

Continuing Education in the Age of AI

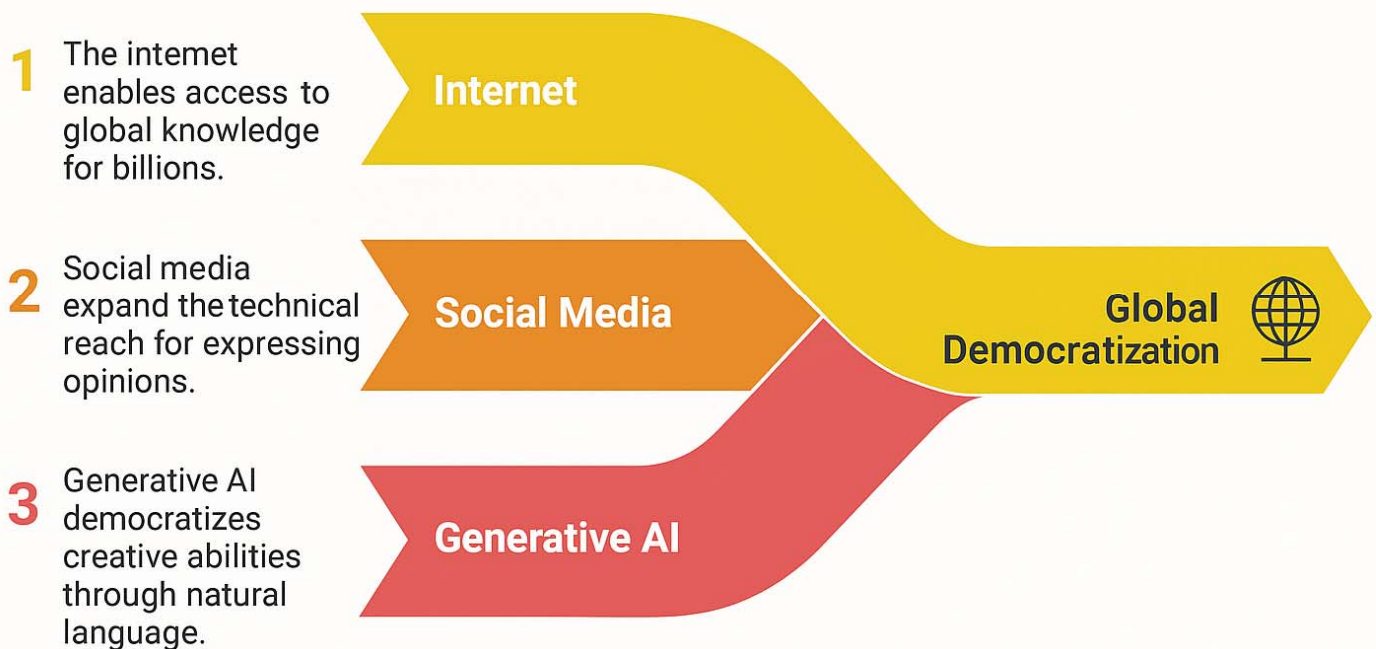
Dr. Josef Sawetz, September 2025

When we founded the first English-language online magazines and internet video portals in the mid-90s, we were met with widespread skepticism. Marketing directors of international corporations dismissed the internet as a passing hype. A misjudgment, as history has impressively proven. Today, in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), this disruptive dynamic is repeating itself, but on an immensely larger scale. AI is no longer a fleeting phenomenon; it is integrating itself deeply into all societal and economic processes, comparable to the introduction of electricity or the internet itself. A reversal is unthinkable.

„The great Equalizer“

NVIDIA-CEO Jensen Huang aptly described AI as „The great Equalizer“. This technology is setting off a new global wave of democratization. The internet has already opened up access to worldwide knowledge for billions of people. Social media expanded the technical reach for publishing opinions and experiences across the entire globe. With the newest generation of AI tools, especially generative AI, the ability to create is now also being democratized. Every person can potentially become a writer, graphic designer, musician, or programmer, as the barrier of technical execution is overcome by natural language as the new programming language.

