

Commission: ILO

Subject: Does technology help or hinder the working conditions?

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Technology has had a great impact on the working conditions. Since the industrial age, the working conditions have changed significantly, increasing the efficiency and productivity rate. Nonetheless, the environment has been greatly affected by the increase in carbon dioxide emissions and the discharge of harmful substances in the waterway.

The technological developments have helped improve the hygiene levels, as mechanisation ameliorated sterility and diminished human contact with the goods being produced.

With computers and emails, working has been made more accessible and international, with the possibility of meetings and conventions being held online. It is also less physically draining, especially for workers that have more hands on jobs, and potentially less dangerous, as with the help of reliable machinery more dangerous tasks can be simplified or automated.

It also helped generate new work placements, as with the increase in technology required in daily life, like relatively new jobs such as IT.

However, it could be argued that it is harder for workers to detach their social life from work, as the possibility of being contacted by work anytime if required could be stressful.

There are also health implications, things such as eyesight issues, as it could be negatively affected from staring at a screen for hours consecutively.

Italy is aware and recognises the negative environmental impact that technological improvements have had on the environment and on the population itself. Though our emissions of pM10 from 2012 to 2015 were below threshold levels established by the EEA (European Environment Agency), there is a risk of approximately 66000 people dying prematurely because of the unfit quality of air. This has a direct impact on the working population, as they make up a big percentage of the 66000 people that are affected by the quality of the air.

Italy in fact , once Under the country's six-month term as President of the European Commission, pushed for "higher recycling targets and progress toward the complete elimination of EU landfills, green job growth and the tighter control of emissions from medium-sized combustion plants."

With the current world pandemic due to the outbreak of Covid-19, working conditions had to adapt. There are higher hygiene requirements in order to stop the spreading of the virus, and without technology it would be impossible to have a safe working environment. In fact, the improvements in technology had a direct impact on hygiene conditions in the workplace.

Our country requires workplaces to check their employees' temperature with thermal cameras, and an online record of people who enter the workplace is kept to vigilate the situation. Employers must provide protective masks and employees must use them in common areas. If the working activity requires an interpersonal distance of less than one metre, the use of a mask together with other PPE is mandatory. Technology helped effectively tackle the need of facial protection and barriers in the workplace, helping maintain job stability.

Italy is concerned with the pressure that technology might have on the workers, as it might be more challenging to separate work life and social life.

It offers free healthcare which is accessible to workers.