

AI Drives Sharp Decline in Entry-Level UK Job Openings, Experts Urge Adaptation

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— Categories: Economics



UK job data reveals a significant decline in entry-level employment opportunities, with a 32–33% drop in vacancies since the 2022 launch of ChatGPT, according to figures from job sites Adzuna and Indeed. While artificial intelligence has not yet triggered widespread redundancies, its growing influence is reshaping the early-career labour market.

The data suggests that AI is accelerating changes in how businesses hire and structure junior roles, particularly in sectors like marketing, customer service, and data entry, areas where automation tools are becoming increasingly capable. While senior positions and roles requiring specialised human judgment remain stable, routine entry-level jobs are increasingly absorbed or transformed by AI technologies.

Employers are showing a marked preference for candidates who bring AI literacy to the table. Job postings that reference generative AI skills are rising and tend to offer significantly higher salaries, indicating a growing premium on AI-related expertise. This evolution in hiring priorities reflects a broader shift toward a tech-integrated workforce, where human-AI collaboration is fast becoming the norm.

Experts say this trend should not be mistaken for a disappearance of jobs altogether but rather a signal that the types of entry-level roles available are changing. The emergence of generative AI is prompting a redefinition of foundational skills for many occupations. As such, adapting education and training to include AI fluency is becoming essential for preparing young workers to succeed in a rapidly evolving job market.

Labour market analysts are calling for both employers and policymakers to respond with urgency. Businesses are encouraged to invest in upskilling programs and to redefine roles to ensure human potential complements, rather than competes with, automation. At the same time, educators are being urged to embed digital and AI competencies into curricula to future-proof students' employment prospects.

Despite concerns, many economists remain cautiously optimistic. They note that previous waves of automation, such as during the industrial and

digital revolutions, initially displaced certain jobs but ultimately created new categories of employment. The key, they argue, lies in how quickly institutions and individuals can adapt to the pace of change.

As AI reshapes work patterns across the UK, the drop in entry-level job openings serves as a clear signal that the economy is entering a new phase, one that prioritises flexibility, tech adaptability, and continuous learning.