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# AI IS CHANGING WORK: IT’S TIME TO LOOK UP!



**ALEX ZARIFEH  
CALLS ON CDPS  
TO ENGAGE WITH  
THE CHANGING  
WORLD OF WORK,  
AS AI RESHAPES  
CAREERS AND  
INDUSTRIES**

**T**he 2021 film, *Don’t Look Up*, portrays the impending arrival of a catastrophic comet - an existential threat met with indifference, as leaders remain preoccupied with the demands of daily governing. The analogy to the career development sector’s current response to AI’s rapid evolution is striking. Many careers professionals remain focused on immediate challenges, despite AI rapidly advancing and frequently meeting - or even exceeding - human-level performance.

## Speed of acceleration

The speed of AI transformation is staggering. Consider the leap from Open AI’s 01 model to 03 - which introduced PhD-level *deep research* reasoning - taking just three to four months. This breakneck acceleration raises profound questions about the future of work.

Over the past year, Swedish fintech company Klarna has stopped recruiting, replacing the 20% headcount reduction with a range of AI efficiency tools. The result? A 100% increase in gross profit and 30% reduction in costs (Yahoo Finance, 2024). One thing is clear - it is no longer a question of ‘if’ AI will reshape the workforce, but how fast it will happen.

## Here-and-now capabilities

AI models already outperform general practitioners in diagnostics and excel in specialities such as ophthalmology, radiography and cancer detection. AI systems produce PhD-level breakthroughs in physics, chemistry and biology - solving problems beyond their training data. OpenAI’s founder, Sam Altman, underscores this new reality: ‘You will not be better than the AI in maths, physics, programming. In any given area, you will not outrun AI on raw horsepower, probably this year’ (UTokyo GlobE, 2025).

## Augmentation rather than replacement (for now!)

Across industries, AI is revolutionising professional workflows - not by replacing workers outright, but by augmenting human capabilities. From management consulting to software development, financial analysis and scientific research, employees collaborating with AI are completing tasks faster, improving output quality and driving innovation.

AI sceptics pronounce that a ‘human in the loop’ will always be necessary, taking comfort in the words of ‘Economics of AI’ Professor Anton Korinek, who noted in December 2024 that ‘right now, AI is only able to do parts of tasks’. Yet they conveniently overlook his follow-up warning: ‘AI is rapidly advancing such that it can perform more work, more autonomously, meaning you need fewer humans for the remaining tasks’ (Center for AI Policy, 2025).

## Disruption ahead

During February 2025’s ‘AI Action’ Summit in Paris, Gilbert Hounbo, Director General of the International Labour Organisation, warned: ‘It is true, AI will lead to the loss of millions of jobs. Whether we like it or not, any CEO who can replace employees with machines will!’ (DW News, 2025).

In the UK, the April 2024, ‘Transformed by AI’ report from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) estimated that current AI capabilities already threaten 11% of UK jobs - a figure that could rise dramatically. The report’s conclusion was unambiguous: ‘A fundamental shift has occurred. We now have a technology capable of delivering human-quality output in a fraction of the time. The need for policymakers to act is urgent’ (Jung and Srinivasa, 2024).

## Everything still to play for!

While the rise of super-intelligent machines seems inevitable, Sam Altman adds a more optimistic perspective ‘you will be able to do new things with AI, that nobody could do before! The skills you will need are quick adaptability, resilience and learning how to use these tools to achieve far more than ever possible before’ (UTokyo GlobE, 2024). Likewise, Gilbert Hounbo remains confident that AI’s impact will ultimately create more opportunities than it displaces. The real challenge, he argues, is not the technology, but how society manages the transition (DW News, 2025).

## ATLP’s Futures Readiness!

A number of career development professionals already champion AI-focused initiatives, including Associate Professor Deirdre Hughes and #TheWeekInCareers’ Chris Webb. The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership’s (ATLP) Futures Readiness programme is similarly forward-thinking, offering the UK’s only iterative approach, empowering students, careers leaders and wider educational staff to critically engage with AI as it unfolds.

Through fortnightly, interactive tutor-time video resources, Futures Readiness delivers six key benefits:

1. **Workplace Insights** - Keeping users up to date with AI-driven changes.
2. **Understanding AI’s Societal Impact** - Encouraging critical discussions on AI’s wider implications.
3. **AI Safety and Risk Awareness** - Helping users recognise and respond to amplified AI-related challenges.
4. **Practical AI Tools** - Evaluating applications with the potential to enhance learning, productivity and career readiness.



## FORTNIGHTLY VIDEOS DELIVER THE FOLLOWING SIX FEATURES:



Insights into 'here and now' AI-induced workplace changes



Cast a light upon wider societal impacts of AI



Safeguarding insights into novel and existing risks



Spotlights AI tools with impactful learning use cases



Enriches subject areas of the national curriculum



Encourages personal growth reflection



5. **Curriculum Enrichment** - Embedding future-focused AI content within existing subject frameworks.

6. **Personal reflection and career readiness** - Encouraging students to reflect upon their preparedness for the AI transformed workplace.

Futures Readiness is delivered in two tailored formats:

Futures Readiness **FOUNDATION** - Designed for Upper Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 learners.

Futures Readiness **CORE** - Tailored for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students.

Futures Readiness is underpinned by a robust, twenty-aspect framework of skills, attributes, values and competencies developed in collaboration with the University of Birmingham's Dr. Shane McLoughlin.

### Do look up!

It may be tempting to dismiss figures like Sam Altman as accelerationist optimists; however, when known AGI

sceptic Yann LeCun acknowledged to the UN Security Council in December 2024 that 'there is no question, AI systems will match and surpass human intellectual capabilities' (SVGN, 2025), it becomes increasingly clear that the careers sector can no longer afford to look away!

### Reference

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