

AI Code: **slop and Rot**

Addressing the elephant in the pull request. Why bad code isn't a new
problem, just a new medium.

"AI generated code is bad, because
AI generates slop and rot."

— Common Developer Sentiment

Defining the Terms

`<Slop />`

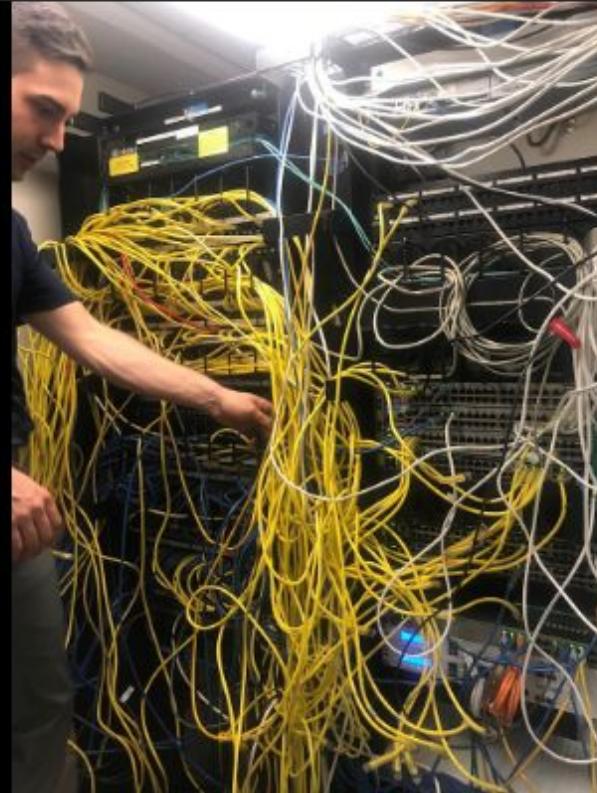
Plausible but low-quality code that sneaks past review. It looks correct at a glance but lacks robustness, edge-case handling, or efficiency.

`<Rot />`

The long-term structural decay caused by accumulating slop. It's the "death by a thousand cuts" that makes a codebase impossible to maintain or refactor.

The Anatomy of Slop

- **Superficial Correctness:** It compiles, it runs, but it's fragile.
- **Lack of Context:** AI guesses the intent but misses the broader architectural constraints.
- **Subtle Bugs:** Errors that are hard to spot in a quick diff but crash production under load.
- **Review Fatigue:** Reviewers assume it's right because it looks authoritative.



The Long-Term Effect: Rot

When slop accumulates, it calcifies into Rot.

- System rigidity increases; changes become risky.
- Onboarding new developers becomes a nightmare.
- Refactoring is impossible because nobody understands the generated logic.
- The codebase becomes a legacy burden immediately after creation.



But doesn't that sound familiar?

Old Problems, New Names

AI Criticism	Human Equivalent	The Reality
Slop	Cargo Cult Code, Spaghetti Code	Copy-pasting without understanding.
Boilerplate Bloat	Over-engineering	Adding layers that do nothing.
Rot	Technical Debt	Choosing speed over quality.
Hallucinations	"It worked on my machine"	Assumptions vs. Specification.

We've Been Here Before

These problems existed long before LLMs.

- > StackOverflow copy-paste driven development.
- > Hacking away without specifications.
- > Skipping code reviews to meet deadlines.
- > Ignoring design patterns for "quick fixes".

Slop and Rot are not AI problems. They are workflow problems.



The Real Root Cause



No Standards

Accepting code—human or AI—withou adherring to a strict style guide or architecture.



Weak Reviews

Rubber-stamping PRs without actually reading and understanding the logic.



Zero Spec

Generating code without a clear definition of what needs to be built.

The Solution: Mastery

With advanced techniques and context, AI performs as a **Senior Developer**.

- **Strategic Review:** Shift focus from checking syntax to validating architectural fit.
- **High-Level Specs:** Providing deep context unlocks senior-level, production-ready output.
- **Automated Precision:** Use AI to enforce patterns and standards more rigorously than humans.
- **Orchestration:** We transition from writing code to directing intelligent systems.



AI Is The New Standard

It replaces manual coding with high-level engineering. The bar has been raised.

Q&A

Let's discuss our
workflow.

Image Sources



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