

Will AI make writers obsolete

We currently live in a very strange world as technology advances feel like they have accelerated extremely quickly. Gone are the days of the pagers and into the world of phones that can do almost anything for you. In some cases this is great but how does these advancements truly affect the way we work? Today I'll be exploring the effects this technological growth has in the film industry, specifically how AI is affecting the way we view the Writers of the industry. AI has been a very hot topic for a lot of people over the past few years especially within the last two, It's an understatement to say its grown massively when thinking how revolutionary Siri was back when it was unveiled as a key feature of the Iphone 4s all the way back in 2011, and here we are today just 13 years later and its advanced so much that it can now do so much more at such a larger scale.

AI has become a very polarising topic in the film industry with the writers strikers that happened in 2023 and the continuing strikes in the animation industry this all started on 18 april 2023 when 97.85% of the writers guild of America voted to go on strike if they didn't come up with a satisfactory agreement with Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers by May 1st 2023. This was not met so the writers strike began as writers wanted higher royalties, mandatory staffing of TV writing rooms and safeguards to their jobs from the use of artificial intelligence and in a article by BBC, Michelle Amor, (Hollywood screenwriter) said " I don't want to be replaced with anything artificial."

Another Writer Melissa Rundle was shocked by how quickly Chat GPT became such a core issue saying in the same article "I was surprised at first, because Chat GPT appeared seemingly out of nowhere, but as soon as I became more familiar with its ever-increasing capabilities it became a concern," indicating directly to us that it was obvious that something like this could become a very large threat to the writers who had been on strike for nearly three months at the time of the article being posted by the BBC.

The Strikes were a long process that lasted almost 5 months that came to an end late september after an agreement was settled and a contract set to last for three years was, that limited the use of AI as well as giving the writers a much fairer share of money. While this was a amazing win for the WGA there's no telling how long till executives want to start bringing in AI more and more and over the last year we have seen many people and studios come out and say that they will be investing in AI such as LionsGate who have made a deal to allow an AI program to learn of their films.

Will AI make writers obsolete

The rise of AI has changed a large majority of industries including the film industry, in recent years especially AI has progressed massively from concept to a vital tool that we can use to do tasks that were believed to once be exclusive to only human creativity. One of the most impacted jobs in the rise of AI usage is script writing, A domain that has been traditionally reliant upon human ingenuity, emotional intelligence as well as culture with AI's increasing ability to write coherent plots, create dialogue and imitate storytelling styles. It has begun to lead to a lot of people to begin to question the future need of humans in the writers room, Could AI with its capacity to analyse a large amount of data and produce a vast amount of content in that far surpasses human capabilities, eventually lead to the human writers being replaced from behind the scenes of films and TV shows?

Some suggest AI's growing proficiency is dangerous for the writers in the industry as it grows into something that is extremely fast and useful at creating scripts, character arcs and storytelling styles. While AI can be used to generate all these it is unable to compete entirely thanks to the reliance on the human things that makes a story so compelling such as our human emotions that make the audience connect and feel things thanks to being able to relate to the characters. As well as the human experiences that we have that guide us through our lives that we use to inspire not only ourselves but also use it to write stories that may help and inspire others that may explore the world and create their own stories, so While AI may play an increasingly important role in assisting and enhancing the writing process, it is unlikely that it will even fully replace human writers in the creation of films that are impactful and culturally resonant.

AI'S ability to analyse and process data at an extraordinary scale offers remarkable potential in script writing. Machine learning models can now generate plot ideas, craft dialogue and also suggest ideas for the pacing, structure as well as character development. In many ways AI can perform tasks a lot of people can do that are considered time consuming and repetitive for the writing process such as generating the structural elements of scripts or give different ideas for a given scene.

AI can also analyse a large amount of audience data and try to predict what type of stories, characters and even plot lines that may resonate with audiences, making it a tool that interests production companies looking to cater to a specific audience demographic or marketing trends. AI has the ability to really help improve upon the script by giving us a lot of different ways a scene could be written or how a plot twist could work within the story in a much quicker time compared to human writers this level of efficiency makes a very good argument as to how AI could take over the writers room especially as it's a very competitive industry. However AI also has reliance on already existing work which means that it is unable to be original and push the boundaries of script writing, whereas human writers are able to give new perspectives and explore uncharted territories, storytelling often involves taking risks something AI at the moment is unable to truly accomplish.

