

Xavier Reynolds and Raoul Gebert
July 2026

Impacts of AI Implementation on the Canadian Workforce



Imprint

Published by

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e. V.
Godesberger Allee 149
53175 Bonn
Germany
info@fes.de

Issuing Department

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Washington Office |
719 A Street, NE | Washington, DC 20002 | USA

Responsibility for Content and Editing

Dr Reinhard Krumm | Director | FES USA and Canada
reinhard.krumm@fes.de

Contact

info-dc@fes.de

Design/Layout

pertext | corporate publishing
www.pertext.de

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). Commercial use of media published by the FES is not permitted without the written consent of the FES. Publications by the FES may not be used for electioneering purposes.

July 2026

© Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e. V.

Further publications of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung can be found here:

➤ www.fes.de/publikationen

Xavier Reynolds and Raoul Gebert
July 2026

Impacts of AI Implementation on the Canadian Workforce

Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Statistics on AI adoption in Canada	4
3. Analysis of AI impacts on different Canadian sectors	9
a. AI implementation in Canadian public services	9
b. AI implementation in the Canadian private sector	12
4. Cross-sector analysis of challenges (and opportunities)	17
a. Job losses (and potential gains)	17
b. Surveillance and privacy issues	17
c. Automatic decision making and ethics	18
d. Copyright	18
e. Workers' rights and earnings	18
5. Regulating AI and the digital economy, going forward	19
a. Advocacy for improving the legislative framework	19
b. Pursuing collective bargaining and social dialogue with employers	20
c. Taking a gamble on litigation	20
6. Conclusion	22
References	23
Glossary	25
List of acronyms	26
List of tables and figures	27

1.

Introduction

Over the past decade, the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) has reshaped the structure, regulation and work experience in Canada. AI has become a defining force in the transformation of Canada's workforce across all sectors. Although adoption varies between sectors, AI is rapidly expanding in scope and capability, influencing productivity and efficiency, but also how work is organized and monitored. The federal government has already integrated the use of AI across multiple departments to automate administrative tasks, enhance service delivery and allow public servants to focus on more complex tasks. At the same time, industries such as manufacturing, transportation and shipping, food deliveries and taxi services, as well as creative industries and the arts, are integrating AI to improve efficiency, optimize operations and support real-time decision making.

Despite these opportunities, the rise of AI presents significant challenges for workers and policymakers. The 2021 national census¹ indicates that a majority of Canadian jobs are exposed to AI driven change. For more than half of those who are employed in occupations with high potential exposure, AI may substitute job tasks rather than augment them. Growing concerns about job displacement, shifting skill requirements and intensified digital surveillance have become a common issue for Canadian workers. Evidence from multiple sectors shows that AI monitoring can heighten stress, reduce job satisfaction and weaken trust.² These effects raise questions about privacy regulation and quality of work where AI has been implemented.

Canada's regulatory landscape has struggled to keep pace with technological developments. The withdrawal of Bill C-27, the federal regulatory framework around AI, has left gaps in accountability, transparency and worker protection. While some provinces, such as British Columbia (with increased protections for app-based workers) and Ontario (with increased disclosure of electronic monitoring), have begun implementing targeted measures for AI practices, there is still a lack of a comprehensive policy capable of addressing the social, economic and ethical risks associated with AI adoption.

This report examines the evolving role of artificial intelligence across multiple sectors in Canada. It will assess how technological change is reshaping jobs in those areas, how workers are affected and how a better regulatory framework can help govern the integration of AI in the labour market.

We conducted this research using a mixed methodology that integrates quantitative and qualitative data sources. Our review draws on a wide range of materials such as statistical releases from national institutions, publications from institutional and government entities, financial reports from relevant companies and public stakeholder documents, such as websites and press releases. To complement these sources, we also carried out ten interviews with thirteen trade union representatives from various sectors, whose perspectives provided valuable contextual insights to our analysis.

¹ Mehdi, T., & Frenette, M. (2024). *Exposure to artificial intelligence in Canadian jobs: Experimental estimates*. Statistics Canada. <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202400900004-eng>.

² Masoodi, M., et al. (2023). *Monitoring remote work in Canada: Support or surveillance?* Future Skills Centre. https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Monitoring-Remote-Work-in-Canada-Support-or-Surveillance_Report.pdf.

2. Statistics on AI adoption in Canada

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to technologies capable of performing tasks that typically require human cognitive abilities. Although AI is expanding at an exponential rate driven by innovation within private-sector firms, we observe a slowing and comparatively weak trend of business investment in this innovation in Canada. As Figure 1 illustrates, national R&D investment grew steadily from the 1960s to 2000, reaching a peak of approximately 2.3 % of GDP. Over the past two decades, this momentum has stalled, with investment falling to roughly 1.8 % of GDP by 2018. However, as we will discuss later, Canadian governments of all levels, are doubling down on their investments in AI, thereby compensating for some of the sluggish adoption by the private sector.

Therefore, when compared to other advanced economies, Canada's overall performance is somewhat concerning. Business-sector R&D spending in Canada has consistently lagged behind the average of OECD member countries. By 2019, Canadian businesses were investing less

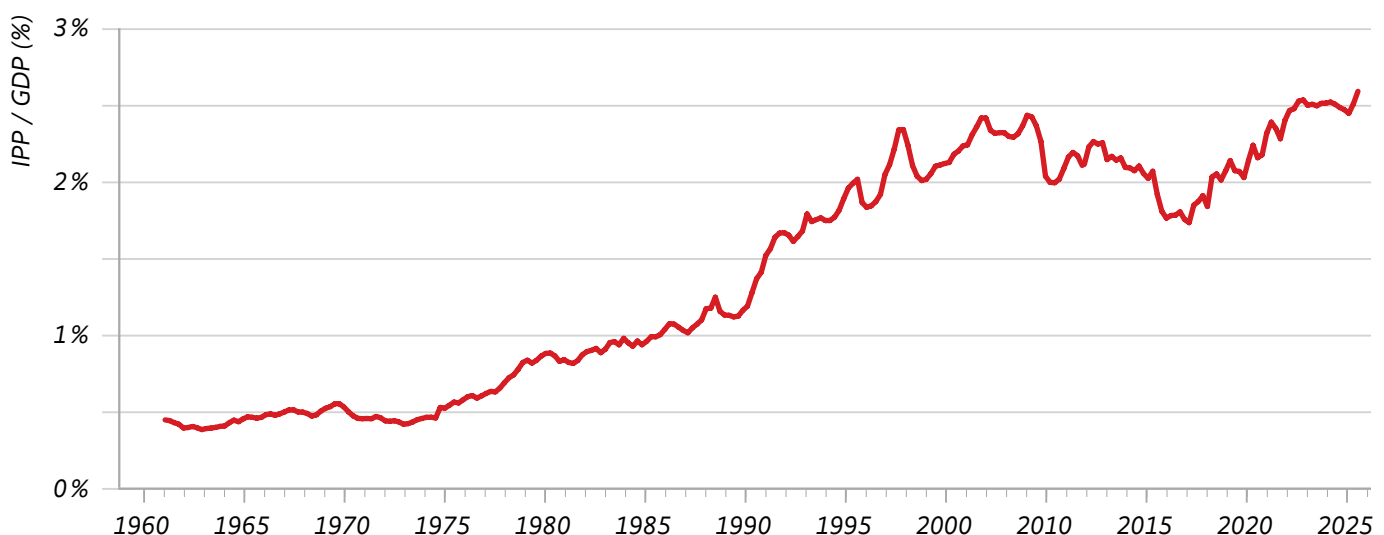
than half of the R&D share of GDP recorded across other industrial nations, highlighting a persistent and widening innovation gap.³

According to the 2021 Census, three out of five workers in Canada are employed in occupations with a high potential for exposure to AI-related technologies.⁴ Despite the global momentum, AI adoption among Canadian businesses remains comparatively limited. Data from the 2025 Canadian Survey on Business Conditions⁵ indicates that only 14.5 % of businesses expect to implement AI within the next 12 months, while approximately two thirds report no plans to adopt AI in the foreseeable future. The most frequently cited reason for non-adoption is that AI is not considered relevant to the organization's current goods or services, followed by concerns related to knowledge gaps, implementation capacity, and privacy issue.

Businesses planning to adopt AI in the coming year are concentrated in information and cultural industries, finance and

Business Investment in Innovation (1961–2026)

Figure 1

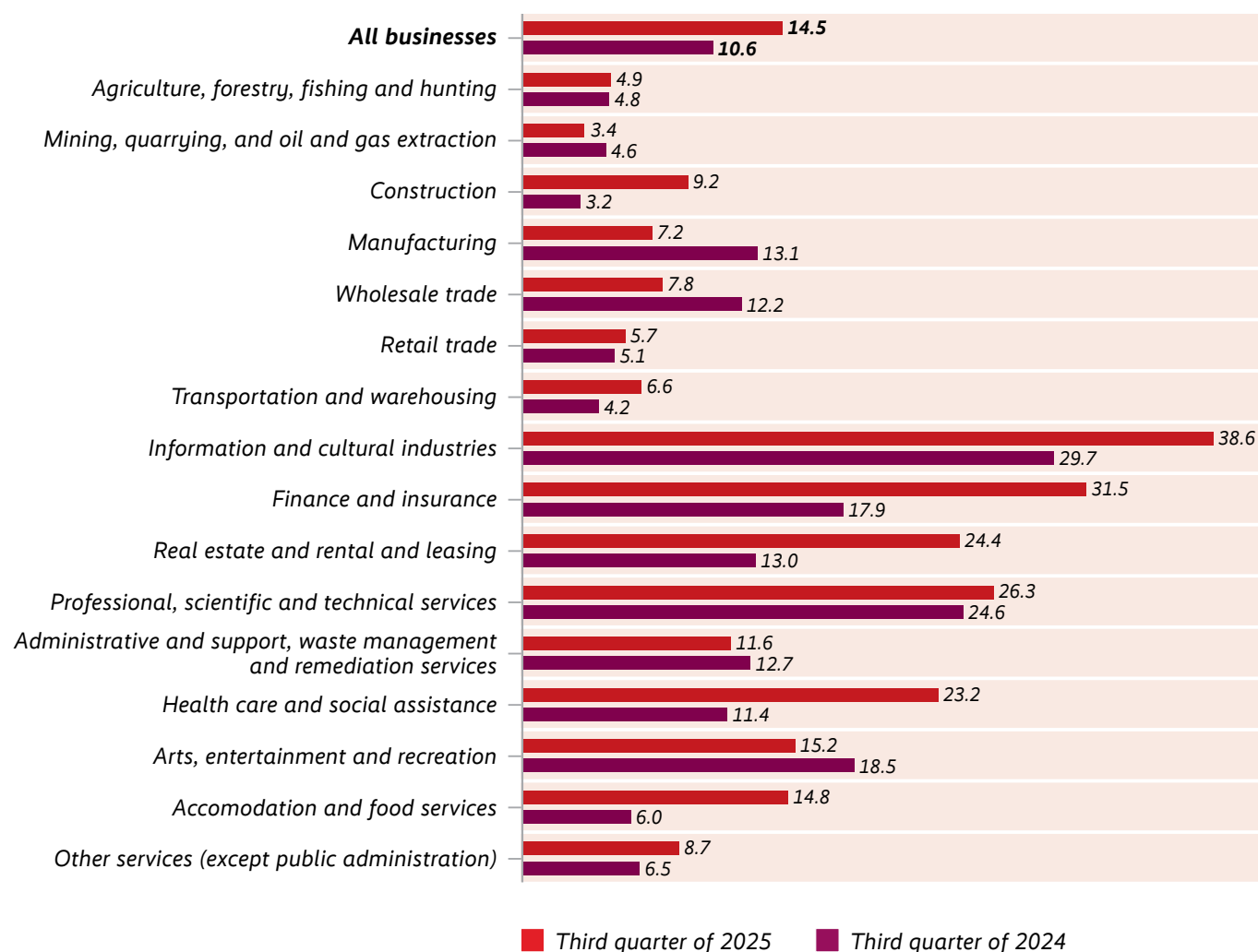


Source: Statistics Canada.

