

100M+ Views of AI Fear Hit Your Workforce. Is Your AI ROI at Risk?

An Automation Workz Research Brief — September 2026

Executive Summary

AI has stopped being just a technology problem. It is now a human technology-readiness problem.



Figure 1. CNN's Anderson Cooper 360° (September 2026): former Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxon discusses his viral resignation warning that AI "could kill all of us by end of decade."

On September 8, 2026, former Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxon's resignation warning about catastrophic AI risk generated an estimated 76 million to 150+ million views within 72 hours (Deadline, 2026; TIME, 2026; TheStreet, 2026; Oliver Willis, 2026; Fortune, 2026). Days later, Anthropic released a threat-intelligence report documenting real misuse of AI systems, including cyberattacks, influence operations, and bioweapons-adjacent research (Anthropic, 2026). View counts vary by source and platform snapshot, so this brief treats the number as a range rather than a single verified figure.

The story landed on a workforce already worried about AI:

- 40% of workers fear AI will make their jobs obsolete, up from 28% in 2024 (Mercer, as cited in Metaintro, 2026).
- 52% of U.S. workers worry about AI's future workplace impact (Pew Research Center, 2025).
- 61% worry about AI's ethical and safety risks (MetLife, 2026).
- AI mentions in employee reviews rose 240% year-over-year, with sentiment turning negative (4 Corner Resources, 2026).
- Global technostress prevalence has been estimated near 40% (Phua et al., 2026).

The viral news cycle did not create technostress. It struck an already-elevated baseline. For corporate leaders, that creates AI adoption and ROI risk. For military leaders, it creates technology and mission-readiness risk. Yet most dashboards cannot see the variable that may determine whether increasingly sophisticated technology actually produces performance.

Automation Workz built SenseiiWyze™, a Predictive Behavior Analytics Engine, as the bridge between AI Investment and AI ROI, to surface the AI ROI gap before employee resistance shows up as poor adoption, wasted training investment, diminished productivity, or mission risk.



Figure 2. SenseiiWyze bridges the gap between AI Investment and AI ROI

YOUR AI DASHBOARD MAY BE MEASURING THE WRONG THING

Organizations measure: licenses, logins, training completion, feature use, certifications. Those numbers tell leaders what people did. They do not necessarily tell leaders whether people are ready to master the technology.

An employee can log into an AI platform every day while believing the platform threatens their job. A service member can complete technical training while lacking confidence in a rapidly changing system. Leaders see activity. They may not see resistance.

Skills measure what someone knows today. Tech Capability measures the potential to keep adapting as technology changes. That distinction matters because AI, cybersecurity, data analytics, IoT, autonomous systems, and network technologies do not remain static. Capability — not simply a snapshot of existing skills — is increasingly important to technology readiness.

THREE QUESTIONS EVERY TECHNOLOGY LEADER SHOULD ANSWER

1. WHO CAN ADAPT? — Tech Capability

Which people have the behavioral potential to grow into technology-intensive work? Where is hidden capability sitting inside the organization? Who may be capable of adapting into:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Cybersecurity
- Data Analytics
- Internet of Things
- Network Engineering

Organizations often search externally for technology talent while overlooking capability already inside their workforce.

2. WHO IS RESISTING — AND WHY? — Technostress Risk

Technostress is not simply “employees being stressed about technology.” Research identifies five distinct technostress creators (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008):

- **Techno-Overload** — too much, too fast.
- **Techno-Invasion** — always connected; no escape.
- **Techno-Complexity** — technology feels difficult to master.
- **Techno-Insecurity** — fear of displacement or job loss.
- **Techno-Uncertainty** — technology changes constantly and the future feels unclear.



Figure 3. The Five Faces of Technostress (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008).

The September AI news cycle is especially relevant to techno-insecurity and techno-uncertainty. Employees already hear, “AI will change your job.” Then they hear prominent AI researchers warning that even developers of the technology cannot confidently predict or control where increasingly powerful AI may lead.

Management says, “AI will help you.” Workers simultaneously hear, “AI may replace you — or become dangerous.” A company memo does not automatically resolve that conflict.

3. WHAT INTERVENTION WILL ACTUALLY WORK?

This is where organizations waste money. If the problem is a skill gap, train. If the problem is complexity, coaching may be more useful. If the problem is insecurity, another technical course may do very little. If the problem is overload, workflow redesign may be necessary. If the problem is uncertainty, leaders may need better communication and clearer career pathways. The objective should not be: **Train Everyone**. The objective should be: **Identify the barrier. Then target the intervention.**

Stop spending the same training dollar on different problems.

