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From coder to creator: how AI inspires us to rethink our craft

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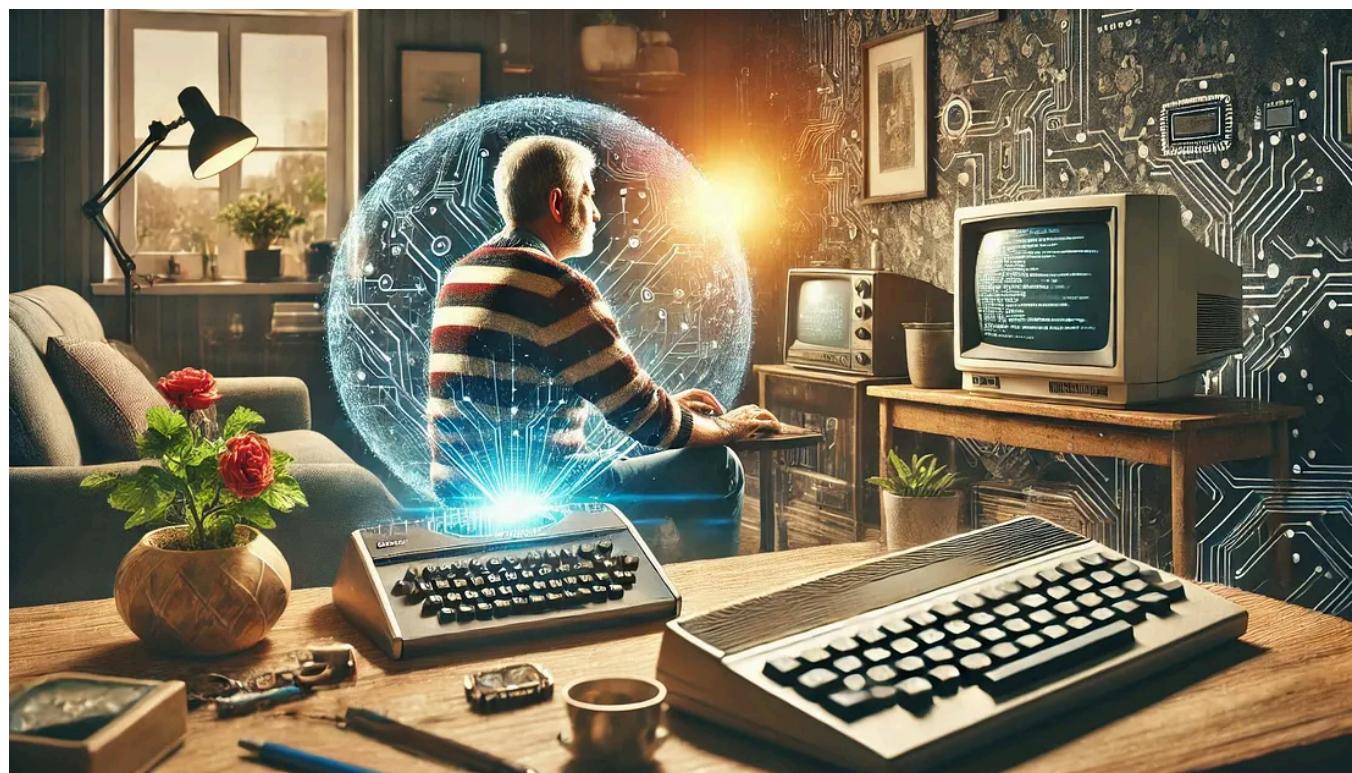


Bart Van der Auweraert

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I remember the first time I touched a keyboard connected to my Sinclair ZX80 — my very first computer. It was a marvel of its time, without a hard disk, relying solely on a connection to the TV in my parents living room. If I accidentally unplugged it, all my carefully typed code would vanish, forcing me to start over. Of course, my parents liked to watch TV, which often meant my code was lost anyway — but I

always found it funny to start over the next day. Looking back, I see that those early days taught me resilience, creativity, and the joy of discovery — lessons that have carried me through decades of rapid technological change.

