



Work-Tech2050: Israel Node Activities

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MP Meeting, October 2017

- Two WorkTech2050 Roundtable sessions with experts (government, education, research, NGOs, business), hosted by the Zvi Meitar Institute (ZMI) for Legal Implications of Emerging Technologies at IDC Herzliya.
- Detailed reports submitted to the MP.
- Cooperation established with the Future of Work Team at the Center for Governance and the Economy, Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) – ongoing activity.

First Roundtable: Sept 28, 2016;

10 experts + 3 students

Policy-related observations:

- A major issue: short time horizon of politicians. They only react to crises. Desired solution: enforcing “a responsibility period” (similar to “cooling-off period”)
- Governments will *not* prepare a long-term strategy. But they may create more flexible labour market rules with better social safety net.
- Better plan for nearer future rather than 2050, so that we can watch the signals and adapt plans.
- More involvement of the young generation in the thinking processes

Education:

- Must change (still educates students for jobs likely to disappear)
- STEM is not all that matters. More focus on social responsibility
- Best practices still missing regarding how to implement lifelong learning

General comments related to the MP Scenarios

- Availability of a technology doesn't necessarily imply that a certain human work will be replaced. It depends on societal and economic factors (e.g cost-benefit)
- Today's AI cannot replace human imagination or the subconscious; Maybe this will change in the far future (100 years).
- UBI: even if it destroys people's will to work - so what? Is work what defines us as human beings?

Missing (or not sufficiently developed) elements in the scenarios:

- **Gradual adjustment** of society to NT (Perhaps another scenario is necessary).
- Regulation as an influencing and resisting factor to technological changes.
- Financial factors as a major source of job market disruptions (more than technology).
- Human Resource aspects
- Coping with the mentality of politicians

Second Roundtable: 11 May 2017; Focus on Policy

Participants: 10 experts

Government

- Trust:** For effective policy mutual trust and cooperation of the main actors (government, industry, labor unions) is essential.
- Flexibility:** Remove barriers that prevent individuals from switching from one mode to another (salaried employee, self-employed, etc.)
- UBI:** AI and robots should be transformed into an equivalent of taxable “humans”, to finance UBI.
- International coordination needed prior to implementing UBI - to prevent political and emigrational pressures (with non-UBI countries)
- Attention to opportunities such as growth of the leisure time, health, growing elderly population, expansion of tourism, etc.

Education and Training

- Focus on generic skills (rather than specific knowledge): **grit**, self-learning ability, social/communications skills, emotional intelligence, independent thinking, ethics, financial literacy.
- The government, the employers and the labor unions should cooperate in creating adequate models of lifelong learning.
- Develop new education/training frameworks, that do not necessarily fit into traditional academic degree “packages” (e.g. the Singularity University with its constantly changing curricula).
- To maintain a high level of engineering profession it is necessary to teach technology while preserving thinking abilities.

Business and Labor

- Replace obsolete concepts (e.g. punch clocks) by flexible employment formats and enable easy switching between them
- Reward in terms of productivity/value creation, rather than “working time”.
- Labor unions could lead the change in working paradigms
- Excessive centralization is a barrier to flexibility.
- Accessibility to useful info: A kind of “Waze” (navigation app) of the labor market would be useful, for people who seek new opportunities

Culture

- Recognize that self-realization/fulfillment are legitimate even without “usual” work.
- Eliminate the stigma that anyone who doesn't work is worthless.
- Recognize the growing importance of high human contact skills
- Cultivate a culture of lifelong learning, foster transition from a culture of constant competition to co-operation and solidarity.
- UBI could become the modern equivalent of the past patronage of kings and lords (given in the past to artists, scientists, etc...)

Science & Technology

- New jobs will develop, which are difficult to imagine now.
- Next generation technologies could provide (almost) free services/products, so that work for basic existence will not be necessary (high impact on perception of work).
- If super-human capabilities enabled by technology are only accessible to those who can afford it, the danger of increased inequality should be addressed.
- In the more distant future, when technology can be relied on in designing engineering systems, the engineering profession will transform, if not disappear.

Challenging statements by experts (from the point of view of Futures Studies):

- *“we live in a world of uncertainty, therefore we have to move forward on the basis of what is certain”,*
- *“as a government, it is impossible to prepare for scenarios whose likelihood is 20-30% and to invest money in it”,*
- *“the distant future is questionable, therefore practical consideration of it is very problematic”,*
- *“we must separate what is known from what is unknown and act only according to what we know”.*

How we (futures researchers) convincingly address such claims?