

# Could your job be at risk to AI?

Over the last 9 months, I've presented 16 webinars on a number of Estimating topics to more than 500 construction professionals around the world. One of the main questions I get asked is: "Will AI impact my job?" Right now, this is a major concern for many Estimators, Quantity Surveyors, and Project Control professionals. That's the reason for this article.

## **AI is not some future concept. It's already here, actively transforming how EPC, Engineering, and Architectural firms operate.**

The construction industry is going through a new phase of transformation. Old methods are on the way out, and AI-powered methods are quickly becoming the norm. AI is reshaping industries across the board, including construction. Long-standing processes, responsibilities, and workflows for Estimators, Quantity Surveyors, and Cost Engineers are rapidly evolving.

Just for the record: Four well-known leaders in the software development world recently predicted that AI will replace millions of white-collar jobs over the next 5 to 10 years. Blue-collar workers, like Carpenters, Electricians, and Plumbers, can rest easier. Their jobs are not directly threatened by AI (at least not yet).

AI will bring major changes to how Estimating and Quantity Surveying tasks are performed. AI-driven systems and tools are simplifying complex math problems, optimizing material take-offs, and speeding up Estimating and Tender delivery timelines.



## **Some key takeaways and benefits of AI in Estimating, QS, and Project Controls:**

1. AI is already influencing Estimating, Quantity Surveying, and Project Control methods, procedures, work practices, and individual responsibilities.
2. AI increases productivity in Estimating and Project Controls by automating take-offs and pricing for Class 5 through Class 1 (Conceptual and FEED) Capital Estimates.
3. Estimating labor, materials, and indirect costs will be faster and more efficient, saving valuable time and resources.
4. Bid solicitation and procurement from subcontractors, vendors, and suppliers will improve.
5. On-screen take-offs using BIM (4D, 5D, etc.) will help identify missing scope and generate detailed checklists.
6. Early-phase Pre-FEED and FEED Estimates, even at 5–20% design completion, will be enhanced with tools that can define remaining scope and quantities.
7. Re-measurement of Schedule of Rates and Bill of Quantities will be AI-based, drawing from BIM data and current benchmarks.
8. Earned Value, Risk Management, Labor Productivity, Value Engineering, QRA methods, and Contingency calculations will be automated. This will save valuable QA and QC review time.
9. Interim monthly payment calculations, such as percentage of work completed or materials on-site, will be automated.
10. Claim tracking, change orders, and back charges will be more efficiently managed.
11. Cost control and project status reporting will be built-in and automated.
12. Dashboards will display cost status, productivity gaps, safety issues, and 30- to 90-day EPC objectives.



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## The Benefits and Staffing Impact of AI (Pluses and Minuses):

1. AI will likely reduce the number of Estimating and QS staff required, saving on overhead and operating costs.
2. Administrative staffing levels in the home office will also decrease.
3. Productivity, accuracy, and time management will improve.
4. AI will streamline complex take-off and pricing routines.
5. Estimators and QSs will be able to handle more projects at once.
6. Communication among construction teams will be enhanced.
7. AI will support better oversight and faster project approvals.
8. Integration between BIM and CAD and other EPC tools will be smoother.
9. Final QA and QC checks on bids, tenders, and RFQs will be automated.
10. More time will be available to pursue new project opportunities.
11. Benchmarking systems will become more accurate and accessible.

## The Bottom Line:

**Yes, learning AI will take time and effort.  
But it could make all the difference in your career.**

*Back in the 1970s and 1980s, I visited engineering offices around the world filled with 100 or more draftsmen and designers at drafting tables. Today, just 5 to 10 CAD operators do the same work. I believe AI will have a similar impact on the Estimating and QS professions. It could reduce the workforce by 50% within five years.*

**REALITY CHECK:** If you currently work in an office with 10 to 12 Estimators or QSs, in 3 to 5 years only 3 to 5 of those jobs may remain. Make sure you're one of the ones who stays, or start thinking about a career shift.

## Checklist for Getting Proficient with AI:

Many Estimators and QSs will need to embrace AI and develop new skills. Those who become AI power users will have more job security and higher salaries.

### START HERE:

- ☐ 1. Make a conscious effort to understand AI basics. Keep a notebook or file to track what you learn. This is a sink or swim moment for many careers.
- ☐ 2. Attend AI seminars, workshops, or lunch-and-learns when possible.
- ☐ 3. Buy and read AI-related books. Build your own reference library.
- ☐ 4. Talk to your peers about how they are adapting to AI in their roles.



## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

John McConville, CCP

+1 (609) 577 4505

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