Will AI make writers obsolete

The Last Screenwriter is a first of its kind as it is a film that was written entirely by AI and will one day be a key piece of history, The film is a very interesting watch for the most part and is very good at raising questions for the viewer however it does have its flaws the big one is that it can be very boring this is for a few factors one of my main ones was how the dialogue for the humans was written by AI as it felt very stiff and almost inhuman and because of this it was very obvious that it was written by AI. One user who commented on the video put it best "Example of dancing bear syndrome" As the film itself is not greatly written however its just really impressive that AI was able to pull it off and write a feature length film.

Some things that I did like about the film is that the actors did a phenomenal job with the script that they were given and made a lot of it work such as how Jack really struggled with his feelings on AI and it felt relatable because I feel the same way and the message at the end of the film has changed some of my own personal views. Jack had a really good scene with his son as he struggles with writer's block so badly that he couldn't come up with a bedtime story to tell his son and it shows how if AI were to truly take over it would make it harder for the human writers as they would struggle to be as creative as they wouldn't be able to flex their creative muscles as much. The framing of the house where the majority of the film takes place is really interesting and is a testimony to the incredible directing and cinematography because due to Jack's office being on the ground floor and there being a second floor that you can look over and see Jack, helps present the idea of him hitting rock bottom with people especially his wife Sarah standing up there when talking to him and as the scenes progress she gets higher and higher up the stairs indicating the distance growing in their relationship.

There's two other scenes that I really want to discuss as they are great with their messages such as when we see Jack visiting his mentor Richards in a hospital to then be confirmed dead the scene after, which can be seen as symbolism that the traditional way is dead and that AI is the future. One of the last scenes in the film is where Jack destroys his AI assistant and it is implying that humans have a choice and can dictate the future of the industry over the next few years.

The film ends with a little monologue by Jack talking about how despite the fact that AI and tech is growing nothing will truly take away from what we as human writers have and that is what will always make us special. This little monologue is what made me start to question my own ideas on AI as well as some of the comments that I had read that were left underneath the video.

I feel like the comment section is a very important thing to look at when discussing the last screenwriter because while I have my own opinion on the film and AI. The comment section allows us to take a look at what other people think about AI in the writing position in the filmmaking process. One of the main criticisms that I have

Will AI make writers obsolete

seen while scrolling through the comments is about the stiff dialogue from comments such as “None of these characters have any level of depth or personality and it makes the whole movie feel grossly empty” by user natertot736, which just shows how AI isn’t ready to be used in the writers room. While I was scrolling through the comments the general consensus on the film is on the negative side as you would expect, however there was still a lot more support for it as an experiment to see what AI could do on its own. “I won’t deny that it made me feel something. As an artist (a real one) I feel like this “social experiment” gives me and my peers a lot of questions to ask and a lot of points to analyze, referencing this movie as an example. I’d love to have a dedicated hour-long session to pick it apart in a setting where nuance is expected amidst the conversation.” by user Kevin Mclean provides an excellent point about the film saying how it should give people some questions that should be answered because if this is our future we should be prepared for a lot of jobs to be lost and most likely a rise in the indie scene because it will feel more human and relatable for people and that is part of what makes people become invested in stories. While AI will only learn and grow and if someone was to do this “social experiment” in another 5 years I’m sure it will turn out vastly better and continue to question if writers are even going to be needed.

This film should make us think more about our own writing as well because people like Darrian say “This experiment showed me how much acting, editing, music, cinematography, etc. are capable of elevating weak writing!”. Weak writing is what is making people think that AI writing may be a more viable option as it will be a lot cheaper than actual writers are, So one way we could counteract this is by working on our own writing and practising our own craft so that we can refine our own styles of writing that makes audiences fall in love with stories, This way the writing can be just as important for people rather than a film relying on acting, post production and music to carry films because if the writing stays weak it will only entice the higher ups to want to use AI as it saves them money to use.

“It’s a good movie, and the AI definitely did well and has great potential. However the OpenAI ethical guidelines ruined all this as always, the human good AI bad thing is so annoying. Also there was no intimate scenes or real emotion into it coz of the guidelines” This is a comment that really sticks out as it makes you wonder what the future really has in store for us as there are people who truly do believe AI is a good thing and believe that the guidelines are not needed it really speaks volumes as to how people view certain jobs like writers and through my research I’ve noticed people like this who don’t care for the writers and only the spectacles in the actors or the music.

Overall the comment section is a brilliant insight into the ideas of people on AI and it truly asks you to challenge your own views on not only the film but on AI itself and how AI can actually be used in the writers room. The different perspectives provided in the comment section provides support for those who worry that AI may take over the industry and make things challenging for human writers as it is clear that while there most certainly is intriguing, people can see the ways it can also provide support for those same writers.

