



XCEDE'S 2021 SALARY GUIDE

Explore the biggest salary trends
and insights from 2020 and
for the year ahead

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Specialisms	6
Data	8
Digital	10
Tech	12
Contract	14
Contact Us	17

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT XCEDE

Xcede is a leading recruitment specialist that provides talent across three core specialisms: data, digital, and technology. We work alongside Europe's most renowned organisations—from pioneering tech start-ups to international consumer-focused brands.

Xcede deliver contract, permanent, and high-end Project Talent Solutions. Split across our core digital functions, our teams recruit for niche roles that support every stage of the digital lifecycle. Now part of the TechStream Group, a globally diversified and niche recruitment company, Xcede are one of 6 practices spanning the STEM recruitment space. These include EarthStream, CyberStream, CloudStream, AutoStream, Xcede and Etonwood.

INDUSTRY STATS

- Digital tech accounts for 9% of the UK workforce¹.
- By 2022, the global big data and business analytics market is expected to grow to around \$274.3 billion².
- Searches for tech courses surged 40% during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the same period in 2019. Searches for UI and UX saw the biggest increases of 62% and 56%, respectively³.
- Demand for niche data skills possessed by specialists such as data scientists and data engineers has tripled over the last five years⁴.
- Digital tech saw a 36% increase in job vacancies from June to August 2020, second only to the healthcare sector⁵.
- By 2030, 50% of the UK economy will come from the digital, tech and creative sectors⁶.

WELCOME TO THE XCEDE 2021 SALARY GUIDE

In 2019, the digital recruitment market was evolving rapidly. Innovations in automation, big data, and digital marketing were transforming the talent acquisition landscape. Skill requirements were changing, creating opportunities for professionals and employers alike. Fast-forward to 2020, we saw the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerate the pace of digitisation across all sectors.

2020 was a year that will shape the way we work for years to come. Focusing on our core specialisms of data, digital, and technology, we have gathered information from job seekers, employers, experienced consultants, and valued sources. Our results highlight findings from across 24 industries, using information from surveys, CVs, job listings and hires to provide a snapshot of current hiring trends.

At the time of collating and analysing the data from our previous survey, we could not have predicted the events of 2020 and the far-reaching effects on organisations across all sectors and industries. Since March 2020, Xcede has been tracking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our clients and candidates, adapting our approach and services in line with changing market conditions and demands.

Overall average salaries increased by 5%, with top-end salaries rising by 10%. Tech saw the biggest jump in average salary, with a 12% rise from 2019. This is largely due to businesses moving to remote working and a heavy reliance on technology to stay online and connected. The need to build strong digital, data, and tech teams is greater than ever before with companies working harder to attract and retain top-tier talent. This is reflected by the 55% increase in salaries for Head Of roles across all three specialisms as businesses invest more in senior professionals who can drive revised strategies.



Julian Vecchio | Group Managing Director

One of the most significant shifts since our last survey is an increase in contractor engagement. At the start of 2020, businesses were reluctant to engage contractors due to the extension of IR35 in the private sector. However, with those plans put on hold until April 2021 and COVID-19 putting a pause on permanent recruitment, there was a surge in contract hiring. This delay has enabled businesses to fully prepare for the IR35 reform and put in robust strategies for contingent workforces.

Additionally, larger companies are learning that diversity must be prioritised if we have any chance of conquering skills shortages across data, tech, and digital. Our clients are becoming open to offering internships rather than simply relying on formal higher education qualifications, which have proved to be a barrier for some time. It is a key area of focus for Xcede in 2021, and we will continue to support our clients in developing robust diversity and inclusion strategies and processes that will open the door to a plethora of untapped talent.



Kimberley Wardle | Commercial Director

SPECIALISMS

Xcede's extensive knowledge and experience of the European digital industry enables our sector specialists to source the right talent and provide in-depth insights that guide the businesses and careers of our clients and candidates.

In this report, Xcede's expert sector leaders share key learnings and observations from the survey data.

DATA

Providing unparalleled insights into customer behaviour and business activity through advanced analytics, insight & science, and engineering & architecture.

Top average salaries in data for 2021:

1. Machine Learning & AI - £78,000
2. Product Analytics - £68,000
3. Data Analytics & Optimisation - £66,000

DIGITAL

Delivering outstanding user experiences ranging from digital products and services to cross-platform campaigns.

Top average salaries in digital for 2021:

1. Product Management £67,000
2. UX Design £65,000
3. Performance Marketing £62,000

TECH

Sourcing the transformative talent in development and engineering that brings technological innovation to life.

