

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/disproportionate-job-displacement>

Toni Townes-Whitley, Corporate Vice President of Worldwide Public Sector and Industry at Microsoft, underscores the need for today's leaders to think about how technology can magnify social ills even as it improves business. She cites World Economic Forum forecasts showing that, in the year 2020, the creation of digital jobs will disproportionately displace women because of their high numbers in labor categories that are ripe for disruption.



Transcript

- All of this matters when a digital transformation or a digital economy is accessible and democratized for everyone.. And so there is a very real chance that if we're not purposeful about this conversation, that all the investments in digital transformation won't have the outcome that we're looking for.. So we spend a lot of time on programs.. Yes, Microsoft and our competitors do this.. This is not an infomercial for Microsoft.. This is a conversation that I wanna have with you about how you design and build in the new world.. Because if you're not careful, you might end up with something you don't anticipate.. If you'll flip to the next slide.. Here's the study that was done by the World Economic Forum.. And the study basically shows that by 2020, for every one digital job that is created for a man, four traditional jobs will be displaced..

Now, that may be concerning to you.. That's a one-to-four ratio, fair to kind of sit up in your seat.. But I'd like you to sit up a little further in your seat because for every one job created for a woman, 20 jobs will be displaced.. Now, why is that? Now you get to put on the economics hat for a minute.. Women around the world are disproportionately in labor categories that are ripe for digital transformation.. So when you're disproportionately in a labor category that will be transformed, the impact of that transformation is gonna be more severe.. So what does that say to a company like Microsoft? If we're not intentional about programs for entrepreneurial activity, digital literacy, and getting more women through STEM, which by the way is going in the wrong direction right now in this country, doing better outside of this country.. If we're not intentional about that as a company, we'll have a digitally-transformed workforce.. We're gonna have a few people that are amazingly digitally literate, highly, highly agile.. But the gap and the divide is gonna be worse than it is today..

So this is why companies have to be thoughtful and intentional and purposeful, because the data says if left to our own devices we'll just keep creating and we'll still build really cool stuff.. Stuff is a codeword.. We'll build cool stuff, but we will divide the world even more than it is today...