

Why Should We Care?

Importance

AI/machines taking over human jobs is one of the most pressing social issues that we have to encounter in the modern day.

In the worst case scenario, AI taking jobs would result in no money going to consumers, no one would be able to buy goods from producers, and the producer consumer cycle would either break or everything would be forced to be free. People would have nothing to do. Our jobs are often more than just the way we make a living. They influence how we see ourselves, as well as the way others see us |4|.

Humans have likely been toolmakers for a solid <u>2.6 million</u> years [1]. Losing all our jobs would be like 2.6 million years of regression.

AI has set its sights on 300 million jobs around the globe, about 9.1% of all the world's jobs, and here in the U.S., 24% of the workforce is concerned about being replaced by AI. [1]

Pros (AI taking over jobs)

Vast efficiency and precision increases within job environments due to the massive difference between human and machine speed and accuracy.

Monotonous, simple, annoying/undesirable tasks will be automated; potentially improving worker morale and productivity, because undesirable jobs will be no more.

Producers would not have to hire and pay employees for certain positions, meaning that prices would drop dramatically after the machines are paid off.

There are a surprising amount of positives for AI in the workplace of the future, for a technology so many see as detrimental.

Cons (AI taking over jobs)

- Stress would likely rise, as people lose their jobs and AI initially will likely increase prices of things that it would be involved in, due to the producers needing to pay off expensive machines.
- General knowledge requirements for well paying jobs would likely skyrocket, due to the advanced knowledge that is required to work with AI and understand AI on a basic level.
- Poverty would increase as initial prices increase, non-machine assisted products would likely balloon in price due to extreme competition.
- People do not function well when there's nothing to do, and people who were happy with their jobs would likely be unhappy with their being fired



Jobs that support or cover for AI weaknesses will increase in value dramatically. Jobs that do not help AI, or those that are overrun by AI will lead to people in those areas losing their jobs.

We have already experienced something like this "in 1930, the prominent British economist John Maynard Keynes had warned that we were "being afflicted with a new disease" called technological unemployment[2]." When machine workers sped up production speed, people were worried about losing their jobs too, it is possible that history will repeat itself and our fear is unwarranted and in reality everything will be better.

Scenario

Arnold is the owner of a hamburger restaurant. He has been reading about an automated fast-food machine that can do everything a human worker can do, but potentially much faster. Even if it is not faster, the machine can run 24/7 and does not need breaks or days off. Also, the machine is not paid benefits or other things required by law for human employees. The machine is very expensive to purchase but the restaurant is in an area that is raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, so by laying off or firing almost all the employees, the machine would be paid off in one year. Arnold is tempted to buy the machine.

User Dilemma:

Is it ethical for Arnold to buy the machine?

Dilemma Discussion ("restaurant" Scenario)

I think that Arnold should not buy the machine, because it would do more harm than good to society. For Arnold the benefits would outweigh the costs, the robot would pay itself off quickly and would not require enough maintenance to out-price full time employees; however, the impact on the people they fire, the potential hit to Arnold's reputation after firing humans for the sake of getting a machine, and the high likelihood that prices would not go down despite the machines making the cost far lower due to greed, are too highly weighted to make it a good overall decision. If many people in the area were purchasing similar machines, and people are fine with it, and the academic level can support people losing low-skill jobs, it would be positive.

Bibliography/Citations

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