

Can I write an article with chatGPT?

Summary

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The following sections of the article (up until [the part titled "The generated article"](#)) is not written by chatGPT.

Introduction

With the volume of articles I have to write, I've been considering whether being assisted by chatGPT would be a good idea.

I have some ethical reservations when it comes using LLMs to generate an entire pre-baked article, that and a fair bit of pride that prevents me from doing such a thing. For this reason, I decided to only use it as a writing assistant, I provide all of the content, while chatGPT takes care of writing it in a submittable format.

The theme I am going with to go with for this experiment is the experiment itself, I will write, with chatGPT, about how it is to write with chatGPT. I will succinctly express my ideas and then asked the LLM to pretty things up. If all goes well, then my velocity and workflow could be improved when it comes to writing articles, I would only need to take care of finding the information I want and then simply throw it at the LLM, without a regard for form, wording, or grammar. However, I had my reservations about it.

Doubts and reservations

I am not a particularly frequent user of chatGPT. One of the reasons why I refuse to use it for research is because of how black boxed LLMs are as a piece of technology: I am fine with whatever algorithm googles search uses, because at the end of the day, search results are merely suggestions, you can refine it or change it. The actual data behind those results is real, but when it comes to LLMs, each new token is not inferred from knowledge or expertise, but rather from probabilities, and those are presented as a solution.

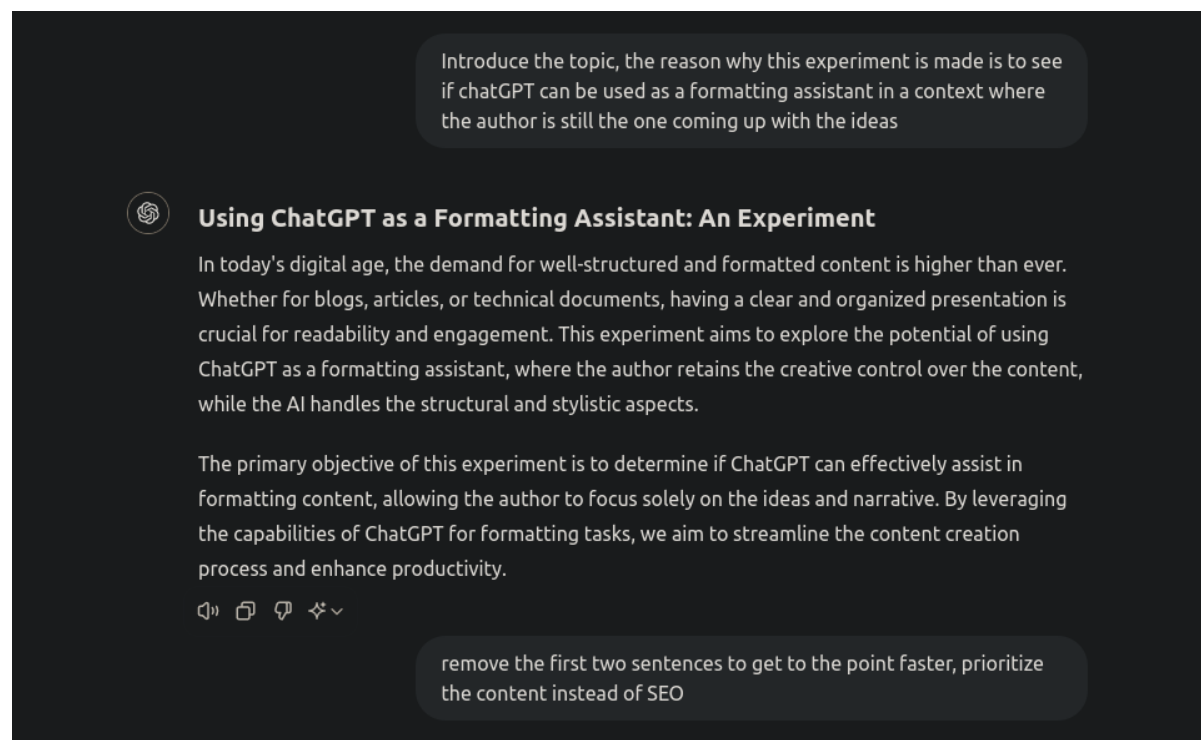
It is easy to check if chatGPT hallucinated something when it is code that you can run on the fly, or a topic that you already know about, but when it comes to research, you have to directly double-check things

yourself, which defeats the purpose of having an LLM do it for you. This is why I only limited chatGPT's role to mere reformatting and rewording for this experiment.

