

Education, population, poverty, tax...getting views on topics like those in Jersey isn't the difficult part – but have you ever noticed how many people sound eminently credible when talking about them, even though they may actually be basing their views on conjecture, false facts and blind guesswork?

There is a real danger in making the 'facts' fit the opinion, rather than the other way around – which is exactly the point at which someone with an eye on the latest buzzwords will smugly insert the phrase 'post-truth' into the conversation, imagining it's actually helpful.

So, we've asked the Jersey Policy Forum to add some robust material to those crucial local debates – the point is not to provoke agreement or acquiescence; it is to provide reliable material on which others can build their views.



THINK-TANK



Gailina Liew, Director, Jersey Policy Forum
Guest Writer: Siobhan O'Sullivan FCIM

Who's idea was it for a five-day week, anyway?

Gailina Liew: The first Barclays AI Frenzy was held on July 12, 2018, at the Jersey Library to an audience of over 200 registered attendees. Similar events are being run by Barclays throughout their Eagle Lab network in the UK, with one soon to be opening in San Francisco in the US. The purpose of these events is to start and encourage a broader conversation about AI (artificial intelligence) and the profound changes that this technology is making to our lives. I was honoured to be invited to co-introduce the event alongside Joanne Alford, Ecosystem Manager for the Jersey Eagle Lab.

An excellent line-up of speakers presented throughout the evening with many local companies and firms displaying their activity and interest in AI. See who presented and learn more about AI here: <https://labs.uk.barclays.ai>. I invited one of the attendees, Siobhan O'Sullivan, a respected strategy advisor and AI enthusiast, to share her thoughts about AI and the future following this event, and another she had attended

two weeks earlier - CogX 2018 as part of London Tech Week.

Siobhan O'Sullivan:

"Work has not been re-invented for over 100 years – now is the time to change the way we think about it"

This statement came up in one of the panel discussions at CogX 2018, and really made me think about the concept of work. Most businesses want high productivity and low inefficiency. Human resource is all about managing your resources effectively to achieve the best output.

Is the best way to manage your people having them sitting at a desk for eight hours a day, five days a week and just being present (surfing the internet) or is there a different way?

Where did the five day week come from in the first place?

Back to the factory floor

Going back to the age of industrialisation, this period was all about increasing productivity and efficiency through the introduction of machines.

In the early part of the nineteenth century factory owners agreed to let their workers



have more time off on a Saturday and, in exchange, workers would turn up for work on Monday, sober and refreshed!

The Ford Motor Company in 1914 championed the 40-hour week but only because Henry Ford believed that too many hours were bad for workers' productivity.

In 1938 the US Fair Labour Standards Act made the Monday to Friday, 40-hour week official, and the two-day weekend was adopted.

It's all about controlling the outputs

In the years following the introduction of the law, various management techniques and disciplines evolved. These focussed on increasing productivity and efficiency through standardisation, division of labour, centralisation and hierarchy.

Top-down management evolved as more organisations became more complex and by the 1960's we saw the emergence of functional organisations and the human resource movement to understand the human factor in production and productivity.

Tools such as goal setting, performance reviews and job descriptions were born. This was followed by measuring function to resource allocation and further developed into Total Quality Management (TQM), Six Sigma and Lean processes were used to measure processes and improve productivity. Benchmarking and business process re-engineering became popular in the 1990's, with tools such as Strategy Maps and Balance Scorecards.

For over 100 years, it's been all about control and compliance; like a factory production line, it's all about conformity.

Time for a rethink

Most countries and organisations are now looking for innovation and growth to stay competitive. We are at the start of a new industrial revolution and now is the time to think differently.

The New Economics Foundation has recommended moving to a 21-hour standard work week to assist the

economy, the environment and support parental care.

There are innovative companies who are exploring alternative ways of working. Glassdoor is a useful resource to check out what employees think about their companies.

One company has decided to really explore an alternative way of working for its people. Perpetual Guardian, a New Zealand trust company, embarked on a world first and ran a six-week trial with 200 employees, offering staff a free day off every week. Staff could work four days but still be paid for five.

"We want people to be the best they can be while they're in the office, but also at home. It's the natural solution."

Andrew Barnes, founder and CEO, Perpetual Guardian

Andrew was inspired to conduct the trial by several global productivity reports and a company internal survey, which asked staff how productivity, innovation and engagement could grow. Christine Brotherton, Head of People and Capability, said:

"If employees are engaged with their job and employer, they are more productive. We believe efficiency will come with more

staff focus and motivation, and this trial is a valuable and timely way to test our theories."

Humans and non-humans

The next industrial revolution and the pressure to change our working practices will involve machines and automation. Just as it did over 100 years ago. AI will change the way we work. Repetitive tasks are well suited for the non-human workforce and they will increase productivity as they can keep working 24/7, don't get sick and won't be surfing the internet!

People and machines have co-existed for many years and evolved and adapted together. Humans are always inventing and creating to make their lives easier with time-saving devices. The same is happening with machine learning and AI.

Companies will soon, if not already, need to manage, monitor and track performance with our new non-human work colleagues. Hopefully, that will leave us humans to be free to explore the new industrial age and work flexibly, creatively, collaboratively and more productively because we can be trusted to do so. Being human is our competitive advantage. Emotional intelligence, curiosity, creativity and communication are key skills.

As a mum with three children, I have a keen interest in education and technology and believe that combining them could make a better world for the future of all world citizens both human and non-human. The age of machine learning and AI is an exciting new era – let's embrace it for the benefit of humanity.

Gailina Liew:

What do you think? Do you agree? The Jersey Policy Forum is interested in your thoughts about AI and the future of work and would like to hear from you. Please fill out our survey here: <https://jerseypolicyforum.typeform.com/to/ebPEhm>. You can also email us at contact@jerseypolicyforum.org



Pepper at CogX2018 and TechXR8 as part of London Tech Week 2018