

# Review of: "[Commentary] Service Sector Work Under Pressure From New Technologies and Artificial Intelligence – Lessons From a Number of Foresight Studies"

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## Review of "Service Sector Work Under Pressure From New Technologies and Artificial Intelligence – Lessons From a Number of Foresight Studies"

This commentary effectively highlights the under-discussed issue of new technologies' impact on service sector work. It argues that while automation's influence on manufacturing is well-recognized, its subtle infiltration into service industries is often overlooked.

The key strength lies in differentiating between two types of technological influence. The first involves unnoticed changes to existing workflows, impacting working conditions. The second, exemplified by the rise of food delivery services, leads to a complete overhaul of work methods, potentially creating challenges for worker well-being.

The commentary raises a crucial point: the potential amplification of these effects with the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI). This foreshadows the need for proactive measures to ensure AI implementation prioritizes the well-being of service sector workers.

Some potential areas for further exploration:

- **Specifying the types of service sector jobs most susceptible to these changes.**
- **Providing concrete examples of how AI could impact service work, both positively and negatively.**
- **Offering suggestions for how businesses can introduce new technologies while safeguarding worker health and well-being.**

This commentary offers a valuable starting point for a broader discussion on the evolving landscape of service sector work in the face of rapid technological advancements. By prompting further exploration and proposing solutions, we can ensure a future where technological progress benefits both businesses and the workforce.

### Service Sector Jobs Impacted by Unnoticed Tech Changes

- **Customer Service Representatives:** Chatbots and virtual assistants are increasingly handling basic inquiries, freeing up human reps for more complex issues.
- **Data Entry Clerks:** Automation tools like Optical Character Recognition (OCR) are streamlining data entry processes,

potentially reducing the need for manual data entry jobs.

- **Travel Agents:** Online booking platforms and travel aggregators have transformed the travel industry, impacting how agents research and book travel for clients.
- **Retail Sales Associates:** Self-checkout kiosks and inventory management systems are changing the way retail associates interact with customers and manage stock.
- **Food Service Workers:** Kitchen automation, like automated fryers or burger assembly systems, can speed up processes in fast-food chains, potentially reducing labor needs.

These are just a few examples, and the impact varies depending on the specific technology and industry.

### **Proactive Measures for AI and Worker Well-being**

Businesses can implement several proactive measures to ensure AI prioritizes worker well-being:

- **Upskilling and Reskilling Programs:** Invest in training programs that equip employees with the skills needed to work alongside AI or transition to new roles created by AI integration.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Clearly explain how AI will be used and its impact on jobs. Open communication fosters trust and reduces anxieties.
- **Focus on Human-AI Collaboration:** Design AI systems to complement human strengths, not replace them. Leverage AI to handle repetitive tasks, freeing up human workers for higher-level problem-solving and client interaction.
- **Prioritize Worker Mental Health:** Be mindful of potential stress or burnout caused by AI implementation. Provide resources like mental health support or flexible work arrangements to address these concerns.
- **Focus on Explainable AI:** Choose AI systems that provide clear explanations for their decisions. This helps build trust with workers and ensure fair treatment by AI algorithms.

By implementing these proactive measures, businesses can create a smooth transition to AI while minimizing negative impacts on workers and maximizing the benefits of AI for both employees and the company.