The experiment

The entire chatGPT conversation history that led to the following section can be found [on this link](#).

My first feedback to GPT was to tone down the initial "introduction" which is mostly unimportant bloat that does not benefit the reader in any way.



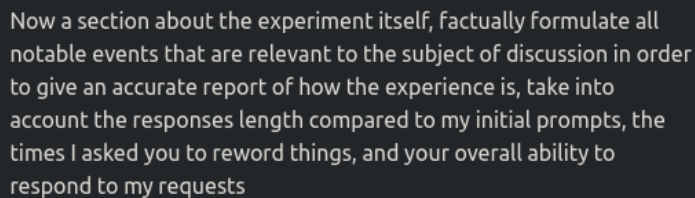
As the experiment went on, I noticed the following:

- ChatGPT has no problem talking in my stead and use first person, it is conscious of the context that it is an article, and does a good job at following my instructions ;
- Amusingly enough, the LLM at one point used the [em dash](#) — symbol ;

- While LLMs can be useful in development—where "answers" are easy to test by launching the program—the same does not apply to writing. For writing, I would need to double-check the AI-
- This symbol is most often seen in news articles or press releases, much less in tech articles ;
- Perhaps because of the subjectivity I imposed on it, or the fact I specifically mentioned writing an "article", the LLM pulled from those parts of its training data.

ChatGPT did rewrite and pad up my ideas pretty well, however, I did not completely relax in my writing, even though I stopped "writing for a human reader", the notion that chatGPT had to not misunderstand still affected my writing, the cognitive load of phrasing wasn't entirely removed, instead, it was shifted to "writing for an LLM to understand it".

At some point, I decided to test its capacity for introspection by giving it a tougher prompt :



Now a section about the experiment itself, factually formulate all notable events that are relevant to the subject of discussion in order to give an accurate report of how the experience is, take into account the responses length compared to my initial prompts, the times I asked you to reword things, and your overall ability to respond to my requests

I basically asked it "how well do you think you did?" based on different metrics. [The response](#) I got from it felt fairly vague and non-committal enough to feel like a case of the Barnum effect: I do not actually know whether it fulfilled my demand, or whether it just correctly guessed what would usually happen when such an experiment is conducted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, chatGPT proved that it can serve as a decent assistant, the experiment was done with both GPT 4o and GPT 3.5 and both were good enough for tasks such as rewording. However, I personally still want to write my articles without such tools for now, as I feel like expressing your writing style is a nice part of writing articles.

I am fairly biased against generative models, I think that their behavior and efficacy is too heavily driven by the prompter's ability to express his initial idea and that it should not be trusted for getting important answers (as shown with [older](#) and [newer](#) controversies). I also think that this is an issue that will not get better, that LLMs are a probabilistic suggestion machine which reflects the user and its training data, a machine for suggestion that is misused as a machine for answers.

But despite all of that, I am still pleasantly surprised with its rewording and rewriting job. I will not use it for future articles though, while it did not fail at answering my prompt, it still produced an output that is very detached from my usual writing style, and that I would not go out of my way to bother reading.

The generated article

This article has been written by chatGPT 4o and chatGPT 3.5, based on my prompts.

You may stop reading there, as a lot of the information in this article has already been talked about in the previous section, you may use this article to compare my writing style against chatGPT's

Using ChatGPT as a Formatting Assistant: An Experiment

This experiment aims to explore the potential of using ChatGPT as a formatting assistant, where the author retains creative control over the content, while the AI handles the structural and stylistic aspects.

The primary objective of this experiment is to determine if ChatGPT can effectively assist in formatting content, allowing the author to focus solely on the ideas and narrative. By leveraging the capabilities of ChatGPT for formatting tasks, we aim to streamline the content creation process and enhance productivity.

Objectives and Concerns

As the author, I want to find out if articles can be produced faster if I do not have to go through the process of properly formatting ideas, and instead just leave them for an AI assistant to format. One of the issues I predict is that rather than fixing the problem, it might just change from "writing while knowing a human will read this" to "writing while knowing a robot needs to understand this." Because of that, I am afraid that I will still stay conscious of my speech, despite this experiment being supposed to ease the mental load.

Why Limit the Assistant to Formatting?

The reason for restricting the AI assistant to formatting tasks is primarily to avoid the risk of hallucination. Large language models (LLMs) function as black boxes, making it difficult to trust them for finding actual answers. My level of trust in the accuracy of LLMs is still relatively low, and by focusing solely on formatting, I can ensure that the core content remains accurate and true to my original ideas.

