

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO YOUR NEXT MOVE

What Careers Will Live After AI?

How To Survive the AI Boom



45 CAREER PROFILES / UNITED STATES EDITION

J&M DIGITAL LLC



Scope, dates, and how to read the numbers

United States edition

Research cutoff: October 1, 2026. This publication is written primarily for adults in the United States. Licensing, funding, tuition, and labor markets differ elsewhere and between U.S. states. The sources are a selected evidence base, not a complete review of every study or occupation.

Pay is a reference point

Career profiles use BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook figures retrieved for this edition: May 2025 employee pay and 2025-2035 employment projections. A median divides the measured wage distribution in half. It is not a starting salary, an offer, or a promise. The wage data generally exclude self-employed workers. Hourly figures are kept hourly when that is the clearer measure. [R1]

Forecasts are conditional

Projected growth is a national estimate over a decade, not a count of jobs currently available near you. Openings can arise when people leave an occupation even if total employment declines. Some BLS pages combine several occupations; profiles identify when the demand group is broader than the specific pay figure. [R2]

Our interpretation is labeled

The labels relatively resilient, substantial change, and more uncertain are editorial assessments of task patterns. They are not BLS categories, validated risk scores, or probabilities of losing a job. Training budgets are explicitly illustrative planning allowances, not surveyed price ranges. All worked examples are fictional. This is general career education, not individual legal, financial, clinical, or licensing advice.

Read claims at the right level

Capability studies

An exposure study estimates whether technology could affect tasks. The ILO's 2025 index found broad potential exposure and emphasized that job transformation is more likely than complete automation for many occupations. It is a global task-exposure analysis, not a forecast that a particular U.S. worker will be laid off. [R3]

Observed workplace results

Brynjolfsson, Li, and Raymond studied an AI assistant used by 5,172 customer-support agents. Their revised paper reports an average 15% improvement in issues resolved per hour, with different effects across workers. That is evidence from a particular workplace setting, not a universal productivity rate or proof of an equivalent reduction in jobs. [R4]

Results can change

METR's early-2025 randomized study found experienced open-source developers took 19% longer on the studied tasks with AI. Its February 2026 update said newer data were affected by selection problems and did not reliably establish the current effect. Do not freeze an old result into a permanent rule about a rapidly changing tool. [R5] [R6]

Your practical conclusion

Use studies to form questions, then test those questions in your own setting. Who was studied? Which tool version? Which task? Was quality checked? Does the result measure output, time, hiring, wages, or something else? A measured improvement in one outcome does not automatically establish the others.

Audit tasks, not your job title

Capture a normal week

List eight to twelve recurring tasks and estimate the share of time each takes. Make the total roughly 100%. Include the work that is easy to overlook: checking errors, handling exceptions, coordinating people, preparing a site, and explaining decisions. Avoid broad entries such as administration that hide several different activities.

Describe the conditions

For each task, note whether inputs are digital and standardized, whether the outcome can be checked easily, whether physical presence is needed, whether the situation varies, and who carries responsibility for mistakes. These are prompts for judgment, not a formula that produces an automation probability.

Assign a working response

Use three action labels. Assist: try an approved tool with human review. Strengthen: improve judgment, relationships, domain knowledge, or physical skill. Verify: collect more evidence because the task, tool, or employer plan is unclear. A task can need both assistance and strengthening. Keep the next action specific.

Interpret the whole role

A role with many automatable minutes may still contain a small but essential responsibility. Conversely, a role with human contact may face fewer openings if software handles the routine workload. Look at how your employer could reorganize the bundle, not just whether a single task can be done by a tool.

Worked example: an office coordinator

Illustrative situation

Jordan is a fictional office coordinator. A weekly audit estimates 25% of time on scheduling, 20% on routine email, 20% on resolving supplier problems, 20% on checking invoices, and 15% on helping colleagues complete processes. These invented percentages illustrate the method; they are not findings about office workers.

What the audit reveals

Scheduling and first-draft email are candidates for approved assistance. Invoice checking includes both routine matching and exceptions that need investigation. Supplier problems require context, negotiation, and follow-through. Jordan does not label the whole job safe or doomed. The useful question is how to become more valuable as routine work gets faster.

