

THE FUTURE OF WORK

By Stephen Mills, Executive Director UMR research

A UMR nationwide survey undertaken earlier this year shows New Zealanders appear to be remarkably complacent about the threat from the advance of new technologies to many occupations in the near let alone the more distant future.

They do not appear, at least yet, to be overly concerned by the threat to current occupations from new technologies.

Employed New Zealanders are not overly worried that their job will be lost to new technology. Right now, there is more concern their job will be lost as a result of poor management.

Decisive majorities of all New Zealanders surveyed believe that the job they work in now will be around in 10 years, 20 years and even in 50 years.

They also believe that most occupations will survive, even over a 50 year timespan. Of a range of 16 occupations tested, the only ones a majority of New Zealanders think will probably be gone in 50 years are; travel agents, cashiers and tellers and postal service workers.

Reasons for concern about losing job

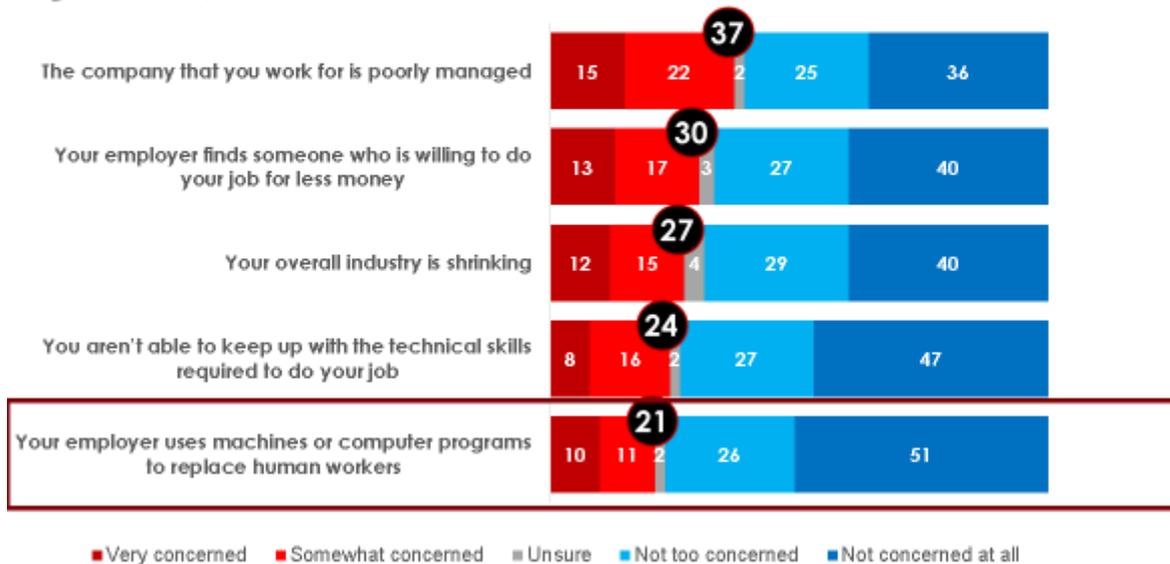
Provided with a set of reasons on why people might worry about losing a job, 10% were very concerned that their “employer uses machines or computer programs to replace human workers”; 11% were somewhat concerned; 26% were not too concerned and 51% were not concerned at all; 2% were unsure.

Of the reasons provided, employed New Zealanders were most concerned about losing their job because the company was poorly managed.

Concern about losing their job to machines or computer programs was higher amongst New Zealanders on lower household incomes. Amongst those in households earning \$50,000 or less, 24% were concerned and 74% were not concerned. Amongst those in household incomes earning less than \$100,000, 16% were concerned and 84% were not concerned

Job security concerns

} How concerned, if at all, are you are about potentially losing your job for these reasons?
(Feb 2017)



Base: Those currently working full time or part time n=595



Sustainability of jobs

Employed New Zealanders were asked about the likelihood of the job that they worked in now existing in 10, 20 and 50 years time.

A decade ahead, 60% thought their job would definitely still exist, 33% that it probably would exist, 4% that it would probably not exist and 1% that it would definitely not exist. 2% were unsure.