Now, nearly forty years later, I stand at another transformative crossroads — one as monumental as those first steps into coding. The rise of artificial intelligence is reshaping not only how we build software but how we think about the very craft of creation itself. At first, I feared being left behind. But today, I see AI not as a replacement for human ingenuity, but as a co-pilot, enhancing our abilities and helping us rediscover the joy of problem-solving.

Facing the Tidal Wave of Rapid Change

At first, I doubted whether I could keep pace with the relentless change. Frameworks evolved faster than I could spin up a new sandbox environment. New languages, deployment models, and architectures appeared with stunning regularity. Young developers, fresh out of college and bootcamps, seemed more in tune with the cutting-edge ecosystem than I could ever be. I wondered if I might finally have to hang up my coding gloves.

AI as a Co-Pilot: From Doubts to Discovery

Yet, here I am, actually empowered by AI. Instead of being replaced, I find myself augmented. Tools that can generate code snippets, explain complex architectures, and predict performance bottlenecks allow me to focus more on the “why” rather than the “how” of software development. My decades of experience — once weighed down by syntaxes and best practices — now combine with AI’s vast code knowledge to form a synergistic relationship. Freed from the struggle to keep up, I now follow my intuition, with AI seamlessly filling in the gaps. It’s an unexpectedly joyful experience, like having a co-pilot who helps steer the ship without ever taking my hands off the wheel.

Navigating Change: Developers at the Helm

It’s true we’re in a transitional phase. For now, we developers remain the pilots, guiding and interpreting while AI assists. This isn’t just a shift in software — everyone, from teachers seeking lesson ideas to analysts interpreting unfamiliar code, can benefit by embracing AI. Artists, actors, and designers are discovering their place within this new paradigm. The industrial revolution once reshaped the world; now the AI revolution is upon us. We still have our hands on the knobs and levers, discovering how best to use these evolving tools.

A Glimpse into the Future: Where Does the Craft of Coding Go?

But as AI grows more capable, what becomes of the art and craft of coding? With AI able to instantly scaffold applications, handle automated testing, and even produce full software solutions, will “software developer” become a historical footnote? Instead of methodically crafting code line-by-line, tomorrow’s professionals might guide AI-generated solutions at a higher level — like software architects or conductors of a grand symphony, orchestrating creative harmonies rather than playing each note themselves.

Rediscovering Joy: Coding as an Art Form

As AI streamlines routine coding tasks and automates complex workflows, the role of professional developers may evolve. Yet, this evolution does not negate the possibility of coding as an art form. Freed from the constraints of project deadlines, many developers may rediscover coding as a personal, creative pursuit, balancing both commercial and artistic roles. Even as AI takes over utilitarian aspects of coding, the essence of problem-solving and creative exploration will endure. Developers will continue to find joy in shaping algorithms, whether for work or personal expression.

Evolving Roles, Enduring Passions

So where do I stand now? I choose to embrace AI. I’ll continue harnessing these tools to boost efficiency and explore new territories. And if, one day, the traditional programmer’s role disappears, I’ll still write code. I’ll do it for the love of creation, for the sheer intellectual pleasure, for the artistry within logic. As the world redefines our roles and skill sets, our passions — curiosity, creativity, and the drive to create something from nothing — remain unwavering.

Concluding Thoughts: Adapting with Grace and Imagination

Ultimately, the story isn’t about machines replacing humans; it’s about humans evolving alongside technology. The times may change and the job descriptions may shift, but the spirit that ignited our passion for coding in the first place still burns brightly. By embracing the AI revolution with open minds and imaginative hearts, we ensure that, no matter what happens, our love for building, learning, and innovating will endure.

I extend heartfelt thanks to my sister, Ann Van der Auweraert, for her thoughtful feedback; to my colleague and friend, Erwin, for his insightful suggestions; and to Maarten, my partner’s son, for his valuable contributions.

As we navigate this era of unprecedented growth, I invite developers to embrace AI with curiosity and creativity, ensuring our passion for building and innovating endures.

This article was crafted with the assistance of AI, demonstrating the very collaboration between human creativity and machine intelligence that it explores.



