David Autor

Ford Professor of Economics, MIT

The consequences of technological changes and globalization

Biography

David Autor, Ford Professor of Economics at MIT, is one of the leading labor economists in the world. He is an internationally recognized authority on how technological change, globalization, and trade agreements affect labor markets. Autor also researches the causes of inequality and its remedies, including the effects of education and disabilities.

David’s latest book, *The Work of the Future: Building Better Jobs in an Age of Intelligent Machines*, is on why the United States lags behind other industrialized countries in sharing the benefits of innovation with workers and how we can remedy the problem. The book argues that we must foster institutional innovations that complement technological change.

Topics & Books

*Economics*

*World Economy*
**Technology.** David is best known for his work on how computerization both replaces and complements human labor. He warns against the tendency to exaggerate how much machines will replace humans and proposes ways to deal creatively with the disruptions they cause. He has focused on how automating some of a worker’s tasks can actually improve their economic value because the human half of the partnership now needs greater skills. To meet this challenge we need strong and creative institutions, and especially, education that gives workers the decision-making capabilities they need in an automated economy.

**Globalization.** David Autor is also an expert on how globalization in general and China’s very rapid rise in particular have affected U.S. labor markets, which has in fact been disastrous for low-skilled workers in manufacturing. Globalization increases the size of a country’s economic pie, but it also makes some of its slices smaller. Autor has clear suggestions for offsetting globalization’s dislocations while continuing to enjoy its benefits.

**Credentials**

- Ford Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Associate Department Head, MIT Economics Department
- Co-director, School Effectiveness and Inequality Initiative, MIT
- National Bureau of Economic Research:
  - Director, Disability Research Center
  - Faculty research associate, Aging programs
- Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Cambridge:
  - Research Affiliate
- Fellow, Econometric Society
- Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences - Fellow, Society of Labor Economists