

This is exactly what you need to know about AI and the future of your job

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Even today, when we hear the words [“Artificial Intelligence”](#), our minds immediately conjure up visions of Hollywood movies where smart robots, either malignant or benign, interfere in some way with humanity. We haven’t reached that point. Yet. But AI is already amongst us. It’s here in machines that recognize our voices and respond to our questions or demands by sifting, unsupervised, through vast reservoirs of data. We call them names like Alexa and Siri.

It's here in browsers and apps that collate data to better anticipate our interests, (and help companies target us with their products).
It's here in automated messages randomly calling our phones with offers.
Driverless cars, drones delivering our packages, interactive advertising
....., the list is growing.

So, we are not dealing with science fiction, but science fact.

The question is, how will AI's ever-increasing presence affect the way we work. Our jobs and our job security.

It would be all too easy to be alarmist about the accelerating impact of AI on the workforce and the workplace. Easy. But pointless.
The rise of AI is inexorable. A Luddite response to progress will end the same way as, well the Luddites.

No amount of concerned modern-day, suited Canute's can turn back wave after wave of technological advancement as it bears down on global shores. They will simply drown in a digital Tsunami.

So, if change cannot be halted, it must be understood. Managed. Even embraced. Let's look more specifically, at jobs. Which industries or sectors may be affected? How they will be affected. And what it might mean for you if you are in that sector.

Last August, Genesys, (A major customer experience solutions company), published a [study](#) that put manufacturing, telemarketing, retail, and data entry at the top of the list of sectors facing the greatest exposure to AI advancement. Other studies suggest that the health industry and education work may experience a period of disruption and change as well.

Why these sectors? Well, for a start, AI already exists right now ready to be implemented, streamlining company costs and unarguably creating efficiencies and greater productivity. Telemarketers, for instance, are already being replaced worldwide by formless voices armed with a standard "sell" and a data-captured "lead". The prediction is that human telemarketers will disappear altogether.

Manufacturing and other categories have, to a great extent, already been ravaged, in terms of employment, by the development and implementation of new software and of new robotics. AI looks set to have greater implications for more skilled workers.
Stanford researcher, Michael Webb, looked at entries for millions of new patents in a google database and cross-referenced them with 964 job

descriptions listed by the US Department of Labor. His conclusion was that once implemented, new AI would create high exposure in skilled fields like; power plant operators, chemical engineers, clinical lab technicians, and even optometrists.

It's a surprising interpretation for many as most of us anticipate that it's the lower skill levels where jobs will be most affected. Any job, regardless of the level of training required that is essentially routine, will ultimately be performed much faster and more accurately by AI.

Lab technicians, although they have had to study hard to know their jobs, are essentially collating and processing data. And anything to do with data, AI will do immeasurably faster.

There's an inevitability about the way AI will change the way we work. It is already changing the way we work. But what could that actually mean to you on a more personal level?

Ok. You are a power plant operator. You studied, got your certificates and jumped into your working life with enthusiasm and even a little gratitude. Soon you had enough to buy your first home. Your girlfriends talking about settling down, starting a family. Why not? You have a secure job. Prospects look good. You got promoted recently. You're still in your early thirties. Then today came. Your boss calls you over. He shows you a new machine he is installing, screens, lights, and buttons everywhere. He demonstrates. At first, you are fascinated. Visibly impressed. And then slowly it dawns on you. The system is doing your job. Now, what's going to happen? What will you do?

Many of us will face a similar dilemma over the coming months and years. And the answer to the dilemma is the same whatever sector you are in. The same and almost brutally simple.

We need to change. To adapt.

If all this sounds gloomy, even menacing, it's not the full story. Gartner's, the world's leading research and advisory company, while predicting significant job losses in certain sectors, also predicts the creation of more jobs than those that are lost. Different kinds of jobs. Hence the need to adapt and change.

A [study from the MAPI Foundation](#) strongly suggests that increased AI in manufacturing will lead to the creation of, what they call, hybrid jobs; "Hybrid roles will arise where humans will enable machines and where AI will augment human capabilities".

In simple terms, the opportunity is to fulfill a new role by becoming familiar with the tech and the systems so that you can manage and utilize it to good

effect. You won't be a power plant operator, you'll be a Smart power plant operator. An AI wrangler.

AI is programmed to perform a specific task. It lacks the ability (for now) to judge how its own task impacts on other tasks needed in the manufacturing process. It still needs a human understanding of the the bigger picture to be effective.

[Carolyn Frantz](#), Microsoft's Corporate Secretary, put a slightly different perspective on it; "AI is an opportunity for workers to focus on the parts of their jobs that may be the most satisfying to them." However, for these new roles to be created will take far greater understanding from multi-nationals and smaller companies alike.

They need to learn quickly that simply buying AI and offloading people is both short-sighted and limiting in terms of the potential AI can bring to their business. They need to take a longer-term view and immediately start creating internal training programs to fill these potential new hybrid roles. At the moment estimates suggest that only 20% of US companies are putting some sort of plan together toward this end. These are the changes we know are here or are coming. The change that we know we have to adapt to.

But what about exponential innovation in AI tech? Where will it lead? What will be the implications?

Will AI one day learn to reason, develop intuition, understand feelings? Recently Samsung unveiled the first-ever digitally generated "artificial humans". The unnervingly real "NEONS" as they are known, are programmed to respond, react, laugh, emote. And to adapt to the things they learn about their primary user.

We don't know where it will end. Even the most respected Guru's of AI isn't sure. No, we don't know where it will end. So, for now, we just need to be prepared for where it is going.

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