Hourglass Quarterly

Thank you to our 2020 Hourglass Quarterly Forum Sponsor:

YOUR
LOGO
HERE

The Hourglass is looking for sponsors for the
Hourglass Quarterly.

If you are interested in sponsoring this informative publication,
please contact the Hourglass at
(717) 295-0755 or at hourglasslancaster@gmail.com.

Letter from the Executive Director

Hello,

I am pleased to welcome you to our new Hourglass Quarterly! This publication has historically been one of our key methods of presenting Lancaster County's leaders with relevant, exciting and important articles from a variety of sources. This new Quarterly reaffirms our commitment to keeping you informed by providing more in depth summaries of our First Friday Forums, increasing the number of articles we showcase, and relating these featured articles to Lancaster County when possible.

In this edition, we first highlight the reporting done by PA Post's Ed Mahon on the City of Erie's use of Opportunity Zones to spur economic growth. We also include a summary of our highly successful forum "The Future Ain't What It Used To Be". This forum featured eight presentations from leaders from Lancaster and York Counties on innovative ideas and practices that will influence our future. Following this summary, we have included two articles which relate to two topics covered in the forum: Artificial Intelligence and Immigration and Refugees.

If you enjoy reading the Hourglass Quarterly, please sign up to receive our bi-weekly email publication "Keeping Lancaster Current" which includes recommendations of articles to read from across the web. You can do so by visiting our website (www.hourglassfoundation.org) and entering your email address on our homepage.

This Quarterly is part of our commitment to educate Lancaster's leaders and to champion and facilitate sound decision-making in order to assure prosperity while maintaining the county's unique character and enviable quality of life.
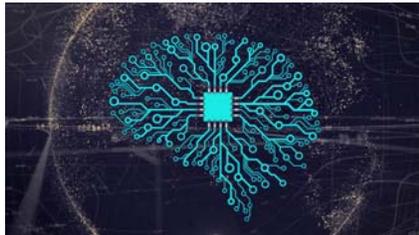

Happy reading!

Jonathan Russell
Executive Director

WILL AI TAKE YOUR JOB?

White collar workers are most at risk

As we move further into the 21st Century, it seems as though Artificial Intelligence (AI) features more prominently in our lexicon. So what is it? AI is the ability for computers and machines to mimic human reasoning and process complex tasks such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages.

Much has been written about the affects AI will have on employment in the United States. As machines will increasingly be able to perform tasks humans currently undertake, those studying the phenomenon have been ringing the alarm bells. In Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael Osborne's 2013 paper, "The Future of Employment", the authors make the claim that "about 47 percent of total U.S. employment is at risk" of automation from AI. A 2017 report from McKinsey Global Institute predicts that as many as 30% of jobs could be in jeopardy.

Factories or Office Jobs?

When discussing automation, images of factories with robots and assembly lines come to mind. While this is certainly a part of automation, AI will affect a much wider swath of the American workforce.

A new report from Brookings examines the level of "exposure", or vulnerability to AI, for different classifications of employment. Using AI, this study compared occupational descriptions from the US Department of Labor to the capabilities outlined in patents for AI software. The study identified where job classifications and AI capabilities intersected. Jobs experiencing many of these overlaps, were considered to have a high level of "exposure" to AI. Jobs without many overlaps were considered to have a low level of "exposure".

What the study found was surprising. In addition to manufacturing jobs, the jobs most open to exposure, were those held by better-paid, better-educated white-collar workers. These jobs are typically held by men who are white, Asian, prime-age workers.

The research is unclear, however, if the level of exposure experienced by these employment sectors will result in replacing these jobs, complimenting them, or creating new forms of employment.

Geographic Disparities

While AI will be employed virtually everywhere, the depths of its use will vary geographically. This will be determined by an area's industry, occupational mix, and education levels.

Bigger, higher-tech metro areas and communities heavily involved in manufacturing are likely to experience the most AI-related disruption. Smaller rural communities will be much less open to exposure than larger urban communities. This is most likely due to the concentration of the IT and professional economies of urban areas — economies that are all susceptible to AI.

As AI technologies continue to be adopted in the workforce, its impact on employment and the economies of localities will become more clear.

Article summarized from "What jobs are affected by AI? Better-paid, better-educated workers face the most exposure" by Mark Muro, Jacob Whiton, and Robert Maxim from Brookings. November 20, 2019.