Top reasons for considering a tech career

- It involves something they are currently interested in - gaming, social media apps, a particular career like army or medicine.
- It is fun/enjoyable.
- They can be creative and be a part of something that can reach thousands of people around the world.
- For the challenge.
- It is a good career option with versatile opportunities.

## Barriers to entry

- Not getting enough information about the industry or know where to look for it (specifics, not general - i.e. skills needed, how to start, which paths to take).
- Variety in ICT topics at school is limiting - curriculum is one dimensional (not reflecting the industry).
- More focus needed on real-world tools that are actually used in the work place.
- Little to no understanding of different working methods in the tech industry.

## Key takeaways

### Tech importance

Teenagers identify the importance and dominance of tech in today's world, and for most this plays a part in why or what would make them consider a career in tech.

- Making a difference and being creative are the 2 most important attributes, respectively, for teenagers.
- More IT work experience for teens is needed to give a proper flavour of life in the industry.
- ICT education needs to reflect real-life to equip students with the right skills to start a career in tech.
- Position ICT in way that is relevant and relatable to what teenagers are currently interested in to inspire attraction.
- Explain the different routes and paths where IT can be used so teenagers are aware of all the opportunities available to them.
- Show how creative IT can be, especially how it can be used for good, to encourage more young people and in particular, girls, into the profession.