

AI and the Changing World of Work



24th September 2026


Funded by
UK Government

 THAMES VALLEY
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
GROUP

 LSIP THAMES VALLEY
SHAPING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

Welcome Everyone!



DIVISIONS & TEAMS

- BUSINESS, ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS
- INTERNATIONAL TRADE
- POLICY & INWARD INVESTMENT
- SKILLS & TRAINING



WHERE WE CAN HELP

- RAISE YOUR COMPANY PROFILE
- BUSINESS REPRESENTATION
- INTERNATIONAL TRADE SERVICES
- INDUSTRY EVENTS/WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING
- PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS AND DISCOUNTS



OPPORTUNITIES

- NETWORKING EVENTS
- TOPICAL ROUND TABLES
- INDUSTRY FORUMS
- INDUSTRY WORKING GROUPS
- REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
- SEASONAL SOCIAL EVENTS
- ANNUAL AWARDS
- SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
- POLICY ENGAGEMENTS
- INTERNATIONAL TRADE EVENTS



ENGAGE WITH US



Introduction

Dr Pamela Farries

Policy and Skills Manager, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group

What are the LSIPs

Our **Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)** set out the skills priorities identified by employers and the actions needed to build a stronger workforce across **Berkshire** and **Oxfordshire**.

The plans are based on extensive employer engagement and focus on practical solutions that help businesses recruit, develop and retain talent.

Across Berkshire and Oxfordshire, the LSIPs have reached:

Over 135,015
electronic reach
since 2022

11,390 employer
engagements
since 2022

2,628 employer
engagements*
since September
2025

*Of which 77% were SMEs and 70% non-Chamber members

Why this matters to Employers

Skills influence every aspect of business performance, affecting productivity, innovation, customer service, growth and competitiveness.

Employers told us they need:

- Better access to skilled workers
- More flexible training opportunities
- **Stronger digital and AI capability**
- Better management and leadership skills
- More work-ready recruits
- A greater role in shaping training provision

The Thames Valley has a significant opportunity to strengthen its workforce and maintain its position as one of the UK's leading economic regions. Achieving this depends on employers, education providers and partners working together.

Use of Mentimeter

Please join the online engagement system at:

MENTI.COM USING CODE

Use to raise questions as you hear from speakers

We will use these to shape the panel discussion

Join at menti.com | use code 2513 1760

Agenda

9:00	Arrival Registration & Networking Refreshments Available
9:30	Welcome & Setting the Scene Purpose of the forum and how your input will support LSIP 2.0 delivery
9:40	Technology, Infrastructure and the Next Wave of Change <i>Clayton Nash, Strategy Director, CityFibre</i>
10:00	AI in Practice - What is Changing for Employers? <i>Mark Wakefield, Software Engineer, SLB</i>
10:20	Setting the Challenge: AI, Skills and the Changing Workplace <i>Simon Barrable, Engagement Officer, TVCC</i>
10:30	AI, Ethics and Confidence in Practice <i>Dr Joe Watkins, Founder, Grassroots Intelligence</i>
10:50	Panel Discussion: Joining the Dots across Berkshire and Oxfordshire Contributors: • Clayton Nash, CityFibre • Mark Wakefield, SLB • Joe Watkins, Grassroots Intelligence • Rob Jefferies, Blake Morgan • Daniel Fairbairn, Windsor Forest Colleges Group
11:20	Next Steps: Moving Roadmap Actions Forward
11:30	Networking & Further Conversations

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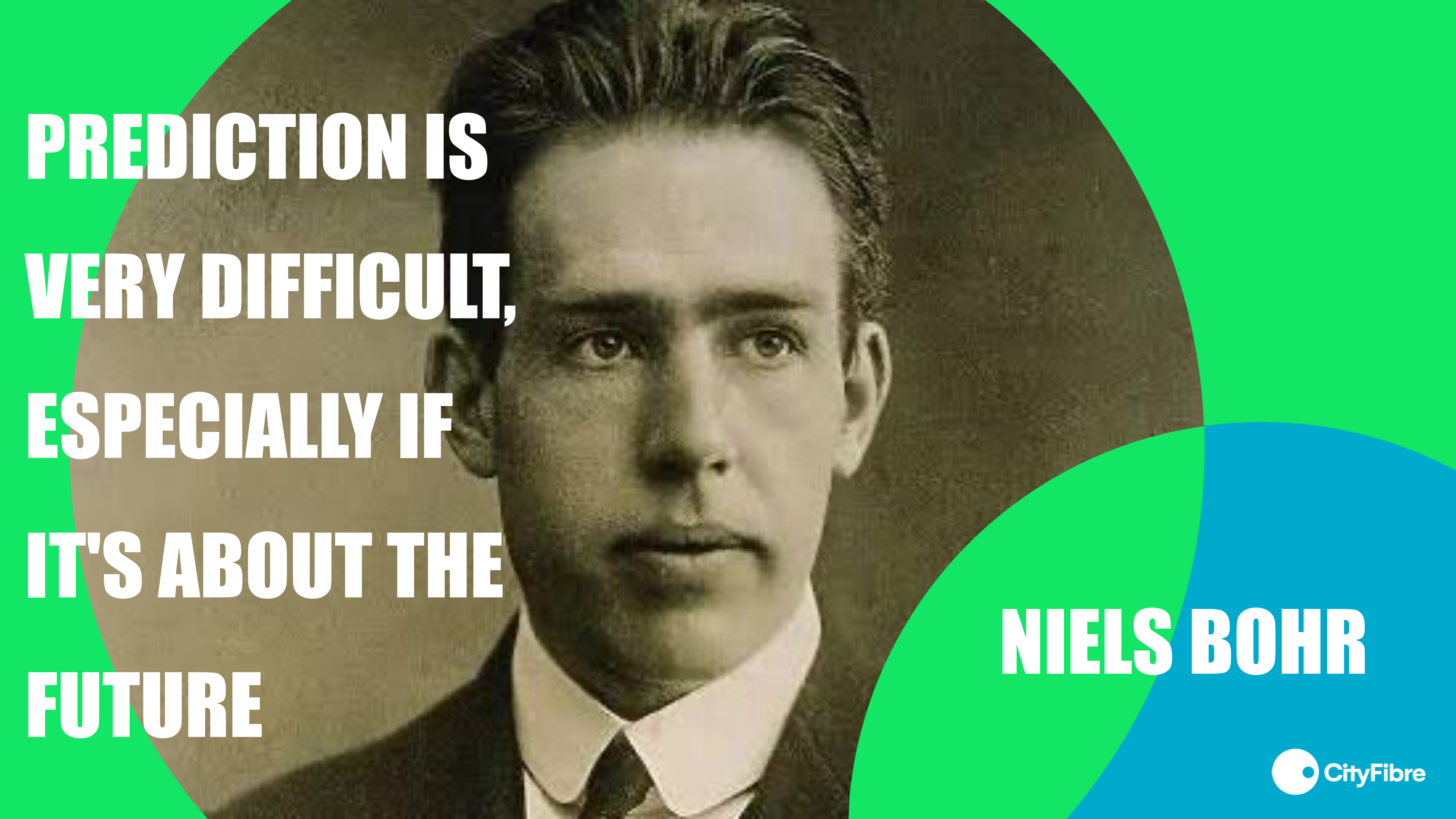
Technology, Infrastructure and the Next Wave of Change

Clayton Nash

Strategy Director, CityFibre

AI AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

Clayton Nash
Strategy Director
24 September 2026

A black and white portrait of Niels Bohr, a Danish physicist, is centered in the background. He is a middle-aged man with dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie. The portrait is partially obscured by large, overlapping circular shapes in bright green and blue. On the left, a large green circle contains the text 'PREDICTION IS VERY DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IF IT'S ABOUT THE FUTURE' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. On the right, a blue circle contains the name 'NIELS BOHR' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. In the bottom right corner, there is a small white circle with a blue dot inside, followed by the text 'CityFibre' in a white sans-serif font.

