

Concours AST – Session 2026

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Titre du sujet : Ghost Jobs

By Megan Lawton

The phrase “ghost jobs” may sound like something connected to Halloween, but it describes a serious problem in the modern job market. Ghost jobs are vacancies that employers advertise even though they do not plan to hire anyone. Sometimes the job has already been filled, and in other cases it may never have existed at all. This issue affects jobseekers on both sides of the Atlantic. A study by recruitment software company Greenhouse found that up to 22% of online job adverts last year were posted with no intention to hire. The research covered the US, the UK and Germany. Another study in the UK suggested the figure could be even higher, at 34%.

One person trying to bring attention to the issue is Eric Thompson, a tech worker in the US. Last October, he lost his job at a start-up and spent the next two months applying for hundreds of roles. “I looked at everything under the sun, applying for positions at my current level, and ones that were more senior and junior,” he says. Over time, Mr Thompson realised that many of the jobs he applied for did not exist. This experience led him to create a working group that is calling for new laws to ban fake job adverts in the US. He has helped develop proposed legislation called The Truth in Job Advertising & Accountability Act.

Mr Thompson has also launched a petition, which has already gained more than 50,000 signatures. He says many people have contacted him to explain how ghost jobs have damaged their confidence and affected their mental health. He describes this situation as “shameful”. Some governments are beginning to take action. In Canada, the province of Ontario will require companies to say whether a job advert is for a role that is actively being filled.

In the UK, there are currently no plans to tackle ghost jobs or recruitment ghosting. Jobseeker Ailish Davies from Leicester says the experience is “soul destroying”. “The amount of time I’ve spent putting effort into tailoring an application, to hear nothing back, it knocks you down,” she explains.

Career coach Jasmine Escalera says companies post ghost jobs for several reasons. Some want to build a talent pool, others want to appear to be growing, and some may collect data. To avoid ghost jobs, she advises networking and watching for warning signs, such as jobs being reposted often or left open for a long time.

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Source de l'article : <https://www.bbc.com/news>

Titre du sujet : A Swiss City Adopts Bitcoin

By John Laurenson

In a McDonald's by a lake in the Swiss city of Lugano, a man orders a coffee. He then asks, "Can I pay with bitcoin?" The cashier gives him a small machine that looks like a credit card terminal. It is actually for paying with cryptocurrency. The city has given these machines to local businesses for free.

In Lugano, Switzerland, 350 shops and restaurants accept bitcoin. The city even takes bitcoin for some public services, like paying for pre-school childcare. Nicolas, a customer from France, is a strong supporter of bitcoin. He says, "What's great about paying in bitcoin is the feeling of freedom... You are no longer dependent on a financial system with its middlemen and its costs." Nicolas also explains that he found "bitcoin cards" in Switzerland.

In one shop called Vintage Nassa, the owner, Cherubino Fry, tells me he accepts bitcoin because the fees are lower than credit cards. He says that bitcoin fees are usually below 1%, while debit card fees can be up to 1.7% and credit cards up to 3.4%. Nearby is the office of "Plan B," a project started in 2022 by the city and the company Tether. It wants "to make Lugano the European hub for bitcoin." The director, Mir Liponi, tells me about her experiment when she had problems with her bank. For 11 days she could only use bitcoin. She says she could survive, although there were limits. "It's missing public transportation... another one is fuel," she explains. Some medical places accept it, but not dentists, and she says you still cannot pay energy bills in bitcoin.

Not all bitcoin experiments succeed. In El Salvador, people received \$30 in bitcoin, but most changed it to dollars and never used bitcoin again. But other cities, such as Ljubljana and Zurich, are called very crypto-friendly.

In Lugano, not everyone is happy with bitcoin. A statue of Satoshi Nakamoto by the lake was destroyed and thrown into the water. A local woman named Lucia says she is surprised, because people usually behave well. Still, she is sceptical about bitcoin. She says cryptocurrencies are linked with "crime... the dark web and speculation," and that many people lose money.

Some experts also warn about risks. Professor Sergio Rossi says bitcoin is volatile and shopkeepers should quickly convert it to "fat" currencies like Swiss francs. He also says that if a digital wallet platform fails, "my cryptocurrencies disappear instantaneously." But the mayor, Michele Foletti, is not worried. He says you can do good or bad with any money, and that criminals prefer cash.

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Source de l'article : <https://www.bbc.com/news>

Titre du sujet : Deepfake Teachers

By Hayley Clarke

Schools across the UK are testing new technology, including deepfake teachers and remote staff who teach from hundreds of miles away. The government says AI can “transform education” and help reduce teachers’ admin work. But teachers, school leaders and unions disagree about what classrooms should look like in the future.

At The Valley Leadership Academy in Lancashire, maths teacher Emily Cooke is unhappy that her school has hired a virtual maths teacher. Since September, top-set pupils in Years 9–11 have been taught by a teacher who works from Devon, about 300 miles away. Teachers at the school have gone on strike, and the National Education Union calls the situation “unacceptable.” Mrs Cooke says the important teacher–student relationship “cannot be formed or replicated over a screen.” But the school says the programme is a “small-scale initiative” and a “win-win” because pupils learn from an excellent online teacher, while another teacher supports them in the classroom.

