

# AI bots could replace us, peer warns House of Lords during debate

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Author: Safi Bugel

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The House of Lords could be replaced by bots with “deeper knowledge, higher productivity and lower running costs”, said a peer during a debate on the development of advanced artificial intelligence. Addressing the upper chamber, Richard Denison hypothesised that AI services may soon be able to deliver his speeches in his own style and voice, “with no hesitation, repetition or deviation”. He quoted the example to raise the wider issue of AI’s potential effect on the UK jobs market. In May, IBM put the brakes on nearly 7,800 jobs that could be replaced by AI and automation over time, shortly before BT announced it would cut up to 55,000 jobs by 2030, about 10,000 of which were predicted to be replaced by AI. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the jobs most likely to be affected by the impending “AI revolution” were in “highly skilled” professions such as law, medicine and finance. “Is it an exciting or alarming prospect that your lordships might one day be replaced by peer bots with deeper knowledge, higher productivity and lower running costs?” the independent crossbencher asked. “Yet this is the prospect for perhaps as many as 5 million workers in the UK over the next 10 years. “I was briefly tempted to outsource my AI speech to a chatbot and to see if anybody noticed. I did in fact test out two large language models. In seconds, both delivered 500-word speeches which were credible, if somewhat generic.” The crossbench peer Charles Colville, a freelance television producer, said that he had asked the AI programme ChatGPT to write a speech for him on the threat that AI poses to journalism. He said one of the paragraphs stated: “AI, in its tireless efficiency, threatens to overshadow human journalism. News articles can be automated and editorials composed without a single thought, a single beating heart behind the words. “My fear is, we will descend into a landscape where news is stripped of the very human elements that make it relatable, understandable and ultimately impactful.” He added: “The new AI technology is further exacerbating this financial threat to the whole industry; AI-generating companies able to scrape for free the information from news websites, which are already facing increasing costs of creating original journalistic content.” Other peers noted additional potential threats, spanning bias and discrimination, privacy and security issues, and advised that humanity move forward with caution. The AI minister, Jonathan Berry, said: “These advances bring great opportunities, from improving diagnostics and healthcare to tackling climate change, but they also bring serious challenges, such as the threat of fraud and disinformation created by deepfakes. “We note the stark warnings from AI pioneers, however uncertain they may be about artificial general intelligence and AI biosecurity risks. We will unlock the extraordinary benefits of this landmark technology while protecting our society and keeping the public safe.”