**PREDICTION IS
VERY DIFFICULT,
ESPECIALLY IF
IT'S ABOUT THE
FUTURE**

NIELS BOHR



INTEREST RATES

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS	4.65%
------------------	-------

6 MONTH CD	5.25%
------------	-------

1 YEAR CD	5.50%
-----------	-------

LOANS

PERSONAL LOANS	8.75%
----------------	-------

AUTOMOBILE LOANS	7.75%
------------------	-------

FUNDS AVAILABLE
ON ALL DEPOSITS
CHECKS CASHED



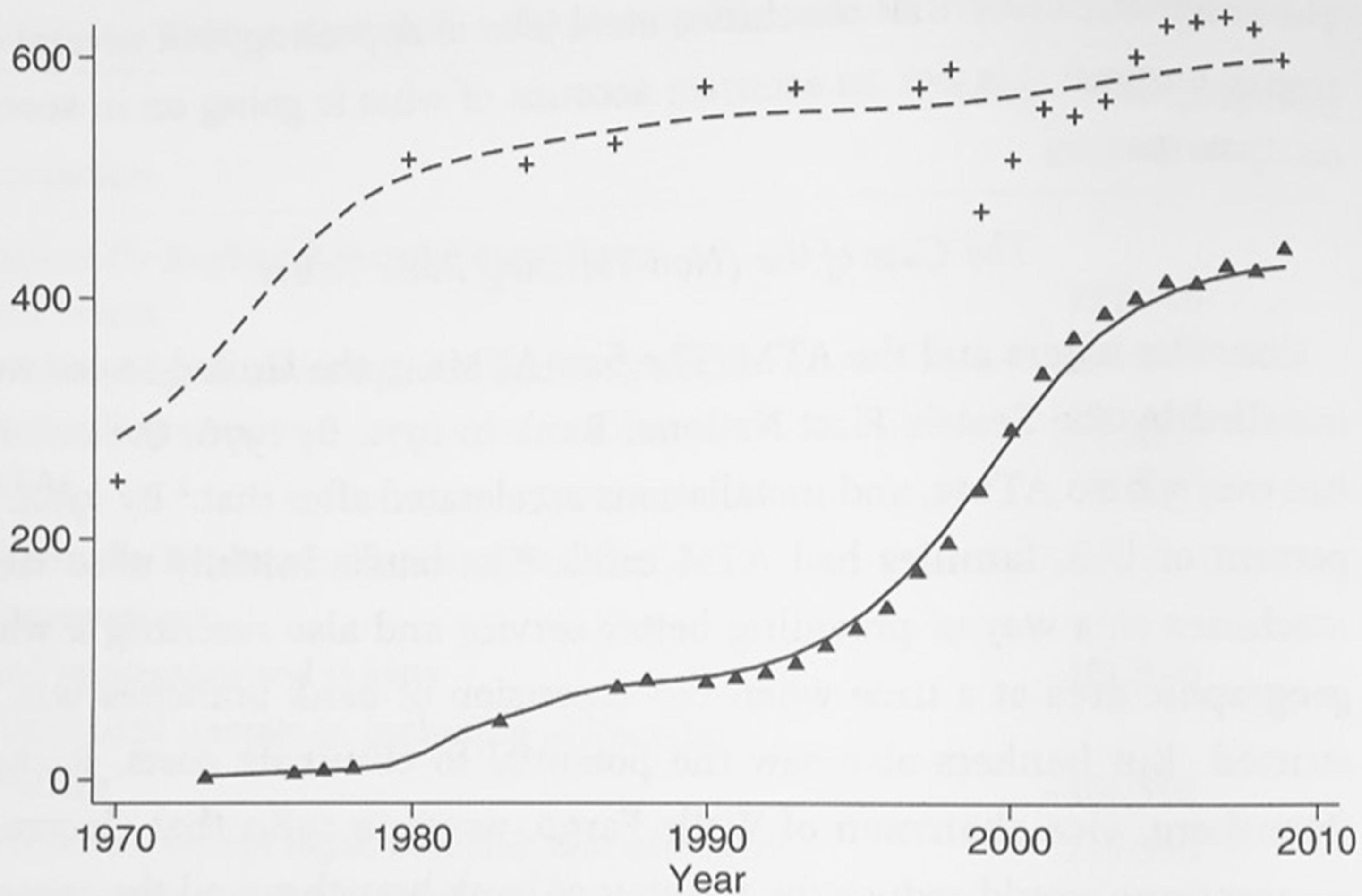
Insert Credit Card
With Your Account
Number Up



Insert
Deposit
Envelope



Tellers, ATMs (Thousands)



+ Tellers Employed ▲ ATMs Installed

WHY DID AUTOMATION RESULT IN MORE EMPLOYMENT?

1970

21 Tellers per branch

- Cash handling
- Cheque deposits
- Balance checks

2010

13 Tellers per branch

- Financial advice
- Customer relations
- Selling complex products

WHY DID AUTOMATION RESULT IN MORE EMPLOYMENT?

Branches became cheaper to run

So we opened more branches

JEVONS PARADOX



“Making the use of a resource more efficiently leads to an overall increase in total consumption of that resource rather than a decrease”





“A good science fiction story should be able to predict not the automobile but the traffic jam.”

Frederick Pohl

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAST TECHNOLOGICAL ERAS

1980s
Personal
Computing



1990s
The Internet



2000s
Mobile



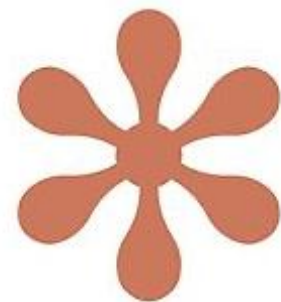
2010-15
Cloud



2015-2020
Big Data

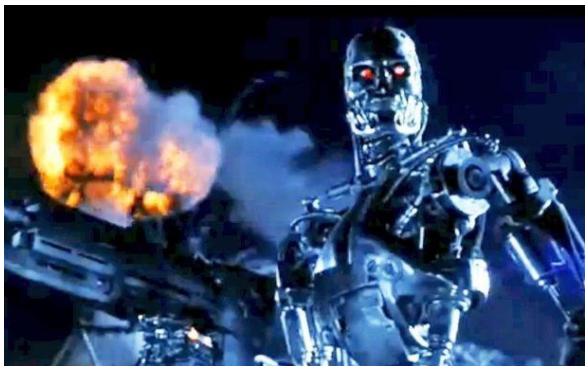


2020-2030
Generative AI



thinking...

