WORKFORCE: THE ROLE OF AI AND HUMAN SKILLS: FROM RIVALS TO PARTNERS - THE EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AI AND WORKFORCE

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What "All" of Us Know

The main topic is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the skills that are going to be changed in the future. What is known about AI, what some of us might know if we are following the topic and subject, and what actually no one knows. When we are speaking about artificial intelligence, if we simplify it and put it on one dimension, on one side, we have a utopian view. AI is going to create a better future for us, it's going to unlock our creativity, and it's going to help us be more innovative on a large scale. On the completely other side of this dimension, there is a dystopian view, quite pessimistic, which suggests that AI might even threaten human existence. Therefore, it can be concluded that when AI matures, it will get rid of its beneficial parts. The question is, what are the benefits and who benefits from them? According to some research, it might be us. Are we playing with our own lives currently? We will probably see the answer in the next few years.

According to a report from the World Economic Forum (WEF), AI could replace a large proportion of existing jobs. WEF concluded in a 2020 report, "A new generation of smart machines fueled by rapid advances in AI and robotics could potentially replace a large proportion of existing human jobs." And then we can analyze which jobs are going to be automated.

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https://doi.org/1056889/gjkr8468
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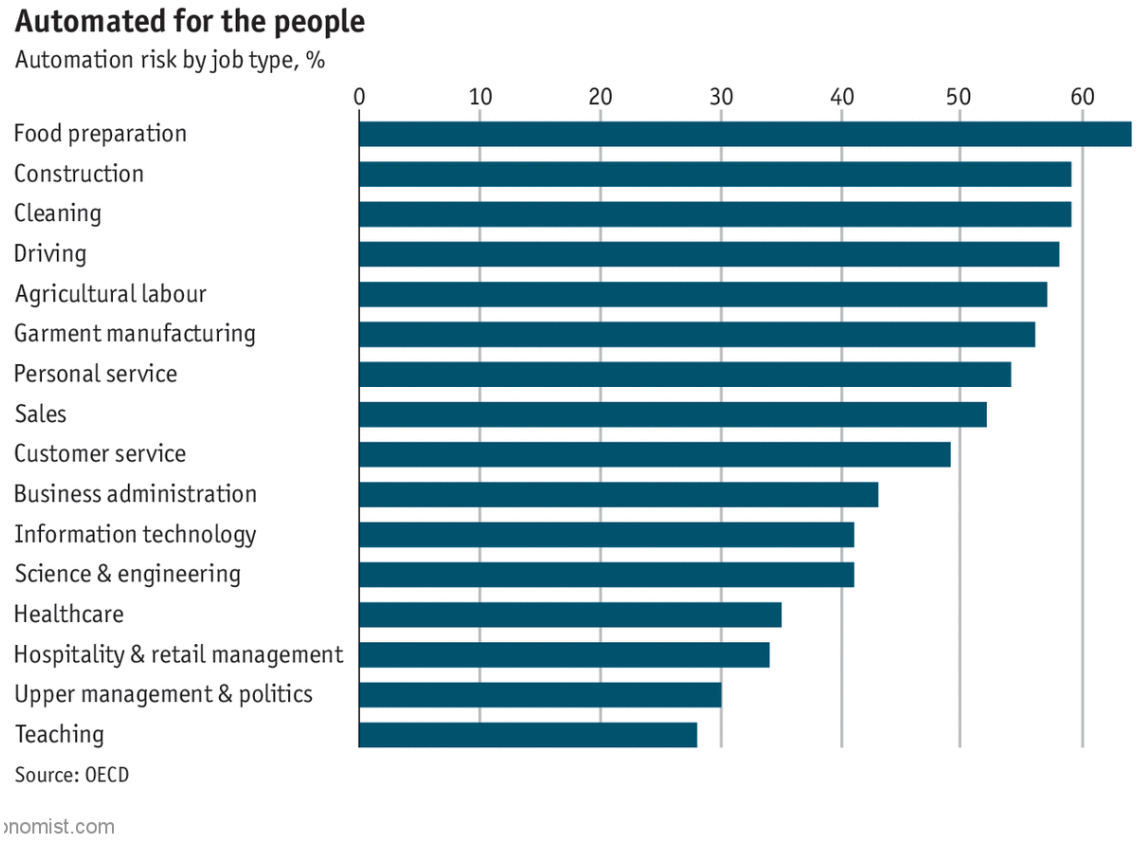

Figure 1. Jobs vulnerable to automation (The Economist)

We can discuss the amount of time it will take. It could be two, three, five years—there is no precise data. Other researchers suggest a shifting job landscape. Some jobs will be created, and some will be destroyed. This could be seen as relatively optimistic. For example, if you ask people in the United States how it is going to impact them, they are afraid it will boost unemployment, especially in certain categories. There are different levels of automation, from level one, where there is no computer, to mid-levels, where some tasks are automated, to level ten, where no human involvement is required.

