

AI Rivalry as a Craft: How Resisting and Embracing Generative AI Are Reshaping the Writing Profession

Rama Adithya Varanasi
Tandon School of Engineering
New York University
NYC, NY, USA

Batia Mishan Wiesenfeld
Stern School of Business
New York University
NYC, NY, USA

Oded Nov
Tandon School of Engineering
New York University
NYC, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

Generative AI (GAI) technologies are disrupting professional writing, challenging traditional practices. Recent studies explore GAI adoption experiences of creative practitioners, but we know little about how these experiences evolve into established practices and how GAI resistance alters these practices. To address this gap, we conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with writing professionals who adopted and/or resisted GAI. Using the theoretical lens of Job Crafting, we identify four strategies professionals employ to reshape their roles. Writing professionals employed GAI resisting strategies to maximize human potential, reinforce professional identity, carve out a professional niche, and preserve credibility within their networks. In contrast, GAI-enabled strategies allowed writers who embraced GAI to enhance desirable workflows, minimize mundane tasks, and engage in new AI-managerial labor. These strategies amplified their collaborations with GAI while reducing their reliance on other people. We conclude by discussing implications of GAI practices on writers' identity and practices as well as crafting theory.

CCS CONCEPTS

- Human-centered computing → Empirical studies in HCI;
Empirical studies in collaborative and social computing.

KEYWORDS

Generative AI, genAI, writer, writing professional, author, chatGPT, job, job crafting, labor, work transformation, productivity, invisible work, rivalry

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1 INTRODUCTION

"If I let [G]AI do my work, It would make me miserable inside, because I really love these tasks that I do. That's

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the bottom line ... The only way I can stay relevant is by opposing these tools my way." - P17, Screenwriter

"It [GAI] is helping me do my job better and make me more competitive ... I feel individuals who are not using it [GAI] are at a serious disadvantage." - P4, Paralegal

In an era of rapid technological advancement, the growth of Generative AI (GAI) technologies (e.g., ChatGPT) has had an unprecedented impact on global industries, professional futures, and interpersonal relationships that few were prepared for. While the emergence of personal computers [72], smart devices [107], social media [20], and the 'first wave' of AI-integration [7] have been influential in many professional and personal applications, GAI has become a direct competitor to professional writing.

Recent research has shown that new features of GAI have significant implications for all types of professional writers. Studies of their early adoption experiences associated GAI use with increased creativity, self-efficacy, and productivity [29, 80, 111]. Yet during the same period, numerous writers' organizations, including the WGA and SAG-AFTRA, have expressed concerns about GAI's threat to their field [62]. One of the highlighted features of GAI technologies is the ability to generate creative and analytical content while engaging in natural context-sensitive conversations with humans [18]. This duality, as many professional writers have lamented, presents both opportunities and causes for concern regarding the future of work.

As GAI reshapes the literary landscape, the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) has responded by focusing on the lived experiences of writers' early adoption of GAI [64, 102]. Among these studies, there is a lack of understanding of the actions many professionals take to resist GAI and establish work practices to fight its incursion into their work. Moreover, little is known about how early experiences, whether resisting or embracing practices around GAI, evolve into habituated practices in real-world settings. Understanding the parallels between resisting and embracing practices can move discussions beyond early techno-deterministic optimism and foster equitable spaces as GAI technologies continue to mature.

To fill this gap, we conducted a qualitative study to: (1) understand how writing professionals employ resistive strategies with GAI, and (2) compare and contrast these practices with those in similar roles who adopt embracing strategies with GAI. We gathered data through in-depth interviews with 25 experienced professionals (avg. experience = 17 years) in diverse writing fields, all of whom had been exposed to GAI for at least 12 months. Using a job crafting framework [116], an employee-driven process in which individuals modify their tasks and interactions to enhance their

work outcomes, as our theoretical framing, we demonstrate that writing professionals who engaged in resisting practices with GAI shaped their work in distinct ways while pursuing similar goals as those who embraced GAI. Professionals who resisted GAI placed emphasis on the visibility of their work identity and human labor to their networks and end-users. In selective cases, they carved out niches for their human-driven work by appealing to exclusive communities.

Conversely, professionals embraced GAI to enrich their workflows by delegating tedious tasks to reduce their boredom, stress, and additional emotional labor, though this sometimes extended to essential yet challenging tasks. These benefits also required reconfiguring their workflows to carve out dedicated time for effective GAI utilization. We distill these insights into *four* different resisting and embracing crafting strategies. We compare these strategies to show how professionals who deployed human-driven (resisting) strategies shaped both their creative identity as well as their practices, while GAI-driven (embracing) strategies were only used to craft their practices. Interestingly, professionals who deployed human-driven strategies proactively engaged in rivalry with GAI, mirroring a pattern previously observed only between professionals. This strategy differs from GAI-driven strategies that include significant invisible labor in the form of AI managerial labor.

We argue that common metrics, like productivity and efficiency, are insufficient for assessing the value of human-driven and GAI-driven strategies, and advocate for more holistic metrics. The strategies we found offer new avenues for skill development, but also point to future skill and job displacement. To create an equitable environment for both groups, we propose fostering dialogue and collective learning. Overall, our study contributes to the development of GAI in the writing field by showing:

- How human-driven (resisting) strategies and GAI-driven (embracing) strategies serve different purposes in shaping writers' work, with human-driven strategies enabling the crafting of both *identities* and *practices*, while GAI-driven strategies enable only the crafting of *practices*.
- How writers employ GAI-resisting strategies to develop a competitive edge using *AI rivalry* – a new phenomenon identified in our study.
- Ways to better integrate GAI at work to create equitable opportunities for workers engaging in both resisting and embracing techniques.

2 RELATED WORK

In this section, we provide an overview of HCI literature on how creative work has undergone transformation through technological innovation, highlighting key research involving workers in writing contexts. We then examine the pressing gaps within this literature by exploring the application of GAI in the creative labor and writing profession. Finally, we introduce job crafting theory [116] as a theoretical lens for systematically investigating our research objective.

2.1 HCI and Creative Work

Creative work is traditionally defined as a process in which ideas are developed with the intent of creating something novel or useful

[45, 48]. Craftsmanship is required to transform ideas into creations, giving creative workers autonomy to structure their processes. Craftsmanship has long required technologies (e.g., pencils, printing presses), but as more advanced technologies have become closely integrated with creative work [83, 84], HCI scholars have studied creative work's evolution, with the aim of understanding and enhancing creative processes and outcomes [52]. New tools and disciplines supporting this endeavor have emerged in the process, including computer-aided design (CAD) [91], creativity-support tools (CST) [24], and creative computing [53].

The integration of digital technologies into creative work has transformed creative practices in several significant ways. The first key shift was that the application of digital innovation increased the emphasis on intangible outcomes (e.g., knowledge, digital assets) over tangible ones (e.g., machinery, artifacts) [48]. This transformation reshaped value production and had significant implications for how creative labor was recognized, monetized, and distributed [92]. The second shift involved moving away from solely prioritizing creative outcomes to considering the broader dynamics of workers' creative processes [52]. For example, in creative fields like graphic design and music production, CST research has highlighted the value of supporting both conventional and unconventional practices (e.g., using digital tools as a buffer to store and develop multiple creative ideas [41]) [66, 83, 93], while finding ways to extend existing practices [25] and supporting transformed professional identities [34]. This shift has led to a reconceptualization of how creative labor is defined, understood, and valued [96].

More recently, the rise of platform-mediated creative labor on platforms like Upwork, Fiverr and Instagram has introduced new challenges and complexities to creative work. These platforms often prioritize scale, output, and client satisfaction, challenging control and autonomy for creative practitioners while blurring the boundaries between the individual and the work itself [77]. This dynamic has deepened the need to examine not only the activities that constitute creative labor (the "what") but also the identity of the person (the "who") performing the work. [52]. Several studies exploring the role of worker identity in relation to work practices have found that platforms often undermine workers' control over how and when they can make their identity visible, particularly for under-represented worker communities [77, 78].

With the advent of algorithmic oversight of gig platforms and AI-based technologies in creative work, workers' ability to control their identities and their work has become more precarious [33]. Multiple studies of online content creators have shown how algorithmic design of the platforms make it increasingly difficult for the workers to make their identities visible [32]. Similarly, platforms like Etsy have also pushed small-scale craft sellers to perform new forms of invisible labor, such as articulation work, to ensure consistent earnings [88]. In response to these emerging issues, HCI research is investigating how workers reconfigure their identities [23] and, in the process, making the underlying bottom-up efforts more explicit (e.g., algorithmic gossip used by creative workers on YouTube [12]).