Other schools are exploring AI even more. At the Great Schools Trust in Liverpool, Warrington and Bolton, CEO Shane Jerston wants to give students a “top class, world-quality education.” He believes AI can save teachers’ time so they can focus on students’ character and leadership skills. Teachers already use AI to mark tests, and the trust’s AI director, Benjamin Barker, says the system can find gaps in learning and help plan lessons.

Some people support these ideas, but many parents are unsure. Parentkind, a national charity, says parents are “deeply sceptical about AI,” and only 12% think it should be used in classrooms. But the charity says parents may agree if schools clearly explain how AI helps children.

Use of AI in schools is growing. A Teacher Tapp survey shows that in October 2024, 31% of teachers used AI in the past week, rising to 58% by October 2025. Over 40,000 teachers have also tried Oak National Academy’s AI lesson-planning tool.

Back at The Valley, Mrs Cooke says online learning is not as good as face-to-face teaching and reminds people of the “huge gaps” caused during Covid. The Department for Education says technology must “enhance – not replace” effective learning. The NEU says it will “never tolerate the imposition of a virtual teacher.” However, the academy says its remote teaching is “structured, supported, and takes place in school,” and is a small response to the shortage of specialist maths teachers.

Langue du sujet : Anglais

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Titre du sujet : A Very Unusual Crop

By Georgina Rannard

In an ordinary field in a quiet part of east England, a very unusual experiment is growing. In four small paddy fields, rice plants are doing well after the UK's hottest summer on record. "When I tell people what I'm doing here, they think I'm joking," says Nadine Mitschunas, the UK's first and only rice-grower. The rice is planted on the land of farmers Sarah and Craig Taylor in Cambridgeshire. "We could never have contemplated this would grow here," says Sarah.

The project is part of a trial to explore what foods Britain might grow in the future. It aims to answer big questions about food security and farmers' livelihoods as climate change alters weather and growing conditions. Nine varieties of rice are being tested, from countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Italy and the Philippines. Some are well-known types like risotto, basmati and sushi rice. Nadine points out one success: "This is Estrella from Colombia, the best one so far."

The experiment is led by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH). Although rice is often seen as a tropical crop, it can grow in cooler places. The recent hot summer helped, and climate change may make rice more suitable in the future. "Nobody has tried this before, but with climate change, we have crops that, 10 years ago, we wouldn't have thought would be viable. In 10 years time, rice could be a completely perfect crop for us," Nadine says.

For now, rice is still risky to grow in the UK. But scientists say that if average temperatures rise by 2–4C, rice could be grown more widely. The project is also about climate action. Farms in the Fenlands (in eastern England) grow a third of Britain's vegetables, but they are on peat soils that release carbon dioxide as they dry. Flooding the land for rice could help keep carbon locked in the soil.

Craig knows change is needed. "We don't want people thinking we're the 'crazy rice farmers' - this is about rethinking the whole system and making it work for everyone," he says. Sarah adds, "We see that the future isn't stable. We want to be able to write our own destiny and not have it decided for us."

Officials from the government are watching closely. "We're at a critical juncture in climate change and we need to make decisions," says Richard Pywell from UKCEH. It may be years before UK-grown rice reaches dinner plates, but the idea is no longer a joke.

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Titre du sujet : 'Speaking Irish is everything'

By Naomi Clarke

Identity, culture, and self-expression are important to many people who want to keep speaking their native language. The thousands of people who came to Belfast's Waterfront Hall this week feel the same way. They are attending Oireachtas na Samhna, Ireland's oldest Irish-language arts festival. The event celebrates music, spoken word, debates, films, competitions, and workshops — all in Irish.

The festival began in 1897 and has returned to Belfast for the first time in 30 years. For 23-year-old Laochra Mac Iomaire, this return is "historic." He has been coming for several years, and this year around 10,000 people are expected to attend from Wednesday to Sunday.

At a time when Irish language debates often focus on street signs or talk of a "culture war," Laochra told BBC News NI that speaking Irish means "everything" to him. He said: "I was raised with it as my first language... it's about preserving the culture of who we are." As a child, he was embarrassed to speak Irish because few others used it. But now, he feels more people are proud of it. He says the rap group Kneecap helped make Irish popular again for young people, and many of his friends started Irish classes after seeing their film.

Kneecap, a Belfast group who rap in both Irish and English, became well-known globally with their award-winning film. The film was partly based on their lives and their fight for more respect for the Irish language. It was also part of this week's opening programme.

Many musicians, broadcasters, and Irish-language radio stations have also helped what some call an "Irish language revolution." Preston, a 20-year-old student from Boston who studies Irish at the University of Toronto, said these efforts help show that "Irish is still alive... and has gone around the globe." His classmate Fiona, from Toronto, said hearing so many people speaking Irish was "heart-warming" and "refreshing," especially because she did not meet many speakers on earlier visits to Belfast or Dublin.

Colm Ó Mathúna from County Wicklow and his wife Lora from California brought their two children. Lora said it is "very encouraging" to see so many people interested in Irish. She added: "Being bilingual is extremely useful... it makes other languages easier to learn." She also said Irish offers "a different way of seeing the world."

The festival opened on Wednesday, with Ireland's president-elect Catherine Connolly attending. Events are being held across Belfast, and the city council gave £30,000 in grants to groups supporting Irish-language arts.