Technology as a Democratizing Force



The future of continuing education is today: Dr. Google was yesterday - Dr. ChatGPT has taken over
Continuing education has fundamentally changed in the last 25 years through the internet, e-books, online databases, social media, and video conferences. Artificial intelligence is now accelerating this change exponentially. With the new tools, it is possible to delve into any subject area quickly, easily, regardless of location, and across languages. The decisive progress lies in the adaptability of these systems: Learning content and methods can be tailored precisely to the personal learning style, individual needs, and the desired time commitment. Worldwide knowledge is thereby becoming more convenient, more efficient, and available to every individual. Dr. Google was yesterday - Dr. ChatGPT has taken over. This shift marks the transition from pure information retrieval to active knowledge generation and synthesis.

This development goes hand in hand with the concept of lifelong learning. In a world where the half-life of specific professional knowledge is constantly decreasing, the ability to continuously learn new things becomes a crucial core competence. According to estimates, the skills of about half of all employees will need to be fundamentally adapted in the coming years. AI-supported platforms play a key role here by helping employees analyze their skills and find suitable continuing education offers to remain relevant for the job markets of the future.

Everyone's Personal Coach/Trainer/Professor: The Era of Hyper-personalization

What sounded like a utopian vision just a few years ago is now a reality: the hyper-personalization of learning. Leading private universities in the USA and Great Britain are already advertising the creation of learning environments in which every student is supervised by a personal AI professor - around the clock, equipped with the entire knowledge of the world and infinite patience.

These AI tutors go far beyond traditional e-learning platforms. Through the use of „Affective Computing" and emotion analysis, they can recognize the emotional state of the learners through their facial expressions and voice. The system identifies when a learning break is necessary, when concentration is waning, or when the students are particularly receptive. This interactive and adaptive learning experience maximizes the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge transfer. Studies show that learners who work with AI tutors achieve significantly higher learning gains and complete courses more successfully than those who use traditional online platforms. This highly personalized approach ensures that no one is left behind and that everyone can reach their full potential.

However, this development also raises important ethical questions. Protecting privacy, the transparency of algorithms, and avoiding bias in the data are central challenges that must be addressed responsibly to ensure a just and inclusive educational future.

The new Yin and Yang in corporate leadership: Emotional intelligence meets digital networking

Modern corporate leadership is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by two central developments: the increase of female and younger executives. This shift brings a twofold dynamic into companies, creating a new balance - a new Yin and Yang.

The Power of Emotional Intelligence: The increase of women in leadership positions strengthens the importance of emotional intelligence and sensitivity for social relationships. These skills, long considered „soft" and secondary, complement the traditionally male-dominated, often process-oriented leadership styles. Leaders with high emotional intelligence, as described by Daniel Goleman, are demonstrably more successful. They promote team spirit and vision, create a climate in which innovation can thrive, and can inspire their employees for common goals. Studies show that companies with greater gender diversity in management are more profitable and have a higher probability of achieving above-average financial results.

The Perspective of Digital Natives: At the same time, younger executives – the Digital Natives – bring a new perspective. Having grown up in a fast-paced, globally networked, and social media-shaped world, they are accustomed to acting in complex and dynamic environments. They possess the ability to think from multiple perspectives, react quickly to changes, and act in a socially responsible manner. Their approach is often more agile and adapted to the conditions of the so-called VUCA world (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity). They are predestined to transform complex problems into innovative solutions and to navigate their teams through uncertainty.

Soft Skills are the Hard Skills of the Future: The Competencies for a World in Flux

The drastically shortening half-life of specific professional knowledge forces a radical rethinking in competence development. While technical knowledge in some areas is already outdated after just a few years, transferable, human skills are gaining decisive importance. Managers and executives must focus on how they can most efficiently acquire new knowledge and connect it with existing experience in a solution-oriented way to apply it practically.

