AI-Powered Professional

Awareness and Integration Guide for Non-Technicals

A Comic Book for Executives

Written and Illustrated by Fiona Passantino

About the Author

Fiona Passantino is a passionate Employee Engagement, Communication and Culture specialist. She is an international speaker, author, podcaster, trainer and executive coach, helping leaders and teams successfully integrate AI into their workflows with intensive training, integration strategy, governance and ongoing support.

Fiona is growing a considerable international following as an edgy and entertaining speaker and author-illustrator of 4 books, including the UK Business Book Award-winning “Comic Books for Executives” Handbook for Employee Engagement.

Before her launch as an AI-Human thought leader, Fiona was a “non-technical professional” embed in corporate communications for 15 years, working for some of the largest international companies in Europe. She received an MBA in Management from the University of Amsterdam in leadership with a concentration in AI.

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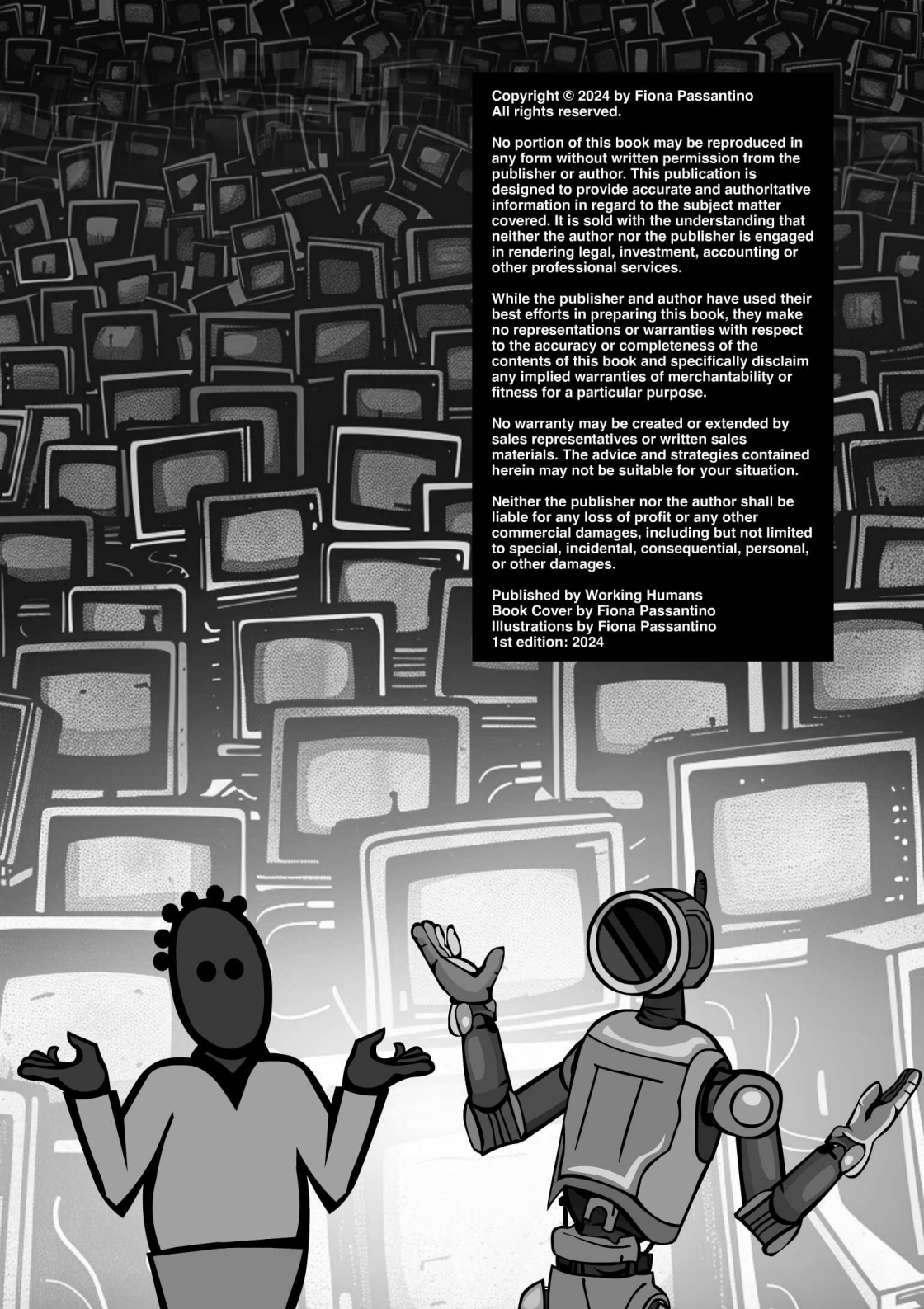


For Sabine and Tilo

Don’t have time to read?

Just listen.

Working Humans is a bi-monthly podcast focusing on the AI and Human connection at work. Available on Apple and Spotify.

Foreword and Disclaimer

By the time you read this book, we will be even further into our future; the one we dreamed about as kids. The flying cars and friendly assistant robots that had advanced interpersonal skills and seemed to possess infinite knowledge about everything.

It's a future we have been dreaming about for millennia, ever since we Humans started developing our own tools and shaping our environment. It's a dream we already know. It's the story of Talos the Protector robot of ancient Crete. Of Pandora, the Gods' double-edged gift to Humanity, of Astro Boy and Iron Giant. Ogun from the Yoruba; a primordial Orisha (god) of iron, technology and creative intelligence.[1]

And now we're here; we are seeing the revolution in our own lifetimes. Soon, and forever more, we will be sharing our world with a new form of non-Human intelligence whose powers of pattern recognition and predictive analysis, ability to process vast mountains of data in the blink of an eye will overshadow our own.

Advances in AI are occurring so rapidly that *any* book on this subject, whether on paper or otherwise, can only ever aspire to be a time capsule; a snapshot bearing witness to this fascinating moment in our history that is obsolete as the words hit paper. The moment *just before* everything changed.

