The Employment Impact of Emerging Digital Technologies: Evidence from US Labor Markets

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Introduction

Emerging Digital Technologies Shape the Future of Work

- Emerging digital technologies have transformed the global economy through widespread digitalization
 - ► e.g., artificial intelligence (AI), electric vehicles, drones, the Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics
- They reshape the nature of work, impacting workers in uneven ways
 - ► Enhanced productivity, new job opportunities, and task displacement (Acemoglu and Restrepo 2018)
- ⇒ Which occupations and industries are most affected by these changes? Which demographic and skill groups are most vulnerable?

This Paper

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■ We measure the exposure of industries and occupations to emerging digital technologies and estimate their impact on US employment

Exposure. Using the methodology from Prytkova et al. (2024) adapted to the US context

- We obtain exposure scores of 1,110 8-digit O*NET-SOC 2010 occupations and 324 4-digit NAICS 2007 industries to 40 digital technologies that emerged between 2012 and 2021
- Open-access TechXposure database

Employment Impact.

- We estimate their impact on US employment and among different demographic and skill groups (2012–2019) using an IV shift–share
 - ► American Community Survey (ACS) Data with 741 Commuting Zones (CZ)

Preview of the Results

Introduction

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- 1. Overall positive impact of digital technologies
 - ▶ 1-SD increase in CZ exposure \Rightarrow 0.67 pp. (1.1%) increase in the CZ employment-to-population ratio
- 2. Substantial heterogeneity among demographic groups
 - ▶ Positive employment effects for young workers (ages 16–24) and senior workers (ages 45–64)
 - ► Negative impact for core working-age individuals (ages 25–44)
 - ► No significant differences in impact across gender
- 3. Skill-biased technological change
 - ► Negative impact on workers with a high school education or less, whereas a positive impact is noted for college graduates

Exposure Descriptives Empirical Analysis
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Contributions

Introduction

- The changing nature of work due to technological change
 - ► Computerization (Frey and Osborne 2017), industrial robots (Acemoglu and Restrepo 2020), specific applications of Al (Webb 2019, Felten et al. 2021, Felten et al. 2018, Hampole et al. 2025), or a broad spectrum of technologies (Autor et al. 2024, Kogan et al. 2017, Kogan et al. 2017).
 - ⇒ Wider array of new and detailed digital technologies with measures of exposure at a very granular level for the US context using a state-of-the-art NLP approach
- Impact of digital technologies on US employment
 - ▶ Industrial robots: negative (Acemoglu and Restrepo 2020); Al: mixed (Webb 2019, Bonfiglioli et al. 2024, Hampole et al. 2025); broader definition of automation technologies: positive (Mann and Püttmann 2023, Autor et al. 2024) with skill-biased technological change (Kogan et al. 2021)
 - ⇒ We find a positive overall impact on US employment with significant heterogeneity across different age groups and educational levels

From Patents to Emerging Digital Technologies

- We use the sample of patents identified as core digital inventions in Chaturvedi et al. (2023)
 - ► Filed between 2012 and 2021 (extracted from Derwent Database)
- These patents are grouped into 40 distinct technologies based on semantic similarities in their titles in Prytkova et al. (2024)

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9 Technology Families: 40 Emerging Technologies Distribution

	Family		Emerging Digital Technology
F1	3D Printing	01 02 03	3D Printer Hardware 3D Printing Additive Manufacturing
F2	Embedded Systems	04 05 06 07 08 09	Smart Agriculture & Water Management Internet of Things (IoT) Predictive Energy Management and Distribution Industrial Automation & Robot Control Remote Monitoring & Control Systems Smart Home & Intelligent Household Control
F3	Smart Mobility	10 11 12 13 14	Intelligent Logistics Autonomous Vehicles & UAVs Parking and Vehicle Space Management Vehicle Telematics & Electric Vehicle Management Passenger Transportation
F4	Food Services	15	Food Ordering & Vending Systems
F5	E-Commerce	16 17 18 19	Digital Advertising Electronic Trading and Auctions Online Shopping Platforms E-Coupons & Promotion Management