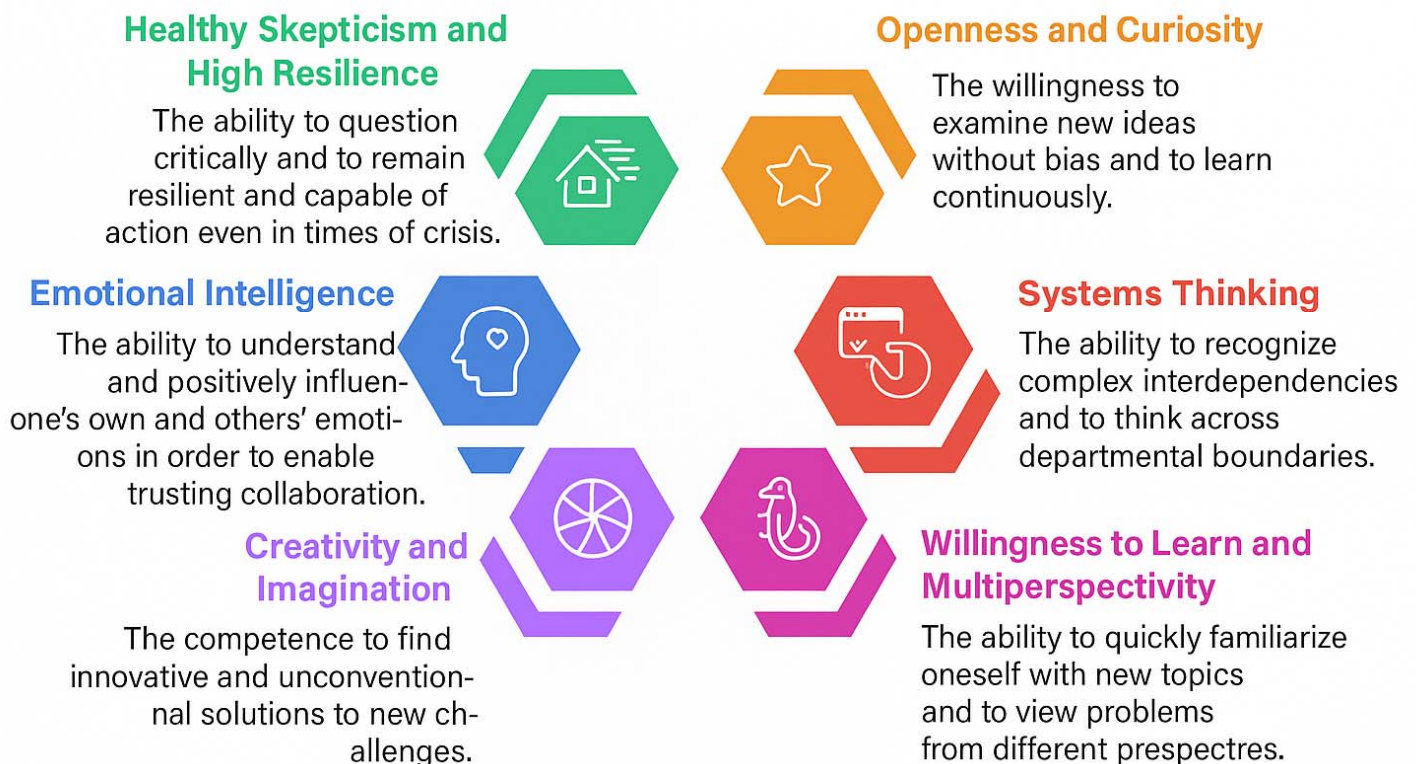
The future tasks of managers will be shaped less by specific professional knowledge and more by distinct interdisciplinary competencies. The „Future of Jobs Report 2023" by the World Economic Forum identifies analytical and creative thinking as the most important skills for the future. These are closely followed by qualities such as resilience, flexibility and agility, curiosity and lifelong learning, as well as motivation and self-awareness. These so-called soft skills are the true hard skills of the future. These include:

- **Openness and Curiosity:** The willingness to examine new ideas without prejudice and to learn continuously.
- **Systems Thinking:** The ability to recognize complex interconnections and to think beyond departmental boundaries.
- **Willingness to Learn and Multi-perspectivity:** The ability to quickly familiarize oneself with new topics and to consider problems from different perspectives.
- **Creativity and Imagination:** The competence to find innovative and unconventional solutions for new challenges.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** The ability to understand one's own and others' emotions and to influence them positively to enable trustful collaboration.
- **Healthy Skepticism and High Resilience:** The ability to question things critically and to remain resilient and capable of acting even in times of crisis.

The Pillars of Soft Skills

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The Pillars of Soft Skills



It is no longer about possessing a certain body of knowledge, but about the attitude and the willingness to keep one's own knowledge, attitudes, and values in a constant state of flux. Only in this way can one adapt to the speed and unpredictability of a world that is permanently in transition and shaped by multiple crises.

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