Top average salaries in tech for 2021:

1. Back-end Software Development - £75,000
2. DevOps - £74,000
3. Front-end - £74,000

Largest growth industries

1. Omnichannel retail
2. Proptech
3. Regtech
4. Cyber Security
5. Fintech

Highest contractor daily rates

1. Senior Data Engineer - £750
2. Senior Data Architect - £735
3. Senior Machine Learning Engineer - £700
4. Senior Data Scientist - £665
5. Senior Front-end Developer - £650

Areas with the biggest year-on-year increase in demand

1. Machine Learning
2. Product Management
3. Back-end Software Development
4. Product & Service Design
5. Product Analytics

Top 2020 industries by average salary

1. Consultancy £85,000
2. AI £76,000
3. Fintech £75,000
4. Proptech - £72,000
5. Regtech - £69,000

DATA

As our global consumption of data increases, the data industry continues to grow. Estimates indicate that the global data science platform market will be worth around \$25.94 billion by 2027, representing a growth of 26.9% between 2020 and 2027⁷.

This growth is demonstrated in our survey results, with average senior data salaries rising by 10% from the previous year and entry-level salaries increasing by 13%.

An acute focus on digital transformation projects during the pandemic meant organisations had a precise blueprint on the type of talent and seniority level they wanted to hire. As a direct result, we saw less speculative hiring and a greater emphasis on candidates with the exact skills and experience dictated by project needs.

Ongoing growth in this field means data skills will remain in high demand, with knowledge and experience of product analytics, machine learning and data science particularly sought after in 2021.

The Data

Average Permanent Salary by Market and Seniority:

DATA MARKET	JUNIOR	MID LEVEL	SENIOR	LEAD	HEAD OF
Product Analytics	£38,000	£54,000	£66,000	£82,000	£100,000
Data Engineering	£35,000	£58,000	£62,000	£100,000	£110,000
CRM & Marketing Analytics	£33,000	£42,000	£55,000	£68,000	£90,000
BI & Data Warehousing	£33,000	£52,000	£60,000	£73,000	£88,000
Digital Analytics & Optimisation	£38,000	£51,000	£61,000	£69,900	£110,000
Machine Learning & AI	£45,000	£57,000	£75,000	£95,000	£120,000
Customer Insight	£33,000	£44,000	£59,000	£74,000	£92,000
Data Science	£34,000	£60,000	£78,000	£83,000	£105,000
Data Analytics	£32,000	£45,000	£55,000	£55,000	£95,000

XCEDE’S EXPERT LOOK AT 2021

“We have seen growth in demand for two roles in particular – Product Analyst and Machine Learning Engineer. As more and more companies want to understand how customers interact with their apps, the need for Product Analysts has increased. So too has the need for Machine Learning Engineers to join businesses that have hired Data Scientists and now need dedicated resources to deploy and productionise algorithms.

Diversity remains a general problem in the data world. It is something that an abundance of employers are truly committed to focusing on in the coming months and beyond. In 2020, we saw companies try to address it through dedicated programs, revised hiring strategies and internships. There is now a greater awareness that the system is flawed from a diversity standpoint, with many roles, particularly those in data engineering, requiring further education such as Master’s degrees or PhDs that can act as a barrier to entry. It will take time to address the issue fully, but it is certainly a top priority for many organisations in 2021.”



Matthew Jones | Associate Director | Data

The Industry View

“The biggest trend we have noticed in our recent round of recruiting is the sharp contrast in coding competency in candidates. This appears to stem from the structure of their teams, particularly around responsibility for writing production code. When the Data Scientists are writing code – as they do here at Channel 4 – it forces more rigour on coding practices (e.g. testing, reproducibility, version control and design), which are hard to develop theoretically.”

Mike Terrell | Chief Data Scientist | Channel 4

“Strong data scientists in industries directly impacted by the pandemic found themselves with uncertain futures, and entry-level candidates trying to get first roles found suitable positions in short supply. An unusually high number of experienced candidates were available for roles in the months after COVID-19 struck, which made hiring at senior levels considerably easier than previously. Data scientists with secure employment were anxious to hold on to this security. As the world starts to navigate a path out the pandemic, data science as a field is beginning to recover and return to how it was pre-COVID.”

Mahana Mansfield | Data Science Director | Deliveroo

DIGITAL

During our digital age, the demand for top talent remains buoyant as organisations continue to strengthen their online infrastructures. In 2020, it was reported that the UK’s digital technology sector is experiencing growth six times higher than any other industry⁸.

