Grant Thornton

Writing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Let's face it, writing is not always fun. We all understand the basics. We send emails, write reports, and perhaps even draft a few articles here and there. However, in practice, no matter how much writing we do, there are days when the right words just won't come.

That is where Artificial Intelligence (AI) steps in. Suddenly, tools like *ChatGPT*, *Grammarly*, and other writing assistants have quickly become the go-to solution for many.

When you're staring at a blank page with no idea how to begin, it is hard not to feel a little relief when all you must do is type a few prompts into a chat box, and watch an article practically write itself. It is fast, efficient, and to be honest, it feels like the perfect shortcut. The real question is, the more we delegate the act of writing to AI, what do we, as human writers, give up in return?

And the answer does not lie in what AI can do, but what it quietly takes away.

The New Era of Writing

Writing isn't simply about putting words on a page. As Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough put it, *"Writing is thinking, and to write well is to think clearly."* It is in the process of writing that challenges us to organize our thoughts and turn them into a clear and coherent expression.

Today, much of that process can be assisted by technology. When *OpenAI* launched *ChatGPT* in November 2022, over a million people started using it within the first week (Open AI, 2022). As of early 2025, the platform now sees over 180 million monthly users (Siddiqui, 2025), a testament to the growing influence of AI tools in everyday life.

That rapid adoption also signals a broader shift in how written communication is approached. A study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Noy & Zhang, 2023) found that using *ChatGPT* made professionals over 50% faster in completing their writing tasks. Meanwhile, 54% of content marketers now use AI to generate ideas, and 25% use it to write rough drafts (Orbit Media, 2024).

By making writing quicker, easier, and more accessible, AI is redefining how we create and share content. Whether in an office, a classroom, or just writing for yourself, if you've turned to a chatbot for help, you're definitely not alone.

Why AI Still Cannot (and Will Never) Replace Human Writers

While AI may help with the productivity in written communication, it also raises a deeper concern about what is being lost for the human writers.

Artificial Intelligence has rapidly become a powerful tool for writers. From auto-generating outlines to suggesting alternative phrasing, AI technologies have undeniably made the writing process more efficient. As Harvard cognitive scientist Steven Pinker has noted, AI holds remarkable potential to advance human knowledge through pattern recognition and data synthesis at a scale no human can match (Pinker, 2023). However, despite these advancements, there remains a crucial boundary that AI has yet to, and likely will never, cross.

At the heart of great writing is not just output, but process. Writing is a deeply cognitive and emotional act, rooted in critical thinking, self-reflection, or the unique lived experiences of the writer. Unlike AI, which relies on predictive modeling and statistical probabilities, human writers engage in active reflection throughout the writing process.

They ask questions like:

?
What am I truly trying to say?
Why does this message matter?
Who needs to hear it and how?
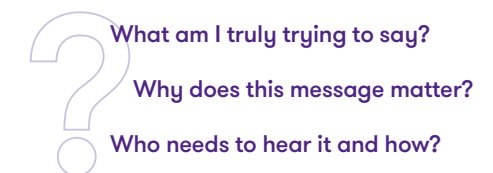
These questions demand more than information. They require perspective, context, and narrative intuition.

In a world increasingly shaped by automation, this reflective process is more important than ever. Pinker himself warns of the potential dangers in handing over too much communicative control to machines, which can inadvertently facilitate misinformation, whether through algorithmic bias, decontextualized outputs, or echo chambers that reinforce unchallenged perspectives (Pinker, 2023). AI can suggest what **could** be said, but it does not understand what **ought** to be said. It lacks the ability to recognize nuance, subtext, or the moral consequences of a message.

This brings us to a more subtle, but significant risk which is the more we delegate writing to AI, the more we risk losing the core cognitive and emotional skills that make writing meaningful. Clarity of thought, a distinct voice, ethical considerations, and rhetorical judgment are not just by-products of writing, they are developed through it.

Therefore, the concern is not whether AI will replace human writers, but whether we will allow ourselves to become creatively and cognitively dependent on it. AI can assist, certainly. But it must not override the central role of humans in the writing process.

39%

of the skills we use at work will change by 2030, mostly due to automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Source: *The World Economic Forum (2025)*

The Future: Partnership, not Replacement

As we step further into the AI era, the question is no longer whether to embrace or reject these technologies, but how to engage with them critically and consciously.

Rather than relying too much on AI, a more constructive approach is to see it as a partner. The World Economic Forum (2025) predicts that 39% of the skills we use at work will change by 2030, mostly due to automation and AI. This makes skills such as analytical and creative thinking more essential than ever (WEF, 2025). At the same time, technology literacy has emerged as a top core skill in 2025. The ability to understand, adapt to, and collaborate with technological tools is now just as important.

Ultimately, the future belongs not to the most traditional writers nor to the most sophisticated machines, but to those who skillfully combine human insight with technological capabilities and cultivate this partnership wisely.

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