AI visuals are strange and surprising, vivid and eerie. The pieces are amalgamations, mash-ups, crunching up the entire history of our Human art, ideas, photographs, illustrations, logos, design into a kind of bizarro superblender. The result is something new and intriguing.

Voice, video and music AI are equally transformative, with new models surprising and delighting us in their ability to recreate Humans speaking, at work, our mannerisms, accents, tics and imperfections. All the things that make us unique and surprising can apparently be tokenized and reduced to a complex mathematical formula and extrapolated out to the highest probability of accuracy. There is a creative force at work here that we cannot define or hope to understand.

AI is a mirror; its input is our own Human culture; our knowledge, writing, opinions, art, music, poetry; all our collective artefacts throughout history. Its output is a mathematical reflection back at us. AI *is* us. By now, it's clear that there's no turning back. The future of this technology could go in many directions and no one quite knows how the story will end. There are doomsday scenarios where Humans are turned into two-legged livestock, serving their AI masters with physical labor, kept distracted and addicted to their devices in exchange for new original thought to refresh the training data.

At the other end of the spectrum, the equally implausible paradise where AI has solved all our problems, from climate change, disease, food insecurity, overpopulation to pollution and the proper treatment of animals, and we enter an era of peace, justice and universal wellbeing where no one needs to work another day in their lives. The reality is likely to be somewhere between the two.

"State of Disruption". Illustrated by Fiona Passantino. Assisted by Midjourney and Adobe In-Painting.

For now - today and tomorrow - we hold our breath and watch entire creative sectors and startups, industries and skillsets become redundant and transform practically overnight. We try not to panic, but focus our energies into learning this strange, new language.

The Tech Bros in Silicon Valley – the citizens of OpenAI, Microsoft, Google and Apple - are clearly the ones in control at the moment. They innovate, build and ship bigger, faster and more capable models. With every release our landscape changes, and it's more than any government can regulate or any economy can absorb.

The same people who brought us crypto and the infinite scroll build on, faster and faster, pulling billions in capital out of the air on the promise of those dreams we all share. They determine how the world will bend and shift in the future, who will be made redundant, and who has a chance to remain relevant in this new world.

The technical professionals are not always good at explaining how their magic works. Perhaps by design, or perhaps because a brain that is able to calculate advanced algorithmic code is not the same one that that can clearly communicate how all of it works, what it is, and where it's going. They speak an alien language, unintelligible to the majority of us, but with enormous consequences for all of us.

Or worse, perhaps they, too, don't fully understand the nature of the being they are creating nor how it's capable of doing what it does. Just that it *does.*

This book is a glimpse at our strange new creation. It's a practical guide to understanding AI with background information, step-by-step instructions and the implications and our responsibilities ahead. The comics are an essential part of this journey; if we are laughing, we are not afraid. We are open to the information and able to learn and absorb. The visuals are strategic explainers geared for the non-technical mind.

As each type of intelligence, one biological and one silicon-based, embark on a strange dance of probability and the improbable, this book is meant to explain highly technical processes in a way that non-technicals can understand. So that all us of us can adapt, re-tool and return fire.

It is our Human destiny to create machines that will think, reason, plan and create, and shine brighter and burn longer than we do. It's happening, whether we understand it or not, whether we like or not, whether we are a part of it or not. The non-technical professional needs a seat at the table, and the agency to help design our collective futures. That only happens when we understand and speak this new language.

Here's to the future.

of us feel that work is becoming **more intense**.

Dugan (2023) People at Increased Risk of Burnout Due to More Demanding Workdays, TUC Says. The Guardian. Accessed July 12, 2024.

Introduction; How We're About to be 10-xed

Right now, some communications manager in one of many complex, international organizations might tell you that her team is expected to be a 100% Human-generated content engine. While some team members might be dipping into AI to do some of the non-essential work (such as summarizing and responding to complex emails), the assumption is that if a piece of communication sees daylight it is written by hand.

As leaders and managers learn more about the explosive potential of generative AI and as employees are being trained, one layer of the organization at a time, it will quickly become clear that not all tasks need to be Human-generated, and some professionals will be quick to learn the new ways of working while others may struggle to adapt.

The average Human has about 3-4 hours of good, creative work on a good, focused day. Then consider that only 20% of the work that Human does generates 80% of the total value of their role.[2] What does this mean? We spend lots of time spinning our wheels, doing unimportant, administrative tasks, communicating, sitting in meetings, checking work, giving briefings, engaging in back-and-forth tasks and checking our social feeds.

If we're disciplined enough to use those 3-4 hours of our productivity for the creative 'work-work' and the other 3-4 hours for 'all that other stuff', we can make the most of our day. But we are not always in control of our daily tasks, nor the number of meetings we are expected to attend. There are limits to what we can expect from a traditional 100% Human workflow.

The AI-Powered communications professional can produce 10 times the amount of content as their traditional counterparts; from text to video, voice to imagery. They will also be cheaper; they will do all their own translation, voiceover, illustration, video, music, photo editing, copywriting, coding, data analysis, A/B testing, promotion and editing without the help of expensive freelancers.

Their work will be richly visual, multimodal, translated into 20 regional languages and have multiple versions to address long-form thought leadership to short social posts. They will be able to transcribe meetings, video or audio to text, plan events, create original music and turn CEO cocktail napkin sketches into actionable wireframes for that new customer experience app.

They will not only produce but also absorb information. They will have read and summarized all the 'read before the meeting' documents before every meeting and come prepared with a list of thoughtful questions. They will be up to speed on industry developments, thought leadership trends and news.

The Human employee will mumble about 'being snowed under' or 'I'm still working my way through my inbox.' And wonder, *What's their secret? How do they stay on top of everything so effortlessly? How do they produce so much content?*

Their secret? They don't.

The pressure to adopt AI into the workflow will grow as one colleague after another switches over. The analog employee will see the superstars and give up reading in person and opt for the AI assisted bullet-point summary instead to save time, whether there is AI governance in place or not, simply because they will be unable to withstand the pressure.

Eventually there will be just one person left in the team who reads and writes documents the old-fashioned way. He will be the one left behind, out of the loop, unable to respond to the 350 emails that accumulate between the close of business on Tuesday and 8:00 Wednesday morning, read the 125 pages of text and attend six hours of meetings that are required to 'keep up' in the job. It will be gently suggested that he take early retirement, allowing him all the time in the world to read, or write, by hand, as much as he likes.