The pandemic did not affect growth in this area, as demonstrated by the year-on-year increase in average salaries by 4%. Product management skills were in particularly high demand, with top salaries seeing a rise of 15% from 2019.

There has also been a heightened demand for UX skills globally, with many countries seeing demand massively outstrip supply. According to a report, UX design is one of the top five in-demand hard skills globally⁹. This growth is reflected by a year-on-year increase in mid-level UX design salaries by 39%, with senior UX design salaries rising by 20%.

As UX becomes a Google ranking factor, we expect this upward trajectory to continue as businesses increase focus on UX to remain competitive in 2021.

The Data

Average Permanent Salary by Market and Seniority:

MARKET	JUNIOR	MID LEVEL	SENIOR	LEAD	HEAD OF
Product Management	£42,000	£65,000	£77,000	£85,000	£121,000
Project Management	£32,000	£43,000	£58,000	£67,000	£94,000
Service Design	£28,000	£45,000	£65,000	£73,000	£90,000
UX Research	£29,000	£45,000	£60,000	£68,000	£80,000
UX Design	£29,000	£50,000	£66,000	£73,000	£92,000
Product Design	£29,500	£50,000	£66,000	£75,000	£90,000
Digital Production	£30,000	£36,000	£52,000	£60,000	£83,000
Visual Design	£30,000	£45,000	£60,000	£70,000	£85,000
Paid Social	£28,000	£45,000	£55,000	£65,000	£85,000
PPC	£28,000	£45,000	£65,000	£80,000	£95,000
SEO	£28,000	£45,000	£65,000	£80,000	£95,000
Performance Marketing	£30,000	£50,000	£70,000	£85,000	£100,000
Digital Marketing	£28,000	£45,000	£65,000	£80,000	£115,000

XCEDE’S EXPERT LOOK AT 2021

“In 2021, digital functions within an organisation will hold more value than ever before. With the pandemic seeing a rise in on-demand services, more businesses are set to remove themselves from large ecommerce platforms and establish their own to retain complete control of the customer experience. As a result, candidates will be increasingly expected to possess the relevant B2C expertise necessary to complete and manage such projects.

Generally, top talent was retained during the pandemic, and with the acceleration of ecommerce and lifestyle applications, we have seen that the market is still very candidate driven as companies look to build and grow teams to deal with demand in the online world. It’s a very busy time in the digital space, and innovation is still at the forefront as we move into a post-pandemic world.

From a marketing perspective, changes in data legislation surrounding third-party data and cookies in the coming years means big tech companies will be making significant changes to their operations. Candidates will be required to help them utilise first-party data and apply more innovative methods of reaching their target audiences.”



Andrew Barnett | Sales Manager | Digital

The Industry View

“Digital customer experience was already central for many brands, but the pandemic underlined the need for a joined-up approach that integrates creative, media, content, data, ecommerce, customer relationship management and technology. Innovation and speed have risen up the priority list, as customer habits are changing rapidly (and, in some cases, permanently).”¹⁰

Gideon Spanier | UK editor-in-chief | Campaign

“This year has been particularly challenging for design and product recruitment. Demand outweighs supply, particularly as many companies are choosing not to hire junior talent and are focusing on hiring at senior level and above. There is a lot of uncertainty still, even with things looking more positive with the COVID vaccine, so we’re talking to a lot of candidates who are uneasy about leaving roles where they feel secure, even if they aren’t particularly happy. ”

Annie Jackson | Head of Talent | Cleo

TECH

The UK tech sector employs 2.93m people, with tech professionals accounting for more than a fifth of the workforce in our biggest cities¹¹. With a 40% growth over the last two years, the sector shows no sign of slowing, even in the face of a global pandemic.

2020 saw average tech salaries increase by 12% on the previous year, with salaries for top-level positions rising by 5%.

Demand for specialist roles grew as companies accelerated digital transformation and evolved business models in response to COVID-19. In particular, back-end developers were highly sought-after across a range of industries, with permanent salaries for lead-level roles increasing by 7% since 2019.

For some organisations, 2020 was the first year they experienced managing a fully remote workforce. Due to the fact that tech engineers and developers were already set-up for remote working, we saw many clients become more open to tapping into this talent regardless of their location. Previously, geography acted as a barrier to the tech skills they needed, and the pandemic has gone a long way in removing this obstacle.

