

A Call For AI Clarity, From Leading Thinkers And Doers

[Joe McKendrick](#) Jul 15, 2026, 01:30pm EDT



AI will make the world go round

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Artificial intelligence, for better or worse, is reshaping our economy at blinding speed. And we're not ready to handle the dramatic shifts now occurring, a group of leading economists and AI researchers.

The [joint statement](#), which includes 16 Nobel Laureates, called for urgent preparation for the economic impacts of "radically more powerful AI." At the time of this writing, the document was endorsed by close to 1,800 people.

The statement boils down to three distinct points:

1. "AI may become radically more powerful over the next 10 years.
2. "This could drive an unprecedented transformation of our economy,

larger than the Industrial Revolution, but unfolding over a vastly shorter time frame. It could bring risks, including large-scale job displacement, as well as opportunities such as major gains in living standards.

3. "Economists, policymakers and technology leaders must act now to understand the economics of transformative AI and to build the incentives, guardrails, and institutions needed to steer AI in a direction that complements humans and benefits society."

The statement was organized by economists [Erik Brynjolfsson](#), Ajay Agrawal, Anton Korinek, and Tom Cunningham. "The scale, scope, and speed of the advances in AI, combined with a high level of uncertainty about the magnitude and timing of the impacts across many parts of the economy, call for an 'all hands on deck' approach to steering AI in beneficial directions," said statement co-author [Michael Spence](#), Nobel Laureate and Professor Emeritus at New York University.

The challenge with AI is making it accessible to all, Brynjolfsson told me in an earlier interview. "We see productivity gains, and part of my mission in life is to bring that to more people," he said. "And to get the whole economy on board with this. Hopefully, we'll have tens of millions, hundreds of millions of people creating the kinds of benefits that right now just a small handful of people are doing. And when we do that, we will see productivity not just in little green shoots, but throughout the economy."

Across the business landscape, leaders and practitioners agree with the spirit of the statement, but feel it is stating what they already knew intuitively. "This academic warning won't change many minds because companies are already feeling the shift on the floor, not in a manifesto," said Tim Kay, founder and executive producer at Argus HD. "Real preparation happens in daily workflow and hiring decisions, not in white papers."

The co-signers of the statement consists of industry heavyweights – Nobel laureates including former Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke and Joseph Stiglitz, alongside leading figures in AI such as Meta's Yann LeCun. "Having

such a group agree to put their name to a statement is in and of itself a big deal. But the statement lacks teeth," said Jason Cherubini, CFO and COO at Dawn's Light Media. "It calls out a problem without asking companies to take any specific action."

Crying wolf without actionable advice "has no upside for most people across the industry, academia, and government," agreed Emmanuel Vallod, head of venture and research for Hivemind Capital. "Concrete near-to mid-term objectives and commitments from its signatories in line with their statement would go a long way in giving it more than an episodic moment in the spotlight."

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Still, the prominence of the signatories is causing people to sit up and take notice – "it makes it harder to wave off preparation as fringe anxiety," said Nik Kale, principal engineer and member of the Coalition for Secure AI (CoSAI). "The more useful move for a business leader isn't to treat the statement as a prediction to believe or reject, it's to treat it as a plausible stress scenario and pressure-test the systems that would actually bear the load: the decision rights, the autonomy boundaries, and the accountability lines around AI that's already acting inside the company. You don't wait for the river to reach the boardroom before deciding where to build the levees."

At a higher level, the very presence of such a statement "shifts the AI discussion from technology innovation to economic preparedness," said Sandip Patel, senior cloud solution architect at Microsoft. "Whether or not it changes policy, it highlights a growing concern shared by many enterprise leaders: AI adoption is accelerating far faster than workforce transformation. The AI race is no longer about who has access to the technology. It's about who can prepare their workforce fast enough to use it responsibly, securely, and effectively."

Ultimately, capital allocation will drive the future, not academic statements, others feel. "I don't think this statement will change many minds because the market has already moved beyond debating whether AI matters," said Vincent Peters, lead information compliance assurance manager at SpaceX. "But business leaders should pay attention because over the next decade, companies won't simply win or lose with AI, they'll live or die based on how quickly they adapt and find edges with it."

Business leaders should take the statement seriously, agreed Daniel Burrus, technology futurist and AI expert in residence at High Point University. "More capable AI will affect jobs, decision-making, productivity, and competitive pressure faster than most planning cycles allow. A week from now, the statement itself may fade from view, but the risks it points to won't."

The statement itself is a confirmation, "evidence that the shift already happened somewhere ahead of the paper trail," said David Gaidukovych, head of marketing at Regenics. "Nature does not ask permission before it changes; it only leaves warnings behind for those who were looking the other way. Whether business leaders heed it matters less than whether they already felt it coming. Five years from now, nobody will remember the headline. They will only notice who was still building with yesterday's tools while everyone else had already moved on."

Indeed, the growing impact of AI on economic growth and jobs has been underway for some time, and is closely connected to responsible AI. "The greater risk is treating AI as a future problem when it's already reshaping people's lives today, from workforce disruption and data center impacts to surveillance and the treatment of data workers around the world," said Bo Young Lee, CEO at AI4ALL. "History shows that transformative technologies require new infrastructure, policies, and safeguards, but those don't get built by waiting for a crisis."

Ultimately, the statement "won't change minds on its own, and most business leaders will have forgotten it within a week, because a four-

sentence warning signed by economists doesn't tell an operator what to do on Monday," said Elijah Buford, principal AI product manager at Stanley Black & Decker. "But that's exactly why leaders should heed it — not as a doom forecast, but as permission to fund the unglamorous prep work now: cleaning data, defining metrics, and building the guardrails that turn "radically more powerful AI" into something you can actually deploy. The gap isn't awareness of AI's potential; it's the readiness to absorb it — and readiness is built quietly, before the disruption, not during it."