It's Not the End of Work. It's the End of Boring Work.

ChatGPT 不会让你失业，而是会终结无聊的工作

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642 Words

　　Despite all the **dazzling** digital advances, the trillions of dollars spent on computer technology have done almost nothing to make the world a more productive place. The economist Robert Solow, who **identified** this problem, called it the **productivity paradox**. In 1987, a decade into the computer revolution, he observed that productivity growth had actually slowed down. "You can see the computer age everywhere," he wrote, "but in the productivity statistics."

　　尽管数字技术取得了令人眼花缭乱的进步，但花在计算机技术上的数万亿美元几乎没有提高生产率。经济学家罗伯特·索洛发现了这个问题，称之为"生产率悖论"。1987 年，计算机革命过去了十年，索洛观察到生产率增长实际上变慢了。他写道："你到处都看得见计算机，就是在生产率统计方面却看不见计算机。"

　　Economists and historians have spent a lot of time **scratching their heads** about why this might be. But you already know the answer: Software is supposed to make us faster, but often it makes us slower. We spend a half-hour **clumsily** filling out PDF files that we could have done with pencil and paper in a minute. We spend an hour bouncing emails **back and forth** to clarify a point that could have been **nailed down** in 30 seconds on the phone. The digital era has made a lot of everyday work more complicated and less efficient than it was 30 years ago.

　　经济学家和历史学家花了很多时间苦思冥想为什么会这样。但你已经知道答案了：软件理应让我们更高效，但它经常耽误更多时间。我们花半个小时笨拙地填写 PDF 文件，这些文件用纸笔一分钟就能填完。我们花一

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dazzling [ˈdæzəlɪŋ] *adj.* 使人目眩的，令人眼花的 | a dazzling display of football skills 让人眼花缭乱的足球技巧表演

identify [aɪˈdentɪfaɪ] *v.* 发现，找到；确认，认出 | Scientists have identified a link between diet and cancer. 科学家发现了饮食与癌症之间的关联。

✧　背景知识

productivity paradox

生产率悖论，又称索洛悖论，即虽然企业在 IT 方面投入了大量的资源，然而从生产率的角度看，收效甚微。

paradox [ˈpærədɑːks] *n.* 自相矛盾（的情况）；悖论，似非而是的说法

scratch your head 苦苦琢磨，苦思冥想，绞尽脑汁 | This crisis has politicians scratching their heads and wondering what to do. 这场危机让政治家们抓破了脑袋，不知怎么办才好。

clumsily [ˈklʌmzɪli] *adv.* 笨拙地 | He was clumsily trying to grab at Alfred's arms. 他正笨手笨脚地试图抓住艾尔弗雷德的手臂。

back and forth 反复来回 | He

个小时来来回回发电子邮件，去说明一个电话里 30 秒就能搞定的问题。与 30 年前相比，数字时代使许多日常工作变得更加复杂，效率也更低。

The huge productivity gains of the industrial age didn't happen just because someone invented a new technology; they happened because people also **figured out** how best to reorganize work around that technology. A steam engine, for example, would have been no use to **textile** manufacturing if textile workers had remained a **scattered** network of independent farmers, as opposed to a group of employees gathered under a single factory roof. And **conveyor belts** were nothing new when Henry Ford put them to use in his factory; the revolution was how he arranged for workers to use them, breaking the complex work of automobile manufacture into repetitive, specific tasks. Ford's **breakthrough** was as much organizational as technological.

工业时代的生产力大幅增长不仅仅是因为某人发明了一项新技术，而是因为人们也找到了围绕这项技术重新组织工作的最佳方式。例如，如果纺织工人仍然是独立的农民，分散在各处，而不是变为一群雇员，聚集在一个工厂里，那么蒸汽机对纺织制造业就没有任何用处。传送带被用在亨利·福特的工厂里时并不是什么新鲜事物，革命性在于福特如何安排工人使用它们，将制造汽车的复杂工作分解为重复的、具体的任务。福特在组织上的突破和技术上的突破一样重要。

Computers have failed to produce a huge **surge** in productivity, but the problem isn't the computers. It's that we haven't let workers **tap into** the computers' true power — automation. We still use them like typewriters or calculators.

电脑没能让生产力激增，但问题不在于电脑，而是我们还没有让工人运用计算机真正的力量——自动化。我们仍然像使用打字机或计算器一样使用电脑。

The arrival of ChatGPT — most of all, its **remarkable** ability to write computer code to automate well-defined tasks — can change all that. Instead of **eliminating** many white-collar

was pacing back and forth. 他在来回踱步。

nail down 弄清；确定（协议）| It would be useful if you could nail down the source of this tension. 如果你能弄清这种紧张的根源，将会大有益处。

figure out 弄懂，搞清楚，理解 | I can't figure out how to do this. 我弄不懂怎样做这件事。

textile [ˈtekstaɪl] *n.* 纺织品

scattered [ˈskætərd] *adj.* 分散的，零散的 | My relatives are scattered all over the country. 我的亲属分散在全国各地。

conveyor belt 传送带，输送带（如输送工厂的产品或机场的行李）

breakthrough [ˈbreɪkθruː] *n.* 重大进展，突破 *adj.* 突破性的 | Scientists have made a major breakthrough in the treatment of cancer. 科学家在癌症治疗方面取得了重大突破。

surge [sɜːrdʒ] *n./v.* 急剧上升，激增 | We are having trouble keeping up with the recent surge in demand. 对于近来出现的需求猛增，我们难以应对。

tap into 开发，发掘，利用 | There is a supply of skilled workers that they can tap into. 有一批熟练工人可供他们使用。

remarkable [rɪˈmɑːrkəbl] *adj.* 非凡的，显著的 | She has made

jobs altogether, as people are understandably worried it will do, it has the ability to do something much more powerful: to eliminate what's boring about those jobs, freeing us up to be more stimulated, more creative and more human in our work. In the process it can **drastically** increase productivity.