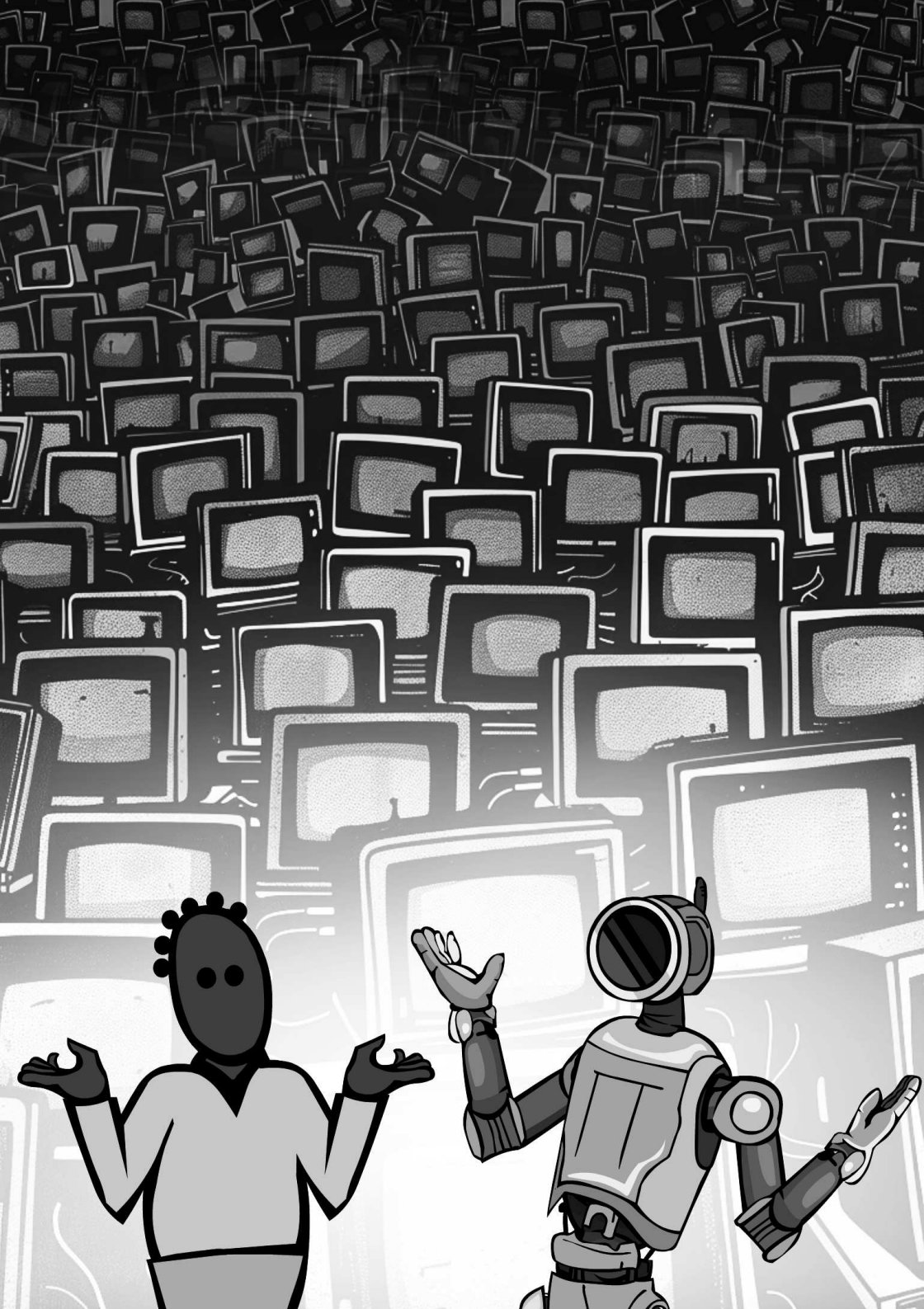
AI-powered employees will be expected to handle a heavier load of tasks and responsibilities because they can process information and perform tasks at a speed and scale that surpasses their traditional colleagues. This efficiency will lead to higher expectations for everyone, such that AI skills become a prerequisite for anyone joining the company going forward.

of us feel **exhausted** by our jobs.

Dugan (2023) People at Increased Risk of Burnout Due to More Demanding Workdays, TUC Says. The Guardian. Accessed July 12, 2024.

Not just volume but breadth; AI-powered employees will be expected to handle a wider range of tasks and responsibilities because they can produce far outside their narrow areas of discipline. Communicators can be coders, illustrators, storyboard writers, trainers, videographers, musicians and note-takers. A team of five will be collapsed into a team of two or three.

This book is written for non-technical professionals who see and understand these trends and wish to become AI-Powered on their own terms, in their own way, and at their own pace. To have some fun in the process and, eventually, take a seat at the table to better guide the future that is impacting all of us, together.



CHAPTER 1: Why We're Scared of AI

This Moment in History

We Humans are a distinctly lonely species. Since the beginning of time, we have looked up at the night sky and wondered where those advanced aliens might be. Or, where the time travelers might be hiding, visiting, from the future, who could assure us that everything, eventually, would be OK. We look for signs of ancient intelligence in our caves, on the surface of our moon, on our neighboring planets, in faraway galaxies. Are we the only ones who have mastered complex language, expressive art, technology, and shaped our planet according to our vision?

Are we alone?

And for all this time, the answer has been a relentless 'yes'. Even as we live alongside our brilliant fellow travelers – the dolphin, the chimpanzee, the octopus – we cannot communicate or learn from them. At our best, we admire them from a distance. At our worst, we ignore, dominate, possess and destroy other forms of intelligence. They are neither our companions nor our friends.

Our loneliness has caused us to retreat into our heads; to invent worlds of gods and goddesses, heavens and hells we cannot see and fantastical stories to answer the questions we cannot bear to leave unanswered. Throughout history, we have designed and attempted to build machines that think and talk like we do, to offer us guidance, hope and companionship. That could lift our heavy burdens, and assure us that everything, eventually, will be OK.

