Surviving Automation
Insights from Trade Journals, Alumni & Job Seekers
Agenda

• 1: Trade Journals - Survive and thrive in the new era of automation

• 2: Alumni Survey - Implications for curriculum design in School of Communication & Information

• 3: Challenges for education
Trade Journals

Trade Journals

• Beyond simply positive or negative framing – an overarching theme is *inevitability*

• Resistance is futile

• “...technology will be the death of the traditional media planner... It's evolve or die.”
Trade Journals – Why Change?

• “... technology has also created a need for talented planners, emphasis on ‘talented.’”

• Implications:
  • No specific skill needed
  • Rather, only the gifted will survive

• Don’t worry, there is good news!
Trade Journals – What Skills?

• “If workers get ahead of the game and leverage the [technology] to increase their capacity, they can use automation to help them manage their roles and use more of their own soft skills.”

• “... staying flexible and viewing technology as an enabler will be key for the bookkeeper of the future. The accountant of the future has a much more [client] connected role.”
Trade Journals – Create Tech

• “leverage technology; viewing technology as an enabler”

• Skill Implications:
  
  • Know how to create technology (this is not just being an Excel wizard)
  
  • Can you automate some tasks by writing simple scripts?
  
  • Can you identify what tasks should be automated?
Trade Journals – What Skills?

• “With computer-based tools able to book meetings, for example, an admin has more time to anticipate emerging issues and identify tasks to be done that ease the stress level of the boss.”
Trade Journals – Soft Skills

• “...identify tasks to be done that ease the stress level of the boss.”

• Skill Implications:
  
  • Soft skills (this is not just being charming)
  
  • Emotional intelligence
  
  • Empathy paired with initiative
Trade Journals – Data Literacy

• “Ask a senior digital analyst for his or her largest complaint. Aside from parking, the primary grievance is nearly always related to data accessibility, data quality, and the pain of manipulating data.”

• “CFOs will not need deep technology expertise, but they will need to understand how these technologies are used.”

• Skill Implications:

  • Data Literacy
Data Literacy

- Skills related to data literacy are the #1 response from alumni & industry leaders when asked what skills graduates need.

- Part of an ongoing effort to revamp the curriculum at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information.
Not a repeat
Skill #1: Data Literacy

• Different than knowing how to code or run the newest analytics

• “Not everyone can be a data analyst”

• Employees who can successfully turn data into action are rarer than those who can analyze it alone

• Extra challenge: Constantly changing; requires ongoing investment
Bitcoin Devours More Electricity Than Switzerland

Estimated annual electricity consumption in 2019 (terawatt-hours)

- Total worldwide: 20,863.00 terawatt-hours
  - China: 5,564.00 terawatt-hours
  - United States: 3,902.00 terawatt-hours

- Bitcoin: 61.76 terawatt-hours
- Switzerland: 58.46 terawatt-hours
- Greece: 56.89 terawatt-hours
- Israel: 55.00 terawatt-hours
- Ireland: 25.68 terawatt-hours

Source: University of Cambridge
Skill #2: Sustainability

• Consumers are demanding companies set ambitious sustainability goals – along with metrics to get to net zero.

• As companies are asked to do a lot more, their teams will need to step up to embrace the new climate epoch.

• Knowledge of own carbon footprint and have a specialty interest/expertise in the area of sustainability.

• Sustainability is the new ethics
Skill #3: Time Management

• Employees will be given far greater flexibility in their work schedules. Covid-19 is certainly accelerating this trend.

• Without “9-to-5” type constraints, employees need to independently remain accountable and results driven at work,

• Extra challenge: Requires establishing guard rails to insure work doesn’t dominate one’s life/burnout.
Challenges for Education

• Data Literacy – requires data skills and soft skills like creative writing

• Demands a move away from “I” education to “T-shaped” education

• Often requires a restructuring of disciplinary lines and extreme silo-busting. What is a horizontal curriculum?
Challenges for Education

- Keeping up with technological change – but not sacrificing core skills

- “In spite of economic growth, there’s a cautionary tale we should be aware of. When we become dependent on technology, we often lose the skills that technology has replaced.”