THE WORLD OF WORK 4.0

THESES OF THE KDA FEDERAL COMMITTEE ON WORK AND TECHNOLOGY

KWA

EVANGELISCHER VERBAND
KIRCHE WIRTSCHAFT ARBEITSWELT

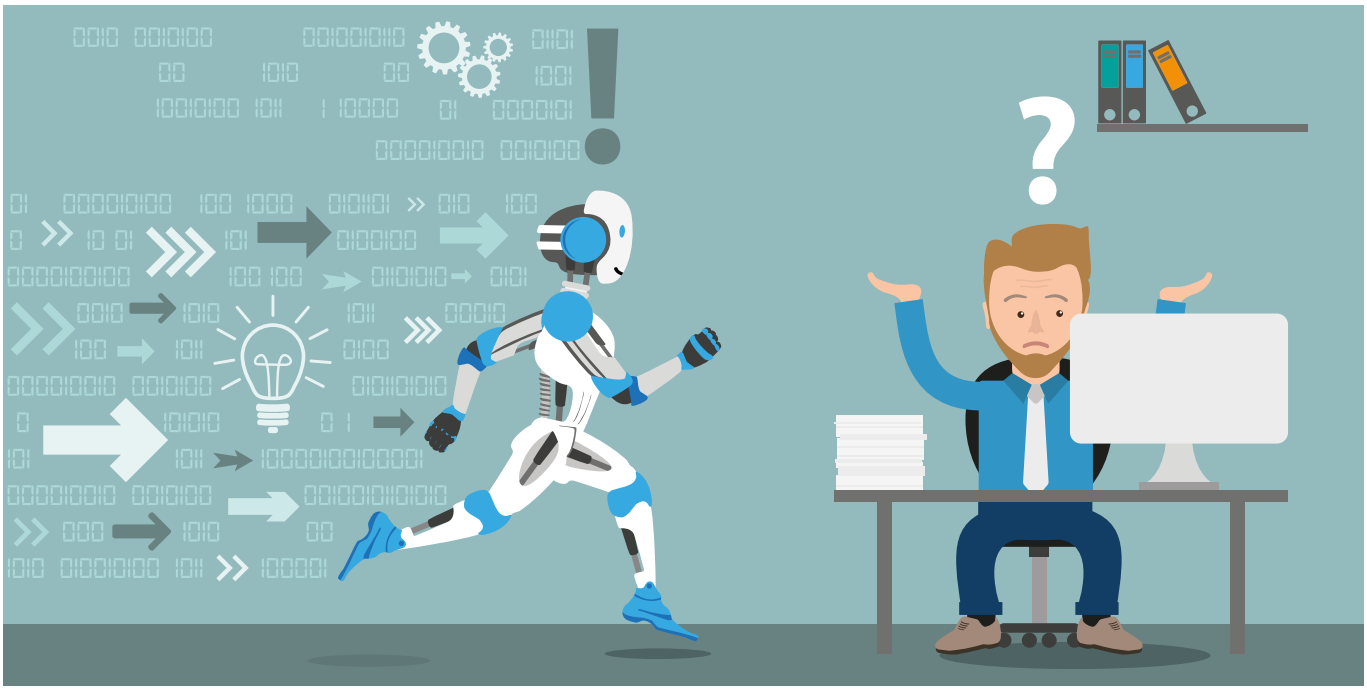
KDA – Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt

IN DIALOGUE

CHURCH
ECONOMY
WORK

THE WORLD OF WORK 4.0
THESES OF THE KDA FEDERAL COMMITTEE ON WORK AND TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION



Our world is characterised by increasing complexity. People must learn to deal with it – for their own life design, for living together in partnerships, communities and organisations and for participation in democratic decision-making processes.

To put it bluntly: Today, we think predominantly within one system. The challenge at all levels of society, however, is to learn to think across systems.

For some, the new possibilities of the Worldwide Web hardly seem worth questioning critically. For others, the PC is already an impenetrable black box. Many people hope that increasing digitalisation will enable them to better force through their economic interests. As KDA we want to pursue the question of what is appropriate for human beings.

We as the Federal Committee have learned so far: On the one hand, there is the conventional reality in businesses which must be dealt with using the existing instruments of co-determination. On the other hand, there is the vision of a new technical dimension (“Industry 4.0”), for which appropriate analysis and design instruments must now be developed.