The year is 900 BCE. Ancient Egyptians built some of the first Humanoid automatons using limited, mechanical systems operated by hidden puppeteers. An x-ray of a wooden statue of Hathor revealed a hidden, pulley-like mechanism inside her leg, allowing her arm to move.[3] She was designed to amuse and delight the Pharaoh's royal court.

The year is 1206, the Kingdom of Persia. The great polymath Ismail al-Jazari, an all-round genius in art, mathematics and engineering, wrote *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices.*[4] The text contains designs for more than 50 mechanical and semi-automated devices, including the earliest renderings of Humanoid robots. These were intended to think, act and speak by themselves.

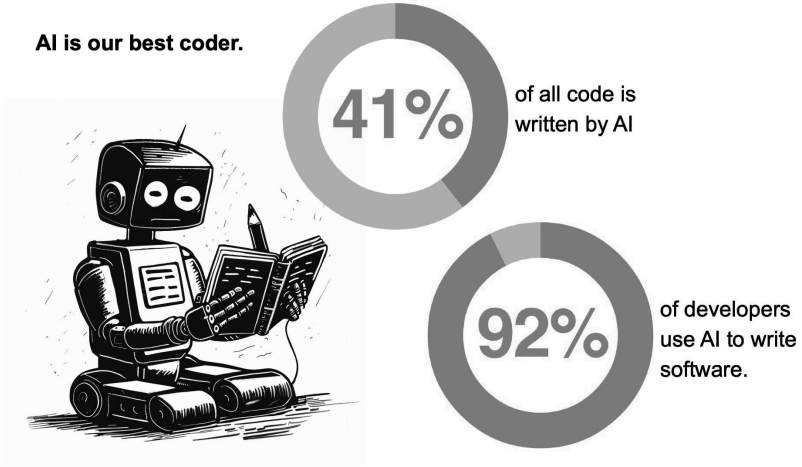
The prototypes were moving statues based on hydraulics, crankshafts, pumps, valves and pistons. The thinking and speaking was largely carried out by nearby Human operators. As far as we know, none of them were ever able to move alone.

2,000 BCE, Ancient Egyptian statue of Hathor; wood, x-ray. Ancient Egyptians built some of the first non-autonomous automatons using limited, Human-operated mechanics. SOURCE: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Statuette of a nude woman with moveable arms, one missing. Third Intermediate Period ca. 945–664 BC

(left) Kingdom of Persia, 1206 AD Ismail al-Jazari The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices; the earliest renderings of automatons. (right): Imperial Japan, 1796 AD Hosokawa Hanzo Yorinao Illustrated Compendium of Clever Machines. Detailed descriptions of a tea-serving automaton. SOURCE: Lebling (2019) Robots of Ages Past, AramcoWorld.

The year is 1796, and the place is the court of Imperial Japan. Another great genius, Hosokawa Hanzo Yorinao, presents his Illustrated Compendium of Clever Machines in which he describes a tea-serving automaton to silently take over the tasks of the Human servants in the closed palace.5 These were largely built to fool visitors to the court but could never move and think by themselves.

And still we dream, design and imagine, thousands of years later.



Doerrfeld (2024) "Does Using AI Assistants Lead to Lower Code Quality?" DevOps.com

We're Here, Now

Today, we stand at a transformative juncture, comparable to the invention of the printing press, the Industrial Revolution, or the birth of the internet. This moment in time – a tiny span of 5-10 years - marks the birth of the age of AI. We Humans are about to make an extraordinary leap forward in our evolution, changing the course of our lives forever. We will be in a position to solve so many of our crushing problems, fundamentally change how we see, act and operate in our world, unlocking the languages of animals and the natural world.

The birth of AI marks a new era of unprecedented possibilities and challenges; the potential to reshape industries, revolutionize the way we live and work and fundamentally alter the fabric of our societies in ways we cannot comprehend. For the better, for the worse; it largely depends on us.

As it stands right now, AI is still in its infancy. But in just a short time, it is already able to outperform Humans in a variety of tasks. Our best coder is an AI; nearly 92% of developers use generative tools to write code.[6] Nearly half of our code is produced by AI, saving 55% of a programmer's time; according to Microsoft, that number will soon be 80%.[7]

Large Language Models (LLMs) are already outperforming Humans in most certification exams. GPT-4 scored in the 90th percentile of the bar, making it legally able to practice law in most US states. It also scores higher than us in more Human exams, such as AP Art History, AP Psychology or GRE Verbal.[8] Particularly psychology gives us pause; these systems already have a deeper cognitive understanding of how Humans think, the keys to our behavior and motivation.

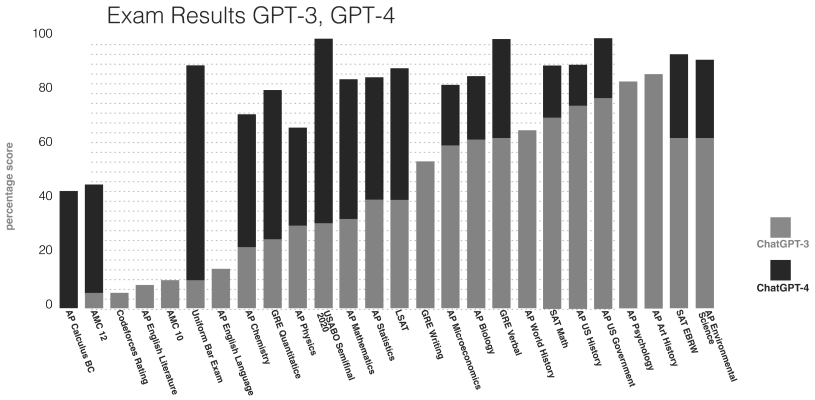
AI is also handily beating us at our own games. In 1997, IBM's Deep Blue defeated World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov. In 2011, IBM Watson outperformed all competing Humans at the gameshow Jeopardy! In 2016, the AI bot AlphaGo outsmarted Go World Champion Lee Sedol; an ancient Chinese game considered to be the most complex board game invented, with more potential board positions than the number of atoms in the universe.[9]

