How artificial intelligence will impact self-employment

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People who are self-employed in some of the lowest paid and most popular jobs are at the greatest risk of being displaced by artificial intelligence (AI), according to new research from the University at

Buffalo School of Management.

Recently published by the Center for Research on Self-Employment, the study found that with both self-employment and AI investment on the rise, independent sales people, drivers, and agriculture and construction workers are in the greatest danger of having their jobs computerized, because the work is routine and low in technical expertise.

"Those who are self-employed just don't have the same access to AI resources that corporate employees do, which makes it difficult for them to keep up with these technological advancements," says Kate Bezrukova, associate professor of organization and human resources in the UB School of Management.

The researchers conducted a systematic review of every study to date on artificial intelligence and the self-employed, and compared those findings to their own research on groups and teams from more than 20 published studies across many work settings. Through this approach, they found that while certain jobs are at risk from AI, not every profession is in jeopardy.

In general, occupations that require employees to work together, negotiate and make decisions are less likely to be eliminated because these attributes are harder for AI to imitate. The careers less at risk from AI are typically those with higher pay, such as lawyers, managers, and business and medical professionals.

The study also found that technical jobs such as maintenance for robots and distribution of hardware for AI may see significant growth.

"It's like when the computer revolution hit decades ago—there was great fear that computers would replace people," says Bezrukova. "But work just shifted and IT positions grew because we needed more support for

our computers and networking."

Looking ahead, the study recommends creating public awareness programs to highlight the opportunities and risks of AI, updating education curriculum to integrate shifting skills and tools, and conducting additional research on the integration of AI in work, specifically for the self-employed.

Provided by University at Buffalo

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