This will be developed in the following theses:

1ST THESIS
ASYNCHRONIES AND INEQUALITIES

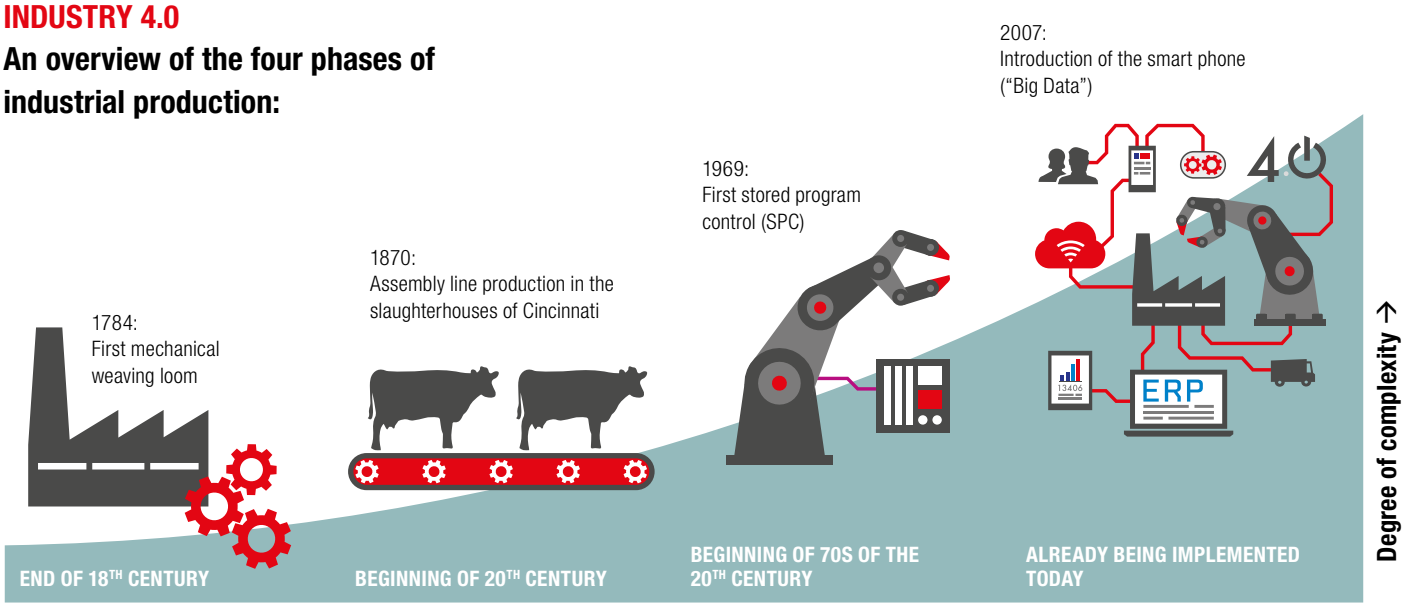
We observe multiple asynchronies in digital and social development. These have an impact on the inequalities in society; people and companies are affected differently. This trend will continue and intensify.

At the moment, the focus is mainly on technical development, whereas the focus on the social and cultural changes that digitalisation has brought about is neglected, be that consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly. At the moment we are experiencing in all three sectors – Industry, Services and Agriculture – the close co-existence of different stages of technological development, the so-called "Industry 1.0 – 4.0". This asynchrony is also reflected in the discourses of economics, politics and interest groups as well as in the minds and hearts of (individual) people. The dissemination of digital technologies is progressing rapidly in some cases, so that legislation cannot keep up with it. In addition, there are several opposing trends, such as regionalisation vs. globalisation.

From an ethical perspective, the social players have to deal with the changes brought about by increasing digitalisation in order to be able to help shape the quantum leaps in economic and labour-structuring development. Only then will we be in a position to answer the question of what "social" can mean in these contexts? This is a prerequisite for being able to describe the concept of the social market economy in the digital age.

INDUSTRY 4.0

An overview of the four phases of industrial production:



1ST INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
Mechanical work machines replace manual work, the first concepts of work scheduling.

2ND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
Electric power takes root. Thus production can be regulated more exactly.

3RD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
With the aid of IT technology the productivity of the factories increases greatly.

4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
Production is more interconnected and thus more versatile, more flexible and more transparent.

Data source: DFKI 2011 Design: Magascreen.com

2ND THESIS
POTENTIALS

Based on the mission to preserve creation, it is the task of the Protestant Church and the KDA to work for a good basis of life for all people. We therefore support initiatives by individuals and/or companies who (alongside the mainstream) use alternative approaches to respond creatively to the inequalities and challenges of transformation in the digital age.

