

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Robot wars or automation alliances?

People, technology  
and the future of work



Capita

HOT SPOTS  
MOVEMENT

Britainthinks  
Insight & Strategy

**“ What is both significant and unique about this research and report is that the perspective is shifted from the leader to the people who are impacted by automation. To fail to listen to their voices and act upon their insights would be to significantly obstruct this automation agenda.”**

Professor Lynda Gratton

**The future of work is here. The rapid acceleration of technologies such as automation and artificial intelligence is changing the way that people and technology interact in the workplace, and is revolutionising work across all sectors and skill levels.**

While there has been much discussion about the impacts of this shift on the UK economy and employment patterns at a macro level, missing from the debate has been the voice of the people who will be more directly impacted by these changes.

As the world transitions to these new ways of working, questions arise about how the full potential of automation can be unlocked, while also harnessing the benefits to preserve ‘meaningful work’ into the future. To address these important issues, Capita has collaborated with Hot Spots Movement and BritainThinks to initiate an honest conversation about how the world of work is changing.

Drawing on direct engagement with business leaders and people across the UK whose jobs are already evolving - including Capita’s own employees - this report investigates these real-life experiences, anxieties and hopes. By listening to voices from across the employment spectrum, this study has exposed many ‘automation myths’ to reveal five new findings around the dynamics that are shaping the challenges presented by the future of work. These range from the clear need for strong leadership and engagement, to the new ways of thinking about the skills and career pathways that will be required. Based upon these findings, a framework of automation ‘guiding principles’ has been laid out to encourage the responsible implementation of these new technologies for the world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**[Read the full report at capita.com/futureofwork](https://capita.com/futureofwork)**

**“ Automation will drive society forward in ways we cannot now imagine. The challenge is how to embrace technologies that are by nature disruptive in a manner that is as non-disruptive and as inclusive as possible”**

Jon Lewis, Chief Executive Officer, Capita



# A framework for responsible automation

This report establishes a framework of ‘guiding principles’ to encourage the responsible implementation of workplace technologies into the future. In doing so, a clear direction emerges for governments, policy makers, organisations, and employees themselves to ensure that automation is given the best chance possible to deliver on its potential in a way that benefits everyone.

## 1. Leadership:

With strong leadership and an honest, compelling vision, people will be more likely to embrace new technologies. By engaging in dialogue, people are more able to identify and believe in the benefits of automation, shifting the conversation away from one filled with myths, fear and anxiety and towards an optimistic view of the future.

**Set out a clear vision for automation through proactive, transparent communication which demonstrates a longer-term view of how people can expect to engage with technology into the future**

## 2. Skills:

Skills are the employment currency of the future, with ‘human skills’ such as empathy and critical thinking becoming the most valuable. This mindset shift requires innovative ways of mapping and bridging skills; along with new approaches to learning and accreditation.

**Champion the development of transferable skillsets for the future, accelerating support for reskilling and building a shared base level of digital understanding across the workforce**

## 3. Curiosity:

Automation is creating a new, important interdependency between business leaders and employees. Engagement with employees who are closest to the opportunities for automation and creating feedback loops is the only way to deliver the “gold standard” of automation: changing work, while keeping it rewarding and meaningful for the people it impacts.

**Co-create the future of work, supporting engagement and empowering people to self-identify the ways that technology could improve their jobs**

## 4. Inclusion:

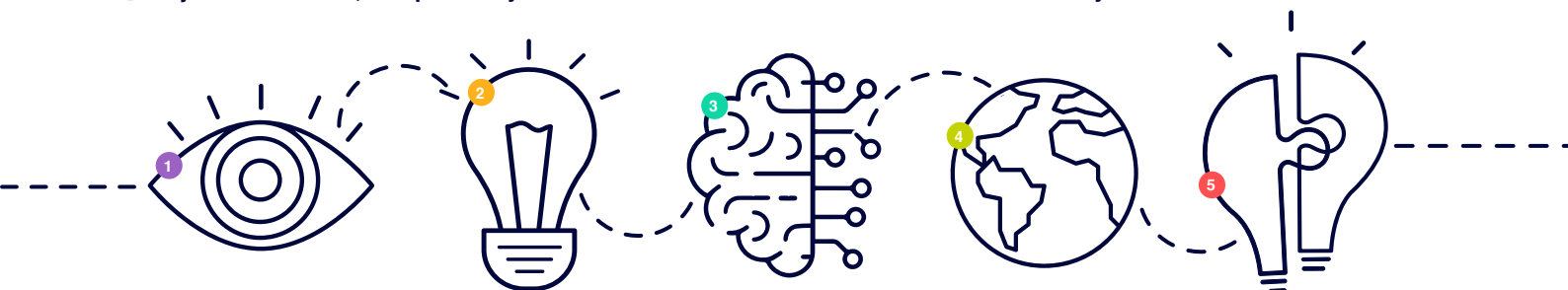
Certain groups within the workforce may be taking on a disproportionate share of the risks - this includes contractors, older people and those in sectors where tasks are most easily automated. Cooperation between industries and governments is needed to address these potential disparities, create opportunities for all and preserve social mobility into the future.

**Design inclusive and accessible automation strategies that appropriately cater to the varied needs of the many demographics within the workforce**

## 5. Collaboration:

As business, jobs and society are disrupted through automation, there will be a radical change in the way we live and work. To ensure this shift is positive for all will require urgent multi-stakeholder action that considers all the component parts of this transformation.

**Tackle the scale and urgency of this challenge with multi-stakeholder action which recognises the future of work as a major societal shift; and positively seeks to realise and share the benefits across society**



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