



Introduction & Discovering the Why



Welcome to the course! This introductory section will explore the various aspects of:

- How much of work, particularly knowledge work, has moved to a remote work schedule, giving many more people the flexibility to choose the location of their work based on their own needs
- Why becoming a digital nomad is attractive, and maybe even right for you!
- The various advantages and disadvantages of a digital nomad lifestyle
- Some professions that are suited to DNs to see if this could be right for you. The pre-requisite for the information in this course is that you already have a profession or some other way to financially support yourself in this journey. Many other courses focus on how to make money while sustaining this lifestyle but this course does NOT.
- Finally, for those that are not yet living in this lifestyle, whether it makes sense to start slowly and “test the waters”, gradually adapting your lifestyle to this, or whether you should just go all in or “jump in headfirst” to the lifestyle.

So lets get started and see if this lifestyle is right for you!



Why Be a Digital Nomad?

- Adventure
- Community
- Travel and see the world
- Work from anywhere
- Cost savings

Adventure

Research suggests that around 43% of employees are bored in their jobs. Office workers in particular are stereotyped as disconnected, unhappy, and resentful as shown in the 1999 comedy *Office Space*. And no wonder, with many employers expecting employees to spend 40+ hour weeks in uncomfortable formal clothing in fluorescently lit offices.

The Covid-19 pandemic showed many people, particularly knowledge workers, that they can be equally productive working remotely. Quarantine measures during the pandemic also renewed people's sense of interest in the outdoors and seeing what's beyond their own little slice of the world.

A DN lifestyle is unusual. While most people will continue to work for a corporation, a DN makes the conscious decision that they want something

more than a 9-5 job, mortgage, and picket fence. The DN craves new sights, new people, and new experiences.

Community

After the Covid-19 pandemic showed that remote work is possible, more and more people are trying the DN lifestyle. There are many places in the world now popular with the DN community. These places let you meet like-minded people who have embraced the sense of adventure. Like-minded people where friendships and communities are formed.

Co-working spaces for example are common in many areas that have people from all over the world working and traveling together. You can find people to help you with your travel plans, travel together for a while, or even do some business networking.

Travel and Work from Anywhere

Generally, most workers receive limited holidays per year. U.S. workers for example receive only about 2 weeks of paid holidays per year on average. This limited time off thus restricts many people from being able to travel to maybe one trip or holiday per year.

Being a Digital Nomad on the other hand means that generally with a laptop and internet connection you can work from anywhere. You can spend as much or as little time in one location, city, or country and when you're ready, travel somewhere else.

The limit is only the travel you choose for yourself. You can see as much, or as little, of the world as you choose, at your own pace, and working from where you choose.

Cost Efficiencies

The average apartment in Manhattan, NY costs \$4300 USD as of Feb 2022 and is a very modest 700 sq feet. The same is true to a certain degree in many other high cost areas in the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, and parts of Asia.

On the other hand, areas such as Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia have considerably lower costs of living. For example, the author lives in Bogota, Colombia in front of a park and in one of the most attractive and vibrant neighborhoods in Latin America and pays \$1000 USD for a 4 bedroom apartment.

Similarly, the author visited NY last month and paid \$11 USD for a cappuccino at his hotel. A same-sized cappuccino, made from local beans, costs \$1.5 USD at the local coffee chain in Bogota.

DNs are able to save money in many cases by living in lower cost areas. The money can be saved, used for additional travel or for adventures. Either way, in the extreme case saving \$3000+ USD in rent per month can go a long way.....



Pros/Cons of Digital Nomad Lifestyle

| Pros | Cons |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ Adventure | ✗ Isolation and Loneliness |
| ✓ Community | ✗ Cost issues |
| ✓ Travel and see the World | ✗ Bureaucracies |
| ✓ Work from Anywhere | ✗ Comfort |
| ✓ Cost savings | |

The advantages and pros of a DN lifestyle were outlined in the previous section on “Why Be a DN” where I discussed the key benefits or pros:

- A sense of adventure for those not satisfied with the status quo and craving new sights, new people, and new experiences
- A community in which you can find people to help you with your travel plans, travel together for a while, or even do some business networking
- Not being satisfied with traveling once or twice a year with standard holidays and being able to travel and see the world at your own pace
- Working from anywhere and achieving location independence
- And moving from high cost of living areas to lower cost of living areas to achieve significant cost savings

However, there are some important considerations too:

- Isolation and loneliness are real issues for DNs if not handled correctly. Simply moving to a new location is not enough and active steps need to be taken to meet new people and become part of local or DN

communities. We will discuss some of these strategies and tips later on in this course.

- While it is possible to save significant money while working remotely and traveling, this can also become an expensive lifestyle if not handled correctly. DNs need to strike a balance between the amount that they work, play and travel like with anything else. We will discuss the idea of setting up a home base and choosing your travel frequency further on in this course.
- There are a number of real bureaucratic considerations when traveling that are not inherently obviously. DNs should have a visa, or permission to live and work in foreign countries, which can often be time consuming and expensive to get. Similarly medical insurance is an important consideration and something that should be purchased for both peace of mind and because health issues and accidents are unpredictable.
- Finally, becoming a DN is inherently getting out of your comfort zone and trying something new. Despite all of the advantages and craving for adventure this is something that is inherently uncomfortable to people used to working a conventional job and with everyday routines.

