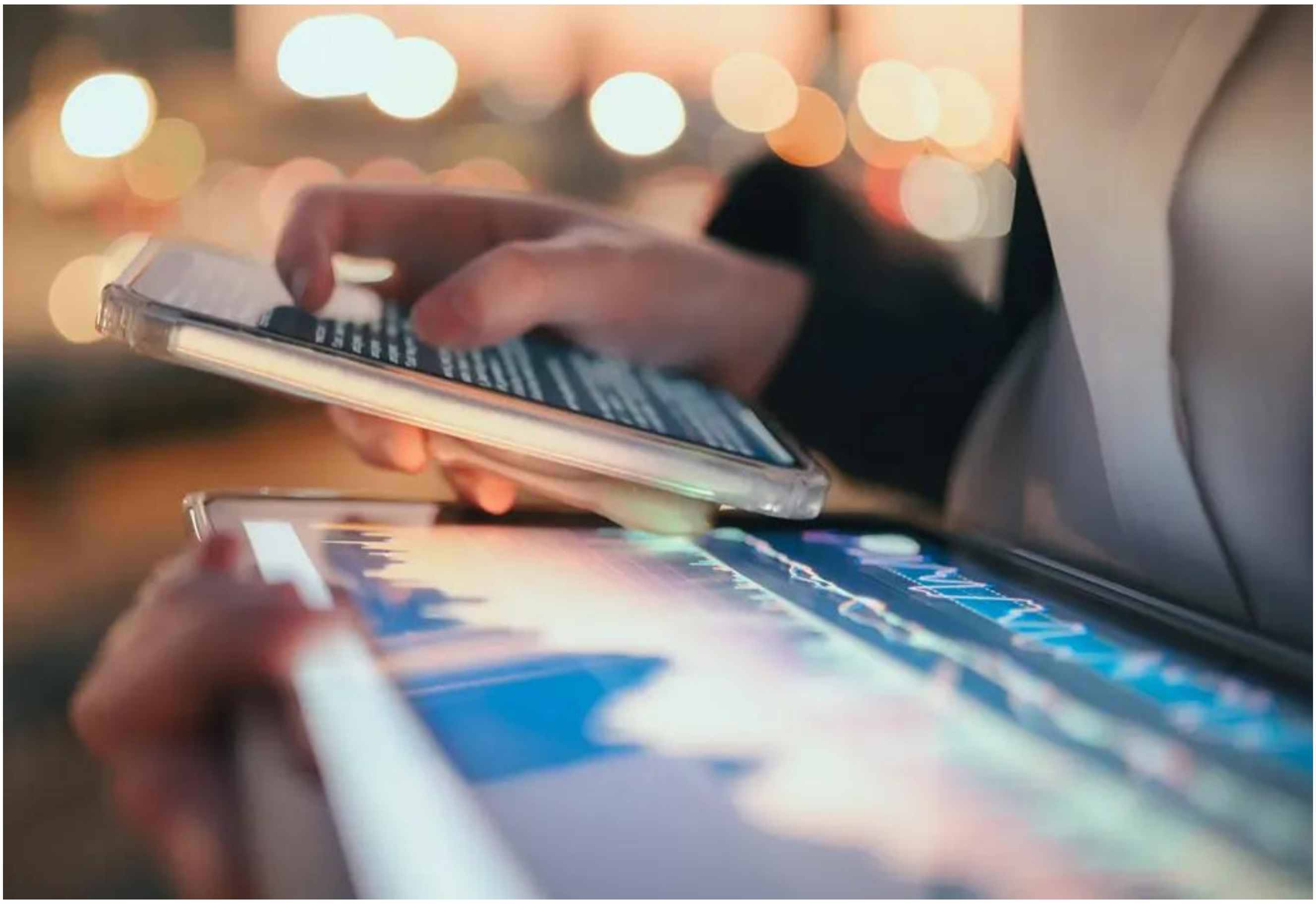
Is AI already transforming the economy? Not quite

Four areas where artificial intelligence still doesn't offer definitive answers, according to Eduard Talamas.



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IESE's Eduard Talamas highlights four key issues for understanding the current state of artificial intelligence, which emerged from a two-day academic conference on the economic effects of AI held in Barcelona in June 2026.

1. Labor market. Some studies point to a decline in junior workers in occupations most exposed to AI, while others find no significant differences between those who use these tools and those who don't. For now, Talamas believes it's still too early to say what effect AI is having on the labor market, particularly with regard to junior workers.

2. Computing power. The cost of training and deploying AI models is growing faster than the economic value they generate. That gap will have to close, and we will have to see greater revenue generation thanks to AI, in order to justify maintaining current levels of investment and use of computing power.

3. Adoption. Technical capability alone no longer explains the pace of AI implementation. Autonomous vehicles, for example, have been technically viable for years. However, despite some pilots of robotaxis in certain geofenced urban zones in North America and Asia, there has still not been widespread adoption of self-driving vehicles at scale.

4. Verification. The volume of AI-generated scientific articles and papers is growing at a rate that conferences and journals can barely keep up with. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify which research is truly relevant and noteworthy, because it still requires human reviewers to filter and verify the ideas, and decide which articles and papers are worth discussing and publishing.

"Overall, I think AI gives us tremendous opportunities to move toward a better world, but I also think there are challenges ahead and there is a lot of work to do," he concludes. "We can do much better with AI, but we have to make sure that we move in the right direction."

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Eduard Talamas

Associate Professor of Economics at IESE Business School. His areas of research are the economic effects of AI, organizational economics, bargaining and networks.

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