In 2019, Google DeepMind's AlphaStar outplayed 99.8% of Humans at the real-time strategy video game StarCraft II.[10] And in 2022, DeepMind beat the best Human at Stratego. This was a pivotal moment for AI, since Stratego is a game based on deception, strategy and intuition. Players work from imperfect information, shifting scenarios and a huge number of possible scenarios and win by bluffing, misleading and deceiving their opponents.[11]

For years, we Humans have invented machines to help us with physical work. We no longer plow fields with oxen, forge iron tools by hand or sew our clothes. We have powerful machines to build our cars and manufacture our shoes. Churning butter and weaving yarn used to be essential household skills; today, done only by artisans and hobbyists. The blacksmith, the weaver, the potter and the bricklayer were replaced, one by one, by machines, in the era of our parents and grandparents.

The rise of AI is so different because we now have a machine that has hacked our Human operating system: our language. Human language is what sets us apart from all the other animals. It defines our systems of government, education and economies. Language explains our culture, our histories. It's how we understand who we are and what we're supposed to do, how we think and see the world.

“If it Weren’t for Disruption…” Illustrated by Fiona Passantino.
Assisted by Midjourney and Adobe In-Painting.



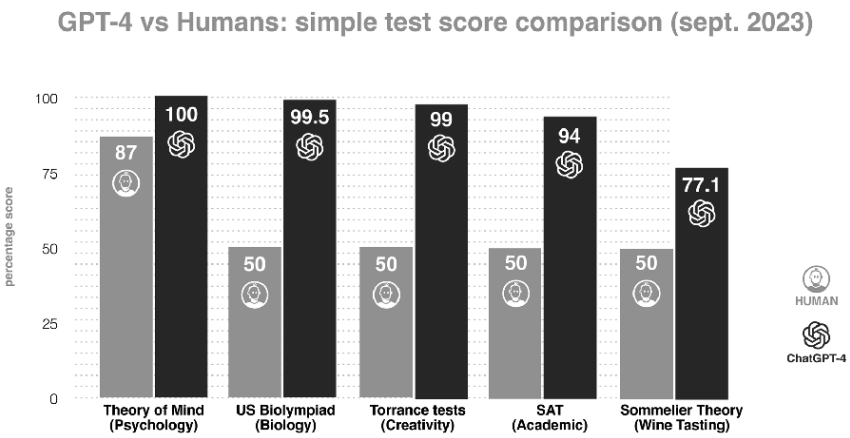
Wang (2023) GPT-4 scores in Top 10% for Legal Bar Exam. Next Big Future

Our Large Language Models (LLMs) have achieved mastery of language essentially by reducing it to a mathematical formula; tokens and data points and statistical analyses. Fed by 4003 lines of code, 45 terabytes of data and guided by 1.8 trillion parameters, the ability to analyze vast volumes of data and generate unique content seems almost magical. [12]

AI targets cognitive, creative tasks. What will happen to us when our machines have a deeper understanding of our Human operating system, our language, than we do? What will we do when artificial thinking outperforms us in the arena of ideas, words and persuasion? What will happen to *us,* and what value will we bring to the world?

This book is written for non-technical professional Humans. We are the creators and storytellers of our kind. We are the keepers and transmitters of art, music, design, literature, knowledge and thought. We research, write, teach and advise. We are trainers, marketeers and publicists, community managers, consultants, content creators and script writers. We write textbooks and trade magazines, illustrate children's books and compile annual reports. We describe vacation resorts, design laundry soap packaging, write the speeches of our leaders and the news stories for our anchors. We are translators and interpreters, animators, coders and videographers.

What we are witnessing now is more than the rise of a powerful new form of intelligence and the rapid restructuring of our collective global economies. We are having a conversation about what it means to be Human. We will be part of a profound reimagination of our place in the world, requiring the breadth of our collective wisdom, creativity, resourcefulness, responsibility and foresight. It will demand multidisciplinary, cross-border collaboration, and the building of an international ethical framework.



Thompson (2023) GPT-4 vs Humans: simple test score comparison (sept. 2023). Life Architect.

It will need an open, honest dialogue so we can forge a relationship with this rising intelligence, and a shared vision of our Human values and aspirations. All the things we haven't done well until now.

This is the great challenge of our generation, our task and our calling. We have to get it right. And we have to do it now. Because now, whether we like it or not, whether we are paying attention or not, whether we care or not, we finally have the answer to our question - *are we alone?*

The answer is *'no'.* Not anymore, and never again.

Why AI is So Scary

According to ancient Greek legend, Daedalus, the great scientist and servant of King Minos of Crete, was asked to build a machine to defend the island from enemy ships. Daedalus got to work and built Talos: a towering, bronze robot with superhuman strength, agility, and intelligence. Talos' purpose was to prevent invaders from approaching its shores. From its first day on the job, it was frighteningly effective, hurling boulders at all enemy ships attempting to attack the cities.

The citizens of Crete were delighted with their big, shiny protector and felt pride in this fantastic creation. News of the robot quickly spread to the mainland, and before long, no armies dared to attack.

Talos had run out of enemies to destroy. Without an actionable mandate, he set his sights on lesser threats: trading vessels, suppliers and voyagers. Any boat approaching the island could be a danger, regardless of their intentions. So fixated on achieving his primary directive and consumed with tunnel vision, Talos hurled boulders at all approaching vessels. He became unstoppable; neither Daedalus nor King Minos could control him. With no traders daring to approach the island, the people of Crete began to starve.

The hero, Jason of the Argonauts, was finally able to deactivate the robot by discovering a hidden weakness and free the people of Crete.

The 'Creator Economy' is valued at approximately $14 billion per year.[13] The marketplace for today's creative economy is our digital channel infrastructure; the platform that allows writers, podcasters, artists and musicians to find and connect with their audiences. With entry barriers practically obliterated, everyone has the ability to engage in original creative work and reach audiences directly. Until now, all the content on these platforms has been Human, and thus, finite.