2.2 Generative AI, HCI, and Creative Labor

GAI is the newest wave of technologies which affect work in diverse areas such as hospitality [51], education [21], manufacturing

[8], and healthcare [97], as well as in creative work [54]. Recent predictions suggest that almost 80% of the U.S. workforce could have at least 10% of their work tasks altered by the introduction of GAI [36]. These significant shifts in the landscape of professional practice have given rise to two key streams of research. The first stream explores the potential of GAI to augment workers' skills and enhance their ability to perform tasks. Early experimental studies highlight beneficial worker outcomes, such as performance and productivity improvements [4, 18, 27, 80]. Studies have also begun to suggest that GAI tools may transform more creative aspects of work processes, such as by sparking idea generation [38].

The second stream of research cautions about several shortcomings of GAI, revealing that professionals using GAI in their work tasks could introduce bias and produce errors, degrading their outputs [59, 76, 94]. Moreover, by using GAI tools, workers might diminish their professional capacities, diluting human skills such as creativity and critical thinking [37, 109].

Both streams of research on GAI at work are nascent and have shortcomings that warrant further research. First, most existing research evaluates effects on categories of workers or professions, neglecting workers' in-depth, individualized practices [36]. Second, prior studies utilizing experimental methodologies do not reflect natural work settings, in which complex interdependencies with other tasks and roles are prevalent. Lastly, prior studies placed GAI at the center of their investigation and explored its implementation on workers' outcomes, rather than focusing on how workers derived their lived experiences from using these tools.

HCI research on GAI has largely focused on designing and developing systems leveraging GAI to aid workers' tasks [118]. Other studies have used speculative design methods in controlled settings to gauge workers' preliminary perceptions and attitudes about tentative features to understand their potential benefits and/or harms in creative work processes [61, 110, 115]. In the context of writing, studies explore developing and implementing GAI to improve workers' outputs [50, 89]. For instance, Lee et al. [69] developed CoAuthor, which assisted writers in drafting sentences and, in the process, helped them compose short stories. HCI studies also focus on augmenting workers' processes instead of directly affecting their outputs [6, 9, 25]. For example, Chung et al. [25] designed and evaluated a GAI-based system that enhanced writers' progress by offering context-aware cues and encouraging them to resume their work after interruptions. While workers recognized the advantages of these features, they also expressed concerns about the technical proficiency needed to effectively utilize custom-made GAI tools in their work. In response, several studies used off-the-shelf GAI technologies (e.g., ChatGPT) to understand the benefits and liabilities these tools brought to individuals' work [57, 71, 80]. Mirowski et al. [75] conducted an experimental study with screenwriters that revealed tensions between the writers' creative instincts and GAI's functionalities, highlighting the limitations of decontextualized evaluations of such systems and underscoring the need for a deeper understanding of GAI integration in writing fields.

Studies following the tradition of reflective HCI research [30] responded to this call by taking a more critical stance towards understanding creative workers' sociotechnical experiences in their natural settings [67]. These studies focused on the early adoption

experiences of creative professionals more broadly, such as game developers, trainees, and User Experience (UX) designers, about using off-the-shelf GAI technologies in their daily workflows [14, 64, 101]. Key findings indicate that the adoption of GAI is influenced by several considerations. One such consideration is the operational modality of these GAI (e.g., text-generation vs. image-generation) and the ease of working with the modalities in existing workflows [14]. Some creative roles (e.g., programmers) found it more straightforward than others (e.g., graphic artists). For example, Mim et al. [74] showed how Bangladeshi graphic artists had to deviate from their traditional process of visualizing creative ideas on a canvas, instead putting significant effort into translating their visual concepts into textual prompts for GAI tools to generate visualizations. This shift in processes led to cognitive strain. However, research in this area remains limited within the context of writing professionals. An exception is Dergaa et al. [28]'s meta-synthesis, which examined the writing practices of academics. Their findings suggest an overall increase in work productivity, albeit at the expense of authenticity and credibility. They emphasized the need for more in-depth research to understand how GAI elicits such trade-offs by capturing changes in work practices.

Taken together, prior research makes it difficult to discern whether the practices are driven by the novelty of GAI, or reflect routines that have been *established* and *sustained* as users become accustomed to them. Furthermore, several studies that captured lived experiences also involved young professionals whose workflows may not have matured enough to demonstrate complex strategies with GAI. Lastly, these studies disproportionately focus on adoption practices, limiting scholars' understanding of writing professionals who have actively *resisted* GAI while continuing to shape their work in anticipation of its disruptive impact on the industry. Limited insights in this direction come from professionals engaged in knowledge and creative work [14, 64], indicating that their resistance was primarily driven by skepticism about whether GAI would add value to their work. Research in this space could benefit from more in-depth treatment of resistance practices beyond professionals' initial speculations around their fears. In order to fill these gaps in research on GAI in the field of writing, we address the following two research questions:

RQ-1: *What resisting practices are writing professionals employing in response to GAI technologies in their field?*

RQ-2: *How do these practices compare and contrast with the embracing strategies of writing professionals?*

2.3 Job Crafting: A Theoretical Lens

To answer our research questions, we applied the theoretical framework of *Job Crafting*. Job crafting originated as a theory of work design to understand the relationship between the design of people's work responsibilities, activities, and relationships and the way they derive identity and meaning from their work [116]. What sets job crafting apart from other work design frameworks is that it attributes agency to workers, rather than managers or the organization, in designing their work. In this regard, the framework focuses on the bottom-up physical and cognitive changes that workers initiate to modify their role or relationship boundaries [104].

Wrzesniewski and Dutton introduced the idea of job crafting by showing how professionals invest significant energy in reconfiguring and shaping their jobs [116]. Later research identified two main aspects of the job that individuals craft. The first aspect is the role, including the tasks it involves and the way people perceive the job. The second aspect comprises *relational* changes that influence how people interact with their colleagues at work. Lately, researchers have considered workers' goals, differentiating *approach* crafting, which involves actively creating opportunities to align one's work role with one's professional preferences, strengths, and goals by expanding the role, from *avoidance* crafting, which involves the practices individuals employ to reduce negative aspects of work Bruning and Campion [16], Zhang and Parker [117].

Workers who engage in proactive crafting behaviors have been shown to benefit from increased job performance, satisfaction, and well-being [42, 105]. However, not all workers engage in job crafting to the same extent. This variation is influenced by factors, such as rank [10], degree of autonomy [10], and the resources available to workers [86]. These findings suggest that job crafting may be especially relevant to creative workers with greater skill and autonomy. Moreover, while it is extensively studied to understand how full-time employees in traditional organizational settings establish goals and work-life balance [17, 44, 65] or manage relationships [13]), job crafting is also being applied to understand non-traditional work contexts, such as gig work [19, 114].

Yet there is limited understanding of how AI technologies are shaping workers' crafting activities. Studying changing worker-led practices related to GAI through the lens of job crafting is beneficial for multiple reasons. The job crafting lens positions agency in the hands of the workers, the actual users of the GAI technologies, as opposed to the management that might be responsible for adopting and designing the rules around the technology. The framework also allows us to balance the techno-deterministic narrative surrounding GAI with a social constructivist understanding of how individuals integrate and use GAI to shape their work. Lastly, it offers a systematic approach to examining nuanced sociotechnical practices and lived experiences at a micro-level, complementing economy-level assessments of GAI's impact on work. Moreover, creative workers' autonomy and dependence on craftsmanship positions them at the forefront of job crafting in relation to GAI.

3 METHODS

To address our research questions, we conducted an IRB-approved interview study with writing professionals who were familiar with GAI-based writing tools and actively engaged with them in different ways. Data collection spanned four months (Mar-Jun'24). In this section, we describe the recruitment procedures, the demographics of the participants, and the analysis procedure.

3.1 Participant Recruitment and Demographics

In order to recruit professionals from various writing professions, we employed a quota sampling strategy. We started by partnering with our university's in-house publication and marketing team. Over multiple meetings, we presented our diverse recruitment criteria, including the type of role, industry, size of the company, nature of tasks, seniority level, and gender of the professional. The

first author, along with the publishing team, designed the recruitment materials and shared them using multiple avenues, including social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, dedicated mailing lists for writing professionals (e.g., Writers Guild of America), gig-work platforms like Upwork, and specific writing subreddits. To enable some comparability across the participants' narratives, we focused our recruitment efforts within the U.S.A. The recruitment flyer contained a link to the screening survey that captured participants' demographics, their primary work responsibilities related to writing, their overall attitudes towards GAI technology and its use in their routines, and their interest in participating in the interview study (see the supplementary material).