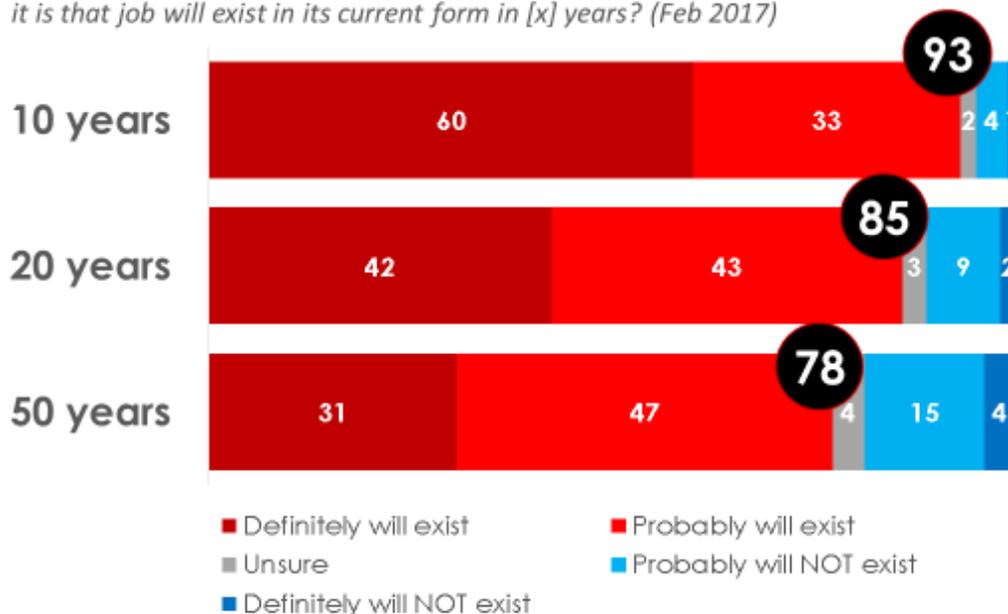
Pushing that timeframe out to 20 years, 42% thought that the job they were in now would still exist, 43% that it probably would exist, 9% that it would probably not exist and 2% that it would definitely not exist. 3% were unsure.

Even looking ahead 50 years, 31% thought that the job they were in now would definitely still exist, 47% that it would probably exist, 15% that would probably not exist and 4% that would definitely not exist. Despite the massive uncertainties of looking ahead over such a long period, only 4% recorded an unsure opinion.

New Zealanders on lower household incomes were generally more likely to think their job would be gone than those on higher household incomes.

Will your job exist in [x] years' time?

} Thinking about the job or occupation that you work in now, how likely do you think it is that job will exist in its current form in [x] years? (Feb 2017)



Base: Those currently working full time or part time n=595



Future of occupations

Given a range of 16 occupations and asked about whether they would still exist in 50 years time, most New Zealanders believed most jobs would survive.

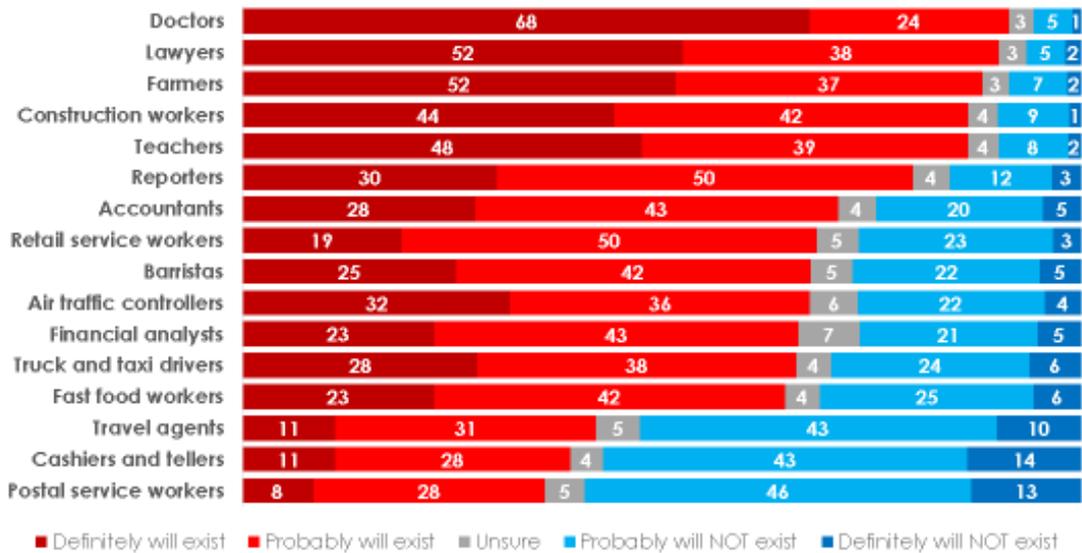
92% thought doctors would definitely or probably still exist, 90% lawyers, 89% farmers and 86% construction workers.

Even in the media industry, obviously subject to significant disruption, 80% thought reporters would definitely or probably still exist. Even more surprisingly perhaps, given the publicity about driverless cars, 66% thought truck and taxi drivers would definitely or probably still exist in 50 years time.

Only in the case of postal service workers, cashiers and tellers and travel agents did a majority of New Zealanders think that occupation would probably or definitely not exist in 50 years time.

Will these jobs exist in 50 years?

} Thinking about the job or occupations below, how likely do you think it is that these will exist in their current form in 50 years' time? (Feb 2017)



Base: all respondents n=1000



[Note on methodology: All results are from questions included in UMR's monthly online omnibus survey. This is a survey of a nationally representative sample of 1000 New Zealanders 18 years plus. Fieldwork was 10-17 February 2017.]