WHY THIS HAS BECOME AN AI ROI PROBLEM

The AI investment boom has created an uncomfortable economic problem. MIT Project NANDA examined hundreds of deployments, interviews, and surveys and reported that 95% of GenAI pilots studied showed no measurable P&L impact, despite an estimated \$30–\$40 billion in spending (Challapally et al., 2025). MIT described a learning gap, rather than simply blaming AI models.

Gartner separately predicted that 30% of GenAI projects would be abandoned after proof of concept by the end of 2025 (Gartner, 2024), and that more than 40% of agentic AI projects will be canceled by the end of 2027 (Gartner, 2025). These findings measure different things and should not be combined into a single failure statistic, but they point in the same direction: technology acquisition does not automatically create technology value.

MIT also reported widespread use of personal or “shadow” AI tools inside organizations (Challapally et al., 2025). That creates a paradox. Employees can resist sanctioned corporate AI while simultaneously using unsanctioned AI because they find it easier or more useful. A dashboard showing “low use” of the official platform may therefore misdiagnose the problem completely.

TECHNOLOGY READINESS REQUIRES MORE THAN SKILL



Figure 4. Technology Readiness = Capability × Motivation × Operating Environment.

Technology performance depends on all three:

- **Capability** — Can the person adapt and learn?
- **Motivation** — Will the person engage, experiment, and persist?
- **Operating Environment** — Do workflow, leadership, governance, and incentives make productive adoption possible?

Weakness in any one of these areas can suppress performance. Technostress attacks the motivation side directly. Poor workflow integration attacks the operating environment. And static skills assessments can miss capability entirely. That creates one of the most important hidden risks in technology deployment:



Figure 5. Hidden Tech Risk: High Capability + High Technostress = Hidden Readiness Risk.

The organization may have the talent. The talent may simply be resisting, overwhelmed, uncertain, or afraid. Not a talent shortage. A readiness mismatch.

LOGINS ARE NOT READINESS

Imagine this dashboard: 95% training completion. 80% activation. 70% monthly usage. It looks successful. But employees could still be using only basic functions, withholding institutional knowledge, avoiding experimentation, complying because management requires it, fearing replacement, using unauthorized tools instead, or completing training without applying it to actual work.

Logins measure access. Completion measures participation. Behavioral readiness measures the potential to turn technology into performance.

AI FEAR CAN BECOME OPERATIONAL RISK

Unchecked technostress can surface as:

- **Reduced motivation** — fear of displacement and constant uncertainty can undermine engagement.
- **Shadow AI** — workers may avoid sanctioned tools while using unapproved systems, creating governance and data-security exposure.
- **Leadership distrust** — employees may interpret AI deployment as a precursor to downsizing rather than an investment in their capability.
- **Training waste** — organizations continue purchasing courses even when the actual problem is not lack of technical skill.
- **Invisible ROI loss** — leaders blame the software, model, or vendor when the missing variable may be the human implementation environment.

That is why the critical management question is no longer simply, “DID WE DEPLOY AI?” The better questions are:

- Who can adapt? Who is resisting? Why are they resisting?

- Which technostress creator is involved?
- Who needs training? Who needs coaching? Who needs clearer communication or redesigned work?
- Where are we spending money without understanding the actual barrier?

THE MILITARY VERSION IS EVEN MORE CONSEQUENTIAL

For military organizations, this should not be framed primarily as employee anxiety. It is mission readiness under technology pressure. Service members increasingly operate alongside AI, cybersecurity systems, autonomous and semi-autonomous technologies, advanced analytics, and networked systems that change rapidly.

The question becomes: who can adapt quickly enough — and what behavioral barriers could interfere before they affect mission performance? That makes technostress a readiness variable. Not a wellness slogan. Not simply HR. Readiness.

Training completion alone cannot answer that question.

SENSEIIWYZE: THE MISSING HUMAN TECHNOLOGY-READINESS LAYER

SenseiiWyze™ is a behavioral data-generation and predictive analytics engine designed to identify technology-readiness risk before it becomes performance risk. It helps leaders evaluate three different questions:

- **Tech Skills** — What can this person do now?
- **Tech Capability** — What could this person adapt into?
- **Technostress** — What may be blocking adoption and performance?

Together, these create a more complete picture of human technology readiness than skills data alone.

PREDICT CAPABILITY. IDENTIFY TECHNOSTRESS. TARGET THE INTERVENTION.



Figure 6. Predict a Pathway Forward — the four-step readiness-to-coaching sequence.

