

# HOW ARE EMPLOYEES USING GENERATIVE AI TO PRODUCE WRITTEN WORK IN 2025?

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...and is it killing our ability to think critically?

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# WHY DID WE CARRY OUT THIS RESEARCH?

Wordtree partners with corporate organisations to solve communications and cultural challenges. We're a small, niche consultancy that uses language to articulate and embed brand and culture.

Sometimes this can be as straightforward as creating marketing collateral that conveys a consistent story. Sometimes it's articulating the building blocks of an organisation's narrative, and leveraging the power of language to shape the ways people think about – and act – within their organisations.

Earlier this year, we were facilitating a training workshop with a mixed group of colleagues. Sitting together were HR professionals, marketers, a small sales team, a lawyer and a couple of people from finance.

About half an hour into the session, a marketer approached us looking concerned. "Sorry," he said. "But can I just ask – are you actually expecting us to *write* in this session?"

When we said that, yes, writing was very much part of exploring how language aligns with brand, his face contorted further: "I haven't written anything in two years," he said. "No-one does. Writing is dead."

He explained that his daily routine was to receive briefs, drop them into ChatGPT and copy-paste the results into publishing software.

We asked him about his quality assurance processes. He looked confused, so we

asked: "Without some kind of checklist, how do you assess the AI outputs?"

He thought we were insane. "No-one has time to check outputs," he said. "ChatGPT gets it right – it spells better than me."

Wow. OK, we thought. We'll need to discuss this with our client...

But this exchange kept niggling away at us. Is this really the future? No thinking, no checking – just a focus on hyper productivity?

We decided to find out what the picture was more broadly – and commissioned this research.

We're not against generative AI. On the contrary, we advise top-tier corporations on how to integrate it into workstreams safely and productively.

Generative AI can be a magnificently powerful tool that can boost productivity and all-but automate some of the more mundane, repetitive aspects of communications – sometimes removing significant cost and effort.

This potential for cost savings and speed can make it irresistible to senior leaders. But like all disruptive, revolutionary technology, it poses risks as well as benefits.

In a classic project management matrix, some of these risks would be categorised as "severe", "extreme" or "critical".

Yet this research indicates that general understanding of some of the more serious risks is surprisingly low.

Fundamentally, generative AI does not think. Instead, it hoovers up enormous quantities of data – like everything that’s available on the internet. From this, it learns patterns – including how sentences are structured and which words are likely to follow others.

Based on this ability to recognise and replicate patterns, it can now generate highly plausible, readable text. And it does it in split seconds.

But if you look carefully at any generative AI platform, you’ll see some variation of the following warning: *AI responses may include mistakes.*

AI makes errors for a whole range of reasons, including inaccuracies in source data, biases of programmers and algorithms working inefficiently<sup>1</sup>. Then there’s “hallucination” – which is a technical term for “making stuff up” and is a characteristic of the way that generative AI works.

The whole purpose of generative AI is to generate. So even if there is no concrete underlying data, the technology will generate outputs that conform to patterns it has identified.

These have already included bogus academic citations. Some of them have made their ways into student papers – and, infamously, the USA’s Health and Human Services Secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr’s, *Make America Healthy Again*<sup>2</sup> report.

Using generative AI can also result in plagiarism – even when authors don’t set out to copy the work of others.

And if colleagues use unsecured generative AI platforms, they also need to remember that any information they input – including sensitive reports, marketing campaigns and even corporate strategy – will be gobbled up by the AI. This could then be regurgitated when any competitor asks: *What strategies are companies in my sector adopting?*

In other words, uncontrolled use of generative AI has the potential to leak IP and breach GDPR obligations.

Also critical to consider is the environmental cost of using generative AI platforms. The technology consumes significant amounts of energy and water.

There could be a temptation to think these are simply teething problems, and that the companies behind the platforms are working around the clock to eliminate these risks.

However, this does not appear to be the case. The Financial Times reported that the “Godfather” of AI, Yoshua Bengio, is concerned that in the race to make AI ever-more intelligent, improving accuracy and safety are not seen as priorities<sup>3</sup>.

The pursuit of short-term efficiencies could also threaten longer-term resilience. If it becomes the norm to delegate thinking and creation to non-human resources – how will companies drive innovation and thought leadership in the future?

We hope this report prompts individuals and organisations to consider both the benefits and risks of generative AI. We hope it leads to discussions about balancing efficiencies with creating space for human thinking and analysis – and of the need for guardrails and training.

Because the current laissez-faire approach to the use of generative AI may be exposing organisations to serious short-term and longer-term risks.



Liz Doig  
Founder and lead strategist  
Wordtree

<sup>1</sup> <https://ml-site.cdn-apple.com/papers/the-illusion-of-thinking.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.science.org/content/article/trump-officials-downplay-fake-citations-high-profile-report-children-s-health>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/2b3ce320-2451-45c4-a15c-757461624585>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Generative AI – software that can generate content like text, images, video, code and more – can trace its development back to the 1960s. But it's only in the last three years that it's become widely available to anyone who wants to use it.

In November 2022, OpenAI released ChatGPT. The following February, Microsoft launched Copilot. A month later, Google launched Bard and Anthropic unveiled Claude. More generative AI platforms followed – and the technology began to be integrated into many types of software.

In a little over two years, generative AI has become a go-to resource for millions and millions of people. In February this year, ChatGPT alone said it had 400m active weekly users<sup>4</sup> – and 2m paying enterprise users.

Generative AI has rapidly become ultra-accessible. And it's being used to do everything from generating highly plausible university essays, through to producing spreadsheets, planning days out and generating poetry – as well as vast swathes of corporate communications.

Anecdotally, we know that generative AI has quickly become an important tool for Wordtree's corporate clients. We know that many senior leaders regard the technology as a golden opportunity to enhance productivity and cut costs. Indeed, we've supported some of our clients to embed generative AI, safely and productively, into workflows.

But in our experience, thoughtful and well-implemented uses of generative AI

are still the exception, rather than the rule.

So we decided to commission this top-level research to get a clearer picture of the ways it's currently being used.

We focused on the use of generative AI to create written materials – including everything from emails between colleagues, through to reports, internal communications and marketing and sales collateral.

We wanted to know answers to questions including: How many people are using it? How often are they using it? What are they using it for? Do they like it? What do they feel the pros and cons of using it are? How are organisations integrating it? And are they aware of the risks – and putting systems into place to mitigate them?

What emerged was a picture of almost ubiquitous generative AI use. Marketers are using it to create marketing materials. HR professionals are using it to create job ads and internal comms. Analysts are using it to produce reports. Educators are using it to generate training materials.

Everyone is using it. And managers and senior leaders are aware that everyone is using it.

However, there are rarely guardrails in place to govern the way it's used.

And what should perhaps provoke even more concern is that it appears very little thought is being given to its long-term impact on an organisation's ability to think critically and innovate.

Yes, the act of human writing takes time. However, research shows that it forces a deeper engagement with subject matter – and prompts critical thinking, analysis, reflection, evaluation, creativity and reasoning<sup>5</sup>.

In other words, organisations that achieve efficiencies by removing human writing as a task, could be at risk of hobbling their teams' abilities to think critically and innovate.

Is this already happening? Are team members already losing the ability to think? It's difficult to say. But at the end of this survey, we gave participants a couple of optional questions. What were they most proud of producing using generative AI? And what were they least proud of producing, using the technology?

In freeform answers, several respondents told us they regularly use generative AI to write emails to colleagues. A couple of people told us they had used it to generate messages to write in cards for colleagues.

Maybe they were in a rush on the day they needed to say "happy birthday" – or pop a note in a colleague's leaving card. Or maybe the message was difficult to write for personal or political reasons. Or they didn't know the recipient of the card and couldn't be bothered.

But there is a chance that, after months and years of using ChatGPT to generate all written outputs, they'd lost confidence in their own ability to create a message.

If this is the case, it doesn't bode well for companies' long-term resilience.

Writing is a two-sided coin. On one side, it's a process of recording and transmitting information. On the other, it's a process that obliges us to think, analyse, reflect, interrogate – and organise – our thinking.

If organisations focus on recording and transmitting – then generative AI can feel like a revolution in productivity.

But when reducing – or completely removing – human input reduces the process of organising thoughts, what will the longer-term impact be?

Will organisations lose institutional knowledge? Will they need to rely more heavily on external support for new ideas and creativity?

In a world where change is the only constant, is the short-term gain in productivity worth trading for longer-term innovation and resilience?

## Which platforms are being used?

Overall, the picture painted by participants was one of broad adoption.

Only 14% of respondents had never used generative AI to create written outputs. The remaining 86% are using the technology for this purpose, at least some of the time.

Most respondents are using more than one generative AI platform. A total of 36% use one platform only. The rest (64%) use more than one platform.

By far the most used platform is ChatGPT (cited by 69% of respondents). This is followed by Microsoft's Copilot (45%), Grammarly (15%) and Google's Gemini (14%). Interestingly, 72% of respondents using Copilot are also using ChatGPT.

## What are corporate attitudes towards using generative AI to produce written outputs?

Generally, respondents were positive about using generative AI to create written materials – but there were concerns and frustrations about using it too.

Senior leaders were more likely to be “very positive” about its use than entry or mid-level colleagues (38% of all senior leaders were “very positive” while 13% of entry and mid-level respondents were “very positive”).

This may indicate that having hands-on experience of using the technology slightly dampens enthusiasm for it.

About a third of respondents (31%) said that their organisations actively encouraged the use of generative AI to produce written materials. Just 6% said that their organisations actively discouraged use of the technology. This left 63% of respondents, who said their organisations neither encouraged, nor discouraged, using generative AI to create written materials.

This would suggest that most organisations have a laissez-faire approach to generative AI use.

ChatGPT is the most used generative AI platform, followed by Copilot.

It appears most organisations have a laissez-faire attitude to generative AI use.

## How frequently are participants using generative AI to create written materials?

Almost a third of respondents (28%) are using generative AI to support their written work, as least once a day. A further 21% are using it a few times a week. Only 14% never use it – and 10% use it less than once a month.

Almost a third of respondents are using generative AI to create written materials at least once a day.

## How much of their written work are participants using generative AI for?

Most participants (59%) are using generative AI to support with up to 25% of their written workload.

A total of 14% are using it to generate up to 50% of their written outputs. And a small percentage (3%) are using it to create more than 75% of their written work.

A small percentage of participants are using generative AI to produce more than 75% of their written work.

The technology is being used to perform multiple writing tasks – from structuring and drafting materials, through to formatting and spellchecking.

## What are they using it to generate?

Generative AI is being used to create a wide variety of written outputs.

A total of 46% of respondents use it to create reports – with some sharing comments that AI helped them to complete these documents in a couple of hours, rather than days.

46% of respondents use generative AI to create reports. 33% are using it to write emails to colleagues.

Marketers are clearly getting a lot of use out of the technology – with up to two thirds of respondents sharing that they use it to generate various types of marketing collateral.

Other types of written work produced using generative AI include HR and internal communications (39%), education and training content (26%) and sales communications (21%). Notably, a third of respondents (33%) are using generative AI to write emails to colleagues.

## Are respondents using secured generative AI environments?

Generative AI can be open-access (unsecured) or closed-access (secured). Closed-access systems are designed to keep data private, and within an organisation.

An open-access – or unsecured – platform doesn't keep data within an organisation. Instead, any information that has been inputted into an unsecured platform can be used to "train" the underlying technology. This data can then be shared with anyone using the platform, anywhere in the world.

This sharing could happen in a subtle way – perhaps with generative AI extracting only small pieces of one organisation's information and blending them with many other sources. It can also happen in more obvious ways, especially when the question asked of generative AI is very specific. This could result in whole pieces of work being regurgitated, almost identically.

It was therefore concerning to discover that most respondents are using unsecured generative AI environments some or all of the time.

Just under a third (30%) only use a secured generative AI environment. A total of 36% of respondents only use unsecured generative AI environments – and 21% use a mixture of both.

Of equal concern was the fact that 13% of respondents weren't sure if they were working in secured or unsecured environments.

When we analysed the types of work being carried out in both secured and unsecured environments, the figures were broadly similar. In other words, participants do not appear to be consciously choosing secured environments for sensitive or confidential information. Instead, they are generally creating the same types of materials, regardless of whether they're working in a secured environment or not.

Most people are working in unsecured generative AI environments some or all of the time.

## What are the perceived advantages of using generative AI to create written materials?

The top three advantages cited by participants were speed (80%), introducing efficiencies (70%) and increasing productivity (68%).

Fewer respondents saw generative AI as a way of increasing the potential for innovation (32%) or introducing cost savings (30%). Managers, however, were more likely to identify cost savings as a benefit (41%), than non-managers (18%).

The #1 benefit of using generative AI is seen to be speed.

## What are the perceived disadvantages of using generative AI to create written materials?

Overall, there was relatively low recognition of some of the key risks associated with generative AI use.

Respondents were very likely to acknowledge the risk of poor quality output (77%). At the same time, the potential for breaching copyright and reducing critical thinking were cited as a risks by 59% and 58% of participants, respectively.

However, failing to safeguard intellectual property (IP) was only flagged by 49% of respondents – and maintaining confidentiality by 44%.

Less than a third of participants highlighted breaching GDPR obligations, or sustainability, as potential risks of using the technology (30% and 28% respectively).

It seems the risks most likely to be identified by respondents are those where the consequences can be directly observed. Professionals who deal with written generative AI outputs know from first-hand experience that they can contain errors, draw wrong conclusions – and sound a little odd, or very like communications from direct competitors.

The risks whose consequences can't be immediately seen – like IP leakage, confidentiality and sustainability – were less likely to be cited. However, low-level recognition does not equate to low-level risk.

Put simply, if your organisation's use of generative AI produces marketing materials that read a little strangely, you'll perhaps take a small reputational hit. However, if in producing a report or pitch document, a colleague inputs confidential, commercially sensitive information into an unsecured environment – your organisation may lose business, trade secrets and competitive advantage. It may also breach client confidentiality agreements.

Sustainability is another key area of risk that appears to have relatively low recognition. This should be particularly concerning for organisations that have made commitments (or are obliged) to report on their carbon and water footprint.

Less than half of respondents recognised intellectual property loss or breaches of confidentiality as risks of using generative AI.

However, nearly two thirds said generative AI use presents a risk to the ability to think critically.

The data centres required to train generative AI models – and respond to queries and prompts – consume vast amounts of carbon and cooling water. If an organisation’s materiality assessment was last updated before late 2022 – and its teams are regularly using generative AI – it’s likely that they’ll need to recalculate their starting point for carbon and water consumption.

A longer-term area of risk associated with the use of generative AI is the potential to lose the ability to think critically. A total of 58% of survey respondents saw this as a key risk of generative AI use.

It’s worth remembering that the act of writing isn’t simply an inefficiency to be streamlined with AI. It’s a way of organising thought and applying critical analysis.<sup>6</sup>

The challenge, of course, is that a report that has taken three days of brain-aching analysis and writing to produce may not feel quite as polished as a slick generative AI production. However, from the right author, it is likely to contain fewer errors and more genuine insight.

If an organisation’s teams begin to routinely delegate tasks such as email and report writing to generative AI, does this mean they will ultimately reduce their opportunities to develop the skill of critical thinking? And if it does, what will this mean for the long-term resilience of organisations and their ability to thrive through innovation?

## How many organisations have guardrails in place?

A total of 60% of respondents either didn't know if their organisation had generative AI policies in place – or knew that they definitely didn't.

Only a quarter of professionals who responded to the survey knew that their organisation definitely did have generative AI policies in place.

Where policies exist, they cover acceptable use, treatment of confidential information and use of platforms. Less than a quarter of workplace generative AI policies mandate use of quality assurance (QA) processes.