While LLMs can be useful in development—where "answers" are easy to test by launching the program—the same does not apply to writing. For writing, I would need to double-check the AI-generated content with search engines, which defeats the purpose of using an LLM in the first place. By limiting the assistant to formatting tasks, I can avoid the need for constant verification and maintain control over the factual and creative aspects of the article.

Additionally, while LLMs are often considered black boxes, we can observe that one way they work is by following our lead. Everything you say to ChatGPT is a leading question. This approach is less risky for OpenAI, both legally and in terms of reputation, as it is safer to confirm someone who is wrong rather than correct them at the risk of being wrong. There have been significant outrages about Bing AI confidently asserting incorrect information and Google Search providing ridiculous results. Although there have been similar incidents with people tricking ChatGPT into giving incorrect answers, these have caused much smaller outcries. This dynamic reinforces the importance of using the AI for tasks where accuracy and creativity do not hinge on the AI's interpretation, such as formatting.

Possible Advantages of Using ChatGPT for Formatting

Utilizing ChatGPT as a formatting assistant presents several potential benefits:

- **Reduced Focus on Academic Formatting:** With the AI handling the structural and stylistic aspects, I can be less mindful of adhering to strict academic formatting guidelines. This allows for a more fluid writing process, freeing me from the constraints of formatting rules.
- **Improved Vocabulary and Grammar:** ChatGPT can help ensure that vocabulary and grammar are consistently correct, reducing the likelihood of errors. This allows me to focus on the content without worrying about language precision.
- **Enhanced Focus on Ideas:** By delegating formatting tasks to the AI, I can concentrate more on developing and refining my ideas. This shift in focus can lead to a more coherent and compelling narrative, as I can dedicate more mental resources to the substance of the article rather than its presentation.

Potential Disadvantages of Using ChatGPT for Formatting

While there are potential advantages to utilizing ChatGPT as a formatting assistant, several disadvantages also exist:

- **Loss of Writing Style:** Entrusting formatting to an AI can result in the loss of my unique writing style. The AI may impose its own stylistic preferences, leading to a departure from my accustomed tone and voice.
- **Tedious Fine-Tuning Process:** Fine-tuning the AI's output with initial prompts can be a tedious and time-consuming task. If I restrict the prompts too much, the AI may simply repeat what I've said without adding any meaningful contributions. Conversely, if I don't restrict the prompts enough, the AI may liberally add content that doesn't align with my intentions, requiring extensive revisions.
- **Cognitive Load of Revision:** While the AI may alleviate some of the cognitive load associated with phrasing sentences, it introduces a new burden of correcting and revising someone else's text. This process can be mentally taxing and may diminish the efficiency gains initially sought through the use of the AI assistant.

Conducting the Experiment

The experiment involved using ChatGPT as a formatting assistant to streamline the content creation process while maintaining control over the core ideas and narrative. Throughout the experiment, notable events occurred that shed light on the efficacy of this approach.

1. **Initial Setup:** The experiment began with establishing the parameters and objectives of utilizing ChatGPT as a formatting assistant. This involved determining the extent to which the AI would be involved in the formatting process while retaining control over content.
2. **Engagement with ChatGPT:** Interactions with ChatGPT revealed both strengths and limitations of the AI as a formatting assistant. Notably, responses varied in length compared to the initial prompts, sometimes requiring rephrasing to align with the desired formatting style.
3. **Revision and Refinement:** As the experiment progressed, revisions and refinements were necessary to fine-tune the AI-generated content. This included rewording responses to better fit the intended tone and style, highlighting the importance of maintaining control over the content despite leveraging AI assistance.

4. **Response Evaluation:** Throughout the experiment, the AI's ability to respond to requests and adapt to feedback was evaluated. While the AI demonstrated competence in certain formatting tasks, such as organizing content into sections and bullet points, limitations were observed in maintaining consistency with the author's writing style.
5. **Overall Assessment:** Upon completion of the experiment, an overall assessment was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of using ChatGPT as a formatting assistant. While the AI provided valuable assistance in streamlining the formatting process, concerns regarding loss of writing style and the need for extensive fine-tuning were noted.

In conclusion, the experiment provided insights into the potential benefits and challenges of utilizing ChatGPT as a formatting assistant. While the AI's ability to respond to requests and assist with formatting tasks is promising, careful consideration is required to balance the benefits of AI assistance with the need for maintaining authorial control and preserving writing style.