

AI's impact on the future workforce

Artificial intelligence is already delivering business value, which in turn is accelerating greater adoption. Now organizations must strategize for AI's impact on their workforces.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is often discussed in futuristic terms as if it is a wave that will sweep over the workplace. But it is already here, significantly improving our lives and work in ways that we may not even notice.

We tend to use AI every day without thinking about it. Machine learning algorithms power search engines with the uncanny ability to know what we're looking for even if our search terms are vague. We think nothing about letting a smartphone app guide us to a destination a hundred miles away and trusting it to find the shortest possible route. Voice assistants are all around us; if you want to know how many acres are in a hectare, you need only ask.

"Some of the most prominent use cases are so pervasive that we don't even think about them," said Nidhi Srivastava, Vice President and Global Head of Google Business Unit at TCS. "AI won't be a big bang; it will be a growing part of our daily routine. All of these opportunities are underpinned by cloud. At TCS, we help businesses imagine, plan, navigate and realize what's possible with cloud."

But the scope and power of AI's influence will increase at Moore's law-like speeds. Organizations must prepare now for the impact on their workforces.

Beyond the labs

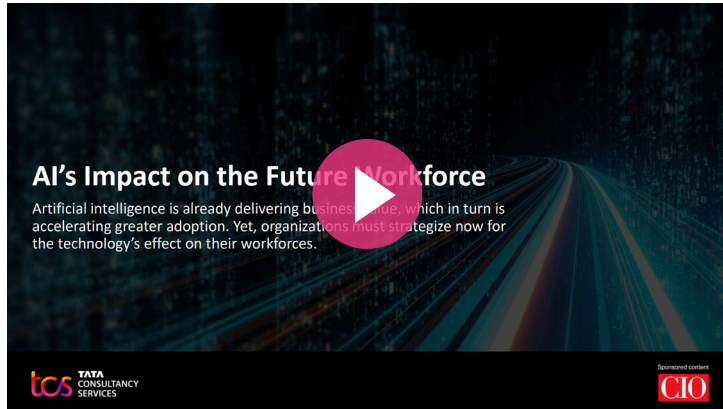
AI has been in the realm of academic institutions and laboratories for so long that we tend to think of it as a science project. However, forward-leaning organizations are shifting their perspectives toward treating AI instead as an enabler of business transformation. This transition is already taking place as evidenced by the 91% of organizations that have adopted, or plan to adopt, a "digital-first" business strategy, [according to the Foundry 2021 Digital Business Study](#).

AI-powered reporting will democratize data, giving everyone a chance to put technology to work in the ways that best suit them. It will enable paradigms to shift from seat-of-the-pants thinking to decisions supported by facts and intelligent predictions. Low-code and no-code programming tools will bring these capabilities to people with little technical knowledge. AI will amplify their existing domain skills, supporting them to make better and more confident decisions. For example, Google Cloud offers a tremendous AI and ML platform that allows scalability and democratization to accelerate an organization's transformation journey.



However, broad-based AI adoption is by no means a sure thing unless care is taken to insure against risks. Companies must prepare their people for workplace transitions with the understanding that, while some jobs will be lost, more will be created, according to [the World Economic Forum](#).

The jobs that are most likely to be automated first will be the ones no one wants to do: repetitive but necessary tasks. Offloading this work to a computer will free people to pursue more fulfilling opportunities. In Srivastava's words, "You have a beautiful mind; you don't want to spend it on tax regulation release."



Video

A quick view on AI's impact

Watch this brief Q&A video with Nidhi Srivastava, Vice President and Global Head of Google Business Unit at Tata Consultancy Services to learn more about AI's impact on the future workforce.

Identify and retrain

Organizations shouldn't hold back the tide of change but rather equip people to navigate it. Many of the jobs AI creates will require specialized technical skills. Leaders must be realistic about the roles that could be eliminated and formulate strategies so that those individuals with the aptitude and ambition for AI can develop those skills.

Forward-leaning organizations should develop a change management strategy that involves all impacted stakeholders, deals positively with resistance, and creates a culture that sees opportunity in uncertainty. AI will make it possible for the impact of decisions to be modeled with far greater precision than they have in the past.

Leaders must break down silos and empower business units with AI teams that can independently explore, ideate, and implement use cases specific to their needs. The goal should be to cultivate a culture of constant experimentation, openness to change, and acceptance of failure as an inevitable and acceptable byproduct of innovation.

Trust is key

A key element of this transition will be establishing robust guidelines for AI governance. Algorithms are only as good as the data they are given, so organizations must constantly monitor the quality of data used to train AI models to ensure against bias. AI-driven decisions must also be transparent so that people can fully understand how they were reached. Algorithms must never become a "black box," as any evidence of bias or error can undermine confidence in the entire system.

In the final analysis, AI will enable organizations to move more confidently because a far greater number of variables may be factored into their decisions. It is perhaps ironic that this confidence will also create a new tolerance for risk-taking because the impacts of decisions can be modeled more precisely. Leaders can facilitate this by empowering their business units with AI teams that can independently explore, ideate, and implement use cases specific to their needs.

Learn more

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