Automation Workz applies a four-step process:

1. **Motivate** — Connect technology adoption to the individual, organizational, or mission objective.
2. **Generate Data** — SenseiiWyze generates behavioral readiness signals.
3. **Predict** — Analyze Tech Capability and technostress dimensions to identify readiness risk.
4. **Intervene** — Match the intervention to the underlying barrier: training, coaching, communication, workflow redesign, or role alignment.

The goal is simple: the right intervention for the right person before leaders spend more money.

FROM LAGGING INDICATORS TO LEADING INDICATORS

Most organizations discover resistance after the damage appears: productivity falls, training produces weak results, employees disengage, turnover rises, technology utilization stalls, mission performance suffers. Automation Workz's proposition is different: measure before failure. Treat Tech Capability and Technostress Risk as leading indicators rather than conducting a postmortem after deployment underperforms.

PROOF: HUMAN READINESS CAN PRODUCE MEASURABLE RETURNS



Figure 7. Proven Economic Impact — Michigan Workforce Development and Dr. Bronner's

Michigan Workforce Development: 284.4% Technology Certification Training ROI

Automation Workz applied its human-readiness approach with Michigan workforce-development participants pursuing certifications across Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, IoT, Data Analytics, and Network Engineering. The program achieved 58% training completion and generated 284.4% technology-certification training ROI.

That ROI was not measured by certifications alone. It was measured by whether participants went on to secure middle-skilled tech jobs. Jah became a firewall auditor at Deloitte earning \$130,000. Kay became a Network Programmer earning \$166,000. Jimmie became a data center specialist earning \$96,000.

The significance is not simply that participants received technology training. The model sought to identify capability, motivate participants, and align people with technology pathways before expecting training alone to produce an outcome — and the job placements are the proof the alignment worked.

Dr. Bronner's: Culture Data to 45% Revenue Increase over 3 Years

Dr. Bronner's is a 75-year-old, family-owned natural soap brand whose products are sold through retailers including Better Health, Costco, Kroger, Publix, Target, Turnip Truck, Walmart, and Whole Foods.

During the company's growth period, Lilia Vergara, Vice President of Human Resources, advanced from HR Manager to Director and ultimately Vice President while helping guide the organization's expanding workforce. Vergara commissioned Ida Byrd-Hill, CEO of Automation Workz, to conduct a Culture Audit designed to identify and harness the organization's 34 diverse employee cognitive-thinking styles. Byrd-Hill compiled the findings into a 220-page data report that leadership could use to better understand the workforce and inform organizational transformation.

The Automation Workz case study reports that during the three-year transformation period, revenue increased 45%, the Human Resources department expanded 400%, and the employee base increased 25%.

The larger lesson is not that technology or training alone produces growth. It is that behavioral data can reveal human capability that leaders can intentionally organize, coach, and deploy against a business objective. SenseiWyze™ evolved from that same fundamental question: what can behavioral data tell leaders about the capability they already have — and the barriers preventing that capability from producing results?

CORPORATE LEADERS: PROTECT THE AI INVESTMENT

Before buying another AI platform or launching another organization-wide training initiative, ask:

- Do we know who possesses hidden technology capability?
- Do we know who is resisting — and why?
- Do we know whether the barrier is skill, complexity, overload, insecurity, or uncertainty?
- Do we know whether training is actually the right intervention?

If your current dashboard cannot answer those questions, you have a behavioral blind spot in your AI strategy. More technology spending will not automatically fix it. Measure the humans responsible for producing the ROI — not simply the technology they were given.

MILITARY LEADERS: PROTECT MISSION READINESS

Before expanding technology training force-wide, ask:

- Who can adapt fastest? Where is hidden technology capability?
- Who is experiencing technostress risk? What is driving it?
- Which personnel need training versus another intervention?
- Can we see technology-readiness risk before it reaches mission performance?

Mission readiness is more than course completion. It is the interaction of Capability + Motivation + Technology Demands + Operating Environment. SenseiWyze™ provides leaders with the behavioral layer traditional technology dashboards may miss.

THE MANAGEMENT IMPERATIVE

Model capability matters. Cybersecurity matters. Governance matters. Technology cost matters. But none of them eliminates the requirement for a human being to learn, trust, integrate, and productively use the technology. AI implementation therefore cannot remain only an IT discussion. It is also a human-performance problem. And human behavior can be measured.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This AI news cycle did not create technostress. It exposed how vulnerable organizations may already be. AI concern was already elevated. Enterprise AI investments were already struggling to produce measurable returns. Technology was already changing faster than many organizations could absorb it.

The question leaders can no longer afford to ignore is: are your people ready for the technology you are asking them to adopt? Not simply technically. Behaviorally. Motivationally. Operationally.