	Family		Emerging Digital Technology
F6	Payment Systems	20 21 22	Electronic Payments & Financial Transactions Mobile Payments Gaming & Wagering Systems
F7	Digital Services	23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34	Digital Authentication E-Learning Location-Based Services & Tracking Voice Communication Electronic Messaging Workflow Management Cloud Storage & Data Security Information Processing Cloud Computing Recommender Systems Social Networking & Media Platforms Digital Media Content
F8	Computer Vision	35 36 37	Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) Machine Learning & Neural Networks Medical Imaging & Image Processing
F9	HealthTech	38 39 40	Health Monitoring Medical Information E-Healthcare

Methodology to Derive Exposure Scores

- 1. We preprocess the textual data from patents, industries, and occupations
 - ► 4-digit NAICS 2007 industries and 8-digit O*NET-SOC 2010 occupations
- 2. We transform these preprocessed texts into contextual embeddings (i.e., dense vector representations) using the pre-trained MPNet v2 sentence transformer (Song et al. 2020)
 - ► Contextual embeddings consider the surrounding context of a word as compared to bag-of-word methods (e.g., Webb 2019, Autor et al. 2024)
- 3. We compute the cosine similarity between each patent-industry and patent-occupation pair of embeddings
 - ► Filter out irrelevant or mistaken connections (false positives)
- 4. We aggregate these exposure scores from the patent level up to the technology level
 - ▶ Patents are weighted by the number of citations relative to the total number of citations all patents filed in the same year received
 - ► We adjust for the right skewness of the exposure scores

Exposure Scores (for industries) • Weighting Scheme

Exposure

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- We obtain cumulative exposure X_i^k of each industry to each of 40 technologies over the period 2012–2021
 - ► Same for occupations

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Table: Top 5 Exposure Score Pairs

4-digit NAI	CS	NAICS Industry Title (i)	Digital Technology (k)	X_i^k
52	23	Activities Related to Credit Intermediation	E-Payment	9.01
54	18	Advertising, Public Relations, and Related Services Digital	Advertising	8.41
45	41	Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses	E-Payment	8.32
52	21	Depository Credit Intermediation	E-Payment	8.28
45	41	Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses	Online Shopping	8.27

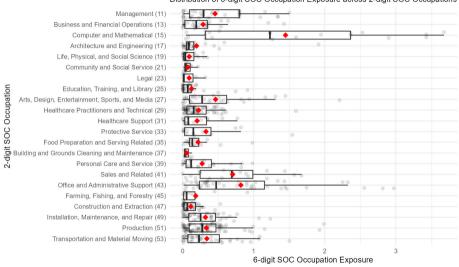
Interpreting Exposure Scores

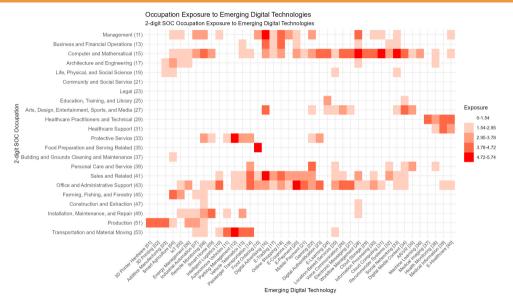
- Exposure scores are the measure of relevance of a technology to an industry or occupation
 - ► For industries: integration of a technology into the production process and/or if the technology enhances the output of an industry
 - ► For occupations: importance of a technology in performing tasks and functions inherent to an occupation
- They indicate the potential for adoption, but *de facto* adoption might not have happened yet
 - ► Proxy for actual adoption
- Exposure scores are neutral regarding the relationship between technology and labor

Updating the TechXposure Database (v0.9.1)

- We deliver these new data as an update of the open—access TechXposure database
- Available here (soon): github.com/FabienPetitEconomics/TechXposure
- All aggregation levels: up to 8-digit SOC 2010 Occupations and 4-digit NAICS 2007 Industries
- The database will be updated periodically (new technologies, new classifications)
 - ► ISCO-08 and NACE Rev.2 already available

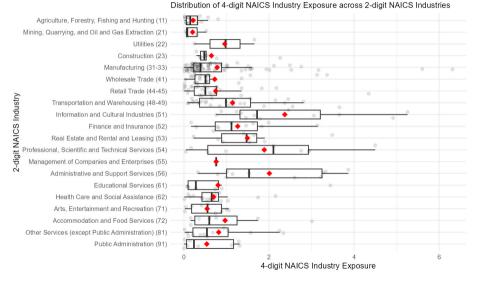
Occupation Exposure to Emerging Digital Technologies Distribution of 6-digit SOC Occupation Exposure across 2-digit SOC Occupations