Generative AI specifically threatens a number of jobs. It is not that we should eliminate all jobs just to check the size of the list. For example, many translators already feel this problem in their fields, but not all translators. Politicians are using AI for tasks such as copywriting and creating debate content. Additionally, designers, who three years ago were considered difficult to replace with AI, are now seeing reduced demand and lower hourly rates. Influencers on social networks, like Instagram, face competition from AI-generated profiles. It is predicted that by next year, 50% of profiles on Instagram will be AI-generated, earning significant income.

AI is also influencing education. We might soon have AI teaching in primary schools, elementary schools, and universities. The education system is transforming, as we already see thousands of people being fired from tech companies. This trend will likely continue, with CEOs firing large percentages of their staff. For example, more than 70% of US states are

expected to replace police officers with AI. Maintenance labor is also becoming a candidate for automation, with humanoid robots potentially arriving sooner than we think. In 2013, Amazon had 1,000 robots. Ten years later, they have 750,000 robots, indicating a massive reduction in human job opportunities.

What Some of Us Know

What's our next step? If you're researching this subject, you'll likely encounter different frameworks for how generative AI will impact the future. We're trying to predict, assess, and position ourselves in the shortest period of time we've ever had to adopt any technology. But we carry the burden of the past. The education system was designed for the industrial revolution, training people to perform repetitive tasks without questioning the status quo.

So far, companies have been using AI to improve tasks incrementally. "It'll increase efficiency and might increase productivity slightly, but ultimately, the net benefits are small because all you're doing is the same thing a little better." However, AI technology allows us to create new processes that add value to customers. The focus was on efficiency and standardization before, rather than creativity and individuality. This is crucial for our future system. AI is changing the world, but we are still deciding how this will happen. We must invent new processes to use AI effectively.

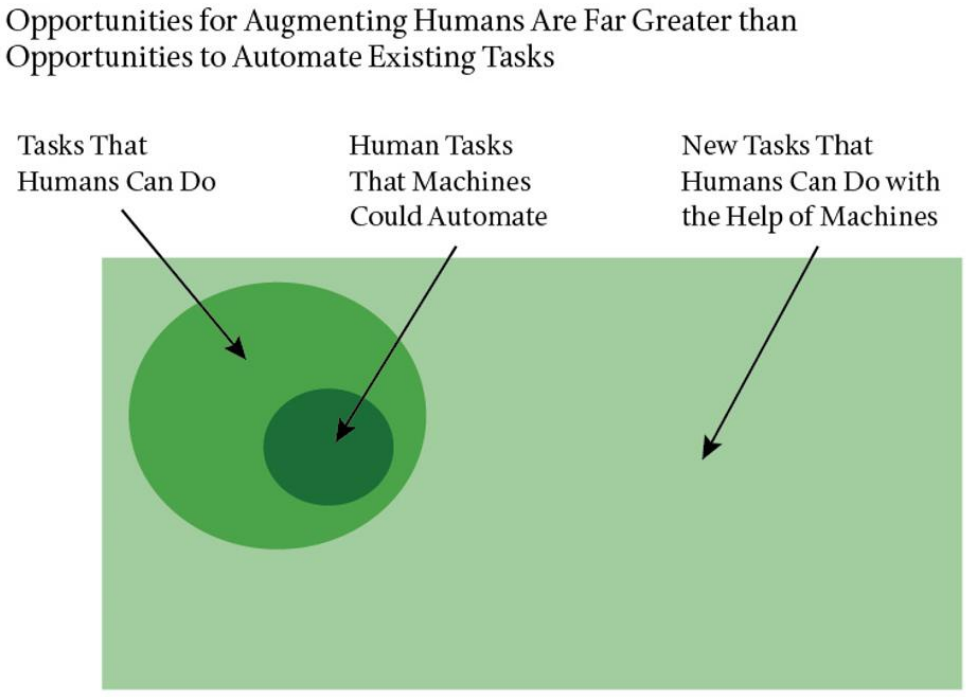

Figure 2. New tasks

There are tasks that only humans can do, and within those, some tasks can be automated by AI. More importantly, there are tasks that humans can perform only with the help of AI, which have been hidden from us so far. Bill Gates highlighted that soon, the demand for many skill sets

will be substantially lower. This concept is not in our mental model yet. Most people in the companies I work with, are unaware of this shift, often due to fear. They sometimes protect themselves from this reality.