Additionally, a total of 66% of respondents either didn't know if their organisation had QA processes, or knew they definitely did not. Meantime, 21% said their workplace had ad-hoc QA processes in place for checking and monitoring the outputs of generative AI. Only 13% said there were formal, departmental or company-wide quality-checking processes in place.

It seems that in a race to generate cost savings and efficiencies in some organisations, little is being done to make sure the technology is being used safely, or to achieve consistently high quality outputs.

Interestingly, participants from organisations that do have policies and process in place were more likely to say that the technology has introduced efficiencies. They also seem to make greater use of it.

Only 25% of respondents work in organisations that have a generative AI policy.

Only 13% work in organisations that have formal QA processes for checking and implementing generative AI outputs.

# Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, we urge leaders to consider:

## **Providing – and mandating – use of secured generative AI environments**

Where organisations are not using secured generative AI environments, they are likely to be giving their data away. At the low end of the risk scale, they may, for example, be putting their own marketing communications out into the world – which the generative AI will be all too happy to convert into a template for a competitor to use.

At the higher end of the risk scale, they may be sharing their own – or their clients' – highly sensitive commercial information.

Secured environments are a must – and their use must be embedded with policy, training and process.

## **Introducing QA approaches that are widely understood and implemented**

Creative agencies are very familiar with the good/cheap/fast triangle. It's a device that's used to manage expectations – and the received wisdom is that clients can only have two out of the three at any given time. So creative work provided by the agency can be good and fast – but it won't be cheap. Or it can be cheap and good, but it won't be fast... and so on.

A little of this thinking would go a long way to help organisations embed generative AI into their workflows. Yes, generative AI can create efficiencies and speed. But this can't come at the expense of "good". Some investment in quality control and training is required.

## **Understanding the link between writing, thinking and innovation**

In the race to introduce the efficiencies and cost savings associated with generative AI, there can be a temptation to think of writing as a manual workflow that is ripe for industrialisation. This way of thinking sees writing in a similar way to creating cloth on a hand loom, or sawing wooden beams and joists by hand. It takes days to work this way – so why not bring in technology to spit out multiple cloths/joists/documents in seconds?

And to an extent, this analogy can work. When you have technology that can pump out thousands of words a second, why would you pay for a human being to do it by hand? This thinking can be particularly on-the-nail when the requirement is for multiple tiny variations of mundane, transactional communications.

But generative AI won't provide original thinking. For example, if you ask it to give you ideas for a marketing campaign for milk chocolate, it will provide multiple, highly predictable lines about "sweet treats". What it absolutely will not do is suggest a 500lb gorilla playing the drums.

And maybe more pertinently for many organisations, what this way of thinking about writing fails to acknowledge is this: The act of committing words to a page is a vitally important way of developing critical thinking. By writing, we explore, organise and interrogate our own thinking. Which builds understanding, confidence and resilience. It fosters innovation – and it boosts collaboration.

Can your organisation afford to delegate this ability to an algorithm?

# ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

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# METHOD

This research set out to understand how generative AI is being used to create written documents and materials in corporate workplaces.

We created an anonymous online survey of roughly five minutes' duration – and asked Wordtree's clients and contacts to complete it. There were no incentives to take part (other than sharing results with participants).

The definition of “written materials” was broad – covering everything from emails and reports, through to marketing materials, learning materials, policy documents and more.

In total, 71 professionals from a variety of sectors and roles completed the survey – and a further 16 partially completed it – between April 24 and May 22, 2025.

Everyone who completed the survey either creates written materials as part of their role – or manages people who do.

## Participants

Survey participants were primarily Wordtree contacts – or professionals who responded to LinkedIn prompts to take part. Predominantly, participants work in professional services or knowledge-based roles – and are more likely to be in mid-level or senior roles.

Participants are based in the UK and mainland Europe. We cannot therefore be sure if the same results would have been produced if respondents had also come from North America or the rest of the world.

Some of our findings skirted the edge of statistical significance – however, where we believed they might indicate an interesting trend, we have included them. When we've done this, we have been clear that the sample size is very low.

### Survey limitations

The survey was completed by a relatively small sample size.

### Rounding

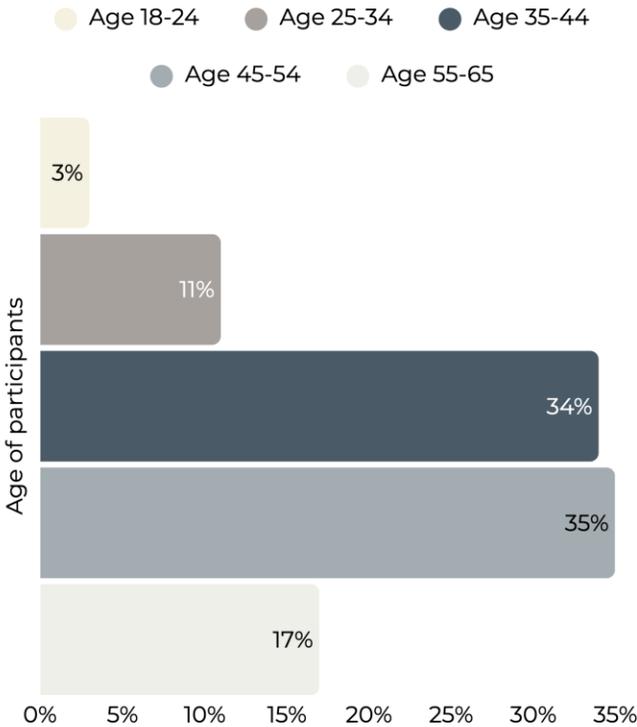
Please note that due to the effects of rounding, some cumulative percentages do not add up to 100.

# ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

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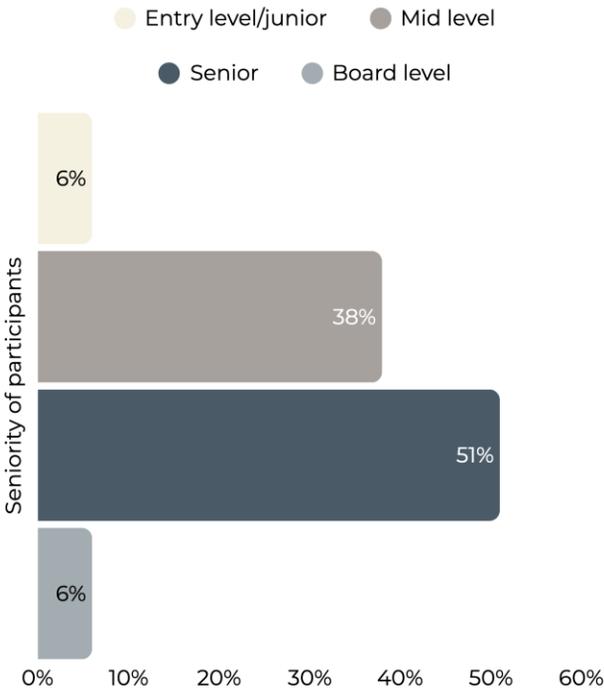


# BROAD DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN TERMS OF AGE AND LEVEL OF SENIORITY



Participants represent a wide range of ages and levels of seniority.

Most were between the ages of 35-54 – and in mid to senior-level roles.

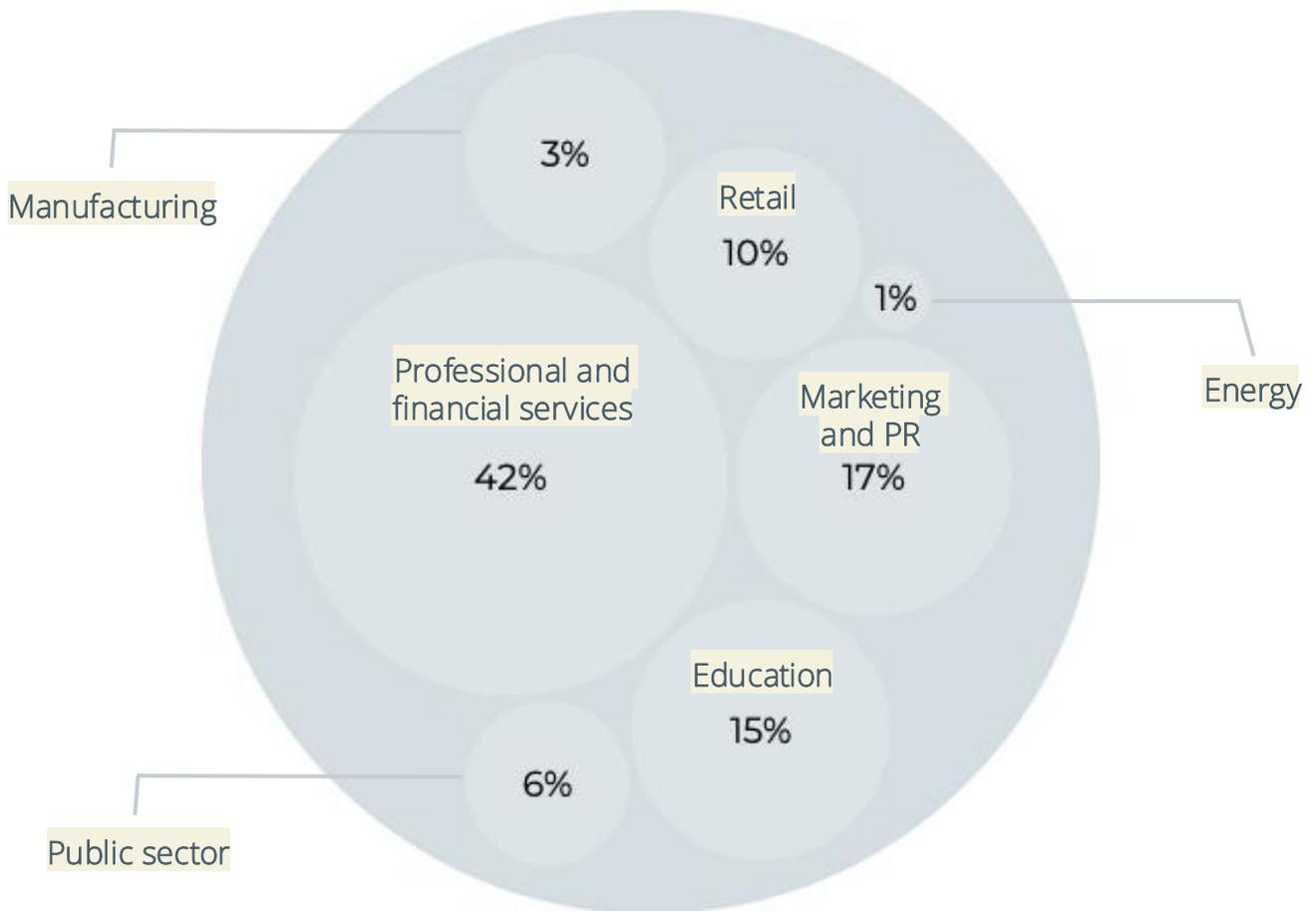


Question: Approximately how many people work in your organisation?

Source: Wordtree / Customer IQ

Base: All participants (n=71)

# PARTICIPANTS REPRESENT A WIDE RANGE OF BUSINESS SECTORS



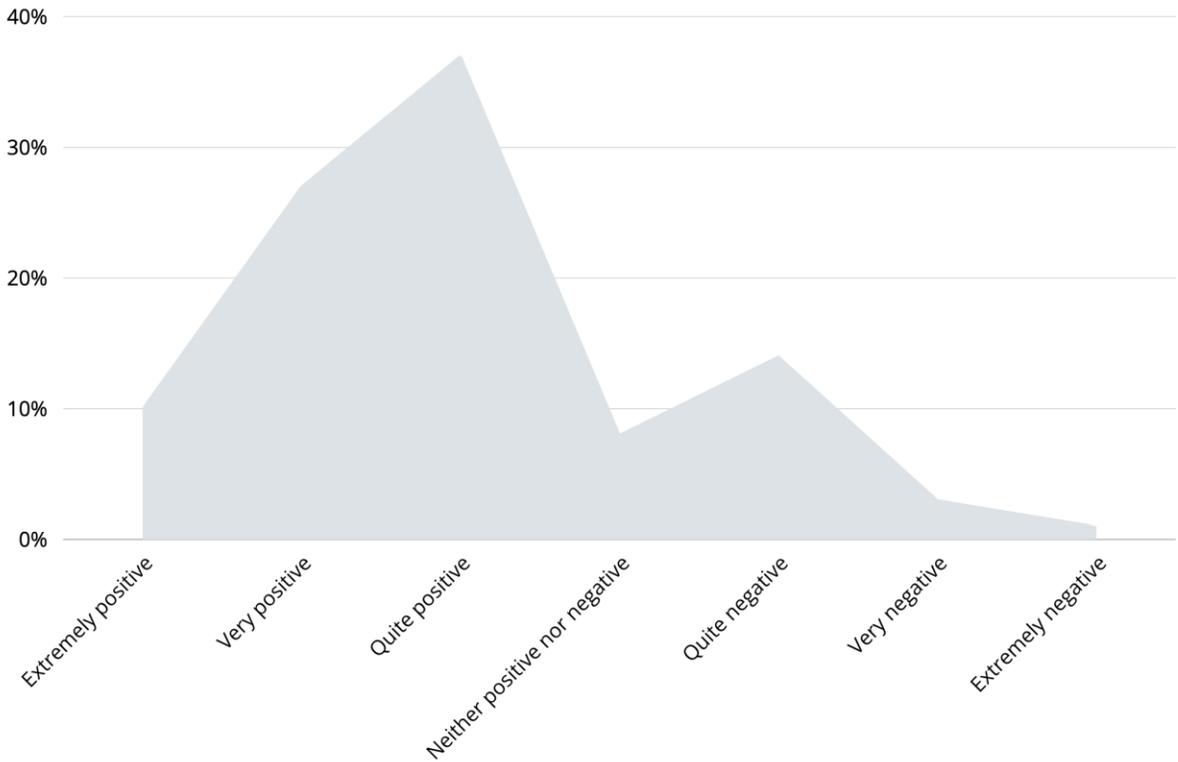
Participants come from a broad range of sectors – and work across disciplines including marketing and sales, operations, customer services, HR, consultancy and academia.

# PERCEPTIONS OF GENERATIVE AI

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# OVERALL, PARTICIPANTS FEEL POSITIVE ABOUT USING GENERATIVE AI TO CREATE WRITTEN MATERIALS



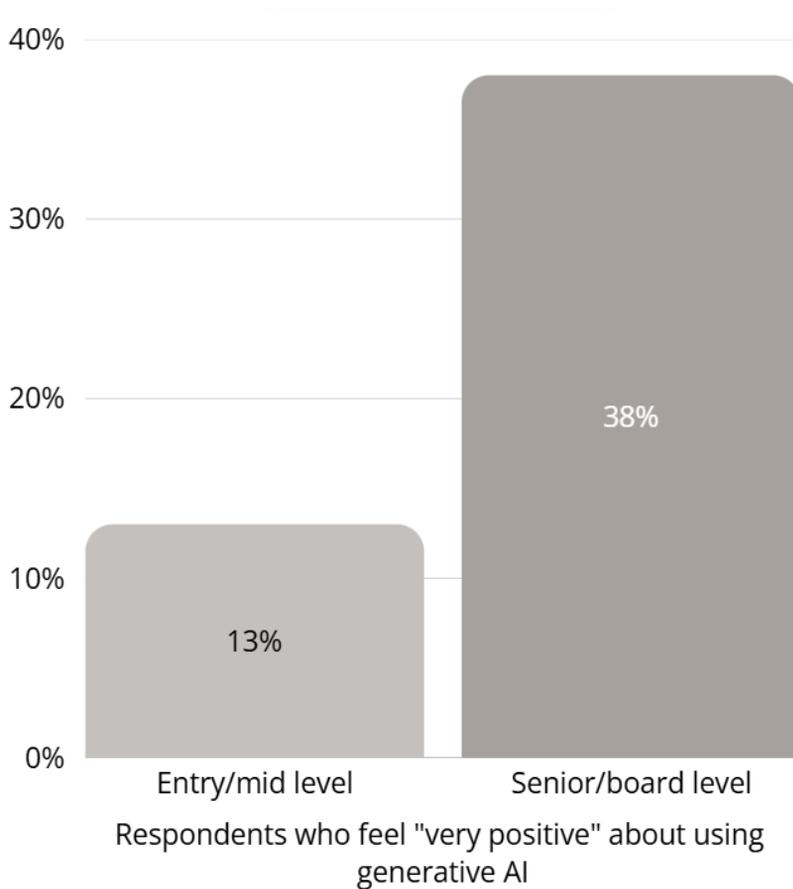
Levels of positivity about generative AI use in respondents' organisations

A total of 73% of participants were either extremely, very or quite positive about the use of generative AI to create written documents and materials in the workplace.