ChatGPT 的到来可以改变这一切，最关键的是它能够出色地编写计算机代码自动执行明确的任务。人们担心 ChatGPT 会彻底淘汰许多白领工作，这是可以理解的，但恰恰相反，它有能力做一些更强大的事情：消除这些工作中的无聊之处，让我们从中解放出来，在工作中更有激情、更有创造力、更人性化。在这个过程中，ChatGPT 可以大大提高生产力。

I realize that automating your everyday tasks can be scary. If a **macro** can generate your daily report in five seconds rather than the five hours it takes you, what is your value? It's **tempting** to see ourselves, or our employees, as nothing more than those repetitive tasks. We can't imagine a world where those same employees could do more.

我知道把你的日常工作自动化可能很可怕。如果一个宏可以在五秒钟内生成你的每日报告,而不需要你花费五个小时去做,那你还有什么价值？我们很容易认为自己或员工不过是等同于那些重复性的任务。我们无法想象同样的员工可以做更多的事情。

But if a company can take this **momentous** step from avoiding to embracing everyday automation, it will have a competitive **edge**. <u>Companies that promote workers who can automate the **tedious** parts of their jobs will be more profitable in the long run, because those employees can then do more complicated, more rewarding, more human work.</u> Almost **by definition**, the work that cannot be automated will be better paid.

但是，如果一家公司能够迈出这重要的一步，从回避转向接受日常工作自动化，它将具有竞争优势。从长远来看，公司如果提拔那些能把枯燥的工作任务自动化的员工，它会赚到更多的钱，因为这样一来公司员工可以去做更复杂、回报更高、更人性化的工作。毫无疑问，无法自动化的工

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remarkable progress. 她取得了显著的进步。

eliminate [ɪˈlɪmɪneɪt] *v.* 清除，消除；淘汰 | This diet claims to eliminate toxins from the body. 这种饮食据称具有排除体内毒素的作用。

drastically [ˈdræstɪkli] *adv.* 急剧地 | Output has been drastically reduced. 产量已急剧下降。

macro [ˈmækroʊ] *n.* 宏，宏指令

tempting [ˈtemptɪŋ] *adj.* 吸引人的，诱人的，有吸引力的 | It's tempting to speculate about what might have happened. 大家不禁猜测，到底发生了什么事。

momentous [moʊˈmentəs] *adj.* 关键的，重要的 | In that year, two momentous discoveries were made. 那年有 2 项重大的新发现。

edge [edʒ] *n.* 优势；边缘 | The company needs to improve its competitive edge. 公司需要提高它的竞争力。

tedious [ˈtiːdiəs] *adj.* 冗长的，单调乏味的 | We had to listen to the tedious details of his operation. 我们不得不听他唠叨他那次行动繁琐的细节。

by definition 必然 | People say that students are by definition idealistic and impatient. 人们说学生必定是理想主义的、躁动不安的。

shortsighted *adj.* 目光短浅的，无远见的 | Environmentalists fear

作会有更高的薪酬。

It's true that some **shortsighted** corporations would be happy to do the same work they do now but with fewer people. But my **suspicion** is that most successful businesses will realize the long-term potential of encouraging workers to solve harder problems.

的确，一些目光短浅的公司很乐意用更少的人做他们现在做的同样的工作。但在我看来，大多数成功的企业都会意识到，鼓励员工解决更难的问题从长远来看是有好处的。

Everyday automation, if it happens, will be the **undoing** of Henry Ford. His **assembly**-line production paid workers better but was **dehumanizing**. It implied that the only way we could be more productive and make more money was to become more like machines. Everyday automation says the opposite: that the way to be more productive and earn more money is to use our technology to become more human again.

如果日常工作真的得以自动化，亨利·福特式的组织形式将走到尽头。他的流水线生产给工人带来了更高的工资，但却丧失了人性。这种生产方式表明，如果我们想要提高生产力，赚更多的钱，唯一的办法就是变得更像机器。日常工作自动化则恰恰相反：要想提高生产力，赚更多的钱，我们就要利用技术再次变得更人性化。

that this is a shortsighted approach to the problem of global warming. 环境保护主义者们担心这会是解决全球变暖问题的一个目光短浅的方法。

suspicion [səˈspɪʃn] *n.* 怀疑，猜疑；感觉，看法 | I have a suspicion that the local authority may be planning to close the school. 我怀疑当局可能计划要关闭这所学校。

undoing [ʌnˈduːɪŋ] *n.* 失败的原因，毁灭的原因 | This uncompromising attitude may have led to his undoing. 可能就是这种不妥协态度导致了他的垮台。

assembly [əˈsembli] *n.* 装配，组装；集会；议会 | an assembly plant 装配厂

dehumanizing [ˌdiːˈhjuːmənaɪzɪŋ] *adj.* 丧失人性的 | the dehumanizing effects of poverty 贫穷的环境造成丧失人性的结果

➢ 脉络梳理

➢ 长难句拆解

主句　　　　　　　状语

Companies ... will be more profitable in the long run

定语从句，修饰 companies　　　定语从句，修饰 workers

that promote workers　　who can automate the tedious parts of their jobs

原因状语从句

because those employees can then do more complicated, more rewarding, more human work.