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AI, JOBS AND WAGES SPECIAL REPORT

Explore!



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AI technologies have initiated a profound transformation in the labor market over the past few years. Even more is expected in the years ahead. Companies are adopting this new power at an unprecedented pace. According to PwC's 2025 Global AI Jobs Barometer, all sectors — including traditionally less digital fields such as mining and agriculture — have begun increasing their use of AI. In this uncertain transformation environment, there are both significant opportunities and risks for employees.



2023 - 2025: THE RULES OF WORK ARE BEING REWRITTEN

Over the past two years, the AI wave has effectively begun to rewrite the rules of working life. When the power of AI applications became widely recognized at the **end of 2022** (the “ChatGPT effect”), a race began across all industries. In sectors with high transformation potential, productivity metrics per employee are poised for explosive growth: since 2022, revenue per employee in these sectors has reached nearly three times that of other sectors, yet expectations are even higher.



THE NEW WAGE FORMULA

BASE EXPERTISE VALUE

+

AI SKILL COEFFICIENT

+

PRODUCTIVITY PREMIUM

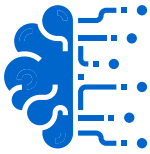
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TALENT SCARCITY EFFECT

+

AUTOMATION RISK ADJUSTMENT

WHY ARE WAGES RISING SO FAST?



AI SKILL PREMIUM

Employees with AI skills are beginning to earn significantly higher salaries compared to those in the same position without these skills. A global analysis reveals that workers with **AI skills in the same profession earn on average 56% more**. AI expertise has become a new “golden bracelet,” significantly pushing wages upward. Indeed, every sector appears willing to pay extra for employees with AI capabilities.



DEMAND COMPETITION

The supply of AI talent is insufficient to meet exploding demand. Companies continuously raise salary benchmarks to attract a limited pool of experts. In Silicon Valley, tech giants have begun offering **million-dollar** annual packages to secure top AI researchers. At firms such as Meta, Google, and OpenAI, total annual compensation for elite AI researchers has exceeded **\$10 million**. Although these astronomical levels are exceptional, demand for AI skills in the broader market is also rising rapidly. In the U.S., the share of job postings requiring AI skills increased from 8% in 2022 to 24% in 2025.



PRODUCTIVITY PREMIUM

Employees who actively use AI can generate far higher output than those who do not. This enables employers to **justify paying more for those roles**. Even in jobs most susceptible to automation, wages are rising rather than falling; because AI increases the productivity of employees in those roles, it also **increases their value**. While AI takes over repetitive tasks, it directs employees toward more creative or complex work, and these **higher value-added tasks** bring better compensation.



AUTOMATION PRESSURE (RISK AND OPPORTUNITY)

The automation wave brought by AI can exert downward pressure on wages in certain fields. Especially in repetitive office and administrative roles, as AI-powered software simplifies tasks, the number of such positions may decline or wage growth may slow. For example, in the U.S., employment for **credit analysts and insurance claims** adjusters is projected to decline and wages may be suppressed due to AI-based automation (a -3.9% employment change is expected for credit analysts between 2023–33). However, another consequence of automation is that fewer employees performing the same job may assume **broader responsibilities** and become more skilled. In this case, companies may raise wages to retain the limited number of employees in critical positions. In short, AI means wage growth for some and wage pressure for others. The direction of this balance depends on employees’ adaptability and employers’ strategies.

WINNERS AND LOSERS: A POLARIZING ERA



The AI wave does not affect all employees equally; on the contrary, divisions between **winners** and **losers** within the workforce are becoming more pronounced. **On the winning side** are those who effectively use AI and work in high-skill roles. According to U.S. data, employees in jobs most exposed to AI already earn an average of **\$33 per hour**, while those in jobs least affected by AI earn around **\$20 per hour**. Thus, **better-paid white-collar jobs** are currently more intertwined with AI, and as these individuals adapt, they maintain their wage advantage.

Programmers with AI expertise, data scientists, and machine learning engineers can reach astronomical salaries in the global market; in fact, amid talent wars among tech giants, top AI experts are offered seven-figure annual compensation packages. Additionally, AI creates **new job opportunities** in many sectors (such as digital content creation, AI training, and robotics maintenance), giving an advantage to those who fill these roles.

On the **losing side** are jobs that AI-driven automation simplifies and devalues. Particularly routine, repetitive, and **lower-skilled** roles are at risk. Just as industrial robots once put blue-collar workers in a difficult position, software automation — especially Generative AI — now threatens **routine white-collar jobs**. For example, call center representatives, data entry clerks, basic accounting, and administrative support roles are already seeing reduced human demand due to AI-supported systems. According to ILO studies, clerical and secretarial occupations, where female employment is concentrated, are among the most highly exposed to AI; therefore, female employees may be disproportionately affected.

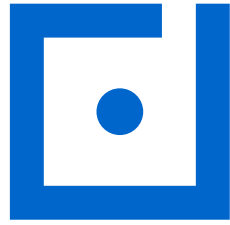
Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that “losing” does not mean becoming unemployed overnight. In most cases, AI changes the nature of these jobs: customer service representatives may work alongside AI chatbots and focus on more complex issues, while accountants may shift routine bookkeeping tasks to automation and concentrate more on advisory and analytical functions. Employees who fail to adapt to this transformation, **who do not know how to use AI and are not supported in doing so**, unfortunately face the risk of declining market value and income loss. OECD studies frequently highlight that some workers in medium-skill jobs may either be pushed into **lower-level** service roles due to AI or be forced to move into higher-level roles through adequate training.

Another important dimension concerns the group referred to as **invisible workers**. Behind AI systems lies a large human workforce, often in developing countries, working for low wages. These workers perform tasks such as data labeling, content moderation, and image recognition to train AI models, and the wages paid can be extremely low. For example, OpenAI used outsourced workers in Kenya earning **\$1.3–\$2 per hour** to filter harmful content for ChatGPT. These workers reviewed thousands of lines of text containing violence, abuse, and hate speech to clean AI training datasets. Similarly, companies such as Facebook and Google use “**micro-worker**” networks in less developed countries to manually clean or label billions of data points. This represents the darker side of AI’s global division of labor: while **highly paid AI experts** design the systems, **low-paid hidden workers** feed them. Institutions such as Human Rights Watch and the ILO have begun emphasizing that such jobs must meet decent work standards, at the very least providing fair wages and psychological support mechanisms.

In the coming period, **countries and segments of the workforce that rapidly adapt to innovation** will achieve significant gains, while **those unable to adapt** face the danger of falling behind. Therefore, both national policies and workplace-level initiatives will play a critical role in ensuring a **human-centered AI transformation**.

References

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