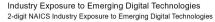




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Industry Exposure to Emerging Digital Technologies







Effect of Technological Change on Employment

■ We estimate the following empirical specification:

$$\Delta Y_c = \alpha + \beta X_c + Z\delta + \phi_{s(c)} + u_c$$

- \triangleright $\triangle Y_c$ is the change in the CZ employment-to-population ratio 2012-2019 (in pp.)
- \triangleright X_c is the CZ exposure to emerging digital technologies
- \triangleright Z is a set of covariates, $\phi_{s(c)}$ are state FE, and u_c the error term
- American Community Survey (ACS) Data
 - ► Sample: 740 Commuting Zones (CZ) using Dorn (2009) crosswalk
 - ► Employment in 2-digit NAICS industries
 - ► Demographic controls
- TechXposure Database: Cumulative exposure scores 2012-2019 by industry

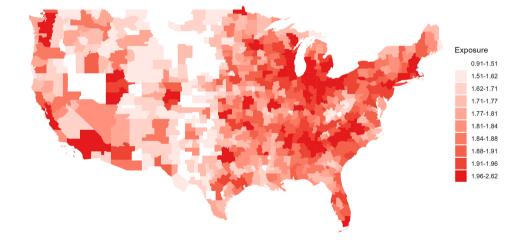
Shift-Share IV: Regional Exposure to Emerging Digital Technologies

■ Shift—share IV (Borusyak et al. 2021):

$$X_c = \sum_{j} \underbrace{I_{cj}}_{\text{Share}} \cdot \underbrace{X_j}_{\text{Shock}},$$

- $ightharpoonup I_{ci}$ is the employment share of sector j in area c in 2010 Details
- \triangleright X_i is the average exposure of sector j to all emerging digital technologies (2012–2019)
- Identifying assumptions:
 - 1. Shock exogeneity: Quasi-random assignment of shocks 36% of US patents (excluded)
 - 2a. The number of observed shocks is sufficiently large (HHI is $\sum_i l_i^2 = 0.077$)
 - 2b. More exposed regions are not disproportionately affected by other labor market shocks/trends

CZ Exposure to Digital Technologies (2012–2019)

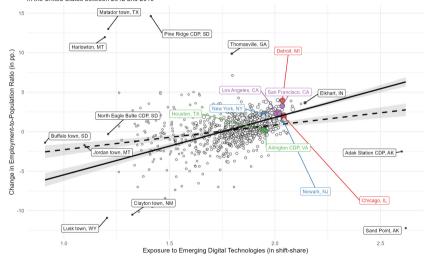


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Change in Employment-to-Population Ratio and Exposure to Emerging Digital Technologies

Relationship between the change in employment-to-population ratio and exposure to emerging digital technologies in commuting zones in the United States between 2012 and 2019



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Overall Impact of Emerging Digital Technologies on CZ Employment

		IV – De	p. var: Δ Emp-	to-pop. Ratio	(2012-2019)	× 100		
		Weighted				Unweighted		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
Exposure to Digital Technologies	0.94*** (0.12)	0.67*** (0.11)	0.92*** (0.16)	0.81** (0.21)	0.08 (0.16)	0.55** (0.19)	0.76*** (0.09)	
State FE	✓	√	✓	✓	✓	√	✓	
Demographics		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Industry share			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Exclude Top 10% Exp. CZ				✓				
Exclude Bottom 10% Pop. CZ						✓		
Exclude Bottom 20% Pop. CZ							\checkmark	
R ²	0.57	0.60	0.61	0.49	0.25	0.33	0.41	
Adj. R ²	0.54	0.57	0.58	0.44	0.18	0.27	0.35	
Num. obs.	741	741	741	666	741	666	592	

Notes: *** p < 0.01: ** p < 0.05: * p < 0.1. Standard errors between parentheses are derived following the AKMO inference procedure from Adão et al. (2019). Regressions are weighted by population in 2010. Column (1) includes census division fixed effects: Column (2) adds demographics controls in 2010, including the logarithm of population, the proportion of females, the proportion of the population aged over 65, and the proportions of the population with secondary and tertiary education levels; Column (3) adds the share of employment in the industry sector.

