

# Should Robots Replace Humans in Your Industrial Facility?

*Looking to organize a new industrial automation program at your facility? Read more to see what is best for your facility and see common robotics applications!*

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, April 24, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In an era where “reshoring” overseas manufacturing jobs back home to the USA is on the rise, there’s increasing debate on the role of robots in our economy. Will we see a net increase or decrease in overall manufacturing jobs due to robots replacing humans on the factory floor? We take a look at ways you can decide for yourself if investing in industrial automation solutions is the right decision for your industrial facility.



Robotics automation

“

We’re on a path toward a Robot Apocalypse where artificial intelligence (AI) life forms take over”

*Famed British scientist,  
Stephen Hawking*

If you like industrial automation technology as much as we do, then the biannual Automate 2017 tradeshow held this past April in Chicago was the place to be. Organized by the Association for Advancing Automation (A3) and its member trade associations, the Robotic Industries Association (RIA), the Motion Control & Motor Association (MCMA), and the Machine Vision Trade Association (AIA), Automate 2017 brought together over 400 robotic companies from around the world to show off their latest advances in robot and industrial automation technology.

\* One Automate 2017 attendee captured video of the many different styles of working robots on display, ranging from large, dedicated industrial automation systems to smaller robots (known as ‘Co-Bots’) designed to interact safely with people.

## Arguments in Favor of Investing in Industrial Automation and Working Robots

The industrial automation business is very hot right now. According to the International Federation of Robotics (IFR), 253,748 industrial robots were sold in 2015 alone (setting a new record). [Worldwide](#)

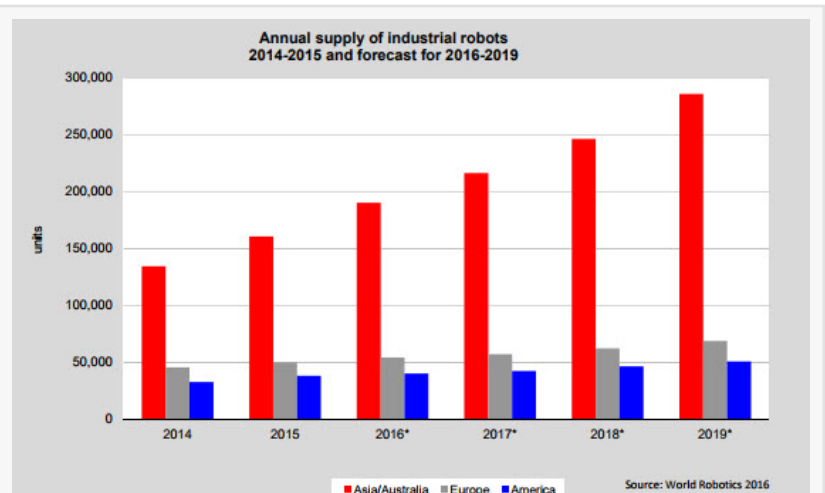
industrial robot installations are projected to climb by another 1 million in the next couple of years — projected to reach a total of 2.6 million industrial robots in use by 2019.

Why the sudden burst in sales? Like any other capital investment in manufacturing, the underlying principle is to make a significant return on investment (ROI). Looking at it this way, robots replacing humans is no different than any of the previous leaps in technology that have taken place since the start of the industrial revolution.

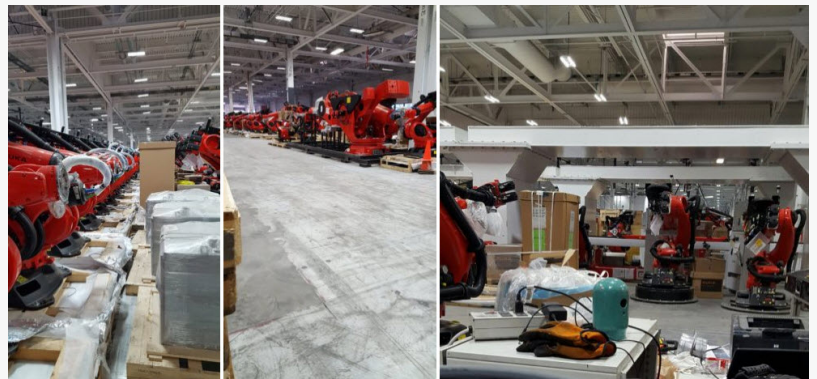
Already today's robots can perform many factory production tasks far faster than human workers — with greater quality and precision. The realized cost savings (in this case, from robots replacing humans) can be significant too: robots don't need expensive healthcare plans, won't need old-age pensions, don't take two-week vacations, and won't go on strike.

