

# Only Humans Need Apply: Winners and Losers in the Age of Smart Machines

Thomas H. Davenport, Julia Kirby

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**ONLY HUMANS  
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**Winners & Losers in the  
Age of Smart Machines**

**THOMAS H. DAVENPORT  
& JULIA KIRBY**

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Thomas H. Davenport, Julia Kirby : **Only Humans Need Apply: Winners and Losers in the Age of Smart Machines** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Only Humans Need Apply: Winners and Losers in the Age of Smart Machines:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Step Forward) is a very clever and practical way to give people a road map for the different ways of positioning themselves for working in environments where smart machines (cognitive systems) place an increasingly important role By Steven Miller (SMU, Singapore) I read this book cover to

cover when it first appeared in mid-2016. I have made use of the ideas and summaries in this book on a number of occasions since that time. The Davenport / Kirby model for the 5 ways of Stepping (Step Up, Step Aside, Step In, Step Narrowly, Step Forward) is a very clever and practical way to give people a road map for the different ways of positioning themselves for working in environments where smart machines (cognitive systems) place an increasingly important role. Their respective chapters on each of these types of ways of "Stepping" with respect to Smart Machines are based on very solid evidence of what is happening from Tom's extensive field work and consulting with companies actively using this new type of smart, cognitive IT. Their emphasis on augmentation (human with Smart Machine) versus Automation (Human replaced by Smart Machine) is an important message and an important mindset in order to build both user acceptance and to get wide-spread support from a wide range of stakeholders within the company. Overall, I thought the book was a great contribution, and is an essential read and an essential reference for anyone seriously interested in how the new generation of Smart IT Systems (aka Cognitive Systems) are being used in the workplaces of the early adopters, and what this means for everyone else as this type of technology will continue to be more widely used.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Kaushik Ray  
Very well explained. AI is difficult for most senior management to understand. This makes it much easier.  
16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. TAKE ACTION, OR BE SWEEP ASIDE BY AUTOMATION  
By Bassocantor  
ONLY HUMANS NEED APPLY is a complicated book--and even a little bit scary--so plan on giving it some time. First of all, note that this book is not just a theoretical book exploring some things that might happen in the future. Rather, the author explores what is already happening around the world as automation displaces many workers. Fortunately for the reader, the author provides specific action plans that you can take to protect your job. I admit I was not expecting much from this book--mostly because I was not familiar with this author. I learned that Dr. Davenport has EXTENSIVE experience in this area, and has taught at Harvard Business School, as well as at University of Chicago. So after researching the author's credentials a little bit, I decided to give this book a lot more attention. The theme of the book is that automation is changing (and often eliminating jobs). There is no stopping it, so you need to adapt. You need to face this realistically, or you will be left behind: "Our main mission in this book has been to give you a sense of agency and to help you begin to make decisions for yourself about how to deal with advancing automation." The reality is that traditional jobs are in jeopardy. Most of all, it's those jobs that can be reduced to a set of specific steps. The author calls that "Codifying" the work. If your job can be reduced to some set of steps, you are in trouble: "If work can be codified, it can be automated. And there's also the corollary: If it can be automated in an economical fashion, it will be." Oftentimes, the impact of automation is slow--just at the margins. So, for example, a company might have employed 10 people to do certain jobs in the past, but now, they only need 9. So it doesn't happen all at once; instead, you are sort of "edged toward" the door. As an example of how automation has changed the nature of professions, Dr. Davenport uses the profession of radiology. Traditionally, this has been among the most highly paid professions. In recent years, however, part of this profession has been "codified." The process of radiology--what the doctor actually does--has been explicitly defined. The result of that was outsourcing of some of the work. And other parts were computerized. So what can anyone do? The author has specific recommendations to deal with the threat of automation. By recognizing what is happening, you can have a strategy to survive. One strategy is called "Stepping Aside." By this, the author means changing your job to focus on things that aren't easily automated: "Moving to a type of non-decision-oriented work that computers aren't good at, such as selling or motivating people, or describing in straightforward terms the decisions that computers have made." Another strategy is "Stepping In." This means working to try to improve the automation. (This sounds to me like "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!") The strategy I like best the author calls "Stepping Narrowly." This means specializing so narrowly that there is no incentive to automate it. "Finding a specialty area within your profession that is so narrow that no one is attempting to automate it--and it might never be economical to do so." (Note: This is the strategy that I myself employ.) Another option, the idea of "Stepping Forward," is to focus on "developing the new systems and technology that support intelligent decisions and actions in a particular domain." You can also decide to try "Stepping Up." This means changing your job to look at the "big picture." Unfortunately, there are typically only a few people--at the top of the company, who are employed to do this. This is work that "cannot be done by robots. Most organizations have only a few people in such roles--but it is important out of proportion to the numbers." Dr. Davenport argues that the anemic job market is not just a short-time anomaly, but rather a result of automation. "The persistent unemployment could no longer be called a cyclical phenomenon. It reflected a structural change, in part due to the growing sophistication of automation." So don't expect the job market to all of a sudden pick-up. Automation is not going away. So in other words, get used to it. Many jobs will continue to be eliminated as automation continues. "Most everyone agrees that the growing ability to automate knowledge work will cause (indeed, is causing) labor dislocations that are painful in the short run..." So all in all, I thought ONLY HUMANS NEED APPLY was an outstanding book. It is clear to me that the author absolutely understands what is happening. I appreciate his offering specific steps that we can take to deal with this ongoing automation. Advance Review Copy courtesy of Edelweiss Book Distributors.