		IV – Dep. var: Δ Emp-to-pop. Ratio (2012–2019) $ imes$ 100							
	Gender	(Y16-64)	Age						
	Female	Male	Y16-19	Y20-24	Y25-44	Y45-54	Y55-64	Y65-74	Y75+
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Exposure to Digital Technologies	0.20** (0.08)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.12** (0.06)	-0.45*** (0.11)	0.43*** (0.11)	0.38*** (0.07)	0.03 (0.03)	0.01** (0.01)
Emp-to-pop. Ratio in 2012 Change (in %)	0.26 0.75	0.28 0.94	0.02 7.02	0.05 2.02	$0.25 \\ -1.70$	0.14 3.01	0.09 4.00	0.02 1.42	0.00 2.64
R ² Adj. R ² Num. obs.	0.55 0.51 741	0.53 0.49 741	0.41 0.36 741	0.38 0.33 741	0.45 0.41 741	0.75 0.73 741	0.62 0.59 741	0.38 0.33 741	0.20 0.13 741

Notes: *** p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; **p < 0.1. Standard errors between parentheses are derived following the AKM0 inference procedure from Adão et al. (2019). Regressions are weighted by population in 2010. Demographic controls (in 2010) include the logarithm of population, the proportion of females, the proportion of the population aged over 65, and the proportions of the population with secondary and tertiary education levels. Low-, middle-, and high-skilled workers are defined by educational level (i.e., high school or less, some college, and bachelor's degree or higher).

Empirical Analysis

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Decomposing the Impact by Education Groups

	IV – Dep.	IV – Dep. var: Δ Emp-to-pop. Ratio (2012–2019) \times 100						
	Less HS	HS	Bach.+					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)				
Exposure to Digital Technologies	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.16** (0.06)	0.22** (0.07)	0.35** (0.13)				
Emp-to-pop. Ratio in 2012 Change (in %)	$0.04 \\ -1.08$	$0.12 \\ -1.32$	0.15 1.41	0.17 2.05				
R ² Adj. R ² Num. obs.	0.56 0.52 741	0.62 0.59 741	0.47 0.43 741	0.60 0.57 741				

Notes:***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1. Standard errors between parentheses are derived following the AKM0 inference procedure from Adão et al. (2019). Regressions are weighted by population in 2010. Demographic controls (in 2010) include the logarithm of population, the proportion of females, the proportion of the population aged over 65, and the proportions of the population with secondary and tertiary education levels. Low-, middle-, and high-skilled workers are defined by educational level (i.e., high school or less, some college, and bachelor's degree or higher).

Timing of the Impact on Employment

- We estimate the impact of digital technologies on the employment-to-population ratio over two sub-periods (2012–2016 and 2016–2019)
- We recalibrate the shift-share exposure of CZs for each period $t = \{1, 2\}$ as follows:

$$X_c^t = \sum_j I_{cj} X_j^t,$$

where X_j^t is the average exposure score of each 2-digit NAICS industry to all digital technologies during the period t

- Cumulative development of digital technologies: X_c^1 and X_c^2 are highly correlated
- lacktriangle To address this, we calculate the change in exposure across the periods as $\Delta X_c \equiv X_c^2/X_c^1$
 - Intensification of digital technology exposure in the second period relative to the first

Effect of Digital Technologies on US Employment by Periods

	IV	– Dep. var:	Δ Emp-to-p	oop. Ratio ×	< 100
	2012–2016		2016-	2012–2019	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Exposure P1 (2012–2016)	0.36**	0.37**		0.45***	0.82***
	(0.09)	(0.13)		(0.19)	(0.21)
Exposure P2 (2016–2019)			0.30***		
			(80.0)		
Exposure P2/P1		0.01		0.23^{*}	0.24
		(0.21)		(0.16)	(0.24)
R ²	0.44	0.44	0.56	0.56	0.61
Adj. R ²	0.40	0.40	0.52	0.52	0.57
Num. obs.	741	741	741	741	741

Notes:***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1. Standard errors between parentheses are derived following the AKM0 inference procedure from Adão et al. (2019). Regressions are weighted by population in 2010. Demographic controls (in 2010) include the logarithm of population, the proportion of females, the proportion of the population aged over 65, and the proportions of the population with secondary and tertiary education levels. Low-, middle-, and high-skilled workers are defined by educational level (i.e., high school or less, some college, and bachelor's degree or higher).