³ Stanford, J. (2022). *Where are the robots? The surprising deceleration of technology in Canadian workplaces*. Centre for Future Work/PowerShare. <https://centreforfuturework.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Where-Are-The-Robots.pdf>.

⁴ Mehdi, T. and R. Morissette. (2024). *Experimental Estimates of Potential AI Occupational Exposure in Canada*. Statistics Canada.

⁵ Statistics Canada. (2025). *Analysis on expected use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2025* (Catalogue No. 11-621-M2025011-eng). Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-621-m/11-621-m2025011-eng.htm>.



Source: Statistics Canada.

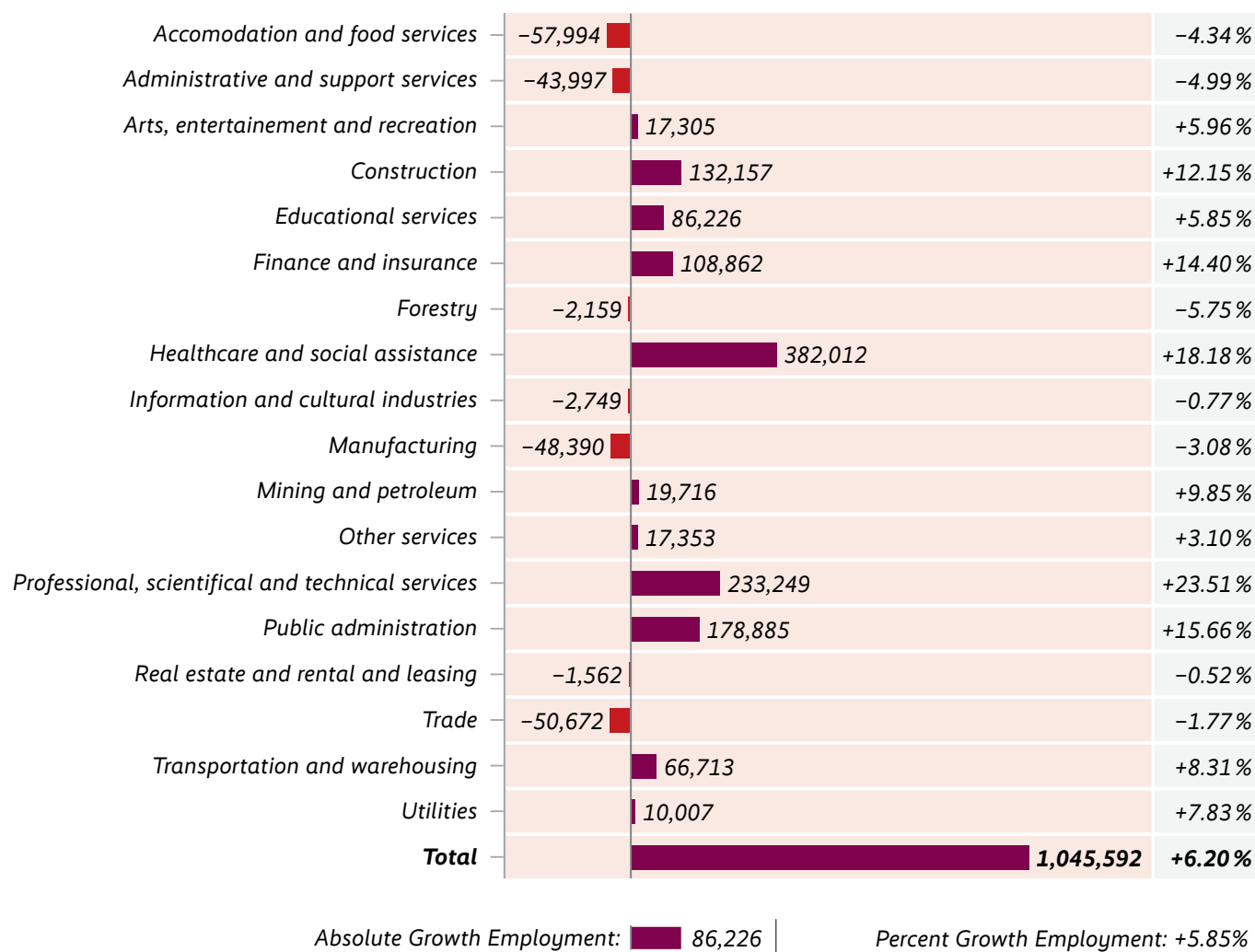
insurance, as well as professional, scientific, and technical services. Compared with the 2024 survey results, sectors that were already leading (such as information and cultural industries, healthcare, finance and insurance, along with real estate) have shown further substantial increases in AI uptake. By contrast, the manufacturing sector and wholesale trade report a significantly lower expected usage of AI (projected levels falling to roughly half of what was anticipated). However, there are also some “new kids on the block” in 2025: the construction industry, as well as accommodation and food services, now report significantly higher expectations of AI implementation.

While AI offers substantial opportunities for innovation and productivity, it also raises concerns about job security. Public discourse frequently links AI to potential job displacement,

particularly in occupations involving routine or repetitive tasks. Recent economic research suggests that the job displacing potential of emerging technologies could be significant. A study by Frey and Osborne⁶ estimated that approximately 47% of existing jobs in the United States were at high risk of displacement within a decade due to automation. In contrast, businesses in Canada continue to report relatively limited employment impacts associated with AI adoption. Among firms planning to implement AI within the next 12 months, more than two thirds anticipate no change in staffing levels. A report commissioned by the Bank of Canada and published in May 2026 shows a contrasted picture regarding the adoption of AI in various Canadian sectors, with finance and insurance leading the way. The report also projects that, overall, no major job losses should be expected in the Canadian economy.⁷

⁶ Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (2017). *The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?* *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 114, 254–280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2016.08.019>.

⁷ Alexopoulos, M. (2026). *AI is knocking: Canada's next productivity story*. Bank of Canada. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2026/05/ai-is-knocking-canadas-next-productivity-story/>.



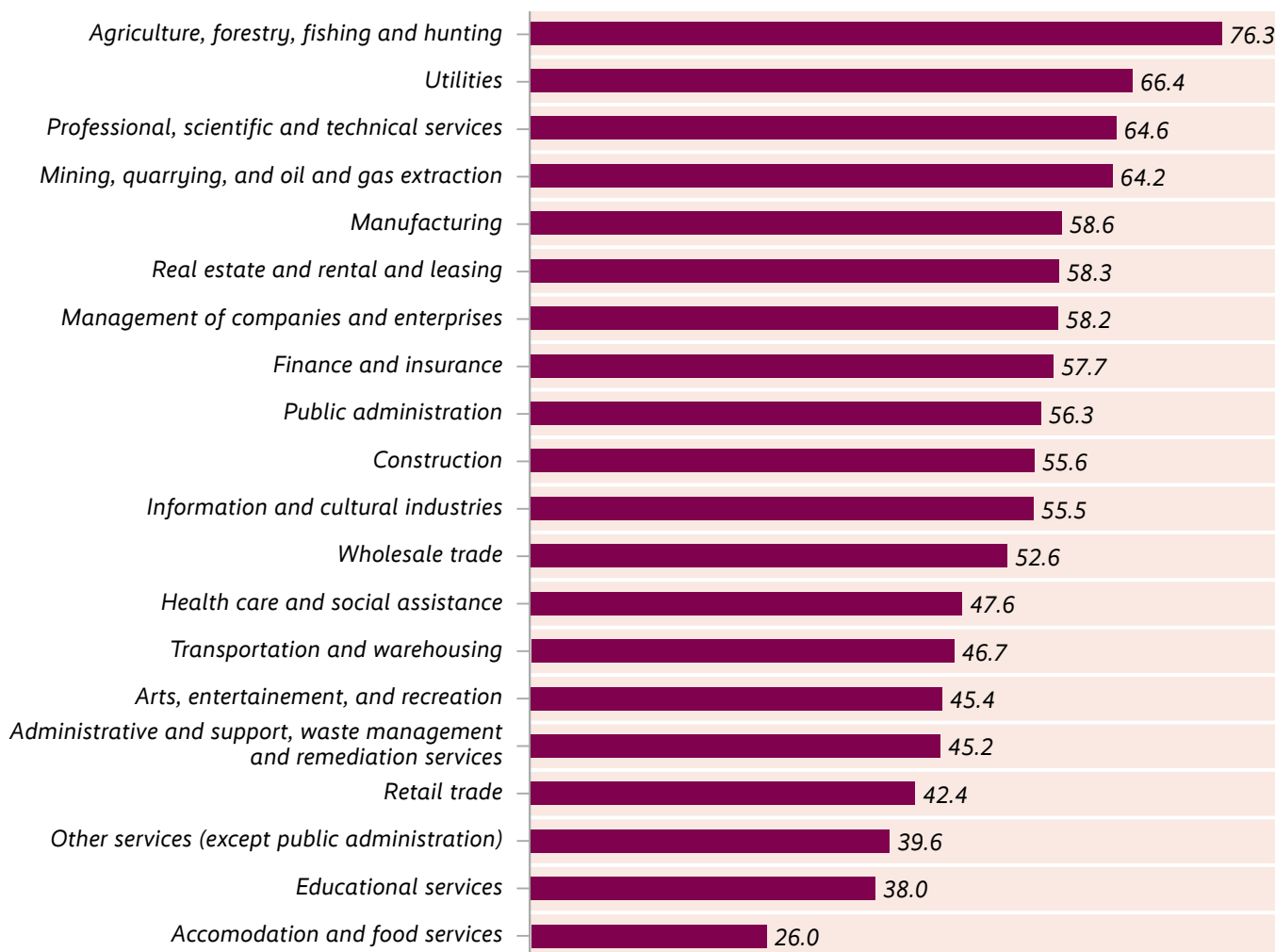
Source: Statistics Canada.

While the adoption of new production technologies can reduce direct employment in specific industries or occupations, there are several reasons why widespread technological displacement and broad-based unemployment across the labour market is unlikely to occur. New technologies often generate their own labour demand through engineering, development, installation, and maintenance while also creating entirely new industries and occupations that did not previously exist. With supportive macroeconomic, labour market, and retraining policies, displaced workers can be reabsorbed into expanding sectors. Thus, ensuring that productivity gains translate into new employment opportunities in Canada rather than widespread job loss. Historically, reductions in working hours have also helped distribute productivity benefits more evenly, preventing technological change from producing large increases in unemployment.⁸

Nevertheless, expectations are shifting gradually. Figure 2 illustrates that the proportion of businesses forecasting employment declines increased from 9.4 % in the second quarter of 2024 to 12.2 % in the second quarter of 2025. Over the same period, the share expecting employment growth decreased from 11.1 % to 7.3 %. Forecasts depict a darkening picture of macroeconomic growth, linked to trade disputes with the United States and global insecurity. These adjustments, then, also suggest that some Canadian employers are increasingly looking to AI in order to be able to shed employees, even though widespread displacement linked to automation has not materialized.

These expectations align closely with the experiences of businesses already employing AI for production and service delivery. In the second quarter of 2025, a majority of AI-using firms reported no change in employment

⁸ Hayden, A. (1999). *Sharing the work, sparing the planet: Work time, consumption, and ecology*. Between the Lines.



Source: The Conference Board.

levels. Among those that did experience change, 6.3% reported a decrease in employment, while 4.3% reported an increase.⁹ Overall, the data indicates that AI adoption is influencing employment in nuanced and sector-specific ways rather than producing uniform or widespread job losses. As Figure 3 illustrates, job gains or losses (as a percentage of overall sector employment) are varying significantly by sector, with professional scientific and technical services, as well as healthcare and public administration leading the pack. As we have seen, these are also the sectors in which AI adoption is highest. So, while we cannot infer causality, investments in AI are not necessarily followed by lowered job prospects but rather correlated with rising employment in the sector.

In terms of the prospects for future job displacement, as of May 2021, 31% of employees were working in occupations that were both highly exposed to AI and less complementary (where AI could potentially substitute human labour), while 29% were employed in roles that were highly exposed but also highly complementary (where AI is more likely to enhance rather than replace human work).¹⁰ Exposure varies significantly across industries: sectors such as healthcare, finance, and information technology face higher levels of AI integration, whereas trades and manual labour occupations show considerably lower exposure. A study by Mehdi and Frenette¹¹ also finds that highly educated workers are more likely to experience job transformation driven by AI, reflecting the technology's growing influence on cognitive and analytical tasks.