\* Working with circuit boards is a delicate operation. Here robots from Kuka (a German Industrial automation company recently acquired by a Chinese conglomerate) show how dedicated working robots can see, touch and manipulate sensitive electronic components on a dedicated assembly line.

Not convinced?



Robotics forecast



Tesla 3 production



Zuckerberg vs Elon

Industrial automation analysts will be watching Tesla Motors closely as it attempts to transform itself from a low-volume (under 100k units per year), high-priced specialty car manufacturer to a high-volume (over 300k units per year), mass market automobile manufacturer. The key to Tesla's manufacturing strategy appears to be an investment in more than 400 new Kuka robots designed to ramp up production of the upcoming Tesla Model 3, now expected to be available in 2018.

## Industrial Automation Advocates Also See Working Robots As Key to Successful Re-Shoring

With robots replacing humans, it's also becoming economically feasible to move entire factory production lines from low wage regions (such as China or Mexico) back to the USA — an idea that is gathering steam now as the White House promotes the idea of “border adjustment” taxes on imported manufactured goods.

According to the Reshoring Institute's Reshoring Initiative 2016 Data Report, the year 2016 was significant for American manufacturing. Rather than losing as many as 220,000 manufacturing jobs (as was the case in previous years), the tide turned in 2016 with the first recorded net increase in American manufacturing jobs since the 1970s — thanks to a combined increase in reshoring and foreign direct investment (FDI) in American production facilities.

## Wait a Second... With Robots Replacing Humans, Is My Own Job Safe and Secure?

While it may seem a bit off topic, we need to take a moment address an issue that often overshadows any conversation about industrial automation: the question of whether robots will threaten on our own job security.

While robots can make us feel good about reshoring factory production to the USA, they can also make us feel very uneasy about our own individual roles in a robot world. As a result, people often hold conflicting opinions about robots. For example, most of us think it's a good idea to employ robot workers in dangerous conditions (such as when there is a potential exposure to radiation or toxic chemicals) or to perform inherently risky tasks (such as detecting and detonating bombs). Most (but not all of us) would also agree that robots replacing humans is a suitable choice for highly repetitious and tedious factory jobs (e.g. assembling micro screws into electronic products, such as iPhones). But when it comes to a robot replacing our own job, all of us agree: that's a BAD idea!

Famed British scientist, Stephen Hawking, sees a much darker future, warning us that we're on a path toward a Robot Apocalypse where artificial intelligence (AI) life forms take over. The resulting “AI Takeover” sounds almost as bad as a Zombie Apocalypse, except, instead of being killed by the walking dead, we'll suffer a similar fate as space explorers David Bowman and Frank Poole in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey at the hands of the all-powerful HAL 9000 computer.

## The Counter Argument: Investments in Industrial Automation Will Create More Jobs Overall

Does it all have to be that dire?

Analysts' opinion differ on how quickly this could happen, but there is no question that as industrial robots start to learn complex tasks and make decisions on their own (thanks to advances in artificial intelligence), many careers will be at risk, eventually — even some surprising ones, such as jobs for music composers creating soundtracks for videos.

Technology analyst, Shelly Palmer, predicts that the five jobs most vulnerable to robot replacement are:

Middle Managers  
Commodity Salespeople  
Report Writers, Journalists, Authors, & Announcers  
Accountants and Bookkeepers  
Doctors

while he predicts the least at-risk professions are:

Pre-school and Elementary School Teachers  
Professional Athletes  
Politicians  
Judges  
Mental Health Professionals

Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, recently predicted that job displacement by automation will be one of the major challenges facing the Millennial Generation. Speaking at Harvard University (where he received an honorary degree), Zuckerberg speculated we might need to “explore ideas like universal basic income...” as a means to cope with the coming changes facing society.

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