2030+
Autonomy



Digitised
Work

- Computerisation of office work
- Knowledge workers become dramatically more productive
- Creation of the software industry

Digitised
Information

- Information becomes globally accessible
- Digital distribution emerges
- New business models appear

Digitised
People

- Internet becomes ubiquitous
- Consumer behaviour fundamentally changes
- Entire industries disrupted

Digitised
Infrastructure

- Dramatically lower cost of innovation
- Start-ups can scale globally
- Software eats every industry

Digitised
Knowledge

- Decision-making becomes data-driven
- Personalisation becomes normal
- Beginning of algorithmic business models

Digitised
Cognition

- Knowledge work becomes augmentable
- Software can create content
- Human-machine collaboration emerges

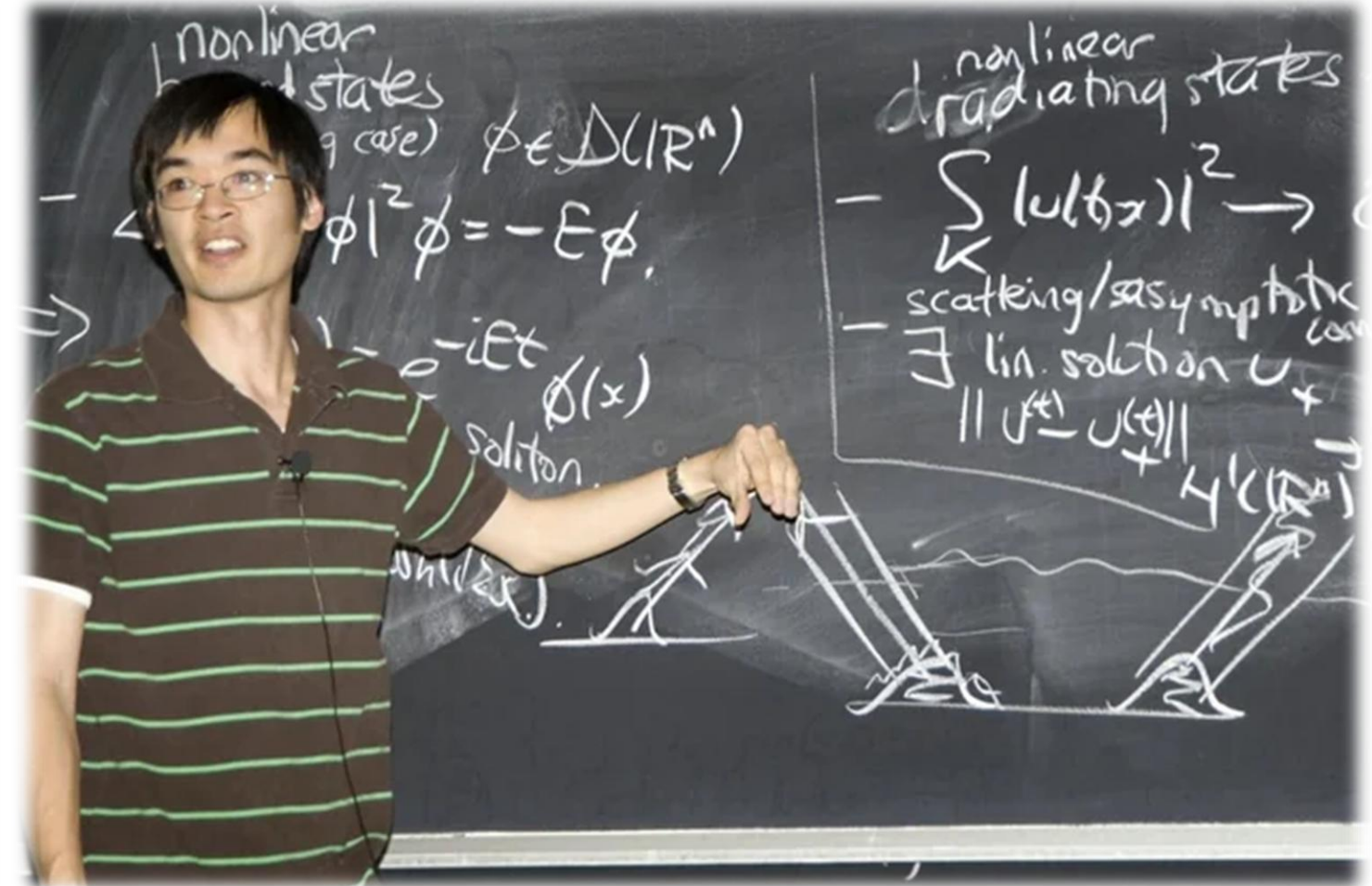
Digitising
Decisions

- Entire business processes automated
- Human roles shift towards governance & strategy
- Orgs structured around human + agent

WHICH JOBS ARE REALLY BEING IMPACTED TODAY?



In 2016 Ford CEO Mark Fields predicted they would sell a car without a steering wheel by 2021