⁹ Bryan, V., Sood, S., & Johnston, C. (2025). *Analysis on expected use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2025*. Statistics Canada.

¹⁰ Mehdi, T., & Frenette, M. (2024). *Exposure to artificial intelligence in Canadian jobs: Experimental estimates*. Statistics Canada. <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202400900004-eng>.

¹¹ Mehdi, T., & Frenette, M. (2024). *Exposure to artificial intelligence in Canadian jobs: Experimental estimates*. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2024009/article/00004-eng.htm>.

Findings reported by the Conference Board of Canada¹² lean towards the same results: more than half of all tasks performed across occupations could be completed by AI technologies. Their projections indicate that employment will rise by 2.1% by 2045, but only after an initial decline of 2.6% by 2030 (equivalent to approximately 550,000 jobs). This reflects a period of short-term adjustment in which businesses reduce their workforce as they integrate new AI systems, followed by longer-term gains as productivity improvements stimulate new economic activity in Canada.

An important distinction, especially in the manufacturing sector, should be made between automation technology (AT) and artificial intelligence (AI). Recent developments in automation have renewed concerns about the future of work, particularly when automation, paired with AI, might displace certain types of human labour entirely. Earlier studies¹³ on the Canadian labour market focused primarily on automation defined as the use of machines to perform simple, routine, and non-cognitive tasks. AI, by contrast, is capable of undertaking complex, non-routine, and cognitive functions, expanding the potential scope of technological impacts on employment.

Furthermore, automation risk is not confined to a single segment of the workforce. Both white-collar and blue-collar roles face exposure to the automation of cognitive and routine tasks, such as data analysis, literature review, monitoring, and other functions that can be replicated by AI. The research also highlights a clear relationship between exposure and potential benefits: industries with the highest exposure to AI stand to gain the most from productivity growth. As illustrated in Figure 4, primary industries exhibit the highest levels of exposure to both AT and AI, and consequently, the largest productivity gains driven largely by the replacement of manual or repetitive tasks with automated systems. A similar logic applies to white-collar work, where AI can perform tasks such as data collection or information processing. By contrast, industries that rely heavily on direct human interaction are less exposed to AI and thus face a more modest potential for productivity improvements.

¹² Conference Board of Canada. (2025). *Understanding the Influence of AI on Employment*. Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada.

¹³ Frenette, M., Frank, K. (2020). *Automation and Job Transformation in Canada: Who's at Risk?* Statistiques Canada.

3.

Analysis of AI impacts on different Canadian sectors

To illustrate the impacts of AI implementation on the Canadian workforce, we have selected a certain number of economic sectors, which we deemed the most significant in three regards: in terms of overall employment numbers, in terms of the potential disruption caused by both automation and the introduction of AI, and with regards to timeliness – sectors in which change is particularly rapid or recent. Our selection is necessarily partial and cannot cover every aspect of digitalization in the Canadian economy.

Currently, the resource, manufacturing and agricultural sectors are important drivers of economic growth in Canada. However, the process of automation has been a constant force of technological change there for at least a generation, so we have not focused on them. On the other hand, education is a very significant employer in Canada. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has even managed to negotiate some initial language around AI implementation in higher education. It is important to note that the impacts of AI in the sector are still very much in their beginnings hence why we didn't have much to report here.

To better regroup our data, we start by presenting our findings in the public sector (public administration, healthcare and public transit), before moving to the private sector (transportation, e-commerce and shipping, private services and the creative industries). This order simply reflects the importance of AI in government investments alluded to earlier.

a. AI implementation in Canadian public services

i. Public administration

Being the first country to implement a national AI strategy in 2017, the Canadian federal government has been integrating AI into its operations for nearly a decade and continues to expand its use. In theory, the use of AI should enable the development of new service delivery models, better meeting the needs of Canadian citizens. Routine and repetitive tasks are meant to be automated, allowing public servants to concentrate on higher-value and more com-

plex responsibilities. AI applications are now embedded across multiple departments and agencies including Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Statistics Canada; Shared Services Canada; and Transport Canada.¹⁴

The most impacted function across all government departments that is targeted for replacement by AI is the translation of documents between Canada's two official languages, English and French. According to trade unions in the public sector, the government has invested in its own conversational translation apps called CanChat and Cohere. This is placing significant pressure on government translators and their union, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE).

In early 2025, the Canadian federal government introduced a new AI strategy for the public sector designed to accelerate the adoption of responsible AI systems. The strategy is built around four core principles.¹⁵ They entail that AI should 1) improve public services for Canadians; 2) encourage strong cooperation among all stakeholders; 3) operate on secure and scalable technological infrastructure; and 4) uphold transparency and accountability throughout the system's life-cycle. The question remains if workers affected by AI-driven changes count as relevant stakeholders in the process, and if the end result will be both secure and transparent for the citizens the systems are looking to serve.

Local Canadian governments are also implementing AI to improve both internal administrative processes and public service delivery. Municipal governments are often the primary point of contact between citizens and public institutions and play an important role in supporting economic development and sustainability. However, they frequently operate with limited financial and technical resources, which makes both the risks associated with AI adoption more daunting, but also its potential opportunities more tempting.

In many respects, local governments face issues similar to those encountered at the national level. While AI offers significant opportunities particularly by automating routine tasks and improving operational efficiency, it also raises concerns related to workforce impacts, including potential

¹⁴ Government of Canada. (2024). GC AI strategy overview. <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-government-innovations/responsible-use-ai/gc-ai-strategy-overview.html>

¹⁵ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2026). *Responsible use of artificial intelligence in government* (including AI strategy overview). Government of Canada.

job displacement and the lack of adequate training for public employees adapting to these new technologies.¹⁶ A recent report from the Future Skills Centre¹⁷ finds that public sector employees are significantly more likely to be exposed to AI than workers in the broader labour market (74 % compared to 56 %). Nearly half of public sector roles fall into low-complementarity categories, indicating that AI could substitute for a significant share of jobs tasks rather than augmenting them. If we consider the current 1.1 million workers in public administration, over five hundred thousand of these workers could be partially replaced or entirely replaced by AI.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), which represents federal public service employees, including those at the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), has voiced growing concerns about the introduction of AI into government operations¹⁸. CRA workers, in particular, fear that AI systems may alter the nature of their jobs or reduce the scope of their responsibilities. Some worry that automated tools such as AI chatbots used to deliver direct assistance to the public could eventually replace certain roles or diminish the need for human involvement¹⁹.

ii. Healthcare sector

While important changes related to AI implementation also touch various levels of public education (the other large branch of employment in the public service sector), presently changes in Canadian healthcare delivery are more striking. As previously shown, the healthcare sector is among the leading growers with regards to AI implementation. It is notoriously understaffed, difficult to manage, dealing with an ageing society and often conflictual relations with a highly professional workforce. Therefore, the healthcare sector presents somewhat of a ground zero for public employers trying to leverage AI technologies to boost services, while controlling costs.

Among the more significant novelties in Canadian healthcare are both aspects of automation (food preparation in long-term care, robot-assisted procedures) and artificial intelligence (app-based scheduling, algorithmic route planning for home care providers, real-time digital surveillance of both patients and healthcare workers, as well as digital note taking and patient records).

The Ontario home care sector has implemented the app-based scheduling system ReliaCare, originating from the United States. The app allows for route optimization and

the increased surveillance of downtime. It is now also slowly being introduced in hospitals in that province, raising significant privacy concerns. Incidentally, the home-care sector, in some Canadian provinces, also exhibits aspects of “dependent contractor” status. The advantages and pitfalls of the home-care sector will be discussed hereafter.

Among further AI-powered enhancements are digital emergency bracelets, originally designed to give patients a cordless option for calling assistance in case of emergency. These are now also provided to care workers on a voluntary basis. Their whereabouts can then be tracked by AI, once again raising concerns about privacy and intensification of work.

Finally, Toronto emergency services have also been experimenting with Hyper, a chat bot meant to assist with the triage of emergency calls. While the system might indeed redirect critically urgent call to a human agent much faster than a first-come-first-serve call centre, it is impossible to guarantee that all urgent calls will indeed be recognized as such by the AI chat bot. Issues of racial discrimination (for instance, a poor recognition of accented English) as well as agism could arise.

Québec healthcare services have introduced app-based solutions to booking overtime shifts. While the efficiency gains are obvious, the process also interferes with collectively negotiated rules around seniority, providing first right of refusal to more senior staff. It also raises questions around whether care workers should have a “right to disconnect” from their devices during work hours, notably to concentrate on providing better care to patients.

Long-term care operators in that province have introduced automation in the preparation of food and launched pilot projects for the delivery of food and medication by robots to the patients. The operational pitfalls of such automation (potentially deadly gaps and errors in medication) are obvious, let alone the shock of elderly patients seeing their human caregiver replaced by a robot. Additionally, a question arises around the prohibition of subcontracting in many collective agreements in the healthcare system: are robots subcontractors, legally speaking?

iii. Public transit

AI is also reshaping the transportation sector. Some research firms estimate that the global AI impact in the transportation market will reach USD 34.8 billion by 2034,

¹⁶ Wan, S. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Adoption in Canadian Local Governments: Opportunities, Challenges and Factors of Innovation*. McGill University (Canada).

¹⁷ Dobbs, G., Li, V., Vu, V., & Côté, A. (2025). *Adoption ready? The AI exposure of jobs and skills in Canada's public sector workforce*. Future Skills Centre, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/adoption-ready-the-ai-exposure-of-jobs-and-skills-in-canadas-public-sector-workforce.pdf>.

¹⁸ Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2025). *Bargaining at CRA: Dispute over artificial intelligence*, <https://psacunion.ca/bargaining-cra-dispute-over-artificial>.

¹⁹ Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2025). *New poll finds majority of Canadians oppose “deep surveillance” at work*, <https://psacunion.ca/new-poll-finds-majority-canadians-oppose-deep> (psacunion.ca).

reflecting an annual growth rate of 22.7%.²⁰ Expected benefits include greater operational efficiency, improved customer experience, and enhanced organizational capabilities. AI can be integrated across multiple stages of the transportation value chain for example through dynamic pricing, route optimization, automated invoice matching, and self-service delivery tracking. Unsurprisingly, public transportation authorities in Canada have started to tap into these potential efficiency gains by relying on both automation and the implementation of artificial intelligence.

In Saskatoon, the transit department began using AI in 2023 to help prevent bus breakdowns on the road. The pilot program installed hardware on buses that transmits real-time vehicle data, allowing the system to detect irregularities and alert maintenance teams before a failure occurs. As the transit department explains, a driver may not notice slight changes such as a small drop in oil pressure or engine RPMs that are slightly out of sync but AI can identify these issues immediately.²¹ By enabling repairs to be scheduled proactively rather than after a breakdown occurs, the program has helped reduce maintenance costs and improve fleet reliability.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) partnered with Moov AI to develop a system that predicts passenger traffic in subway cars. The goal was to help riders make informed decisions. For example, showing how crowded each car was permitted passengers to better maintain social distancing. This initiative, aimed to improve both customer experience and overall service efficiency within Montréal's transit network, has remained in place well after the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions.

Also in Québec, a pilot project led by the city of Montréal has introduced driverless shuttles operating along a 2.6 km route between two destinations in the city.²² These vehicles became the first self-driving shuttles to operate on urban public roads in Québec, marking an important milestone in the province's adoption of autonomous transportation technologies. The City of Trois-Rivières has also switched to an AI-enhanced system for route planning, eventually aiming to provide driverless public transit. The collective agreement between the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local and the Trois-Rivières transit authority and is also one of the few that has been amended to specifically cover AI-related

issues, such as consultation rights and job protections.

Driverless transportation is becoming increasingly common as automated systems expand across Canada and abroad. Vancouver's SkyTrain, one of the world's oldest and longest fully automated rapid transit networks, has operated without drivers for decades.²³ Montréal has followed a similar path with the Réseau Express Métropolitain (REM)²⁴, a fully driverless light rail system, while Toronto is planning to introduce a SkyTrain-inspired automated line by 2031. CUPE has criticized these initiatives, both for their potential employment effects and security concerns.