I completely agree that some jobs should be automated. Research supports this by identifying a significant percentage of jobs that could be termed "bullshit jobs." We wanted AI to handle the challenging mental jobs, but currently, it is performing easier mental tasks. Hopefully, this will shift in the future. AI cannot create jobs that require human humor and creativity.

The advancement of AI in skills that are close to human level or even surpassing it is amazing. This progress is encouraging, especially for those working as software developers. Time management skills might need prioritization as AI capabilities expand. It is not rare to foresee AI coding in the near future. Education systems must adapt to this new reality, focusing on information architecture, with companies like IBM leading these predictions. In the next three years, 40% of the global workforce will need to be re-skilled. This goal, initially set for five years, now seems necessary within a shorter time frame, affecting approximately 1.6 billion people.

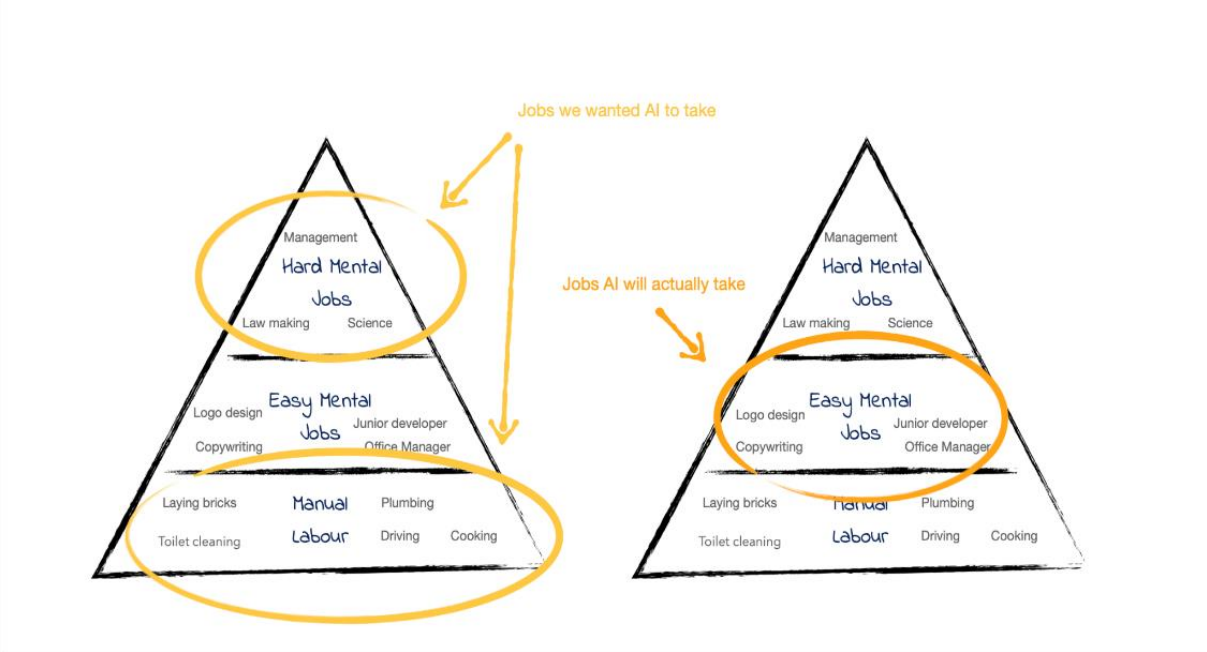

Figure 3. Want vs. Are

What Nobody Knows

The frequency of learning required to keep up with AI advancements is still uncertain. Should we learn daily, weekly, or monthly? Continuous education might become a necessity. Leaders and organizations must participate actively in this change rather than merely observing.

In 2022, a survey of over 700 top academics and researchers revealed that half believed there was a 10% or greater chance of human extinction or severe disempowerment due to future AI systems. Boundaries between technical and non-technical work will blur, making interpersonal skills like collaboration, leadership, creativity, and brainstorming crucial.

We are in the midst of transitions that defy our traditional understanding. These are not mere shifts but metamorphoses. Understanding them is vital for not just survival but for thriving in this new era. As leaders, we must ask ourselves, "Is my organization a participant in this change or merely a spectator?"