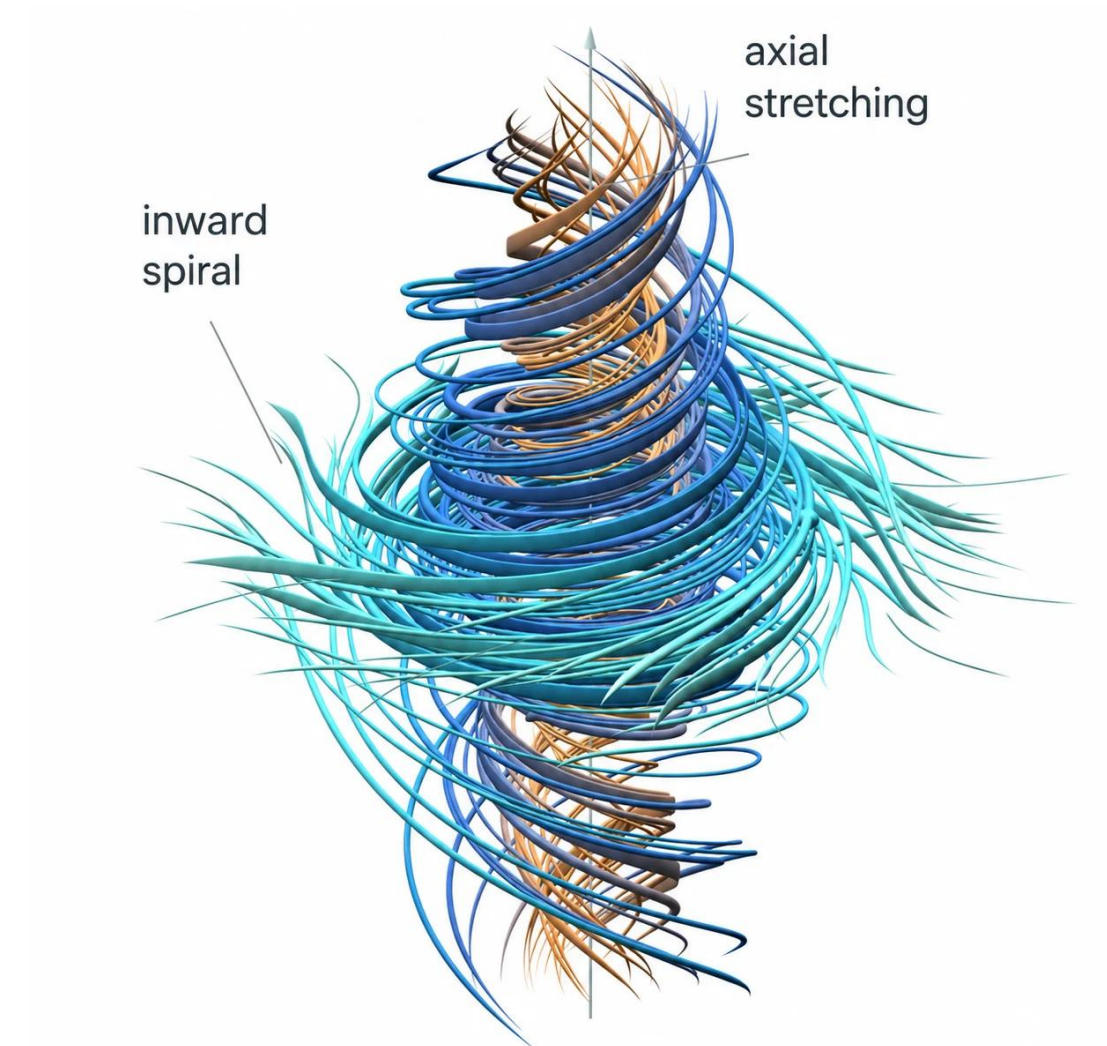


ChatGPT is a "not completely incompetent graduate student"

IN REALITY...



Dozens of autonomous cars stuck in Atlanta cul-de-sac



OpenAI just solved a 90 year of maths problem

SO LETS MAKE SOME PREDICTIONS!



Chess is solved but humans play more chess than ever

Predictions

1. AI makes work cheap so we'll do more work than ever before
2. Work will be a hybrid of human judgement and machine intelligence

SO LETS MAKE SOME PREDICTIONS!

AI is good at

1. Following clear rules
2. Where outcomes are measurable
3. Analysis and synthesizing
4. Rote tasks
5. Standardised physical tasks

AI is poor at

1. Dealing with complex dynamics
2. Outcomes are unclear
3. Extracting meaning
4. Creative tasks
5. Abstract Tasks

SO LETS MAKE SOME PREDICTIONS!

OUT	IN
Rules based tasks	Judgement based outcomes
Easy to measure outcomes	Complex outcomes
Research	Prediction & execution
Warehouse work	Personal shopper
Report writing	Entertaining talks on the future of work

WHAT DOES A CONTRIBUTOR DO?

Old World	New World
Hybrid	Direct AI Co-ordination Selection
Judgement	Complex outcomes
Desk based	Park based
Interrupt driven	Agents work 24/7 Interventions are stochastic
Doing	Planning & correcting

WHAT DOES A MANAGER DO?

Old World	New World
Supervising	Coaching
Managing people	Co-ordinating people & AI
Hierarchy	Flat structure
Human level volumes of output	20X the output to review
Simple scoring of outcomes	Complex judgement of outcomes

MANAGING THE TRANSITION

The new world is great for

1. Smart adaptable people
2. Experts with good judgement
3. Senior managers

It could be terrible for

1. New entrants to the workforce
2. Administrators and rote workers
3. Middle management

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AI in Practice - What is Changing for Employers?

Mark Wakefield

Software Engineer, SLB



Energy, AI and Future Skills

Mark Wakefield – Subsurface AI Architect
24th September 2026

SLB

- A global technology company, driving energy innovation for a balanced planet.
- > 100,000 employees, > 100 countries

In the UK, including:

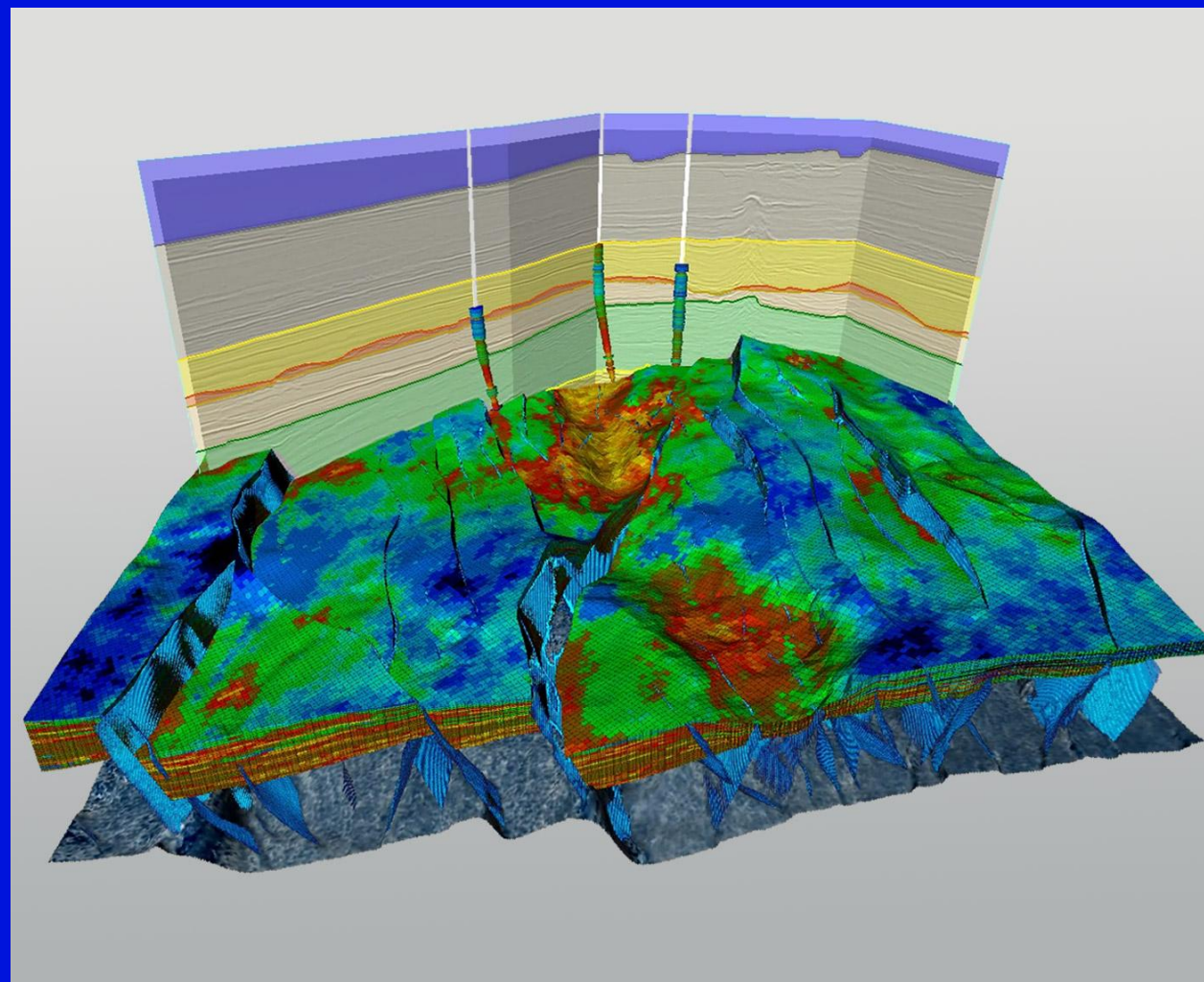
- Aberdeen – operations
- Stonehouse, Gloucestershire – manufacturing downhole equipment
- Crawley – geophysics interpretation
- London – management HQ
- Cambridge Research Center – material science / data science
- Abingdon & Leeds Technology Center – commercial subsurface software development and support

