FOURTH
NATIONAL
CONFERENCE

The Future of
Work 2021
Zoom IN

Just Innovation

Are you ultimately a luddite if you call for labor rights in times of rise of intelligent automation?

Belgrade, Serbia,
November 25th, 2021
12:00 to 15:30 CET

FOCUS AND RATIONALE OF THE CONFERENCE

Do societies have a possibility to adjust to technological change by adhering to values and norms which put human interest in its center? This hot topic will be at the center of The Fourth National Conference, Future of Work 2021 – Just innovation. This year the conference will zoom in the ethical dimension and effects of new technologies and intelligent automation on society on one side, and on the future of work in Serbia and globally, on the other.

Inspired by the recent work of acclaimed economists Dani Rodrik, Daron Acemoglu, Ricardo Hausmann and alike, we will seek solutions how to keep the best of humanity in the application of machine learning (Artificial Intelligence) and automation. The development of new technologies and AI creates both hopes for increased efficiency and economic progress as well as concerns whether these advancements would be human-centered, bringing welfare to the whole mankind or will work to the benefit of only few.

We argue that governments, along with other players – businesses, workers, NGOs and citizens - are ultimate shapers of technological landscape and "may tilt the playing field to determine what kind of innovations take place" (Rodrik, 2020).

12:00 **PLENARY SESSION:**
12:30 ETHICS OF AI

12:35 **FIRST PANEL DISCUSSION** - TOPIC:
13:25 AUTOMATION AND JOBS CREATION

Do robots deserve more leeway than laborers?
In many cases governments are spurring robotisation and automation by creating tax breaks, introducing accelerated amortization, and interest deductions. While this seems as a right policy approach, particularly in the countries were the automation is lagging behind, Acemoglu argues that these initiatives should be carefully designed not to distort automation incentives by favouring mediocre applications over labour. As he points out if right policies are applied, technology can be redirected toward the creation of new productivity-enhancing tasks for people.

13:30 **SECOND PANEL DISCUSSION** – TOPIC:
14:20 EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

Does every truck driver need to become a computer programmer?
Behind this question lays an old debate which is particularly relevant today when everybody rushes to create skilling and reskilling programs aimed to close the gap between the needs of the businesses which look for workers with advanced digital skills and the educational system that struggles to provide adequate workforce. Is it possible to successfully reskill everybody or we should ask businesses to create jobs which would fit the workers we have, not the workers we wish we had as suggested by Hausmann? How to approach this topic in countries which at once deal with large surpluses of unskilled workers and shortage of workers with skills in high demand? What incentives this creates in terms of education vs automation?

14:25 **THIRD PANEL DISCUSSION** – TOPIC:
15:15 ALGORITHMIC MANAGEMENT

Do people really get fired by artificial intelligence?
Sophisticated technologies increasingly allow managers to measure efficiency of workers and increase productivity standards often crossing the lines of preserving workers' physical and mental health. In addition, algorithmic management which is not transparent may contribute to worsening working conditions, diluting bargaining power and endangering of workers' dignity.

Alternatively, very similar technologies can empower workers to increase their autonomy and control their work environment. How ethics can be introduced in algorithmic management?

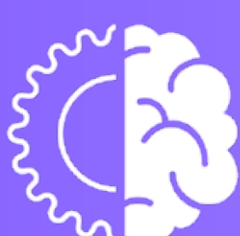15:15 **CONCLUSION:**
15:30 WHAT'S NEXT?

TECHNICAL DETAILS:
SHORT EXPLANATION

The conference will last half day (cca 3,5 hours), and will be organized online via Zoom.

The Zoom application will support participation of up to 500 people including organizers, guest speakers, attendees, and technical support. The access to the conference will be free (no fees) but the attendees will have to register prior to the conference.

The event will be organized in 3 plenary sessions and will be accompanied by rich online content (website, videos, charts, visualization, polls etc.) including an online and off line art exhibition inspired by the algorithms. Each session will start with the exclusive insights from the CENTER's research relevant for the sessions, and will be accompanied by a poll related to the specific topic discussed in that session. The proceedings from the polls will feed into the recommendations.

All sessions will be filmed and available to the general public at the CENTER's you tube channel.

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