

Women's jobs more at risk due to lower use of AI

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the questions. Provide details for your answers.

- Do you use AI at work? What for?
- Which jobs do you think will be replaced by AI?
- Why might women be more affected by job loss caused by AI?

2 Reading for gist

a. Read the article quickly and choose the statement that best summarises the main idea.

1. Women are at risk of losing jobs to AI, so governments should prepare to offer them social benefits.
2. Women are at risk of losing jobs to AI, so they should start learning how to use the tool.
3. Women are at risk of losing jobs to AI, so employers should start to retrain them for other positions.

3 Key words

a. Read the definitions and find the key words in the article that match them. The section number is given in brackets to help you. Check your answers and understanding of the words by using them to complete the example sentences immediately after each definition. Use a capital letter where needed. Then read the complete article to see how the key words are used in context.

1. If something is _____ it is very shocking. (paragraph 3)

The rate of automation in the logistics sector has led to _____ productivity increases.

2. If you _____, you continue despite difficulties. (paragraph 3)

Concerns over AI ethics _____, even as companies invest more in it.

3. If you _____, you stop working temporarily for personal or health reasons. (paragraph 4)

More women than men _____ after childbirth, contributing to the gender pay gap.

4. Something that is _____ demands all your energy and attention.
(paragraph 4)
Managing a startup in the AI sector can be _____, leaving no time for personal life.
5. _____ means learning new skills to remain competitive in the workforce. (paragraph 6)
With AI replacing routine tasks, _____ is essential for employees to keep jobs.
6. If you _____ someone, you prevent them from progressing.
(paragraph 9)
Unconscious gender profiling can _____ talented candidates from reaching leadership positions.
7. If you _____ expectations or results, you go beyond them.
(paragraph 9)
The AI-powered customer service tool managed to _____ all KPIs within three months.
8. _____ is a tendency to prefer one group over another unfairly.
(paragraph 10)
Algorithmic _____ in hiring tools may reinforce existing inequalities in the workplace.
9. If something is _____, it is no longer useful or effective. (paragraph 13)
Relying on _____ recruitment methods can hinder efforts to diversify the workforce.
10. _____ is the process of enhancing human abilities with technology.
(paragraph 13)
AI _____ rather than replacement is becoming the preferred approach in creative industries.

11. _____ is intense promotion or attention that may not reflect reality.
(paragraph 14)

While the _____ around AI suggests rapid changes, it'll take time before they really happen.

Women are lagging behind on AI but they can catch up

CURIOSITY, EXPERIMENTATION AND LEARNING ARE CRUCIAL IF WOMEN ARE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF WORK

BY ISABEL BERWICK

- 1 Women are more likely than men to be in jobs at risk of being automated, but are also 25 per cent less likely than men to have basic digital skills, separate studies show.
- 2 The findings, from the International Labour Organization and the UN respectively, highlight an urgent challenge for women across the world. The artificial intelligence-driven industrial revolution ought to offer a unique opportunity for everyone to shape the future of work, but many women are already behind.
- 3 A 2024 Danish study of 100,000 workers found “a staggering gender gap in the adoption of [OpenAI chatbot] ChatGPT: women are 20 percentage points less likely to use ChatGPT than men in the same occupation”. The researchers found the gap persisted when people in the same workplaces were compared, and when the study controlled for different task mixes.
- 4 So how can women keep up with AI developments — especially those who might feel too busy to take time off for training within a part-time schedule, or who may be in denial about AI’s all-consuming importance? The challenges are understandable: it is hard to know where to start.
- 5 A useful resource is research company Charter’s Guide to AI in the Workplace. Instead of focusing on ideas and AI’s “maybe” impacts, this report has case studies on how some prominent companies are working with staff to share AI best practice.
- 6 But small employers don’t have anything like these resources and, as the UK’s Pissarides Review into the future of work and wellbeing points out, “good impacts — including upskilling and the substitution of routine tasks — cannot be assumed and must be proactively shaped”.
- 7 So how can you use AI yourself, even when there is no corporate, or even team-level, push for change? The best advice I have seen is from Slack, the workplace collaboration platform, which recommends setting aside time for experimentation and learning.
- 8 It is also good to be curious about AI, more generally. My recent reading includes “AI will change what it is to be human. Are we ready?” by economist Tyler Cowen and Avital Balwit, of AI software developer Anthropic.
- 9 I am also experimenting. I asked the FT’s ChatGPT Enterprise to tell me what is holding women back in adopting AI. It pointed to a 2024 study on women and generative AI by Deloitte, the consultancy. The researchers expected “the proportion of women experimenting with and using gen AI for projects and tasks will match or surpass that of men in the United States by the end of 2025”. So it is not all doom and gloom.
- 10 Caution is still good. As the FT noted last month, generative AI chatbots such as ChatGPT and Anthropic’s Claude may sometimes demonstrate how “the potential biases of those working at AI companies can seep into their models”. An FT reporter ran a series of questions about AI bosses through different chatbots, and each model was far more favourable about its own leader.
- 11 Women make up just a third of the AI workforce, according to World Economic Forum figures. But that should give us all the more reason to learn more about large language models and AI-powered agents — and start to influence how to build knowledge in our own organisations.

