

pXu Personal X Units

A distributed-ownership framework for the AI and robotics economy

glassboxai.dev/research/pxu-active-income-decentralized-ai-robotics/

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THE CORE QUESTION

If AI and robotics become a major form of productive capital, who should own that productive capacity?

The pXu proposal explores an alternative to treating automation only as a redistribution problem. Instead of allowing productive technological assets to concentrate first and redistributing part of the resulting income later, it asks whether part of the productive capacity itself can be owned by individuals as portable technological capital.

This document is a research and policy proposal, not enacted law and not jurisdiction-specific legal advice.

1. The automation ownership problem

AI and robotics can raise productivity while reducing the amount of human labour required for many tasks. Public policy therefore increasingly confronts technological unemployment, wage pressure, inequality and the distribution of automation gains.

Universal basic income, robot taxes and wage subsidies mainly intervene after ownership of productive automation has already been established. pXu asks an earlier question: **can ownership of productive technological capacity itself be distributed?**

The proposed path is: **automation → distributed productive ownership → productive participation → active income.**

2. What is pXu?

pXu means **Personal X Unit**. The capital X is deliberately treated as a variable: it identifies the kind of productive technological capability associated with the person.

FORM	MEANING	PRIMARY DOMAIN
pXu	Personal X Unit - umbrella category	Individually owned productive technological capital
pAlu	Personal AI Unit	Digital / cognitive work performed by AI systems
pRu	Personal Robotic Unit	Physical work performed through robotic systems

A pXu does not have to be one physical device. It can be digital, physical or hybrid. Its defining characteristic is legal and economic: it represents productive technological capacity associated with an individual and capable of performing authorized work with, for or on behalf of that person.

3. Why distinguish pAlu and pRu?

Automation does not occur in only one technological form. A pAlu may execute software development, analysis, administration, design, planning or other digital tasks. A pRu may perform manufacturing, logistics, maintenance, inspection or other physical tasks. Hybrid deployments may combine both.

The distinction makes the framework technology-neutral: the policy principle concerns ownership of productive automation, not one particular model, robot, vendor or computing platform.

4. Core principles

Individual ownership. The pXu is associated with the person as productive capital rather than becoming permanently absorbed into an employer's assets.

Portability. Ending an employment relationship should not automatically extinguish the person's productive technological capital.

Employer financing. Where automation replaces or substantially transforms a role, regulation could require financing of an interoperable worker-associated pXu.

Maintenance as training. Updates, cybersecurity, repair and replacement can be treated as the technological analogue of continuing professional training while the pXu is deployed.

Interoperability. Open interfaces and portability should limit vendor lock-in and prevent personal productive capital from becoming dependent on a single platform.

Verifiability. Productive activity, authorization, remuneration and critical decisions require auditable records and independent controls.

Human authority. The person remains the legal subject. The pXu is productive capital and delegated capability, not an autonomous bearer of legal personhood.

5. Active income rather than passive redistribution alone

pXu is not a universal basic income mechanism. It links part of a person's economic participation to productive technological capital that the person owns or controls. A solidarity layer remains necessary, but productive ownership becomes part of the distribution architecture.

The framework explores remuneration linked to the economic function performed by a pAlu or pRu and indexed over time, rather than allowing compensation to collapse toward the marginal cost of software execution or machine time. The precise formula would require sector-specific economic modelling.

Qualifying non-negligent technical failures should not automatically eliminate income. A regulated framework could treat such failures analogously to temporary incapacity while assigning repair and operational duties to the deploying organization.

6. Employer duties and liability

A deployer using a worker-associated pXu could be responsible for maintenance, updates, cybersecurity and timely repair. A practical framework could impose rapid-repair or supervised-fallback duties for productive continuity.

Liability to third parties must be allocated explicitly among the individual owner, employer or deployer, manufacturer, model provider and operator. The proposal favors avoiding automatic transfer of enterprise operational risk to the individual merely because the pXu is associated with that person.

7. Digital Solidarity Levy

Distributed productive ownership does not remove the need for social protection. People differ in health, circumstances, caregiving responsibilities and ability to participate in markets.

A Digital Solidarity Levy could allocate part of the value generated by highly automated production to people whose productive participation is limited or impossible. The purpose is to prevent distributed productive capital

from creating a new divide between highly demanded pXus and structurally disadvantaged citizens.

8. Decentralized technical infrastructure

Personal productive sovereignty is weak if every pXu depends on one cloud platform, one proprietary model or one vendor. pXu therefore points toward decentralized, private, interoperable and verifiable infrastructure, with local execution where practical.

Possible mechanisms include encrypted sandboxing between personal and employer environments, a national or federated work ledger for authorized productive activity and automatic payment, emergency peer-to-peer capacity rental, cryptographic provenance, and independent physical and logical stop mechanisms for safety-critical deployments.

9. Productive concentration and transition

The proposal considers a productive-concentration threshold for highly automated businesses. Above a defined level, firms could face obligations to incorporate worker-associated pXus rather than replacing labour entirely with productive capital owned only by the firm.

Any transition would need to be gradual. Thresholds, exemptions, financing rules and sector differences require empirical testing to avoid discouraging employment, investment or small-business formation.

10. Legal domains requiring validation

A real legislative framework would require jurisdiction-specific analysis of labour law, social security, taxation, data protection, product liability, competition law, intellectual property, insolvency, consumer law and AI regulation.

Key definitions include what exactly is owned, what remains licensed, how a pAlu or pRu remains portable after dismissal or insolvency, how remuneration is calculated, how employer data is separated from personal data, and how safety obligations are enforced.

11. Open research questions

How should productive value be measured when many AI agents and robots cooperate? Can portable pXus remain competitive without recreating platform dependence? How should intellectual property be separated from ownership of productive capacity? Could mandatory financing discourage hiring? Which solidarity mechanisms preserve inclusion without distorting incentives? How should hybrid pAlu/pRu systems be classified? Which parts of the framework belong in labour law, social law, corporate law or AI regulation?

These questions are the research agenda, not defects to hide. pXu is intended to be criticized, modelled, simulated and refined by economists, lawyers, engineers, workers, companies and policymakers.

COMPARING THE POLICY LOGIC

APPROACH	PRIMARY MECHANISM	CENTRAL POLICY VARIABLE
Universal basic income	Cash transfer	Income floor; productive ownership usually unchanged
Robot / automation tax	Tax + redistribution	Taxation of automation gains; productive ownership usually remains concentrated
pXu	Distributed productive capital + remuneration	Who owns productive AI and robotic capacity

THE THESIS

UBI distributes income. pXu explores distributing productive capacity.

Instead of redistributing only the income generated by automation, pXu asks whether society should also distribute ownership of productive automation itself.

As AI changes the relationship between labour and capital, the ownership architecture of automation may become as important as the intelligence architecture itself.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

pXu is an open proposal. Challenge the economics, test the technical architecture, examine the legal assumptions or help develop a better alternative in The Glass Box AI Project community.

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