# UK risks losing £200 billion by lagging behind in AI workplace adoption, warns Google



The head of Google’s UK and European operations has sounded an urgent warning regarding the UK’s lagging adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace, highlighting the risk that Britain could forfeit up to £200 billion in economic gains. This concern comes amid new research from Google that reveals a significant gap in the integration of generative AI tools among British workers.

The study, conducted by research group Public First and encompassing more than 3,100 respondents, found that approximately two-thirds (66%) of workers in the UK have never used generative AI in their jobs. Usage is notably lower among women over the age of 55 and individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Google’s analysis suggests that AI has the potential to contribute £400 billion to the UK economy by 2030 through improvements in productivity; however, realising only half of this potential could occur if the current adoption gap remains unaddressed.

Debbie Weinstein, president of Google in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, described the findings as a “call to arms… to make sure we’re providing the tools that workers need for the UK” in remarks made to the PA news agency. She emphasised that bridging the adoption gap is critical not only to economic advancement but also to achieving time-saving benefits for workers, while cautioning that “more needs to be done.”

Google’s “AI Works” report points to a long-standing pattern of delayed technology adoption in the UK compared to other countries. The firm notes that while innovation occurs, implementation frequently lags, impeding economic growth. This cycle, the report states, “risks delaying productivity and compromising long-term growth,” especially given AI’s transformative potential.

Key barriers identified include a shortage of accredited, bite-sized training courses and insufficient guidance from employers on AI use at work. The survey revealed that 70% of workers who use AI tools do so independently, without managerial encouragement, and only 22% receive official encouragement—a decline from 28% six months prior. Google commented, “AI adoption is largely happening without official workplace guidance.”

In response, Google is urging the UK Government to incorporate AI support into its industrial strategy, outlining how adoption can be best fostered across vital sectors. The company advocates for explicit frameworks that provide workers with clear permissions and boundaries regarding AI use. Additionally, Google recommends that Skills England, a new government-backed body, develop an accreditation system for concise, effective AI training programmes.

The UK’s Technology Secretary, Peter Kyle, endorsed efforts to skill up workers in AI-related fields, stating, “We will support workers to develop the skills they need for jobs in and with AI, so that all parts of society can benefit from this technology.” He described the AI Opportunities Action Plan, which includes collaboration with Skills England and industry players to identify and address talent shortages.

Google has already piloted initiatives with small UK businesses employing behavioural science techniques to boost AI uptake and has partnered with school academies and Community Union to broaden its reach. Plans are underway to expand the AI Works pilot programme to other countries, including Germany.

This development underscores ongoing discussions about the role of AI in the UK workforce and the measures needed to harness its economic benefits fully.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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