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Conclusion

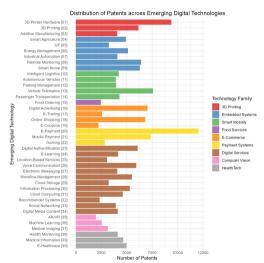
- We measure the exposure of industries and occupations to emerging digital technologies and estimate their impact on US employment
 - ► TechXposure Database available on GitHub (US data soon)
- Main takeaways:
 - 1. Overall positive impact on US employment with substantial heterogeneity by worker types
 - 2. Reskilling and upskilling policies for vulnerable workers are necessary, particularly those in core working-age groups and with lower education levels
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Conclusion

Some Examples of Patents Goback

- Intelligent Vehicular Control Device (201713859U, 2017)
 - ▶ Vehicle intelligent logistics control device, has GPS locating module for obtaining position information of transport vehicle through main control chip, RFID reader for reading RFID tag information, and 4G module connected with server
- Speech Recognition System (202048118D, 2020)
 - System for recognizing training speech, has process or which is configured to increment counter associated with word sequences, and train language model of automatic transcription system using word sequences and counter

Distribution of Patents Go back



NAICS Industry Classification (4-digit level) Goback

- Each industry $i \in \mathcal{I}$ has a title, a description, and exclusions
- 1. We break descriptions into individual sentences
- 2. We concatenate each sentence with its title
- 3. We represent these composite sentences as $s \in S_i$
- This results in 324 industries at the 4-digit level, each represented by 4.5 composite sentences on average

5151 Radio and Television Broadcasting This industry errors comprises establishments primarily enumed in operatine broadcast studies and Description often engaged in the production or purchase of programs or generate revenues from the sale of air time to advertisers, from donations and subsidies, or from the sale of programs 51511 Radio Broadcasting This industry comprises establishments primarily encound in broadcasting audio signals. These establishments operate radio broadcasting studios and facilities for the transmission of aural programmin Description o the oublic to affiliates, or to subscribers. The radio programs may include entertainment, news, talk bore beerges data or religious services . Broadcasting exclusively on the Internet-are classified in Industry 51913. Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals; and Exclude Producing taped radio programming—are classified in Industry 51229. Other Sound Recording 515111 Radio Networks US This U.S. industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in assembling and transmitting sural programming to their affiliates or subscribers via over-the-air broadcasts, cable, or satellite. The programming to take annual or material such as mean acroises, close, or stakens, most acroises spects or anasic Establishments primarily engaged in-. Broadcasting exclusively on the Internet-are classified in Industry 519130, Internet Publishing and Broad casting and Web Search Bostale and Producing timed radio representation—and classified in Industry \$12290. Other Sound Recording 515112 Radio Stations US This U.S. industry comprises establishments primarily encoged in broadcasting sural programs by radio to the mildir. Decomposition may existing to their corn studio, from an affiliated extensit, or from extensit 51512 Television Broadcasting See industry description for 515120 below 515120 Television Broadcasting Description renomination of measures to the profile. These autiblishments also produce or transmit visual accommunity to affiliated broadcast television stations, which in term broadcast the moreover to the mildic on a mediatempired schedule. Programming may originate in their own studio, from an affiliated network, or · Broadcasting exclusively on the Internet-are classified in Industry 519130. Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portale Producing tuned television resource materials—are classified in Industry \$12110. Motion Picture Furnishing cable and other pay television services—are classified in Infratry 517110. Wired. Telecommunications Carriery and Producing and broadcasting television programs for cable and satellite television systems—are classified in Industry 515210. Cable and Other Subscription Programming.

Embeddings and Cosine Similarity Scores Goback

- We produce the embeddings of these composite sentences $Emb_{s,i}$ (with MPNet v2)
- For each patent $p \in \mathcal{P}$, we compute the cosine similarity with its description p_1 and its function p_2 :

$$C_{s,i}^{p_1} = \frac{Emb_{s,i} \cdot Emb_{p_1}}{||Emb_{s,i}|| \ ||Emb_{p_1}||}$$
 and $C_{s,i}^{p_2} = \frac{Emb_{s,i} \cdot Emb_{p_2}}{||Emb_{s,i}|| \ ||Emb_{p_2}||}$

■ For each (i, p_1) and (i, p_2) combinations, we retain the composite sentence s that exhibits the highest cosine similarity score:

$$C_i^{p_1} := \arg\max_{s \in S_i} C_{s,i}^{p_1}$$
 and $C_i^{p_2} := \arg\max_{s \in S_i} C_{s,i}^{p_2}$

