

Using AI to Improve Your Communication

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One rainy Tuesday afternoon, Vishnu worked on his laptop at a small café in Manchester. The clock ticked away as he struggled to find the perfect wording for an important email he needed to send his manager, Alex.

The email was about a glitch the team had found in a piece of code, and it would likely delay a crucial project deadline. Every sentence was a battle; each word made Vishnu question his intelligence and fit for his role. Vishnu read the email, then read it again, then again... but each time he read it, he began questioning the tone, the clarity, and the impact of his words all over again.

The afternoon passed, and Vishnu still wasn't happy with his email. He was frustrated, so he picked up the phone to vent to a friend. His friend suggested using AI for assistance. Sceptical but desperate, Vishnu decided to give it a try.

With a few clicks, Vishnu prompted the AI tool with the email's purpose and the key points he needed to communicate. He told the AI tool that he wanted the email to sound conversational as if it were actually Vishnu speaking, but he needed it to also be professional. He needed to inform his manager about the problem and take accountability without sounding like he was making excuses for the likelihood of the team not hitting their deadline.

In just a few seconds, the tool delivered a draft of Vishnu's email. It was clear, concise, and captured Vishnu's intent. There were a few points missing and Vishnu had to go back and forth with the tool a few times, but before long, he had an email he was happy with. Vishnu made some tweaks and added a couple of personal touches... but a few minutes later, Vishnu sent the email.

The next day, he received a response from Alex. Not only had Alex understood the message, and appreciated the accountability Vishnu had taken, but she also commended Vishnu on the clarity of the email. It had precisely conveyed the project concerns,

provided a revised timeline and suggested actionable steps that would help the team get there.

Vishnu could not believe what had just happened. He had spent hours writing that email and this AI tool did a better job almost instantly! Sure, he had to play around with the prompts and reinstruct the tool a few times to get what he needed, but it was easy, stress-free, and he knew it wouldn't take him long to learn how to optimise his use of prompts.

The AI tool hadn't just written an email; it had lifted a massive weight off his shoulders. It transformed hours of stress into a moment of insightful assistance. From that day on, Vishnu embraced AI as a partner in communication, a tool that complemented his skills and turned daunting tasks into opportunities for success.

In the blend of human thought and AI efficiency, Vishnu found a newfound confidence in his professional communications.

Welcome to our lesson on Using AI to Improve Communication. Our journey today will examine the transformative role of artificial intelligence in professional communication. You'll understand its benefits and challenges and explore how to embrace uniquely human skills in an AI-driven world.

Artificial intelligence leaders like OpenAI, Google, and Microsoft are working furiously to expand the capabilities and use of AI. AI technologies like chatbots and virtual assistants are not just tools; they're reshaping how we interact and connect with friends, colleagues, and businesses.

There are many ways AI can be used to improve communication.

First, AI can improve both accessibility and efficiency. As Vishnu learned, using AI can help you complete tasks like writing emails, press releases, case studies, or any type of content quickly and efficiently. AI tools will rarely produce a perfect piece on the first try, but they can generate something you can use as a starting point.

This is especially helpful for those who are trying to communicate in a language they're not fully fluent in. Sometimes, written communication can be extremely challenging. AI tools can be incredibly helpful in these situations – just write your first draft, drop it into a tool like ChatGPT and prompt, "Can you please edit and rephrase this to use perfect British English?"

AI can help businesses be more efficient. By using AI chatbots that provide real-time, accurate responses to customer inquiries, AI can take care of many of the monotonous tasks workers need to deal with in their day-to-day roles. This gives individuals time to focus on higher-priority items. This is more than a futuristic vision; it's a current reality, changing the landscape of customer service.

AI also helps when it comes to tailoring communication. By analysing user data, AI tools can adapt communications to individual preferences. For example, Spotify's AI-driven personalised playlists showcase how AI can cater to individual tastes and enhance user experience. AI communication tools can be trained to understand your preferred tone and language style, becoming more and more efficient as they learn what you like.

Now, this all sounds pretty great, but AI is not without its challenges and drawbacks.