A small experiment

With a manager's permission, Jordan tests an approved tool on non-sensitive meeting summaries. For two weeks, Jordan records drafting time, correction time, missing actions, and final quality. The experiment measures reliable completed work, including review. If corrections consume the time saved, the workflow needs revision or should be abandoned.

A nearby development path

Jordan proposes taking ownership of supplier exceptions and a clearer invoice-escalation process. In parallel, Jordan interviews two operations coordinators about hiring requirements. The outcome is a stronger current role and a tested alternative. It is not a claim that an AI course guarantees promotion, nor a reason to stop watching the employer's hiring plans.

Understand the training budget ranges

These are planning scenarios

The profile budget ranges are editorial allowances for an initial comparison. They are not researched national tuition distributions, school quotes, ceilings, or promises of aid. They cover selected direct training costs before aid and exclude living costs and lost earnings. Actual prices can be below or far above them. Replace them with written local quotes before deciding.

Six budget routes

A: paid apprenticeship, \$0-\$5,000 for possible fees, tools, and related expenses. B: employer-led entry, \$0-\$2,000 for optional preparation or required entry items. C: certificate route, \$1,000-\$15,000. D: lower-cost associate route, \$6,000-\$30,000. E: substantial degree or graduate route, \$20,000-\$100,000 or more. F: targeted bridge for someone already qualified, \$0-\$5,000; a new degree must be priced separately.

The route changes the meaning

A zero-tuition apprenticeship can still require transport, tools, and a temporary pay reduction. An employer-trained role may have no upfront course cost. A certificate can be inexpensive but useless if employers do not recognize it. A four-year nursing route should not be costed as a two-year associate route.

Build the full total

Add tuition, fees, books, tools, exams, renewals, travel, childcare, and any reduction in earnings. Subtract only confirmed grants or employer support. Keep loans separate because they change how you pay, not what the training costs. Include a contingency amount you can actually afford and a plan if training takes longer.

Electrician

\$63,190/year

May 2025 U.S. median employee pay. Not starting pay.

9% growth · BLS 2025-2035 national forecast

Figures describe the BLS occupation or group named in the linked source.

The work

Electricians install, diagnose, maintain, and repair electrical systems. The work combines plans and measurements with decisions in real buildings, where conditions rarely match a perfect diagram. Residential service, commercial construction, and industrial maintenance are different working lives. Ask which one you are applying for before deciding whether this trade fits you.

Skills you can bring

Useful starting strengths include careful measurement, following a sequence, mechanical curiosity, reliable attendance, and explaining a problem to a customer. Experience maintaining equipment or coordinating jobs can help. Being comfortable with software is useful, but it does not replace electrical safety knowledge or supervised practice.

Entry requirements

A high school diploma or equivalent is a common starting requirement. Most workers learn through an apprenticeship, and most states require licensing. A short electrical course can help you explore the field; it does not authorize independent electrical work. Confirm the sponsor's admission rules, classroom schedule, wage steps, and route to the required license.

Time and cost

Commonly 4-5 years for an apprenticeship; hiring and licensing add time. Illustrative direct-cost allowance: \$0-\$5,000 for possible fees, tools, and related training items on a paid apprenticeship route. Confirm wages and costs with the sponsor.

Source C01: BLS occupational profile · Retrieved October 1, 2026

AI, tradeoffs, and a first step

RELATIVELY RESILIENT • EDITORIAL ASSESSMENT

How AI may change the work

AI may speed estimating, documentation, code lookups, and fault suggestions. Installing and safely testing a system still requires physical access and accountable judgment. That makes the core work relatively resilient in this book's assessment. It does not protect a contractor from a construction slowdown, poor management, or stronger competition.

Drawbacks to investigate

Expect travel, ladders, cramped spaces, kneeling, weather, and potentially hazardous energy. Apprentice wages may be well below the occupational median. Entry can be competitive, and early starts may conflict with childcare. Ask about safety training, protective equipment, overtime, and who pays for tools before accepting.