A small but significant minority (18%) were negative about the use of generative AI.

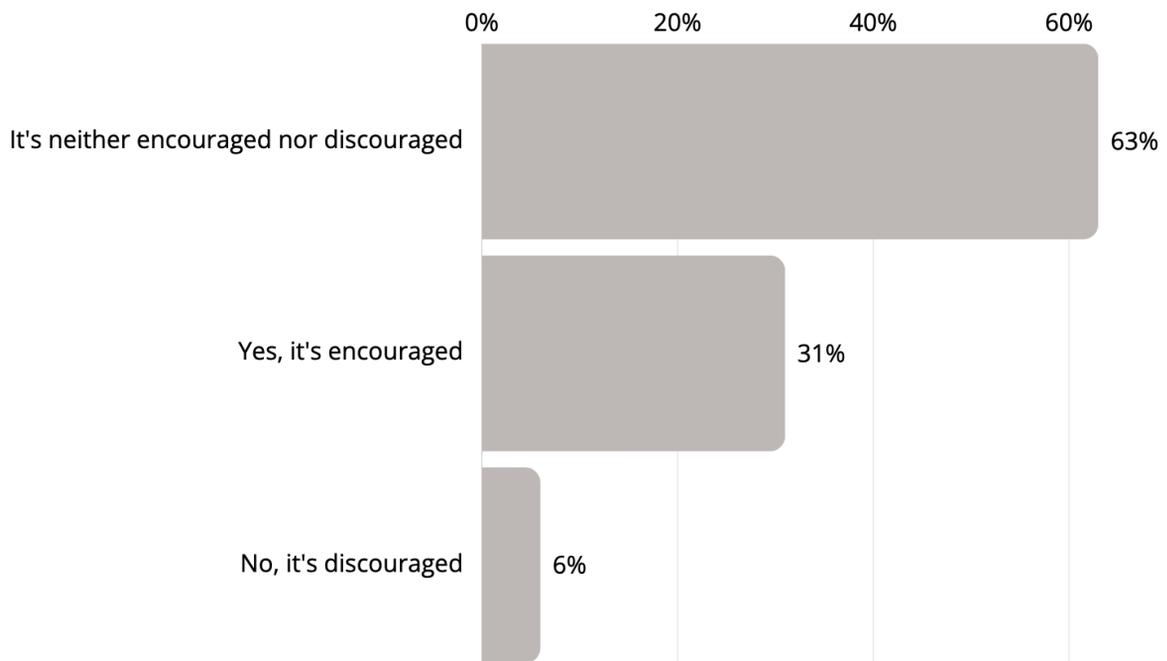
Senior and board level participants were significantly more likely to be “very positive”, compared to those in entry and mid-level roles.

# SENIOR-LEVEL RESPONDENTS MORE LIKELY TO FEEL “VERY POSITIVE” ABOUT THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI



Of senior and board level respondents, 38% were “very positive” about the use of generative AI in the creation of written documents and materials. By contrast, of entry and mid-level respondents, only 13% were “very positive”.

# ORGANISATIONS DO NOT SEEM TO COMMUNICATE A STRONG VIEW ABOUT THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI



The majority of organisations (63%) do not seem to be communicating a strong message to colleagues about using generative AI.

Almost a third actively encourage its use, while a very small percentage (6%) actively discourage it.

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID...

Throughout this survey, respondents had opportunities to share views, feelings and observations via open text comments. These were some of their thoughts on perceptions of generative AI...

## Positive perceptions

"I love to use generative AI, but it's important to know how it works. When you use it for writing text, don't be lazy. You should write your own draft text and be very clear about what you expect from AI (proofreading, making it more clear) while staying close to your personal style. Only then can it help."

"Great tool with underestimated impact."

"I'm a founder – Gen AI is critical to me scaling this business quickly."

## Negative perceptions

"I hate using it. It causes errors and creates harm every day. But there is a board level decision to jump on the bandwagon and cut costs. I think it's unwise."

"I pushed back as much as I could [against generative AI] and argued my case but it falls on deaf ears and ultimately I ended up having to adjust to my manager and boss's views."

"We are wary of it, due to the possibility of inaccuracies."

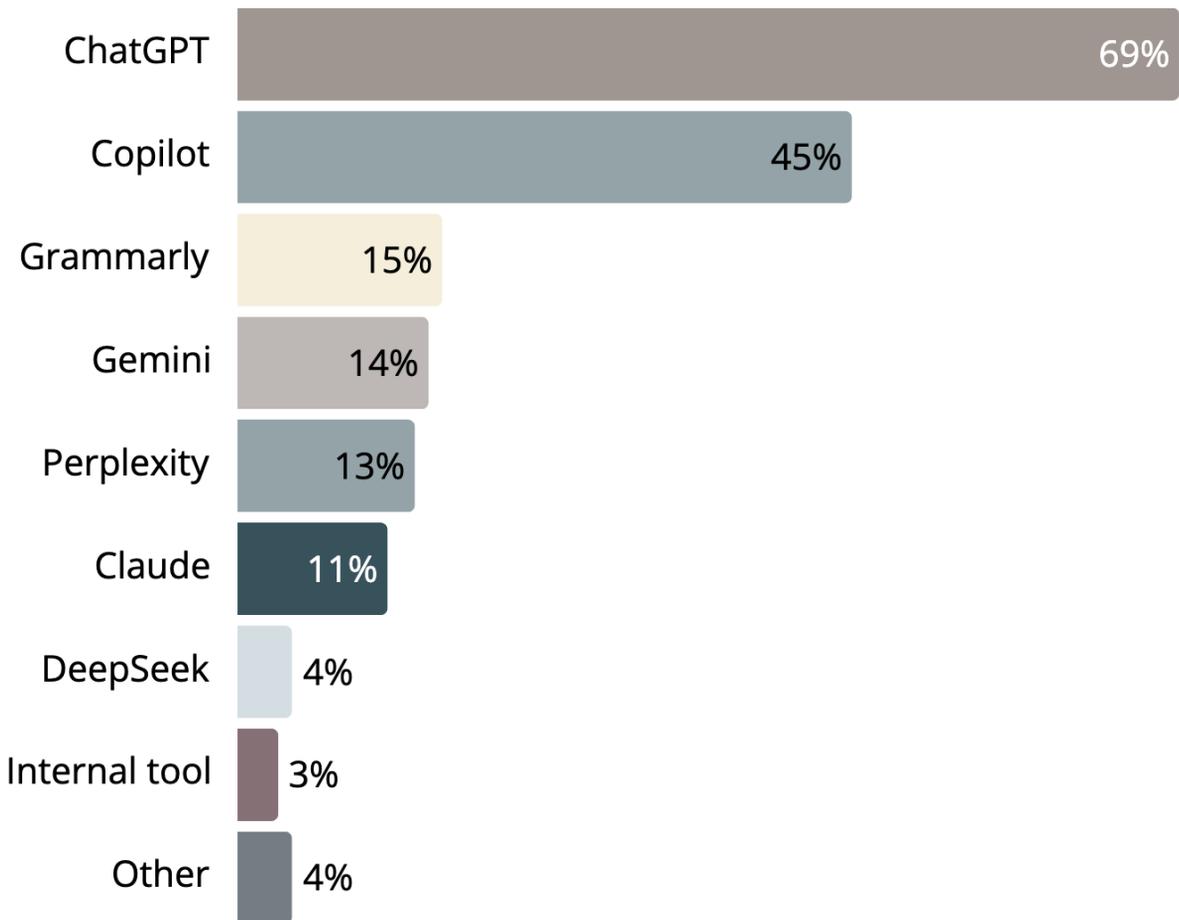
"I don't really know what it is."

# HOW IS GENERATIVE AI BEING USED?

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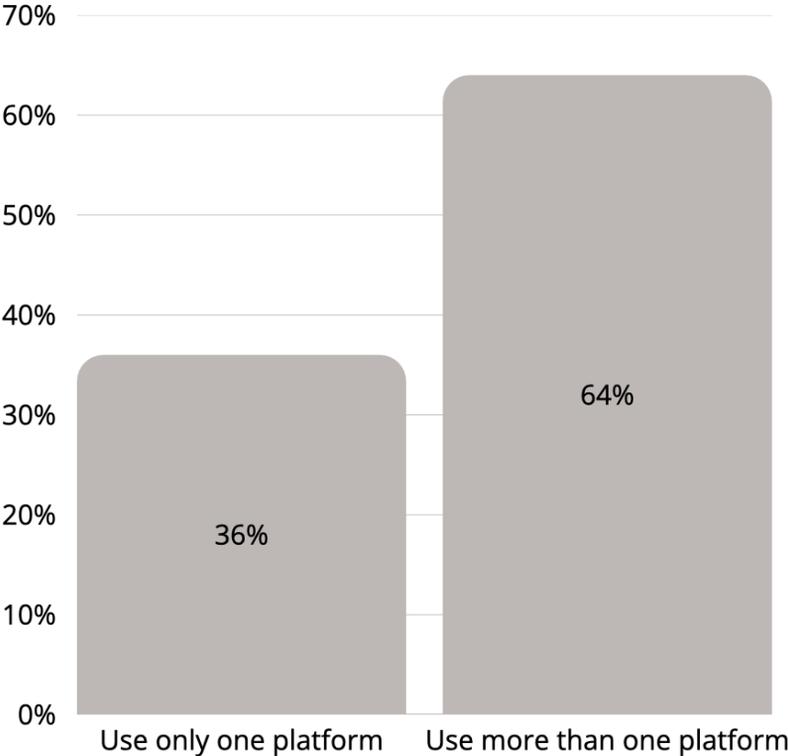
# CHATGPT IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED PLATFORM, FOLLOWED BY COPILOT



The survey asked participants to highlight the generative AI platforms they use. ChatGPT is used by 69% of respondents – and Copilot by 45%.

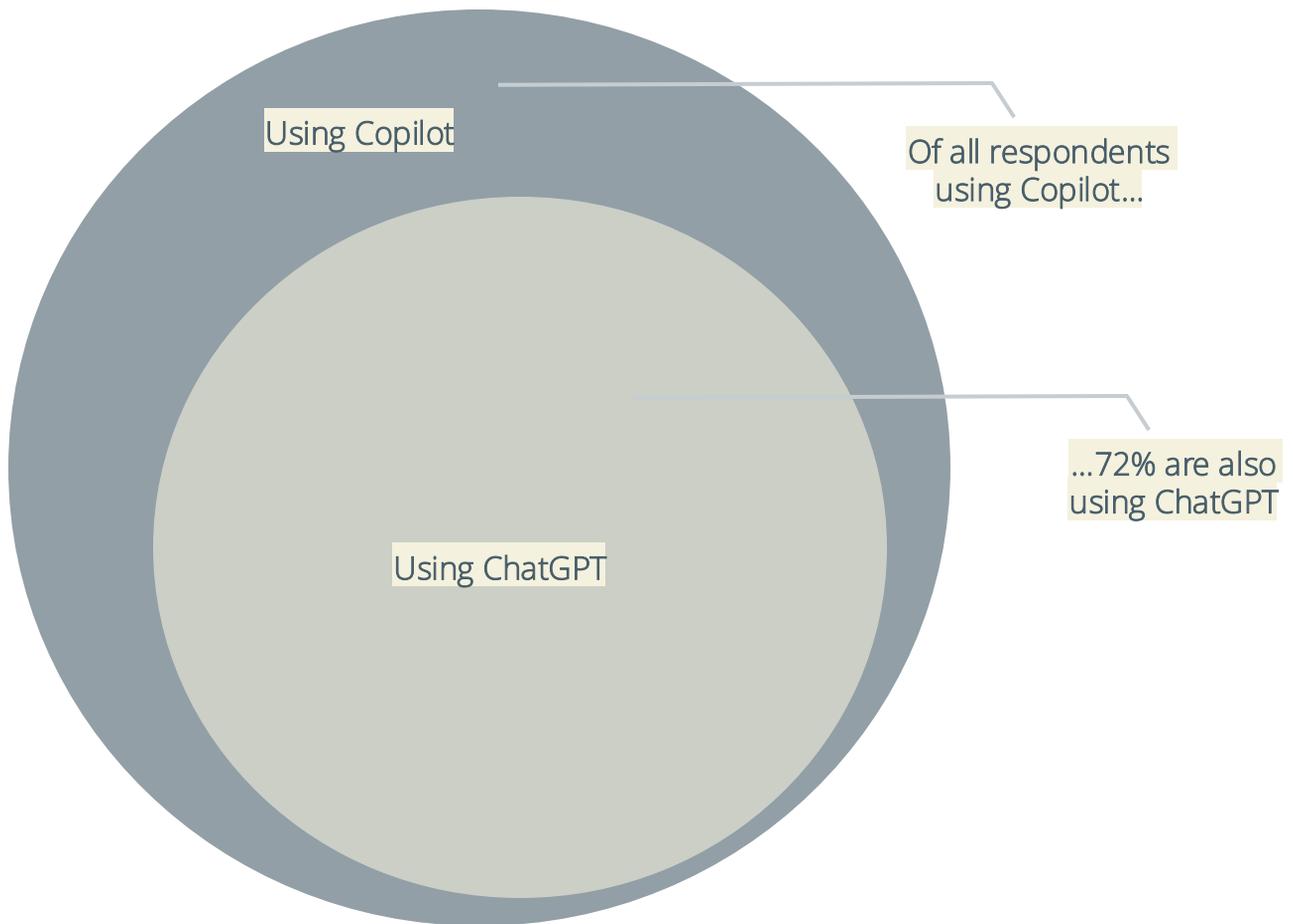
Given that many respondents work in organisations where Microsoft products are the norm, it is perhaps surprising that Copilot was not in the top position.

# MOST PARTICIPANTS USE MORE THAN ONE GENERATIVE AI PLATFORM



Almost two thirds of respondents use more than one generative AI platform – while just over a third use one platform only.