The Data

Average Permanent Salary by Market and Seniority:

MARKET	JUNIOR	MID LEVEL	SENIOR	LEAD	HEAD OF
Front-end Development / UI	£40,000	£55,000	£70,000	£80,000	£95,000
Back-end Software Development	£45,000	£60,000	£75,000	£90,000	£105,000
Mobile Development	£40,000	£65,000	£77,500	£85,000	£100,000.
Testing & QA	£30,000	£40,000	£55,000	£75,000	£90,000
Enterprise Technologies	£40,000	£50,000	£60,000	£75,000	£90,000
DevOps	£45,000	£60,000	£80,000	£90,000	£110,000
Full Stack Development	£40,000	£55,000	£70,000	£90,000	£110,000
Infrastructure	£35,000	£45,000	£55,000	£65,000	£85,000

XCEDE'S EXPERT LOOK AT 2021

"2021 will see companies further define the parameters of remote working as a permanent option, especially if they want to secure the best tech talent. It will be interesting to see how this will impact salaries and additional incentives offered to employees. We have already seen those employers that invested heavily in creating a culture of fun in the workplace start to backtrack and rethink how this culture translates to include remote working."

Matthew Jones | Associate Director | Tech



The Industry View

"Tech companies are facing a marketplace where lockdowns have triggered a huge shift in how we, as consumers, and businesses use and adopt technology. It has brought the digital future forward. It's evident from the growth in ecommerce, surging mobile data consumption, video streaming through to an accelerated move of businesses to cloud services.

These new habits are largely driven by the move to home-working, which have, of course, been fast-tracked by the pandemic but are unlikely to reverse. As we continue to spend more time at home, adoption of tech such as IoT devices alongside health and education technology will also rapidly grow. The tech sector is at the heart of all these shifts and has much to consider for 2021."

Gareth Murfitt | UK Technology Industry Leader | PwC¹²

CONTRACT

The pandemic brought the changing hiring needs of businesses into sharp focus. Upon emerging from the first lockdown, the hesitation to hire permanent members of staff was replaced by an optimism to engage with contractors who could bring specialist skills, flexibility, and cost efficiencies.

Additionally, the delay in IR35 reform in the private sector to 2021 meant we witnessed a steep increase in demand for contracting professionals throughout 2020. Contracting day rates have remained strong, with senior BI analysts and mid-level product analysts seeing a leap in day rate of 18% compared to 2019. While contractors were used as a resource to navigate COVID-19 uncertainty last year, 2021 will see formal contingent workforce strategies established in many organisations as they seek to tap into in-demand skills across the data, digital and tech sectors.

Top five mid-range contracting roles, according to average day rate:

1. Data Architect - £600
2. Java/Python Developer - £525
3. Data Scientist - £505
4. Machine Learning/Data Engineer - £500
5. Node.JS - £490

Top five senior contracting roles, according to average day rate:

1. Data Engineer - £750
2. Data Architect - £735
3. Machine Learning Engineer - £700
4. Data Scientist - £665
5. C++ Developer - £650

XCEDE'S EXPERT LOOK AT 2021

"Despite changes to IR35 legislation this year, the contract market remains busier than ever. We have seen a huge rise in demand for experts across our three core specialisms. As organisations adapt to the 'new normal', the need for specialists does not seem to be slowing down anytime soon."

Helen Graham | Sales Manager | Contract



The Industry View

"A flexible jobs market has always been one of the UK's great economic assets – keeping employment high in the good times and ensuring people have more options when times are tough. As lockdown eases and the economy recovers, businesses will use temporary work to start to build back. While the path ahead is still uncertain, temporary work helps firms create jobs sooner, and helps people who need new jobs get back to earning quickly."

Neil Carberry | Chief Executive | REC

The Data

Daily Rate 2020:

	MARKET	JUNIOR	MID LEVEL
DATA	Insight Analyst	£340	£470
	BI Analyst	£405	£550
	Digital Analyst	£425	£550
	Product Analyst	£485	£500
	Implementation Specialist	£475	£600
	Data Scientist	£505	£665
	Machine Learning Engineer	£500	£700
	Research Scientist	£440	£550
	Data Engineer	£500	£750
	Data Architect	£600	£735
DIGITAL	Product Designer	£425	£525
	UX Designer	£455	£520
	UI Designer	£400	£450
	Product Manager	£500	£570
	Digital Project Manager - Agency	£350	£450
	Digital Project Manager - Client	£400	£500
	User Researcher	£475	£525
	PPC/Performance Marketing	£300	£425
	Paid Social	£300	£425
	SEO	£335	£425
	Digital Marketing	£390	£400
	2D Motion Designer	£300	£350
	3D Motion Designer	£350	£400
	Digital Creative	£400	£500
	Affiliates	£400	£475
	Social & Content	£300	£500
TECH	Full Stack	£450	£575
	Front-end Developer	£425	£650
	Back-end Developer	£480	£650
	Node.JS	£490	£650
	Java Developer	£525	£580
	Python Developer	£525	£650
	PHP Developer	£340	£410
	Ruby Developer	£475	£550
	C# Developer	£350	£590
	C++ Developer	£600	£650

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TALK TO AN EXPERT

If you want to discuss our 2021 Salary Guide results or you are looking to find out more about the services we offer, contact our team today.

