

## Restaurant Automation

Written by Steve Marr  
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I've covered the subject of automation several times. I see how automation continues to increase. A phrase I've adapted is "if something can be automated it will be." I ran across an article in *Bloomberg* about how HaiDiLao [\[DG1\]](#) International, owner of Hot Pot Restaurants, is developing robots to replace chefs and wait staff. You can read the full article here: <https://bit.ly/2FbTHGF>

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My wife and I frequent a local breakfast place. We know the owner and most of the wait staff. We walk in the door and it feels like old home week. My coffee and my wife's tea appear without asking for them. In this type of establishment, I can't see robots taking over. However, other customers focus on service and cost, not relationship. Initially, I was taken back by the terminals in some establishments where you can call up your bill and pay by credit card, leave your tip and depart all without receiving a paper bill or interaction with your server. I agree that if I'm in a hurry, this works well.

Fifteen and sixteen-year-olds looking for their first job may need to look harder because technology looks to eliminate entry-level, low-skill positions.

In many situations, technology improves our lives. For example, my dad would drive into a Standard Oil station and "Whitey" would fill the tank, clean the windows and talk to my dad about the latest baseball game. They had a relationship. Now I pull into a gas station, swipe my credit card, swipe my loyalty card for the two-cent discount, pump my gas and drive on my way. I don't have time to build relationships during gas fill-ups. I suppose in a restaurant I don't need the frustration of flagging down a waiter when they're too busy to get my check or when I must wait for change. All technology comes at a price. Part of me feels the loss. However, other times I'm glad it doesn't take ten minutes or more to fill my tank with gas.

Some of these changes are helpful; some may be destructive. When creating something different, the Lord gave us an example which we read in Genesis. "God saw all that he had

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made, and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31, NIV) As we design new innovations, we need to embrace what is *very good* while avoiding those changes that are not. When in doubt, seek the Lord’s guidance. He will answer your prayer with all the wisdom you need.

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