

How 4IR is solving unemployment

There's been much in the media about the fourth industrial revolution and how it has the potential to change South Africa's economy for the better.



Gareth Taylor, country manager for Bolt in South Africa

This revolution is about more than just technology-driven change; it is an opportunity to help everyone, including leaders, policy-makers and people from all income groups and nations to harness converging technologies to create an inclusive, human-centred future.

The real opportunity is to look beyond technology and find ways to give the greatest number of people the ability to positively impact their families, organisations and communities.

Ride-hailing, or Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS), has changed the way that South Africans commute to work, get to the shops, and travel when they're out for fun. There's no need to own a car or carry its high fuel, maintenance and insurance costs when you can call for the services of someone else who has turned their vehicle into their own business.

Ride-hailing services put the power of the fourth industrial revolution directly in the hands of these people – the people who need it the most.

Drivers who were previously unemployed can now earn a good living – and they can work when and where it suits them. Some drivers have taken their success through the platform to higher levels by driving for someone else to owning their own vehicles, or even using their earnings to start their own fleets of vehicles, in turn creating work opportunities for other drivers too.

Ride-hailing makes it possible for more people to access work: many South Africans can only access work opportunities that are close to rigid and predetermined public transport routes - but affordable ride-hailing means that they can get directly to work, wherever it might be.

Technology democratises human capabilities

Bolt's global success and rapid global expansion is proof that technology democratises human capabilities. Technology won't replace people – it will give them greater scope and capacity to add value to production and transport processes.

The fourth industrial revolution isn't just a concept that's a topic of conversation – it's real and it's changing the way that we live, work, and engage with government. It's also creating new jobs that didn't exist before, such as all the support staff that make your online shopping automatically happen from the time you click 'pay' to the time your goods arrive at your door.

It's changing the way that the South African government services its people – think of the Department of Home Affairs' partnership with major banks to simplify the process of applying for and receiving identity documents and passports.

"There's so much potential in the mobility environment, both through mobility as a service, and through the opportunities offered by electric vehicles," says Gareth Taylor, country manager for Bolt in South Africa. "We're excited about the future – and we're excited for the thousands and thousands of job opportunities we see on the horizon, made possible by technology."

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