

Failings of the Fourth Estate!

Sandra Santos and the San Antonio Express News reveals why America's News Media declines to report about obsolete people.

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Surprising . . . seldom do you hear or read about the obsolete people problem and their displacement by technology. For the millennials and generation-Z, this is a very major factor in determining what future they will have. You would think this would be the 'story of the century' with stories and reports abounding from America's news media, both print and electronic, but no . . . hardly a peep! Now much of this is a result of the news media's swing towards being 'entertainment', with less and less emphases on real hard core news subjects, all because of their quest for higher ratings and readership. Nevertheless, this problem must be known and understood by the youth of America if they are to have any real hope of mitigating its impact on their lives. You can't solve problems until you understand them!



I've been studying and writing about this problem for a number of years, and having a very strong foundation in engineering and science, couple with being well read in history, I have a good understanding of the problems millennials and generation-Z now face. And so I decided to contact Ms. Sandra Santos, the Political and Government Editor of our local newspaper, the San Antonio Express News, and offer to talk with her while providing some of my writings on the subject. Nothing! No reply what so ever! I made other attempts at contact, both emails and traditional mailings, offering copies of my books, even lunch at my treat. Not a peep! Not even so much as a courtesy "Thanks, but no thanks", just silence. My last attempt, I sent one of my articles detailing how jobs for American youth are quickly disappearing, with a note that in my day, a news hound would have been off and running at the first scent of a news story.

I found a couple of snapshots of Ms. Santos on the internet, and she had that look of being young, foolish and frivolous, but I didn't feel that really explained anything. Why was it that the American news media, as typified by Ms. Santos, goes to such lengths to avoid facing the problem and doing any real reporting about technology displacement? How could anyone of responsibility be so negligent as to deliberately ignored what has been going on since the last century and continues at an ever increasing pace? Then it occurred to me the real problem was fear. Ms. Santos and others were simply too scared to face the problem and the consequences of being obsolete and pushed out of the social economic system. And that's understandable, because since the introduction of the linotype machines in the 1890's, the news media has itself face extensive technology displacement, which over the decades has swept large numbers of their jobs away.

For the print media, automating the printing process took away jobs . . . good paying jobs. Computers added to the displacement by automating the composition workers, those who laid out each page of the publication, word processors reducing the workers needed to write the stories, then edit them. In the 1920's, commercial broadcasting radio was expanding, soon bringing news to the American public. After World War II, television became popular to further expand the electronic news media bringing stiff competition to the print media. By the 1960's, this electronic competition started taking a toll on the newspapers, as more and more newspapers lost out and folded. This process continues to this day, I heard just a few months ago that another long standing newspaper in New York closed its doors. But the electronic news media has had its share of job losses from technology too, as new electronic technology has reduced the number of people needed to produce television news. Like the print media, this displacement was accelerated by the digital revolution and microchips. Then the internet opened up new avenues for electronic distribution, with the major news outlets facing news reporting by amateurs and semi-amateurs, so in the last few decades they too have lost significant numbers of jobs.

And it hasn't ended yet!

This last year I read about two computer program systems developed to write technical reports and legal briefs. The facts and figures are entered, and the document is created in record time, without meetings, coffee and bathroom breaks, without fatigue . . . without any human punching the keys of a wordprocessor. The new AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology of IBM's Watson could ferret out those facts and figures to pass along to the writing program, and the human reporter is left at best, working for minimum wages or as an intern.

Technology marches on, so of course, job-lost continues, and since technology doubles every fifteen years, that rate of job-lost is accelerating both for the news media and the rest of American society. So it is easy to understand why the 'Sandra Santos's' of America's news media are so careful to avoid the problem of obsolete people, for they themselves are just as much at risk as any other American. People address difficult, overwhelming problems by denial- indeed, the first stage of cancer is . . . **denial**. But I don't think this is consciously done, it isn't some conspiracy by all reporters to avoid any contact with the subject, rather I think they sense the precariousness of their position and instinctively avoid it. Hence, why there was no response what so ever to me.

The thing is, complex difficult problems do not solve themselves, so living a denial is only making things worst for themselves as well as most other Americans. Right now, alternative solutions are silently being closed off and lost as we delay facing this problem. The longer you wait to address a problem, the fewer options you have left. So while it is fully understandable why Sandra Santos and others seek the emotional shelter of denial, their fears to stand up and start facing the problem of technology displacement and obsolete people is only making it worst for all others.

I often tell people that if you want to understand what's happening in society today, just look back a hundred and fifty years to what happen to the Native American Indians. It's the same thing all over again . . . no real difference at all. It is past time to face up to this problem and start trying to do something about it, otherwise it's 'lights out' for many of America's millennials, generation-Z and whatever the next generation is called. It's America's Fourth Estate who defines and brings problems to the forefront so the government can addresses those problems. Until they start doing that, this critical problem will only continue to get worst to the detriment of many Americans of all ages.