Dr. Isaac Kohane, a computer scientist and physician at Harvard, collaborated with colleagues to evaluate the medical capabilities of OpenAI's GPT-4 for their upcoming book, "The AI Revolution in Medicine." They found that GPT-4 performed exceptionally well in a medical setting, outperforming many doctors and scoring over 90% on US medical exam licensing questions." [1]

The AI model wasn't just good at taking tests... it also translated medical information accurately and efficiently, simplifying complex jargon and offering advice on bedside manner. But while GPT-4 can summarise lengthy reports quickly and even explain its reasoning, Kohane certainly acknowledges its limitations, stating its intelligence is based on data patterns without true understanding. The book highlights GPT-4's imperfections, like making subtle errors and "hallucinating" or fabricating answers, raising concerns about its reliability and lack of ethical judgement compared to human medical professionals.

As AI becomes increasingly sophisticated, differentiating AI-generated content from human-generated content becomes challenging, raising concerns about trust and transparency, especially in journalism and marketing.

A critical concern is AI's potential to perpetuate biases. AI tools are trained based on information fed to them, and if that information is based on biased data, AI tools could reinforce existing inequalities. Research from the AI Now Institute [2] illustrates how AI language models can reflect gender and racial biases, noting that he/him pronouns are often more likely to be associated with career-related words than she/her pronouns. This highlights the importance of ethical AI development.

Despite advancements, AI faces the hurdle of anthropocentric bias [3] – which is the human tendency to prefer human over AI interactions. Studies show that AI-created artworks are perceived as less creative when compared to human-made ones, suggesting that humans favour human-to-human connections, especially in high-stakes situations. The same could be said about AI-generated communications like emails and social media posts, which is one reason it's so important to review and add your own personality to anything you create using AI tools.

The future of communication lies in the synergy between human and AI intelligence. Let's take a look at the concept of "Centaur Chess." [3]

Yes, now we're talking about playing chess.

Centaur chess is a combo of human intelligence and computerised chess analysis, where players use their intuition and strategic thinking alongside a computer's ability to calculate huge numbers of potential moves and outcomes.

The approach allows players to consult advanced chess engines during games, integrating millions of stored game data into their decision-making.

In this half-human, half-machine format, the player maintains the crucial role of making the final moves, combining human judgement with the computer's recommendations. This synergy enhances the game beyond the capabilities of either humans or machines alone, demonstrating a successful collaborative model where technology amplifies human strategy and intuition.

This is sort of how Vishnu used AI to write that email to his manager at the beginning of this lesson. He used the AI to get him started, to get his ideas and structure all setup, then took the time to tweak the wording and add personal touches to bring humanity into the end result.

AI can help us communicate more clearly and more efficiently – there's no doubt about that.

But as we embrace AI, it's essential to maintain our uniquely human skills, especially when it comes to communicating with others. Collaborating with AI creates an environment where both humans and machines benefit from one another's strengths.

This week, choose one tedious task that AI may be able to help you with. As technology advances, embracing our humanness and fostering human connections becomes crucial for personal and professional growth. By recognising the importance of human-centric

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skills and cultivating human-AI collaboration, we can pave the way for innovation and achievement in the AI era.

Thank you for joining us. Have a productive day.

[1] *The Newest Version of ChatGPT Passed the US Medical Licensing Exam With Flying Colors — and Diagnosed a 1 in 100,000 Condition in Seconds*, Hilary Brueck (2023)
<https://www.businessinsider.com/chatgpt-passes-medical-exam-diagnoses-rare-condition-2023-4>

[2] *The Future of Communication: How AI is Transforming the Way We Connect*, Sascha H. Funk (2023)
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/future-communication-how-ai-transforming-way-we-connet-sascha-h-funk/>

[3] *The Future Of Communication In The Age Of Artificial Intelligence*, Kwame Christian, Forbes (2023)
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kwamechristian/2023/05/04/the-future-of-communication-in-the-age-of-artificial-intelligence/?sh=2fafa0cc469c>