
Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace

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The workplace has evolved greatly over the last few decades. With the continuous introduction of technology, the advent of social media, and the transition of the workforce from the baby boomers to subsequent generations of workers, the pace of change has been rapid. These changes have been accelerated thanks largely to the Covid-19 pandemic. Remote work has become commonplace, with remote screening and hiring also becoming the norm. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is not new to the workplace. It has been used to filter resumes and scan social media profiles of potential candidates. However, the pandemic and resultant remote workforce have acted as an impetus for further implementation of AI workplace tools. While there is no doubt that AI has the potential to add immense value to the workplace, the implementation of AI can raise important legal questions.

AI has become a trendy technology buzzword, but the technology is not difficult to conceptually understand. Before an AI system is used, the system is "trained" by using a basic data set. Using a machine learning algorithm, a computer system processes a training data set and "learns" how to optimize the results over time. As the AI processes this initial data, it learns which parameters of the data it can adjust to obtain a desired output, and how the system should process new data in order to optimize the output going forward. Because of this, an AI system is only as good as the data set that is used to train the algorithm. If the training data is skewed, for example by being racially biased, the output of the AI system will likewise be biased.

Implementation of AI systems within the workplace presents an incredible opportunity for increased efficiency in the workplace, and can free up time for already-overworked staff. However, if not implemented correctly, it can put the organization at risk.

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Industries

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This article addresses both the benefits and areas employers should be aware of to properly evaluate, monitor and audit an AI system.