



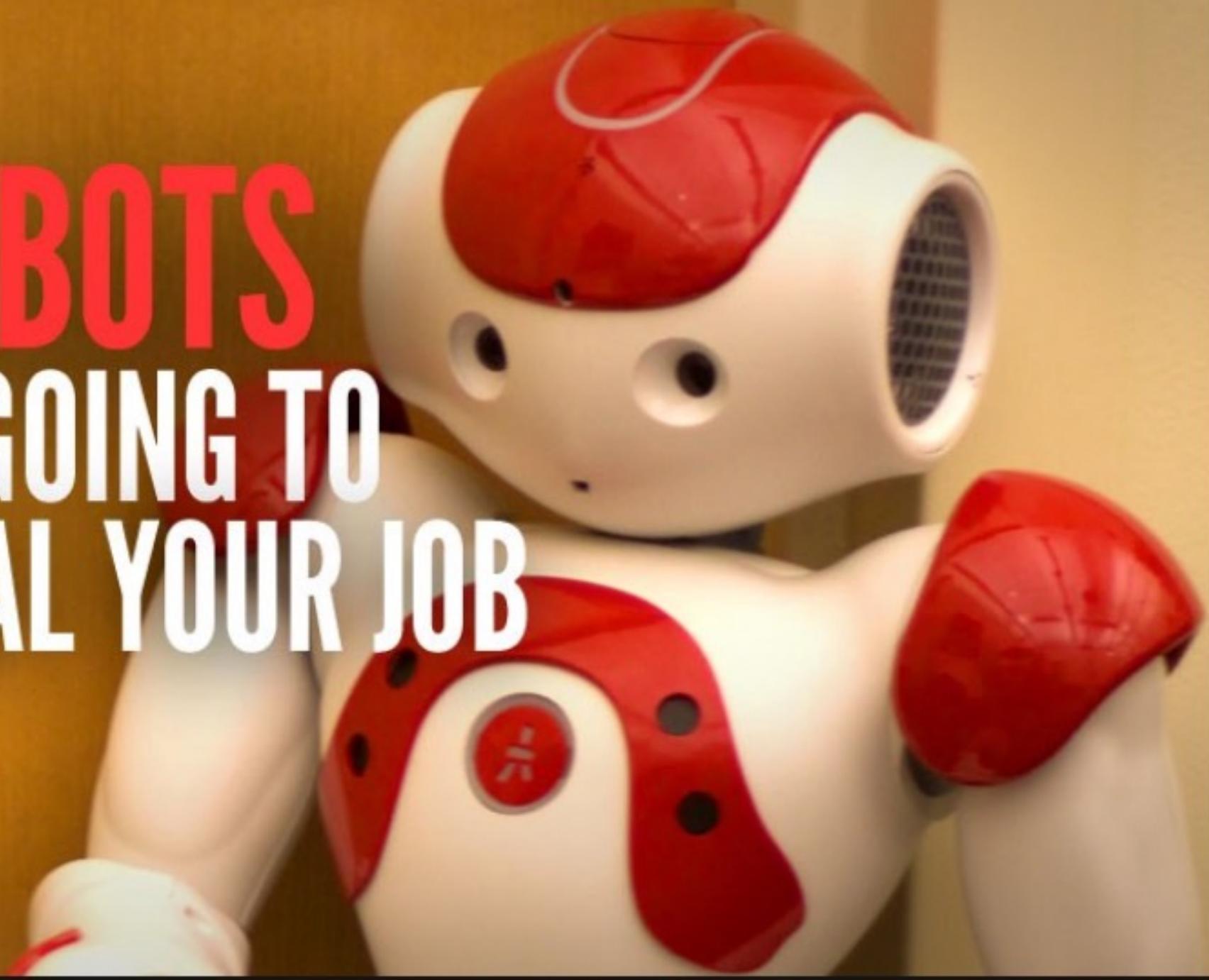
► Protecting workers in the digital age

Janine Berg, ILO

Sustainable Employment in the Age of Digitalisation (SEAD)
conference

22 April 2021

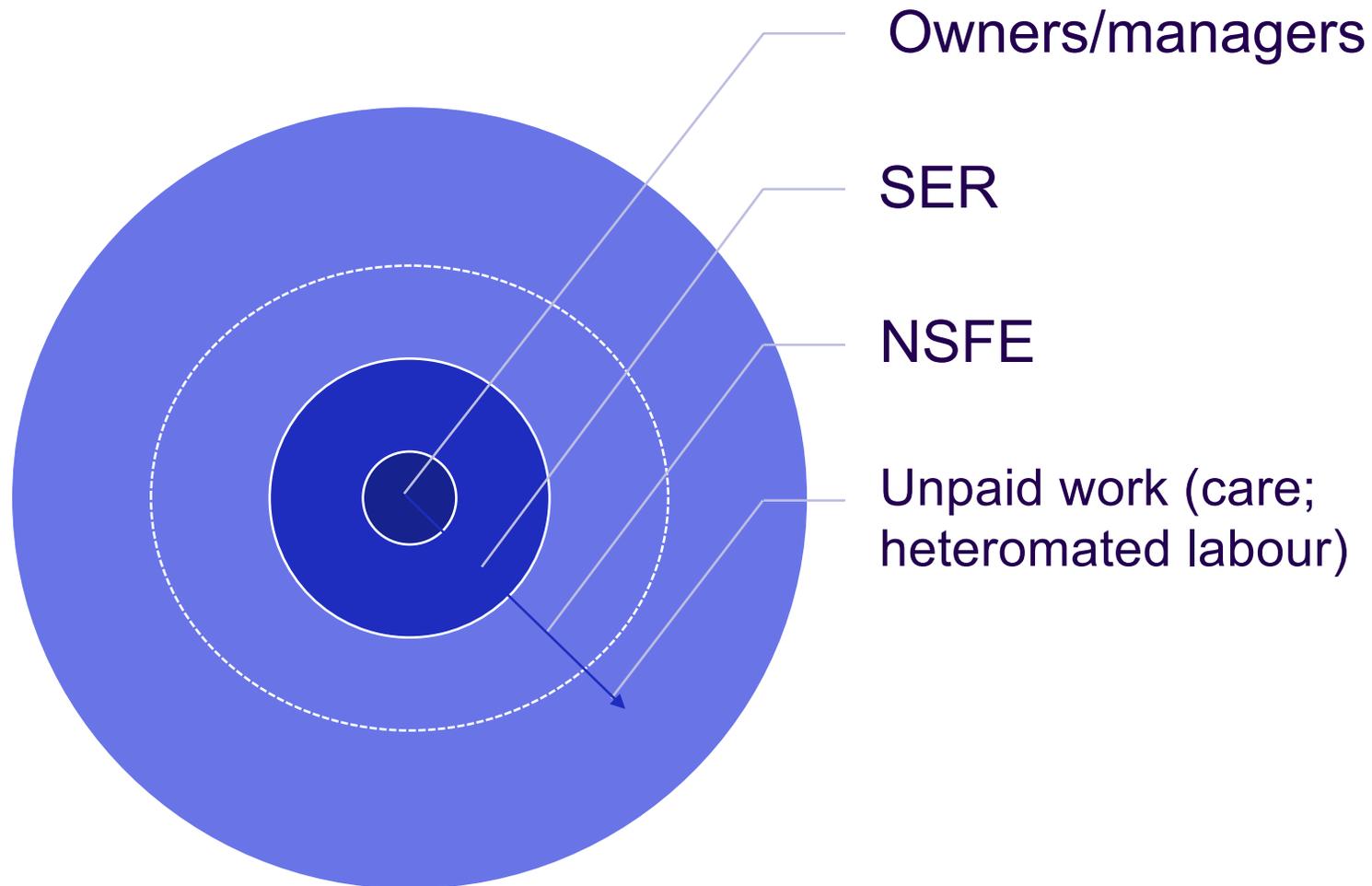
ROBOTS
ARE GOING TO
STEAL YOUR JOB



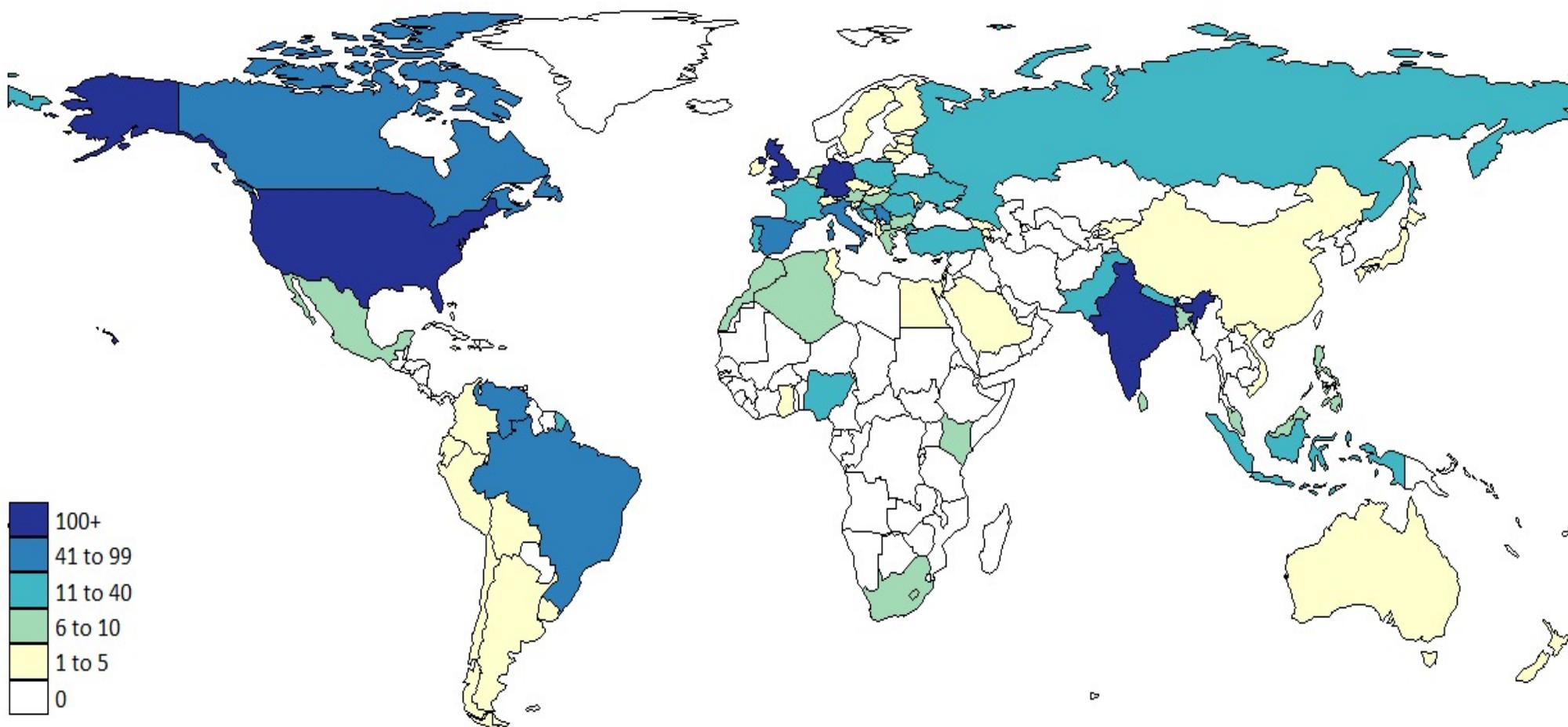
► **Tech revolution *displacing* labour, not *replacing* it**

- Accelerating the trend that began decades ago of growth in precarious work.
 - Important effects on job quality that have received scant attention.
- **This is a political debate rather than a technological one.**

An expansion of the periphery



The added challenges from tech: Virtual outsourcing



Virtual assistants: The outsourcing of (previously untradable) office work

Conditions of Work:

- Classified as 'independent contractors' by platform
- Have set working hours (either PT or FT with set breaks)
- Required to download a time-tracking management system that takes random screen shots and is used to record attendance and prepare payroll.



