AI and Work: Navigating the New Frontier

Jonathan Glenister : Consulting Director : Datacom

"Optimistic but with a sense of urgency"

DATACOM

We've been here before or have we ?

1800s - Industrial Revolution

Job Impact	Artisans lost their jobs as factories could replicate their work
	People left arable jobs for textile mills and factories
Social Change	Migration from villages and farms to cities
	Earning a wage, A new 9-5 regime, Choice ?
Economic Inequality	Lack of regulation led to poor working conditions
	Wealth remained in the hands of the few
Protest & Rights	People joined Luddite protests and destroyed machines
	Over time the creation of unions and worker rights
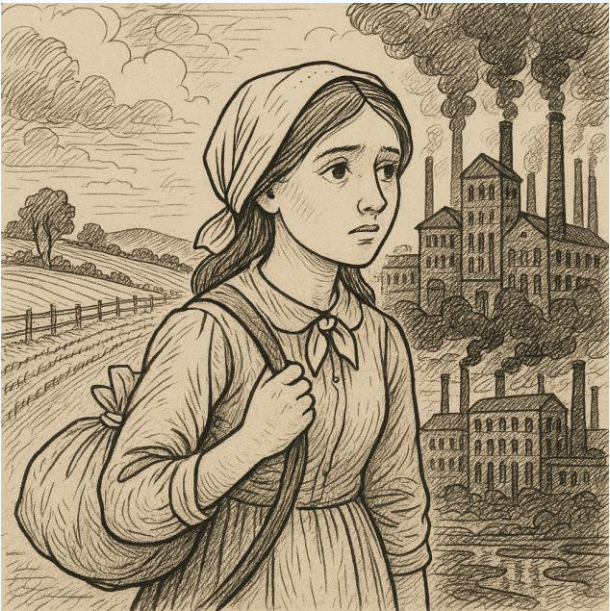
10-15 million people impacted

70-100 year transition

Data Points and Signals

"Signals" are early clues to help us read the direction of change

1 what do they tell us ? 2 so what ? 3 now what ?

NZ Future of Jobs Report – MBIE (2024)

- **63%** of workers expect to use AI in their jobs within five years

- Only **34%** can explain AI clearly, despite **97%** having heard of it

Global Data Points (2023–2025)

- Meta cut 3,600 roles in 2025 while hiring AI specialists

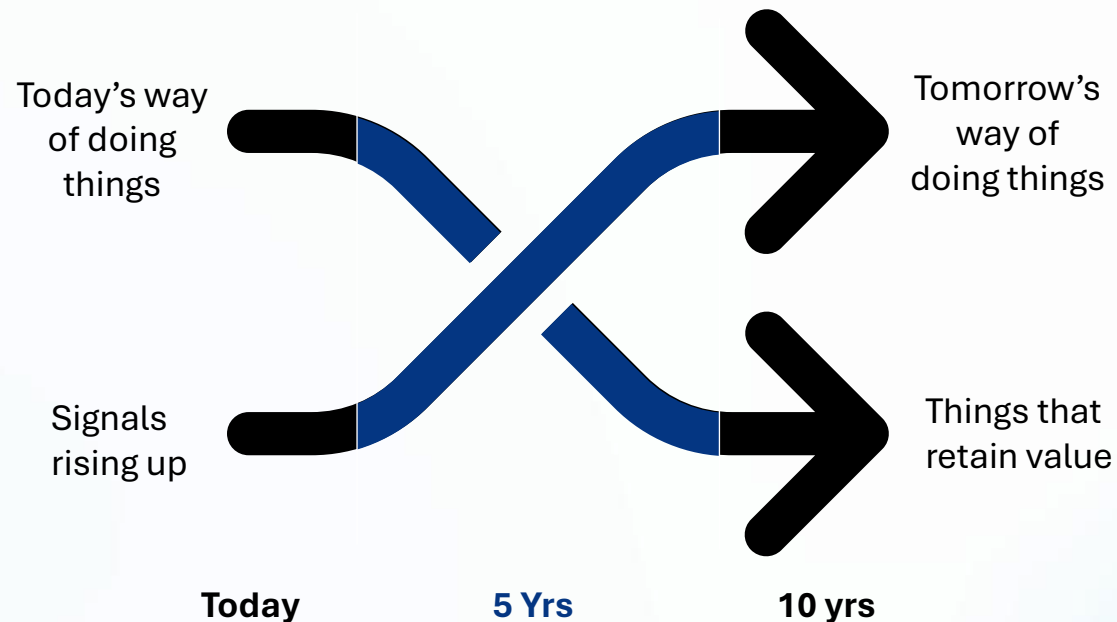- Polish radio station dropped AI presenters after audience pushback

DUOLINGO CEO SURPRISED BY BACKLASH TO AI-FIRST COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENT

SHOPIFY CEO SAYS NEW HIRES MUST BE JUSTIFIED BY PROVING AI CAN'T DO THE JOB BETTER

From Insight to Action

Horizon 1: LLMs – Truth vs Hype

Horizon 2: Specialist & Agentic AI

Horizon 3: AI – Partner, Replacement or Master?

Today's way of doing things

Tomorrow's way of doing things

Signals rising up

Things that retain value

Today   **5 Yrs**   **10 yrs**

Three Horizons / Two Curves Model - Institute for the Future

? Question to consider

1. How will you **upskill or redeploy staff** impacted by AI?

2. How are **employees involved** in your AI plans?

3. What **new roles or services** could AI enable?

4. How might AI change your **value delivery** to customers ?

5. What role should businesses / governments play in the coming AI **workforce transition**?