→ <https://www.slb.com/>



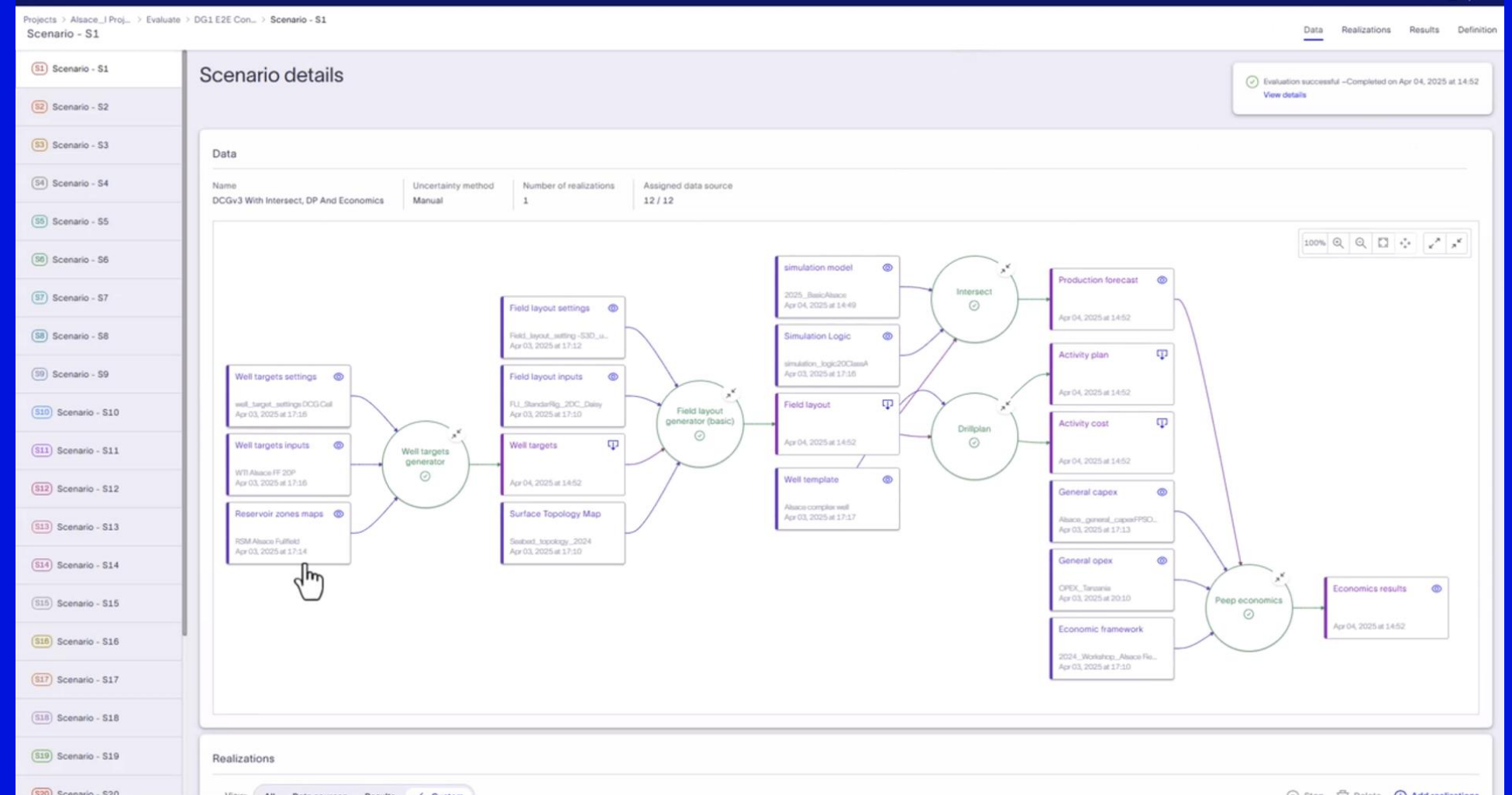
Subsurface Software Portfolio

- <https://www.slb.com/products-and-services/delivering-digital-at-scale/software/delfi>
- <https://www.slb.com/about/driving-energy-innovation/scaling-new-energy-systems>
- <https://www.slb.com/products-and-services/decarbonizing-industry/methane-emissions-management/emissions-technologies-and-solutions>



Usage including:

- Geothermal modelling
- Carbon Storage evaluation
- Lithium brine simulation
- Emissions reduction planning



Domain AI Agents

→ <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/oil-and-gas/our-insights/talent-squeeze-planning-for-the-energy-sectors-talent-transition>

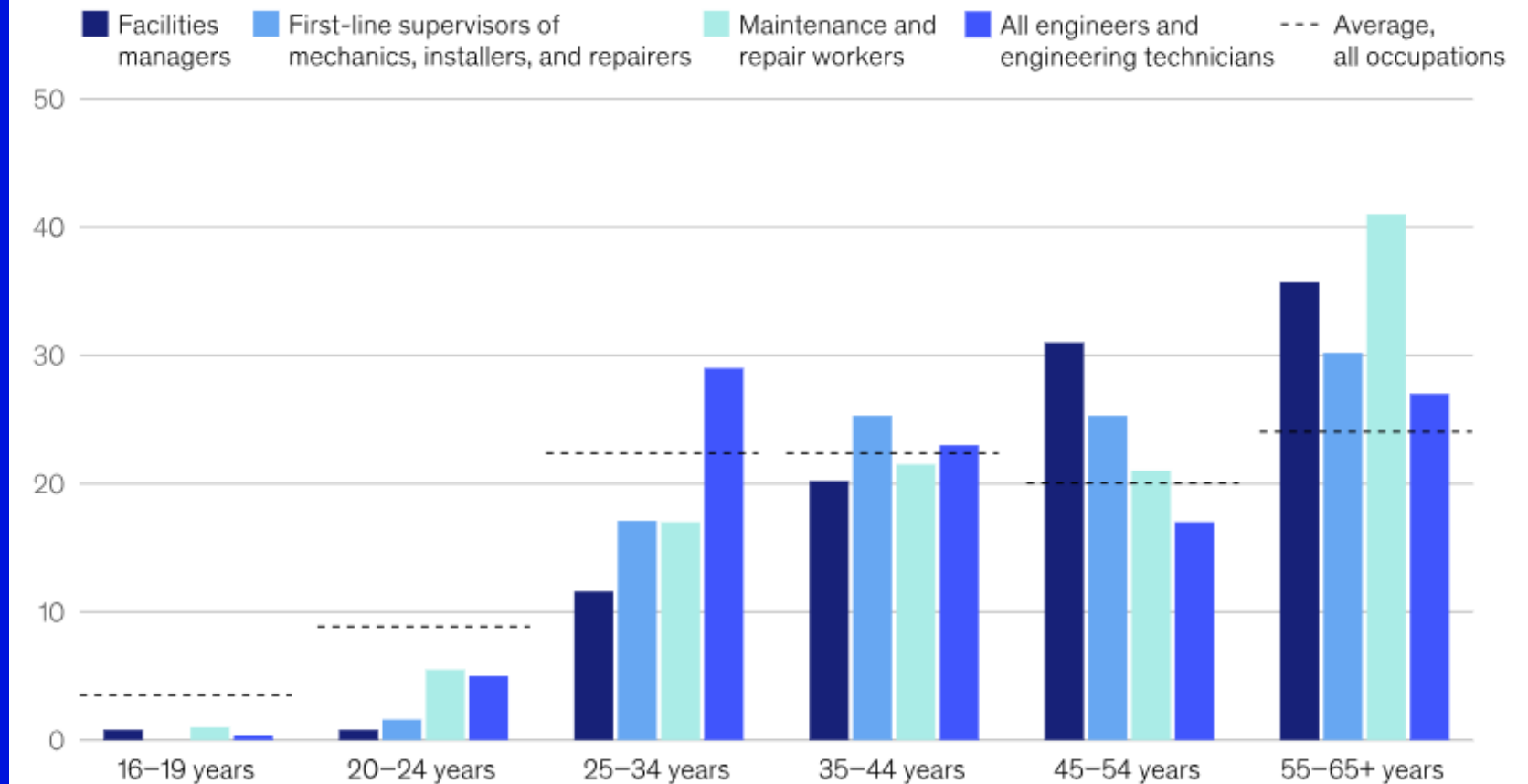
→ <https://www.slb.com/newsroom/press-release/2025/aiq-slb-energyai-pr>