From the individuals who indicated their interest in participating in the study, we shortlisted and conducted semi-structured interviews with 25 participants. We prioritized diversifying the attributes of the participants while shortlisting them. For example, we carefully considered participants with varied exposure and perspectives on the use of GAI tools in their work, including those inclined to use them, those who had stopped using them, and those not inclined to use them. We selected participants who were aware of GAI tools for at least a year.

3.2 Participant Demographics

Out of 25 practitioners, 10 identified themselves as men, 12 women and 3 as non-binary. Participants comprised professionals from diverse writing fields, including social media writers, grant & proposal writers, ghostwriters, paralegals, copywriters, poets, staff editors, brand writers, technical writers, content strategists, UX writers, SEO and marketing writers, content creators, publishing company owners, authors, screenwriters, academic writers, fiction writers, book reviewers, journalists, and business/press release writers. Participation came from a wide variety of domains, including law, entertainment, business, sports, internet and social media, technology development, non-fiction, and creative fiction. We also interviewed six practitioners who worked in multiple capacities (e.g., ghostwriter and marketing writer), including three who owned and worked in their own publication company that hired writers to publish online content. Two participants had a minimum educational qualification of a diploma, 12 had a bachelors degree, 9 had a masters' degree and 2 had doctorates. All the practitioners first encountered the GAI tools at least one year prior to the date of interview (min.= 12 months, avg.= 15.84, max.= 27). More details are available in the Table 1.

3.3 Procedure

We conducted semi-structured interviews remotely via video calls. Before the interview sessions, we contacted the participants to obtain their informed consent and set appropriate expectations. This involved familiarizing participants with the interview study procedure and clarifying our neutral stance towards GAI tools and our overall objective of developing effective safeguards for professionals experiencing disruptive technologies. We also explicitly stated the voluntary nature of the study.

The interviews lasted between 65 minutes and 1.5 hours (avg.= 77 minutes) and were conducted in English. Our interview protocol focused on capturing how practitioners changed their work practices

Total Participants (n=25)				
Gender	Women:12	Men: 10	Non-binary: 3	
Age (years)	Min: 24	Max: 65	Avg: 42.6	S.D: 12.6
Education (degree)	High school: 2	Bachelor's: 12	Master's: 9	Doctoral: 2
Job type	On payroll: 12;	contract: 8	freelance: 7	
Region	Eastern USA: 6	Southern USA: 4	Western USA: 9	Central USA: 6
Experience (years)	Min: 4	Max: 35	Avg: 17.8	S.D: 10.6
Roles	Journalist (x2); Paralegal (x2); SEO editor (x2) ; Social media writer (x2); Grant Writer; Ghostwriter (x2); Owner (x2); Marketing writer; Staff editor; Poet; Production Editor; Technical writer; Copywriter; Author (x2); Content Strategist; Fiction writer; Book Reviewer; Brand Writer; Screenwriter; Business writer;			
GAI exposure (months)	Min.: 12	Max.: 27	Avg.: 15.84	S.D.: 12
GAI tools	ChatGPT (x20); CoPilot (x5); Writesonic (x1); Elicit (x2); CoCounsel (x2); Anyword (x3); Jasper (x1); Claude (x2); Custom-GAI (x3); Neuron (x2); AlliAI (x1); Waldo (x1)			

Table 1: Demographic details of writing professionals interviewed for the study.

in response to the proliferation of GAI tools in their occupation. We began the interviews by capturing the practitioners' daily work practices (e.g., “*What does your typical work day looks like?*”) and high-level attitudes towards specific GAI technologies. (e.g., “*It has been more than a year since [GAI Tool] was introduced. How do you feel about it?*”). We then captured insights on how practitioners responded to GAI tools and re-shaped their practices over the past year (e.g., “*Can you give me an example of how you changed your daily work tasks in response to [GAI tool]?*”). The third section focused on capturing changes in their work relationships (e.g., “*How did you navigate interactions with colleagues and clients who had a different view of [GAI Tool]?*”) as well as their efforts surrounding skill development in the post-GAI period (e.g., “*can you give me an example of how you see the [GAI tools] hindering or assisting your efforts in improving your skills?*”). We concluded the interview after capturing their overall perspectives on the immediate future of their work role (e.g.,“*How do you perceive the impact of AI tools on the broader writing industry and professional standards?*”).

During the interviews, participants were encouraged to share their screen and show us specific examples from their work tasks. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. After every few rounds of interviews, the authors revised the interview protocol collaboratively to capture deeper insights relating to our research questions. We provided compensation of \$50 in the form of an Amazon gift voucher or an equivalent contract (e.g., on Upwork) for study participation. We stopped our interviews once we reached theoretical saturation in our data.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Overall, we collected 32.5 hours of audio-recorded interviews (transcribed verbatim). We also captured several pages of notes during the interviews, especially for three participants who denied permission to record the interview. All of this data was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis [15]. As a first step in our qualitative

analysis, we started taking multiple passes of our transcribed data to understand the breadth of the interviewee's accounts. Subsequently, we conducted open-coding while avoiding any preconceived notions, presupposed codes, or theoretical assumptions. During this stage, we also captured our reflections in the form of memos. The process resulted in 82 codes. Through collaborative discussions, we removed overlapping codes and discarded the duplicate ones. The resulting codebook consisted of 61 codes. Examples included *task reconfigurations, increased efficiency, expanding role, and increased collaboration w/ AI*. As a second step, we used theoretical coding [49] to develop a sense of thematic organization of our codes. Using an abductive process [103], we reflected on the key elements of job crafting theory [68, 116], namely role and relational crafting as well as avoidance and approach crafting, to further map, categorize, and structure the codes under appropriate themes. To establish validity and to reduce bias in our coding process, all the authors were involved in prolonged engagement over multiple weeks. Important disagreements were resolved through peer-debriefing [26]. Examples of the resultant themes included, *factors impacting GAI adoption, task-re-planning around GAI work, reducing collaboration with network*. The final codebook is provided in Appendix A. Based on these final themes, we present our findings in the next section.

3.5 Positionality

In this study, our objective was to engage with writing professionals holding diverse perspectives, including those who embraced and those who resisted AI, to capture a comprehensive account of their work transformations. To maintain neutrality, we ensured that our communication remained unbiased, neither favoring nor opposing GAI, and that participants fully understood our research while proactively addressing any concerns they had. We also recognize the importance of studying and uncovering these worker-led practices as a critical step toward ensuring equitable outcomes. To achieve this, we drew on our diverse research experience in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Organizational and Management Studies, and Computer-Supported Collaborative Work (CSCW) for our analysis and interpretation. Lastly, two authors identify as men, and one as a woman. Two authors hold senior faculty positions at a well-established university in the Global North, while the third is an early-career scholar at the same institution.

4 FINDINGS

As expected based on prior research [14, 108], writing professionals we studied identified threats and opportunities associated with GAI, albeit to varying extents. Extending prior work, our findings reveal two unique forms of bottom-up, preemptive strategies professionals employ to proactively reshape and adapt their roles in anticipation of these changes (see Figure 1).

The first set of strategies focused on *role expansion* through approach crafting emphasizing increasing the desirable and motivating aspects of their roles [16]. Professionals with higher perceptions of threat, who resisted GAI, employed *human-driven expansion strategies* to enhance their human-centric tasks and skillsets, with the explicit goals of underscoring the distinct value of human labor and differentiating themselves from GAI users (see top-left quadrant in Figure 1). Conversely, professionals more inclined to embrace

GAI employed GAI-driven expansion strategies to leverage GAI in enriching their work and introducing innovative elements to their roles (see bottom-left quadrant in Figure 1). We detail and compare these role expansion strategies in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

The second set of strategies involved *streamlining* one's role through avoidance crafting [16]. These strategies sought to reduce uncomfortable or undesirable aspects of their roles while safeguarding core responsibilities. Professionals who resisted GAI employed human-driven localization strategies to minimize unnecessary human effort, ensuring competitiveness against GAI users (see top-right quadrant in Figure 1). On the other hand, those who embraced GAI adopted GAI-driven delegation strategies to streamline and delegate mundane or repetitive tasks to GAI (see bottom-right quadrant in Figure 1). We elaborate on and compare these role streamlining strategies in Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

4.1 Expanding Role Through Human-Driven Expansion Strategies: Strengthening Identity, Skillsets, and Practices

4.1.1 Strengthening Professional Identity & Ownership. Professionals employing *human-driven expansion strategies* used crafting techniques to emphasize and enhance their *worker identity* and professional worth at various stages of their work, responding to the growing influence of GAI in their fields (see Figure 2). Beginning with their applications for writing jobs, these professionals invested significant effort in tailoring their profiles and interacting with employers to distinguish themselves from those relying on GAI-generated content and to exhibit their skill to impress potential clients or employers. P25, a full-time and freelance SEO writer shared:

"I take time and include personalized cover letters with all my bids. The trick is to make small anecdotal details matching the clients' proposal. . . sometimes a few pieces from my past projects . . . Good humor in these letters goes a long way to stand apart! . . . I even changed my profile picture with one where I am teaching my daughter to write . . . they [clients] should not feel I am an AI bot."

