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Social Dimensions of Office Automation

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Publisher Summary

This chapter focuses on the social implications of office automation, and describes the effects of office automation on people and organization. Office automation is a controversial subject which amplifies residual biases present in all studies of social impacts of technology. Study of office automation begins with an examination of productivity in the office. The chapter discusses different approaches to automation, the impact of office automation on employment (based on employment levels, skill requirements, and career paths), some key policy issues concerning the effects of automation on employment, changing skill levels in clerical and professional work, the policies of organized labor and union responses to the challenges posed by office automation, and the organizational and managerial implications of office automation. The literature on computers and organizations is being reviewed that focuses on the computer's role in decision making and problem solving. The chapter concludes by discussing the future of work. Since work is a central concern in office automation, it is natural to consider its future at the end of the study.



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