

Lenovo's AI assistant advertisement sparks controversy for making humans feel like 'superfluous'.

Lenovo's AI Work Companion advertisement featuring the Qira assistant has sparked controversy for portraying office workers as helpless, letting AI do all their work for them.

We constantly hear, especially from AI CEOs, that the era of human labor is coming to an end, that in just 6–12 months, AI will render many professions obsolete. This is not surprising, as they need to promote this narrative to justify the billions of dollars invested in AI infrastructure.

Most warnings that "AI will replace everything" are usually general statements about the future, rarely targeting a specific group of people. However, things seem to be changing with Lenovo's advertisement introducing the AI Work Companion concept, powered by an AI assistant named Qira.

This advertisement feels like a direct jab at humanity. The way it's staged makes office workers seem not only inferior to AI, but also almost powerless, incapable of doing anything meaningful and completely oblivious to what's happening right before their eyes.

The story begins with Jeff, an office worker, asking Qira to write a report he forgot to prepare. All Jeff does is draw a simple sketch, which Qira then transforms into a complete report. This situation is not controversial in itself. Everyone has experienced forgetting something and wished for such a 'lifesaving' tool. If people truly believe AI can complete an important report entirely in one go, many would be willing to try.

But the problem lies in the next scene. A colleague walks in and asks about the company's first-quarter budget. Jeff – who is portrayed as a 'hardworking' employee – is completely unaware of the figure. Qira then appears and recites all the information that Jeff should have known.

What's even more annoying is that the other colleague thanked Jeff for 'updating the information,' completely ignoring the fact that the answer came from AI. Ironically, Qira did all the work, while Jeff sat back and took all the credit.

The group then went into a meeting, and once again, Qira handled everything. Throughout the commercial, not a single truly professional action was performed by a human.

The commercial ends with Jeff's statement after a 'hard day': 'I couldn't have done this without you, partner.' It sounds more ironic than grateful.

Perhaps Lenovo simply wanted to highlight the usefulness of its new AI assistant. However, the way it was presented inadvertently brought to light the helplessness of office workers. Couldn't they create scenarios where humans still play an active role, instead of just sitting and observing professionally?

If that's the company's vision of future employees, then what's the point of keeping them? It's not hard to understand why there's a wave of layoffs everywhere. If you were a CEO, you probably wouldn't want to pay a salary to such a 'Jeff,' but would rather buy a few more Qira assistants to work together.

Back to reality, AI doesn't operate as perfectly as advertised. Try submitting a report entirely generated by AI to your boss and wait for their reaction. Current AI still can't perform every task flawlessly, while humans can simply doodle. Even large tech companies like Amazon and Microsoft have faced numerous limitations of AI in real-world implementation.

From a practical standpoint, advertising seems to promise something that AI assistants cannot yet guarantee. However, from a messaging perspective, it inadvertently portrays a passive workforce, one that simply sits around drinking coffee and lets machines do the work.

Even though this is just an advertisement for a product concept – and Lenovo is known for its innovative concepts – it still raises a thought-provoking question: how does the tech industry truly envision the future of work?

Businesses need to tell big stories to maintain stock prices and attract investment. But perhaps there are smarter ways to do this, rather than inadvertently ignoring the very people they expect to use their products.

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