# OF PARTICIPANTS WHO USE COPILOT, MANY ALSO USE CHATGPT

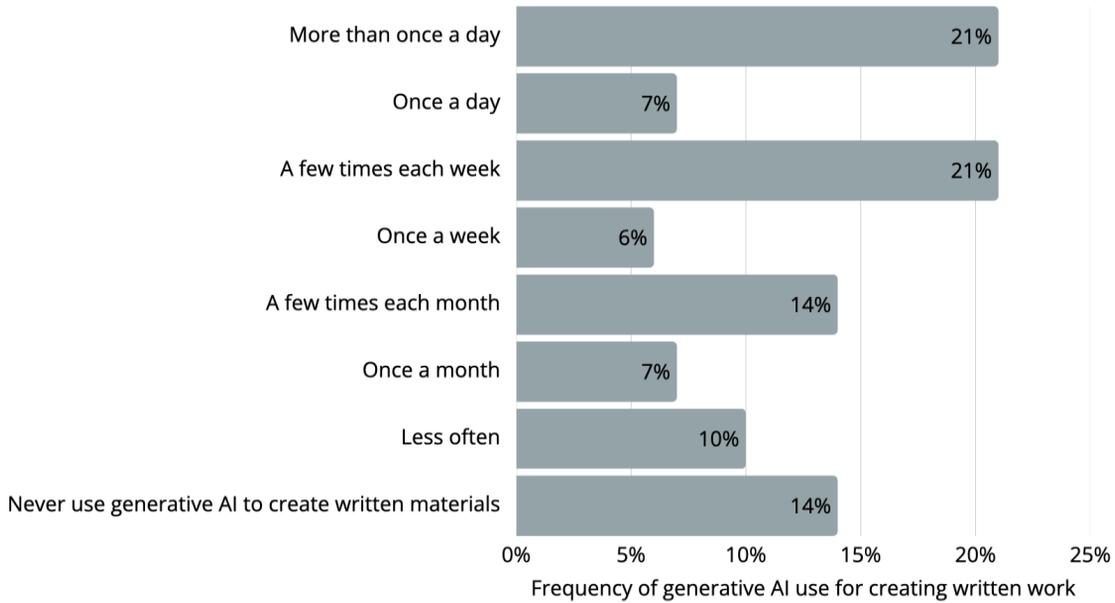


Of the 45% of respondents who use Copilot, 72% also said they use ChatGPT.

This could suggest that in addition to using a “sanctioned” platform that’s built into Microsoft 365 working environments, they’re also using ChatGPT as a less officially recognised platform.

This may be due to perceived usability and quality issues. It could also be because outputs generated by platforms outside of a controlled environment are less likely to be subject to scrutiny.

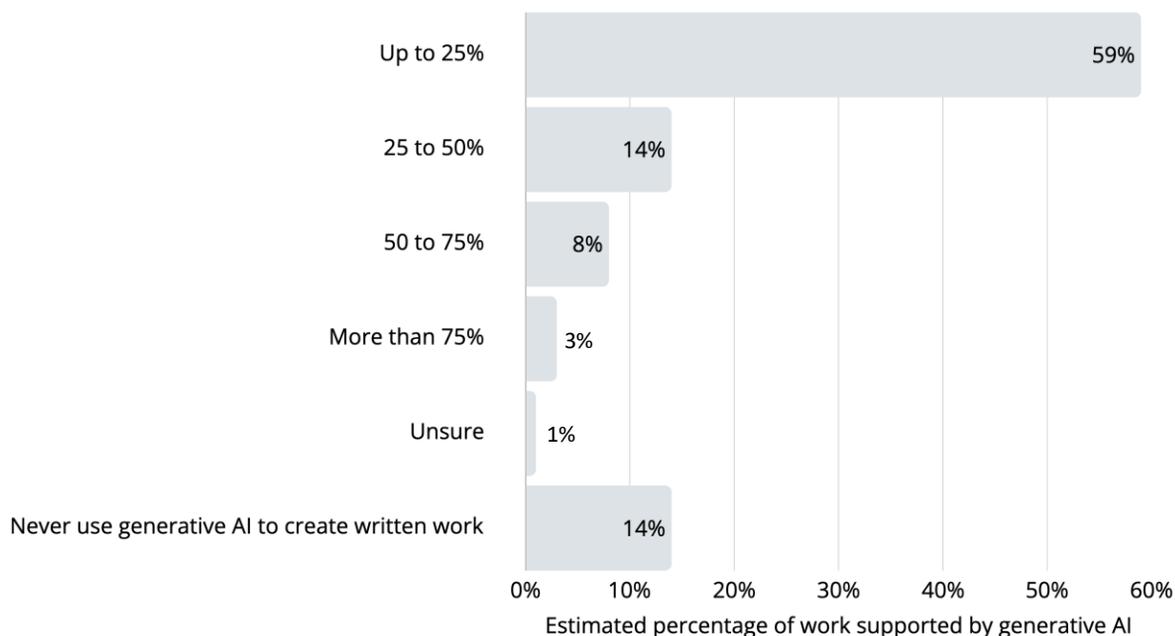
# HALF OF RESPONDENTS USE GENERATIVE AI WEEKLY – A QUARTER USE IT DAILY



Most respondents are using generative AI very regularly.

Nearly a third are using it at least once a day. More than half are using it at least weekly. Only 14% of respondents never use it.

# MORE THAN 10% OF RESPONDENTS ARE USING GENERATIVE AI FOR 50%+ OF THEIR WRITTEN WORK



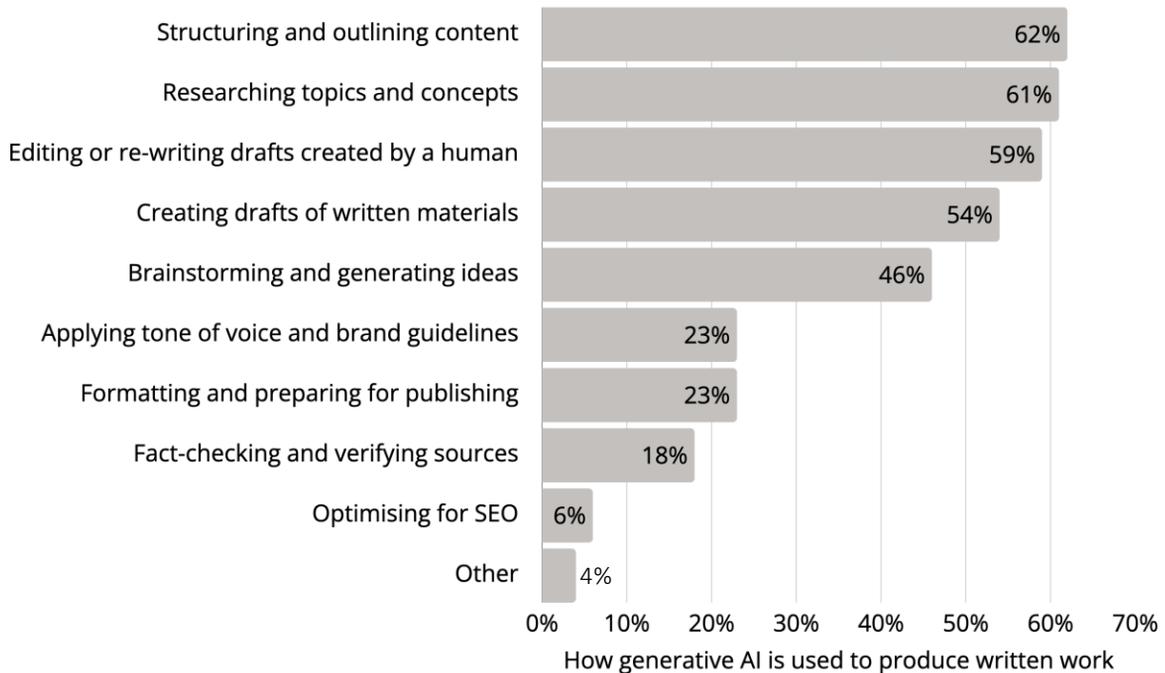
A small percentage of respondents are completing more than 75% of their written work with the support of generative AI.

More than 10% are using it to complete more than half their written work.

Meanwhile, 14% are using it to generate between a quarter and a half of their written work.

The majority (59%) are using generative AI to complete up to a quarter of their written output. 14% of respondents had never used generative AI to create written materials.

# GENERATIVE AI IS BEING USED TO PERFORM MULTIPLE PLANNING AND WRITING TASKS



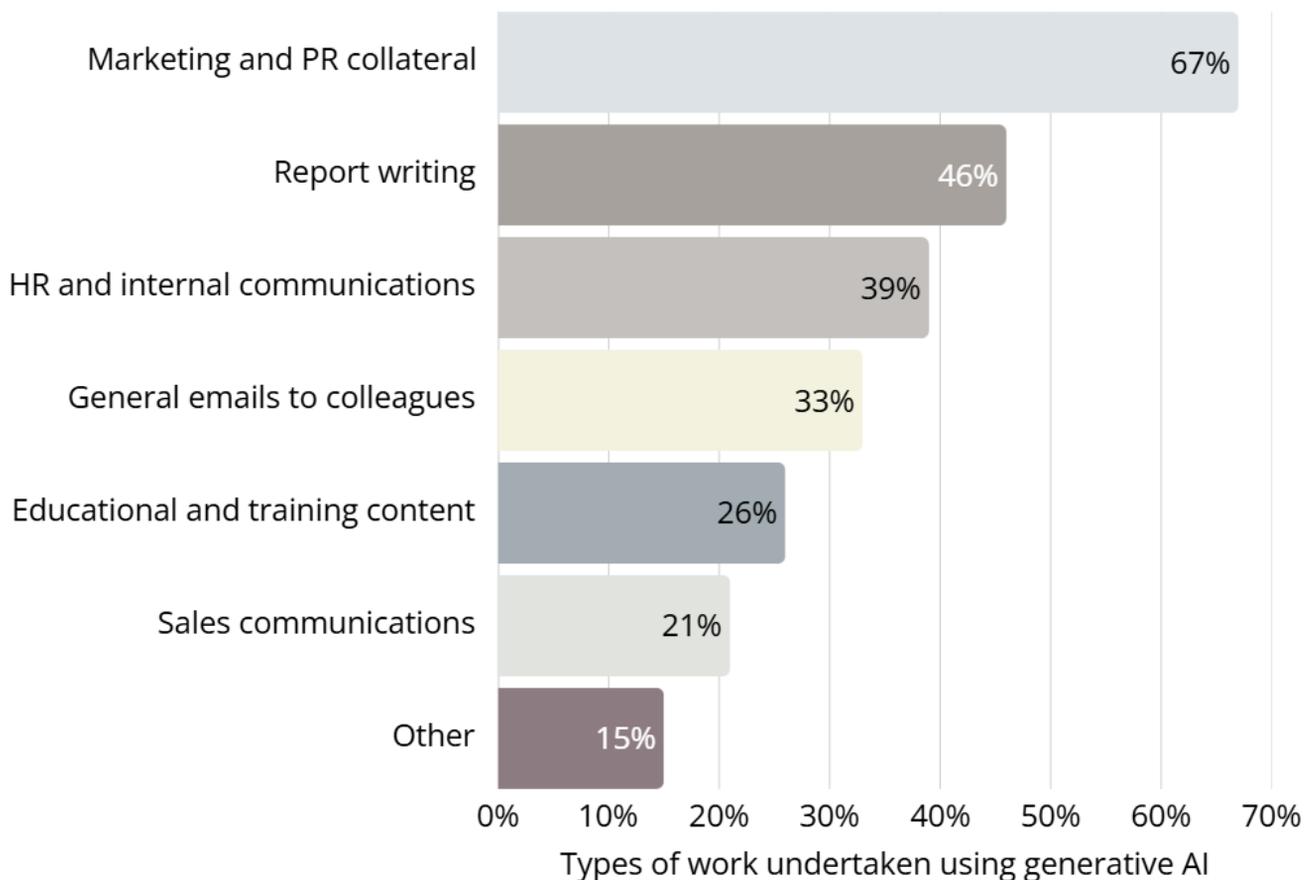
The highest uses of generative AI are to structure content – and research topics and concepts (62% and 61%).

Almost 60% of respondents use it to edit or rewrite drafts of documents that have been created by humans.

A total of 54% use it to create drafts from scratch. And 46% use it for brainstorming and generating ideas.

It's also put to more specialist brand and marketing use – with 23% using it to apply tone of voice, 23% using it to format text – and 6% using it for SEO writing.

# AND IT'S BEING USED TO CREATE MULTIPLE TYPES OF WRITTEN OUTPUTS

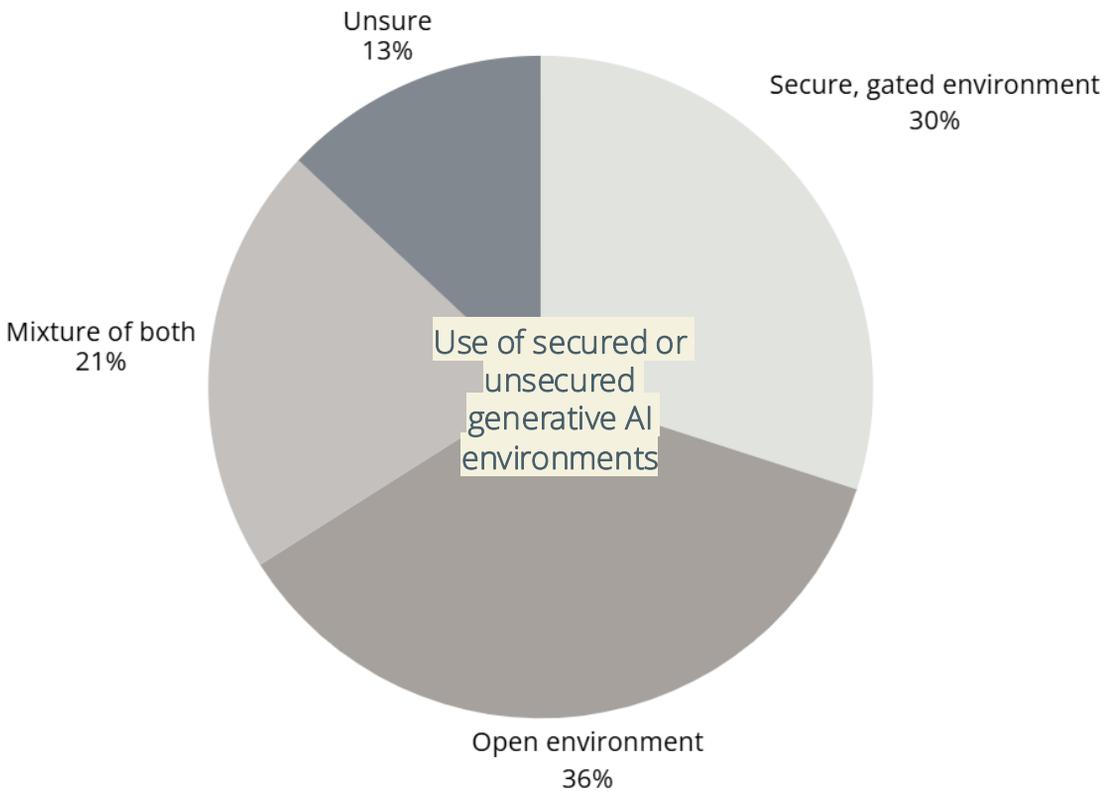


Generative AI is being used in corporate workplaces to generate everything from reports through to HR communications.

Report writing was one of the most frequently cited uses of the technology – second only to creating marketing materials – perhaps because reports can take many hours and days to create without tech assistance.

Marketing collateral and internal communications are also frequently generated with the assistance of AI – as are individual emails between colleagues.

