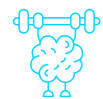


HOW TO ENSURE WORKABILITY WITH AI IN THE WORKPLACE?

AI innovations in the workplace can have a huge impact on workability indicators (such as work stress, motivation and well-being) and risk indicators (such as workload, task variation and autonomy). When involving employees in innovation trajectories, not only the technological innovation itself, but also the social and organisational innovation associated with it are taken into account. AI innovation processes will run more smoothly because their potential impact and the conditions for successful adoption are clear.

The best way to involve employees always depends heavily on the type of AI technology, but also on the work and business context in which the technology will be implemented. That consideration and analysis should be thoughtfully done by employers in order to roll out a successful innovation trajectory.

If you want to know more about employee engagement in AI innovations, we recommend the vision paper 'Werknemers betrekken zorgt voor betere adoptie van AI-innovaties op de werkvloer, en voor werkbaarder werk.' (only in Dutch) from the Knowledge Centre Data & Society (publication date December 2023).



Knowledge Centre Data & Society (December 2023).
How to ensure workability with AI in the workplace?
brAinfood of the Knowledge Centre Data & Society.
Brussels: Knowledge Centre Data & Society.



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AI technology in the workplace

There are a huge number of applications of AI technology to be found in the workplace. Some **common AI technologies** in the workplace are:



deep learning, such as for detecting cancers by analysing medical images



natural language processing, such as for screening social media content among employees and potential new candidates



machine learning, such as assessing and assigning the most optimal shipping and transport solutions

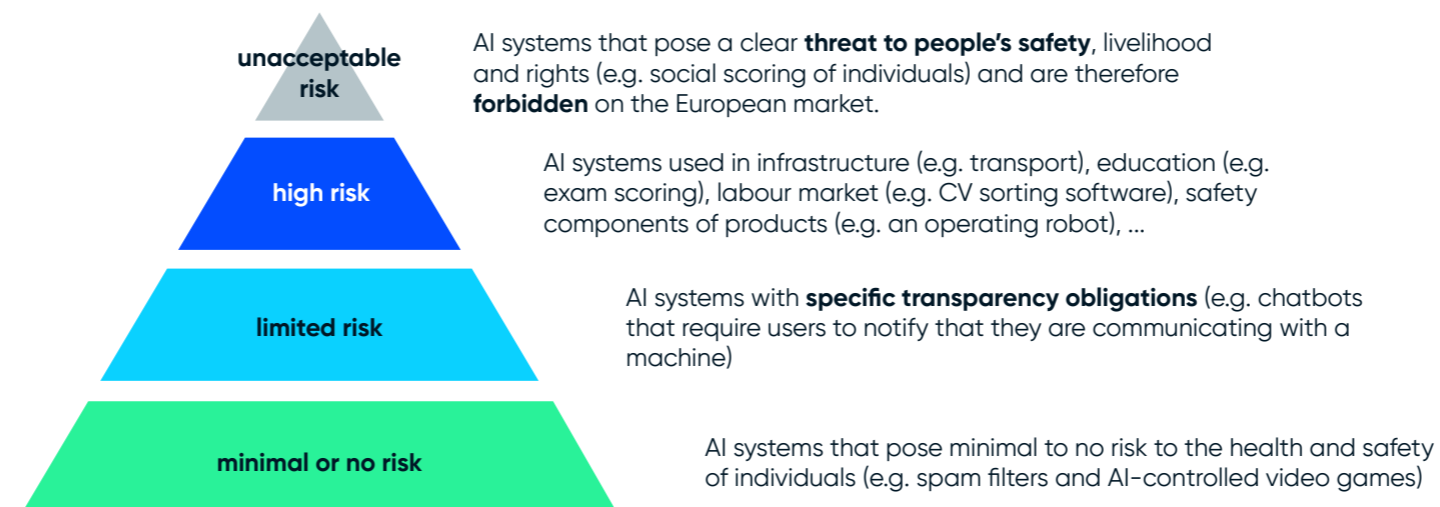


text analytics, such as creating graphs and charts from a lot of textual information so that only relevant data is highlighted



robotic process automation, such as collecting data and documents from all kinds of environments and updating customer information and requests

The impact of these AI technologies on work organisation, culture and employees strongly depends on the context in which the application will be used and for what purposes. It is therefore important to consider not only the type of AI technology, but also the level of risk associated with it. The European Commission identifies **four levels of risk** in their ['Regulatory framework proposal on AI'](#):



Areas of concerns with AI in the workplace

Because of this wide variation in AI applications, it is recommended to always carefully examine whether and which AI application can add **value**, whether the risks associated with the application are acceptable and what **impact** it might have on work, employees and the organisation in general. In all cases, it is valuable to **include employees** in this analysis, and certainly recommended when the (potential) AI application:



measures, collects and analyses **(personal) data** of employees, objects, processes and systems;



interacts with the employee;



takes over part of the **employees' tasks;**



performs **(semi-)autonomous actions;**



has an impact on **employee safety;** etc.

Employee involvement: types of participation

Engaging employees can be done in many ways and at different times. The process consists of **a series of smaller actions and steps** that can take place throughout the innovation process in different forms and degrees.

The higher the risk of a high impact of the application, the more frequent and greater degrees of engagement are important. In addition, the specific approach to employee engagement depends on several factors such as:



the **target audience**: employees' **interests, skills and competencies;**



the **resources and time available;**



the **willingness of management** to organise involvement;



the **enthusiasm of employees** to participate; etc.

Different **degrees of involvement** can be used:



Inform: keep employees informed about your plans and what changes they can expect.



Engage: give employees the opportunity to respond, give feedback and identify their own wishes.



Co-create: involve employees in coming up with solutions and testing ideas.



Collaborate: give employees ownership of certain tasks within the innovation process.

By using these insights to set up a participation process that involves employees at different times and in different ways, you ensure better adoption of AI applications as well as a better quality of work.