These developments illustrate how public transit is undergoing rapid technological change, transitioning from operator-driven vehicles to fully automated systems. The shift extends beyond rail: autonomous vehicle technology is advancing in the automotive sector as well. Companies such as Waymo, originally launched in Phoenix, Arizona, now operating driverless ride-hailing services across five states and seeking international expansion. What was once considered a distant possibility is now becoming a reality, as autonomous buses, trains, and cars increasingly move from experimental projects to active use on public roads and transit networks.

Beyond public transit, several Canadian municipalities have also introduced AI to optimize routes for waste collection and snow removal.

Overall, the public sector's adoption of AI and AT demonstrates both the transformative potential of these technologies and the significant challenges they introduce for governments and public employees. While AI has improved efficiency, service delivery, and operational reliability, it has also raised concerns about workforce impacts, job security, and the adequacy of existing governance frameworks. These tensions highlight that even highly regulated public institutions struggle to balance innovation with accountability and worker protection.

As Canada's private sector undergoes a similarly fast and much more commercially driven implementation of AI, many of these issues are not only reproduced there, but they often become more complex and conflictual. Let us thus turn to a deeper look at how AI is reshaping Canadian industries and private services.

²⁰ Zoting, S. (2025). *Artificial intelligence in transportation market size, share and trends (2025–2034)*. Precedence Research, <https://www.precedenceresearch.com/artificial-intelligence-in-transportation-market>.

²¹ Wolfson, B. (2025). *Here's how one local government is adopting AI*. BNN Bloomberg, <https://beta.bnnbloomberg.ca/business/artificial-intelligence/2025/12/11/heres-how-one-local-government-is-adopting-ai/>.

²² Stantec. (n.d.) *Autonomous electric shuttle pilot project in Montréal*, <https://www.stantec.com/en/projects/canada-projects/a/autonomous-electric-shuttle-pilot-project-in-montreal>.

²³ TransLink. (n.d.). *British Columbia Rapid Transit Company fleet and technologies*. <https://www.translink.ca/about-us/about-translink/operating-companies/british-columbia-rapid-transit-company#fleet-and-technologies>

²⁴ Chan, K. (2023). *Montréal has opened a massive SkyTrain-inspired driverless train network*. Daily Hive. <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/montreal-rem-vancouver-skytrain-comparison>

b. AI implementation in the Canadian private sector

i. Transportation services

While AI implementation plays an equally challenging role in aviation (ex. app-based scheduling) and railways (ex. digital surveillance of train conductors), we have chosen the maritime transportation sector to highlight some of the more significant developments regarding both AT and AI.

Canada possesses an extensive network of ports that play a critical role in supporting both domestic and international trade. As a country heavily reliant on exports and global supply chains, its ports serve as key gateways for the movement of goods, connecting Canadian industries to markets around the world.²⁵ The largest ports in Canada, measured by tonnage and container volume, are the ports of Vancouver, Montréal, Prince Rupert, Halifax and Saint-John.²⁶ The Port of Vancouver ranks 63 in the largest port internationally.²⁷

The Port of Montréal has become a central hub for innovation with rapid integration of AI. In recent years, the port has increasingly integrated AI to enhance productivity, efficiency and management. Multiple AI-driven programs now operate across different levels of its ecosystem.²⁸ AI is used to retrieve and analyze data to automate tasks such as identifying the precise real-time location of each container before it arrives at the port. Moreover, programs such as PREVU3D uses augment reality to optimize space in ports or Cargo2ai,²⁹ a program used to identify containers stocked with critical cargo such as medical equipment. Together, these technologies illustrate how the port is leveraging AI to modernize its operations and strengthen its competitive position in smart logistics.

The Port of Halifax Authority (HPA) is following the same pathway. It has launched a pilot project using AI to improve visibility and generate actionable insights across its two main port zones.³⁰ This initiative aims to strengthen safety in port operations, while ensuring that employees' privacy is protected, and build organizational capacity to adopt emerging innovations. Through this project, the HPA is positioning itself to integrate advanced technologies responsibly while enhancing the overall efficiency and security of port activities.

AI is increasingly recognized as a critical tool for improving the safety, efficiency, and environmental performance of port operations.³¹ It enables real-time monitoring of port equipment and environments, predictive maintenance to prevent operational failures, optimized vessel traffic management to reduce congestion, and enhanced cybersecurity protection. In parallel, AI-driven analytics support emissions reductions by improving fuel use and operational planning.

However, dockworkers across Canada are concerned that AI, coupled with automation, will replace their jobs. In Halifax, a recent acquisition of two container terminals with automation is raising significant concerns among port workers. The Halifax Longshoremen's Association, representing roughly 700 longshore workers in addition to thousands of truckers and support staff, reports growing anxiety that automated systems may displace substantial portions of the workforce. Attempts to engage the company in dialogue have been limited, reinforcing fears of job losses and economic disruption. Beyond the direct impact on household income, workers argue that large-scale automation could reduce local economic development, since machines do not purchase goods, pay taxes, or contribute to community spending, ultimately diminishing broader regional economic benefits.³²

The Port of Vancouver is facing a similar case with the recent port expansion Roberts Bank Terminal 2. The terminal will be fully automated and workers fear that it will result in significant job losses elsewhere in the port.³³

ii. Ride-sharing and food delivery

The transportation and delivery market for food or people has undergone significant changes in the last ten to fifteen years. Canada is not an exception, where most of the large cities' taxi industry and food delivery services have been thoroughly disrupted.

Since 2022, the Labour Force Survey³⁴ has been collecting information on Canadians engaged in app-based work. In 2024, approximately 495,000 Canadians provided services through digital platforms. Among them, 263,000 (53%) were involved in food delivery, while 151,000 (30%) offered ride-hailing or other public transport services. By compari-

²⁵ Transport Canada. (2023). Canada's ports system. Government of Canada. <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine/backgrounder-canada-s-port-system>

²⁶ Freightos. (2024). *Largest ports in Canada*.

²⁷ Lloyd's List. (2025). *One Hundred Container Ports 2025*, <https://www.lloydslist.com/one-hundred-container-ports-2025>.

²⁸ Port of Montréal. (n.d.). *Innovation Hub*, <https://www.port-montreal.com/en/the-port-of-montreal/innovation-hub>.

²⁹ World Port Sustainability Program. (2020). *Port of Montréal – Cargo2ai*, <https://sustainableworldports.org/project/port-of-montreal-cargo2ai/>.

³⁰ World Port Sustainability Program. (2020). *Port of Halifax – Terminal safety through AI*, <https://sustainableworldports.org/project/port-of-halifax-terminal-safety-through-ai/>.

³¹ Nicom Maritime. Enhancing ports with AI: Safety, sustainability, and smarter operations. <https://www.nicommaritime.com/enhancing-ports-with-ai-safety-sustainability-and-smarter-operations/>

³² Port Workers' Defence. (n.d.). *Port Workers' Defence*, <https://portworkersdo.ca/>.

³³ Workplace Policies and Liveable Jobs. (2021). *The future of work: Technology and workers*.

³⁴ Statistics Canada. (2025). *Labour Force Survey, December 2024*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250110/dq250110a-eng.htm>.

son, in 2022, about 207,000 Canadians provided food or merchandise delivery services, and 79,000 worked through ride-hailing platforms, highlighting significant growth (about 30 % in food delivery and 90 % in ride sharing) in both segments over just two years. It is important to note that 50 % of these workers are concentrated in just three cities: Vancouver, Montréal and Toronto.

Toronto was the first entry point for Uber in Canada, where the emblematic ride-hailing and delivery multinational launched its Canadian transportation services in 2012. After regulatory changes to the taxi industry, Uber was formally granted a private transportation company (PTC) licence in 2016. One year later, in 2017, Lyft entered the Toronto market, establishing itself as a major competitor in the ride-hailing sector. By 2024, 80,429 licensed PTC drivers were in Toronto compared to just 6,891 licensed taxi drivers.³⁵ The number of licensed taxi drivers has declined by 8,000 from 2017.

In early 2025, Hopp, a subsidiary of the Estonian ride-hailing company Bolt, also entered the Toronto market, indicating that there is still room for new competitors even in a city where driver numbers are already quite high. Bolt has also spearheaded efforts in driverless taxi services in various European cities, promising another shift towards automation and AI-powered competition in this sector. So far, the Canadian ride-hailing landscape has long been dominated by a duopoly (Uber and Lyft), making Hopp's arrival a notable development.³⁶

In Montréal, the taxi industry, which was once shared between large companies and independent operators (and unionized by the United Steelworkers trade union), is now also struggling. It is facing competition from both Uber and Lyft. By 2024, 6,516 vehicles operating with Uber were registered with the Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec (SAAQ), compared with 2,806 traditional taxis across the city of Montréal, meaning that Uber accounted for more than 70 % of the city's transportation licences. Unsurprisingly, the conventional taxi industry experienced a notable decline, losing about 2,000 vehicles and 3,000 drivers.³⁷

On the other side of the country, Vancouver is experiencing a similar case where there are much more ride-hailing

vehicles than traditional taxis. In 2022, the city of Vancouver reported that 11,500 vehicles were licensed to do platform work across the region compared to 2,860 licensed taxis, four times fewer than ride-hailing vehicles.³⁸

A common issue found across the country is the lack of regulation for ride-hailing services. For example, in the province of Québec, the *Loi 17* (adopted in 2019) aimed to modernize the taxi industry and regulate new technologies therein. It eliminated the previous taxi permits quotas and removed territorial restrictions. Prior to its implementation, 8,300 permits were in operation across the province. Five years later, 19,000 vehicles were registered with the SAAQ with the majority being vehicles working for Uber.³⁹ Toronto has explored the idea of capping the number of ride-hailing drivers several times. The city attempted to implement a cap in October 2024, but withdrew the measure after Uber launched a legal challenge. The most recent proposal sought to limit licences to 80,429, the number of active PTC driver licences as of December 1, 2024. As of today, Toronto still has no cap on ride-hailing drivers.⁴⁰

Beyond the problem of sprawling licences, drivers' challenges are most often related to safety and economic insecurity. In British Columbia, the Ministry of Labour launched a survey⁴¹ to receive feedback from the workers in the platform-based ride-hailing and delivery sector. Workers raised numerous concerns, including low pay, lack of reimbursement for fuel and other expenses, pressure to accept low-paying assignments, insufficient per-trip compensation, and the absence of pay while waiting for orders. There was also strong support for improved protections, such as sick pay and employer-funded workers' compensation. Many Toronto drivers reported earnings below the minimum wage. A 2024 Toronto study⁴² using both company and municipal data estimated that platform drivers earned between \$6.37 and \$10.37 per hour, about half of Ontario's legal minimum wage (situated at 16.55\$ on January 1, 2024).

However, in British Columbia, a significant milestone has been reached in the platform industry in 2025. The B.C. The Labour Relations Board has granted union status to more than 500 Uber drivers in Victoria, affiliated with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), marking

35 City of Toronto. (2024). *Analysis of driver wages in the vehicle-for-hire industry*. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-251342.pdf>.

36 Now Toronto. (2025). *Popular European rideshare app Hopp is now available in Toronto*, <https://nowtoronto.com/news/popular-european-rideshare-app-hopp-is-now-available-in-toronto/>.

37 Radio-Canada. (2024). *Uber et l'industrie du taxi au Québec*, <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2117389/uber-industrie-taxi-quebec>.

38 Chan, K. (2022). 11,500 vehicles in the Lower Mainland now licensed for ride hailing. https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/lower-mainland-metro-vancouver-ridehailing-statistics#google_vignette

39 Bourdon, M. (2024). « C'est le chaos », déplore l'industrie des taxis. *La Presse*, <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/politique/2024-05-05/taxi/c-est-le-chaos-deplore-l-industrie.php>.

40 Tasker, J. P. (2023). *Toronto considers ride-share licence cap*. CBC News, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-considers-ride-share-licence-cap-1.7400342>.

41 Government of British Columbia. (2023). *What we heard: Gig workers and employers — Consultation on occupational standards, earnings and working conditions for app-based workers*, <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2023/04/What-We-Heard-Report-Gig-Workers-1.pdf>.