We observed these activities to be more prevalent in job roles that engaged in part-time or freelance work, such as social media writers and script writers, among others. Professionals using these strategies exhibited similar practices while engaging in their work tasks, actively finding ways to make their human identity explicitly visible in their labor to their employers. This was especially evident in cases where employers introduced GAI technologies (officially or unofficially) into the workstreams of the professionals we interviewed ($n = 6$). In response, P20, while working on articles as part of his journalistic responsibilities, maintained a detailed informal log that he shared with his editor, clearly distinguishing between the articles he wrote himself and those in which he used GAI technology. When asked why he kept this record, P20 explained,

"The [GAI] tool is not made by my organization. . . My editor does not have a backend access to my account to see my prompts and know whether I wrote the press release or the [GAI] tool spit it out. . . Did I do the research,

scour the backstories, or did interviews for the byline? . . . I prefer to make sure my editor knows 100% that it is my work. . . not just the AI's. . . and not question my work ethic."

Additionally, within these logs, he included only the "core" writing tasks, those traditionally valued in journalism, such as investigative pieces and feature articles, while excluding press releases and routine event coverage.

Surprisingly, even when their contributions were not visible to their managers, some professionals still insisted on applying their own efforts to tasks to elevate their *sense of worth*, despite the additional time required to deliver the results. P10 worked as a brand writer for a marketing agency in the beauty and fashion industry. When her organization abruptly shifted to using GAI to scale content production, they required writers to first generate content with GAI and then edit it to increase the pace. P10 found this approach demeaning to her human labor. She shared:

"Sometimes, just to feel better, I sneak in a couple of my own paragraphs, even if it takes more time, because it keeps my writer spirit alive."

These nuanced behaviors of P10 and P20 challenge prior research on resistance strategies, which often frames them as clear-cut and resolute rather than a delicate balancing act [55].

Professionals also invested in ways to better retain control over their authored work, protecting both themselves and their creations from the influence of GAI. These practices included finding ways to generate more content for which they could retain *ownership* while also establishing long-term revenue streams for such articles. P25 shared how they sought ways to earn money as a writer in new ways:

"I'm taking steps to be more independent. . . Writing itself isn't going anywhere. . . This year, me and a few of my peers have started focusing on how we can own the content. If everything hits the fan, I still want to be able to write but I'm going to own that. I have started 11 websites. The baking website is my best contender; it has Facebook followers. I am working on creating books on Amazon KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing), and send them on mailing lists to be able to sell cookbooks and courses to the followers."

Professionals also focused on making their identity and work process more visible to their readers. To achieve this, they initiated multiple communication channels, both online, through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, and offline, at various meetups. For instance, P16, an author of two best-selling non-fiction books, regularly attended book readings and literary meetups to share anecdotes about his writing process. Similarly, P6, an immigration paralegal, started offering free introductory tutorials for clients, demonstrating the complexity and dedication involved in the preparation of immigration petitions. P23, a screenwriter for online long- and short-form content, shared:

"Having a relationship with the community that you serve, with your sources, making yourself sort of indispensable. . . it does sort of tell the management that if we get rid of this person, we're losing somebody who

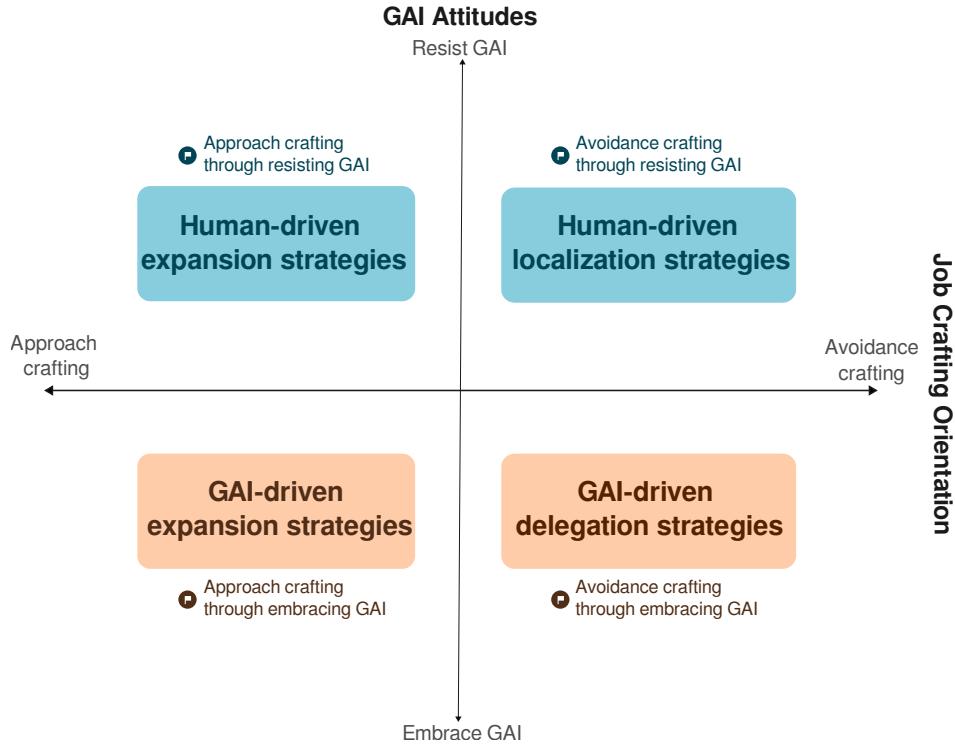


Figure 1: The image illustrates four types of strategies observed among different writing professions. The x-axis represents the crafting orientation derived from Job Crafting theory [116], differentiating approach crafting from avoidance crafting. The y-axis represents the attitude towards GAI, differentiating responses related to embracing GAI from responses resisting it.

is trusted in the community ... people are consuming stories just because of who we are and why we produced it, less about what the topic is."

Overall, these identity-focused strategies extend the notion of *identity work* [34], an established practice among creative professionals, by demonstrating how the proliferation of GAI has significantly intensified its use as a resistance strategy. One notable indication of this shift is the growing reliance on personal narratives (e.g., informal logs used by P20) beyond traditional work outputs, a trend also observed during the post-platformization era of many creative roles [77].

4.1.2 Expanding Skillsets & Practices. Professionals engaging in human-driven expansion also invested efforts in expanding their work practices, alongside their identities, to safeguard themselves against the influence of GAI. They shifted their focus from solely meeting their employers' expectations to prioritizing the value they provide to readers consuming their content. To achieve this, they leveraged uniquely human capabilities that GAI lacks to demonstrate a distinct competitive edge over GAI-generated content. A common tactic was to counter GAI's inability to generate rich, localized content in their written pieces for readers to consume. P21, another journalist working for a local newspaper, shared how he and his team implemented these strategies in real-time. To combat the competition from publication outlets relying on GAI-based content farms, P21 took initiatives to create hyperlocal versions

of key articles, incorporating local information such as up-to-date commentary, details of local businesses relevant to the topic, and interview excerpts from local citizens. He felt that such localization efforts were also helpful in achieving better indexing on Google searches.

Another effort was to rely on the strength of their human connections to counteract GAI technology's ability to generate content rapidly. Through collaborating with those in their networks, professionals enhanced the depth of their work by incorporating human experiences and insights. They perceived that such approaches improved the overall richness and relevance of their deliverables. For this purpose, they organized collaboration initiatives, such as workshops and panels in their organizations and peer networks. For instance, P20, in his organization, pushed for "double by-line stories"¹ that gave him the opportunity to produce collaborative content in his organization that included topics and insights that he could not think of on his own. He felt that GAI models tend to exhibit a "filter effect," producing skewed or biased information, which human collaborations can help circumvent:

"We wrote a piece on effects of air condition on the environment where my coworker [who specialized in consumer reports] wrote about how people were using them. I wrote the climate aspect of it, and we worked with an economist who wrote the cost-benefit aspect of it. We

¹news articles written jointly by two or more authors.

were combining all our perspectives from different fields. That synergy was really useful in making connections that weren't as apparent ... [and] drawing conclusions that were well-rounded ... We are pushing hard for such real human collaborations."

These practices reflect collaborative crafting [43], a specialized form of job crafting in which individuals come together to collectively shape their work. However, what makes this form of collaborative crafting unique in our context is the emphasis on preserving professional identity (e.g., environmental expert) and the specialized knowledge that individual professionals contribute to the collaboration, alongside the traditional goal of generating collaborative insights through this form of crafting.