# MOST PARTICIPANTS ARE WORKING IN UNSECURED ENVIRONMENTS SOME OR ALL OF THE TIME

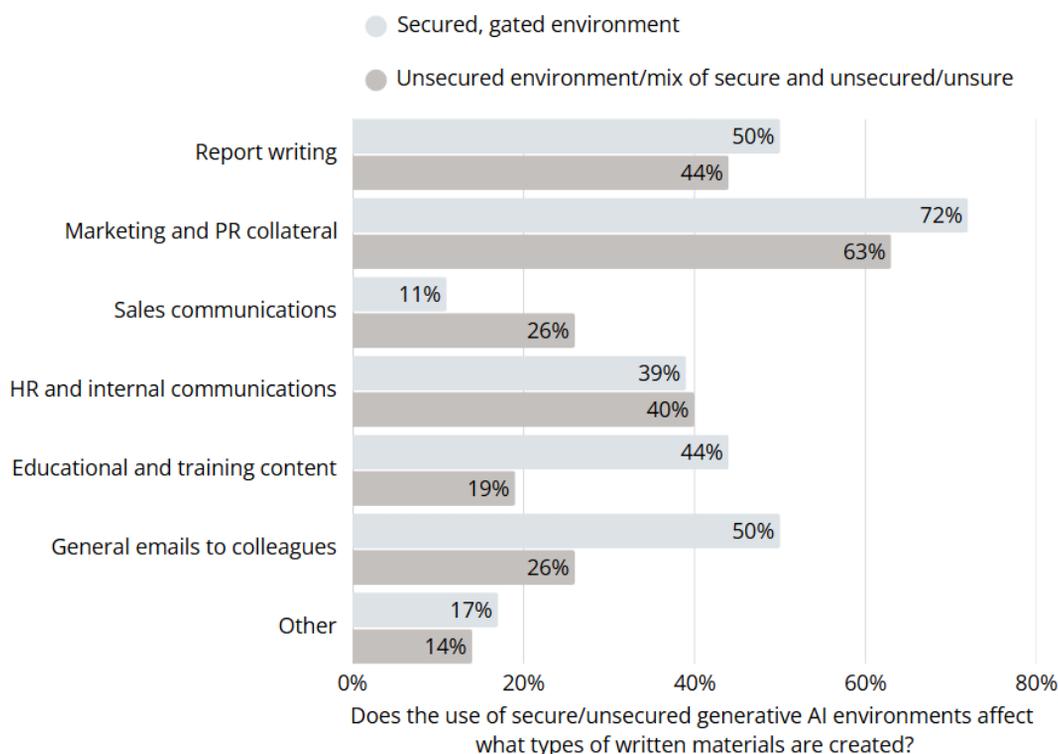


Just under a third of respondents (30%) said that they worked in a secured, gated generative AI environment, all of the time.

A total of 36% said they work in open, unsecured environments – and 21% work in a mixture of secured and unsecured environments.

Meanwhile, 13% of respondents weren't sure of the security status of the generative AI environments they are working in.

# MATERIALS CREATED USING GENERATIVE AI ARE SIMILAR ACROSS SECURED AND UNSECURED ENVIRONMENTS



Participants do not seem to choose to use secured or unsecured environments to produce different types of work.

In other words, the same types of collateral are being generated in both secured and unsecured generative AI environments.

However, general emails are almost twice as likely to be created in secured environments – perhaps because Copilot is integrated into Microsoft Outlook.

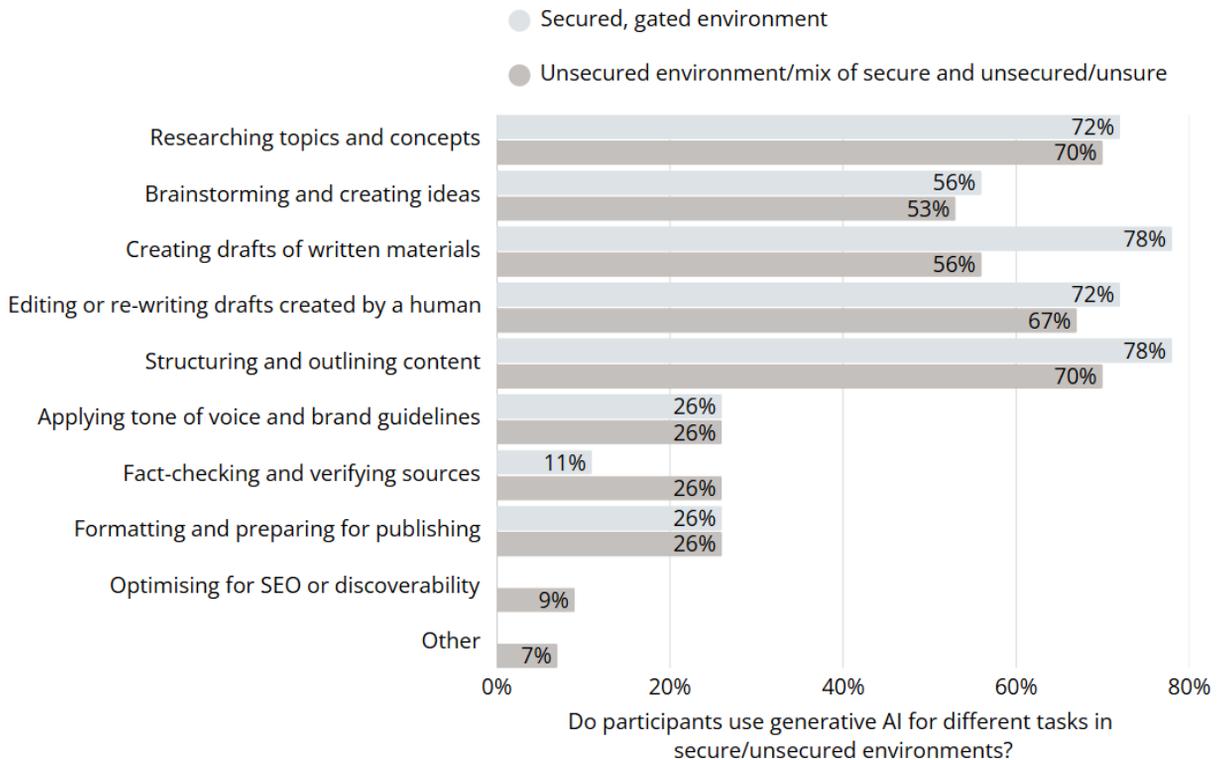
Please note, the sample size here is very low – but it gives an indication of the split in usage.

**Question:** What types of writing do you use generative AI to do? Select all that apply.

**Source:** Wordtree / Customer IQ

**Base:** All participants who with a secured and gated environment (n=18), with a mix of secured and unsecured, unsecured or are unsure (n=43)

# TASKS PERFORMED USING GENERATIVE AI ARE SIMILAR ACROSS SECURED AND UNSECURED ENVIRONMENTS



Generally, participants use generative AI to carry out the same writing-related tasks, regardless of whether they're using a secured or unsecured environment.

Again, the sample size is small - but it's an interesting indication of usage.

**Question:** Which, if any, of the following aspects of writing and written work do you currently use generative AI tools for? Select all that apply

**Source:** Wordtree / Customer IQ

**Base:** All participants who with a secured and gated environment (n=18), with a mix of secured and unsecured, unsecured or are unsure (n=43)

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID...

Throughout this survey, respondents had opportunities to share views, feelings and observations via open text comments. These were some of their thoughts on uses of generative AI...

"I believe that AI does have the potential to be a tool to help everyone explore new ways of working. I'm starting to investigate ways in which it could support our team by, for instance, exploring how AI could minimize or support on repetitive or admin-based writing tasks so there is more time to focus on the creatively complex and imaginative aspects of writing."

"I enjoy using ChatGPT as a guide for non-sensitive information. I don't necessarily trust it for fact checking, as yet."

"It can be useful to prompt ideas when you're stuck on a communications piece but I would never use it beyond that initial prompt."

"It feels like it's in its infancy at my organisation. We're mainly using it for productivity tools but I imagine there will be plans to build it into product too."

"It is very useful to make our work more productive and it also helps to write more fresh communications. However, it is not yet clear how academic journals look at this."

"We should move faster in this space."

"It's hugely useful in speeding up processes on low value writing tasks, but sometimes the output is poor or unhelpful. It's also quite obvious when things are sent using AI but not checked through properly."

"It's something we're looking at using as a way to reduce writing which doesn't need creative input, such as product descriptions, which are time consuming to produce."

"The company are exploring it and investigating the benefits and risks of using it."

"Still early days with some areas using more than others. Pilot phase for different tools to encourage users to share their experience."

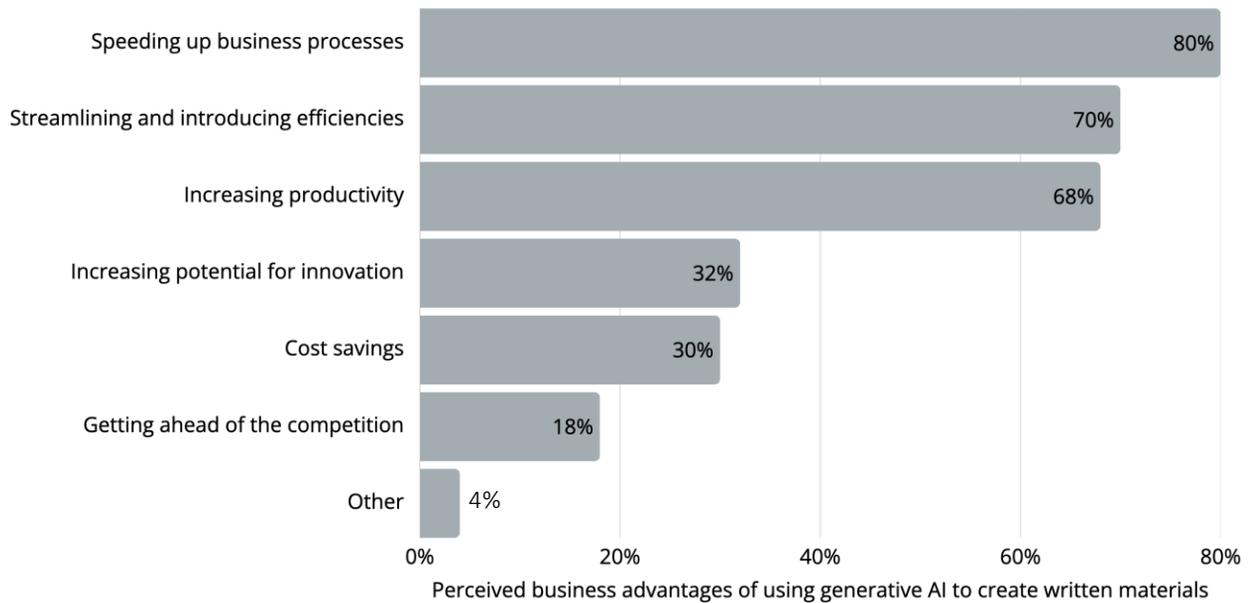
"There's less and less room for personal choice whether to use it or not. It's highly encouraged and now even people with not so great copywriting skills can produce decent copy."

# PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING GENERATIVE AI

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# THE KEY ADVANTAGES OF GENERATIVE AI ARE SEEN TO BE SPEED, EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY

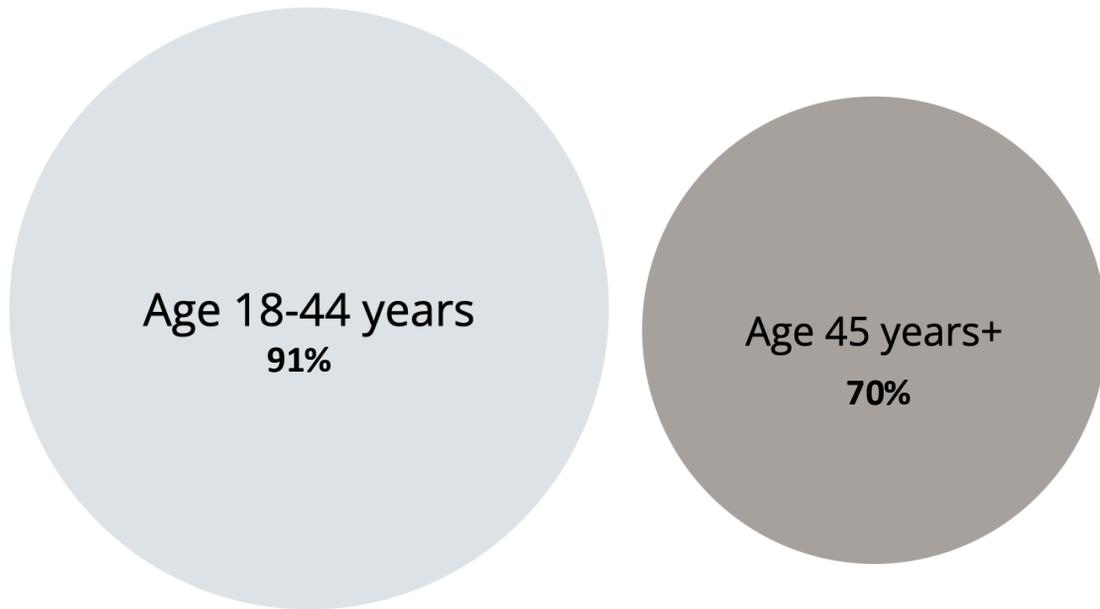


Speed was the most commonly cited benefit of using generative AI (80%).

It is also seen as a way of introducing efficiencies (70%) and increasing productivity (68%).

Fewer respondents saw it as a way to boost innovation (32%), introduce cost savings (30%) or gain competitive advantage (18%).

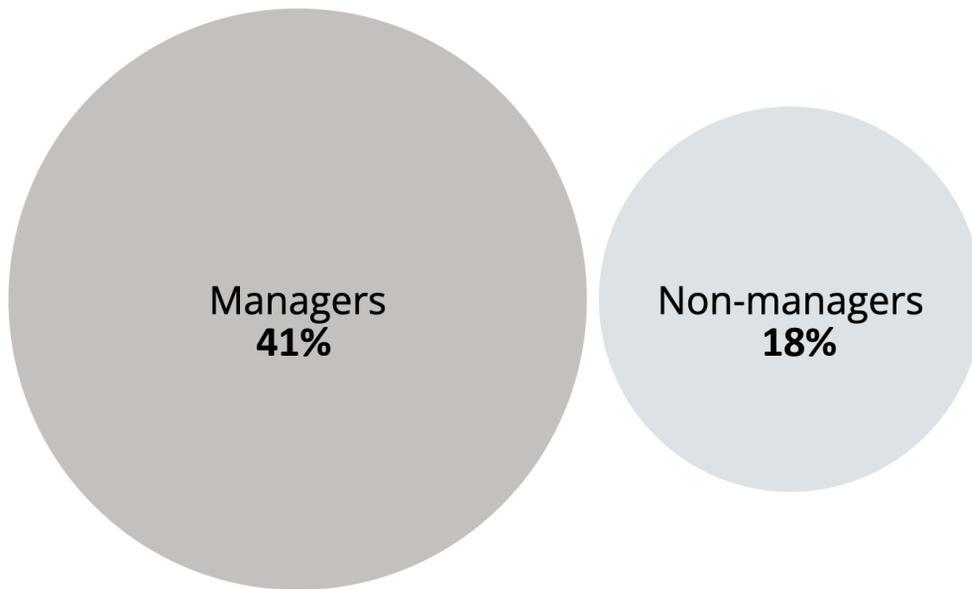
# YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FIND SPEED AN ADVANTAGE



Almost all respondents under the age of 45 saw speed as a key advantage of using generative AI to create written documents and materials.

