

Commission: International Labor Organisation

Subject: Does technology help or hinder the working conditions?

Country: United Kingdom



Ever since the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, the United Kingdom, as well as the rest of the world, has seen a rapid development of technology. Computer processing power has doubled every two years for the past 50 years, accessibility to phones and other newer ways of communication have become a universal norm. In the past 3 decades, the digital world has taken a most important role in the british workplace, by giving universal access to information that no one had before. The advances in automation, robotics, computer development and A.I introduce possibilities that were not even imaginable in the past. This new age information and these innovations in technology have brought not only a more efficient society, raised the quality of the individual's lifestyle, but also raised issues that have never been explored in the past, and these need to be addressed, understood, and resolved.

The United Kingdom is aware of the impacts of technology on the workplace, especially in the context of the British climate. 1.5 million jobs are at high risk of being taken over by automation in the future. The risk of losing one's job due to automation is a real issue for the United Kingdom. Furthermore, with the rapid development of technology, even more jobs could be at risk: self-driving cars would ruin the taxi and chauffeur industry, cooks could be at the peril of losing their jobs to machines, and all elementary jobs are at a high risk of being taken over.

Technological development, though it has its downsides and issues that the United Kingdom will study and respond accordingly to, has brought an immense amount of efficiency and productivity, to levels humans could never achieve by themselves. Even though automation puts some low skill level jobs at risk, it creates new skilled labour as well, refueling the economy with work. Some examples to illustrate this could be the increase in the number of mechanics needed in order to uphold these new machines, but also the raised demand for programmers and high tech engineers to create and design these new automated machines. We can observe technological advance fueling the workplace with job opportunities, in 2018, with an employment rate of over 75%, the highest rate since 1943 and the Second World War.

The United Kingdom finds an advance in technology to be very beneficial to the british industry, as not only does it create new, skill demanding job positions, it also lowers costs of manufacture, and therefore reduces costs of living. Cheaper labour has brought more affordable products to the British market, and create the possibility for the british citizen to spend their money not only on necessities, but also on services. The tertiary sector has gone from being only 51% of the british economy in 1920, to 83% in 2018.

The United Kingdom recognizes technology's importance in the international endeavour that is creating an environmentally sustainable future. The creation of technological innovations, such as renewable sources of energy with fuel cells and lithium-air batteries have allowed us to reduce our energy consumption. With the help of technological innovations, we are able to tackle issues that

seemed too far out of reach a decade ago. The automobile and transportation industry are a prime example: electrically run vehicles such as cars, buses and trains have reduced the amount of air pollution. Electric trains produce 30% less CO₂ per passenger than diesel trains. To create an environmentally friendly future, technological advance and innovation is mandatory, and can create a more sustainable way of life for all.

Modernisation of industry has improved working conditions and standards of living for all. The spread of the internet has raised new opportunities by improving communication through inventions such as electronic mailing, social networks, work oriented applications and enabling remote working. Working at home is now possible through technology. By using the internet to connect home to the workplace, the world has taken advantage of an extremely important tool to deal with the current Covid-19 pandemic. For jobs that do not require physical interactions, the internet has become a great tool to continue working, without the need for an in-person presence. In this regard, the development of technology has saved the United Kingdom from a complete economic downfall, by keeping the economy active during a period of stagnation.

Ever since the original , set in 1948, the United Kingdom has ratified all Fundamental Conventions of the ILO and hopes today to continue on this path: striving for a more economically stable and prosperous future. The United Kingdom also hopes to continue fighting for everlasting progress, both in terms of technological advances, but also in terms of working conditions and in terms of a cleaner, more sustainable society. The United Kingdom believes that the modernisation of society is a crucial stride towards improving universal standards of living.