

THERE'S A GROWING DEBATE ABOUT THE IMPACT THAT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL HAVE ON THE FUTURE, WITH TWO TECH LUMINARIES THEMSELVES--TESLA (TSLA) CEO ELON MUSK AND FACEBOOK (FB) CEO MARK ZUCKERBERG--AS FIGUREHEADS REPRESENTING GLASS-HALF-EMPTY VS. HALF-FULL PERSPECTIVES, RESPECTIVELY. LAST WEEK, MUSK COMMENTED THAT AI IS AN "EXISTENTIAL RISK FOR HUMAN CIVILIZATION." WHILE THESE COMMENTS REFER TO SWEEPING IMPACTS, MANY ARE DEBATING ONE SPECIFIC AREA WHERE WE ARE ALREADY SEEING THE EFFECTS OF AI: JOBS. AS HUMANS, WE'RE TRAINED TO WATCH FOR THREATS TO OUR SURVIVAL AND PREDICT TRAGEDIES. JOBS ARE INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO OUR SURVIVAL, AS THEY'RE THE WAY MOST OF US EARN INCOME AND ARE THEREFORE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR OUR BASIC NEEDS. HOWEVER, MANY ARE PREDICTING THAT WITH THE ADVENT OF AI, WE WILL SEE THE RISE OF A "USELESS CLASS"--PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT JUST UNEMPLOYED, BUT ARE UNEMPLOYABLE. WE CAN LEVERAGE AI TO ENSURE THAT OPPORTUNITY IS MORE EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED AROUND THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD, RATHER THAN CONCENTRATED IN SMALL POCKETS OF URBAN WEALTH AND OPPORTUNITY. THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS THAT THIS "FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION" WILL INCREASE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY, JUST AS THE PREVIOUS THREE HAVE DONE, AND IT COULD ALSO INCREASE THE FLEXIBILITY AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF WORK. ZUCKERBERG RETORTED THAT COMMENTS LIKE THIS ARE "PRETTY IRRESPONSIBLE," TO WHICH MUSK TWEETED A RETORT THAT ZUCKERBERG'S "UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT IS LIMITED." BUT AI ITSELF IS NOT A THING; IT IS A SERIES OF COMBINED TECHNOLOGIES THAT HUMANS ARE CREATING AND .GUIDING THE IMPACTS OF, INCLUDING IMPACTS ON WORK