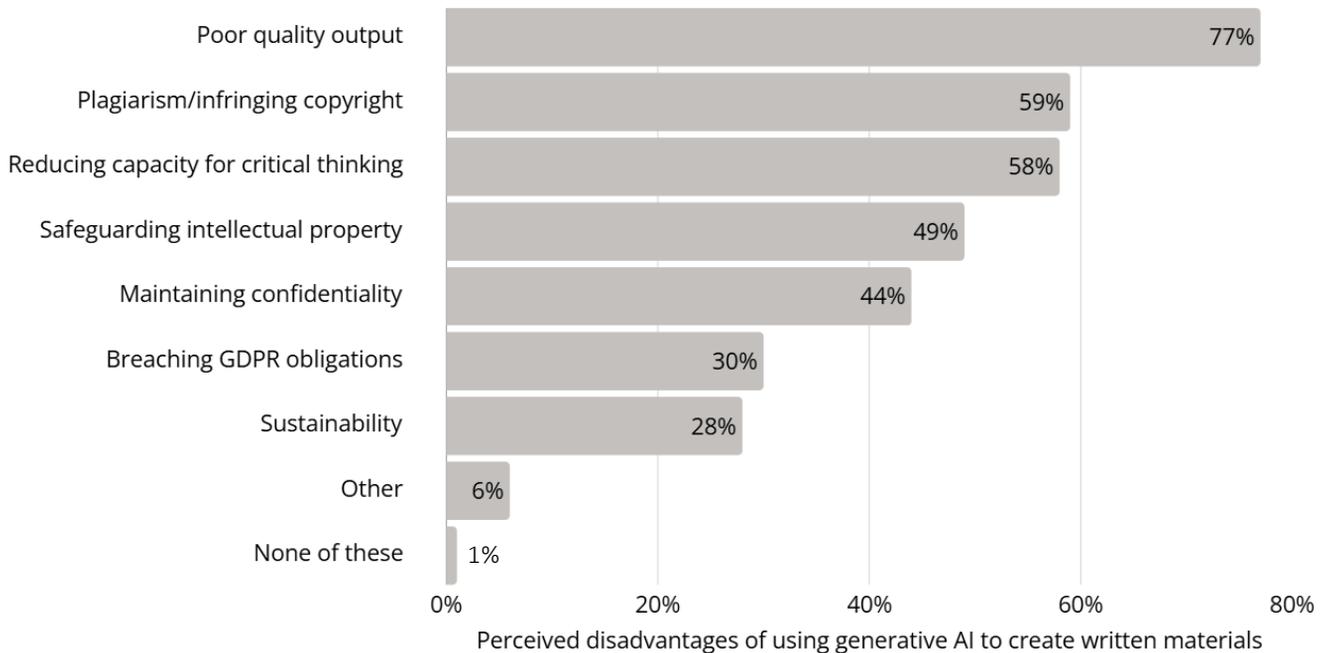
By contrast, 70% of respondents aged 45+ saw speed as an advantage.

# MANAGERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO IDENTIFY COST SAVINGS AS AN ADVANTAGE



A total of 41% of managers saw cost savings as a benefit of using generative AI. Meanwhile, just 18% of non-managers made the same connection.

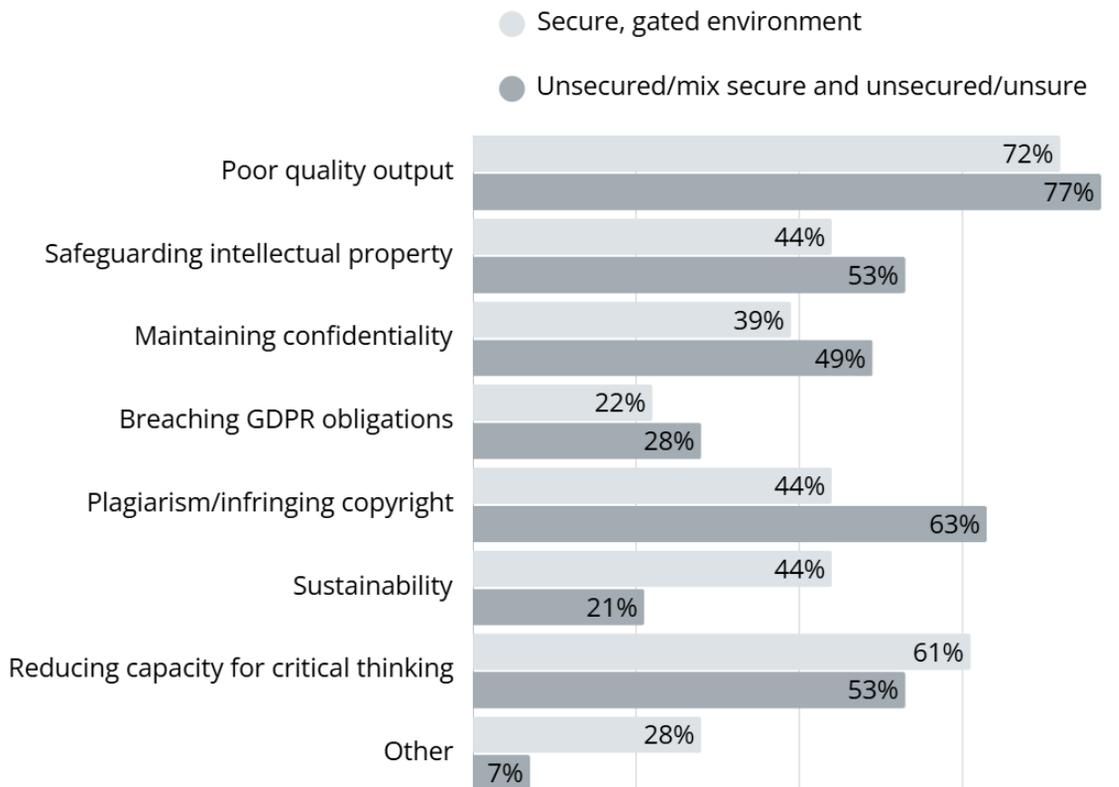
# ALMOST 80% OF RESPONDENTS SAY POOR QUALITY IS THE MAIN RISK OF USING GENERATIVE AI



The most cited risk of using generative AI was “poor quality output” (77%). This was followed by the possibility of infringing copyright (59%) and reducing capacity for critical thinking (58%).

There was less awareness of risks including loss of intellectual property, breaching GDPR obligations and sustainability.

# PARTICIPANTS WORKING IN SECURED ENVIRONMENTS PERCEIVE SLIGHTLY FEWER DISADVANTAGES



Generally, respondents who work in secured generative AI environments perceive slightly fewer disadvantages than those working in unsecured environments.

However, those working in secured environments are more likely to see the impact of generative AI on sustainability as a disadvantage.

Respondents working in secured environments are also more likely to point to the potential of generative AI to reduce capacity for critical thinking.

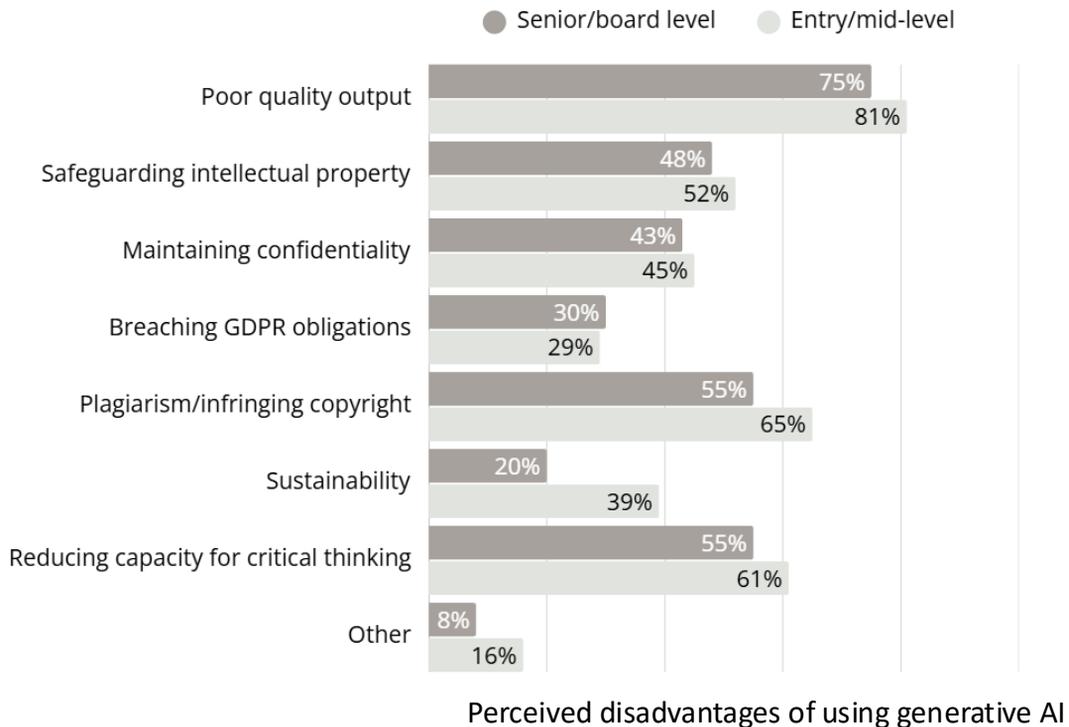
Again, the sample size here is very low – but it shows an interesting split.

**Question:** Which, if any, of the following do you see as disadvantages of your organisation using generative AI to create written materials? Select all that apply.

**Source:** Wordtree / Customer IQ

**Base:** All participants with a secured and gated environment (n=18), with a mix of secured and unsecured, unsecured or are unsure (n=43)

# SENIOR-LEVEL RESPONDENTS LESS LIKELY TO RECOGNISE DISADVANTAGES

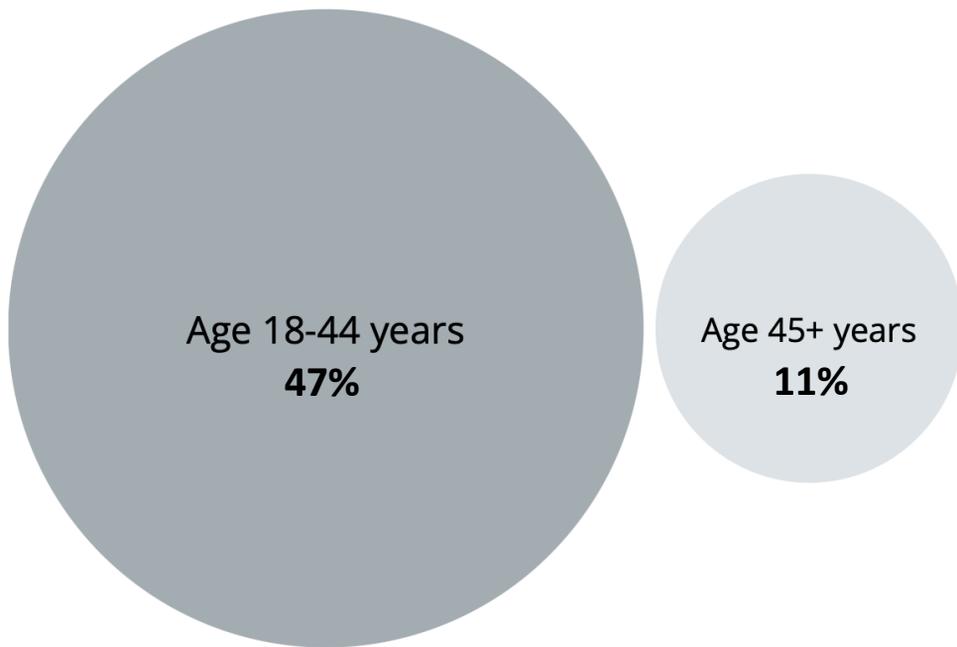


Senior-level respondents were less likely to highlight disadvantages of using generative AI than mid-level and junior respondents.

This is especially noticeable when it comes to sustainability, where mid-level and junior respondents show an even greater level of concern than their senior colleagues.

These findings track with senior leaders' higher levels of positivity about generative AI – and could indicate that hands-on use is more likely to expose disadvantages.

# YOUNGER RESPONDENTS MORE LIKELY TO CITE SUSTAINABILITY AS DISADVANTAGE OF GENERATIVE AI



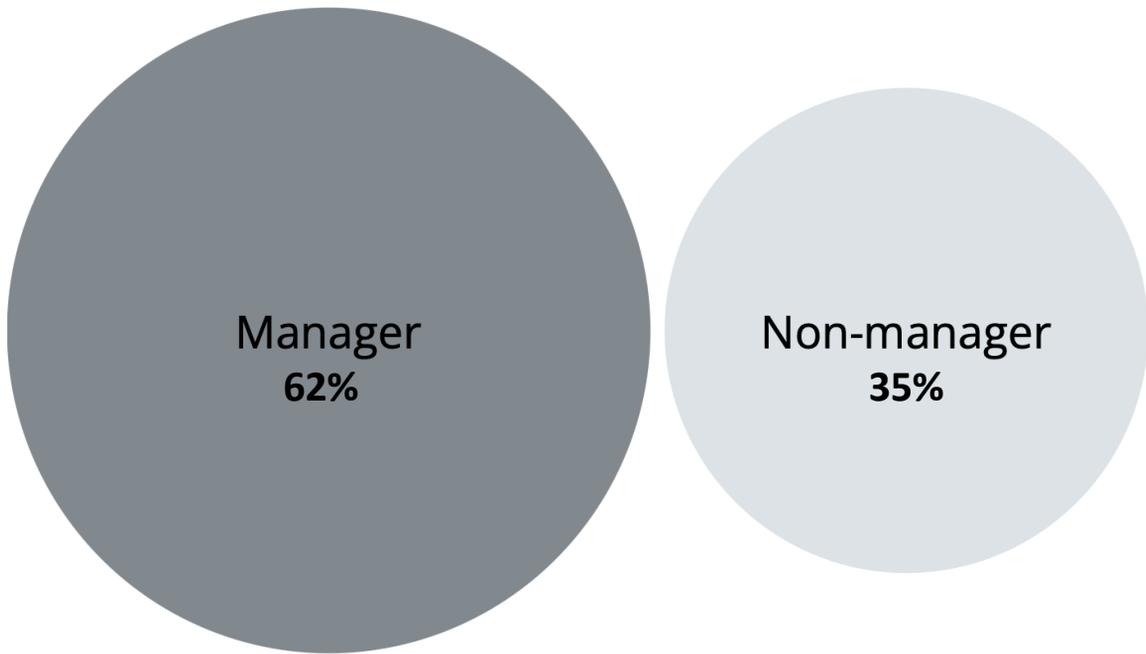
According to Washington Post/University of California research, using ChatGPT-4 to generate a 100-word email consumes enough electricity to power 14 LED lightbulbs for an hour. It also burns off just over half a litre in cooling water.

Based on these figures, Business Energy UK estimated in early 2025 that ChatGPT-4 alone consumes 39.98 million kilowatt hours of electricity every day<sup>8</sup>. This is enough to power the Empire State Building for 540 days. It also estimates that the platform uses 39.16 million gallons of water every day.

However, only 11% of respondents aged over 45 saw sustainability as a risk of using generative AI. Meanwhile, 47% of participants under the age of 45 identified sustainability as a risk of using generative AI.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.businessenergyuk.com/knowledge-hub/chatgpt-energy-consumption-visualized/>

# MANAGERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO IDENTIFY IP LEAKAGE AS A DISADVANTAGE OF USING GENERATIVE AI



A total of 62% of managers thought safeguarding intellectual property (IP) was a risk of using generative AI.

Meanwhile, only 35% of non-managers were similarly concerned about potentially leaking IP via generative AI platforms.

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID...

Throughout this survey, respondents had opportunities to share views, feelings and observations via open text comments. These were some of their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of generative AI...

"Customers have provided negative feedback regarding work produced by AI. As much time can be consumed verifying documentation produced by AI as would be needed to create without AI."

"There's a risk of using AI to generate rather bland, middle of the road content – encouraging a sort of "good enough is good enough" type of attitude. At its best, AI is brilliant at doing boring mundane tasks quickly and efficiently."

"Happy that I can use it to process a lot of information; unhappy that it's used as a substitute for critical thinking, and that it produces unoriginal and derivative copy (as well as suggesting a lack of care/connection)."

"AI is useful but is far from reliable."

"It always needs checking."

"Pros: It can be inspiring and helps save time on repetitive manual tasks. Cons: Lately, there's been a shift towards quantity over quality in content like collateral, blogs and white papers. Getting people to read is already tough, but when content feels AI-generated and generic, it's often dismissed without a second thought. Unfortunately, this means even high-quality, valuable pieces can get ignored by default."

"Nervous about [its use] in CVs for professional roles – also that using generic AI responses would potentially not promote our core values of being human and a tailored approach."