To further enrich their deliverables, some professionals took it to the next level and learned complementary skills from neighboring roles, such as graphic design for journalists, UX design for UX writers, and content design for grant writers and authors. P16 shared his views:

"If I'm the person who writes the stories, shoots the video of the oral history interviews, and takes photos, all of a sudden you're doing too many tasks that involve you wearing too many different hats to be easily replaceable with these [GAI] tools."

Developing broader skillsets gave them confidence, increased their self-esteem, and reduced the perceived risk of job loss. We observed these practices taking shape in both traditional writing roles as well as more contemporary roles.

4.2 Expanding Role Through GAI-Driven Expansion Strategies: Strengthening Practices

4.2.1 Enhancing Creative Workflows. In contrast to human-driven expansion strategies, professionals who incorporated GAI-driven expansion strategies mainly focused on enhancing their work *practices* to improve the overall efficiency and quality of their work (see Figure 2). One such practice was using GAI to generate ideas and "jump-start" creative ideation and writing processes. Even in situations where professionals did not end up using the ideas generated by GAI, those ideas still served as useful starting points or sounding boards in the subsequent steps of their writing process. For instance, screenwriters often create a beat sheet, outlining key beats, as part of their story development. When P1, a social media writer who did part-time script writing, encountered writer's block, he used ChatGPT to generate the initial beats for his scripts. Although he didn't incorporate the exact beats generated by ChatGPT, using them as a reference made it easier for him to develop his own subsequent versions.

Professionals also used GAI to improve the quality of their overall tasks by exploring GAI-recommended alternatives in the early stages of their work. For instance, P1 shared how he used GAI to generate multiple writeup ideas for the descriptions he used in search engine optimization:

"I actually go into the client's WordPress site, editing the metadata. ChatGPT helps me generate super good meta descriptions...I just type, "come up with 10 meta

descriptions". I then piece together what I like from those, and then use the ones I love ... it's been amazing for its speed in coming up with alternative seed keywords. It's really useful when exploring multiple complex domains as part of the keyword strategy.

Professionals also used similar conversations with GAI to overcome obstacles and make progress in their workflows, such as writer's block arising in the middle of a creative project. P3 is a ghostwriter who worked in a publishing company that produced content for children. While P3 resisted using GAI in his creative work, he explained that when encountering creative blocks, he occasionally used ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas, yielding variable results. P3 shared one such instance:

"I was writing this story about this shy duckling that was going to the school for the first time ... the theme of the story was around learning disability ... I wanted to name the school [something] that fit this whole narrative and the character arc while being a little funny. It's a very small thing but I was sitting on it for hours! ... I finally gave up ... used ChatGPT for options. None of them were particularly great but it did make me think in a few new directions."

Although P3 did not end up using any of the options suggested by ChatGPT, the alternatives gave him an idea of his own that he eventually implemented. These findings reveal that even professionals resistant to GAI occasionally adopted its strategies when faced with creative limitations, highlighting how resistance and adoption can coexist in writing. This offers nuanced insights into how other creative practitioners, such as art hobbyists and game designers, may integrate different GAI strategies rather than using them in isolation [95, 108].

Professionals also used GAI to develop, sustain, and improve their professional relationships by drafting communications to other people. Several professionals (n= 5) reported using GAI to help write emails, chats, and posts when dealing with challenging interpersonal situations at work. For instance, P14, a freelance copywriter working in the health domain, recalled using ChatGPT to explore alternative ways of expressing his negative emotions with a client while avoiding harm to the relationship:

"When you are in my domain [freelance copywriting], there is a lot of back and forth with the clients in the writing phase, especially during lead generation or finalizing the USP (unique selling proposition). This client changed their request at the last moment and I lost my cool ... [before this] I used to compose these messages in that [angry] emotional state and that exacerbated the issue. ... [Now] [With GPT] I dump my thoughts and ask it to generate a message with keywords like professional, empathetic, solution-oriented. ... I have created a separate GPT that just does that."

Professionals adopting GAI-driven expansion strategies also advocated for expanding their professional boundaries in addition to shaping their own roles. Three professionals we interviewed enacted this expansion by using their expertise to evaluate and enhance the outputs of GAI models in the context of paid or unpaid programs, in addition to completing their regular writing tasks.

		RESISTING STRATEGIES		EMBRACING STRATEGIES	
		Human-driven Expansion	Human-driven Localization	GAI-driven Expansion	GAI-driven delegation
GAI attitudes	Resist	Resist	Embrace	Embrace	
Crafting orientation	Approach (Role expansion)	Avoidance (Role streamlining)	Approach (Role expansion)	Avoidance (Role streamlining)	
Role impact	Identity + Work Practices	Identity + Work Practices	Work Practices	Work Practices	
Observed roles	Author, Screenwriter, journalist, ghostwriter, social media writer.	Ghostwriter, production editor & Poet, brand writer, author, academic writer, fiction writer, book reviewer.	Social media writer, paralegal, owner, staff editor, content strategist, UX content writer, SEO writer, UX writer.	Grant and proposal writer, paralegal, owner, technical writer, UX content writer, SEO writer.	
Writing stages involved	Job application, drafting, editing, publishing, marketing & communication, professional development.	Job application, research, project planning, editing.	Ideation, drafting, project planning, communication, role development.	Research, content designing, editing, collaboration, drafting.	
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize the profile to stand out, boost internal sense of worth, and make identity and labor visible to employers and end-users. • Increase sense of ownership. • Form collaborations to improve the richness of work. • Improved personal brand with end-users: conversations & workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify job postings and employer profiles in online groups to build trust. • Efforts to avoid connections that promoted GAI. • Appeal to selective groups through niche practices. • Reduce the quality of tasks to compete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance tasks through ideation, sounding boards, overcome roadblocks, and generating alternatives. • Conduct AI managerial labor: design/refine prompts, clean GAI outputs, verify outputs, and re-plan core work around AI managerial labor • Take assistance in challenging communications. • Contribute expertise to improve GAI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offload slow, tedious, stressful, and difficult tasks. • Reduce emotional labor around managerial duties. • Minimize reliance on internal stakeholder expertise. 	

Figure 2: Comparison of four strategies used by writing professionals in response to GAI. The left two columns represent resisting strategies, while the right two columns represent embracing strategies.

In so doing, they applied their field-specific expertise as seasoned professionals to broadening the capabilities of GAI, and then shared the learnings from these experiences with professional colleagues, strengthening human networks. P4, who collaborated with a pioneering company in the GAI space, developed new GAI expertise in this way and regularly shared the insights with her professional networks. P4 described,

"I enrolled in this expert evaluation project for [a big tech company] their multi-layered prompts. My job was to figure out at which level the [G]AI started giving inaccurate information and then correct it. ... Nothing fancy and it does not pay me anything, but I get to be at the forefront of the innovation. ... I am part of these two active paralegal associations where I share these experiences and help my colleagues also learn about these innovations."

Interestingly, P4 shared that several members of these paralegal associations who actively read her experiences preferred not to use GAI, which did not deter her from sharing this information. This evidence shows inherent dependency between professionals who resist and those who embrace GAI within the same profession that are often invisible.

4.2.2 Incorporating AI Managerial Labor. Professionals who used GAI-driven expansion strategies also took initiative to integrate and optimize GAI use within their workflows to achieve effective

outputs. We group these efforts under *AI-managerial labor*. As part of this effort, professionals engaged in prompt engineering, a well-established practice of designing and refining the input prompts to receive beneficial outputs [67, 73, 81].

This required substantial effort and time from professionals, demands they managed by re-organizing their entire workflow to keep AI-managerial tasks together for a particular project. For example, P6, a paralegal in a large firm specializing in immigration issues, was drafting a client's green card application. As part of the process, she had to develop a business plan for the client. Having limited awareness of how to do this, she used ChatGPT to conduct market analysis and generate financial projections, which were critical to the business plan. To optimize ChatGPT within her workflow, she found it necessary to consolidate the AI-managerial tasks into a single session. She shared:

"With ChatGPT, I need to block two to three hours to complete the prompting that I started, or at least the majority in one sitting. If I leave it mid-way, once I am done with a few prompts, and come back to it after a few days, it is extremely difficult to follow the reasoning as to why I provided the particular follow-up prompts ... if I re-run or continue working from that point, there is no guarantee that ChatGPT would provide similar output in the same line of logic again!"

These findings illustrate how certain research-heavy technical writing professions can develop higher dependency on GAI tools, pushing them to reshape their work in major ways.