42 Ride Fair. (2024). *Legislated poverty: An analysis of ride-hail industry earnings and working conditions in Canada*, <https://ridefair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Legislated-Poverty.pdf>.

the first successful unionization of ride-hailing workers in Canada.⁴³ This decision gives Uber drivers the right to engage in collective bargaining, a major shift in the sector. Drivers have long been advocating for stronger protections, greater transparency in rating systems, and improved health and safety standards, and this ruling represents a major step towards securing those rights.

The province has also introduced new regulatory standards for app-based workers, setting another precedent for the industry. British Columbia established a minimum wage of \$20.88⁴⁴ per hour for “engaged time,” meaning the period during which workers are actively completing a trip or delivery. If a platform’s compensation falls below this threshold, companies are required to top up workers’ earnings to meet the minimum standard. The regulations also guarantee that workers receive 100 % of their tips, which remain separate from their base pay. Additionally, drivers are entitled to vehicle-use compensation \$0.45 per kilometre for ride-hailing assignments and \$0.35 per kilometre for delivery work, helping to offset the costs of using personal vehicles for commercial tasks.⁴⁵ These regulatory improvements were the fruit of a joint lobbying effort by both UBER and the UFCW.

These developments come on the heels of two previous attempts in Toronto.⁴⁶ One launched by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) seeking to represent Foodora delivery workers, the other launched by the UFCW to represent Uber drivers at Toronto Pearson airport. The former resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of union accreditation (and the subsequent departure of Foodora from the Canadian market). The latter was withdrawn, when Uber agreed to a novel, more informal agreement with UFCW, permitting the union to represent Uber drivers everywhere in Canada, when faced with a dispute over their contractual arrangement with the multinational company (ex. “de-apping”). As of 2025, about 5,200 disputes have been settled with the assistance of UFCW, with about 28 % leading to a reinstatement of the driver. None of the cases have been brought to the private arbitration tribunal foreseen by the agreement, as all of them were settled between the driver and the company, once the union got involved in the file.

The main common legal problem for organizing platform workers lies in their uncertain status under Canadian employment law.⁴⁷ Several provinces, following a common law tradition, confer onto them a “third status” (neither independent contractor nor salaried employee), which is called “dependent contractor.” This status does provide for some social protections and bargaining rights, while maintaining the benefits of individual service contracts for both parties. The above-mentioned cases in Ontario and British Columbia both rely on this third status. The province of Québec, following a civil law tradition, does not provide for “dependent contractor” status.

iii. E-commerce and shipping

Beyond food delivery, the business to consumer (B2C) delivery of goods stemming from the rapidly expanding e-commerce market, is facing similar challenges. In this sector, a mix of salaried employees and so-called independent contractors ensure the delivery of goods to Canadian doorsteps, while warehouses and distribution centres generally rely on regular employees. Similar to unionization of the trucking industry in the 20th century, trade unions have identified these warehouses and distribution centres as the port of entry for trade union recognition.

In 2024, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) successfully unionized workers at an Amazon facility in the city of Laval, becoming one of the first groups of Amazon employees in Canada to secure formal representation. Shortly after this success, Amazon announced the closure of its seven warehouses across the province.⁴⁸ As the company equally stated its plans to continue expanding its delivery operations in Québec, the closure of their distribution centres raised substantial red flags among labour experts and trade unions, leading to a complaint in front of the Québec labour court in 2025. The proceedings are ongoing, but the court has repeatedly rejected Amazon’s petitions to reject the complaint, and it has asserted its competence in the matter.^{49,50}

In 2025, Amazon warehouse workers in Delta, British Columbia, also won union certification after the company interfered with the organization process. In this latest case

⁴³ Agarwal, M. (2025). Victoria Uber drivers achieve historic union certification — first in Canada. BC Business. <https://bcbusiness.ca/business/transportation/victoria-uber-drivers-achieve-historic-union-certification-first-in-canada/>

⁴⁴ Ministry of Labour. (2024). *Fair pay, basic protections coming for gig workers*. Government of British Columbia.

⁴⁵ Government of British Columbia. (2024). *B.C. introduces minimum earnings and protections for app-based drivers*, <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024LBR0011-000900>.

⁴⁶ Gebert, R. (2021). “The pitfalls and promises of successfully organizing Foodora couriers in Toronto.” Chapter 17 in Jan Drahokoupil Kurt Vandaele. *A Modern Guide to Labour and the Platform Economy*. Edward Elgar.

⁴⁷ Gebert, R. (2023). “Can you complete your delivery? Comparing Canadian and European Union Legal Statuses of Platform Workers” in United in Uniqueness? Lessons From Canadian Politics for European Union Studies. *Politics and Governance*. 11(3).

⁴⁸ Stanford, J. (2025). Amazon’s union-busting in Québec can be overcome. Centre for Future Work. <https://centreforfuturework.ca/2025/02/03/amazons-union-busting-in-quebec-can-be-overcome/>

⁴⁹ Confédération des syndicats nationaux c. Amazon Canada Fulfillment Services, 2025 QCTAT 2966 (CanLII), <https://www.canlii.org/fr/qc/qctat/doc/2025/2025qctat2966/2025qctat2966.html>

⁵⁰ Syndicat des travailleuses et travailleurs d’Amazon Montréal – CSN /Montreal Amazon Workers Union - CSN c. Amazon Canada Fulfillment Services, 2024 QCTAT 2716 (CanLII), <https://www.canlii.org/fr/qc/qctat/doc/2024/2024qctat2716/2024qctat2716.html>

of Canadian Amazon workers being unionized, the trade union UNIFOR had twice attempted to launch certification, but the company initiated a rapid hiring surge that diluted the proportion of signed cards needed for approval. In 2023, the company had also offered pay increases to workers who would refuse to sign a union card. The BC Labour Relations Board⁵¹ later found Amazon to have engaged in unfair labour practices and certified the union automatically.

It becomes clear that the B2C delivery and e-commerce sector has become a major ground for contestation and conflict between workers' rights, platform-based employment and large multinational companies operating in Canada. While this process is deeply reminiscent of previous bouts (e.g. with Walmart in the early 2000s) between Canadian labour unions and American multinationals, unions remain hopeful of making a breakthrough in the sector. By comparison, as of today, there is no significant union presence in Walmart stores across Canada. However, a first Walmart warehouse in Mississauga has now been unionized by UNIFOR, and the company signed a historic, two-year collective agreement there in May 2026.

High-profile companies in this sector also illustrate how deeply surveillance technologies have been embedded into workplace operations. For example, in warehousing and logistics, companies such as Amazon use automated systems to track "time off task," prompting alerts to management when productivity falls below algorithmic thresholds. Delivery drivers have reported similar monitoring pressures through AI-equipped vehicle cameras that record and analyze driving behaviour in real time. Comparable concerns have emerged across major technology and retail firms, including Microsoft, Uber, and Walmart, where digital oversight has increasingly shaped performance management practices.

iv. Other private services (online groceries, security services)

Incidentally, Walmart is also an important player in the emerging market for online groceries, putting major competitive pressure on more established Canadian grocery chains. While major grocery stores are generally unionized in Canada, the emergence and rapid growth of online groceries looks like it might be reproducing the model of salaried employees in warehouses and so-called independent delivery contractors; spearheaded by Amazon in the e-commerce sector. This sets up yet another field for contestation in the Canadian digital economy.

In reaction to online competitors, one of the main Canadian grocers, Sobeys's, signed a deal with the British company Ocado in 2018, and set up fully automated distribution centres for online groceries in four major Canadian cities (Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver and Calgary). Facing unionization in the distribution centres, the company decided to close two of them in 2025.

As traditional grocery stores have long experimented with forms of automation (e.g. self-check outs), analysts of the sector maintain that the economic gains from switching to online grocery delivery are actually quite limited. However, the main impact of its proliferation on the sector is the reduction of margins in the traditional stores, the reduction of working hours, and a subsequent erosion of bargaining power for unionized workers in the sector.

Another, maybe more surprising sector with rapid introduction of automation and AI are private security services. Canadian trade unions active in this sector have reported pilot projects of robotic security agents making their rounds in large commercial buildings, alerting human security agents in case of suspicious activity. While some might see this development as a mere improvement upon stationary camera surveillance, others are raising significant safety and privacy concerns.

v. Creative industries (arts, film, video games)

The rapid proliferation of generative AI has also reshaped Canada's creative industries, enabling computers to produce "synthetic performances" by rearranging previously recorded music, text, and visual art at a level increasingly comparable to human creators. While these technologies offer new possibilities for innovation and experimentation, they also introduce significant pressures on the workers and test the limits of existing copyright legislation.⁵²

Professional groups within the arts that are most affected by this change are voice actors (especially for dubbing), postproduction specialists (for sounds and special effects), production assistants (providing for stage decorations and costumes), as well as stunt performers. It also reduces the need for extras, by continuously improving the already established "tiling" technique (e.g. to fill an arena with a crowd by reusing the same group of extras repeatedly). So, while the reuse of high-profile actors' images in deep fakes has received significant attention in the media,⁵³ it merely represents the tip of the iceberg, when it comes to job displacement by AI in the creative industries.

⁵¹ Arkell, E. (2025). *How BC's labour laws help gig workers organize*. PressProgress, <https://pressprogress.ca/british-columbia-labour-laws-help-gig-workers-unionize/>.

⁵² Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2024). Consultation paper: Consultation on copyright in the age of generative artificial intelligence. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/strategic-policy-sector/en/marketplace-framework-policy/consultation-paper-consultation-copyright-age-generative-artificial-intelligence>

⁵³ Lum, D., & Willis, H. (2026). *Videos show moments in which agents killed a man in Minneapolis*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/15/us/politics/minneapolis-videos-killings-artificial-intelligence.html>.

Similarly, concerns have emerged within the screenwriting and broader media industries, as to the viability of distinctly Canadian contents in a world of AI-generated arts. An experiment by the Writers Guild of Canada,⁵⁴ comparing iconic lines from Canadian film and television with AI-generated rewrites, found that generative AI performed poorly in replicating distinctive cultural voice and nuance. Thus, critics warn that widespread adoption of generative AI may ultimately weaken the unique cultural perspectives that Canadian screenwriters contribute, as AI cannot authentically replicate culturally grounded storytelling.

Although the Canada Copyright Act permits text and data mining for non-commercial purposes, many AI developers are engaging in large-scale commercial data mining that violates these limits. Because they are usually companies based outside Canada, legal recourse under Canadian copyright law becomes very challenging. Unions in the creative industries warn that generative AI can weaken copyright holders' ability to consent to the use of their work (and even their own voice and image), prevent them from receiving fair compensation, and potentially reducing domestic investment and narrowing future creative opportunities. At the same time, technology firms caution that overly restrictive regulations on AI could limit innovation and constrain the competitiveness of Canada's creative industries on the international stage.

The federal government recognizes both the economic potential and the emerging risks associated with AI. As mentioned previously, since 2017, the federal government has invested heavily in its AI strategy. As part of this broader strategy, the government has begun examining copyright challenges related to text and data mining, authorship and ownership of AI-generated works, and questions of infringement and liability to ensure that the development of AI aligns with cultural and economic objectives. Critics, however, maintain that existing copyright legislation is insufficiently enforceable, and that further regulation is needed.

As of 2025, several Canadian trade unions such as the Directors' Guild and ACTRA have created a task force to advocate for enhanced protection of copyright with regards to AI usage, modelled on the United States' Copyright Labelling and Ethical AI Reporting (CLEAR) Act of 2026.⁵⁵ Canadian trade unions have also spearheaded advocacy to restrict public funding to AI-free productions, for instance through the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and various provincial support programs for film and television production.

ACTRA also collaborates with their American counterparts (ex. SAG-AFTRA and NAVA) to enshrine protections

into their collective agreements, in particular for voice artists. The objective is to limit the unfettered use of AI through three principles: consent, compensation and control. While the collective agreement now provides for consent to be given, prior to using an artist's voice or image, and also requires compensation payments, the ultimate control over AI-assisted productions remains an employer prerogative.

