How ChatGPT Will Destabilize White-Collar Work

ChatGPT 将如何威胁白领工作

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ChatGPT is just one of many **mind-blowing generative AI** tools released recently, including the image generators Midjourney and DALL-E and the video generator Synthesia. The upside of these AI tools is easy to see: They're going to produce a **tremendous** amount of digital content, quickly and cheaply. Students are already using ChatGPT to help them write essays. Businesses are using ChatGPT to create **copy** for their websites and promotional materials, and to respond to customer-service inquiries. Lawyers are using it to produce legal briefs and academics to produce **footnotes**.

ChatGPT 只是最近发布的许多令人大开眼界的生成式 AI 工具之一，其他还包括图像生成器 Midjourney 和 DALL-E 以及视频生成器 Synthesia。这些人工智能工具的好处显而易见：它们将快速且廉价地生产海量的数字内容。学生已经开始使用 ChatGPT 来帮助他们写论文。企业正在使用 ChatGPT 为他们的网站和促销材料写文案，并回应客服咨询。律师用它来制作案情摘要，学者用它来做脚注。

Yet an extraordinary downside is also easy to see: What happens when services like ChatGPT start putting **copywriters**, journalists, customer-service agents, **paralegals**, coders, and digital marketers out of a job? For years, tech thinkers have been warning that flexible, creative AI will be a threat to white-collar employment, as robots replace skilled office workers whose jobs were once considered **immune** to automation. In the most extreme **iteration**, analysts imagine AI altering the employment landscape permanently. One Oxford study estimates that 47 percent of U.S. jobs might be at risk.

✧ 背景知识

ChatGPT

由人工智能研究实验室 OpenAI 在 2022 年 11 月 30 日发布的全新聊天机器人模型，是一款人工智能技术驱动的自然语言处理工具。它能够像人类一样聊天交流，甚至能完成撰写邮件、视频脚本、文案、翻译、代码等任务。一项调查显示，截止 2023 年 1 月，美国 89%的大学生都是用 ChatGPT 做作业。

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mind-blowing *adj.* 令人大为惊叹的，使人震惊的，给人印象极深的

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✧ 背景知识

generative AI

生成式 AI。通过各种机器学习（Machine Learning，ML）方法从数据中学习对象的组件，进而生成全新的、完全原创的内容（如文字、图片、视频）。

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tremendous [trəˈmendəs] *adj.* 巨大的，极大的；了不起的 | A tremendous amount of work has gone into the project. 大量的工作已投入到这项工程。

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copy [ˈkɑːpi] *n.* 原稿，稿件，书面材料 | advertising copy 广告文案

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footnote [ˈfʊtnoʊt] *n.* 脚注；补

然而，一个巨大的缺点也显而易见：当诸如 ChatGPT 这样的服务开始让文案、记者、客服、律师助理、程序员和数字营销人员失业时会发生什么？多年来，科技思想家一直在警告，灵活且富有创造力的人工智能将对白领就业构成威胁，因为机器人会取代曾经被认为不受自动化影响的办公室里的熟练工人。在最极端的情况下，分析师们认为人工智能将永久性地改变就业前景。牛津大学的一项研究估计，美国 47%的工作岗位可能面临风险。

No single technology in modern memory has caused mass job loss among highly educated workers. Will generative AI really be an exception? No one can answer this question, **given** how new the technology is and given how slowly employment can adjust in response to technological change. But AI really is different. A range of tasks that up until now were impossible to automate are becoming automatable. ChatGPT and the like **promises to destabilize** a lot of white-collar work, regardless of whether they **eliminate** jobs or not.

现代历史上，没有一项技术曾导致受过高等教育的工人大规模失业。生成式 AI 真的会是个例外吗？考虑到这项技术太过新颖而就业适应技术变化的速度又太过缓慢，没有人能回答这个问题。但人工智能确实很不一样。一系列迄今为止不可能自动化的任务正在变得自动化。不管 ChatGPT 之类的服务是否会减少工作岗位，它们都很有可能威胁许多白领的工作。

As a rule, when companies can **substitute** machines **for** people, they will. AI can do work currently done by paralegals, copywriters, digital-content producers, executive assistants, **entry-level** computer programmers, and, yes, some journalists. That means such jobs might change, and soon. But even if ChatGPT can spit out a pretty good paragraph on AI, it can't interview AI and labor experts, nor can it find historical documents, nor can it assess the quality of studies of technological change and employment. It creates content out of what is already out there, with no authority, no understanding, no ability to correct itself, no way to identify **genuinely** new or