Beyond the neoliberal growth strategy, different alternative approaches are developing worldwide (Care Economy, Degrowth, Ecomony …). They all also have a connection to digitalisation and may use its potential if applied in an ethical way. Representatives of these approaches, however, point out that the necessary transformation will be neither a matter of better technology nor of superior scientific findings and arguments, but rather a matter of getting through struggles and conflicts (according to Welzer). It is necessary to adapt digital transformation to socio-political and civil society terms and as a church to intervene in these discussion processes, with this question: How do we want to live together?

3RD THESIS
INTENSIFICATION OF ALREADY EXISTING DIVISIONS

“The winner takes it all” - this sentence is also proving true in the course of digitalisation. Those who can set standards determine the development and achieve gigantic revenues (Google, Facebook, etc.). The divisions in our societies are intensifying, and with the digitalisation of all areas of life new divisions are also being created (“digital divide”). Social injustice will increase.

The compulsion for growth fuels gigantic concentration processes relentlessly. In the future, so-called “free competition” will be undermined even more by monopolies and oligopolies. Large companies are already exerting their influence by investing in science (partly because universities are inadequately financed by the state). They buy up ideas, only to suppress them. There are currently no international institutions that can successfully control this power of money. This is a big problem of modern democracies.

A new societal divide is created through the differences in access to and use of ICTs by different groups of the population. This affects the growing income gap as well as the age gap (Generation Y, Z as digital natives) and also the gender gap (“Digital Gender Gap”).

4TH THESIS
NECESSARY REGULATORY AND DESIGN POLICY

The potentials of digitalisation are suitable both for making contributions to the necessary sustainable transformation of economy and work, but also for further fanning the flames of the process of the heating and the destruction of the planet. The implementation of digital systems must therefore be accompanied by a regulatory policy through rule-making, and must be designed with the participation of people at all levels. Here, co-determination in companies must also be reconsidered and adapted in order to strengthen and protect workers‘ rights. The effects of digitalisation on the social security systems must also be kept in mind in order to counteract the tendencies towards division.

The neoliberal age is reaching its limits. It is necessary to rethink the economy in order to meet the challenges of the present and to be able to continue to provide goods and services for a good life for all in the future. The social-ecological market economy demanded by many is a desirable goal. At present, however, none of this is really the case: neither socially, nor ecologically, nor a market which is worthy of such a name.

Beyond the field of economics, the question also arises as to what effects these developments will have on our kind of democracies. This is of fundamental importance in view of the necessity to be able to and obliged to control developments by means of a regulatory policy. For otherwise our societies will be controlled by those who also program the algorithms in their interests and thus “govern” us.

5TH THESIS
CHALLENGE: RETHINKING ORGANISATIONS

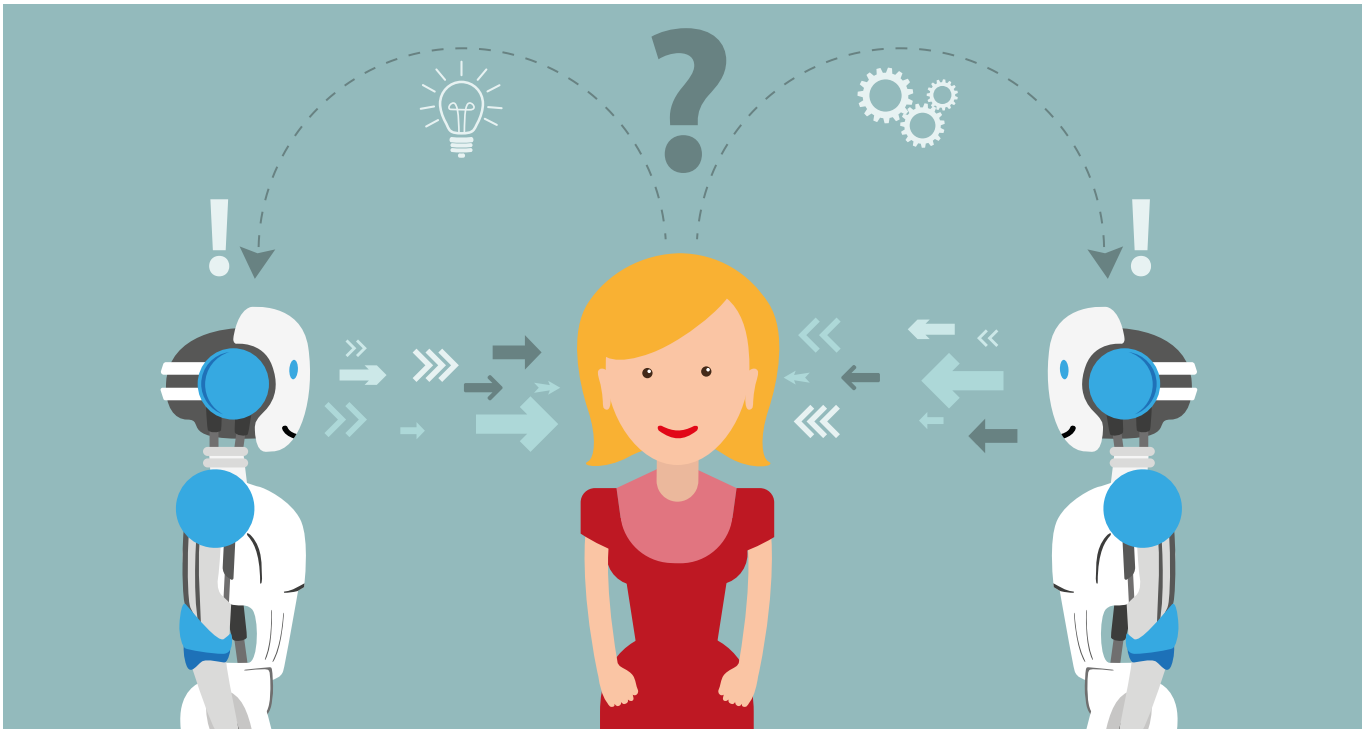
Traditional perceptions of organisations are dissolving in the 4.0 world. This not only affects the understanding of businesses as places of economic activity, but will also affect other forms of organisation (state, associations etc.) and in the end also poses unexpected challenges to church structures.

