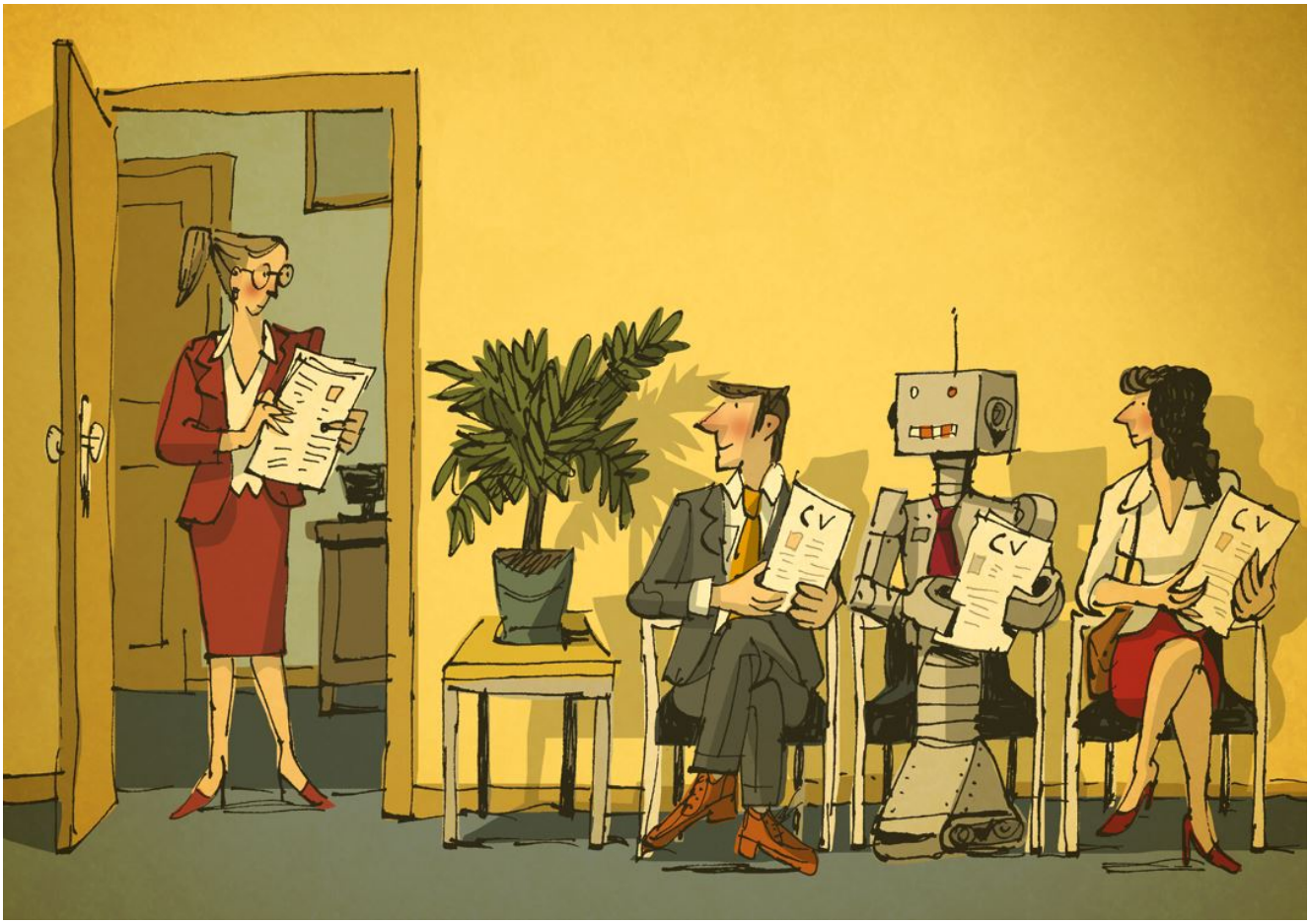
Future-proofing your job from robots

Will a robot take your job? Despite fears that automation may be putting millions of jobs at risk, companies can prepare for technological change.



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“Sheep are eating men!” complained the Cardinal in Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), as

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16th century landlords proceeded to enclose common lands to raise sheep — an activity that required much less labor than farming, causing “the husbandmen be thrust out of their own.”

This complaint might find modern-day expression as: “Robots are eating men!” The growing use of robots in manufacturing and computers in services is stoking fears that people will become redundant.

Everywhere you turn, the media are full of articles predicting the rise of the machines, based on an implicit assumption that wherever a machine can replace a person, it will.

Under the headline, “Will a robot take your job?” the BBC even featured a search box where you could type in your job title and it would tell you the likelihood of your job being automated within the next 20 years.

Should we be scared? IESE has been following this matter with interest, and not just in terms of the specific trend of digitization and the potential of technology to take your job. We are interested in studying what is happening across society, the economy, employment, skills, training and education more broadly.

This article summarizes the latest research, which includes interviews with several top executives from leading corporations in Spain, to help separate science fiction from business reality.

Armed with this deeper understanding, executives may start to view technological change not with fear but with flexibility, and identify some practical actions they can take to ready themselves for whatever lies ahead.

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