Realistic first steps

Find three registered apprenticeship sponsors within a realistic commute. Ask each about application dates, math requirements, starting wage, raises, and total out-of-pocket costs. Compare service contractors with industrial employers. A paid helper opening can provide exposure, but verify whether its hours count toward the pathway you want.

Test before committing

Arrange an authorized jobsite observation or training-center visit. Talk to one first-year apprentice and one experienced electrician. Write down the hardest ordinary day, not just the most interesting project. Do not practice on energized wiring to build a portfolio.

A possible bridge

If you already work in facilities, explore an employer-supported apprenticeship or maintenance pathway before resigning. A later move into estimating, supervision, or training may use field experience while changing physical demands; none is an automatic promotion.

Computer support specialist

\$61,860/year

May 2025 U.S. median employee pay. Not starting pay.

3% decline · BLS 2025-2035 national forecast

Demand: all computer support specialists; pay: user support specialists.

The work

Computer support specialists help people and organizations resolve technology problems. This profile emphasizes user support; the BLS demand forecast includes network support too. Simple password and setup requests differ from device deployment, complex troubleshooting, accessibility support, and helping a frustrated person recover work.

Skills you can bring

Customer service, logical troubleshooting, clear writing, and patient explanation transfer well. Build a habit of asking what changed, reproducing the problem, and recording the resolution. Being the person friends ask for computer help is a starting point, not proof of enterprise support competence.

Entry requirements

Requirements vary. User support may involve college coursework, or a high school diploma plus relevant IT certifications; network support often asks for an associate degree. Check actual local postings. A certificate can support an application but does not guarantee a job or establish experience you have not earned.

Time and cost

Several months-2 years for common entry preparation; requirements differ between user and network support. Illustrative direct-cost allowance: \$1,000-\$15,000 for a certificate route. Employer training may cost less; some private programs cost more. Get a complete local quote.

AI, tradeoffs, and a first step

MORE UNCERTAIN · EDITORIAL ASSESSMENT

How AI may change the work

Routine questions and scripted fixes are strong candidates for self-service and AI assistance. More complex device, network, security, and human problems remain. We classify entry prospects as more uncertain because the mix of jobs may shift even while replacement openings continue.

Drawbacks to investigate

Shift work, ticket targets, contract employment, and frustrated users can be common. Entry-level remote roles may attract many applicants. Avoid assuming national technology demand means an easy first job. Ask what proportion of work involves learning versus repeating a script.

Realistic first steps

Collect ten postings and separate user support, desktop support, and network support. Identify recurring requirements before paying for an exam. Build a small legal home lab and document two troubleshooting cases with fictional or your own non-sensitive data.

Test before committing

Write a one-page guide for a common problem, then ask a nontechnical person to follow it. Record where they get stuck and revise it. This demonstrates communication and verification more clearly than a generic claim of being good with technology.

A possible bridge

Customer-service workers can bring valuable people skills. A realistic bridge may be onsite support or an internal technology liaison. Security and systems administration can be later directions, but they require additional experience and should not be sold as immediate certificate outcomes.

Days 1-30: replace worry with evidence

Week 1

Write your constraints and complete the task audit. Gather your current résumé, qualifications, and examples of work you may share. Identify one way to strengthen your current role and three career options to investigate. Keep the scope small enough to fit your available hours.

Week 2

Read the relevant profiles and collect local postings. Record required qualifications, likely schedules, and pay information without treating posted maxima as starting offers. Contact an American Job Center or apprenticeship sponsor if relevant. Note the critical unknowns rather than trying to resolve every detail at once.

Week 3

Have two informational conversations and arrange one low-cost test. If considering training, request written costs and eligibility requirements. Begin one practical skill exercise or an approved workplace improvement. Keep a record of what you actually did and learned.

Week 4 review

Decide which option deserves another month. Your evidence should include a task audit, three comparisons, two conversations, and one completed test or a clear reason it could not happen. These are planning targets, not required productivity quotas. If life interrupts, reduce the scope and preserve the next useful action. Do not buy training merely to feel that progress has occurred.