

December 16, 2022

Welcome back to the Unfinished newsletter, where we explore the intersection of tech, ethics, and social impact.

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BA

I write a weekly newsletter about what matters at the intersection of tech, ethics, and society (sometimes about AI). Will AI take my job? Please respond in no more than four sentences.



It is unlikely that AI will take your job as a newsletter writer. While AI can be used to assist with certain tasks, such as generating content or suggesting edits, it is not currently capable of fully understanding and analyzing complex social and ethical issues in the way that a human writer can. In the future, AI may be able to assist with certain aspects of the writing process, but it is unlikely to completely replace the need for human writers who can bring unique insights and perspectives to their work.

Will AI replace you? (Yes, you)

For a long time, people believed that AI would threaten mostly working-class jobs, but with ChatGPT's powerful and easy-to-use interface, it's now the knowledge workers who are wondering if they're the first to go.

Will AI take over jobs once done by humans or will it simply change the way we work?

We're here to break it all down (and when we say "we," we mean actual humans 🧑🏻 🧑🏻 who wrote this newsletter from scratch.)

What is ChatGPT?

Open AI's [ChatGPT](#) (which stands for Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) has been all the talk since it was released at the end of November. It's an

artificial intelligence chatbot that produces startlingly well-written text (see above for our chat with ChatGPT).

Enter a prompt, get an essay. Ask for a cohesive narrative for a presentation slide-deck, get one in seconds. Request a poem about love in the metaverse written in Shakespearean English, boom. Instantaneous.

It's been all the rage as people have had entire conversations with artificial intelligence that seem to pass the Turing Test ([see our past newsletter on this topic](#)). But for all the enthusiasm and awe around ChatGPT, it can also produce misinformation, wrong answers, and text infused with bias. [OpenAI admits](#) that ChatGPT can generate “plausible-sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answers.” This is because it's more of a [word-organizer than it is an arbiter of right from wrong](#), or fact from fiction.

Is my job going away?

Within days of being released, [The Guardian said](#): “Professors, programmers and journalists could all be out of a job in just a few years.” But many experts believe that such fears of job loss due to automation are exaggerated.

After all, the threat of job loss due to automation has been around for decades. In 1963, [President Kennedy raised concern](#) about machines taking the jobs of humans: “Too many people coming into the labor market, too many machines are throwing people out.”

In more recent years, experts have predicted that the jobs most likely to be replaced with automation are those where pattern recognition exists, like a radiologist, because a computer algorithm might be more accurate than a human in identifying a tumor.

But as McCaffrey Blauner writes in [The Nation](#), “The key point to consider when thinking about what part of the job market AI implementation is likely to strike first is acceptable *margin of error*.”

Where there is a high risk associated with any error, leading to a low margin of error—like spotting a tumor or driving a semi-truck across the country—artificial intelligence just isn't accurate enough yet to make human jobs obsolete. AI needs to outperform the accuracy of humans for those jobs to be under threat.

But for people who have a larger margin for error in their jobs—like writers—ChatGPT and other AI might be more disruptive. Why hire someone to write a newsletter (🙄) when you can have ChatGPT spit out a semi-coherent one in a matter of seconds?

Replace Humans vs. Enhance Humans

Some suggest that instead of worrying about which jobs will become fully automated, it's more useful to explore what jobs can be done better [with](#)

artificial intelligence. What opportunities exist where the combination of artificial intelligence and human intelligence working together will outperform humans or computers working by themselves?

Lawyers could use AI to write faster legal briefs, which they could edit and correct after the computer has done the heavy lifting. Writers might escape writer's block by having AI get a first draft down on paper. Consultants will get a head start with Powerpoint decks that they can lightly edit before sending to a client. Financial analysts will review AI-generated financial models and coders will edit AI-generated code.

It's possible that the future is less about job loss due to automation and more about the ways human intelligence and artificial intelligence can collaborate to achieve more. Perhaps it's useful for humans to recognize and collaborate with other forms of intelligence. For too long, argues James Bridle in his book ***Ways of Being***, humans have viewed their intelligence as supreme, which has blinded us to all the ways intelligence is distributed across species and plants and machines.

While AI is full of both risks and potential, it might also invite us to explore both the limitations of our intelligence and the ways we can partner with other forms of intelligence to find new ways of being in this world.


