

# Is AI the Monster that Will Eat Your Job?

*By John Benson*

*July 2026*

## 1. Introduction

The better questions as opposed the title question might be: “how many jobs will artificial intelligence create, and how many will it eliminate?” Since nobody really knows the future, all we can do is discuss the factors that will lead to each.

Also, my favorite State Governor (if you can’t guess, this is California-Governor Newsom). Has started a new initiative to gage the questions in the prior paragraph. That is what this paper covers.

*Governor Gavin Newsom today announced the launch of California’s first-in-the-nation tool to proactively track AI-related job loss trends – an early warning system to help the state monitor, track, and anticipate job loss. The dashboard was developed in partnership with the University of California, California Policy Lab and released as part of the Governor’s recent executive order issued to prepare workers, small businesses, and communities for the economic disruption that artificial intelligence will bring.<sup>1</sup>*

*“California has always been a place that embraces innovation while taking seriously the responsibility that comes with it. We’re shaping the future — and charting the course for the nation. As AI advances, we aren’t just watching from the sidelines; we’re reimagining how we prepare California through strong governance and innovative policy.*

*I thank our partners at the California Policy Lab for helping us lead the way.”*

- Governor Gavin Newsom

## 2. Tracking and monitoring AI impacts

*The California AI-Unemployment Tracker<sup>2</sup> is a publicly available dashboard developed in partnership between the researchers at the California Policy Lab’s UCLA site and the California Employment Development Department. The tool is designed not only to inform policymakers but also to help Californians better understand how AI is intersecting with the workforce and the broader job market.*

*“The AI-Unemployment Tracker provides us with a clearer picture of how AI is affecting working people and jobs, and where we need to focus support and training. By grounding our decisions in data, we can respond early and strengthen pathways into good jobs to ensure California’s workforce is able to adapt and thrive as technology evolves.” Stewart Knox, Secretary of the Labor & Workforce Development Agency*

*“AI is advancing quickly, and workers’ concerns about what that could mean for their jobs are real,” said co-author Till von Wachter, Professor of Economics at UCLA and Faculty Director of the California Policy Lab’s UCLA site. “This new tracker helps replace speculation with evidence, giving us a clearer understanding of what’s changing and how to best support affected workers.”*

---

<sup>1</sup> Governor Gavin Newsom’s Website, “California becomes the first state to launch a tool to monitor and track artificial intelligence’s impacts on the workforce,” June 25, 2026,

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2026/06/25/california-becomes-the-first-state-to-launch-a-tool-to-monitor-and-track-artificial-intelligences-impacts-on-the-workforce/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://capolicylab.org/california-ai-unemployment-tracker/>

*The tracker, which will be updated monthly, provides early indicators of possible AI-related job displacement, allowing the state to proactively identify where interventions — such as job-search support, retraining and upskilling opportunities, health-coverage guidance, and other essential resources may be needed most.*

*“The California AI unemployment tracker is a great tool for identifying the impacts and opportunities coming from rapidly developing technology,” said EDD Director Nancy Farias. “It will give us valuable insight into workforce trends so we can better connect Californians with the resources, training, and support they need to succeed.”*

## **2.1. Initially, no Evidence of Rising Unemployment from AI**

*Paired with the tracker is a comprehensive analysis of the data, which at this time shows no evidence of rising statewide unemployment claims in AI-exposed occupations.*

*However, the data does demonstrate impacts to workers in high-exposure AI positions following the expansion of AI software available to the public. For example, claims from college-educated workers in occupations with high AI exposure increased after ChatGPT-3.5’s release in 2022, and workers in occupations with high potential AI exposure in the San Francisco Bay Area also experienced a sustained increase. The data did not show large disproportionate increases by race, ethnicity, gender, or age, in the number of high-AI-exposure UI claimants.*

*“Right now, we are not seeing evidence of large-scale AI-related layoffs in California’s labor market,” said co-author Dr. Ben Hyman, Senior Researcher at the California Policy Lab. “But we do see patterns in certain regions like the SF Bay Area, in certain tech-heavy sectors, and among highly AI-exposed workers with college degrees. It will be important to continue monitoring trends for those workers, as well as others, so that policymakers can respond appropriately.”*

## **2.2. Protecting Workers from AI Disruption**

*The report and database were released in response to the Governor’s executive order, which mobilizes state agencies, labor experts, economists, universities, and industry leaders to develop new policies, gather data, and identify early warning signs of workforce disruption, and ensure workers share in gains made in AI-driven productivity.*

*This executive order is the third issued by Governor Newsom to help spur innovation, assess risk, and create stronger AI policy in California – which is guiding the nation in its comprehensive approach in creating commonsense guardrails balanced with opportunities to advance innovation in this growing sector.*