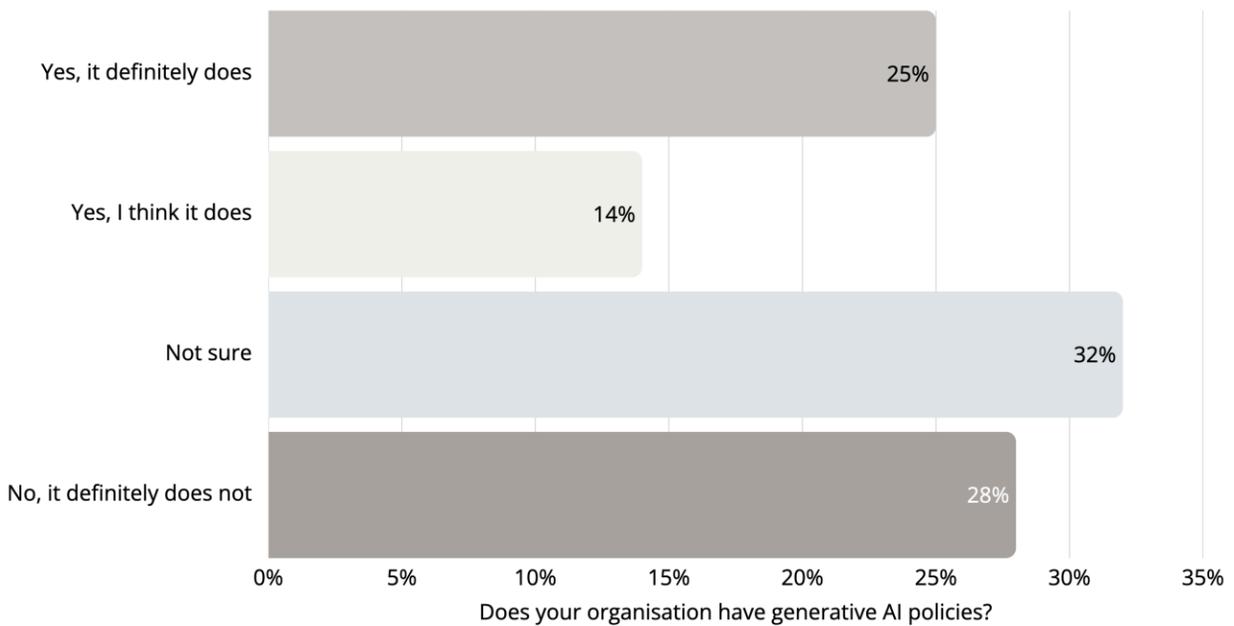
"I worry that in the long term, people will lose the ability to create honest, exciting and meaningful content for themselves. I want to be part of a team that is smart, sharp and able to confidently express themselves. This is what will keep us ahead of competitors. This is what is at the heart of problem-solving and design."

# ARE THERE GUARDRAILS IN PLACE?

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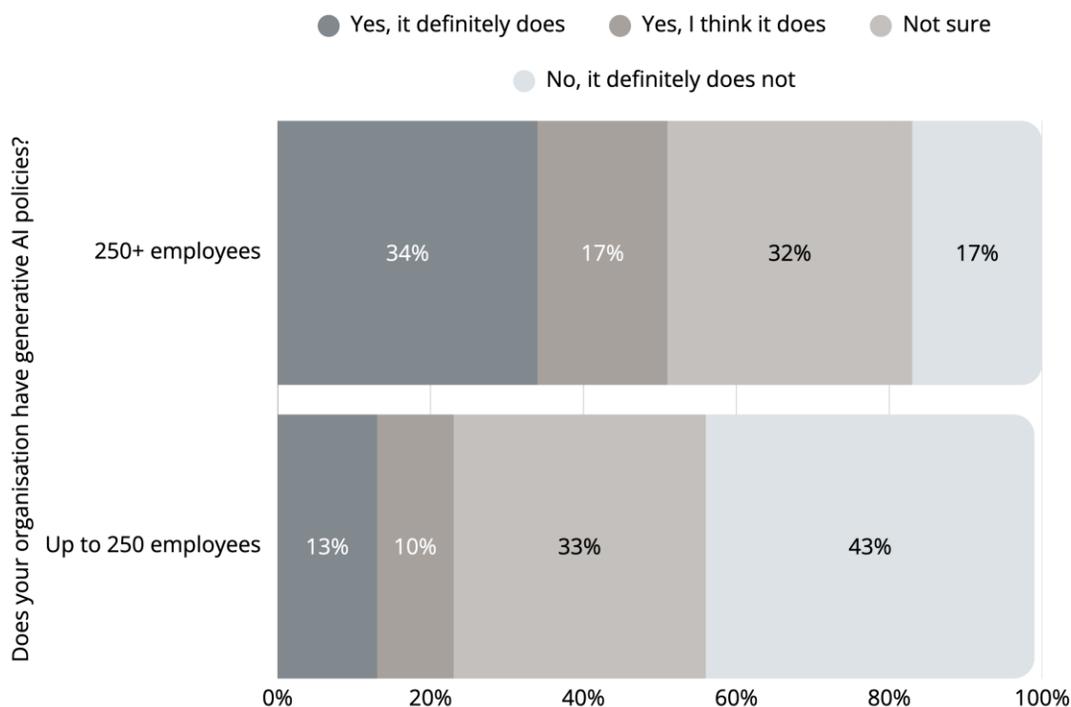
# 60% OF PARTICIPANTS DON'T KNOW IF THEIR ORGANISATION HAS A GENERATIVE AI POLICY – OR KNOW IT DEFINITELY DOES NOT



A total of 60% of participants were unsure or said their organisation definitely does not have a policy in place regarding the use of generative AI to create written documents and materials.

Only a quarter of respondents said their organisation definitely does have a policy or policies in place.

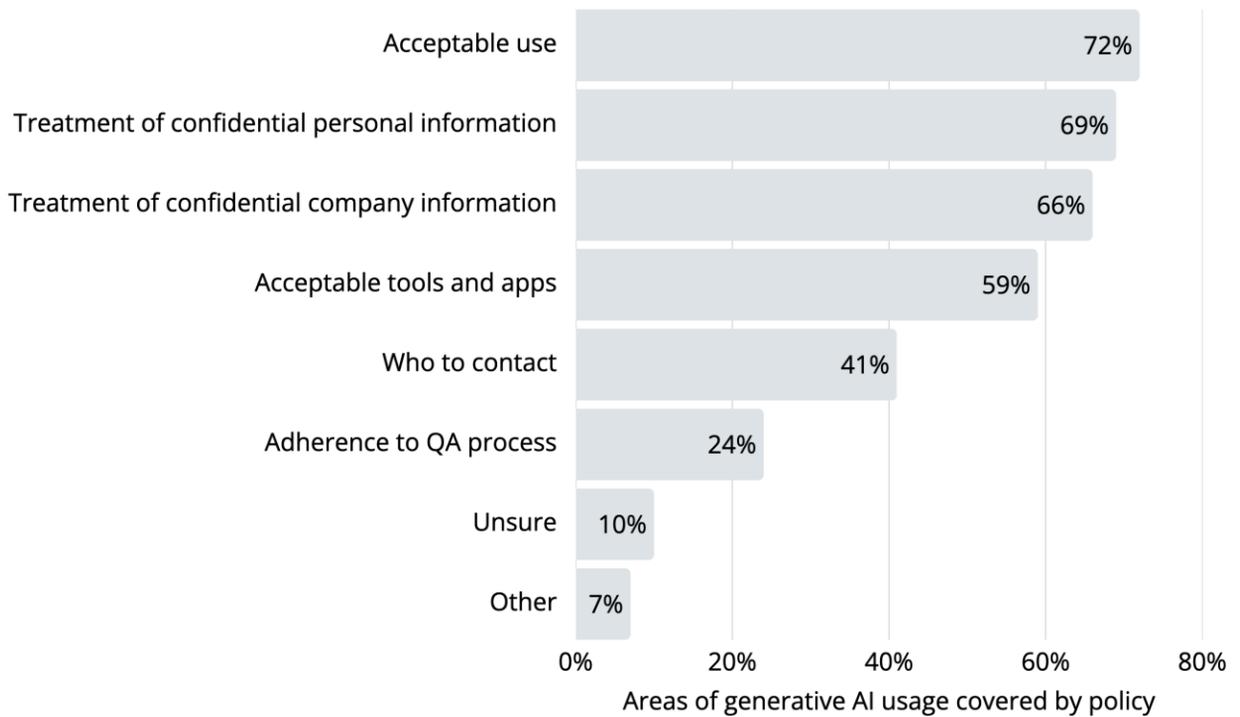
# SMALLER ORGANISATIONS ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE GENERATIVE AI POLICIES IN PLACE



When respondents came from smaller organisations, they were significantly less likely to say that their workplace definitely has a policy in place (13% vs 34%).

They were also far more likely to say that their organisation definitely does not have a policy in place (43% vs 17%).

# POLICIES ARE MOST LIKELY TO COVER ACCEPTABLE USE, CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND PLATFORMS

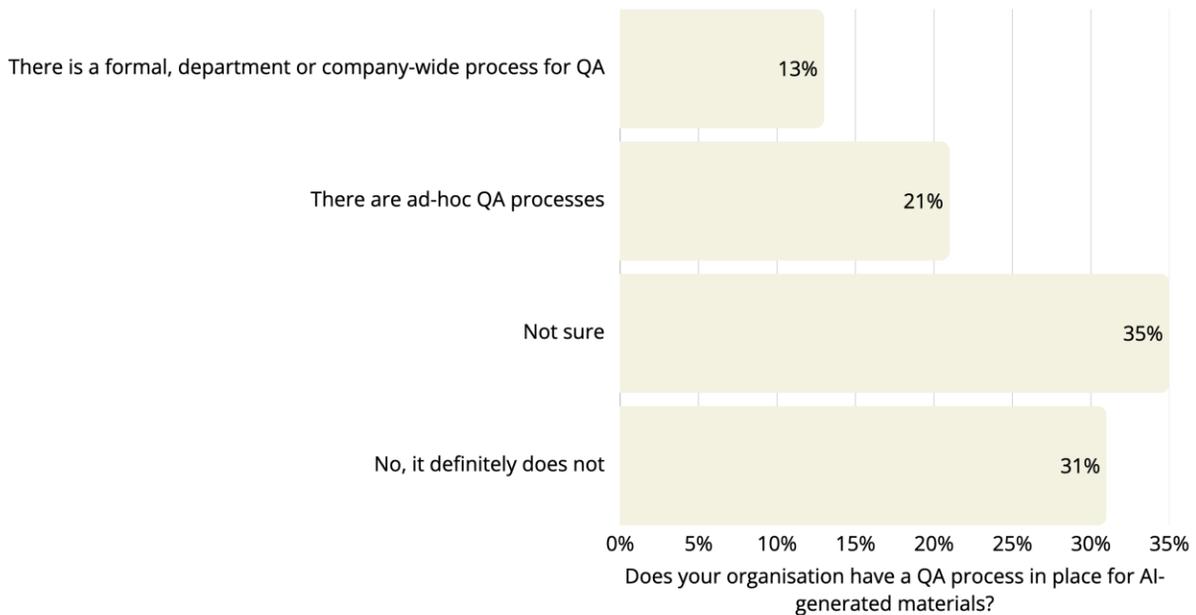


**Question:** What areas of AI usage does this policy (or policies) cover? Select all that apply.

**Source:** Wordtree / Customer IQ

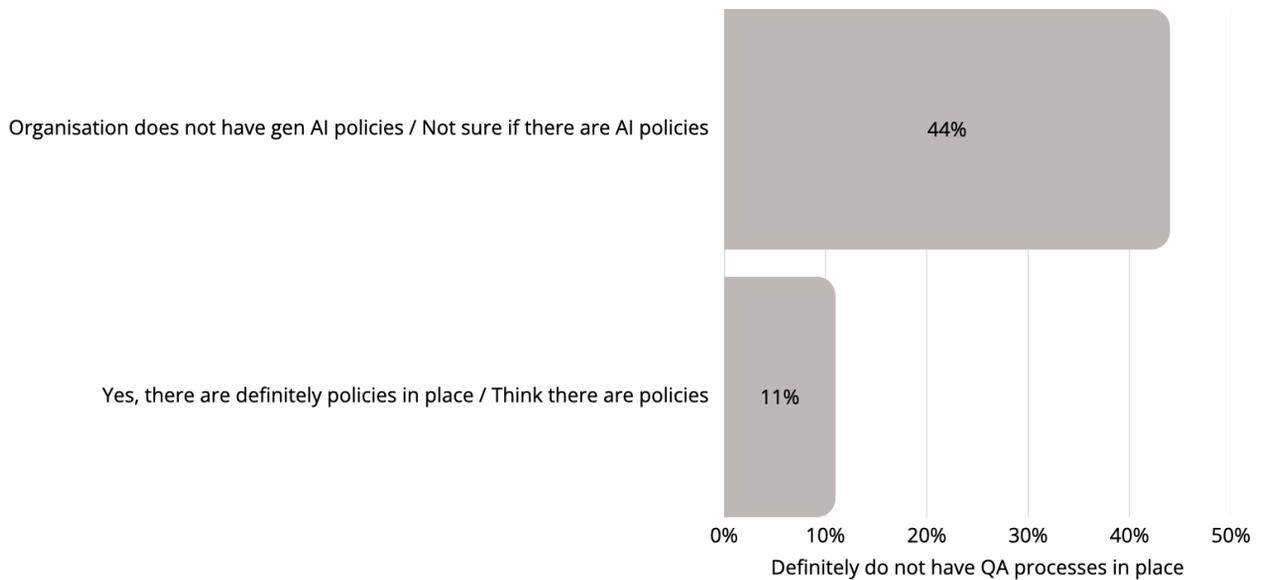
**Base:** All participants whose organisation has an AI policy (definitely + think so) (n=28)

# MOST PARTICIPANTS DON'T THINK THEIR ORGANISATION HAS ANY TYPE OF GENERATIVE AI QA PROCESS



Just a third (34%) of participants claimed their organisation has either formal or ad-hoc QA processes in place for checking output generated by AI, leaving the majority either unsure (35%) or claiming their organisation definitely does not have a QA process (31%).

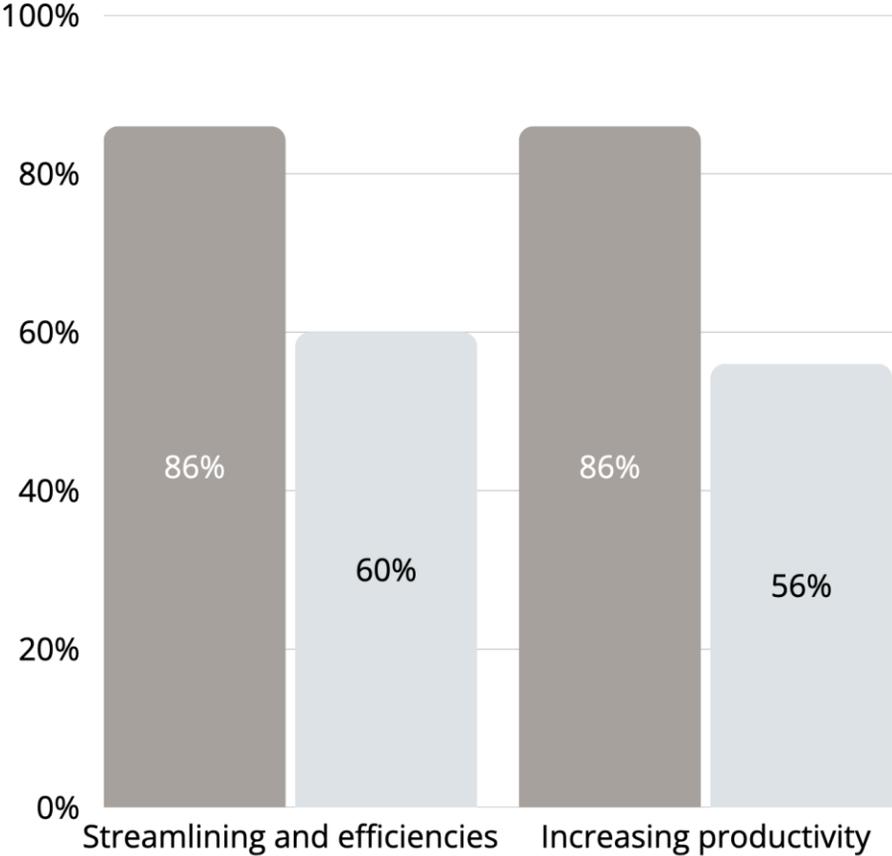
# WHEN ORGANISATIONS DON'T HAVE A GENERATIVE AI POLICY, THEY'RE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE QA PROCESSES



A lack of generative AI policy tends to correlate with a lack of quality assurance (QA) processes.