Zooming out

Whether it's the rise of generative AI or all the questions swirling around social media platforms (as a few of our notable headlines explore below), one thing is clear: we're in a midst of a major reshuffling of how we relate to technology, how we occupy digital spaces, and how we build pluralistic democracies in the digital age. It's easy to be in awe as an AI chatbot spits out articulate sentences in a matter of minutes. It's much harder to interrogate the values, biases, ownership, and infrastructure under these technologies and platforms.

From working at the foundational level of building new protocols like **Project Liberty's Decentralized Social Networking Protocol** to supporting Unfinished Network Partners who ensure tech works for the communities who need it the most to giving the stage at Unfinished Live the activists and writers who are holding power to account, Unfinished is committed to imagining a more humane digital future on the other side of this great reshuffling.



Other notable headlines

 WIRED reports on a new lawsuit claiming that Meta has inflamed a two-year civil war in Ethiopia. The lawsuit filed by Amnesty International alleges that Meta has allowed hate speech to run rampant on its platform, causing widespread violence. Internal Facebook documents have revealed that the company lacks the capacity to properly conduct content moderation in the country, and Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen (who's now leading

[Beyond the Screen](#), an Unfinished Network Partner), has noted that Meta's leadership was well-informed of the platform's potential for exacerbating political and ethnic violence throughout the civil war.

📢 Ezra Klein writes in a [New York Times op-ed](#) that the metaphor of Twitter being a digital town square is wrong on three levels. First, there shouldn't be just one digital town square. There should be many. Second, town squares are public spaces governed and owned by the public. Third, the existence of a town square matters less than the condition of the townspeople in that square. The problem, Klein argues, is that social media platforms like Twitter have led to a deterioration of our capacity for attention and reflection. He says "These are technologies that lend themselves to cacophony, not community," and we would do well to find the spaces that don't amplify an overactive, fretful mind, but seek out the spaces that invite our better, more reflective selves.

❤️ Today's online dating is driven by algorithms, enormous data sets, and the data and statistical science behind matchmaking and romance. But it didn't use to be this way. [Kaitlyn Tiffany from The Atlantic profiles Helen Fisher](#), one of the first researchers and scientists who brought principles from human biology, psychology, and other personality traits to transform the online dating industry in the early 2000s. This article talks about the science (or pseudoscience) of matchmaking, and how the research and science behind online dating took it from something that was stigmatized "for losers" into the mainstream.

🗣️ While radicalization is rising around the world, it is particularly pronounced in the United States. According to [an article in WIRED](#), the uncertainty of the last few years has led to people seeking significance, explanation, and belonging, which is often found in online groups peddling conspiracy theories and explanations of our uncertain world. Some of these groups have extremist views, and the ways those groups use social media allow such radical views to be distributed far more quickly than in the past, leading to even greater uncertainty and radicalization. Research has shown that social media exacerbates political polarization, showing users more extreme content, while also enabling extremists to better organize and coordinate their efforts.

🧠 Unfinished Network Partner News

Unfinished Network Partner [All Tech is Human](#) has released [a 2022 year-in-review and a 2023 snapshot](#) of what's in store for the year ahead. All Tech Is Human is building a stronger Responsible Tech ecosystem that can co-create a tech future aligned with the public interest.

Unfinished Network Partner [Civics Unplugged](#) has just opened up applications for its Spring 2023 Fellowship. **Civics Unplugged** is a nonpartisan social enterprise whose mission is to empower future leaders with

the training, funding, and network to become civic innovators. **The Fellowship** is a three-month civic leadership program that prepares hundreds of civic-minded high school students each year with the knowledge and skills to become the kind of civic innovators their communities need. The Spring 2023 application deadline is January 31, 2023. Learn more and apply [here!](#)

Earlier this fall, a coalition of Iranian women, along with Vital Voices Global Partnership and Unfinished Network Partner [For Freedoms](#) launched [a campaign](#) calling for the immediate removal of the Islamic Republic of Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). On Wednesday of this week, [the UN heeded that call](#) and removed Iran from the U.N. Commission.

Thank you for reading.

Follow Unfinished ([@byUnfinished](#) on Twitter and [@thisisunfinished](#) on IG) for ongoing chitchat on the changing web.

Have a great, restful weekend.

The Unfinished team

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