4.3 Streamlining Role through Human-Driven Localization Strategies: Creating Niche Identity & Reducing Effort

Similar to human-driven expansion strategies, professionals following human-driven localization strategies also focused on shaping both their identity and their practices by concentrating and streamlining their efforts (see Figure 2).

4.3.1 Creating Niche Identity. To protect the most treasured aspects of their professional identity, professionals employed human-driven localization practices, including avoiding GAI-related jobs and distancing themselves from individuals who advocated for GAI use, to preserve their credibility within their community. For instance, participants restructured their professional relationships by changing the way they searched job descriptions to avoid those likely to involve GAI. A primary indicator was the keywords sprinkled across the job descriptions, such as “need to use AI” or “open to using AI”. Another indicator was employers’ prior treatment of professionals’ work or reducing their pay. Practitioners engaged in freelancing work gathered this information from reviews of employers on the platform and through their professional networks. Others relied on emotional, informational, and instrumental social support from close-knit peer communities on social media, such as Facebook (now Meta), to vet clients or employers before committing to work. When asked why they put so much effort behind vetting a particular client, P10 replied:

In this day and age, it absolutely matters who I am associating with and securing work [from]. I do not want to be that person who is seen as pro-[G]AI. That is a sure-shot way to end your career before it starts.”

One such group that P10 interacted with maintained a curated list of clients, companies, and organizations that aligned with the community’s core values and were considered “safe” to work with.

Professionals also proactively reframed their role around craftsmanship, and used their craftsmanship capabilities to appeal to a more selective subset of groups (employers, clients, or communities) that valued human labor and its resultant artifacts. These groups enforced stringent standards, such as using AI detectors (e.g., GPTZero² or ZeroGPT³) to examine the source of the written content. Professionals distinguished their work with keywords such as “boutique”, “niche”, or “organic” to appeal to these selective employers or professional communities and create a niche for their craft. For example, P7, an author and poet working for a children’s publication company, articulated parallels between this change in practice to position her work as more boutique and the evolution of market dynamics in the shift from printed books to e-books. She shared,

“Everyone thought that print books will die because of e-books. That is not the case... books have only increased their value as tangible objects because certain publishers

²<https://gptzero.me>

³<https://www.zerogpt.com/>

chose to make it a boutique object, among other things. ... It boils down to how can 100% human generated content, like poetry distinguish itself? ... I am seeing a shift in publications within my community where they are clearly aligning themselves to these core values of increasing the value of human-generated content with rules like no AI written content, etc.”

These findings echo the *artisan approach*, a form of thinking developed in making, tinkering, and design fields [58, 119]. Professionals following this approach tend to cultivate a deeper commitment to their craft through years of skill development, which motivates them to strongly distinguish their manual labor from commercial artifacts produced at scale.

4.3.2 Reduced Effort in Work. Professionals who employed strategies within this category moderated their level of human effort without succumbing to the pressure of using GAI technologies. One common practice was to meet market expectations on the turn-around time for the required tasks by skipping a few steps in their work processes and reducing the quality of the deliverables (task crafting). For example, P17 shared how she modified her workflow to accommodate the changing market demands:

“I have no option but to say yes, because I gotta keep working. In an ideal world, I will not make any compromises. I have also written a script for someone and I got paid \$10,000 ... Recently, the kind of work I am getting is in no way the same. Everyone wants it fast, quick, and offers far less money ... I have just reduced the depth in research and the amount of iterations that I do with my work. They need something fast and cheap? I just give them that. Because if I don’t do it, they will go with the person who is using AI.”

A possible downstream consequence of this strategy is that by reducing the quality of her human work, P17’s employers may find it harder to differentiate human work from GAI work. Such responses can create a ‘race to the bottom,’ intensifying pressure on professionals to rely on GAI. This can lead to the *AI-ghostwriting paradox* [31] in which professionals, having used GAI, no longer view themselves as the sole authors of their content but remain hesitant to attribute authorship to GAI.

4.4 Streamlining Role through GAI-Driven Delegation Strategies: Reducing Task Load and Dependencies

4.4.1 Delegating Repetitive And Tedious Tasks. GAI-delegation strategies were used by professionals to save time and improve the overall efficiency of their key workflow tasks (see Figure 2). One way they did this was by offloading repetitive tasks. For example, several professionals working in social media, marketing, and search engine optimization (SEO) delegated information foraging tasks to GAI to reduce the amount of time they were spending on their pre-writing activities, such as background research. These professionals engaged with a wide variety of topics in their domain. To develop an understanding of the topic they were writing about, they had to visit different hubs of information, such as news websites and databases (e.g., legal, medical), and read scholarly manuscripts. P22, shared:

"What I would do before [G]AI is visit all these different kinds of research hubs that were available. Whether it was a medical interest or business-related databases that I had access to, through libraries that I was a part of. Then I came up with my own terms to investigate if there were any sources that were relevant to this kind of thing. It was painstaking when you're just trying to get a feel for the landscape of a market. I have completely delegated this hours worth of work to [G]AI... it takes me several minutes and best. I don't have to waste money on the subscriptions."

For many of these professionals, several specialized GAI tools designed for information foraging, such as Writesonic, Elicit, and CoCounsel, were game changing, as the time they saved searching allowed them to focus on sense-making tasks.

4.4.2 Reducing professional dependencies. Professionals in this category also reduced their overall workload by eliminating certain professional dependencies, either partially or entirely. This practice was particularly prevalent among senior professionals (n=4), such as copy editors and owners of small-scale publication houses, who managed other writers and oversaw project deliveries. Our findings indicate that these professionals utilized GAI to alleviate the emotional labor involved in managing workers in writing roles and the additional burden of correcting work. For example, P15, the owner of a publishing house producing science-based content, described how they replaced their entire writing staff with ChatGPT. This effort streamlined their operations and reduced the effort required to manage writers by automating the staff's work:

"The difference now is that I'm not dealing with a lot of writers; I'm not giving them therapy sessions when they are falling behind, [or] if I rejected their manuscripts ... With ChatGPT, it's easy to keep beating on it and make it change. I couldn't do that with my writers without striking a nerve... I had them at very hard pace... I explained every edit, they spent two days doing that, and still missed the deadlines. I ended up using ChatGPT to do all the things that they were doing. My effort has reduced."

Participants also reduced professional dependencies on internal stakeholders to shorten the overall turnaround times. They shifted from relying on experts at every step of the process, who were often busy and slow to provide insights, to using GAI for early iterations of their work. P13 shared how she used GAI to reduce her dependence on subject matter experts by asking ChatGPT some of the questions for the early draft of her UX reports (e.g., *"What are the permits required to start a hotel business in New Jersey?"*), which would otherwise have required expert opinions. P13 shared:

"I was working with a government agency on their new app on zoning regulations ... It takes 4-5 days to get a response from an SME (subject matter experts) who knows about zoning. Without that knowledge, I cannot write key parts of my report ... I used ChatGPT and generated the first version of the draft that I submitted to the SME ... I would ask it questions about certain things like, 'imagine I am a CEO of hotel chain, how

do I start a hotel business in New Jersey?' It usually spits out useful information that I can then build on and integrate in the report and get some feedback."

4.4.3 Offloading Difficult Tasks. A more concerning trend we observed was that several professionals (n=4) delegated tasks they found difficult and had little interest in developing skills for, despite these tasks being important to their professional duties. One such task that was common across different roles was the ability to incorporate diverse "voices" into their writing styles. This process includes embedding specific jargon, diction, or tone to which readers could relate. For P5, one of the biggest challenges in his marketing campaigns was capturing the voice of his target audience and increasing article engagement through the right choice of words and style. In one particular case, P5's client needed targeted content that had to be "*bubbly*", "*techy*", "*energetic*", "*the kind that gives vibes that we wake up at 3 AM, meditate, and are extremely productive*". Although P5 could easily recognize this type of content, it was challenging for him to compose it from scratch as he was trained as a technical writer. P23 had a similar challenge when she was writing scripts for short-form online videos aimed at young adolescents. P23 shared:

"For developing this character's voice meant sitting and watching multiple existing shows and documentaries around the topic ... I passed an initial draft with the voice requirement in the [ChatGPT] tool to capture some of these voices of the characters based on the persona ... It is not perfect by any means but it is a good starting point."

In both situations, professionals found it beneficial to delegate tasks to GAI without considering the impact on their own skill development.

5 DISCUSSION

Our findings uncover a nuanced landscape of how writing professionals adapt their practices in response to generative AI (GAI). Here, we compare and contrast resisting and embracing strategies employed by writing professionals to: (1) explore how these strategies shape professionals' creative identity and practices, along with their broader implications for creative work in HCI, (2) generalize findings to broader transformations in GAI-based work, and (3) offer concrete recommendations for fostering a more equitable working environment.

