



**MKAI**  
Morality & Knowledge in Artificial Intelligence

# AI and the Future of Jobs – Unveiling Emerging Realities and Prospects

MKAI Forum Insights -14th May 2024

# MKAI Forum Insights: AI and the Future of Jobs – Unveiling Emerging Realities and Prospects

*An account of the MKAI Forum hosted in London on 14th May 2024*

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## Overview of the Forum

The Forum, titled "AI and The Future of Jobs: A Real Conversation About Emerging Realities and Prospects" was convened to delve into the current and future implications of artificial intelligence on the workforce and broader society. This gathering aimed to move beyond the surface-level dialogue, fostering an environment for honest and credible discussions about AI's transformative potential and its realistic impacts on various job sectors. It sought to provide a platform where thought leaders, industry experts, and stakeholders could engage in substantive conversations about the integration of AI into the workforce.

## Objectives and Thematic Focus

Held on Tuesday, 14th May 2024 at Regent's Park Centre, London in conjunction with Capital City Collge Group, the thematic focus of the forum revolved around three main pillars:

- **Navigating Job Displacement and Creation in the AI Era:** Evaluating the balance between jobs lost to automation and new roles created by AI innovation, with particular emphasis on the long-term impacts on various job sectors.
- **The Global AI Skills Gap and Education's Response:** Addressing the widening gap between current educational outputs and the skills required in an AI-driven economy, highlighting the need for significant educational reforms and upskilling initiatives.
- **Ensuring Fair Access to Opportunities in the AI-Altered Job Market:** Developing strategies to ensure equitable job opportunities and to overcome barriers in the evolving employment landscape, with a focus on inclusivity and fairness.

## Insights on AI Misconceptions

During the session, participants debunked some common misconceptions about AI:

- **Overestimation of Job Creation:** Participants highlighted a prevalent misconception that AI will create more jobs than it displaces. This optimistic view was criticised for oversimplifying the complexity of job displacement and failing to account for the skills mismatch. A participant referenced an experience where AI experts in a podcast nonchalantly stated that job losses due to AI would be offset by the creation of new jobs, without addressing the specifics of the transition. This perspective was deemed unrealistic, particularly for workers in sectors vulnerable to automation.
- **Historical Parallels and Insufficient Dialogue:** Drawing parallels with past technological disruptions, such as the decline of the mining industry, participants emphasised that recovery is not guaranteed for all sectors. They noted that the current dialogue on AI and employment often lacks depth and fails to consider the long-term consequences for displaced workers. One participant recounted the historical job losses in mining towns, pointing out that many communities never recovered, thus cautioning against repeating the same mistakes with AI.
- **Impact on Different Skill Levels:** The forum revealed concerns about the disparity between the creation of high-skill technical jobs and the displacement of lower-skill roles. Participants stressed that many workers currently in jobs susceptible to automation might lack the skills required for new, more advanced roles. This skills gap presents a significant challenge to workforce readiness, necessitating substantial investment in retraining and upskilling initiatives.
- **Ethical and Emotional Intelligence Considerations:** There were worries about the potential erosion of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills due to increased interaction with AI. Participants expressed concern that younger generations might develop a less nuanced form of emotional intelligence influenced by machine interactions rather than human connections. One participant illustrated this with a personal anecdote about the reliance on AI for drafting documents, highlighting the need to preserve human elements in communication and education.

## Dialogue on AI Reversion Examples

The forum highlighted several instances where organisations reverted from AI solutions back to human-driven processes, emphasising the need for understanding AI's appropriate applications.

Participants discussed several instances where AI implementations in the public sector failed to deliver the expected benefits. One participant highlighted that numerous government AI systems had to be reverted to previous human-operated methods due to a decline in service levels. This experience underscores the challenges of replacing human jobs with AI and the potential negative impact on service quality when such transitions are not carefully managed.

## Reflections on Dignity at Work

We discussed the inherent dignity of work and how our societal view of certain jobs, particularly those that are simple and repetitive, might reflect underlying biases. While some view these roles as undesirable or inferior, they often hold significant value for the individuals performing them and for society at large. This perspective challenges the notion that all repetitive work is inherently undignified and unworthy.

## Exchanges on Moral Implications

The dialogues among participants provided deep insights into the moral challenges posed by AI:

- **Impact on Creativity and Originality:** The moral implications of AI's impact on creative industries were also a significant point of discussion. Participants debated whether AI-generated art and content should be considered original, given that AI models often synthesise existing works. The concern is that AI could diminish the value of human creativity by producing content that is derivative rather than genuinely original. The discussion highlighted the need for clear guidelines on the use of AI in creative fields to protect artists' rights and ensure the integrity of creative works.
- **Social and Economic Implications:** The forum addressed the broader social and economic implications of AI, particularly regarding job displacement and economic inequality. Participants expressed concern that AI could exacerbate social divides by disproportionately benefiting those with access to advanced technologies while leaving behind those in lower-income or less technologically advanced regions. The discussion called for policies and initiatives to ensure equitable access to AI benefits and to support workers in transitioning to new roles created by AI advancements.
- **Moral Red Lines and Regulation:** There was a robust debate on setting moral red lines for AI development. Participants argued that just because AI can perform certain tasks does not mean it should. They stressed the importance of establishing ethical boundaries to prevent AI from being used in ways that could harm society. This includes regulations to control the deployment of AI in sensitive areas such as surveillance, law enforcement, and employment, ensuring that AI is used responsibly and ethically.

## Acknowledgements

We deeply appreciate the active participation and insightful contributions of all attendees. Your diverse perspectives and engagement enriched the discussions, making the forum a dynamic platform for exploring the multifaceted impacts of AI on the job market. Your willingness to share experiences and ideas played a crucial role in the success of the event.

A special thank you to the organising team from MKAI.org, Capital City College Group, and Skills Academy Digital Hub. Your commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue on AI and its implications for the future of work was evident in every aspect of the event—our heartfelt thanks to the hosts and keynote speakers, including Richard Foster-Fletcher and Paul Levy.

## About MKAI

Founded in 2019, MKAI (Morality and Knowledge in Artificial Intelligence) is a global capacity-building organisation that helps academic institutions enhance AI comprehension and strategic thinking. Our focus is on deepening AI literacy, ensuring that leaders engage in informed, positive discussions about AI's role. We provide expert guidance, emphasising ethical considerations and sustainable AI practices, to empower academic leaders and educators.

As a facilitator of emergent AI conversations, MKAI blends expertise with a forward-thinking approach. We equip academic institutions with the insights necessary for navigating the complexities of AI, focusing on its broader implications and opportunities in education.

In fostering AI literacy and ethical discourse, MKAI positions academic institutions as informed and responsible leaders in the AI era. Our commitment to inclusive and conscientious dialogue ensures that the academic sector not only adapts to AI advancements but also shapes its ethical and beneficial use in education.

This forum was a joint initiative between MKAI, Capital City College Group and Skills Academy Digital Hub

