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New jobs emerging

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The more things change, the more they stay the same.

When the industrial revolution took hold, people started leaving their farms and homes in droves, flocking to the cities to find new work. Factories were born as was a system of free education for the masses to feed the production line's insatiable appetite for workers.

A century or so later, ChatGPT 4 has burst onto the scene marking a new revolution (which actually began, unnoticed, a decade or so ago). The explosion of AI has given the media an opportunity feed our natural instincts to fear the unknown. "The end of humanity as we know it is only a decade away", "AI is the last thing we will ever invent", "there will be no jobs left for us", have been some of the headlines we have seen this year.

The AI revolution is now gathering momentum and rapidly reshaping work as we knew it, and indeed our very lives. Will humanity as we know it live on?

The truth is, humanity will continue and new jobs will emerge but will the workers of tomorrow have the skills needed to fill those jobs?

Yes. It's already happening.

The Sydney Morning Herald ran a story on 16 July 2023 titled, "Artificial intelligence reshaping the jobs market in Australia's biggest cities."

The first line says, "Labour markets in NSW and Victoria are among the first to show signs of being reshaped by artificial intelligence, accounting for the vast majority of new jobs using the emerging technology in Australia."

Queensland is behind in the creation of those new jobs, but rest assured, the State won't be far behind. More and more companies are creating new jobs to stay ahead of the AI revolution.

But just as the Industrial Revolution gave birth to a system of education to produce the workers, the AI revolution's insatiable appetite for new skills will never be met unless we change the way we educate our young people.

To meet the new demands of the employment market, young people must be equipped with the skills and dispositions that AI cannot replicate. Our nation also needs more young people moving into research and the development of AI tools. Are our schools ready? I would say not.

How do we avoid a doomsday scenario? Schools must stop focusing solely on content delivery and seek a genuine commitment developing skills and dispositions in young people. The kinds of skills and dispositions that support the growth of creative, innovative and entrepreneurial thinking, along with the development of ethical and moral thinking (character).

Realms of Thinking and Ways of Being are approaches to learning designed to provide young people with the skills and dispositions and character traits they need to not only survive but thrive in the new age.

Like it or not, AI is here to stay and will only become more powerful. But I, like a good number of professors such as Nigel Crook, the Director of the Institute for Ethical AI and professor for AI at Oxford Brookes University, along with mathematician and theologian, Professor John Lennox, don't

believe the doomsday outlook is unavoidable.

Both those experts say the likelihood of the technology singularity overwhelming society tend to be overstated. This is because many people grossly overestimate the ability of AI algorithms and under-estimate the capabilities of human beings.

We need to remember that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

Humanity will live on. The future is exciting. However, we are facing significant challenges right now, as any revolution throws up.

We can adapt and thrive, but we need to face reality and change how we prepare our young people so they are ready for the age of AI.

Finally, advance noticed. All this thinking will be part of a one-day conference in March 2023, Creativity and Character: Educating for the AI era. The line-up of globally recognised speakers come from the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and the University of Melbourne. More details to come.

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