An invigorating, thought-provoking, and positive look at the rise of automation that explores how professionals across

industries can find sustainable careers in the near future. Nearly half of all working Americans could risk losing their jobs because of technology. It's not only blue-collar jobs at stake. Millions of educated knowledge workers—writers, paralegals, assistants, medical technicians—are threatened by accelerating advances in artificial intelligence. The industrial revolution shifted workers from farms to factories. In the first era of automation, machines relieved humans of manually exhausting work. Today, Era Two of automation continues to wash across the entire services-based economy that has replaced jobs in agriculture and manufacturing. Era Three, and the rise of AI, is dawning. Smart computers are demonstrating they are capable of making better decisions than humans. Brilliant technologies can now decide, learn, predict, and even comprehend much faster and more accurately than the human brain, and their progress is accelerating. Where will this leave lawyers, nurses, teachers, and editors? In *Only Humans Need Apply*, Thomas Hayes Davenport and Julia Kirby reframe the conversation about automation, arguing that the future of increased productivity and business success isn't either human or machine. It's both. The key is augmentation, utilizing technology to help humans work better, smarter, and faster. Instead of viewing these machines as competitive interlopers, we can see them as partners and collaborators in creative problem solving as we move into the next era. The choice is ours.

A fine call to action in the face of uncertainty. (Financial Times) The world the authors describe may be unsettling, but it is a world that we would all recognize and will likely live to see. (Wall Street Journal) This badly needed and well-researched book makes a convincing and inspiring case that the challenges ahead could be a catalyst to help us achieve far more of our potential and, in the process, become much more human. It is a powerful call to action and provides a roadmap that we ignore at our peril. It's not enough to read this book; we need to act on it, now! (John Hagel, Chairman of the Deloitte Center for the Edge) The winners in the analytics revolution won't simply replace human decision-making, they will augment it. The essential guide to this management revolution is Davenport and Kirby's remarkable new book. (Erik Brynjolfsson, Professor at MIT and co-author of *The Second Machine Age*) Individual knowledge workers, corporate executives, and government leaders all need to read this book. Smart machines are going to change our work and our lives, and the sooner we begin to augment their capabilities, the more successful our economy will be. Davenport and Kirby are correct: people will augment these tools, rather than be automated by them. The sooner you learn about augmentation, the more successful yours will be in the labor markets of the future. (Manoj Saxena, Former General Manager, IBM Watson) From the Back Cover An invigorating, thought-provoking, and positive look at the rise of automation that explores how professionals across industries can find sustainable careers in the near future. Nearly half of all working Americans risk losing their jobs because of technology. It's not only blue-collar jobs at stake. Millions of educated "knowledge" workers—journalists, lawyers, doctors, marketers—are threatened by accelerating advances in artificial intelligence. The industrial revolution shifted workers from farms to factories. In the first era of automation, machines relieved humans of manually exhausting work. Today Era Two of automation continues to wash across the entire services-based economy, replacing jobs in agriculture and manufacturing. Now Era Three, the rise of "cognitive computing" is dawning. Smart computers are demonstrating they are capable of making better decisions than humans. Brilliant technologies can now learn, predict, decide, and even comprehend much faster and more accurately than the human brain, and their progress is accelerating. Where will this leave financial advisors, scientists, teachers, and other professionals? In *Only Humans Need Apply*, Thomas H. Davenport and Julia Kirby reframe the conversation about automation, arguing that the future of increased productivity and business success isn't either human or machine. It's both. The key is augmentation, utilizing technology to help humans work better, smarter, and faster. Instead of viewing these machines as competitive interlopers, we must see them as partners and collaborators in creative problem solving as we move into the next era. The choice is ours. About the Author Thomas H. Davenport is the President's Distinguished Professor in Management and Information Technology at Babson College, the cofounder of the International Institute for Analytics, a fellow of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy, and a senior advisor to Deloitte Analytics. He teaches analytics and big data in executive programs at Babson, Harvard Business School, MIT Sloan School, and Boston University, and is the author or coauthor of seventeen books. Julia Kirby is a senior editor at Harvard University Press and a contributing editor for Harvard Business Review. She is the coauthor of *Standing on the Sun: How the Explosion of Capitalism Abroad Will Change Business Everywhere*.