

The Future of Work

2nd November 2017 • Geneva

Event premise

Technology is progressing rapidly. Technological change will mean that, over the course of our working lives, many skills will become obsolete whilst others will grow in economic importance. In the past, societies relied on education to help the workforce adapt to these broad changes. But there are good reasons to worry that education will not be as effective a coping mechanism in the future as it has been in the past.

When education fails to keep pace with technology, the result is inequality. Without the skills to stay useful as innovations arrive, workers suffer—and if enough of them fall behind, society starts to fall apart. That fundamental insight seized reformers in the Industrial Revolution, heralding state-funded universal schooling. Later, automation in factories and offices called forth a surge in college graduates. The combination of education and innovation, spread over decades, led to a remarkable flowering of prosperity.

Today robotics and artificial intelligence call for another education revolution. This time, however, working lives are so lengthy and so fast-changing that simply cramming more schooling in at the start is not enough. People must also be able to acquire new skills throughout their careers.

*We live in an environment of constant change, traditional career trajectories are a thing of the past. As career paths with multiple employers become the new norm, and technology skills a requirement, this event aims to answer the following question: **Is education a future-proof route to stable employment?***

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Conference chair

Ryan Avent, Senior Editor and Economics Columnist, ***The Economist***

- 5.00pm** **Registration and refreshments**
- 5.30pm** **Welcome remarks**
Ryan Avent, Senior Editor and Economics Columnist, ***The Economist***
- 5.40pm** **Learning and earning: technology, education and employment**
The Economist's view on the future of work; in conversation with an Economist editor.
- 6.00pm** **Hotseat interview: Cognition switch**
Companies are embracing learning as a core skill. How will workers become better learners?
- 6.20pm** **The world if...?**
In the lead-up to the event, we asked participants to submit their most hoped-for (or feared) scenario for the future of work using the hashtag #econfutureofwork. In this session we ask leading thinkers to imagine the world if three of these scenarios become a reality.
What would the world be like if...
 - 50% of workers moved into the gig economy
 - Robots replaced 60% of jobs
 - All university courses move online
- 7.00pm** **Ask *The Economist*: Technology and the workforce of tomorrow**
In this audience-led session, *The Economist's* editors will take questions on the key issues that have shaped the day's discussions.
- 7.20pm** **Networking**