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- 12 You will know the saying that “AI is not going to take your job — someone using AI will”. That sounds reassuring for anyone who has mastered AI and validates those who are experimenting.
- 13 Unfortunately, like many things in the AI-spin cycle, even this idea may be outdated. Sangeet Paul Choudary, a tech author and adviser, says this idea is “true, but utterly useless”. In his Substack newsletter, he says the statement “directs your attention to the individual task level — automation vs augmentation of the tasks you perform — when the real shift is happening at the level of the entire system of work”. That difference takes some processing but is a useful way to see the bigger picture.
- 14 If you have yet to use generative AI, don’t panic. Time is on your side. Consultancy McKinsey has found that, despite the hype, only 1 per cent of leaders say their companies are “mature” on AI deployment. The other 99 per cent? That’s where the rest of us work.

FT

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4 Understanding the article

a. Are these sentences True or False according to the information in the article? Tick (✓) the correct sentences and rewrite the false ones.

1. Only a quarter of women have digital skills. _____
2. The Danish study compared people working in the same jobs and found that women use AI less than men. _____
3. It's harder for women to take time off to learn about AI. _____
4. UK's Pissarides Review into the future of work and wellbeing claims AI use needs to be proactively taught, not just expected to happen. _____
5. Author agrees with the advice she saw on Slack to just start using AI and see how it works. _____
6. The Deloitte report showed that the men's lead in AI use will grow in the future. _____
7. We need to be careful about AI use because it may have hidden biases. _____
8. Women are one third of AI users. _____
9. Sangeet Paul Choudary agrees that AI won't take your job if you learn how to use it. _____
10. Most companies aren't yet ready to implement the full use of AI. _____

5 Business language – describing proportions and percentages

a. Find the phrases in the box in the article. Match them with the similar phrases that express the same trends in the right-hand column of the table.

a gap match or surpass the proportion of
a third of percentage points less likely

	Alternative
1. _____	one in three / 33 per cent
2. _____	the share of / the percentage of / the number of
3. _____	equal or exceed / catch up with or overtake / be on par with or outperform
4. _____	a disparity / a difference / an imbalance
5. _____	x per cent lower likelihood / x per cent less probable / a reduced probability by x per cent

a. Paraphrase each sentence by replacing the phrase in bold with a similar one from the wordpool or your own vocabulary. Keep the overall meaning of the sentence.

1. **A third of** tech employees said they feared job loss due to AI automation.
2. The company is aiming to **match or surpass** last year's AI-driven revenue.
3. There remains **a gap** between male and female representation in AI leadership roles.
4. Women are **10 percentage points less likely** to be promoted into senior tech roles.
5. **The proportion of** businesses using AI in recruitment has doubled since 2020.
6. **A quarter of** all jobs in finance are projected to be impacted by generative AI.

b. Now choose six words or phrases from the table and write your own sentences.

6 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

1. Do companies have a moral obligation to train their employees in the use of AI?
2. Do you agree with Sangeet Paul Choudary that we should look beyond automation and augmentation when analysing the changes AI will have?
3. Have you been upskilling by learning to use AI?

7 Wider business theme – writing a career plan

a. You are going to prepare a career plan for yourself to future-proof your job in the age of AI.

1. Read the text and fill in the notes with tips on designing a career plan.

How to write your own career plan

In the age of AI, a personal career development plan helps you adapt easily and stay employable. Start by identifying your strengths, goals, and values. Set clear, realistic objectives and update them regularly. Focus on future-ready skills like critical thinking, digital literacy and adaptability. Learn how to work with AI tools, not against them. Check especially how they're used in your industry. Focus on upskilling with AI tools in mind. Keep networking and request feedback from more senior managers when possible. Build in flexibility: make sure most steps have a Plan B to adapt to rapidly changing tech landscape.

2. Fill in the blanks in these notes based on the text:

- Identify your (1) _____, (2) _____ and (3) _____.
- Set clear, (4) _____ objectives.
- Review and (5) _____ your plan regularly.
- Focus on (6) _____ skills like critical thinking and digital literacy.
- Learn how to (7) _____ AI tools, not compete with them.
- Investigate how AI is used in (8) _____.
- Spend time on (9) _____ with AI tools in mind.
- Keep (10) _____ and ask for feedback from senior managers.
- Build in (11) _____: have a (12) _____ for most steps in case of change.

3. Write a career plan following the steps above.

Useful language

My key strength is ..., as I demonstrated when ...

One of my long-term career goals is to ... because ...

In the short term, I plan to ... in order to ...

A skill I need to develop further is ..., especially due to recent changes in ...

I aim to improve my ability to ... by ... (e.g. attending a course, working on a project).

AI is changing my field by ..., so I plan to ...

I will measure my progress by ... and review my plan every ...

To stay adaptable, I've included a Plan B: if ... happens, I will ...

Networking is essential for my development, so I intend to ...

In five years, I hope to ... and I will achieve this by ...