Current developments show that the traditional concept of what businesses are, is on the verge of disintegration due to autonomous controlling systems. The digitalisation of cross-business value chains is changing entrepreneurial models of innovation and investment and has an impact on co-determination in businesses and on collective bargaining, as well as on the health and safety of employees.

Work and working time are no longer bound to the location of businesses. The number of regularly employed workers is decreasing, while the number of partner contractors and solo self-employed (crowd workers) and those in precarious jobs is increasing.

This also changes the understanding of leadership. In the future, leadership will mean organising employee participation to a much greater extent than in the past, also with regard to the design of work processes and workplaces.

Opportunities are emerging for a new flexible type of work that adapts to the needs of employees, but new potential for conflict and discrepancies is also emerging (e.g. “deliberate self-endangerment”, data protection and control). Co-determination at company level and in collective agreements as well as employee protection must therefore be adapted to the developments and conditions under which work currently takes place, i.e. effectively expanded.



6TH THESIS
NEW ADJUSTMENT OF PERSONALITY RIGHTS

In the age of digitalisation, all people leave behind data tracks in the virtual network. The lack of control over the spread of personal data in the net arouses fears and resistance. This development, which eliminates boundaries, must be effectively countered with legal regulations and the cultivating of ethical awareness in order to ensure informational self-determination. Such questions of data protection law must be discussed and answered on an interdisciplinary basis.

This raises questions such as:

- How can retrieval rights be guaranteed in the digital age (with digital order processing in real time)?
- How can the "right to be forgotten" be effectively established internationally?
- How can violence on the Internet (cyberbullying) be prevented and punished?
- How can the amalgamation of data storage and the "working ability" of computers be reconciled with personality rights with regard to the control or monitoring of people at work?
- How can human-machine interactions be reconciled with the personality rights of working people?

Members of the KDA Federal Committee on Work and Technology:

Romeo Edel (KDA Württemberg)

Nina Golf (KDA Bayern)

Christine Gortner (Ev. Arbeitsstelle Bildung und Gesellschaft Pfalz)

Peter Greulich (KDA Hannover)

Peter Grohme (Referat Wirtschaft-Arbeit-Soziales Kurhessen-Waldeck)

Matthias Jung (KDA Hannover)

Angelika Kähler (KDA Nordkirche)

Heike Miehe (ZGV Hessen-Nassau)

Roland Pelikan (KDA Bayern)

Rose Richter (KWA Westfalen)

Martina Spohr (Referat Wirtschaft-Arbeit-Soziales Kurhessen-Waldeck)

Michael Stahlmann (KDA Rheinland)

For the KDA Federal Committee on Work and Technology:

Matthias Jung, Nina Golf, Romeo Edel

Status: November 2017

Design: Holger Giebeler, Magascreen.com · Pictures: © elenabsl/Fotolia.com

KWA

EVANGELISCHER VERBAND
KIRCHE WIRTSCHAFT ARBEITSWELT

Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt

Friedrich-Karrenberg-Haus
Arnswaldtstraße 6
30159 Hannover
Germany
Phone: 0511 473877-0
info@kwa-ekd.de
www.kwa-ekd.de

FUNDED BY

EKD
Evangelische Kirche
in Deutschland