

Exploring the impact of using AI in the built environment

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) recently launched a report exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the built environment and its impact, and the urgent need for industry professionals to understand how it will influence their areas of operation.



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One sector that the [Artificial Intelligence in the Built Environment Insight Paper](#) highlights as facing a significant benefit via AI is facilities management (FM), due to the repetitive nature of many FM functions, making it an ideal place for increased automation, freeing up human ‘man-hours’ for other more strategic tasks. However, the report weighs up the positives and negatives of such changes and how companies should deal with them.

AI at a strategic level

Paul Bagust, RICS global property standards director, says: “Facilities management will always have a vital role to play within the built environment, and even though many operational roles will become more technology-led, this sector could benefit hugely from AI at a strategic level. For example, machinery – utilising AI - will revolutionise the FM industry, making many jobs faster, safer and less costly, and this will ultimately improve a company’s service offering and increase their bottom line.”

He adds: “Technology and the availability of data is also changing the way investors look for opportunities and invest. This will present a huge threat to the industry if ignored, but again, it presents so many opportunities for those who work in the built environment. So, all businesses, however large or small, must act now and analyse and prepare for how this disruptive technology could transform their role, sector and the wider built environment. Otherwise they face becoming obsolete.”

Transforming the property industry

Says TC Chetty, RICS country manager for South Africa: “The *Artificial Intelligence in the Built Environment Insight Paper* – in conjunction with *Artificial Intelligence in Facilities Management* - discusses how AI will transform the property industry by driving smart, efficient buildings from design through to construction. It also highlights how those in the industry can exploit the latest AI applications and developments – including drones and BIM (building information modelling) - to plan and work more effectively, while improving and better maintaining the quality of buildings and the wider built environment.”

Chris Hoar, co-founder of AI in FM comments: “The overarching message of this report is that organisations should seek out and maximise the opportunities that artificial intelligence presents, while minimising any potential threats. This way, they will have a much better chance of controlling their business strategy, direction and financial health.”

In 2016, RICS and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) launched a landmark collaboration to advance the global FM community by offering the most comprehensive catalogue of professional development and credentials. The collaboration leverages the combined authority of two of the world’s premier built environment professional organisations to support FM education and career advancement.

Adds Chetty: “Artificial intelligence will be one of the driving forces as the globe becomes more urban and digital. How this technology can develop our industries and drive productivity will be explored further at the [RICS World Built Environment Forum](#) on 23 April 2018 in London.”

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