Paving the Way for AI that Supports Flourishing at Work

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly integrated into workplace environments. While AI has traditionally been optimized for productivity and efficiency, its broader impact on human flourishing remains less understood. This workshop will bring together researchers, designers, and industry practitioners to examine how AI can contribute to workplace flourishing, considering factors such as cognitive and emotional support, user autonomy, and long-term engagement. Through structured activities, participants will explore existing AI tools and research, generate new use case scenarios, and develop concrete research and design proposals. The workshop weaves together these insights and perspectives to encourage networking, collaborations and shape a research agenda that prioritizes human flourishing as a key objective in AI for work.

CCS Concepts

• **Human-centered computing**;

Keywords

AI, Workplace, Flourishing, Well-being, Research Agenda

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1 MOTIVATION

The role of AI in workplace interactions has evolved over time, moving from automation to augmentation and now toward something deeper—AI that actively supports human flourishing at work. Thus far, AI has primarily been used to replace human effort and automate tasks to increase productivity (e.g., automated scheduling [3, 9], predictive typing [8], and job automation [5]). Although beneficial, this automation approach treated AI as a productivity tool whose primary goal is to minimize workload. Due to improvements in generative AI technologies, AI became a widespread tool, and recently evolved from passive automation to active augmentation, aiming to augment human capabilities and act as a partner in areas like decision-making [15, 19], creativity [17], and workplace communications [12]. However, as Raees et al. [18] suggest, much of AI's evolution has remained technology-centric, with its efficiency largely measured based on system performance metrics rather than the quality of its interaction with humans, especially in practical applications [10, 14, 25].

We now need to pave the way for the next wave of AI in the workplace, one that moves beyond optimizing algorithms and system complexity to prioritize long-term fulfillment and well-being—centered on *human flourishing*. Instead of focusing on improving algorithmic performance, we need to prioritize AI that acts in accordance with human needs and values. Originating in positive psychology, flourishing as a concept includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (commonly abbreviated as PERMA) [20]. HCI already has an emerging body of work engaging with these concepts in workplace settings [7], such as an LLM-powered chatbot that supports self-reflection for leadership growth [1] or algorithms informed by workers' design ideas for wellbeing in the hospitality sector [23]. Speculative work also engages with these perspectives by identifying underlying tensions, challenges, or opportunities [13, 16, 22]. Beyond the workplace, panels and workshops at leading conferences have engaged in the discourse on AI for wellbeing [4, 21]. As AI's influence grows, there is an urgent need to pursue these efforts and establish flourishing as an explicit goal of HCI for work to catalyze a surge in such research. While advances in work performance, such as improved research outcomes (e.g., inductive qualitative analysis through human-AI collaboration [6]), demonstrate AI's potential, they are accompanied by threats to the quality of human connections [16, 24] and personal development [11] that require a human-centered approach.

This workshop will unite researchers–HCI experts, AI designers, and industry practitioners–to reflect on key questions about

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AI's role in flourishing at work. When researching or designing AI tools, we suggest addressing some of the following questions to explore how deeply, when and what type of AI to integrate into our work. What is the *extent* of AI support—does AI automate tasks and truly help us flourish, for example, by freeing us for meaning or connection? Does it collaborate with us and genuinely make us flourish, for example, by improving sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy? What are the *human behavior levels* of AI support? Does AI aid flourishing cognitively (e.g., structuring reflection), emotionally (e.g., easing overthinking), and how can it support both? What is the range of *levels of AI support* to design for—low-level, like reminders nudging us toward engagement, or high-level, like systems altering behavior in the long-run? What is the *amount* of appropriate AI support? Does reducing tool interactions improve flourishing, or can sustained engagement become a meaningful part of our lives? Another challenge lies in determining the appropriate *degree of control.* Does the tool empower workers to define flourishing for themselves rather than imposing system-driven values? For example, if removing AI reduces performance (e.g. deskilling [2]), should the goal be restoring skills or helping workers decide when to use AI and when not to (see the suggestion for the right to *situated refusal* [16])?

2 WORKSHOP PLAN

2.1 Workshop Mode

The workshop will be held in person on the day before the start of the technical program. To extend the discussion beyond the event, the organizers will create a permanent repository of research ideas that participants can access beyond the event.

2.2 Workshop Activities

2.2.1 Group Formation and Voting. **2:30–2:50PM:** 5-minute workshop overview, followed by a wall-grid exercise where participants place their names next to HCI topics and research methods of interest. This helps participants get to know each other and allows organizers to form table groups with a mix of backgrounds and seniority levels. **2:50–3:00PM:** Table discussions on AI's role in workplace flourishing, identifying key contexts, challenges, and tensions. Each group writes research questions of interest on index cards (e.g., *How can an AI assistant help researchers clarify their research mission?*) for voting. **3:00–3:10PM:** Participants move around the tables to vote, selecting one research question per table.