5.1 Writers' Strategies Around GAI and Its' Broader Implications on Creative Labor

Our findings indicate that writing roles with a greater creative focus (e.g., screenwriter (P17), poet (P07)) employed resisting strategies more frequently than technical writing roles (e.g., grant writer (P02), technical writer (P11)), which favored embracing strategies. Also, resistance strategies were more common in better established roles that existed before the digitization of creative work (e.g., author (P18), journalist (P21)), as compared to more emergent roles (e.g., SEO editor (P14), UX writer (P13)).

Resistance as a rational response is not a new phenomenon in creative work. During the first Industrial Revolution, British

textile workers and skilled craftsmen resisted the new weaving machines that they perceived to threaten their work and demean their craftsmanship [56]. Workers held demonstrations and oversaw the destruction of several machines, aiming to slow down the rapid technological disruption [90]. Similar movements have been observed with the introduction of printing and e-books in writing [39], and photography in art [1]. However, in contrast to prior literature, the resisting strategies identified in our findings are constructive (i.e., role-enhancing) and multi-dimensional, with professionals who adopted resisting strategies shaping both their *identities* and *practices* to preserve their relevance as craftspeople, thus warranting the label of *adversarial crafting* of their roles in response to GAI. We unpack each of these phenomena in the context of creative labor individually.

5.1.1 Shaping Creative Identity: Internal and External Projections. One objective of professionals, as part of their resisting strategies, was to preserve and shape their identity through *identity work*, a phenomenon not observed in roles employing embracing strategies. Historically, when workers encounter significant changes such as devaluation, marginalization, and/or discrimination, they react either by protecting their current identity or by restructuring their identities into a desired state as part of their identity work [3, 85]. When technological disruptions are the contributors to these changes, workers either repurpose the technology as an extension of their identity [84] or resist the technology to differentiate their own distinct identity [107]. Prior HCI literature has shown the latter perceptions to be much stronger in more creative roles, such as artists or creative writers [87, 106]. Scholars studying creativity-support tools (CST) are increasingly recognizing this connection, designing explicit pathways within creative tools to enable workers' efforts to build emotional connections and repurpose these tools in line with their identities [83].

However, GAI differs from previous waves of technology due to its anthropomorphizing features, such as its perceived intelligence in generating creative and analytical content and engaging in context-sensitive conversations [31, 79]. These features encouraged professional writers, particularly those working in creative domains, to perceive GAI as having its own distinct identity that directly competed with their creative identities. Integrating GAI into their work meant introducing a contrasting identity that risked diluting how they perceived their internal identity, which underpinned their creative outcomes. In response, we observed evidence of activities aimed at reinforcing their sense of worth that took the form of resisting strategies (see Section 4.1.1). These resisting strategies offered professionals a means of reaffirming their internal identities, in contrast to embracing strategies, which were more commonly employed in roles where such identity conflicts were not as pronounced. These findings extend the preliminary arguments from emergent HCI studies [11]. Furthermore, while we did not observe direct evidence, we predict that professionals employing a combination of resisting and embracing strategies might exhibit the *AI ghostwriting effect* [31], whereby they may have a greater tendency to downplay their use of GAI to preserve their creative identities.

The professionals who employed resisting strategies also reaffirmed their *external* identity, making it explicitly visible and more

distinct. Invisible work, described in the HCI and Science and Technology Studies (STS) literatures as labor that is unacknowledged and undervalued, is particularly likely to emerge in technology-mediated environments [100]. Invisible work can occur when either the worker's identity or their work is obscured. A common example is articulation work [98], whereby creative workers engage in coordination and integration tasks essential for achieving broader goals that often go unnoticed and unrecognized [22, 46]. Professionals who invested in resisting strategies made significant efforts to make their identity visible to external stakeholders, including colleagues and end-users (readers of their work). They took deliberate steps to highlight their human involvement at every stage, from job applications to final work delivery (Section 4.1), even in seemingly minor tasks such as articulation work. In contrast, in the case of professionals employing embracing strategies, we did not observe any identity work, indicating that they were more comfortable allowing their stakeholders to perceive a blended version of their identity and GAI's identity.

5.1.2 Shaping Creative Practices: Rivalry with GAI or AI Managerial Labor? The perceived differences between individuals' professional identities and the identity of GAI also led them to shape their *practices* in ways that opposed GAI, aiming to preserve their relevance as craftspeople. We found that professionals developed strategies that target GAI's perceived weaknesses, such as its limited ability to generate localized and contextual content (see Section 4.1.2), while countering its perceived strengths, such as by bypassing steps in workflow to compete with its ability to generate content rapidly. These behaviors reflect *rivalry*, historically observed among individuals in creative domains [2]. Kilduff et al. [60] defines rivalry as "*a subjective competitive relationship that an actor has with another actor that entails increased psychological involvement and perceived stakes of competition for the focal actor, independent of the objective characteristics of the situation.*" Interviewees used terms such as "*opposing these tools*," "*at odds with it [GAI]*," and "*compete with these tools*" to describe their strategies for reducing GAI's influence in their work and profession, while actively competing with it. Interestingly, these practices of rivalry were *motivating*; instead of avoiding GAI, professionals constructed a perceived image of GAI's capabilities and then crafted their identities and practices to excel in their roles by outperforming it. This form of rivalry mirrors dynamics studied among creative roles, such as creative entrepreneurs [3], where the contagious nature of passion fuels rivalry. These insights contribute a novel perspective to understanding Human-AI (dis)engagement, a field of literature that has predominantly focused on cooperation and collaboration practices [63, 84, 108].

In contrast, professionals who employed embracing strategies (both GAI-enabled expansion and delegation) used GAI to enhance their practices. This came at a cost; demanding new forms of invisible work through AI managerial labor that remained largely unseen. As GAI technology advances, this invisible work is likely to only increase, mirroring trends that have been observed in other forms of work exposed to AI, such as the patchwork and repair work necessary to maintain AI systems [40, 112] or in creative work, such as game development [14] and graphic design [70]. Advances in GAI will also further integrate GAI technologies into workers'

processes. In our findings, this was limited to information foraging, creative ideation, overcoming creative roadblocks, and using GAI tools as sounding boards, but it raises an important question: should the creative contribution of GAI be treated the same as the creative contributions of humans and receive similar recognition? If so, should its work be equally visible? Answers to these questions are essential to define equitable work as the nature of work is fundamentally changing.

5.2 Contextualizing Findings in the Broader Discussion of GAI and Work

5.2.1 GAI and Worker Productivity. Previous studies have advocated for GAI in work settings by highlighting productivity and efficiency gains, demonstrating increased worker output [18, 80]. However, our findings suggest that these metrics fail to capture the craftsmanship of writing professionals' work. On the surface, professionals using GAI-driven delegation appeared more productive by offloading time-consuming, repetitive, and stressful tasks (Section 4.4.1), while those leveraging GAI-driven expansion employed AI for ideation and content generation (Section 4.2.1). These actions are easily quantifiable in terms of *short-term* efficiency gains. However, the black box nature of these technologies also forced professionals into extensive trial and error to make AI managerial labor effective, increasing the estimation of the labor involved. Our findings suggest that the productivity gains associated with GAI may be offset, or even negated in certain tasks, by the hidden burden of AI managerial labor, a form of invisible labor overlooked in prior studies assessing these technologies [18].

Metrics such as productivity and efficiency were even less effective in evaluating the performance of professionals who resisted GAI. In some cases, human-driven expansion and localization strategies reduced productivity in the short-term, as these professionals devoted significant time to preserving human labor (e.g., differentiating their writing through human-driven expansion or bypassing steps in workflows to stay competitive in human-driven localization). However, these activities repositioned workers into higher value-added domains that may yield *long-term* gains. Common examples include creating original content or carving out niche roles through localization (section 4.3.1). This highlights the asymmetries of traditional performance metrics for embracers versus resisters. Traditional performance metrics reward outcomes visible in the short-term, favoring professionals who embrace GAI. They fail to capture the work that requires more time and whose benefits only become apparent later. Developing more comprehensive performance metrics reflecting both immediate and long-term value creation would be both more equitable and better motivate sustained effort and outcomes for both groups while better reflecting the broad societal and professional implications of GAI.

5.2.2 GAI and Skill Development. We also observed differences between resisters and embracers in how they developed skills while working with GAI. In GAI-enabled expansion strategies, professionals used GAI for brainstorming and generating alternative ideas (Section 4.2.1). Although they did not always integrate GAI's recommendations into their work, these interactions provided opportunities to expand their knowledge and develop new skills and expertise. This relational method of developing expertise through

social interaction used to be thought of as a distinctive feature of human interaction [5]. In our findings, GAI was able to take on a relational role, providing context and adapting to professionals' requirements to develop professionals' skills, which had previously only been possible through human collaborations [82].