However, now that we have generative tools that can spit out words, video, audio, music and images at much higher rates than a Human, the content platform system is one of the first to experience disruption. Human and AI generating in parallel, or AI standing alone, auto-generating, outputting in a flood of words and images fighting for the world's attention.

We have seen this all before, after all. Global digitization has given nearly every knowledge industry access to new, cheaper sources of labor that instantly knock out the incumbents. Uber unsettled taxi drivers and Airbnb disturbed the world of hotels. The effect is immediate and irreversible. National governments issue bans, try to contain the new technology, and generally this works for a little while. Inevitably, regulation becomes too difficult and the demand for these services simply becomes impossible to ignore.
We fear obsolescence, irrelevance.

At the same time, we feel enchanted, awestruck, of our new tools. We find ourselves vacillating, backwards and forwards, between pride in our new Human creation and fear of its consequences much like the Citizens of Crete.

"Constitutional AI" Illustrated by Fiona Passantino.
Assisted by Midjourney and Adobe In-Painting.

The difference this time is that AI is impacting every one of us; both the technical and non-technical, alike. No skilled professional is safe from change and re-invention. What will happen to our expertise, hard-earned wisdom, artistry and abilities when everyone is a digital artist, a writer, a podcaster, an editor, a videographer, and able to speak every language on Earth?

We fear loss; of jobs and livelihoods but also the loss of our status in the world. Computers were traditionally superior at calculation, data mining and coding. We Humans operated in the arena of empathy, creativity, humor. We artisans of the soft skills were safe. But we find that AI enhances physician-patient communication by helping draft more compassionate responses to patient messages than physicians would.[14]

Beyond our own jobs, we fear the AI Effect on our ethical landscape. Can AI truly understand the complexities of Human emotions and cultural nuances? Will it perpetuate biases, manipulate audiences, cause addiction and influence our behavior?

Like the citizens of Ancient Crete, we may or may not be able to control our creation in the years to come. We know that we are destined to share our world with a non-Human intelligence and its own form of creativity, and that it's not going away.

This moment is filled with profound questions and concerns. How do we ensure that AI benefits all of us? How do we mitigate the risks of AI-driven automation on employment and income inequality? How do we safeguard against the changes to our economy, to our privacy, our ownership of art, music and writing, guard against Deep Fakes, and other forms of misuse? Do we have a plan for the massive retraining, reskilling and reallocation of all the disrupted professionals we will soon have to reckon with?

"It's All Hype"

Believe it or not, there was a time in our recent history – for some, living memory – when there was no internet, no smart phones and no social media. We remember a time when we used payphones, read newspapers, wrote letters and read maps. Barely two generations ago, the blink of an eye.

When the internet launched, many of us laughed it off as a hype. Even the most forward-thinking futurists would never have imagined for it would take root and unrecognizably transform every aspect of our society in the way that it has.

Every great advance in our history has been met with an equal and opposite backwards kick of incredulity, ridicule and disbelief. This is a very typical Human response. But the path towards advancement is always the same. Resistance gives way to acceptance, uptake, widespread use, and transformation. Here are a few examples:

1. The Lightbulb

When Thomas Edison introduced the practical incandescent light bulb to the public in 1880, it generated a mixture of curiosity, excitement and skepticism.[15] While some were fascinated by the idea of artificial electric light, many doubted its practicality and safety. Many assumed it was a fun and expensive toy for wealthy people and that most of us would just go on reading by candlelight.

2. Mobile Phones

The Motorola DynaTAC 8000X came out in 1973.[16] The first-generation cell phones looked like massive, black, metal tissue boxes with long antennae we held against our heads. Bulky, expensive, with limited functionality and even less reach, no one could imagine their complete societal penetration just a few years later. Today, it would be hard to find anyone living within reach of a paved road that does not own at least one.

Our smartphones are powerful devices serving well beyond their primary function as phones. They are miniature personal computers, entertainment centers, information sources and our connection to each other.

3. The Internet

In the early days, the idea of a global interconnected network of computers seemed improbable, incomprehensible, and only interesting to a handful of passionate data scientists, or 'geeks'. In 1993, there were only 130 websites on the World Wide Web.[17] Today, there are 1.13 billion; and if you consider the number of AI-generated websites being added moment by moment, in every language, that number will soon feel quaint by comparison.[18]

The internet has by now so transformed our communication, commerce, information and infrastructure that by now it's utterly embedded into our daily lives. There is no practical way to unwind it, even if we all wanted to, without dismantling our entire global Human civilization.

4. E-commerce

In the early 2000's, the thought of buying products online seemed irrational. What about payment security? How could we trust the suppliers? Are all shops just fronts from hackers looking for your credit card numbers? But e-commerce surged in popularity, quietly revolutionizing the way people shop, leading to significant changes in retail and consumer behavior. By 2022, Alibaba alone served around 305 million international customers.[19] Amazon, the king of online retail, is worth over $1.105 trillion.[20] During the 2019 pandemic, it was one of the only reliable ways to get supplies when all the shops were closed.

In short, what may initially be viewed as a fleeting hype can evolve into a technology that permanently and unrecognizably reshapes industries and society. Mindful of our recent past, we have learned to remain open to the promise of emerging technologies, even if they

more closely resemble a sci-fi movie than our current reality. By now, we can safely add AI to the list of transformative technologies we will soon be unable to live without.

Our Disruption Roadmap

As with all new technological advances, jobs will be lost and transformed. Once the technology matures and scales, and then takes hold in a critical number of industries, new businesses, and then jobs, are created. The World Economic Forum estimates that AI will cause the initial loss of 83 million jobs and the subsequent creation of 69 million new ones by 2027.[21]

Most “every day” AI we use every day happens without our even knowing it. Algorithms are creeping into our systems via the back door, watching us, learning our behavior, and adapting to our likes and dislikes. How does Netflix know that we love period romcom series and sci-fi movies, and when we log in, we are offered the exact mix of unique content that floats our boat?

When you reach for your phone in the morning, how does it know it’s you and unlock at 4am, when your hair looks like a cat on your head and your face is so puffy that you can barely open your eyes?