Will AI make writers obsolete

AI is a very powerful tool to everyone and it does make it significantly easier so I just want to have a little look over some of the very things that AI can do that makes script writing a lot easier. One way that AI is helpful for script writers is through the way that it can generate ideas this can be very useful as it can provide starting points for writers helping with dealing with writer's block as it helps ease the writers into it and can even help through the actual writing of the script providing different ideas for things such as character arcs. A second way that AI can really help in the writers room is its speed and efficiency. This is a huge plus because it can help speed up the writing process from months to mere days or even hours working alongside human writers to make sure that the emotions as well as human ingenuity.

AI can also be very useful for checking spelling and grammar which is a huge help to writers including myself as I can get carried away and type for a while and make a lot of spelling and grammar mistakes as I'm going so fast to notice but with AI it will be able to ensure that the script or whatever it is that you are writing is up to professional standards. AI can also help with script formatting meaning that AI can automatically format a script so it's up to industry standards, which for human writers can be very time consuming, despite being a very important part of script writing. Lastly AI can be very useful for research which can help speed up the process of writing and can prevent misinformation from being used for example if you are writing a historical piece AI can scour through the internet and find information for the time period that you are writing about which saves a lot of time as it can be done within seconds compared to if it were to be done by a human which could take days or weeks depending on the information that is required.

So AI is truly a resourceful tool that can do things from helping inspire us to get started to how a character could grow through a film. To even just speed up the required research for a production saving countless amounts of time that can be used writing rather than researching.

We've looked at some of the positives of AI but it's still very important to recognise the negatives because if we don't accept them that is when we could be in for a lot of trouble. One example being its speed while this is also a positive it can just as easily be used against human writers because AI can be seen as cost effective and if the higher ups start thinking that AI is the best option for them to maximise profits while saving the most money they will use it more and more until AI is the only thing left in the writing room as it can write scripts in mere minutes. This leads to another negative as it lacks emotional depth and nuance which is good for human writers as it means that humans still have an edge over AI for making films more relatable but because AI struggles with this aspect it means that it can't be extremely useful for dialogue due to the fact that it may struggle with making human emotions noticeable and truly make the audience feel for the characters.

A third negative for the usage of AI in the writers room is the loss of the human perspective a key element of script writing is the perspective that we have when we are writing as we are guided by our experiences such as travel and childhoods for

Will AI make writers obsolete

example where as AI doesn't get to experience these types of things and that means that it doesn't have some perspectives as it is just a machine and while it can take in information from the internet it doesn't get to endure the raw experiences like we do. This can also be connected to my fourth negative for the usage of AI in the fact that AI is limited in its creativity and innovation thanks to its reliance upon patterns and statistics. Which also gives the human writers an advantage because human writers are not tied down by statistics and patterns so they can challenge traditional techniques and storytelling styles in a way that is unique to the person thanks to their own perspective on life.

Lastly the biggest problem with AI in the writers room is the displacement of jobs I have slightly touched on it earlier but this is the big one that made me want to write this essay and led me to question my own views on AI and its a huge possibility for the future that this could happen if people lose trust in human writers as higher ups want to be more cost effective while it will most likely be a slow take over as jobs will slowly drop it could eventually completely take over, but thanks to the writers guild and new contracts coming in every three years they can ensure safety of jobs for the time being. Overall There are a lot of negatives that hurt AI but it will only continue to grow which could lead to a very pivotal moment for the industry which will happen a lot sooner than we think.

Despite all the research I have done my opinion hasn't really changed too much on AI whilst I can see the benefits for AI to be used as a tool, I still fear that it could spell the end for writers as a profession however there is hope and that is through the indie scene. The indie scene has grown massively in the last few years and that is in part to the incredible work people have been doing and telling stories that Hollywood has been too scared to try in taking risks. Thanks to streaming sites like Netflix and amazon prime Indie films have been on the rise as it has a direct to consumer approach which thanks to so many people using them puts a lot of indie films in front of audiences and they even help to fund their own films which are in a degree indie themselves. Another reason as to why Indie is on the rise is thanks to social media being able to promote their work on sites such as X and instagram means that they are more likely to go viral allowing more people to come across the film and decide whether they would like to watch, And if the studio who produces multiple indie productions they may get a reputation and if the works are considered quite good they will continue to bring people back for other productions. A great example at the moment would be the Australian production company Glitch which has made multiple indie animated shows all to different levels of success ranging from a dark comedy psychological thriller in The Amazing Digital Circus to sci fi action in Meta Runner.