Services

Pricing

How it Works

Success



Hire talented virtual staff

We provide Australian businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs with dedicated staff and virtual assistants from the Philippines.

Hire Virtual Staff, Web Developers, Digital Marketing Managers, Lead Generation, Customer Service, Bookkeepers, Virtual Assistants from Philippines, and more...

COVID-19 and the «great working from home experiment»

Working from home predicted to take on greater importance in post-pandemic world

Several likely effects:



outsourcing

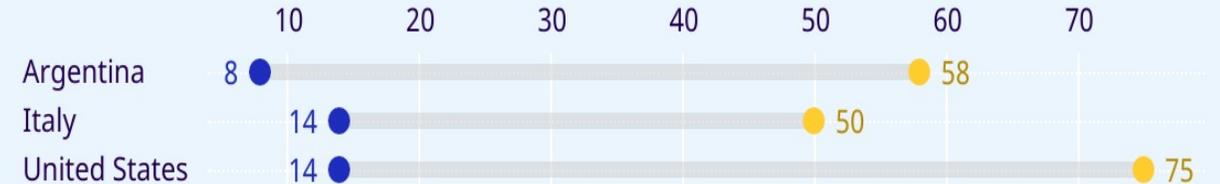


bogus self-employment

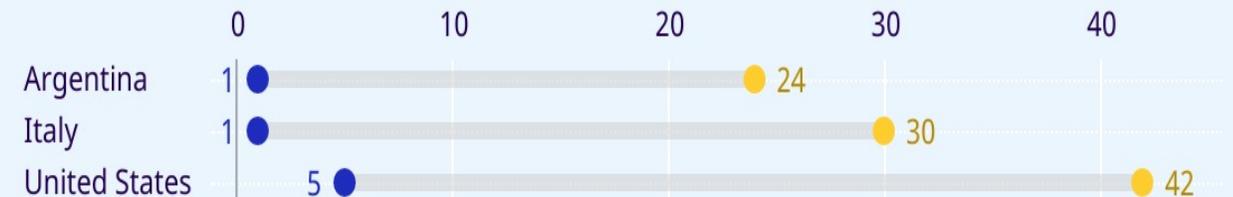


monitoring

► ICT professionals (ISCO 25)



► General and keyboard clerks (ISCO 41)



Technology and job quality: Autonomy, control and voice at work



Source: EUROFOUND.

Positive effects from technology when it reduces tedious or arduous tasks



But risks when other support mechanisms are compromised

Algorithmic management:

1. Continuous tracking of workers' behaviour
2. Constant performance evaluation of workers
3. The automatic implementation of decisions without human intervention
4. Workers' interaction with a "system" rather than humans
5. Low transparency.

Use of electronic scheduling software in retail: case of Ann Taylor



“[ATLAS] gives personality to the system....so that [employees] hate the system and not us”

With a human manager, workers’ concerns are more likely to be accommodated.



International
Labour
Organization



Moving Forward



► But how to do this in a «planetary labour market»?



Technology as part of the solution

The same technology that monitors workers can be used to monitor working conditions: keystrokes, screenshots, work histories, GPS routes – information on working time, breaks, work intensity

Giving workers access to their data and right to turn this data to a third-party (trade union; regulatory authority)

Giving regulators access to data

- ✓ Monitor working time
- ✓ Payment of wages
- ✓ Payment of social security benefits



“The concept of the employee is a legal construct. We do not find out who or what an employee (legally speaking) is. *It is open for us as a society to decide.*”

- G. Davidov, 2006, p. 144

Nothing inevitable about precarious work

Extending protections to all workers regardless of contractual arrangement:

- Freedom of association and collective bargaining rights
- Safe and healthy workplaces as a fundamental right
- Adequate living wage
- Time sovereignty
- Wage protection, dispute resolution systems
- Workers' data privacy



Thank you!



@janinemberg