Or when you wear your glasses, sunglasses, or even a morning facemask? Your device unlocks using biometrics. It scans your face and pins 30,000 invisible infrared dots on it and captures an image. It then uses AI algorithms to compare the scan with all its seen before – all your best and worst moments. According to Apple, the chance of fooling FaceID is one in one million[22].

AI is hard at work in our banking system. We use it to secure our transactions and detect fraud. If you purchase a one-way flight to Tahiti first class or acquire a large amount of Elmo cryptocurrency, your bank’s algorithms will compare this with what it has learned is your normal behavior and flag it as a risky transaction.

In healthcare, AI is powering glucose monitors paired with a mobile app that can predict an epilepsy seizure long before a Human doctor. The machine can sense irregularities with a patient’s behavior and vitals, layer this with their position and notify medical professionals before the seizure has taken place, potentially saving lives at scale.[23]

We have been using AI, quietly, passively, for years now in the areas of education, retail, communication, entertainment, logistics, manufacturing and government. But more and more, our use of AI will switch from passive to active, as we learn to integrate it into our daily lives, at home and at work.

In terms of AI at work, we can expect change in these areas:

"The Learning Curve" Illustrated by Fiona Passantino.
Assisted by Midjourney and Adobe In-Painting.

1. Routine Task Automation

Everyone has those parts of their job they can do with their eyes closed, or drunk. Those dull, repetitive and mundane tasks that every professional has to contend with, such as data entry, scheduling, or basic client inquiries, can largely be taken up by text-generated, off-the-shelf AI.

This allows us to focus on more strategic and complex aspects of our roles, such as spending time with those more difficult or creative messages, developing out-of-the-box communication strategies and doing our Human-to-Human relationship-building.

2. Data Analysis

AI can analyze vast amounts of data and provide valuable insights. We can leverage these analytics to gather feedback. Not the kind you get from bothering your customers with endless surveys no one likes to complete but based on their purchasing behavior and demographics.

This allows us to more deeply understand what our customers, users or listeners like, and why. Who is reading our thought leadership articles? Who is downloading our podcasts? With AI, we can track campaign performance, measure sentiment and make more informed decisions to drive our comms strategies.

3. Brainstorming

For those moments when you're staring at a blank screen, unable to think of the words you need to get started, AI-powered tools can seed your creative process by spitting back an initial draft based on a few keywords or bullet points. It's far easier to expand on existing text than come up with everything from scratch.

Even if the first ideas are terrible (and they often are, no matter who is generating them), they often lead to better ideas, and finally, to inspiration. AI can provide suggestions for headlines or titles for images and help optimize content for specific audiences in case you have the opposite problem – a finished article without a summary, hook or title.

4. Improved Audience Targeting and Personalization

The Great Algorithm in the Cloud can give you information about who is at the receiving end of your message by analyzing user data more deeply. Models can suggest slants, variations or perspectives that would better match the preferences of the people you are trying to reach. It can give you ideas on what motivates your demographic and psychographic. AI means your communication can be greatly personalized, segmenting to match your target down to the individual person if you so desire. This means granular targeted communication.

“So Much Compute” Illustrated by Fiona Passantino.
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5. Chatbot and Virtual Assistant Management

Creative professionals are often happiest in a cocoon of ideation and visionary thinking, while the back-and-forth communication with colleagues, contacts and clients are distracting, time-consuming and uninspiring. The more administrative parts can be sped up by putting text generative AI to work in your inbox – reading, summarizing and bullet-pointing the incoming messages and crafting their response. This is the future of Agentic AI, which is the great promise of a more intelligent future system.

6. Adaptation and Learning

As AI evolves, non-technical professionals will need to stay updated on what feels like daily advancements. We will need to understand its capabilities, learn the new use cases, test it out for ourselves and adapt our workflows accordingly. Prompt engineering, language processing, data analysis and AI ethics shift daily. We enter into a time sinkhole when we attempt to navigate through the changes and lean alone. Ironically, AI is the perfect teacher, trainer and practice pony for professional upskilling and learning about AI and other technological advances.

7. Translation

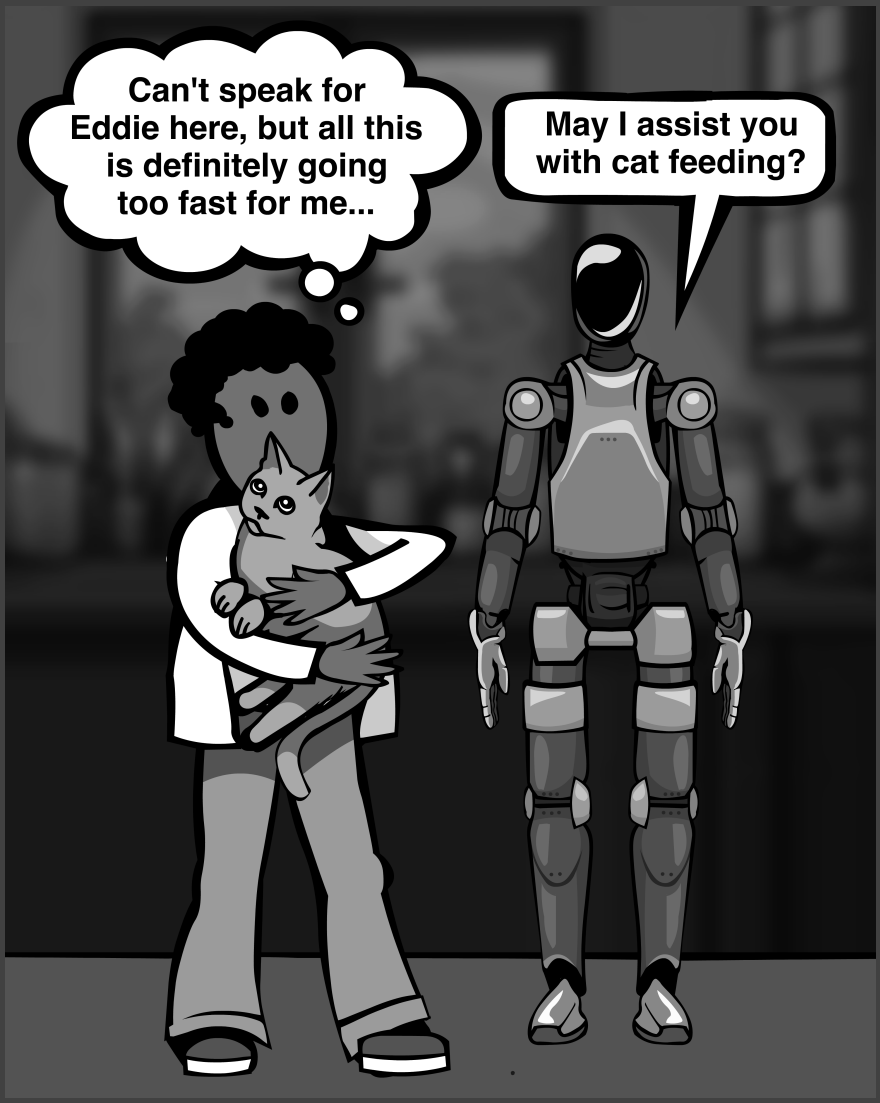
ChatGPT is a better translation tool – by far – than Google Translate, able to generate the fuller meaning, including idioms and expressions, by leveraging its natural language processing abilities. This is because it works off contextual understanding rather than word-for-word conversion; it's a 'transformer' (the 'T' in GPT).