The Union des artistes (UDA), and similar unions representing francophone artists in Canada, have taken a slightly different approach, by negotiating an all-out moratorium on the implementation of AI in their field. The existing provincial legislation about privacy rights and French language protection have proven to be helpful in this endeavour. In particular, the *Charte québécoise des droits et libertés de la personne* provides for digital consent mechanisms, while the *Loi 108* forces streaming platform to modify their algorithms to make local, French-language productions more easily "discoverable."

The implications of the Québec charter go well beyond the arts: the introduction of AI tools such as Copilot cannot be imposed on workers in Québec, because it opens the door to digital surveillance. Major companies, such as Hydro-Québec, have thus strongly recommended the software, but have been unable to implement it wall-to-wall, even for workers performing telework.

In summary, AI is transforming production in the creative industries in multiple ways. Many artists view AI as a valuable tool that expands the boundaries of artistic expression, enabling the creation of patterns, forms, and concepts that might be difficult or impossible to produce manually. AI-driven tools can also complement traditional artistic methods, offering new avenues for experimentation and hybrid forms of creation. AI systems significantly increase productivity in creating material, such as lyrics, book texts or visual content for music videos. AI may also reduce safety issues (e.g. by reducing the need for physically performed stunts in movies) and improve the industry's carbon footprint (e.g. by not requiring a physical filming set in various geographic locations).

Yet these benefits are accompanied by serious concerns. The increasing difficulty of distinguishing between human-made and AI-generated works risks devaluing human creativity, reducing fair compensation and thus undermining artists' economic stability. The use of copyrighted material to train AI systems without permission has intensified fears of plagiarism and unauthorized replication, raising broader questions about artistic integrity and the future of authorship in the digital age.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Writers Guild of Canada. (2024). *Nice try, AI: Writers Guild Canada champions writers, not robots; AI tries and fails*, <https://www.wgc.ca/whats-new/news/nice-try-ai-writers-guild-canada-champions-writers-not-robots-ai-tries-and-fails>.

⁵⁵ Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists. (2023). *Submission on artificial intelligence and Bill C-27*. ACTRA.

⁵⁶ Cultural Policy Hub. (2023). *AI-generated art and its implications*. <https://culturalpolicyhub.ocadu.ca/fr/news/ai-generated-art-implications>

4.

Cross-sector analysis of challenges (and opportunities)

In order to group the essential findings of our sectoral analysis into a more digestible format, we will now discuss the common threats of challenges and opportunities arising from the implementation of AI in Canadian workplaces. In order, we could circumscribe them as a) changes in employment levels, b) surveillance and privacy issues, c) ethical issues related to automatic decision-making, d) copyright legislation, and e) socioeconomic protections for workers.

a. Job losses (and potential gains)

For many workers, finding a job is going to become harder when competing with AI and self-learning robots. The qualifications needed to maintain an edge in the job market are increasing rapidly and the lines between AI-enhanced work and AT-replaced work are blurring. AI can execute analytic tasks, such as conducting a literature review, completing calculations or optimizing delivery routes and floor plans, much faster than humans. Robots can execute manual and repetitive tasks, such as labelling parcels, sorting items or moving containers through a port, much faster and more precisely.

Where jobs are inevitably being replaced, workers and their trade union representatives will need to negotiate the terms of this change, sometimes slowing it down for gradual adaptations to take place naturally, sometimes by developing exit strategies for affected workers. Where sectors may benefit from AI and AT, ultimately resulting in growth of productivity and employment, workers and their representatives need to ensure that the benefits are fairly distributed and that value-added is funnelled back into communities.

b. Surveillance and privacy issues

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered one of the most significant workplace transformations in recent history, normalizing remote and hybrid work across Canada. While this shift brought benefits such as higher perceived productivity, better work life balance, and increased job satisfaction, it also accelerated the adoption of digital surveillance technologies to monitor remote worker performance. This dual

dynamic raises critical questions about the trade-offs between performance support and employee privacy, emotional well-being when isolated, and job quality related to employee autonomy.

A survey conducted by the Future Skills Centre⁵⁷ in October 2022 focused on the workers' experiences with both managerial support and electronic monitoring. A central finding is that surveillance has become widespread in remote work. Approximately 70 % of remote workers reported that some aspect of their work is digitally monitored, such as email content, websites visited, chats, or phone calls. These forms of monitoring involve employer screening or review of digital activity, not simply data storage. Beyond basic monitoring, intensive surveillance practices such as location tracking, webcam or video recording, and computer screenshots were reported by about 32 % of employees.

Workers experiencing these intense forms of monitoring also reported significantly lower job satisfaction, higher stress, and decreased trust in their employer. These impacts were disproportionately felt among younger workers, lower-income workers, racialized workers, and those with disabilities, indicating that digital surveillance may exacerbate existing workplace inequities. Despite the prevalence of monitoring, only 30 % of monitored employees reported receiving complete written information about their employer's electronic monitoring policies. This lack of transparency was strongly associated with lower levels of trust in employers.

While employers often justify surveillance as a means to enhance productivity and ensure accountability, research indicates clear negative consequences for workers. A 2023 report by the American Psychological Association⁵⁸ found that intensive monitoring is associated with heightened stress, burnout, reduced motivation, and emotional exhaustion. These findings highlight the psychosocial risks of continuous digital oversight, particularly in environments where surveillance is perceived as intrusive or punitive.

Geolocation of workers provides a further challenge. While some legislation (such as article 25 of the Québec charter) explicitly prohibit such practices, the algorithms

⁵⁷ Masoodi, et al. (2023). *Monitoring remote work in Canada: Support or surveillance?* Future Skills Centre, https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Monitoring-Remote-Work-in-Canada-Support-or-Surveillance_Report.pdf.

⁵⁸ American Psychological Association. (2023). *Work in America: AI monitoring and the workplace*, <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/work-in-america/2023-work-america-ai-monitoring>.

of many employment platforms, as well as some real-time surveillance applications fundamentally rely on geolocation for their functioning and productivity enhancement.

In summary, digital workplace surveillance is not a new phenomenon; however, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has dramatically expanded its capabilities and overall impact. Modern AI-enabled systems are able to analyze detailed behavioural and productivity indicators including logins, idle time, keystrokes, mouse activity, and even webcam footage to generate continuous assessments of employee performance.

c. Automatic decision making and ethics

Beyond surveillance, AI implementation has transformed monitoring from a passive data-collection process into an active evaluative tool capable of informing management decisions. The growing reliance on AI to support or automate managerial oversight raises significant privacy, ethical, and governance concerns. Algorithmic systems are susceptible to design flaws and embedded biases, which can result in inaccurate evaluations or unfair treatment of workers. These risks are amplified when AI technologies automate decisions with minimal or no human review, or when decisions are submitted to human review in an untimely manner (ex post facto) or with very tight timelines. Automated decision-making thereby reduces the opportunities for contextual judgment or correction of errors.

As previously mentioned, the federal government has introduced automatic decision-making into its “chain of command” in many departments. Hoping that the algorithmic treatment of EI-claims, tax forms and visa applications will ultimately concentrate human decision making on cases with a high potential for ethical dilemmas. This nevertheless sets the stage for potentially letting particularly sensitive cases for discrimination slip through the cracks and leaving ordinary citizens with little recourse when interacting with government agencies. Lack of public oversight and an increased profit motive in the private sector mean that AI-enhanced decision making in hiring, promotions and employee discipline provide for even greater ethical pitfalls there.

d. Copyright

As we have seen, the music and visual art sectors are increasingly affected by generative AI, particularly through copyright infringement and the widespread circulation of AI-generated content. Many AI models are trained on copyrighted works without permission, enabling them to pro-

duce new outputs that compete directly with humans and undermine their earning potential. As noted by Kelly Wilhelm, head of the Cultural Policy Hub at OCAD University: “There’s no question that AI impacts creative intellectual property, copyright, and labour.”⁵⁹ Industry leaders are urging the federal government to enforce copyright law more rigorously, and to recognize that using copyrighted artwork without authorization to train AI datasets constitutes infringement and, in their view, theft. Strengthening the ability to identify AI-generated works is seen as essential for supporting content creators, enabling informed consumer choices, and reinforcing respect for human creativity.

The practice of training AI with data and production obtained from current employees, aimed at eventually replacing those very same employees, is not limited to the creative industries. Translators, programmers, educators and researchers in Canadian organizations and institutions are increasingly faced with the potential digital copycat outsmarting them on the job market. While the CAUT has started to negotiate some protections into some of their collective agreements in the university sector, federal government translators represented by CAPE haven’t been so lucky. They are at the brunt of AI-enhanced job displacement, training the chat bots with their own copyrighted material, allowing them to eventually replace them.

e. Workers’ rights and earnings

As shown in many of the sector-based cases, the introduction of AI and AT has exacerbated the demographic and socioeconomic pressures already weighing heavily on the Canadian workforce. New digital tools, eroding the bargaining position of individual workers and trade unions, exert downward pressure on wages and permit employers to eschew established labour regulation. International competitive pressure, often manifesting itself in Canada in the form of powerful American multinationals, contributes to the disruption of established patterns of labour regulation and reduce earning potential for workers, especially those whose skills are increasingly devalued by AI and AT.

As a matter of fact, the most recent round of consultations in the field of federal labour legislation (a review of the entire Canada Labour Code), launched by the federal Liberal government in April 2026, starts from the premise that Canadian labour law “hasn’t kept up with the times” and that competitive pressures call for the “most modern tools available”.⁶⁰ In short, the government seems to view current labour protections as unsustainable in the face of technological change and international competition. This is a thinly veiled attack on longstanding labour rights, looking to weaken union resistance, especially in the public sector.

⁵⁹ University Affairs. (2025). *Leaders from the creative industries urge Parliament to act on foreign AI companies*, <https://universityaffairs.ca/news/leaders-from-the-creative-industries-urge-parliament-to-act-on-foreign-ai-companies/>.

⁶⁰ Coyne, A. (2026). *Unions warn Carney government is considering sweeping changes to labour law — including the right to strike*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-labour-code-consultations-right-to-strike-9.7209196>.

5.

Regulating AI and the digital economy, going forward

In the hope of modifying the current trajectory of AI implementation into Canadian workplaces, civil society actors, trade unions, and labour scholars have embarked on three different strategies: a) advocating for more robust legislation in the field of AI, b) pursuing social dialogue and more traditional labour relations avenues, and c) launch targeted legal challenges to employers or the government.

a. Advocacy for improving the legislative framework

Regulatory frameworks in Canada have struggled to keep pace with the rapid adoption of AI-driven technologies, particularly in labour law. While the use of artificial intelligence in workplaces has expanded significantly, national legislation governing its development, deployment, and oversight remains fragmented and incomplete. Nowhere is this patchwork more evident than in the fractured legal status of platform workers, sometimes recognized as “dependent contractors,” sometimes not.

But the challenges also reverberate through the labours codes, for instance, when it comes to enforcing rules around obligatory consultation of workers in cases of technological changes resulting in job losses. Even more strikingly, how will strike-breaker legislation (in the few provinces where it exists) remain applicable, when robots cross the picket line, and not human replacement workers? And should resorting to an AI, trained and operated by an independent contractor, be considered outsourcing in the sense of existing collective agreements?

In terms of privacy protections, Canada attempted to introduce a comprehensive regulatory framework through Bill C-27,⁶¹ which included the proposed Artificial Intelligence and Data Act (AIDA) aimed at regulating high-impact AI systems and strengthening accountability standards. In many ways, the legislation was modelled after European data protection standards, a corollary of Canada’s free trade agreement with the European Union. However, the bill was withdrawn in 2025 following changes within the federal Liberal government, leaving the country without binding federal AI legislation.

In the absence of AIDA, Canada’s current regulatory landscape relies primarily on existing privacy law and voluntary guidance mechanisms. The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)⁶² governs data practices in federally regulated private-sector workplaces and restricts employers to collecting only information deemed “reasonable” under the circumstances. Importantly, PIPEDA does not require employee consent for most workplace data processing and applies unevenly across the country, as provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta, and Québec administer their own private-sector privacy laws. These frameworks provide general principles for data protection but do not establish explicit rules for AI-enabled monitoring or automated decision-making.

