

Will AI take my job?

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The most common question we receive about artificial intelligence is unrelated to investments: “Will AI take my job?” Given Hollywood’s tendency to cast an AI future in a negative light (think *Terminator*, *I, Robot*, *The Matrix*, and *Wargames*), it is not surprising that our collective thoughts trend toward pessimism. If we can, however, imagine AI as autonomous agents working for the benefit of humanity, then we can picture a world in which future AI systems produce massive economic and societal benefit.

Scientists have been working on AI since the 1940s, so it is not as if the launch of ChatGPT in 2022 was the first interaction between humanity and this technology. Almost 30 years ago, for example, IBM’s Deep Blue beat then-world chess champion Gary Kasparov. In 2011, IBM Watson defeated Ken Jennings, arguably the greatest *Jeopardy!* contestant in history. What captured the popular imagination in both instances was the idea that if a narrowly trained computer could beat humans in chess and *Jeopardy!*, what would happen if AI was broadly trained to mimic humans?

ChatGPT represented the step change from narrow AI to a generalized system that could learn, reason, and do multiple functions beyond its explicit programming. People discovered that ChatGPT could learn and translate foreign languages, compose music, write books, take exams—and we are just in the early stages of discovering its use cases. If AI is currently able to mimic humans beyond a narrow set of instructions, when will it surpass our capabilities?

Many experts are speculating that AI will reach some sort of sentience by 2030, meaning—some believe—that AI will be aware of itself and hence be its own “being.” And if that being is “better” than us, will it take our jobs... or worse?

We don’t subscribe to the pessimistic view. When we consider AI in the labor market, we believe we are on the cusp of autonomous agents that cannot only analyze data but perform functions. Imagine going through a drive-through and ordering a hamburger, fries, and a cola. Today’s large language models (LLMs) can understand the context and the content of what the customer is ordering and—in the not-too-distant future—should be able to integrate with the restaurant’s internal kitchen management system to create a food order. It will then integrate with the billing system, generate an invoice, accept contactless payments, thus handling the

entire ordering process. Humans can be freed to focus on food preparation and customer service.

With every technological revolution, some jobs do indeed disappear. There are no more elevator or switchboard operators, video store clerks, postal mail sorters, or street lamp lighters. Today we have life coaches, fitness instructors, biotech scientists, drone operators, social media content developers, and influencers—professions that did not exist 50 years ago. Technology automates more mundane functions and allows humans to pursue their highest skill level in areas of passion. We believe AI will continue this enablement. In 50 years, we may have space travel agents, virtual reality designers, human-AI interaction specialists, and a host of other professions that are unimaginable today.

And then there are jobs that we believe AI will never replace. Each human finger has more than 3,000 touch receptors—something robots will never be able to replicate. Professions that enhance human connection are irreplaceable, such as teachers, counselors, social workers, pastors, massage therapists. Professions requiring tactile skill, especially in the trades like electricians, plumbers, HVAC, and wood workers, will remain in-demand and highly remunerated. Human touch, human connection, and building community will increase in value to society, and we will have more time to pursue all three.

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Will there be challenges during this shift? Absolutely. We do not want to discount the dangers of manipulating and abusing technology. This has been embedded in the arc of history. But the greater arc has been one where innovation increases productivity, improves longevity, and furthers human flourishing. We have witnessed unprecedented prosperity in the last 100 years. With AI, we believe prosperity can accelerate, creating opportunities for individuals, businesses, and society to build lasting value.

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