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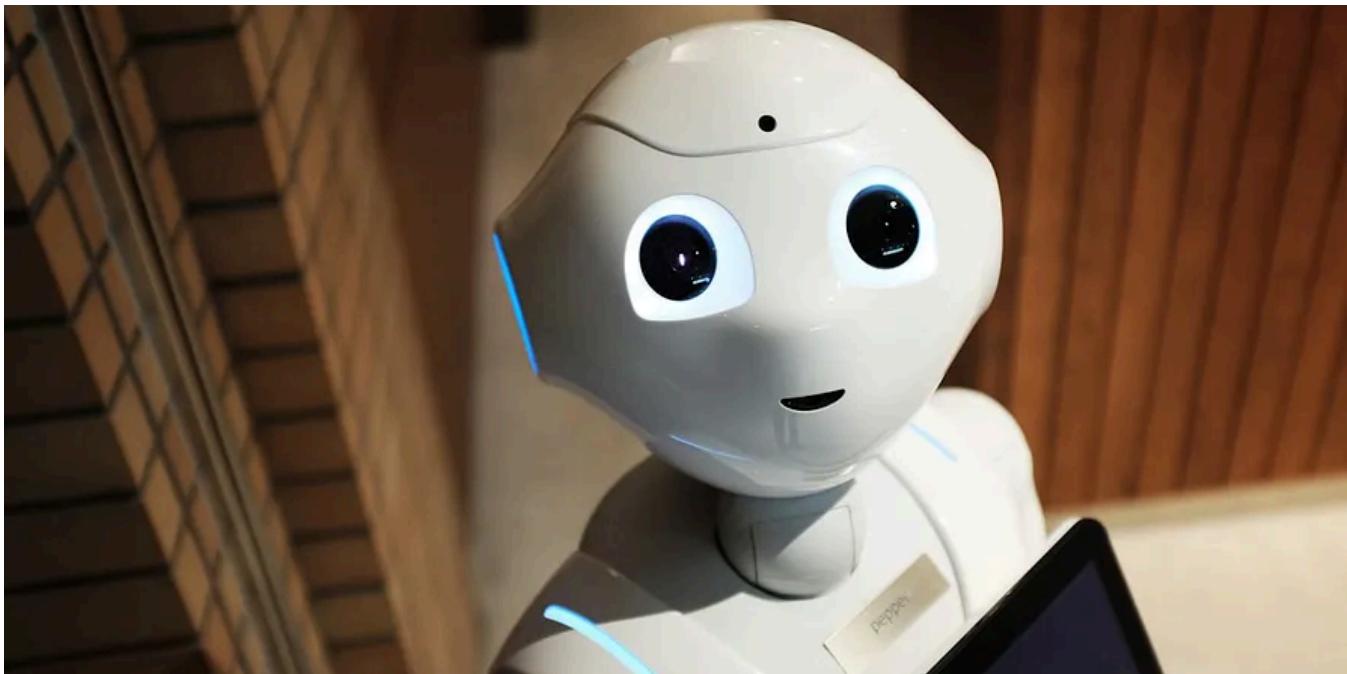


