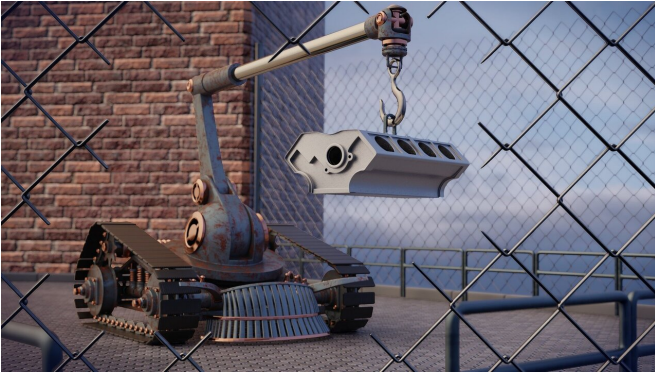


Study finds workers would rather be replaced by a robot than another person

7 August 2019, by Bob Yirka



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A trio of researchers with the Technical University of Munich and Erasmus University Rotterdam has found evidence that suggests workers would rather be replaced by a robot rather than another human being. In their paper published in the journal *Nature Human Behavior*, Armin Granulo, Christoph Fuchs and Stefano Puntoni describe responses from several groups of people regarding job security, and what they found.

In the modern era, robots have been taking the place of human workers because they are seen as a cheaper and more reliable source of labor. Many sociologists and roboticists have predicted this trend will continue, resulting in mass displacement of workers over the next several decades. In this new effort, the researchers sought to better understand how people feel about the possibility of being replaced.

In the first study, the researchers asked 300 people if they would rather see a colleague replaced by a human or a [robot](#)—62 percent of respondents chose the human. The researchers also asked the same group how they would feel if it was their own job at stake—this time, only 37

percent chose the human option.

In a second study, the researchers asked 251 people to rate how much negativity they felt about losing a job to a robot versus to another person. They report that respondents generally showed more negativity toward robots replacing colleagues' jobs than if they were losing their own. The people in this group expressed that they felt less threatened by the thought of losing a job to a robot versus another person. The researchers suggest this is likely because people do not feel the need to compete with a robot the way they would with another person. If a [worker](#) is replaced by another human, it casts doubt on their ability to do a job—if they are replaced by a robot, though, it is just a sign of technology taking over.

In a third study, the researchers asked 296 people who worked in manufacturing if they thought they were going to lose their [jobs](#) someday due to being replaced by some form of technology. They report that roughly a third of respondents felt like it was a real possibility.

More information: Armin Granulo et al. Psychological reactions to human versus robotic job replacement, *Nature Human Behaviour* (2019). [DOI: 10.1038/s41562-019-0670-y](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-019-0670-y)

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