

# Is AI Changing Jobs?

## **AI Is Changing Jobs, But Not Quite in the Way People Expected**

**Bottom line first:** The big question about artificial intelligence and employment is no longer simply whether AI will replace people. The more complicated question is what happens to the jobs that remain. New research from 2026 suggests that AI is already changing what employers expect from workers, while companies are often using the technology to change jobs rather than eliminate them completely.

A new report from PwC, based on more than one billion job advertisements across 27 countries, found that jobs requiring specific AI skills are growing much faster than the overall jobs market. At the same time, employers are placing greater value on human skills such as judgement, leadership and creativity.

## **The Jobs Are Changing from the Inside**

One of the most interesting findings comes from the AI Labor Market Tracker, published in September. It estimates that 87% of changes caused by AI are happening **inside existing jobs**, rather than through a simple switch from one occupation to another.

In other words, a software developer may still be a software developer, but the tasks involved in the job can be very different. Instead of writing every line of code manually, the worker may spend more time checking AI-generated code, solving unusual problems and making decisions about what the software should actually do.

This distinction matters because a job can survive while becoming almost unrecognisable.

## **Some Companies Are Already Seeing Big Productivity Gains**

The New York Federal Reserve reported in September that more than 60% of the service companies in its regional surveys were now using AI, compared with 40% in 2025. Around half of manufacturers were also using AI, compared with 26% a year earlier.

Yet widespread layoffs have not followed the increase in AI use. The researchers found that companies were more often using AI to change how employees work than to immediately replace them.

Indian technology company Wipro offers an interesting example. Its AI programme has reportedly created capacity equivalent to the work of around 20,000 employees. Instead of simply removing those workers, the company says it is moving people into other roles and training them in new AI-related skills. More than 100,000 Wipro employees have received advanced AI training.

That does not mean that nobody will lose their job. It means the transition may be less straightforward than the phrase "AI replaces workers" suggests.

## **Entry-Level Workers Face a Different Problem**

One of the biggest concerns is what happens to people at the beginning of their careers.

PwC found that AI-exposed entry-level jobs are now seven times more likely to require skills traditionally associated with more experienced employees, including judgement and leadership. Entry-level roles exposed to AI have grown since 2019, but many other entry-level positions have declined.

This creates a difficult question: **How do people become experienced workers if companies no longer want to give beginners the opportunity to gain experience?**

AI can perform many routine tasks that young employees previously used to learn their profession. A junior employee might once have spent hours preparing a report, checking data or writing basic code. Those tasks were not necessarily exciting, but they were part of learning the job.

If AI does them instead, companies may have to find new ways for inexperienced workers to develop professional judgement.

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## **Workers Are Learning AI Faster Than Some Employers**

Another recent survey suggests that workers are not simply waiting for their companies to teach them.

Research published by iCIMS in September found a growing gap between the AI skills employers want and the training employers provide. Workers are increasingly developing their own AI skills, while employer-provided training has changed much more slowly.

The same pattern can be seen in Ireland. A Microsoft survey of 1,000 workers found that 47% were reconsidering their career path because of AI, up from 34% in 2025. At the same time, 63% said they were already using AI tools at work.

People are therefore facing a strange situation: the technology is changing quickly, but the institutions responsible for preparing workers may be moving more slowly.

## **The AI Advantage May Belong to People Who Know How to Question It**

There is another important finding in the 2026 research. The workers who benefit most from AI may not be those who simply know how to ask a chatbot for an answer.

They may be the people who understand when the answer is wrong.

Judgement, creativity, leadership and specialist knowledge become more valuable when AI can produce information quickly. A doctor still has to decide whether an AI-generated suggestion makes sense. A manager has to understand whether an AI analysis reflects reality. A programmer has to recognise when computer-generated code creates a security problem.

AI can therefore reduce the value of some routine skills while increasing the value of deeper expertise.

## **So, Will AI Take Our Jobs?**

The honest answer is that nobody knows exactly.

Gartner recently predicted that by 2029, 30% of employees who lose their jobs because of AI may eventually be rehired, often at a higher cost. The prediction suggests that companies may discover that completely removing humans from certain processes is less effective than expected.

The future of work may therefore be less about humans versus machines and more about humans working differently because machines are available.

The difficult part is making sure that workers have enough time and opportunity to adapt. If AI changes jobs faster than people can learn new skills, the economic benefits may be distributed very unevenly.

The biggest question may not be **"Will AI take your job?"**

It may be **"What will your job look like after AI changes it?"**