This course is meant to prepare you to be ready for the unexpected and various issues that can come up and avoid some of the major discomforts and give you peace of mind.



How is Work Changing?

- Covid-19 pandemic showed advantages and trends towards location-independent work
- McKinsey key job trends:
 - Remote work
 - Digitization
 - Automation and AI
- ~25% of jobs will change by 2030
- Opportunities for greater freedom for working age professionals



The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated society's trend towards location independent work.

McKinsey and Company analyzed key remote work trends during the pandemic (*The Future of Work after COVID-19*, 2021) and confirmed three key trends that will help to shape the direction of our economy and are critical for DNs. These are:

- Remote work: McKinsey estimates 20-25% of employees in the developed world could work remotely at least some of the time. That's up to 1 in 4 of ALL jobs that could potentially be done from anywhere in the world. As we will discuss in the section on professions suited to DNs, that's an incredible opportunity for those who have the right skillsets and knowledge for real location-independence.
- Digitization: While it seems that so much of our current economy is already digital, McKinsey estimates that ecommerce could still see 2-5x growth as its share of the economy. That's an incredible opportunity for knowledge workers with technical skills to provide all of the support for ecommerce including: software, design, marketing, writing or entrepreneurs.

- and finally Automation and AI will continue to consume to play a greater part in many jobs.

In developed countries such as the U.S. or Germany about 25% of jobs will change by 2030. Becoming a DN means being on the side of that transition where you can benefit from all of the various advantages discussed and take advantage of these opportunities to try something new and live your best life!



Professions Suited to Digital Nomads

- Traditional jobs include:
 - Software developer
 - Web or graphic design
 - Technical or other writing
 - Virtual assistant
 - Investor or entrepreneur
- Should be expanded to most knowledge work
 - Covid-19 quarantine restrictions showed much more is possible
 - Many other jobs that could be accomplished remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Jobs / making money not focus of this course

Traditional jobs that DNs have focused on have tended to be (i) knowledge heavy, taking advantage of the demand, and greater flexibility that knowledge workers have in general, and fit towards location independence and (ii) computer focused, to allow one to essentially work as long as a good internet connection and electricity are available. These types of jobs have focused around online jobs including:

- Software developers
- Web or graphic design: largely supporting ecommerce as that continues to be a growing worldwide trend as discussed in the prior section
- Technical or other writing: good writing is challenging and still in demand, including technical writing on any number of topics including financial, legal, technology or less formal including: marketing, speech, script or ghost writing, or blogging.
- Many people are virtual assistants help with various administrative or technical problems remotely. Businesses and professions focus on key tasks such as development and sales but there are numerous behind the scenes day-to-day administrative tasks required for the business to run smoothly.

- Finally investors and entrepreneurs, particularly in online and ecommerce businesses inherently work for themselves and are able to do that job more and more from anywhere.

As discussed, location independent remote work is a trend that is only going to accelerate and this list should not be taken in any way shape or form as comprehensive. Ultimately a person's career is their own responsibility and many people can use their ingenuity and networks to work independently.

For example, I know one oil and gas engineer who spent much his career in Latin America in a large multinational energy company. He now consults on economics for new oil and gas projects to companies throughout the U.S. and South America while living in the English countryside. About 90% of his job is remotely with communications through Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp with only occasional trips to South America.

The focus of this course is NOT how to find a job compatible with this lifestyle. Rather the goal of this section is to start getting potential DNs thinking about opportunities and how they may be able to either adapt their own career to become more location independent or think about how to start building a DN-compatible career.



Philosophies to Getting Started

Testing the Waters



Jumping in Headfirst



There are two main philosophies to getting started as a DN.

The first, and what I would recommend, is to start slowly and transition in a staged approach. This can for example include:

- (1) Start moving towards remote work as close to full-time as possible. As many people learned in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, working (or even studying) from home rather than an office requires changes to personal habits, living spaces, and routines. Hopefully though many people will have already learned a lot of this through remote working or studying during the pandemic.
- (2) Incorporate travel into your remote work schedule. For example work for one or two weeks from another city close by. Again being in a different environment will require changes to your habits and routines and will take some time to get used to it. Repeat this at least a few times and try some longer trips or trips to a location further away. Being in a country with a different culture, time zone, or climate will again require some changes that take time to internalize and adjust for.

(3) At this point decide how to proceed further. Being a DN allows you to design your own life. Some DNs spend part of the year in their home country, in a stable home base, and travel part of the year. Some DNs have a home base in a foreign country and travel more frequently. Some DNs travel to a new country every few months. The key here is at least you will have some experience and learn the lessons and pitfalls along the way before jumping in.

The second approach is to go all in or jump in headfirst to being a DN. In this approach you will design what you want to do and what approach to being a DN you want to take, full time or part time or however and wherever you wish, and you go for it. In this approach it is important to plan, and review the information in this course, carefully to avoid many of the considerations and pitfalls.



Real-Life Example

New York



Bali



I will use an example in this course of a friend of mine, originally from NYC, that is living as a full time DN in Bali for the past number years working as a web developer.

He made this move when he was younger and tired of the congestion and high cost of living in NYC and wanted to try something different.

I will review why he chose Bali and the advantages for his lifestyle significantly in the next module on choosing a DN Location.