

An AI Concern

by

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A review of the concerns that liberals and conservatives have with AI (Artificial Intelligence) reveals two facts. First, the concerns of both sides of the political spectrum are valid. Many of the concerns are shared but viewed for different reasons or from differing perspectives.

Secondly, the concerns for both sides need to be addressed. In some cases, such as the liberal's "protection of vulnerable groups" and the conservative "protection from institutional overreach," can result in a common ruling satisfactory to both political sides.

On the other hand, regarding national security, liberals focus on "global cooperation and ethical development," while conservatives emphasize "competing with foreign adversaries and maintaining military/technological dominance." Without a great deal of compromise, it is doubtful that any ruling will be satisfactory to one or the other side. Personally, I lean toward the conservative side on this concern.

Too often we have seen agreements, treaties, and etcetera with other nations or non-state actors fall apart as one side decides to violate the terms. As a nation, we have seen this too often when other global powers, such as China and Russia, change their political and/or economic direction, or just decide to ignore the agreements.

If liberals and conservatives cannot get along on political and economic issues, what makes liberals think that globalization or "sharing the wealth" with our political and/or economic enemies, will work? History is full of countless examples of clashes between the haves and have-nots.

Liberals and conservatives have both expressed concerns on the impact of AI on the American worker. Unfortunately, neither side has taken a very close look at these concerns.

America is a nation that has prospered and grown throughout its history. It has gone through four major economic revolutions and is now entering its fifth revolution. Following is an AI generated chart outlining the key features and impact of these revolutions.

The Major American Economic Revolutions

Revolution	Period	Key Features	Impact on Society & Economy
First – Early Industrial / Agrarian Shift	1760 to 1840	Mechanization of textiles, small-scale manufacturing, canals, steamboats	Shift from agrarian economy to early industrial economy; regional trade grows
Second – Industrial / Managerial Revolution	1870 to 1914	Mass production, railroads, steel, oil, corporations	U.S. becomes industrial power; urbanization increases; rise of managerial capitalism
Third – Post-Industrial / Early Information	1950s to 1960s	Electronics, early computers, consumer economy, suburbanization	Transition from manufacturing to services; growth of middle class and information-based economy
Fourth – Digital / Information Age	1970s to present	Personal computers, internet, software, automation, big data	Globalized economy, tech-driven productivity, rise of knowledge economy
Emerging Fifth – AI / Bio / Clean-Tech	2010 to ?	Artificial intelligence, biotechnology, renewable energy, robotics	Potential major shift in labor, production, and global economic power

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Each revolution has reshaped the American workforce, impacted the social and cultural makeup of the nation, and provided growth and prosperity. But along with these changes, there are also perceived negative changes. For example, in certain industries, American workers were/are displaced as the new “technology” was/is being implemented.

While the consequences of being displaced may include unemployment, wage differentials and skill gaps, displacement can also open up new opportunities for workers who willing to learn new skills, work in another industry or job field, relocate, and/or adapt to change. Many older or long-term workers find these challenges overwhelming and either go on unemployment or leave the workforce entirely.

There is no doubt that current and emerging technology (AI, robotics, etcetera) will continue to impact the American workforce. To remain a viable, competitive worker in today’s labor market, American workers need to focus on a blend of the following skills, mindset, and adaptability.

1. Building and maintaining skills that are in demand
 - a. essential technical skills
 - b. essential human (“soft”) skills

2. Committed to lifelong learning
3. Being adaptable and flexible
4. Demonstrating reliability and professionalism
5. Developing communication skills
6. Being comfortable working with technology
7. Building a strong professional reputation
8. Demonstrating problem-solving ability

In summary, liberals and conservatives share many of the same concerns, however, those concerns are rooted in different values. While it may seem altruistic to share our AI developments with the world, we, as a nation and people, need to be careful in how and what we share.

There is no doubt that AI will continue to have a significant and increasing role in everyone's life – work, health, family, education, social, and personal areas. Learning how to adapt to, incorporate, and live with AI is essential for our wellbeing, both personally and as a nation.