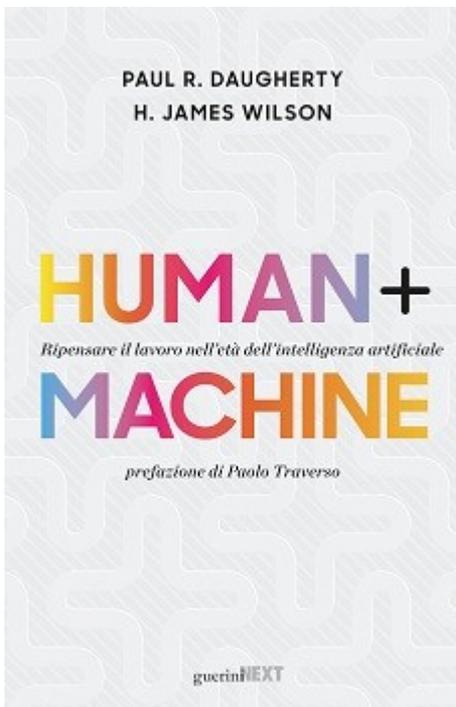# Human + machine, rethinking work

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The Italian edition of the book written by Paul Daugherty and James Wilson, and published by Guerini Next is out. The preface is signed by Paolo Traverso, FBK-ICT director

A new form of collaborative intelligence between man and machine, in which artificial intelligence is not a threat but a ally of humans' in rethinking processes and models, increasing profitability and the level of innovation in work and business.
This is the scenario illustrated by Paul Daugherty and James Wilson in Human + Machine, rethinking work in the age of artificial intelligence, published by Editori Guerini and now in bookstores.

The book – which is based on quantitative and qualitative research conducted on 1,500 companies – addresses the widespread thought that artificial intelligence systems will progressively replace man's work. The two authors, Accenture experts, on the one hand explain how this will inevitably happen for some professions that will undergo the automation of different tasks, on the other hand emphasize how the real strength of AI lies in its capacity to amplify human abilities.

"It is wrong to consider the relationship between technology, artificial intelligence in this case, and man as a dichotomy or a conflict- said Paolo Traverso, director of Center for Information Technology at Fondazione Bruno Kessler, who wrote the preface. Artificial intelligence does not have to replace people, their abilities, their creativity, but exalt them, enhance them, and it is in this perspective that AI must be considered if we look at future work and business scenarios: collaboration and complementarity ".

The collaboration between man and machine paves the way for what the authors call the third wave of industrial transformation. The first, which started with Henry Ford, was about standardized processes; the second, which reached its peak in the 1990s with the re-engineering of business processes, concerned automated processes; the third wave has instead initiated what the authors call the missing middle, that space in which man and machines work together to achieve substantial increases in company performance by taking advantage of what each party does best.

To fully exploit the power of AI, the book argues, companies must bridge the gap in the missing middle by considering the creation of new professions, establishing new types of work relations between man and machine, changing traditional management concepts and revising the concept of work itself.

With the aim of helping business leaders rethink their processes and get the most out of AI to amplify human abilities, the authors suggest a model they call MELDS, a scheme based on five crucial principles that companies must follow to adopt artificial intelligence: Mindset, Enterprise, Leadership, Data and Skills.

In Human + Machine, the authors maintain that the strengthening of AI is changing the business processes within three categories of human-machine interaction in the missing middle: amplification, where AI allows to obtain extraordinary data-based insights, often processed in real time; interaction, where AI uses advanced interfaces such as voice-controlled processing of natural language; personification, where AI works in synergy with sensors, motors and actuators that allow robots to share the work space with the man and undertake a physical working collaboration.

The book also identifies three macro-categories of new professions in the missing middle, thanks to which businesses will be able to guarantee a successful application of artificial intelligence: trainers, who will be called to educate intelligent systems – helping those who process natural language and language translators improve results – and algorithms on how to imitate human behavior; explainers, who will have the function of reducing the gap between technological developments and real applications at the business level, helping sort out the operation of complex algorithms to non-technical professionals; and sustainers, the figures responsible for the correct operation of intelligent systems, as instruments created for the service of man, to simplify our work and our life.

THE AUTHORS

Paul R. Daugherty is Chief Technology and Innovation Officer at Accenture, where he is responsible for artificial intelligence projects and global R&D facilities.

H. James Wilson is head of the IT and Business Research Department at Accenture Reserarch. For Harvard Business Review Press, he is the author of What's the Big Idea? Creating and Capitalizing on the Best Management Thinking.

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AUTHORS

- Salvatore Romano