



WILL OUR JOBS REALLY BE REPLACED BY ROBOTS?

Jason Connolly, director at Next Generation IT, considers the issues

In addition to competing against other jobseekers for work, you'll soon be pitted against robots as well. Millions of workers are in danger of being replaced by computers and artificial intelligence, an Oxford University study has concluded.

Experts predict that we are entering the fourth industrial revolution), where unrelenting technological progress is blurring the traditional boundaries between physical, digital and biological realms. This means there are great opportunities for increases in efficiency and standards of living, but the downside risk is that we could all be out of work soon. Previous industrial revolutions have automated repetitive manual tasks, but artificial intelligence is targeting knowledge workers, such as accountants, bookkeepers, administrators and legal advisors.

Further developments in technology will bring globalisation of the people-centric service sector, impacting rich countries far more than the decline in manufacturing. In the UK, the service sector accounts for around 80% of the economy. The disruption won't be caused because people move freely across borders (as many populist politicians believe), but because technologies will enable the work to be done elsewhere. Knowledge-driven globalisation will be driven by technology. For example, through telerobotics, a surgeon can operate on a patient remotely from another country.

The good news is that the Channel Islands have shown themselves to be very adaptable in the past, we must move up the value chain to ensure our survival and ongoing employment. There are opportunities to be had for nimble and adaptable businesses to take advantage of the rapid change.

Machine learning and artificial intelligence is not all about saving money, but used well can raise productivity, reduce errors, improve quality, safety and speed. Adopting automation could enable local businesses to become more productive and effective, unlocking competitive advantage for our businesses against competing jurisdictions.