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充，补充的信息

copywriter [ˈkɑːpiraɪtər] *n.* 广告文字撰写人，文案

paralegal [ˌpærəˈliːgl] *n.* 律师助理

immune [ɪˈmjuːn] *adj.* 不受影响的；有免疫力的 | Football is not immune to economic recession. 足球不可能不受到经济衰退的影响。

iteration [ˌɪtəˈreɪʃn] *n.* （计算机）新版软件， 新版软体；迭代

given [ˈɡɪvn] *prep.* 考虑到，鉴于 | Given her interest in children, teaching seems the right job for her. 考虑到她喜欢孩子，教书看来是很适合她的工作。

promise to 有可能，有希望 | This evening promises to be a lot of fun. 这个晚会可能非常有趣。

destabilize [ˌdiːˈsteɪbəlaɪz] *v.* 使不稳定 | Terrorist attacks were threatening to destabilize the government. 恐怖袭击威胁着政府的稳定。

eliminate [ɪˈlɪmɪneɪt] *v.* 清除，消除；淘汰 | The Sex Discrimination Act has not eliminated discrimination in employment. 《反性别歧视法》并未根除工作中的歧视。

as a rule 通常，一般来说

substitute ... for ... 用……代替…… | You can substitute chicken for beef if you don't like red meat. 如果你不喜欢红肉，可以用鸡肉代替牛肉。

interesting ideas. That implies that AI might make original journalism more valuable and **investigative** journalists more productive, while creating an enormous **profusion** of simpler content. AI might spit out listicles and summaries of public meetings, while humans will write in-depth stories. "In many ways, AI will help people use **expertise** better," the MIT professor David Autor, one of the world's **foremost** experts on employment and technological change, said. "It means that we'll **specialize** more."

　　一般来说，当公司可以用机器代替人力时，它们就会这么做。人工智能可以承担目前由律师助理、文案、数字内容制作人、行政助理、初级计算机程序员，当然还有一些记者完成的工作。这意味着这些工作可能很快就会改变。但是，即使 ChatGPT 可以生成一段关于人工智能的佳作，它不能采访人工智能和劳工专家，无法找到历史文献，也无法评估关于技术变革和就业的研究的质量。它根据已有的东西进行内容创作，没有权威，没有理解，没有自我纠正的能力，没有办法识别真正新颖或有趣的想法。这意味着，人工智能可能会让原创新闻更有价值，让调查记者更有成效，同时创造出大量更简单的内容。人工智能可能会生成列表和公共会议的摘要，而人类则会写出深刻的故事。麻省理工学院教授大卫·奥托是世界上最著名的就业和技术变革方面的专家之一，他说："在许多方面，人工智能将帮助人们更好地利用专业知识，这意味着我们将更加专业化。"

For workers, Autor noted, the great risk is that AI technologies cause too sudden a change in what kind of labor employers want. Certain specializations might get **wiped out**, leaving thousands of **call-center** operators or marketing workers unemployed. But he stressed the benefits of having such technology in our hands. Productivity has **languished** for decades. Machines doing a little more work would have a big upside, after all.

　　奥托指出，对于工人来说，较大的风险在于人工智能技术会导致雇主想要的劳动力类型发生太过突然的变化。某些专业可能会消失，导致成千上万的电话客服中心接线员或营销人员失业。但他强调了拥有这种技术的

entry-level *adj.* （工作）初级水平的；（产品）初级的，适于初学者的 | Many entry-level jobs were filled by school leavers. 很多初级水平工作都由中学毕业生来做。

genuinely [ˈdʒenjuɪnli] *adv.* 真正地，的确 | These are genuinely difficult issues. 这些的确是难题。

investigative [ɪnˈvestɪɡeɪtɪv] *adj.* 调查性的；（人）好调查的，好探究的

profusion [prəˈfjuːʒn] *n.* 大量，众多 | Cornflowers grow in profusion in the fields. 田里长满了矢车菊。

expertise [ˌekspɜːrˈtiːz] *n.* 专门知识，专门技能，专长 | expertise in the management of hotels 酒店管理的专门知识

foremost [ˈfɔːrmoʊst] *adj.* 最重要的，最著名的 | He is considered the foremost artist of this century. 他被认为是本世纪最杰出的艺术家。

specialize [ˈspeʃəlaɪz] *v.* 专门研究（或从事），专攻 | He specialized in criminal law. 他专攻刑法。

wipe out 摧毁，毁灭，使灭绝 | Whole villages were wiped out by the floods. 整座整座的村庄被洪水冲毁。

call center 电话客服中心，呼叫中心（回答客户问题、销售商品等）

languish [ˈlæŋɡwɪʃ] *v.* 变得衰弱，未能取得进展；（被迫）受苦，受折磨 | The housing market continues to languish. 住宅市场继续疲软。

好处。生产率几十年来一直停滞不前。毕竟，让机器多做一点工作会大有裨益。

> ➤ 脉络梳理

Para. 1-2 介绍最近出现的生成式 AI 工具及其利弊

Para. 3 指出生成式 AI 很有可能威胁白领工作

Para. 4 分析 ChatGPT 无法代替人力的原因，指出人工智能可以帮助人们变得更加专业化

Para. 5 指出人工智能可能会导致某些工人失业，但对提高生产率有好处

> ➤ 长难句拆解

时间状语 主语+谓语

For years, tech thinkers have been warning

宾语从句，作 warning 的宾语

that flexible, creative AI will be a threat to white-collar employment,

原因状语从句

as robots replace skilled office workers

定语从句，修饰 office workers

whose jobs were once considered immune to automation.