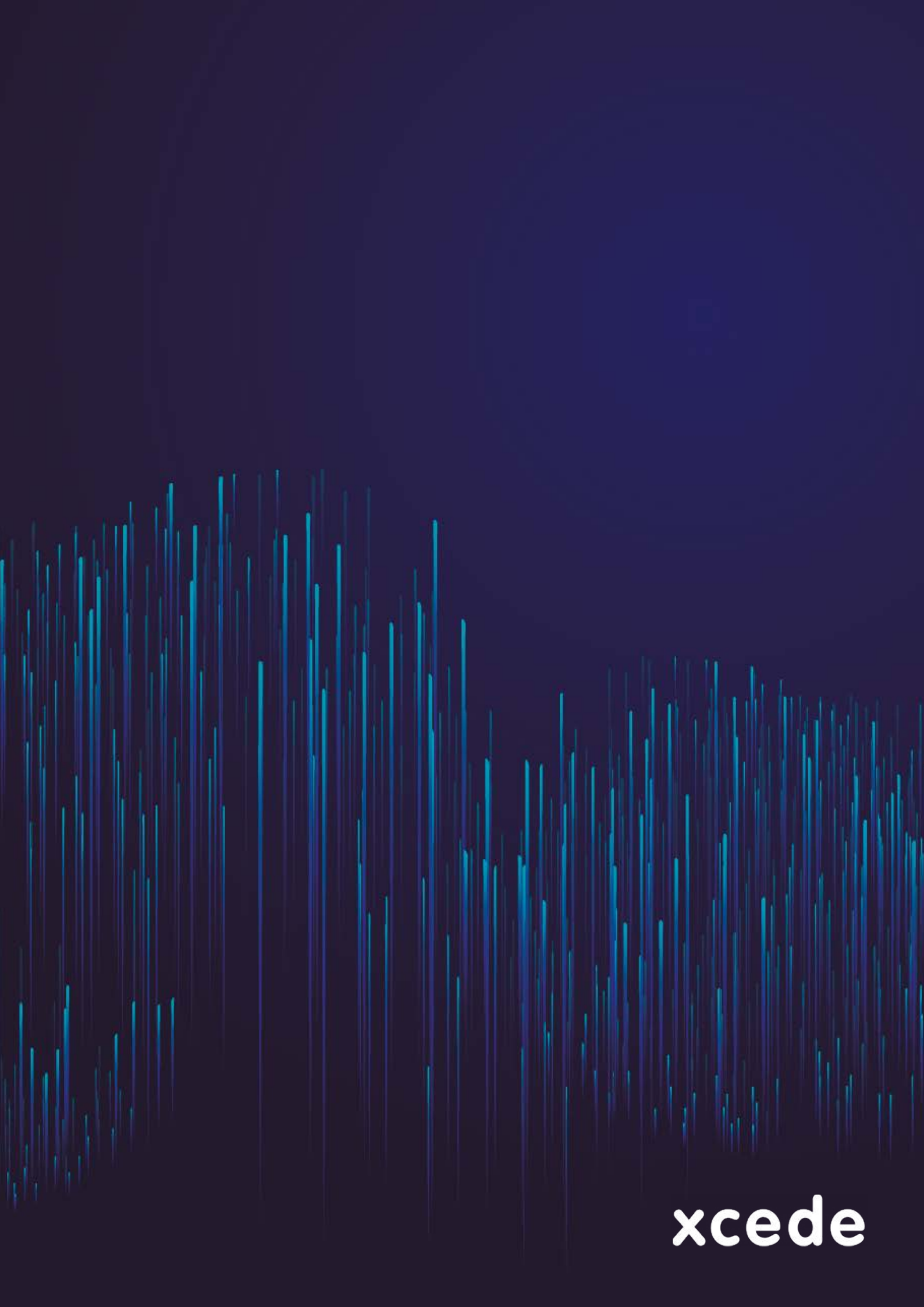
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