→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnzR5aOEIvw>



The oil and gas workforce is aging, with particular challenges among the frontline.

Percent of employees in each occupation, %



Source: US Bureau Labor Statistics from Current Population Survey (CPS) 2022

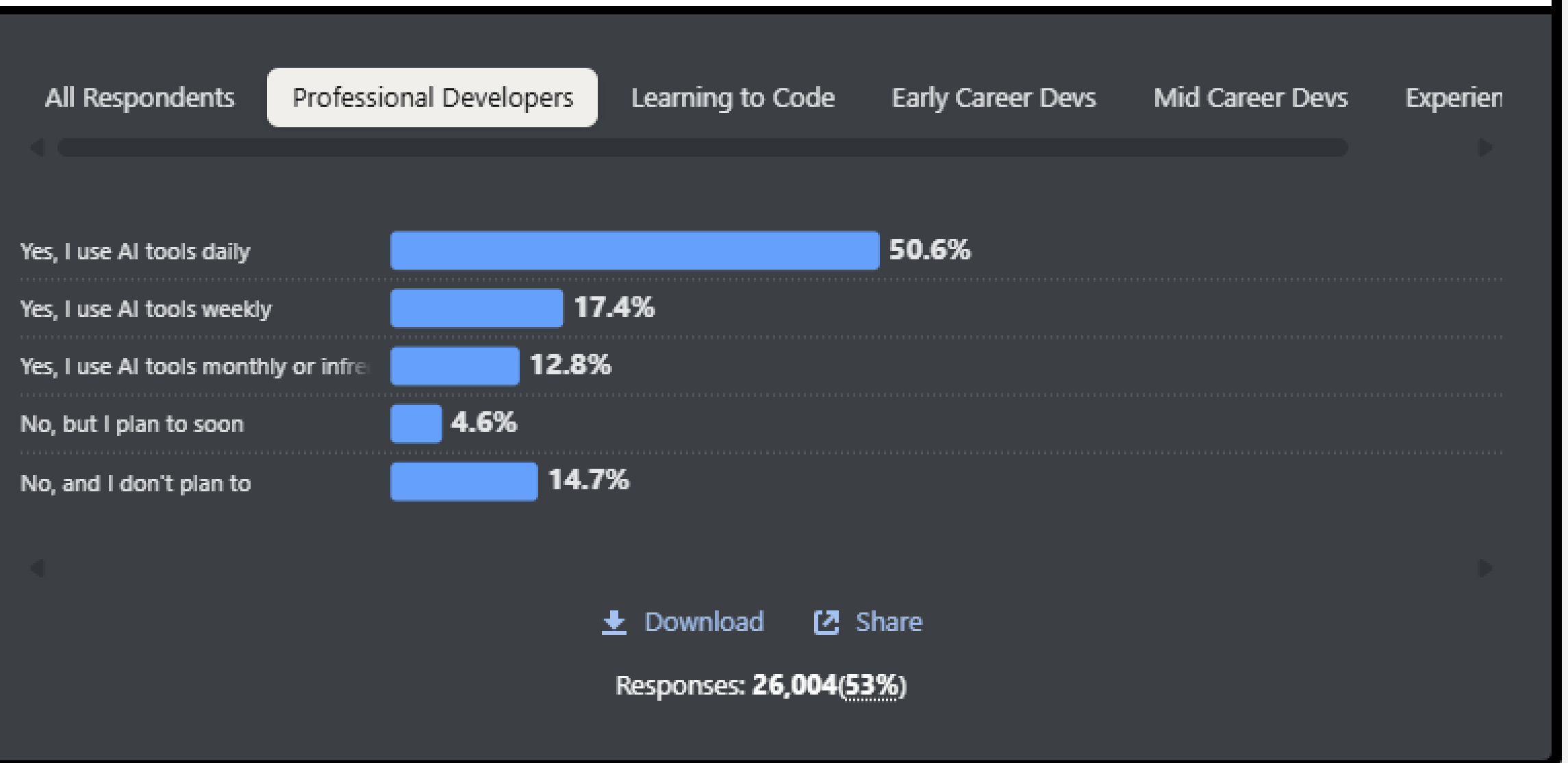
- Building domain AI agents:
 - Autonomous, objective driven
 - Using frontier models with domain context & capabilities
 - Even higher security and sensitivity challenges than data
- Hannah Fry (YouTube): Why AI Agents are either the best or worst thing we've ever built

Revolution already happening in software

AI tools in the development process

84% of respondents are using or planning to use AI tools in their development process, an increase over last year (76%). This year we can see 51% of professional developers use AI tools daily.

? Do you currently use AI tools in your development process?



→ <https://survey.stackoverflow.co/2025>



Skill shift

Executive summary

Key takeaway: AI is an amplifier

In 2025, the central question for technology leaders is no longer if they should adopt AI, but how to realize its value. DORA's research

The greatest returns on AI investment come not from the tools themselves, but from a strategic focus on the underlying

- <https://dora.dev>
- <https://botcommits.dev/>



Public Open Source AI commits



What I'm starting to see:

- More, smaller teams
- Needing to working across traditional roles (T -> M)
- More independence earlier in career, like a senior from day 1
- Need for strong communication skills and a safe environment

SLB Intern Program

- [IC HACK 18 Montage](#)
- <https://careers.slb.com/early-careers/internships>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvFtubuVHWQ>



Internships:

- 3 month, 6 month, 12 month internships
- Join one of our delivery teams working on commercial products
- 2026: 42 interns across UK, 13 in AbTC, £26k – £31k.

