

'Don't approach the future with fear, welcome AI' - Leading futurist examines Ireland's foothold in the tech revolution



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Financial concerns should not hinder Ireland's ability to stay forefront of the tech revolution across Europe, according to a leading futurist.

"A great idea doesn't cost anything; money isn't always the object when you see the technical ability of a mere handset," Kjaer Global's Anne Lise Kjaer told Independent.ie.

"Many people have a full time job to keep paying the bills. But it's a sharing economy, there's a whole new dimension to define what it means to be a global citizen. It's not just about money, the SME instrument is the lifeblood of any small country, assists in the incubation of entrepreneurship."

The 'fourth industrial revolution' is a term coined by World Economic Forum (WEF) founder and executive chairman Klaus Schwab for radical technological shifts under way.

But Kjaer Global recently provided a 'New Renaissance Hotspots Report' for global tech leader Huawei to highlight how Ireland as a nation is undergoing essentially a new age.

Hundreds of years after the original Renaissance, the research shows that there are cities who are particularly leading the way when it comes to big ideas, innovation and change.

Both quantitative data and qualitative research were analysed for the report and cities within ten European countries scored against three key drivers: Creativity, Connectivity and Innovation.

Cork, followed closely by Galway, was identified as the being the epicenter of digital innovation in Ireland.

"The two counties come very close in size and numbers. Real change starts in small communities; they have that drive and they stand out as motivators. There's not so much red tape, they just get on with it, it's very inspiring.

"There's a creative initiative to make Ireland the best country to grow old in."

According to the report, this New Renaissance will be responsible for the creation of more than 1.1 million jobs across Europe by 2025.

"The world is changing; complexity in society and business growth is changing the future of jobs and skills," said Kjaer.

"Evolving technologies, notably robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are driving automation of ever more traditional jobs and rewriting the rules of education and skills. To this end, individuals as well as organisations will need to adopt a growth mindset and nurture the creativity, agility and lifelong learning skills that will make us, not just resilient, but thriving as the world changes."

The long-held belief that automation will overwhelm in the various sectors, and bring with it robots that will replace the need for human employees is still prevalent.

But the tide is turning and the way forward is not something that companies and employees - at whatever level - should shy away from.

And the future is expected to witness the emergence of new roles including Professional Rebel, AI Artist, Creativity Therapist and Robotic Rights Activist.

"Don't approach the future with fear, welcome AI. It enables people to then go on and have the day job which can only be done by people. All of the soft skills that can't be outsourced to robots.

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"Even my role, the job of a futurist - that's a new skillset. We are about to break down paradigms, but it always takes 20-30 years to do so."

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