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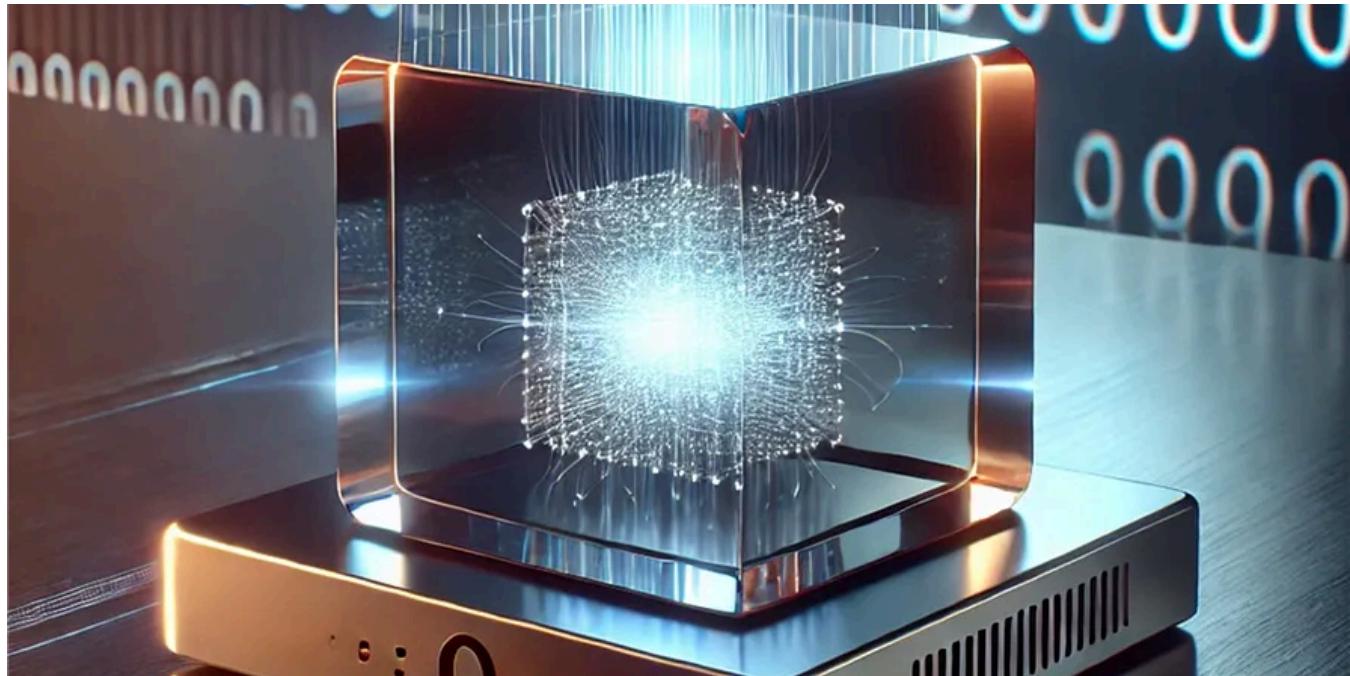
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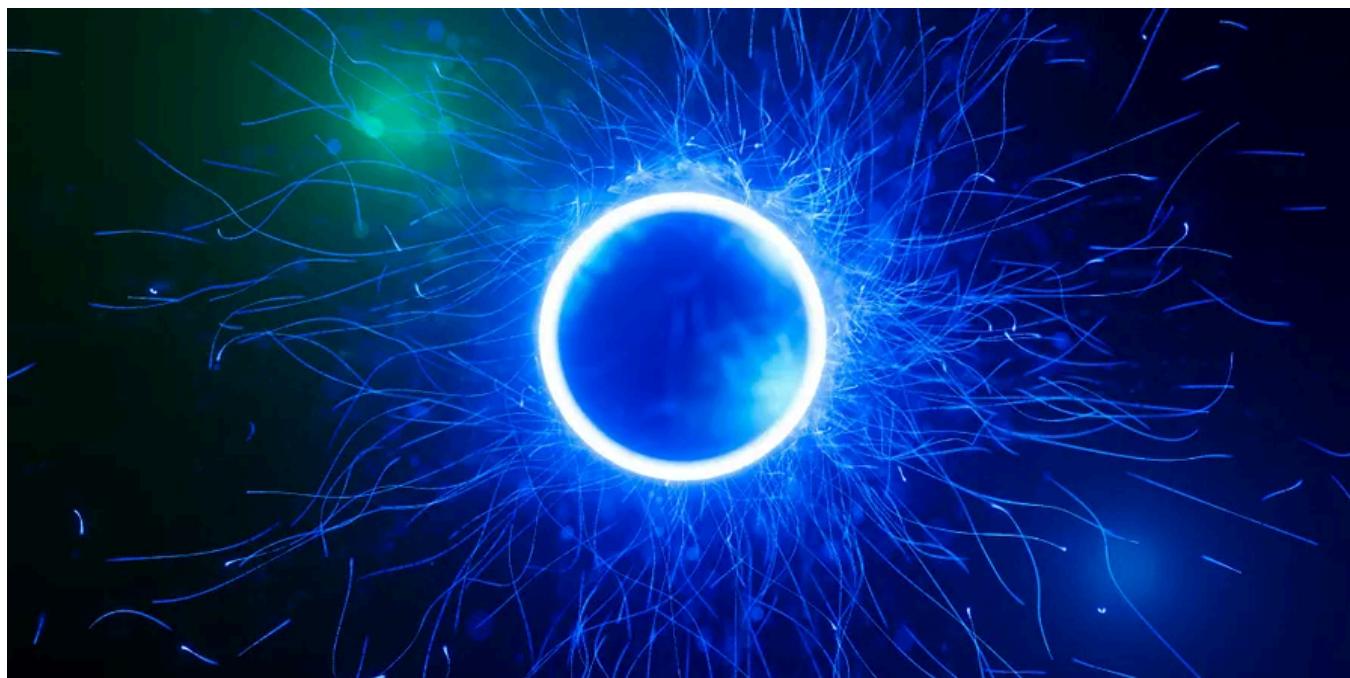
