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AI Layoffs: Convenient patsy or corporate strategy?

AI is not the boogeyman cost-cutting executives would have you believe, according to Australian Catholic University computational intelligence expert Niusha Shafiabady.

WiseTech Global has announced a phased headcount reduction would shed about 2000 jobs this year.

Its AI transformation program follows tens of thousands of redundancies worldwide across multiple sectors in 2025 that were linked to artificial intelligence replacing human labour.

Giants Amazon, Microsoft, Oracle and Intel were among hundreds of companies who have announced job cuts.

Deepwatch was another, attributing its layoffs to the cybersecurity company's intention to invest heavily in AI and automation.

ACU's head of discipline for IT Professor Niusha Shafiabady said in most cases, however, AI was an all too convenient patsy.

"AI is not firing people - executives are," she said. "Technology is being used as a convenient alibi, making job cuts look like innovation rather than cost cutting."

"This framing shifts responsibility away from leadership and onto technology, allowing corporations to deflect criticism by presenting redundancies as part of progress."

Associate Professor Shafiabady said AI integration and job security were not mutually exclusive. Human oversight remains important, as does the concept of corporate social responsibility.

"Using AI as the rationale risks normalising mass redundancies without accountability for social impact," she said."

Associate Professor Niusha Shafiabady is the head of discipline for IT at ACU's Peter Faber Business School and is available for interview via phone or Zoom.

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