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Where we stand on AI

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is an inevitable development but we need to ensure that it doesn't lead to job losses or degrading of jobs.

PCS recognises that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is an inevitable development. We want to ensure that AI does not lead to job losses – while recognising it will impact on job roles – and that it's used to enhance jobs and not to degrade them.

What is AI?

AI allows computers to learn from huge amounts of data and solve problems. The TUC has produced an AI bill. It defines an AI system as a machine-based system that – for explicit or implicit objectives – infers from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness vary. Such systems will have functions that include, but are not limited to: prediction; planning; classification; pattern recognition; organisation; perception; the recognition of speech, sound, or image; the generation of text, sound, or image; language translation; communication; learning; representation; and problem-solving.

A system does not cease to be an AI system solely because of human involvement in it.

What are our aims and attitudes to AI?

PCS is seeking to reach an AI agreement with employers – we aim to ensure new AI systems will only be introduced following consultation and agreement with the union.

As with so many technological changes, there are good and bad aspects to AI. Our job is to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Our union's goal is to prevent humans being reduced to 'machine minders'.

We want to make sure that the AI systems have no detrimental impact on equality and the health and safety of workers.

PCS wants the productivity gains from AI to be shared between the workers and the organisation, in the form of reduced hours and increased pay.

Our bottom line: That no AI system be introduced – or, where already in existence, be used – if in part or whole it is designed to:

- Make any decision that affects humans; in particular to select staff for recruitment, promotion, transfer to another post or dismissal
- Take existing decision-making from humans
- Automate decision-making
- Allocate, monitor or evaluate the work of humans or to undertake any form of surveillance of the human
- Pretend that it is a person.