Thank you

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Setting the Challenge: AI, Skills and the Changing Workplace

Simon Barrable

Engagement Officer, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Existing Strengths

Berkshire

- Strong, long-established, concentration of digital and technology-enabled businesses.
- Includes software development, telecommunications, data services and digital consultancy
- Significant and growing data centre cluster in Slough.
- Digital capability embedded across many other sectors including healthcare, life sciences, professional services, logistics and creative industries.
- Demand for digital skills extends well beyond specialist technology firms and increasingly affects a wide range of occupations across the workforce.

Existing Strengths

Oxfordshire

- Significant centre for artificial intelligence.
- Builds on the strength of the University of Oxford and its wider research ecosystem.
- Growing cluster of AI-focused companies and research groups.
- Machine learning, data science, robotics and applied AI.
- Activity spanning sectors such as health and life sciences, autonomous systems, advanced manufacturing and climate technology.
- Application in real-world settings drives demand for skills in areas such as software development, data engineering, algorithm design and the integration of AI into complex operational and industrial systems.

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What Employers have told us

- Consistent recruitment pressure in specialist digital roles: software developers and engineers, data analysts and data engineers, cyber security specialists and cloud infrastructure engineers.
- Advanced technical capability and practical experience in areas such as secure coding, cloud architecture, predictive analytics, automation tools and cyber risk management .
- Increasing demand for professionals who can lead digital transformation within organisations: Roles such as digital product managers, systems architects and AI implementation leads.
- Adoption of artificial intelligence tools, cloud systems and data-driven decision-making processes.

Join at menti.com | use code 2421 5443

What Employers have told us

Therefore:

- Digital capability is becoming a baseline requirement across many occupations.
- Requires confidence with digital platforms, data systems and AI-assisted tools.
- Core competencies such as cyber awareness, digital collaboration, data literacy and effective use of AI becoming essential across the workforce.

New technologies are transforming how work is carried out, but they also introduce new regulatory, ethical and operational responsibilities.

“There is a significant digital skills gap. Many applicants lack even basic digital literacy, such as using the Microsoft suite or understanding how emerging technologies like AI are applied”

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Ideas for helping to tackle these: The Roadmap

- A Thames Valley Digital WDP that can support a coordinated Thames Valley wide training offer
- Clear employer-led direction on digital and AI skills.
- A Digital Skills Framework that will systemise skills for AI (technical as well as governance, safety and ethics) for learners.
- Expanded Thames Valley-wide modular offer, providing simplified access to short training courses for businesses, including SMEs.

AI, Ethics and Confidence in Practice

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Dr Joe Watkins

Founder, Grassroots Intelligence

AI, Ethics and Confidence in Practice

**Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
AI Forum | 24 September 2026**



Dr Joe Watkins

Founder, Grassroots Intelligence and ElevAlte Resourcing





Dr Joe Watkins

Subject Matter Expert. The other kind of SME.

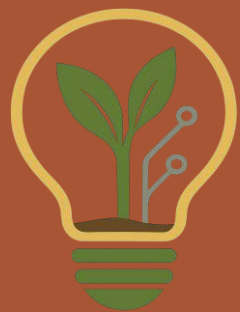
- **Former Lecturer in Mathematics & Public Engagement Specialist**
- **NHS, charity and apprenticeship sectors**
- **Subject Matter Expert, Data Technician Level 3, AI & Automation Level 4**
- **Delivered AI talks for Microsoft, NHS and ongoing AI support for major national broadcaster**



**You may believe that you
can't oversee AI change in
your organisation...**



**... you are more qualified
for this than you think.**





Please generate an image of the Director of a _____ company



finance



care

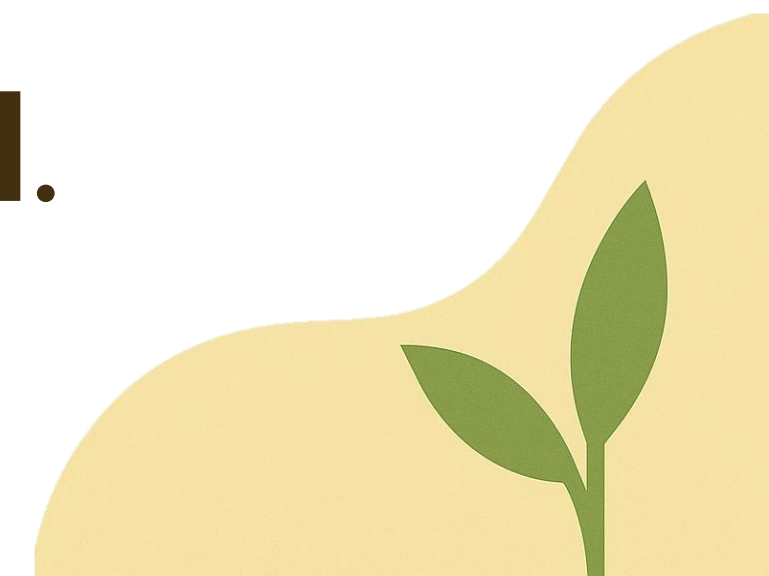


further education



beauty

Same prompt. One word changed.