AI is a very prominent threat to the animation industry as well for the same reasons as it is for writers as it learns from other works throughout the different generations of animations and the different styles to improve the way the images look as it stands at the moment AI can generate animations and images to a fairly decent degree however there is always something that looks just off such as giving the characters

Will AI make writers obsolete

the wrong anatomy such as the characters having 6 fingers rather than 5. This has led to a very intense strike for the animation guild similar to the writers strike of 2023, This is because one of the main concerns is on how AI can replace jobs and take people out of an already competitive industry as less and less jobs would be required. If you follow along on the guilds social media they have been posting videos and posts about the strikes since they started asking other animators to stand with them. Recently in the animation strikes the guild was offered a contract that was very compelling to a lot of people as it ticked a lot of their boxes like extra pay however it didn't give job security against AI so it was rejected and the strikes have continued on. This is important to look at in terms of indie productions because the strikes have negatively impacted the rate of which products are worked on delaying a lot of films and shows just as how the writers strike did a couple of years ago. But it doesn't mean people have completely stopped as they have began to look elsewhere for them to do the craft they love so much they have gone over to the indie scene as most productions are independently funded allowing them to work on what they want to also allowing them to stretch their creative muscles and branch out and work on things they wouldn't normally.

However despite all this during the writers strike SAG AFTRA on Monday the 14th of August they decided that they would no longer "grant interim agreements to independent projects that were written under a Writers Guild of America contract." According to Variety this is because "SAG-AFTRA argued that the agreements supported the strike because they involved independent producers who agreed to all of the union's demands. But they have caused considerable backlash within the union, as some members felt they undermined the strike's overall impact." This meant that the writers wouldn't be able to work on projects that were agreed to with that current "Writers Guild of America contract" as it was seen as hypocritical in a way and that it negatively affected the way the strike would've been seen as it just made the writers look greedy and wanted to single out the big companies just for more money when the strike was more than just about that, but by doing the independent projects it would come across negatively to the people who would actually make the most difference in the organisations who help create a new contract that benefit everyone. Meaning that the guild can constantly see how the industry as a whole is changing and can make sure that the writers with the guild can get the best opportunities that they can, which benefits the writers because if they were trapped in a contract for longer between 5 to 10 years it could drastically change the landscape of the industry and with how quickly technology is growing it could be too late if the contracts were to be that long.

Will AI make writers obsolete

In conclusion the question that I have set out to answer is no not yet, AI as a tool is currently not at a viable spot to completely take over the writers room as there are a lot of things that can be done by human writers that AI simply just can't do very well yet and that is greatly shown through the film *The Last Screenwriter* and that is ok because as the film shows us AI can still be a very useful tool for us all by being able to do the things that we don't want to that take away from allowing our creative juices to flow such as formatting the script automatically and searching across the internet to find information that can be useful for people working on projects that are set in different time periods to make it as accurate as it can be making a film or show as captivating and immersive as it can be. The film was written by AI which is a first of its kind and truly will go down as an incredible piece of history as we enter this new generation of script writing.

AI as a tool will always be controversial with discussions of its ethical usage as the information that AI learns from is essentially stolen work and depending upon the person who creates the AI they can subject the AI to works that only fit one narrative which will make the AI biased as it won't be given films or shows that challenge those views which can be very dangerous especially if it becomes used to spread misinformation politically or in general.

As I have identified AI still has some very glaring issues in some departments that can slow down script writing with the dialogue struggles and not being able to be as original as human writers because of its over reliance on data as that confines it into only certain ways things could be written compared to how humans can attempt to challenge the traditional ways. Once again we can see this in *The Last Screenwriter* when Jack is still a little hesitant to use it and he's working on a script, the AI gives him an idea on how to change a character's development like it's supposed to however it goes against the way that Jack wants to write that character.

The indie scene is growing scene that can only grow with the way streaming services are putting indie films in front of people daily and that success can even lead to those indie projects getting a sequel with more money behind it meaning that there can be more marketing and in a world where people are always on social media more people are likely to see the project and can get even more people to see it through word of mouth. This all just means that people who are trying to make a name for themselves have a way to do it without relying on the big companies who may have different views which may require using AI even though they may not want to.

Lastly I wanted to touch on how this has led to how my opinions have changed. After doing research and watching *The Last Screenwriter* I was able to break from my tunnel vision and could start to see AI for what it truly is a useful tool that can further our own work. So even though one day we may have to make a choice about AI taking over *The Last screenwriter* and my research has taught me that in the end we as a society have the final say in it and the fact that while AI can grow and improve is scary and may one day become an issue we as humans also can grow so we should view it as a way to get a head start on making choices that can positively impact our lives and therefore our own work.