

logo not found or type unknown

Fear of Job Loss Slows Technology Adoption in Virgin Islands Business, Panel Warns at Summit

Panelists cited fears of replacing workers as a major obstacle to tech adoption. They urged retraining, youth-focused AI education, and cultural shifts, warning that failure to modernize risks inefficiency, higher costs, and lost competitiveness.

Business / **Published On October 02, 2025 06:09 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **October 02, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



Robots symbolize the growing role of AI and automation in the workplace, a central theme at the USVI Workforce Development Summit where leaders debated how technology can boost efficiency while raising fears of job displacement.

Could the fear of eliminating traditional jobs be one reason for delays in incorporating more technology into local business processes? A panel discussion on the territory's business ecosystem

explored this and other angles during the first day of the Workforce Development Summit, held on Tuesday at the Caribbean Cinemas facility in Sunny Isle.

According to Wayne Biggs, chief executive officer of the Economic Development Authority, while “policies are geared towards assisting businesses,” there are “improvements that can be made” to make doing business in the territory easier, faster, and “more efficient by using technology.”

Philip Corey, Brava’s head of business in the USVI, agreed. As far as business friendliness is concerned, Mr. Corey believes “technology is the solution to a lot of those challenges.” Digitization, including being able to complete entire processes online, was one of his suggestions. He referenced mainland states where business operators could “do it all online” and “never had to go into a physical building.”

Michael Carty, chair of the Workforce Development Board, was the panel’s moderator. “Why aren’t we already further ahead with these types of conveniences? Is it just us stuck in our old ways?” he asked.

Mr. Biggs believes the change is happening, albeit slowly. At the Economic Development Authority, efforts have been made to “digitize everything,” but the same does not apply to many central government entities and semi-autonomous agencies. The Taxicab Commission, for example, is notoriously still operating with a paper-based system. “Sometimes it’s a monetary thing,” offered Mr. Biggs, noting that scanning and digitizing paper files is an intensive project. Often, lump-sum budgets are not allocated for that purpose, and “you gotta do it piecemeal.”

Panelist Will Royall, founder and chief executive officer of Promotix, said that while the territory has made great strides, “there’s still a long way to go” where the inclusion of technology is concerned. He suggested that “there’s a lot of job protection” which “sometimes gets in the way.”

“People are concerned with replacing people, but we still need the people to run this technology,” Mr. Royall stated.

Contemporary digitization and digitalization conversations often focus on artificial intelligence and how it could be integrated into business processes in the Virgin Islands, with Tuesday’s discussion being no exception. Mr. Biggs shared that the Economic Development Authority is using AI to help prepare speeches and annual reports. “We believe heavily in technology, and we know that technology is really the way that we’re going to stay cutting edge,” he said. The EDA CEO considers it a way to remain efficient as “monetary resources get less.”

Mr. Royall, too, is a proponent of greater inclusion of artificial intelligence. “What we found is that it’s just made us more efficient and faster to get things to market,” he said.

The overarching concern, however, is that AI will replace human jobs, particularly those at the entry level. “They are racing with something that is daily developing and becoming more valuable, so how do we win that race?” Mr. Carty wondered.

Mr. Biggs suggested that young Virgin Islanders who are “growing up” with AI, could potentially be tasked with “teaching the older generation how to apply AI more efficiently.” This does not necessarily offer long-term job security for those who are yet to enter the workforce, however. Mr. Biggs is aware that more widespread use of technology, like artificial intelligence, could reduce the need for businesses to employ large numbers of staff. However, he argued that individuals could be “retrained in various areas” to mitigate the shocks of job losses.

Steve Lowe, founder of EstateShield VI, placed the responsibility of ensuring there are opportunities for young people squarely on the shoulders of the government. “Are we putting them in position to be able to add value, or are we putting them in position to have completely obsolete skills by the time they come to the workforce?” he asked. Mr. Lowe says he is “actively looking to replace myself” through the use of technology. He has lauded AI as a means of allowing him to “free myself up so I have more bandwidth” to accomplish other tasks.

This mindset, Mr. Lowe believes, must be instilled in the youth. “We need to be training the young generation on how to take technology in these tools and just make their time the most efficient it possibly can be,” he argued. His sentiments did not address the potential dearth of employment opportunities, given that many job roles could potentially be replaced by artificial intelligence, but he suggested that education systems will require reimagining.

“Specific knowledge is going to be way more important than general surface-level knowledge that's easily replaceable or easily replaced by ChatGPT,” argued Mr. Lowe.

Brava’s Philip Corey suggested that “there is a tremendous balance that needs to occur.”

“I think it's that mind shift of, I'm not replacing myself, I'm freeing up more of my time to do the higher level things that I need to be doing,” offered Mr. Biggs.