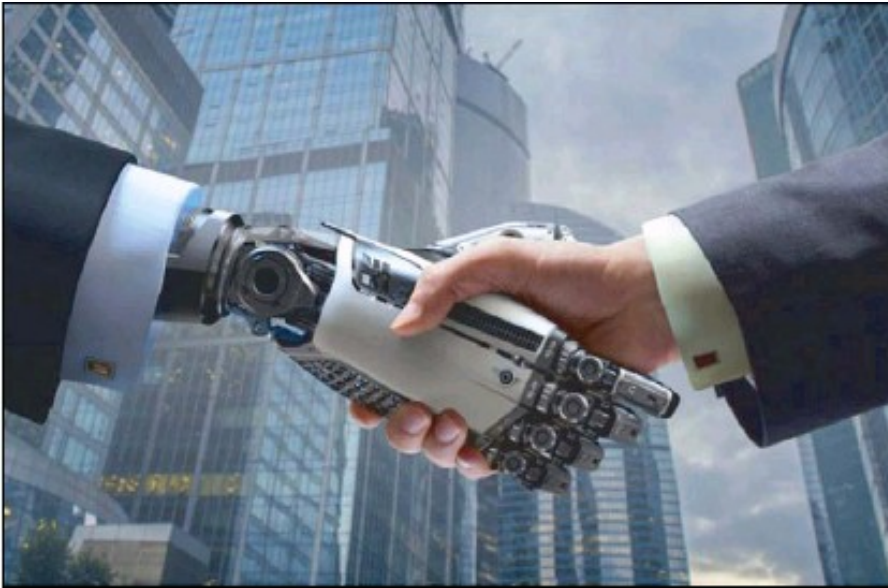


How AI will impact the workplace

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There's no doubt that the advent of broadly available artificial intelligence (AI) offers businesses the prospect of increased productivity and accelerated innovation, while also enabling society to help solve some of its toughest – and most persistent – challenges: disease, famine, climate control and natural disasters.



AI is already delivering tangible economic benefits for many organizations across Asia Pacific. For example, leading global container shipping company OOCL reports that applying AI to their business is saving them \$10 million annually, while Apollo Hospital in India is using AI to help predict heart disease among its patients. While the benefits of Artificial Intelligence are undeniable, AI is a disrupter, especially when it comes to the displacement of jobs. The ramifications of AI on the workforce is a regular topic of discussion among chief executive officers and government leaders across Asia Pacific.

That said, it is also pertinent to examine the far-reaching implication that AI brings to the workforce. Will the social disruptions that AI can potentially create ultimately overshadow its benefits?

Evolution of jobs in AI-shaped future

To put things in perspective: large-scale disruption is a challenge with every industrial revolution. Technology will always have profound implications on the creation, elimination, or evolution of jobs.

For example, just a few years ago, it was common for offices to have a pool of typists. Clearly, this role is no longer relevant in today's modern office, thanks to the proliferation of personal computing. The advent of AI will reshape jobs in a similar way. Microsoft recently partnered with the leading technology advisory firm IDC to assess the digital transformation landscape across the region. Titled "Unlocking the Eco-

conomic Impact of Digital Transformation in Asia Pacific,” the study surveyed 1,560 business and IT leaders from 15 Asia Pacific economies. It showed that 85 percent of jobs in Asia Pacific will be transformed in the next three years.

Delving deeper into the results, the respondents said that over 50 percent of jobs will be redeployed to a new position and/or retrained and upskilled for digital transformation. What’s interesting is that the study shows that 26 percent of jobs will be newly created roles from digital transformation, which will offset the 27 percent of jobs that will be outsourced or automated. In other words, the overall workforce effect will be broadly neutral.

These are clear indications that how businesses organize work, how people find employment and the skills people need to prepare for the workforce are changing dramatically. These changes are likely to accelerate in the decade ahead.

As AI continues to transform the nature of work, education, skills, and training will have to transform as well in order to ensure that people are prepared for the jobs of the future and businesses have access to the talent they need to succeed. And as traditional models of employment transform, there will be a need to modernize legal frameworks to recognize new ways of working, provide adequate worker protections, and maintain social safety nets.

Building better future together

The recently published, “The Future Computed, Artificial Intelligence and its Role in Society,” makes sense of this AI conundrum as it offers three conclusions on AI and the impact on work and jobs:.

- First, the organizations and countries that will fare best in the AI race will be early adopters. The reason is straightforward: AI will be useful wherever intelligence is needed and it helps us to be more productive in nearly every field of human endeavor, which can lead to economic growth. Put simply, new jobs and economic progress will favor those that embrace the technology, not those that resist it.
- Second, while AI will help improve daily life in many ways and help solve big societal problems, its important to remain critical when examining the issues that it can bring. Beyond AI deployment, what’s equally important is to prepare society and the workforce for the impending changes that AI will catalyze by addressing the need for strong ethical principles, the evolution of laws, the importance of training for new skills, and even labor market reforms. These aspects must all come together in order to make the most of this new technology.
- Third, to fully realize the benefits of AI, and to minimize the negative outcomes, technology companies, private and public organizations need to come together with a sense of shared responsibility – AI must be democratized.

The future of AI can burn brightly or dimly. Disruption is a norm, and the ability to adapt to disruptions is what defines all of us. And to adapt to the fast-approaching, rapidly evolving AI future, all parties – from workers to enterprises to governments

– will need to spend more time listening to each other, collaborate and constantly learn new knowledge and skills.