This means if an organisation does not have AI policies in place, it is unlikely to have any form of QA process for checking the outputs of generative AI.

# PARTICIPANTS FROM ORGANISATIONS WITH GENERATIVE AI POLICIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THE TECHNOLOGY INCREASES EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY



● Policies definitely in place/think so

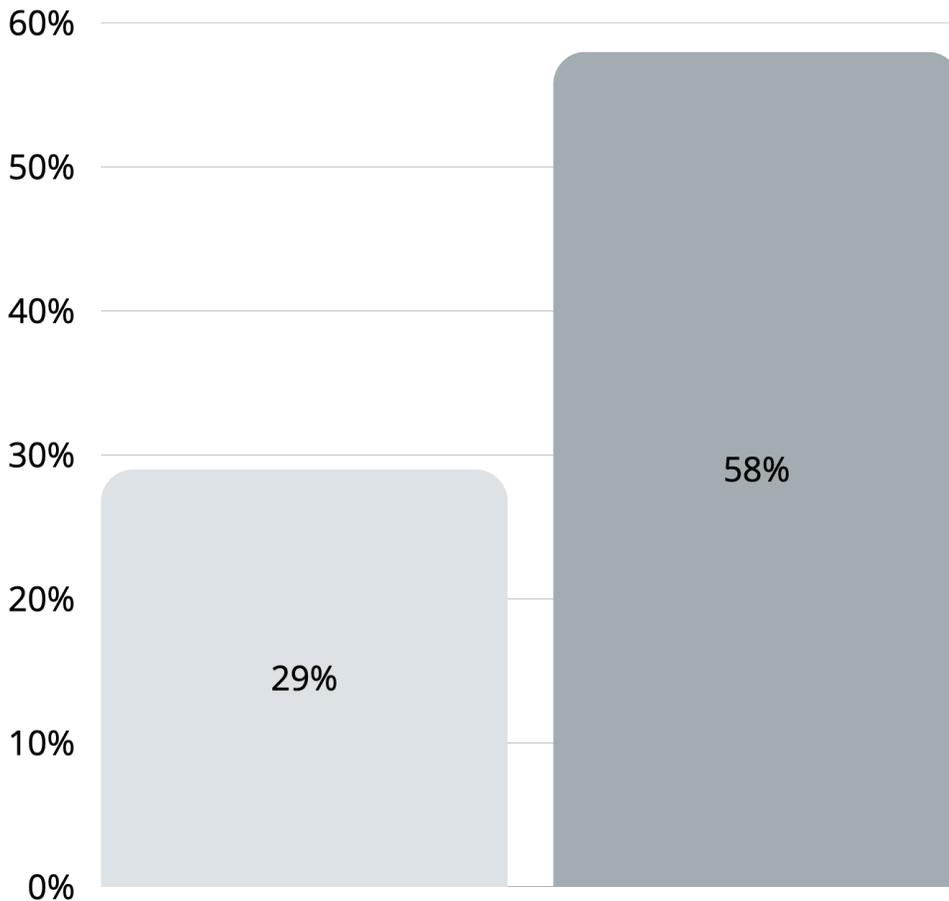
● No policies/not sure

Question: Which, if any, of the following do you see as advantages of your organisation using generative AI? Select all that apply.

Source: Wordtree / Customer IQ

Base: All participants no policy / not sure (n=43) definitely policies / think so (n=28)

# THOSE WITH AN AI POLICY APPEAR TO MAKE GREATER USE OF GENERATIVE AI



- No policies/not sure
- Yes policies in place - definitely/think so

When individuals work in organisations that have generative AI policies, they use the technology for a greater variety of tasks. 59% of respondents whose organisations have generative AI policies use the technology to support with five or more types of task. This figure reduces to 29% in organisations that have no generative AI policy.

**Question:** Which, if any, of the following aspects of writing and written work do you currently use generative AI tools for? Select all that apply.

**Source:** Wordtree / Customer IQ

**Base:** All participants who have used gen AI for written work - no policies / not sure (n=35), definitely / think so (n=26)

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID...

Throughout this survey, respondents had opportunities to share views, feelings and observations via open text comments. These were some of their thoughts on providing guardrails...

"[We're] at the very early stages of integration, guidelines and governance, we have various teams across different functions that are looking into how AI can be helpful to our business."

"I'm not sure if we have a written policy but we are encouraged to fact check anything we get from generative AI and to always make sure we aren't just copying the information and claiming it as our own."

"Should be promoted more + strict guidelines + training."

"Yet to be adopted at board level."

"The organisation is putting policies in place to optimise the use of generative AI."

"[I] think we are like other small (3 people in our case) marketing teams – we use AI as embedded in tools like HubSpot and Sales Dynamics, but are using free tools ad hoc rather than a formal programme."

"Working Group set up across Comms and Marketing meets monthly and discusses best practice. Has created suite of materials such as prompt guides and ethical guidelines."

"We have practices in place to ensure it is effective."

# OTHER OBSERVATIONS

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# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID...

Other comments from survey participants included...

"Generative AI has a significant role to play in the future workplace and identifying where it can add the most value to your organisation is key when considering first use cases."

"I work as an independent freelancer and AI has become an integral part of my work processes. I now run projects within a ChatGPT window and create separate client facing materials. As a freelancer it has brought many benefits but I am very worried about the impact on my critical thinking skills but I can be so much more productive with it it is hard to ignore. I also feel the pressure to stay up-to-date with it and to keep learning or risk being left behind."

"I don't like the way it writes. I don't want to share private information, I don't want to encourage use of AI across the business and it's an environmentally unfriendly tool, through the water used cooling servers. I'd rather it wasn't available to us."

"I have concerns about a gender division emerging. The stats say fewer women use AI, trust AI, are confident in starting to use AI – all seem to be the reality in the organisation I work for. In my experience men tell everyone to use it but are not aware of the inequality... and no obvious action is being taken to bridge the divide. Women have been left behind in the past, they cannot be left behind in the future too. I see it as my responsibility to encourage everyone to embrace AI... especially women."

"I'm interested to learn more. Can see the benefits of using AI for the less creative aspects of the role."

"We have to be mindful to create meaning and share original thinking, not add to the babble."

"I think generative AI should be used as an enhancement, not a replacement of written work produced by individuals. It is a great tool for creating starting points, refining work by posing additional questions you perhaps hadn't thought of. However, I don't think people are fully aware of the limitations or the correct way to question AI tools to account for various biases. I don't think workplaces (in my experience) have done enough to provide guardrails in how to use it securely to maintain confidentiality and protect sensitive information. AI could be a great addition to the workplace if colleagues are trained in the correct way, but employers need to quickly put things in place so that advancements don't run away from us, leaving us with more problems that we can't fix."

"I do worry that it could end up replacing my whole department. I have already heard others say 'we just asked ChatGPT' when they have a team of writers available to ask."

"It's an arms race – others use it, so we don't have much of a choice but to use it as well."

"No in-house training provided, moving so quickly so no-one seems very sure what they can do/should, lots of fear."

"[Our company] is approaching it from a wellbeing perspective... aiming to reduce so-called 'AI anxiety.'"

# WHAT ARE YOU PROUD OF PRODUCING WITH AI? AND WHAT ARE YOU LESS PROUD OF?

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# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID...

As two final, optional, free-response questions, we asked participants what they were most proud of having produced using generative AI – and what they were least proud of having produced using the technology.

Where they were proud of having used generative AI, respondents reported some innovative uses and approaches. Most participants who talked about using generative AI in ways they wouldn't like their colleagues to know about cited writing emails to colleagues.

## Most proud of...

"A new product discovery test plan. I used gen AI to help me build out scenarios to test and a structure for the progression of the discovery."

"Client-facing brochures."

"Blog posts and business briefings."

"API technical documentation... The AI gave me knowledge and independence that formerly I wouldn't have had. In the past I'd have had to collaborate with a software engineer/developer. Now they just have to review the output and check it."

"Strategic documents to provide insight based on company materials, leading to better business strategy."

"My personal business objectives. I wrote them myself initially based on what I need to achieve this year, but then asked Co-Pilot to rewrite them to be action and outcome focused, which it did really well. This means my objectives are much clearer and articulate and it didn't take up that much time to do it!"

"A difficult HR letter that needed empathy but direct challenge. I drafted the note but ChatGPT gave it a sophistication I couldn't."

"A very fun team day full of group activities."

"Market Report - US/UK on a client sector. AI did 70% of the heavy lifting - 30% then refining, editing and enhancing. Saved 2-3 days of time and a lot of it was done better than I could have."

## Least proud of...

"A farewell message for a colleague."

"Drafts of internal emails."

"Emails to colleagues, as it could come across as inauthentic if they knew."

"I generally don't mind that they know, because everybody does it, but I always edit the final product to make sure it doesn't sound too AI-ish and to keep it at least a bit more authentic."

"I have done a piece on sustainability, and I used AI to come up with some points on how this can impact our business as I was really struggling."

"I have used it to write value propositions and I think some clients would think that is cheating. However I work differently with it and use it to explore multiple angles and try different ways in, which I wouldn't be able to do in that time frame."

"Personal emails."

"Refining emails to senior leaders, structuring strategy docs and briefings."

"My emails."

"Generating ideas."

# DEFINITIONS

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# DEFINITIONS

## **Generative AI**

Artificial intelligence that can create new content – including written content, images, video, spreadsheets, documents and more. This research focused on the use of generative AI for creating written outputs.

## **Generative AI platforms**

It's currently possible to source generative AI solutions from a number of different providers. Each of these has built its own platform, which is programmed to work in different ways. ChatGPT was launched in late 2022, and was followed by a number of different offers – notably Microsoft's Copilot in early 2023.

## **Written work/ written collateral/ written communications**

For the purposes of this research, our definition of "written" content was intentionally broad. It encompassed emails, reports, marketing and sales materials, scripts, signage and more.

## **Open and secured/gated environments**

Generative AI platforms are able to do what they do because they have been "trained" on large volumes of existing text and other materials. This allows them to carry out text generation tasks, based on already "knowing" what has already been published on given topics.

In an open environment, any questions that are asked – and any text that is generated in response – can be added into the pool of data that "trains" the AI. This means it can then be shared with anyone else using the platform.

In a secured/gated environment, anything inputted into a generative AI platform

remains within the organisation. This information is not shared with any organisation or individual not authorised to use the secured platform.

A secured AI platform keeps data within an environment that's controlled by the organisation using it. It ensures that sensitive information does not "leak" outside of the organisation.

## **Copy**

This term appears in qualitative feedback. It means text that is created by copywriters.

## **Tone of voice**

Articulating a tone of voice means aligning the way an organisation expresses itself in words with its brand personality and strategic objectives. This articulation is then set out in guidelines so that all of an organisation's communications can be created in the same "voice".

## **Search engine optimisation (SEO)**

SEO is the practice of including key search terms in the text that appears on websites. This is to make the content more discoverable – so that when someone searches for the term, they'll be more likely to find the page it's been used on.

# ABOUT WORDTREE AND CUSTOMER IQ

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# ABOUT WORDTREE

Wordtree is a specialist consultancy that helps corporate organisations to articulate and scale storytelling. We create the strategic building blocks of corporate narrative - then empower our clients to scale storytelling with human and AI training.

Our clients include international professional services organisations, financial services organisations, high street retailers and more.

Training and upskilling is a core aspect of our offer – including [workshops](#) that are designed to empower participants to use generative AI safely and productively.

# ABOUT CUSTOMER IQ

Customer IQ is a research consultancy that supports a wide range of organisations to understand customer needs, motivation and behaviour.

[www.customer-iq.com](http://www.customer-iq.com)

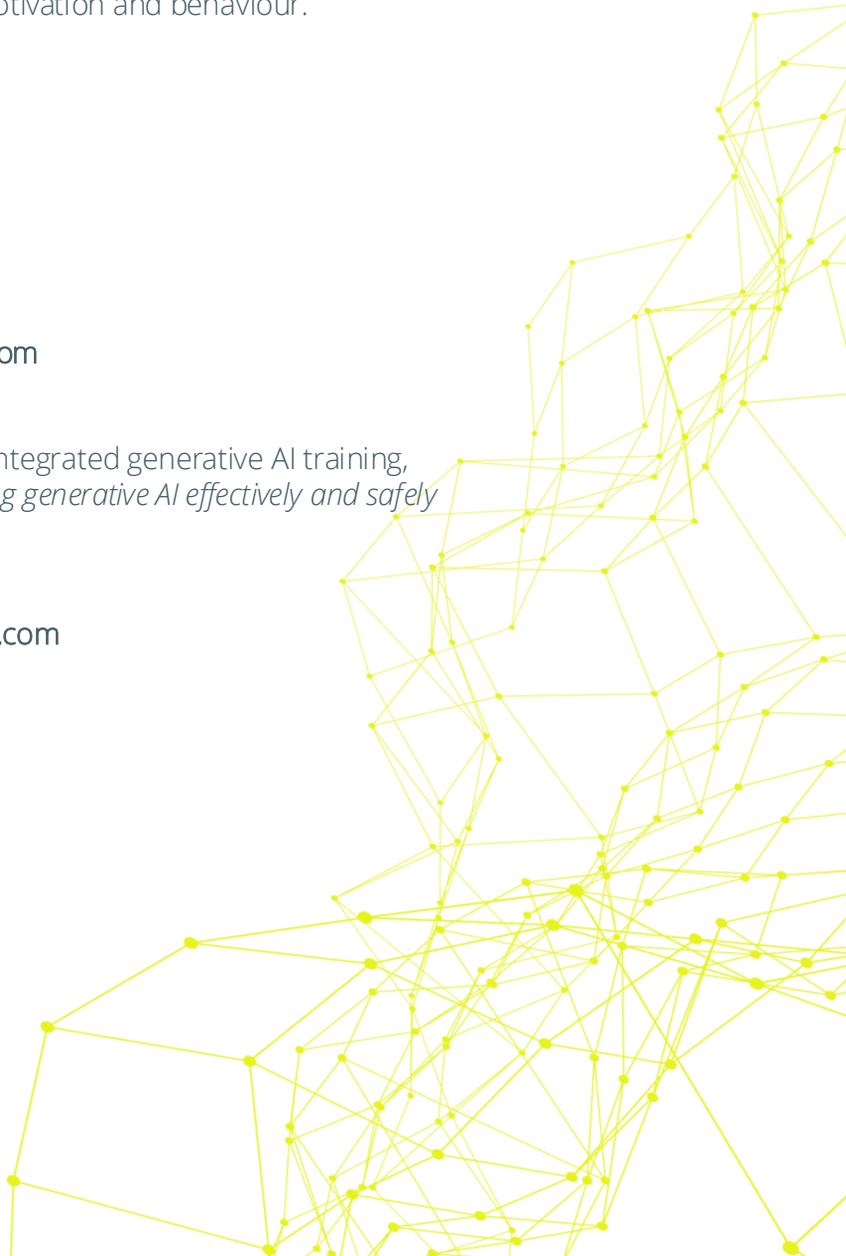
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# THANK YOU

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