Professionals who resisted GAI also found ways to develop their skills and expertise. Those who employed human-driven expansion strategies acquired skills that provided greater ownership and control over their work (Section 4.1.1). Similarly, professionals using human-driven localization strategies focused on refining their skills and tailoring their work to better meet the needs of a niche audience that appreciated what they could offer (Section 4.3.1). Both of these strategies involved professionals anticipating the likely future implications of GAI-enabled work in their field and taking preemptive action to bring about a more desirable future state, strategies GAI is less effective at.

On the flip side, increased dependence on GAI for more complex and significant tasks showed signs of producing deprofessionalization and skill erosion among participants. Deprofessionalization is defined as the loss of autonomy and control, especially in the context of specialized knowledge or skill requirements in work settings [47]. We observed instances of deprofessionalization when professionals using GAI-based delegation strategies outsourced not only boring and mundane tasks but also those tasks that were relevant to professional identity, but challenging to execute (e.g., writing in a specific voice, see Section 4.4.3).

What makes these practices concerning is that, unlike previously reported deprofessionalization due to technology, in which peripheral tasks were delegated to GAI [84], the tasks delegated to it in our study were central to the professionals' identity and delegating them could cause skill decay. One way to mitigate observed instances of deprofessionalization is by designing GAI tools to offer more structured guidance, where the system offers instruction and demonstration on *how* to complete tasks in a modularized approach rather than providing the final solutions in one go. Such an approach would shift the focus from open-ended, outcome-driven interactions to more collaborative, process-oriented engagement, reducing deprofessionalization, and helping users develop and retain their skills.

5.2.3 GAI and Job Displacement. Some of professionals' skill development efforts related to GAI took them beyond their original scope of work. The interviews offered evidence of this role expansion in both professionals who resisted and those who embraced GAI. In human-driven expansion strategies, writing professionals such as journalists learned skills complementary to their role (e.g., graphic design) to broaden their capabilities, with the intention of resisting GAI-enabled automation (Section 4.3.2). Similarly, in GAI-enabled delegation strategies, writing professionals such as senior editors drastically reduced, and in some cases eliminated, their dependencies on other roles (e.g., junior writers).

We argue that both of these strategies indicate that roles are expanding in scope, with writing professionals absorbing into their role tasks traditionally executed by others. The key difference between the two groups lies in the direction of skill expansion. Professionals who resisted GAI absorbed the skills of neighboring roles performed by peers at a similar level in the organizational hierarchy

whose tasks are complementary to their own. In aggregate, this could lead to role consolidation and redistribution of tasks over time. On the contrary, professionals embracing GAI absorbed the skills of roles that reported to them, which may imply job displacement over time, but in a limited way because there is less incentive to expand the role of experts who can command higher pay to incorporate the responsibilities of their much less well-paid subordinates. These nuanced distinctions offer important contributions to work in economics forecasting employment and industry changes associated with GAI [7].

5.3 Creating an Equitable Work Environment for Resisters and Embracers of GAI

Our observations revealed that embracers and resisters were largely operating in silos, unaware of the crafting practices employed by the other group. Future HCI research will benefit from exploring mechanisms to illuminate these distinct practices and foster dialogue that can benefit embracers and resisters. For this, we invoke Wenger-Trayner [113]'s notion of Communities of Practice. In a community of practice, individuals with a common professional interest engage in collective learning by sharing lived experiences. Regardless of their particular strategies, embracers and resisters share common interests in safeguarding their jobs against potential negative impacts (e.g., automation) from GAI. Communities of practice could highlight these shared interests, build awareness of GAI's realistic capabilities (for resisters), and identify ways to make professionals' work identity and practices more visible (for embracers). Communities of practice can help both groups move beyond inaccurate assumptions and develop more nuanced mental models of how GAI benefits or hinders their work. The resultant dialogues can also support the development of policies and guidelines that incorporate the practices and perspectives of both groups.

Lastly, providing both groups with the exposure to the inner workings of GAI's functionalities can further improve how they craft for and against GAI technologies. End-user Explainable AI approaches offer a practical route to achieving this. For our argument, we apply Ehsan et al. [35]'s Explainable AI design, grounded in the notion of social transparency [99]. In this approach, the explainability of the AI system is derived from making the actions of other people visible in the human-AI assemblage [35]. Providing explanations for GAI's output, such as the author of the original source used to derive the output, or explaining why the original source was used for the output, can make embracers of GAI more cognizant of how and at what stages they are using the technology. For instance, seeing that the output for a task they delegated is derived from individual authors they admire, rather than thinking of it as output from a "machine," could encourage them to reflect on the types of activities for which they rely on GAI. This is essential, because unlike the discrete nature of interactions with prior forms of AI (e.g., decision making in predictive AI), professionals using GAI were engaging in more dynamic interactions, making it much more difficult for them to psychologically distance themselves to be more reflective and evaluative when using GAI outputs. Explanations may help encourage reflection and distance. Alternatively, for professionals resisting GAI, these explanations can improve their understanding of GAI, alleviate their fears, and further aid in

shaping their crafting strategies. Taken together, these approaches can facilitate a more thoughtful and intentional engagement of embracers and resisters with GAI, allowing both groups to maximize its benefits while minimizing potential risks.

5.4 Limitations

Our study had several limitations. Although our study covers a significant cross section of different job roles in writing, our insights are constrained by the general methodological limitations of qualitative research, such as a small sample size and limited generalizability beyond the writing field. More studies in this direction can improve the robustness of these findings across diverse professional fields and populations. Second, our study focused on individuals who had access to GAI and the autonomy to craft their work practices around it, as required by Job Crafting theory. We acknowledge that many professionals, particularly in marginalized communities globally, may lack access to GAI tools or the motivation, agency, or autonomy to craft their own jobs.

6 CONCLUSION

Our study adds much needed nuance to current understandings of how members of the writing community are shaping their practices by resisting and embracing GAI. It demonstrates that writing professionals are crafting their work, both by resisting as well as embracing GAI. Regardless of their orientation toward GAI, they actively reconfigured their work in response to these technologies through four different crafting strategies. Those who resisted GAI employed strategies to maximize their human potential, reinforce their professional identity, and carve out their own professional niche. In contrast, those who embraced GAI employed *GAI-enabled* strategies only in specific aspects of their work, such as enhancing workflows and minimizing mundane tasks, while also collaborating with GAI to reduce reliance on colleagues.

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A CODEBOOK FROM ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Theme / Code	Count	Theme / Code	Count
Crafting factors around GAI (16%)	234	Changes in task around GAI (29%)	413
Sense of control on work	13	Reducing quality/number of tasks	20
Job characteristics	14	Task reconfigurations	36
Organization push	15	Delegating repetitive/tedious tasks	32
Competition	19	Increasing task efficiency	26
Automation fear	21	Work (re)-planning	19
Skepticism	11	New AI-specific tasks	37
Changing work identity	19	Increased effort in low-priority tasks	07
Role impact	25	Increasing visibility of tasks	35
Competition	26	Confirmations	26
Need to adapt	12	Brainstorming ideas	32
GAI limitations	11	Increasing visibility of tasks	32
Ambiguity	17	Upskilling human labor	37
Environmental changes	31	Delegating stressful tasks	21
		Increase content ownership	24
		Niche Appeal	29
Changes in relationship around GAI (17%)	245	Changes in cognition around GAI (16%)	231
Increased collaborations w/ AI	31	Improving internal worth	26
Peer support to learn AI	27	Shifting image/work value	21
Improving collaborations through AI	22	Expanding role	18
Reducing dependencies	29	Improved understanding	18
Improving identity/brand w/ stakeholders	22	Reducing emotional stress	32
Safeguarding community	12	Augmenting capabilities	25
Avoiding GAI promotions	28	Improving control	32
Emotional support	33	Competitor to GAI	24
Instrumental support	31	Adversarial reactions	35
Community mobilization	10		
GAI specific labor (12%)	173	Levels of GAI integration (10%)	148
Prompt curation	18	Invisible use	35
Prompt designing	31	Partial use	26
Refining GAI outputs	34	Conformational use	24
Contributing expertise to improve GAI	09	Collaboration	29
Offloading AI labor	11	Modularization	09
Upskilling GAI techniques/training	17	Resistance	25
Integration/planning negotiations	24		
Non-use demand	29		

Table 2: The complete codebook that resulted from our analysis of qualitative interviews, showing six themes (**bold**) and corresponding codes, including the prevalence (%) for each theme, and the total count for each theme/code.