Two factors that really matter about ethical AI adoption

Bias & hallucination

AI inherits the pattern the training data already has

Inaccuracies surface in shortlisting, promotion and appraisal

States falsehoods with total confidence

Deskilling

The entry-level task is where people learn the job

Automate it away and the first rung disappears

You find out three years too late

The strongest safeguard you already employ

knows what wrong looks like



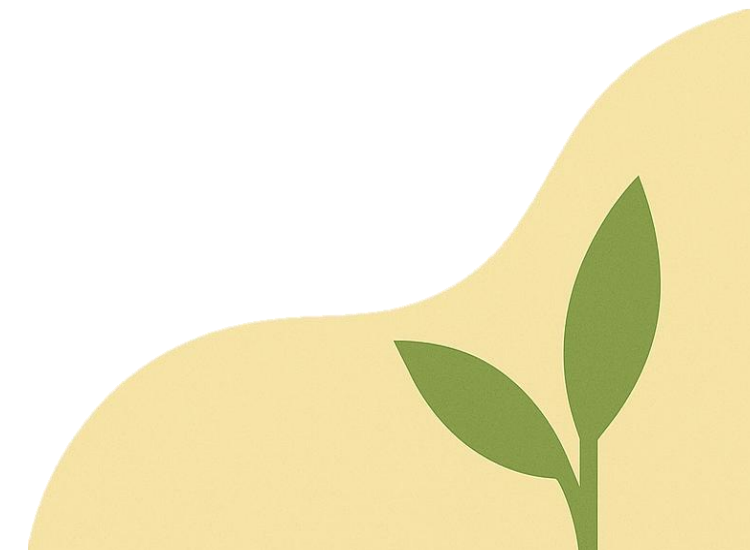
knows what the tool can do

The established colleague

thirty years of judgement

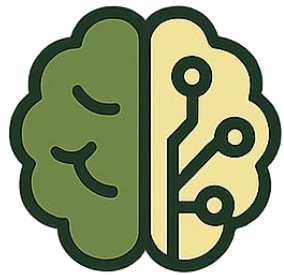
The young starter

fluent, fast, unbothered





Three audiences and their AI needs



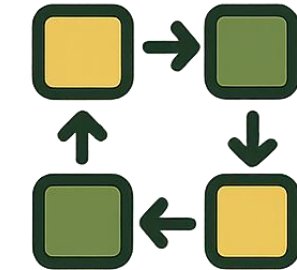
Beginners

They arrive fluent yet uncritical from school and FE preparation



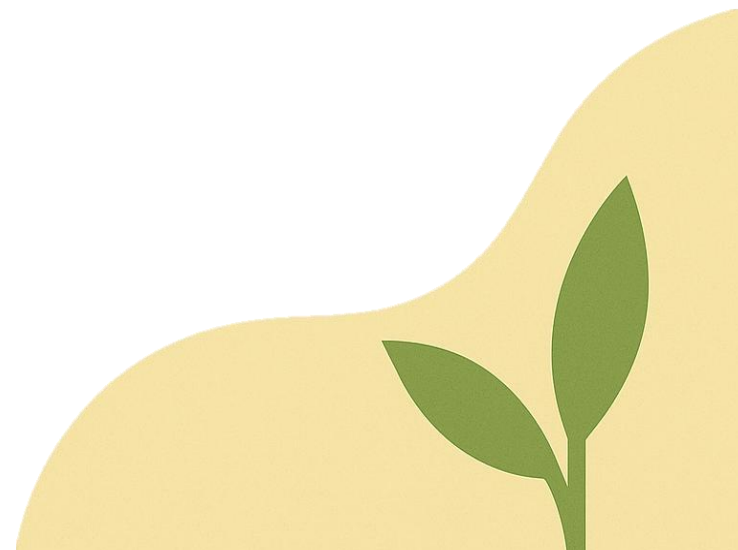
Experts

Workplace AI training, in tandem with their sector expertise

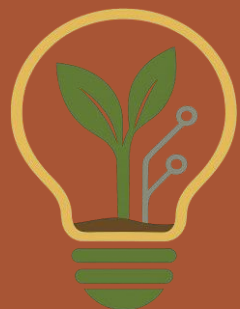


Employers

Supporting all staff and contributing to needs within LSIP



**“We all have Copilot, but
we don’t know what to do
with it.”**





Monday morning

Open the AI tool you are already paying for. For most of you that is Copilot Chat, included in Microsoft 365.

Pick the weekly task you like least. Start there (not with your customer data).



What confidence actually buys you



Innovation

People who trust the tool try things with it. People who fear it wait to be told.



Productivity

The win is not raw speed. It is the hours handed back from work nobody enjoyed.



Future skills

Capability compounds. Next year's problem gets solved by whoever practised on this year's.

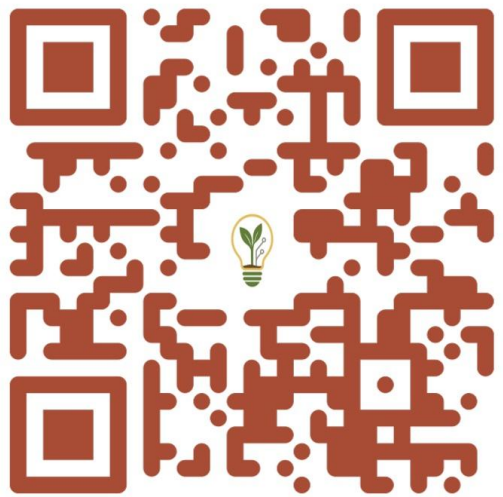




AI Literacy Lab

www.ai-literacy-lab.uk

AI Lab



The AI Literacy Lab

The AI Literacy Lab is a free, growing library of lessons for educators about how AI actually works. Every word, every voice and every image on this site is itself generated by AI — the pedagogies are human-authored and open to inspect, and the content is generated by AI using these.

View this page as:

 Primary variant

 WCAG AAA

 Dyslexia-friendly

 Polski

 हिन्दी

 Shakespeare

 Español

 Українська



Lessons

Each lesson works with any audience: school year groups Y1 to Y13, workforce sessions for [LSIP](#)^①-priority sectors, or apprentice training mapped to specific [KSBs](#)^①. Use the [LSIP](#)^① and [DT3](#)^① filter chips at the top of any lesson to jump straight to the sections for your audience. Every activity has a copy-and-paste prompt for [Copilot](#)^① or [ChatGPT](#)^①.

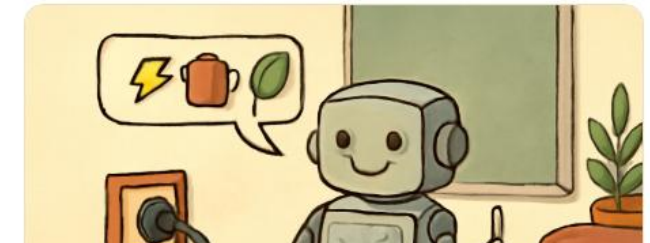
Bias in AI: Why AI Isn't as Neutral as It Looks



Deepfakes: pictures, videos and voices made by AI



AI Energy and Environment: Where the Electricity Goes



AI Confidence Takes Work.

Dr Joe Watkins

Grassroots Intelligence | ElevAlte Resourcing

joe@grassroots-intelligence.com



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Panel Discussion: Joining the Dots across Berkshire & Oxfordshire

Clayton Nash,
CityFibre

Mark Wakefield,
SLB

Joe Watkins,
Grassroots Intelligence

Rob Jefferies,
Blake Morgan

Daniel Fairbairn,
Windsor Forest Colleges Group

Next Steps: Moving Roadmap Actions Forward

Roadmap actions on Digital and AI

- A Thames Valley Digital WDP that can support a coordinated Thames Valley wide training offer
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Next Steps

What else can we be doing inside and outside WDPs?

What barriers need to be overcome?

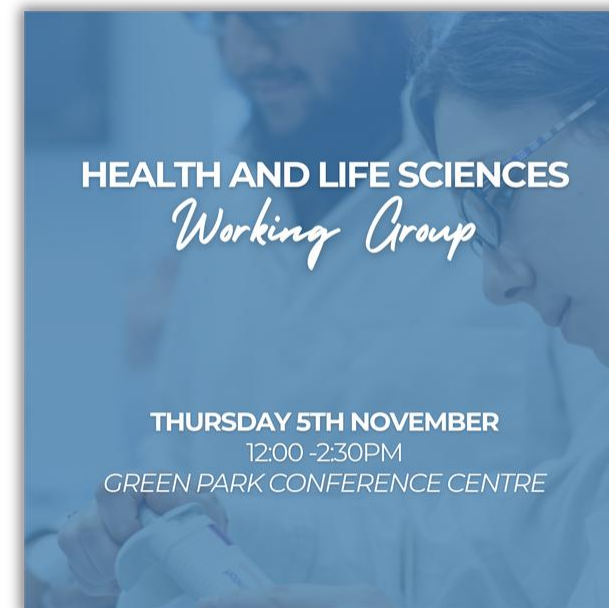
Partnership working approaches we can adopt?

And how to make these happen?



Other ways to stay involved

- One-to-One 30 minute 'deep dive' on Teams
- Join a Workforce Development Partnership
- Become a Thames Valley Skills Champion
- Attending upcoming events:



Please don't hesitate to contact us:

TVLSIP@tvchamber.co.uk

**Thank you for your
participation!**