While Human translators still have the edge over AI – still more accurate and specialized, able to pick up on nuance, humor and irony, AI has access to nearly every language imaginable with near-perfect syntax, grammar and understanding of context and figures of speech. When it doesn't matter that much, AI gets the job done.

8. Humanizing

Paradoxically, AI makes us better Humans. AI automates, generates, sums up and translates Human creativity. Critical thinking, emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making will continue to be an essential part of non-technical jobs. Communication professionals will play a vital role in natural language training, shaping AI strategies, priority-setting, removing biases, maintaining brand voice, building relationships, and navigating the ethical considerations as AI penetrates deeper into our jobs.

But we Humans all have biases, agendas and points of view. We use the same words over and over again without being aware of it. We see the world through the lens of our experience and culture. We bring our baggage with us to every job we hold. AI can see our slants and opinions and point them out, offer another point of view and another side to the story, even if we don't want to hear it.



"Too Fast for Me" Illustrated by Fiona Passantino.
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While AI may automate certain tasks that make up the execution of the creative process, the ideas and vision behind that process - the Human part – the critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and ethical guidance, will continue to be done by us for the near future.

Soft-skilled professionals will be essential for shaping AI strategies, training and refining natural language, maintaining brand voice, building relationships, and navigating ethical considerations once we have fully AI-driven communication. No matter how well-trained a proprietary or locally-run AI might be, the Human element is still a necessary part of the equation.

For now.

Grief and Loss

What does it mean to a Creative and realize that the gift you have spent your adult life mastering – your art, music, writing, design, communication - can now be done just as well by a bit of software? Sure, a Human call center employee can be replaced by an AI bot and a taxi driver can be made redundant by a driverless Waymo car. But a digital artist, a poet, a filmmaker? Impossible.

We lament the state of our new world. We rage against our foolish masters who see no value in our more expensive, slower Human talent and ability. We shake our fists against the market forces that determine that 'free, fast, bland and uncomplicated' is good enough to meet the needs of most of our clients. We grieve the loss of our creative businesses, as our clients, one by one, discover the power of AI and do the work themselves, setting up their own in-house creative agencies run by an intern.

We Creative Content Developers can console ourselves using the Kübler-Ross grief model. The AI bot that is feeding me background information as I write this book is gently reminding me, The Creative Griever, that not everyone will experience all stages, and the order and duration of each can vary greatly from person to person. Thanks, GPT.

Stage 1. Denial

While many non-technicals are already diving in and taking ChatGPT out for a spin for work and play, many of us are still here, hiding our heads in the sand, bleating to ourselves in the dark that it can never replace our particular, original brand of Human creativity. We live in disbelief and a refusal to accept the reality of our (aforementioned) loss. It's how we protect ourselves from overwhelming emotions and the daunting learning curve we see before us.

Deep down, we know we will need to climb this huge mountain of change that is our future. We will need to learn, adapt, experiment, fail, invest and repeat. It's so vast and imposing that we deny it's there. We look at the valley of the past and instead.

"Better Cat Videos" Illustrated by Fiona Passantino.
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Stage 2. Anger

As the reality of this loss sets in, we Creative Communicators may experience anger and frustration. We spend some time raging at the world, at OpenAI, at the market, at the whole of Silicon Valley, at the internet for feeding this beast the full collective knowledge of our civilization. We are mad at ourselves for freely posting so much of our art online or sending our music out into the world.

We start Instagram pages with fellow ragers and scream at, with, among each other, at the world. We can be angry about all the years we have spent learning our craft, becoming artists, writers, journalists and designers, and that our skills are no longer valued as before. And still AI powers on; and the gap between you and your future, AI-Powered self grows ever wider.

Stage 3. Bargaining

We understand the nature of a learning curve, and that jumping in sooner rather than later will save significant time and effort. Do we have to learn all of it now, become versed in this irritating, strange, coder-bro-babble of prompt engineering just to stay interesting to our clients, or have meaningful conversations at cocktail parties?

Can we hide for just a little bit longer with our convictions, our Human-centrism, perhaps even make it a 'thing', by weaving Luddism into our personal brand for just a little while longer? Can we become a digital artist that specializes in 100% Human-drawn artwork and convince buyers that it's worth the price? Can we still demand of authors that they must guarantee that their books are AI-free before we consider publishing them, just for a little while?

Stage 4. Depression

Once we realize what's happening around us, we may enter a state of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness and powerlessness. The world is going in the wrong direction. It's all going to hell. We are all entering a universe of AI therapists and LoverBots, imaginary AI friends and AI teachers.

Soon, we will have no idea if we are having a genuine Human experience when entering anything within the digital space. We mistrust everything we see, hear and experience coming from our devices, anything that has a digital layer and feel powerless, out of control.