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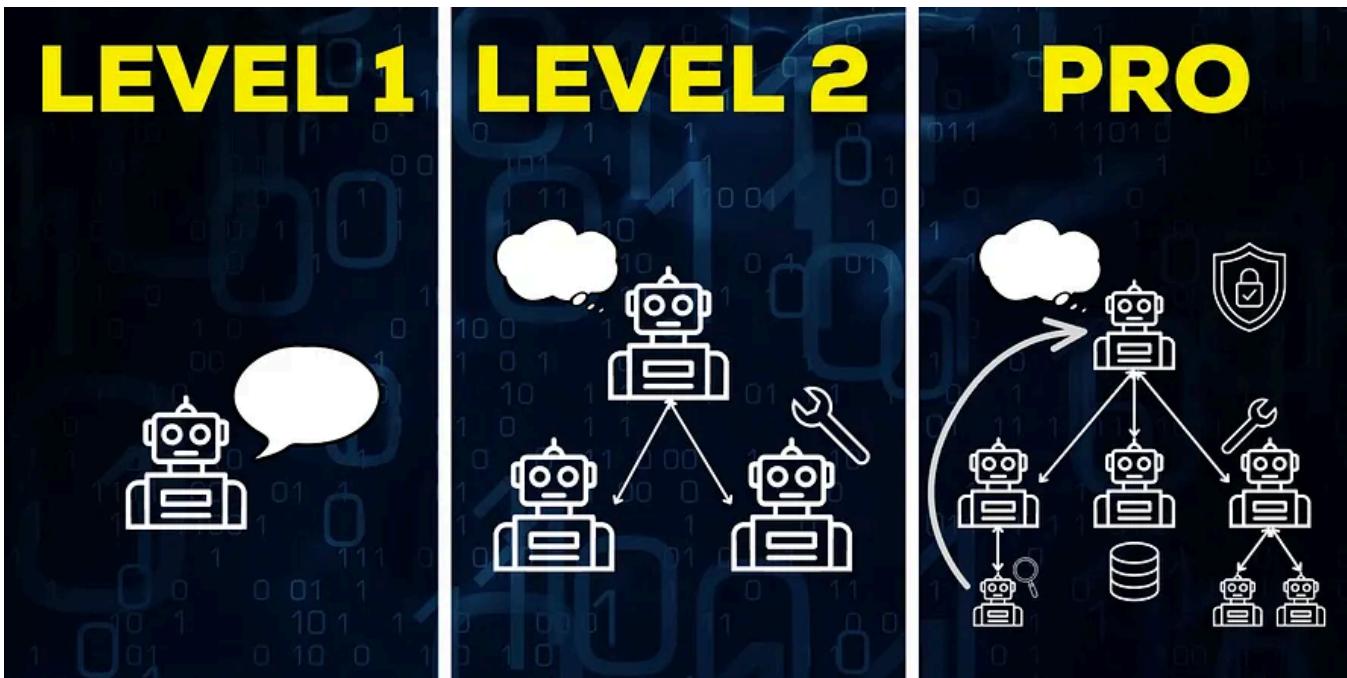
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