Recognizing the regulatory gap, in 2023, the federal government has introduced a Voluntary Code of Conduct for the Responsible Development and Management of Advanced Generative AI Systems.⁶³ Although non-binding, the Code encourages organizations to implement governance measures aligned with six core principles: accountability, safety, fairness and equity, transparency, human oversight, and robustness. It urges organizations to assess and mitigate risks, prevent discriminatory outcomes, communicate system limitations, and ensure secure, reliable AI performance. The Code acknowledges that advanced generative AI poses significant societal risks, including misinformation, discrimination, and safety concerns, and is intended as an interim measure while Canada prepares formal legislation similar to the American CLEAR Act that has been introduced in Congress in early 2026, or the EU Commission’s directive on AI of 2024.

A 2021 parliamentary task force also investigated the issue of the “right to disconnect”. A legislation was drafted to tackle issues of digital availability for (and surveillance of) teleworkers. Ultimately it has been tabled, without success, in various provincial legislatures.

At the provincial level, regulatory responses have begun to emerge, though they remain limited in scope. In Ontario, in 2022, Bill 88⁶⁴ requires employers with more than 25 employees to disclose their electronic monitoring practices

⁶¹ Parliament of Canada. (2022). *Bill C-27: Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022—First reading*. <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-27/first-reading>.

⁶² Justice Laws Website. (2026). *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, S.C. 2000, c. 5*. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/p-8.6/page-1.htm>.

⁶³ Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2023) *Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Responsible Development and Management of Advanced Generative AI Systems*. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/voluntary-code-conduct-responsible-development-and-management-advanced-generative-ai-systems>

⁶⁴ Legislative Assembly of Ontario. (2022). *Bill 88, Working for Workers Act, 2022*. <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-2/bill-88>.

through a written policy. While this measure increases transparency, it does not regulate the nature or extent of monitoring technologies themselves. Across provinces, workplace privacy laws similarly provide broad discretion to employers, offering few protections tailored to AI-enabled surveillance. The same province, as of January 2026, requires that private companies must divulge the use of AI in hiring procedures.⁶⁵

Legal protections for Canada's half-million platform workers have advanced, notably through Bill 48 in British Columbia, but most of them remain in a legal in-between status, lacking most of the protections that apply to salaried employees. This mirrors the situation in the United States, where only Massachusetts and California have passed significant legal protections for ride-hailing drivers, in 2024 and 2025, respectively, falling short of the scope and depth of the EU platform workers directive of 2024, which is currently in its implementation phase in EU member countries.

Overall, though, Canada's existing regulatory environment remains insufficient to address the complexities and risks associated with AI in the workplace. Inconsistent provincial rules, reliance on general privacy legislation, and the absence of binding federal AI regulation create a patchwork approach that leaves workers vulnerable to incomplete labour codes, opaque data practices and automated decision-making. The voluntary federal Code of Conduct signals a recognition of these challenges, but without enforceable standards, Canada continues to lag behind in establishing a robust framework for governing AI in employment contexts.

b. Pursuing collective bargaining and social dialogue with employers

As our sectoral analysis has shown, negotiating clauses concerning the implementation of AI in Canadian workplaces into collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) is still at a rudimentary stage. Only a handful of agreements have explicitly included language that specifically addresses AI, but usually they are covering only very few employees, and they are not tracked systematically by the trade union movement. For instance, a preliminary analysis of publicly available CBAs in the province of Québec produced only six agreements covering a total of 439 employees (in a province of x million workers).⁶⁶ The scope and depth of Canadian CBA provisions thus fall significantly short of what has been documented elsewhere, notably in the European context.⁶⁷

Some of the trade unions in the creative industries have succeeded in promoting basic principles concerning the

implementation of AI into their collective agreements, some have even managed to ban certain usages altogether.

Canadian labour codes generally permit, or even prescribe, consultative committees to be formed in cases where technological change can be expected to produce significant job losses. So, while social dialogue between employers and unions on this subject isn't entirely alien to Canadian labour relations, preciously few collective agreements have included substantive clauses on technological change, let alone the implementation of AI.

In traditional sectors, trade unions have often been able to employ their regular toolbox of trade union accreditation and collective bargaining to improve working conditions. In some cases, especially in the highly unionized public sector, trade unions have also attempted to leverage collective bargaining rounds, and the associated right to strike, in order to regulate telework, digital monitoring practices and job displacement. To that effect, CUPE has published a bargaining guide for its union locals, covering issues such as privacy and job protections in the public sector. The digital economy, however, has largely eschewed trade union representation in the more traditional sense. Some unions have thus experimented with non-traditional frameworks, such as the Uber-UFCW deal.

Going forward, Canadian trade unions are going to need some soul-searching, if the well-worn and remarkably stable Canadian industrial relations framework is fit to resist the rapidly increasing, large-scale introduction of AI and AT, or if some novel frameworks (for instance, sectoral or multi-employer forms of representation) may be needed to complement their toolbox. And even in more traditional sectors, recent attacks from the federal government and an increasingly difficult competitive landscape, erode bargaining power on the workers' side, and leave employers the option to play an AI-enhanced production process against the existing workforce.

c. Taking a gamble on litigation

As we have seen, the uncertain legal status of platform workers is a major pitfall, when challenging employers over their refusal to institute collective bargaining mechanisms in the platform economy. As long as the digital economy relied heavily on so-called independent contractors, major companies will continue to avoid meeting their workforce eye-to-eye at the bargaining table. Labour courts in Canada have generally been quite favourable to collective representation. But the crux of litigation lies within the uncertain status of platform workers, as well as the potential for

⁶⁵ Government of Ontario. (2026). *Requirements related to publicly advertised job postings* — Your guide to the Employment Standards Act. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/requirements-related-publicly-advertised-job>.

⁶⁶ CORAIL database of CBAs in Québec, Canada. www.corail.gouv.qc.ca.

⁶⁷ Molina et al. (2023). "It takes two to code: a comparative analysis of collective bargaining and artificial intelligence" in *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 29(1), 75–94.

sliding back, when “business decisions” such as warehouse closures or an altogether market departure make legal recourse quite difficult to implement.

As we have shown, legal action concerning copyright law presents equally uncertain prospects. While Canadian copyright protects content creators on paper, it is increasingly difficult to enforce in front of Canadian tribunals, as AI-driven creations in the creative industries proliferate in a worldwide economy.

One might imagine Charter challenges based on privacy protections and the rather generous interpretation that the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) has made of the right of association (including and up to a collective right to strike). However, before a single case winds its way through the courts and ends up before Canada’s highest magistrates, sometimes the better part of a decade can pass, meaning that a rapid technological development, such as the implementation of AI, might render many of these legal challenges moot, by the time the SCC gets its say.

6. Conclusion

The transformation driven by artificial intelligence across the Canadian workforce reflects a broader process of *creative destruction*: a dynamic in which old structures, skills, and organizational models are disrupted while new economic opportunities, industries, and forms of work emerge. AI is not simply a technological upgrade; it represents a structural shift that is reshaping how value is produced, how public and private services operate, and how workers interact with the labour market. Across sectors, from public administration and healthcare to platform-based services, AI adoption is accelerating. The evidence shows that Canadian institutions, particularly in the public sector, have begun to integrate AI to enhance efficiency and service delivery, while private-sector firms experiment with automation, optimization, and predictive systems that redefine operational norms. On the other side, some traditional industries are declining and struggle to face competition against their more automated competitors.

Undoubtedly, AI presents pathways for economic renewal and productivity growth consistent with the logic of creative destruction. When responsibly integrated, AI can augment human work, improve safety, streamline operations, and create new categories of employment tied to engineering, maintenance, data analysis, and system oversight. The long-term projections discussed in this report suggest that although Canada may face short-term adjustments and job losses, the economy can ultimately achieve net employment gains if supported by strong macroeconomic policies, robust skills development systems, and worker-inclusive governance.

Yet this technological momentum brings substantial risks and contradictions. Although businesses generally report limited short-term employment impacts, the long-term exposure of Canadian workers to AI remains high. Many occupations, especially those involving cognitive, analytical, or routine tasks are susceptible to substitution or significant task restructuring. Concerns over job displacement, intensifying digital surveillance, and the erosion of professional autonomy are now widespread across industries. As this report highlights, AI-driven monitoring tools, automated decision-making systems, and algorithmic management raise serious ethical and psychological challenges for workers, including reduced job satisfaction, diminished trust, and heightened stress. These impacts are compounded by uneven access to training and a growing digital skills divide, leaving many workers insufficiently equipped to adapt to this rapid technological change.

At the same time, the regulatory and governance landscape has not kept pace with the speed of AI deployment. The withdrawal of federal legislation such as Bill C-27 has created significant gaps in transparency, accountability, and safeguards for workers. While some provinces have introduced targeted protections, such as disclosure rules for electronic monitoring or regulation related to platform workers, Canada lacks a coherent national framework that addresses the complex risks associated with AI and AT in the labour market. As our analysis shows, unions, labour experts and civil society actors have increasingly turned to collective bargaining, public campaigns, and litigation to fill this governance gap, yet these efforts remain fragmented and reactive. A comprehensive regulatory regime remains essential to govern automated decision-making, ensure data protection, strengthen worker rights, and prevent the reproduction of bias and discrimination in algorithmic systems.

Overall, the findings of our research underscore that the future of AI in Canada is neither predetermined nor uniform across sectors. Its outcomes will be shaped by the choices of governments, employers, unions, and civil society. Ensuring that AI evolves as a tool for inclusive and sustainable economic development will require clear regulation, transparent deployment, social dialogue, and continued investment in innovation and workforce development. Creative destruction can generate new possibilities for growth and improved quality of work, but only if Canada adopts a proactive approach to AI that centres on human rights, equity, and worker protection.

