



# The 21st Century at Work: Forces Shaping the Future Workforce and Workplace in the United States

*Lynn A. Karoly, Constantijn (Stan) Panis*

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What are the forces that will continue to shape the U.S. workforce and workplace over the next 10 to 15 years? With such inevitabilities as the proliferation and acceleration of technology worldwide, will more individuals work at home, will more businesses outsource their noncore functions--and with what consequences? Answering such questions can help stakeholders--workers, employers, educators, and policymakers--make informed decisions. With its eye on forming sound policy, the U.S. Department of Labor asked the RAND Corporation to look at the future of work in the near-to-medium term. The authors analyzed shifting demographic patterns, the pace of technological change, and the path of economic globalization. They observe, for example, that the workforce will continue to grow--however, at a markedly declining pace--and that the ongoing education of employees will be paramount as new technologies, such as bio- and nanotechnologies, come onto the scene and develop. They also look at the trend of globalization and how it fares for the United States' economy and those of other countries. Overall, the authors provide for the reader expectations about the key forces in the economy today and their implications for the future workforce and workplace, including the size, composition, and skills of the workforce; the nature of work and workplace arrangements; and worker compensation.

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