

A World Without Work

Specific Purpose: This speech should inform USU students about some of the effects automation and computer science will have on the job market for the next 50 years.

Central Idea: The rise of widespread automation in the workforce will eliminate most middle-class jobs over the next 50 years, leading to displaced workers and extreme income inequality, but also allowing for new growth and better quality of living.

I. Introduction

It must be said that the rise of computers has had a dramatic impact on how we live our lives. Tasks which used to take a lifetime of hard work and study can now often be replaced by a crack team of Computer Scientists and a dozen pepperoni pizzas. The last time a human invention had this kind of impact was during the Industrial Revolution, when the emergence of the idea of “machines” changed the world in ways we could not have imagined. One of the biggest challenges our generation will face is a question of relevance. In a world where our cars drive themselves, our phones remind us where to go, and our laptops even tell us which Netflix shows to watch, what happens to our values of hard work and productive human effort?

II. Body

A. Many jobs are susceptible to automation.

1. 47% of American jobs are already prime candidates to be replaced by computerization (Frey & Osborne).
2. Every single sector of the job market is going to be widely affected by the coming changes.
3. While some jobs will be created to support these computerized replacements, there will generally be a few high-skill positions to replace many low-skill jobs.

Transition: To compound the problem that these changes present, it’s becoming apparent that the tools we use to measure economic growth are beginning to fail at providing a meaningful measure of human success.

- B. Productivity is no longer a good indicator of success.
1. While corporate profits have doubled in the last few years, median household income has actually fallen (The Editors).
 2. This gap is emerging as companies can be more productive with fewer workers.
 3. Routine jobs are those which are being replaced the fastest, which causes problems when such jobs are how many people enter the labor market (Frey & Osborne).

Transition: However, even with so many entry-level jobs being lost to computers, not all is doom and gloom.

- C. These challenges, while daunting, are ultimately temporary.
1. Many Americans are finding novel forms of employment (The Editors).
 2. Conditions for the poor are improving dramatically across the globe.
 3. Technology-sector jobs have some of the highest job-satisfaction ratings in the world.

III. Conclusion

Ultimately, the end result of the computerization of the workforce will be largely up to us to determine. We might end up living in a cyberpunk dystopia where the ultra-wealthy determine every facet of our lives, or we could hope for a better future in which basic services and luxuries are so cheap they can be offered to all humanity freely. Chances are, however, that we'll end up somewhere in the middle. Our quality of life will dramatically improve, but there will be great battles of politics and philosophy along the way. One thing is sure though, our generation is going to change the world.

IV. Works Cited

Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (September 17, 2013) *The Future of Employment: How Susceptible are Jobs to Computerization?* Retrieved from www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf

The Editors, (July 15, 2014) Will Automation Take Our Jobs? *Scientific American*. Retrieved from <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/will-automation-take-our-jobs/>