# AI automation triggers significant job shifts with coding layoffs already underway



Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) technology have raised pressing questions regarding its potential effects on employment. The ongoing discourse, highlighted by various commentators, posits that as AI grows increasingly sophisticated, it could displace human workers across several sectors, leading to substantial job losses and significant social consequences.

John Cassidy, writing for The New Yorker, draws parallels to the early 19th-century textile industry in the United Kingdom, where new automated machinery replaced skilled craftspeople. This period saw considerable unrest, with individuals known as Luddites famously destroying machinery that threatened their livelihoods. Cassidy's reflections evoke questions about whether society can manage the impending disruptions associated with AI without replicating the tumultuous past.

The reality of these job losses is already surfacing, particularly in the realm of software development. Industry leaders, including Google, are reportedly reducing the workforce required for coding by 20% through the integration of AI, thus replacing lower-skilled coders. This transition aligns with historical trends in software development where automation has streamlined processes over the decades.

Henry Kressel, a technologist and former head of electronic device research at RCA Laboratories, provides context from his own experiences in the industry. He recalls a time when designing integrated circuits involved manual effort that required physical blueprints for interconnections. With the advent of automation and sophisticated design software, the field evolved, leading to the production of chips with billions of transistors. As he points out, while some engineers were displaced, many adapted to new roles in chip design software and system design through continuous retraining.

Despite these advancements, Kressel acknowledges that the rise of AI will bring about employment dislocations. Repetitive and routine jobs are particularly susceptible to being replaced by AI systems. Individuals in such roles will need to acquire new skills to transition into emerging job categories.

Historically, similar transformations have occurred; roles like clerical work and telephone switchboard operations have diminished as technology advanced, but new job opportunities arose in their wake. This historical lens suggests that while certain roles will evolve, the need for human intelligence remains integral to the functioning of AI systems.

Kressel emphasises that the crux of mitigating technology-driven unemployment lies in national education policies that empower the workforce with necessary skills for the future job market. The transition posed by AI, while disruptive, is positioned by some experts as a continuation of a long-standing relationship between technology and employment, punctuating the importance of adaptability in the workforce as industries innovate.

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

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