2.2.2 Research Questions and Use Case Scenarios. **3:10–3:30PM:** Groups explore AI tools and research related to their chosen question, using scientific literature, popular sources, and personal experience. A curated reference list (based on participant suggestions) will be available. Participants will analyze the AI tools through different lenses: extent, type, level, amount, and degree of control of AI support. **3:30–4:00PM:** Groups develop their research question into a use case scenario, describing a concrete situation where the problem arises, why current AI solutions fall short, and what kind of AI support is needed. For example: *A researcher feels uncertain about their research direction, leading to frustration and lack of motivation. Existing conversational AI assistants provide broad topic suggestions, but do not help them engage in meaningful self-reflection. Instead, such AI tools could be more effective by supporting structured practices, such as daily journaling prompts to refine their research focus and suggesting they discuss their evolving ideas with a mentor. AI could also help prepare for these discussions by generating personalized discussion questions to guide deeper conversations.* Groups present their challenge scenarios, and organizers note common themes. **4:00–4:30PM:** Coffee break.

2.2.3 Designing User-Centric Studies. **4:30–4:50PM:** Participants propose a study design or concept for an AI tool that addresses their use case scenario in a novel way. Ideas should reflect a user-centric intervention approach and consider how flourishing is conceptualized (e.g., which aspects of PERMA are addressed), how impact is measured, and how the intervention actively supports user wellbeing. **4:50–5:20PM:** Participants present their ideas, receive structured feedback from other groups, and refine their proposals. Discussion will focus on feasibility, ethical concerns, and long-term impact. **5:20–5:30PM:** Mini-break.

2.2.4 Towards a Research Agenda. **5:30–6:00PM:** Participants consolidate their proposal idea into a brief research plan using a shared Miro board. They refine their ideas into a clear research or design agenda, identify execution strategies such as grant opportunities, and form subgroups to collaborate on related research threads. Proposals will be collected in a shared repository and posted in the Slack channel for continued discussion. **6:00–6:15PM:** Participants reflect on what they've learned and outline next steps for their own research or collaborations. **6:15–6:30PM:** Informal wrap-up and closing.

3 Call for Participation

Join us for a half-day, in-person workshop at CHIWORK 2025. This workshop invites HCI researchers, AI designers, and industry partners to reflect on how AI can actively support human flourishing: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (i.e. the PERMA model). While AI has traditionally been optimized for productivity and efficiency at work, its broader impact on human flourishing remains less understood. Can AI free up time for meaning and connection, support cognitive and emotional well-being, or help workers feel greater accomplishment and self-efficacy? Should AI empower workers to define flourishing for themselves rather than impose system-driven values, and how do we balance the benefits of AI support with risks like deskilling or over-reliance? This workshop will examine these questions through interactive sessions where participants analyze current AI tools and research examples, develop use case scenarios, and propose new research or design ideas to support flourishing at work, leading to a shared research agenda that could spark future collaboration and funding pursuits.

To express your interest, submit a 1-page abstract (any format) detailing briefly your research interests and motivation for attending, and suggestions (if you have any) for AI tools or research publications to consider for discussion at the workshop. Email submissions to yoana.ahmetoglu@ucl.ac.uk by April 30. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out on May 9. At least one author per accepted submission must attend and register for one conference day.

4 Plans to Publish Workshop Proceedings

To encourage ongoing collaboration, accepted bio abstracts will be saved in a repository online and shared among participants but will not be formally published.

5 Organizers

- **Yoana Ahmetoglu**, PhD Candidate in Human-Computer Interaction at University College London. Research expertise: technology for planning and time management, personal productivity and human bias.
- **Sowmya Somanath**, Associate Professor of Computer Science at the University of Victoria. Research expertise: technologies for supporting creativity and subjective well-being (happiness), DIY tools and techniques for personalization and customization support.
- **Carine Lallemand**, Assistant Professor of HCI and Experience Design at Eindhoven University of Technology. Research expertise: technologies for workplace wellbeing, active workplaces, experience design, personal informatics.
- **Erin Solovey**, Associate Professor of Computer Science at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Harvard-Radcliffe Institute Fellow at Harvard University. Research expertise: cognitive aspects of work and learning, accessibility, teamwork support, new interaction modalities, human-AI interaction.
- **Duncan P. Brumby**, Professor of Human-Computer Interaction at University College London. Research expertise: HCI, AI use, future of work.
- **Anna L. Cox**, Professor of Human-Computer Interaction at University College London. Research expertise: technology for work and wellbeing, work-life boundary practices.

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