## **2.3. Leading the way in AI**

*California is home to 33 of the top 50 private AI companies in the world, and no state has taken more aggressive action to strengthen the safety, security, and consumer privacy of technology and online platforms.*

*In 2023, Governor Newsom made California the first state to take action on Generative AI policy, announcing an executive order to both responsibly adopt this technology in state government and begin studying its risks. The Governor convened world-leading academic experts to draft the California Report on Frontier AI Policy, providing the state with policy recommendations that helped lead to the Governor’s signature on the first state-legislation nationwide, the Transparency in Frontier Technology Act (Senate Bill 53, Wiener) to help ensure that this technology moves forward responsibly.*

*This adds to other protections signed by Governor Newsom to create strong protocols for child safety and protections against self-harm, crack down on sexually explicit deepfakes and require AI watermarking, protect performers' digital likenesses, and prevent scams from AI-generated robocalls. In addition, it supplements the Governor's March 2026 executive order, which strengthened civil rights and privacy in California's procurement of AI technology and expanded California's adoption of AI to improve government services.*

### **3. Creating a stronger AI-ready workforce**

*Since Governor Newsom took office, the state has supported more than 674,000 earn-and-learn training opportunities, including over 250,000 registered apprenticeships. The University of California's Extension program serves over 300,000 people every year, and UC's innovative new Degree Plus pilot combines a UC bachelor's degree with skills-based certificates and paid internships to strengthen workforce readiness and connect students with employers.*

*To further strengthen California's workforce, the state has also invested nearly \$750,000 in the California Workforce Association to develop a statewide AI workforce strategy that will help local workforce boards prepare workers for emerging job opportunities. This adds to the state's other jobs training resources including skills development referrals, apprenticeship opportunities, and job search assistance and support, as well as work done through the California Workforce Development Board, the Employment Training Panel, and the University of California's and CSU extension programs and the Community College System that support workforce development for all Californians.*

#### **3.1. California Prepares Workers & Employers for AI**

*SACRAMENTO — California is investing in the future by equipping its workforce with the skills needed to thrive in an evolving job market shaped by artificial intelligence (AI). The Employment Development Department (EDD) announced today it has awarded nearly \$750,000 to the California Workforce Association (CWA) to develop a statewide AI workforce strategy for California's 45 local workforce development boards, which provide job training, employment services, and business support vital to the social and economic health of their communities.*



*We are committed to helping California’s workforce prepare for the growing impact of artificial intelligence. Through this partnership, local leaders will have tools to respond to a new AI-driven industry and support workers and businesses across the state.*

- EDD Director Nancy Farias

*The statewide AI workforce blueprint will adapt to changing technology and workforce needs, providing a framework to help workforce development boards build expertise, track AI related workforce trends, and strengthen coordination across California’s workforce system to support statewide planning around emerging technologies.*

*The statewide AI workforce blueprint will adapt to changing technology and workforce needs, providing a framework to help workforce development boards build expertise, track AI related workforce trends, and strengthen coordination across California’s workforce system to support statewide planning around emerging technologies.*

*“This initiative allows CWA to work with local workforce boards across California to prepare for the changing impact of artificial intelligence,” said CWA Executive Director Adam Peck. “By developing a shared strategy and practical tools, we can help keep California’s workforce system innovative and be responsive to change.”*

## **3.2. CAIT**

*The California AI-Unemployment Tracker (CAIT) is a first-in-the-nation tool that monitors AI-related job loss by linking unemployment insurance claims with occupational AI exposure data. A link to this tool is on page 1 of this paper, Reference 2.*

### **3.2.1. Overview**

*CAIT was launched on June 25, 2026, as part of Governor Gavin Newsom’s executive order on AI and workforce preparedness. It is a collaboration between the California Employment Development Department (EDD) and the California Policy Lab (CPL) at UCLA. The tracker is publicly accessible and updated monthly, providing near-real-time insights into how AI may be affecting employment across California*

### **3.2.2. Purpose**

*The tracker serves as an early warning system to identify potential AI-driven job displacement. It allows policymakers, researchers, and the public to monitor trends by region, industry, education, age, race, ethnicity, and gender, helping guide workforce interventions such as retraining, upskilling, and job-search support*

### **3.2.3. Methodology**

*CAIT combines Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims data with AI exposure measures for occupations. Two main metrics are used:*

*Potential AI impact – whether AI could perform or reduce the time spent on occupational tasks.*

*Current AI usage – how frequently AI is already applied in those tasks.*

*This approach provides a detailed picture of which workers and sectors are most exposed to AI, though it does not directly attribute layoffs to AI.*

**Final author’s comment:** Since I haven’t made a secret of it, most of my readers know that I love my home-state (California). One of the many reasons for this is, we don’t just look towards the future, we expect to be a major part of building it.