This is what's next now that the gig economy has changed everything

Economics

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The rise of the freelancer: some estimates are that over 54 million Americans are now taking contractual gigs rather than steady employment. After the recession, some temporary gigs were necessary -- but the experiments in Mechanical Turk and Uber driving gigs that sprouted up seemingly over night took hold. Contractors and freelancers are the norm, now.

But perhaps not for long -- freelancers may turn out to be temps, after all, iftechnologykeeps moving at the blistering pace we've seen. That's just the beginning of the changes we can foresee in the next five to 10 years as technological innovation and social expectation change the world dramatically; even more than the gig economy has changed things thus far. Here's what to expect:

1. Artificial intelligence.

On-demand marketplaces have proven to be fabulously rich -- demonstrating to investors that in what capacity they can be replaced, replacing gigs with AI or technology is a worthwhile endeavor. The technology has caught up to the need and desire for AI, and the next logical step is automation, eliminating the millions of dollars spent on flesh and blood workers.

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Though some recent doomsday studies estimate employment at about half of today’s rates by the time AI matures in 2025, in reality AI will replace much less than that. Though routine jobs and unskilled manual labor will drop off steeply, the same studies estimate that creative, visionary and human-intelligence-based jobs will grow, offsetting some unemployment. Artists, leaders, entrepreneurs and customer service relations will see an increase in job availability due to the inability to automate these sectors.

Though the impetus will be to fight these changes, the sustainable answer is to get educated. For example, taxi drivers who are fighting the influx of Uber and Lyft are wasting their time: Uber drivers are all going to be replaced shortly with AI. Every driver will need to be educated in something new, and the same will be true of many jobs in the next few years.

2. Education must become faster and cheaper.

With the growth of AI will come a rapid pace of changes in the employment market, requiring an ever-faster pace ofeducation, decidedly so in technical fields. Gone are the days where one could learn a technological skill and bank on it as a life-longcareer. Job seekers will need to become super-skilled in subjects for a shorter period of time -- there will be no such thing as a “ Master of One.”

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This kind of education can only be done with cheap, faster, more flexible learning.

The return on a $200, 000 four-year degree will no longer be there. In four years, the job will be gone anyway. Employee retention will entirely depend on the flex-learning ability of the employee and the employers’ willingness to provide knowledge-on-demand, tutors, classes and other in-house trainings to educate their employees on the latest skill.

3. Rise of entrepreneurship.

At the intersection of AI and continuing tech education is the entrepreneur. As more and more jobs are automated, employment rates fluctuate, and skilled labor jobs disappear, the people in demand will be those that can provide singularly human traits of vision, leadership, imagination, values and wisdom. Those things that cannot be provided by technology will be in demand as the planet looks to solve global water, energy and population crises.

Technology itself will be both the catalyst and the tool used to create entrepreneurial vision, as the influx of apps and machine intelligence has and will continue to allow entrepreneurs easy entry into building thriving businesses with a large customer base. Though the problem solving may focus on other sectors, it will continue to be easier than ever to be an entrepreneur.

4. Personal finance will change.

First, because current mortgages, loans, retirement plans and insurance plans are set up for the full-time long-term employee, all of that will have to change as the economy shifts to one largely made up of entrepreneurs and freelancers.

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The fintech market will (and has) changed to reflect the economy as robo-advisors and automated investing brings services previously limited only to the wealthy to the masses, allowing more control over personal finances than ever before. Big banks are facing unbelievable pressure as fintech gains strength -- over $9 billion was invested in fintech in 2016.

Millennials make up 25 percent of the U. S. population and the younger generation, toting larger college debts and lower credit scores than ever before, will need new innovations if they are to participate in financial markets. New platforms are emerging that are changing markets long since stagnant, like life insurance. Peer-to-peer lending, crowd funding and dynamic risk assessments rather than traditional credit scores will replace old models offinance.