References

- Agarwal, M. (2025). *Victoria Uber drivers achieve historic union certification — first in Canada*. *BC Business*. <https://bcbusiness.ca/industries/transportation/victoria-uber-drivers-achieve-historic-union-certification-first-in-canada/>
- Alexopoulos, M. (2026). *AI is knocking: Canada's next productivity story*. Bank of Canada. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2026/05/ai-is-knocking-canadas-next-productivity-story/>
- Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists. (2026). *Submission on artificial intelligence and Bill C-27*. ACTRA.
- American Psychological Association. (2023). *Work in America: AI monitoring and the workplace*. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/work-in-america/2023-work-america-ai-monitoring>
- Arkell, E. (2025). *How BC's labour laws help gig workers organize*. PressProgress. <https://pressprogress.ca/british-columbia-labour-laws-help-gig-workers-unionize/>
- Bourdon, M. (2024). « C'est le chaos », déplore l'industrie des taxis. *La Presse*. <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/politique/2024-05-05/taxi/c-est-le-chaos-deplore-l-industrie.php>
- Bryan, V., Sood, S., & Johnston, C. (2025). *Analysis on expected use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2025*. Statistics Canada.
- Chan, K. (2022). *11,500 vehicles in the Lower Mainland now licensed for ride hailing*. https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/lower-mainland-metro-vancouver-ridehailing-statistics#google_vignette
- Chan, K. (2023). *Montréal has opened a massive SkyTrain-inspired driverless train network*. Daily Hive. <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/montreal-rem-vancouver-skytrain-comparison>
- City of Toronto. (2024). *Analysis of driver wages in the vehicle-for-hire industry*. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-251342.pdf>
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux c. Amazon Canada Fulfillment Services, 2025 QCTAT 2966 (CanLII), <https://www.canlii.org/fr/qc/qctat/doc/2025/2025qctat2966/2025qctat2966.html>
- Conference Board of Canada. (2025). *Understanding the Influence of AI on Employment*. Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada.
- CORAIL database of CBAs in Québec, Canada. www.corail.gouv.qc.ca
- Coyne, A. (2026). *Unions warn Carney government is considering sweeping changes to labour law — including the right to strike*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-labour-code-consultations-right-to-strike-9.7209196>
- Cultural Policy Hub. (2023). *AI-generated art and its implications*. <https://culturalpolicyhub.ocadu.ca/fr/news/ai-generated-art-implications>
- Dobbs, G., Li, V., Vu, V., & Côté, A. (2025). *Adoption ready? The AI exposure of jobs and skills in Canada's public sector workforce*. Future Skills Centre. <https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/adoption-ready-the-ai-exposure-of-jobs-and-skills-in-canadas-public-sector-workforce.pdf>
- Freightos. (2024). *Largest ports in Canada*.
- Frenette, M., Frank, K. (2020). *Automation and Job Transformation in Canada: Who's at Risk?* Statistiques Canada.
- Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (2017). *The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?* *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 114, 254–280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2016.08.019>
- Gebert, R. (2021). *"The pitfalls and promises of successfully organizing Foodora couriers in Toronto"*. Chapter 17 in Jan Drahokoupil Kurt Vandaele. *A Modern Guide to Labour and the Platform Economy*. Edward Elgar.
- Gebert, R. (2023). *"Can you complete your delivery? Comparing Canadian and European Union Legal Statutes of Platform Workers" in United in Uniqueness, Lessons From Canadian Politics for European Union Studies*. Politics and Governance. 11(3)
- Government of British Columbia. (2023). *What we heard: Gig workers and employers — Consultation on occupational standards, earnings and working conditions for app-based workers*. <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2023/04/What-We-Heard-Report-Gig-Workers-1.pdf>
- Government of British Columbia. (2024). *B.C. introduces minimum earnings and protections for app-based drivers*. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024LBR0011-000900>
- Government of Canada. (2024). *GC AI strategy overview*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-government-innovations/responsible-use-ai/gc-ai-strategy-overview.html>
- Government of Ontario. (2026). *Requirements related to publicly advertised job postings — Your guide to the Employment Standards Act*. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/requirements-related-publicly-advertised-job>
- Hayden, A. (1999). *Sharing the work, sparing the planet: Work time, consumption, and ecology*. Between the Lines.
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2023) *Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Responsible Development and Management of Advanced Generative AI Systems*. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/voluntary-code-conduct-responsible-development-and-management-advanced-generative-ai-systems>
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2024). *Consultation paper: Consultation on copyright in the age of generative artificial intelligence*. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/strategic-policy-sector/en/marketplace-framework-policy/consultation-paper-consultation-copyright-age-generative-artificial-intelligence>
- Justice Laws Website. (2026). *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, S.C. 2000, c. 5*. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/P-8.6/index.html>
- Legislative Assembly of Ontario. (2022). *Bill 88, Working for Workers Act, 2022*. <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-2/bill-88>
- Lloyd's List. (2025). *One Hundred Container Ports 2025*. <https://www.lloydslist.com/one-hundred-container-ports-2025>
- Lum, D., & Willis, H. (2026). *Videos show moments in which agents killed a man in Minneapolis*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/15/us/politics/minneapolis-videos-killings-artificial-intelligence.html>
- Masoodi, M., et al. (2023). *Monitoring remote work in Canada: Support or surveillance?* Future Skills Centre. https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Monitoring-Remote-Work-in-Canada-Support-or-Surveillance_Report.pdf
- Mehdi, T. and R. Morissette. (2024). *Experimental Estimates of Potential AI Occupational Exposure in Canada*. Statistics Canada.
- Mehdi, T., & Frenette, M. (2024). *Exposure to artificial intelligence in Canadian jobs: Experimental estimates*. Statistics Canada. <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202400900004-eng>
- Ministry of Labour. (2024). *Fair pay, basic protections coming for gig workers*. Government of British Columbia.
- Molina et al. (2023). *"It takes two to code: a comparative analysis of collective bargaining and artificial intelligence"*. *European Review of Labour and Research*, 29(1), 75–94.
- Nicom Maritime (2025). *Enhancing ports with AI: Safety, sustainability, and smarter operations*. <https://www.nicommaritime.com/enhancing-ports-with-ai-safety-sustainability-and-smarter-operations/>
- Now Toronto. (2025). *Popular European rideshare app Hopp is now available in Toronto*. <https://nowtoronto.com/news/popular-european-rideshare-app-hopp-is-now-available-in-toronto/>
- Parliament of Canada. (2022). *Bill C-27: Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022—First reading*. <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-27/first-reading>

Port of Montréal. (n.d.). *Innovation Hub*. <https://www.port-montreal.com/en/the-port-of-montreal/innovation-hub>

Port Workers' Defence. (n.d.). *Port Workers' Defence*. <https://portworkersdo.ca/>

Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2025). *Bargaining at CRA: Dispute over artificial intelligence*. <https://psacunion.ca/bargaining-cra-dispute-over-artificial>

Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2025). *New poll finds majority of Canadians oppose "deep surveillance" at work*. <https://psacunion.ca/new-poll-finds-majority-canadians-oppose-deep> (psacunion.ca)

Radio-Canada. (2024). *Uber et l'industrie du taxi au Québec*. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2117389/uber-industrie-taxi-quebec>

Ride Fair. (2024). *Legislated poverty: An analysis of ride-hail industry earnings and working conditions in Canada*. <https://ridefair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Legislated-Poverty.pdf>

Stanford, J. (2022). *Where are the robots? The surprising deceleration of technology in Canadian workplaces*. Centre for Future Work/PowerShare. <https://centreforfuturework.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Where-Are-The-Robots.pdf>

Stanford, J. (2025). *Amazon's union-busting in Québec can be overcome*. Centre for Future Work. <https://centreforfuturework.ca/2025/02/03/amazons-union-busting-in-quebec-can-be-overcome/>

Stantec. (n.d.). *Autonomous electric shuttle pilot project in Montréal*. <https://www.stantec.com/en/projects/canada/projects/a/autonomous-electric-shuttle-pilot-project-in-montreal>

Statistics Canada. (2025). *Analysis on expected use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2025* (Catalogue No. 11-621-M2025011-eng). Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-621-m/11-621-m2025011-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2025). *Labour Force Survey, December 2024*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250110/dq250110a-eng.htm>

Syndicat des travailleuses et travailleurs d'Amazon Montréal – CSN /Montreal Amazon Workers Union – CSN c. Amazon Canada Fulfillment Services, 2024 QCTAT 2716 (CanLII), <https://www.canlii.org/fr/qc/qctat/doc/2024/2024qctat2716/2024qctat2716.html>

Tasker, J. P. (2023). *Toronto considers ride-share licence cap*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-considers-ride-share-licence-cap-1.7400342>

TransLink. (n.d.). *British Columbia Rapid Transit Company fleet and technologies*. <https://www.translink.ca/about-us/about-translink/operating-companies/british-columbia-rapid-transit-company#fleet-and-technologies>

Transport Canada. (2023). *Canada's ports system*. Government of Canada. <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine/background-Canada-s-port-system>

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2026). *Responsible use of artificial intelligence in government (including AI strategy overview)*. Government of Canada.

University Affairs. (2025). *Leaders from the creative industries urge Parliament to act on foreign AI companies*. <https://universityaffairs.ca/news/leaders-from-the-creative-industries-urge-parliament-to-act-on-foreign-ai-companies/>

Wan, S. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Adoption in Canadian Local Governments: Opportunities, Challenges and Factors of Innovation*. McGill University (Canada).

Wolfson, B. (2025). *Here's how one local government is adopting AI*. BNN Bloomberg. <https://beta.bnnbloomberg.ca/business/artificial-intelligence/2025/12/11/heres-how-one-local-government-is-adopting-ai/>

Workplace Policies and Liveable Jobs. (2021). *The future of work: Technology and workers*.

World Port Sustainability Program. (2020). *Port of Halifax – Terminal safety through AI*. <https://sustainableworldports.org/project/port-of-halifax-terminal-safety-through-ai/>

World Port Sustainability Program. (2020). *Port of Montréal – Cargo2ai*. <https://sustainableworldports.org/project/port-of-montreal-cargo2ai/>

Writers Guild of Canada. (2024). *Nice try, AI: Writers Guild Canada champions writers, not robots; AI tries and fails*. <https://www.wgc.ca/whats-new/news/nice-try-ai-writers-guild-canada-champions-writers-not-robots-ai-tries-and-fails>

Zoting, S. (2025). *Artificial intelligence in transportation market size, share and trends (2025–2034)*. Precedence Research. <https://www.precedenceresearch.com/artificial-intelligence-in-transportation-market>

Glossary

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that require human intellect, such as learning reasoning, problem solving and decision making.

Automation Technology (AT): Use of hardware and software to execute tasks and processes with minimal human intervention.

Bill C-27: Major Canadian legislation designed to modernize private-sector privacy laws. It would have been the first Canadian regulatory framework for AI, but was never adopted.

Bill 48: Legislative package that introduced employment and labour changes in the province of British Columbia, Canada, in 2023.

Bill 88: Legislative package that introduced employment and labour changes in the province of Ontario, Canada, in 2022.

CLEAR Act: Legislative package that introduced copyright provisions for usage of AI in the United States, introduced (but not yet adopted) in 2026.

Creative Destruction: Process where new innovations and technologies disrupt and replace older products, businesses or industries.

De-apping: Process of stripping personally information like names, account numbers from datasets before they are stored, shared or analyzed.

Loi 17: Legislative package that regulated ride-hailing activities in the province of Québec, Canada, in 2019.

Private Transportation Company (PTC): Online platform or taxi that connects passengers with drivers of private vehicles through an application.

Right to disconnect: Legal concept that protect employees from obligation to engage work outside of their non-work hours.

List of acronyms

ACTRA	Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists
AIDA	Artificial Intelligence and Data Act
B2C	Business to Consumer
CAPE	Canadian Association of Professional Employees
CAUT	Canadian Association of University Teachers
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CRA	Canadian Revenue Agency
CSN	Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (Québec Trade Union Confederation)
CUPE	Canadian Union of Public Employees
CUPW	Canadian Union of Postal Workers
EI	Employment Insurance
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
HPA	Halifax Port Authority
NAVA	National Association of Voice Actors
OCAD	Ontario College of Arts & Design
OECD	The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PIPEDA	Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act
PSAC	Public Service Alliance of Canada
R&D	Research and Development
REM	Réseau Express Métropolitain
SAAQ	Société d'Assurance Automobile du Québec
SAG-AFTRA	Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
SCC	Supreme court of Canada
STM	Société de Transport de Montréal
UdA	Union des artistes (Québec artists union)
UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers

List of tables and figures

Figure 1: Business Investment in Innovation (1961–2026) 4

Figure 2: Use of AI among Canadian businesses 5

Figure 3: Job Creation by Industry, 2019–2025 6

Figure 4: Primary sectors and utilities are most exposed to AI automation ... 7

About the authors

Raoul Gebert holds a PhD in industrial relations from Université de Montreal (2012) and currently works as an associate professor in the Department of Human Resource Management at the Business School of Université de Sherbrooke, in Québec, Canada. His research and teaching interests focus on economic integration and globalization, labour relations and collective bargaining, as well as labour law and the platform economy. Before returning to his academic career in 2020, he worked as Chief of Staff to the Leader of the Official Opposition, Thomas Mulcair (New Democratic Party of Canada), at the House of Commons in Ottawa (2012-2015), and then as Canadian Project Manager for the German political research institute Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (Berlin/Washington D.C).

Xavier Reynolds is an economics graduate with a passion for finance, data analysis, and economic research. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Economics from the Université de Sherbrooke. Throughout his studies and professional career, he has worked on projects involving economic policy, labour markets, and data analysis, helping turn complex information into practical insights. He currently works in the fintech industry, where he continues to develop his analytical skills and deepen his knowledge of financial markets. Outside of work, he enjoys learning about economics, technology, and the ways data can help explain and solve real-world challenges.

Impacts of AI Implementation on the Canadian Workforce

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how Canadians work, from federal chat-bots and driverless transit, to algorithmic surveillance in warehouses and gig platforms. Drawing on statistical data, sectoral case studies, and interviews with trade union representatives, this report maps how AI and automation are transforming the landscape of work in Canada.

While businesses estimate modest near-term employment effects, the study finds Canadian workers face high long-term exposure to AI-driven task substitution, intensifying digital surveillance, and eroding professional autonomy — all while government regulation lags behind. Unions and civil society are turning to collective bargaining, litigation, and advocacy to fill the governance gap. How Canada responds will determine whether AI becomes a tool for shared prosperity, or a new front in struggles for power in the workplace.

Further information on the topic can be found here:

➤ fes.de