Filtering with Redundancy Goback

- For (i, p) combinations, we separately rank the sub-pairs (i, p_1) and (i, p_2) based on $C_i^{p_1}$ and $C_i^{p_2}$
- We identify relevant pairs $(i, p)^*$ if both sub-pairs (i, p_1) and (i, p_2) are within the top 10 of their respective rankings
- For $(i, p)^*$, we calculate the harmonic mean:

$$C_i^p = 2\left(\frac{1}{C_i^{p_1}} + \frac{1}{C_i^{p_2}}\right)^{-1}$$

 \Rightarrow We establish a (semantic) connection between an invention p and a set of relevant industries $i \in \mathcal{I}$

Cosine Similarity for Occupations: Summary

- We use the SOC Classification (at the 6-digit level)
 - ▶ Each occupation $o \in \mathcal{O}$ has a title and a list of tasks
- We produce the embeddings of occupation title as Emb_{o_1} and of a task s as Emb_{s,o_2}
- We compute cosine similarities $C_{o_1}^p$ and $C_{o_2}^p := \arg\max_{s \in S_o} C_{s,o_2}^p$
- Same redundancy filtering and take the harmonic mean for relevant pairs $(o, p)^*$
- \Rightarrow We establish a (semantic) connection between an invention p and a set of relevant occupations $o \in \mathcal{O}$



Weighting Scheme Go back

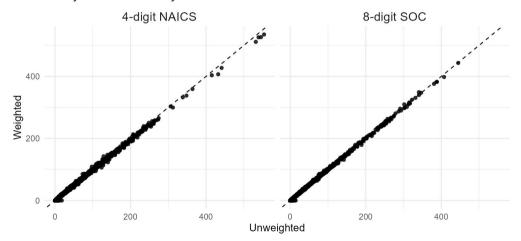
■ The weight assigned to a patent *p* is:

$$\omega_d^p = \frac{m_p}{\sum_{p \in \mathcal{P}_{dt}^k} m_p}$$

- $ightharpoonup m_p$ is the number of citations received by patent p
- $\triangleright \mathcal{P}_{dt}^{\vec{k}}$ is the set of patents belonging to emerging digital technology k, filed in year t, and relevant to industry/occupation $d = \{i, o\}$
- Aggregate to the technology level: $C_{dt}^k = |\mathcal{P}_{dt}^k| \times \sum_{p \in \mathcal{P}_{dt}^k} \omega_d^p C_d^p$
- Cumulative cosine similarity score for the period 2012–2021: $C_d^k = \sum_t C_{dt}^k$

Weighted versus Unweighted Yearly Cosine Similarity Scores

Yearly Cosine Similarity Scores



Average Employment Share by Industry in 2010 (in percent)



			Emp. Share		
	NAICS Industry	Mean	SD	Shock	
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1.4	4.1	0.3	
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.5	2.1	0.2	
22	Utilities	0.9	0.1	1.2	
23	Construction	7.1	2.1	1.0	
31-33	Manufacturing	11.0	23.1	2.8	
41	Wholesale Trade	3.0	0.4	1.9	
44-45	Retail Trade	11.5	1.4	2.2	
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	4.2	1.1	2.2	
51	Information and Cultural Industries	2.3	0.6	3.7	
52	Finance and Insurance	4.9	2.9	1.9	
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2.0	0.4	2.5	
54	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	6.2	6.9	3.2	
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.1	0.0	0.7	
56	Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	4.0	0.7	3.2	
61	Educational Services	9.2	3.6	1.7	
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	12.9	4.4	1.2	
71	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2.0	0.9	0.9	
72	Accommodation and Food Services	6.8	2.1	1.7	
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	4.9	0.3	1.9	
91	Public Administration	4.9	4.6	0.6	

Notes: This table presents the average employment shares in 2010 by 2-digit NAICS industry, which is averaged across all the CZs. and the average exposure to digital technologies which is the shock in the shift-share. CZs are weighted by population in 2010. The first column indicates the 2-digit NAICS codes, the second column is the name of the NAICS industry, the third column is the average employment share in 2010, the fourth column gives the standard deviation (SD), and the fifth column corresponds to the industry exposure to digital technologies.

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