A workforce cannot consistently produce value from technology it is afraid to master, unable to integrate, or unmotivated to use. That is the readiness gap Automation Workz is built to identify.

For Corporate Leaders:

Protect your AI investment before resistance appears in the ROI.

Request a SenseiiWyze™ Demonstration. **Book an executive briefing** <https://autoworkz.ai/ida-speaks/>

For Military Leaders:

Automation Workz is a member of 7 OTA Research Consortiums:

- Cornerstone
- C5 - Consortium for Command, Control and Communications in Cyberspace
- TReX II — Training and Readiness Accelerator II
- Defense Industrial Base Consortium
- Information Warfare Research Project Consortium
- Maritime Advanced Technology Accelerator Consortium
- Naval Surface Technology & Innovation Consortium

This provides an opportunity for associated commands and military branches to research the impact technostress before it becomes mission risk.

Request a SenseiiWyze™ Demonstration. **Book an executive briefing** <https://autoworkz.ai/ida-speaks/>

REFERENCES

- 4 Corner Resources. (2026, June 24). *Job market 2026: AI anxiety spikes as worker trust collapses*. <https://www.4cornerresources.com/job-market-news/job-market-2026-ai-anxiety-worker-trust-midyear/>
- Anthropic. (2026, September 10). *Detecting and countering misuse of AI: September 2026* [Threat intelligence report]. <https://www.anthropic.com/threat-intelligence-report-september-2026>
- Challapally, A., et al. (2025, July). *The GenAI Divide: State of AI in Business 2025* [Report]. MIT NANDA / MIT Media Lab. https://mlq.ai/media/quarterly_decks/v0.1_State_of_AI_in_Business_2025_Report.pdf
- Deadline. (2026, September). *A.I. researcher Jacob Coxon resigns, warns industry “gambling with our lives.”* <https://deadline.com/2026/09/anthropic-jacob-coxon-resignation-artificial-intelligence-1237072134/>
- Fortune. (2026, September 10). *An ex-Anthropic researcher claims that AI could kill us all. But he fails to answer the most essential question*. <https://fortune.com/2026/09/10/ex-anthropic-researcher-jacob-coxon-ai-could-end-humanity-fails-to-answer-most-essential-question/>
- Gartner. (2024, July 29). *Gartner predicts 30% of generative AI projects will be abandoned after proof of concept by end of 2025* [Press release]. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-07-29-gartner-predicts-30-percent-of-generative-ai-projects-will-be-abandoned-after-proof-of-concept-by-end-of-2025>
- Gartner. (2025, June 25). *Gartner predicts over 40% of agentic AI projects will be canceled by end of 2027* [Press release]. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-06-25-gartner-predicts-over-40-percent-of-agentic-ai-projects-will-be-canceled-by-end-of-2027>
- Metaintro. (2026, February 27). *40% of workers now fear losing their job to AI* [Reporting on Mercer's Global Talent Trends 2026 survey]. <https://www.metaintro.com/blog/40-percent-workers-fear-losing-job-to-ai-2026>
- MetLife. (2026, March 16). *MetLife study finds AI acceleration is creating new concerns in today's workplace* [24th Annual U.S. Employee Benefit Trends Study]. <https://www.metlife.com/about-us/newsroom/2026/march/metlife-study-finds-ai-acceleration-is-creating-new-concerns-in-todays-workplace/>
- Oliver Willis. (2026, September). *Who is Jacob Coxon? Anthropic resignation controversy explained*. <https://oliverwillis.com/who-is-jacob-coxon-anthropic-resignation-controversy-explained/>
- Pew Research Center. (2025, February 25). *On future AI use in workplace, US workers more worried than hopeful*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2025/02/25/u-s-workers-are-more-worried-than-hopeful-about-future-ai-use-in-the-workplace/>
- Phua, C., et al. (2026). [Global technostress meta-analysis; 18,535 ICT users, 23 countries; ~40% prevalence]. *Verify full citation against your source library before external use.*
- Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Tu, Q. (2008). The consequences of technostress for end users in organizations: Conceptual development and empirical validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417–433.
- Tarafdar, M., Tu, Q., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Ragu-Nathan, T. S. (2007). The impact of technostress on role stress and productivity. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 24(1), 301–328.
- TheStreet. (2026, September 10). *Anthropic researcher resigns and his reason is a warning to us all*. <https://www.thestreet.com/technology/anthropic-researcher-resigns-ai-safety-warning>
- TIME. (2026, September 9). *He helped build powerful AI at OpenAI and Anthropic. Now he's afraid it could kill us*. <https://time.com/article/2026/09/09/ai-anthropic-openai-jacob-coxon/>