Generative AI and Qualitative Research

ICG

Tom Woodnutt, Founder,
Feeling Mutual

~**Path to 1 million users*** (# of days from launch)

ChatGPT ~5 days
Instagram ~75 days
Spotify ~150 days
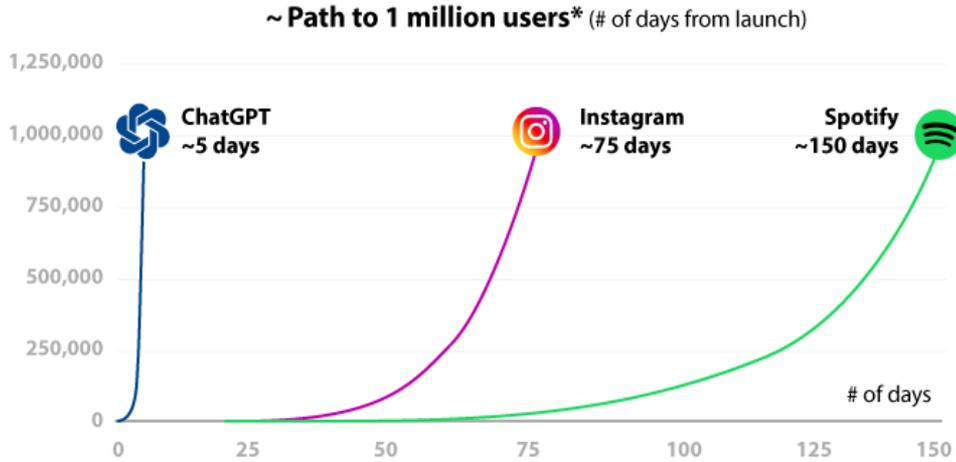
Sources: Google, Subredditstats, Media Reports

A wave of AI is coming...

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DALL-E

How will we ride the wave?

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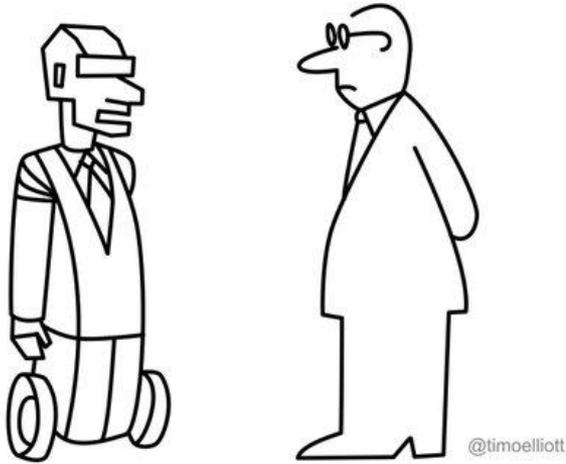
"The good news is I have discovered inefficiencies. The bad news is that you're one of them."

@timoelliott

Manage expectations better

Hyperbole or happening?

Deep Dream Generator:

"Woman reading book, under a night sky, dreamy atmosphere,"

SOURCE: The Guardian, 23/1/23:   'It's the opposite of art': why illustrators are furious about AI' by Sarah Shaffi

Hyperbole or happening?

3 useful metaphors

"The Co-pilot"

"The Actor"

"Formula 1"

What we will do....

1 - PLANNING

2 – RUNNING

3 - ANALYSING & REPORTING

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OVERALL IMPACT

The survey and online qual discussion on which the data in this presentation was based, involved 164 qual researchers around the world. It was hosted by Insight Platforms and Sponsored by Qualzy (who also provided the technology). Feeling Mutual co-designed, analysed and reported the findings. . .
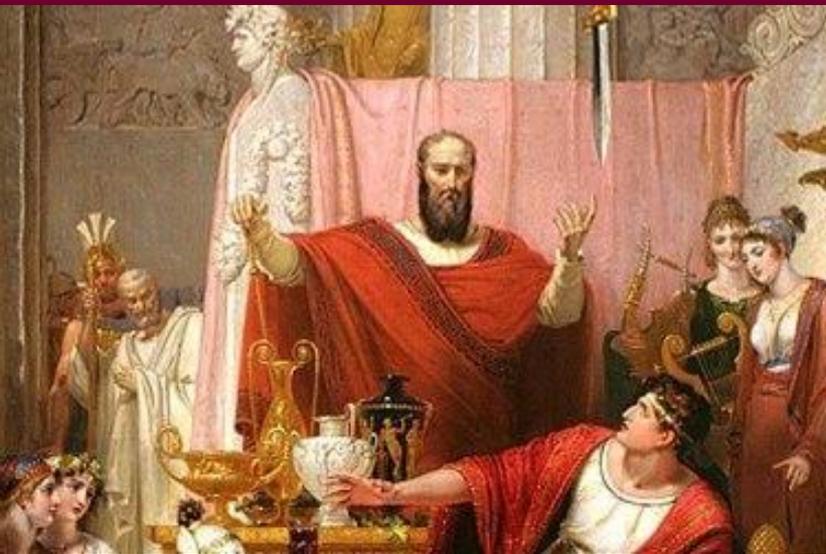
AI's double-edged sword of Damocles

CONS

Less creativity & critical thinking
Less human interactions & insights
Devalued role & damaged reputation

PROS

More efficiency & inspiration
More time for thinking
Better access & democratisation

*"I do not have any concerns as I believe **I can adapt to changes**. **I do not think AI will, can, or should** fully replace humans in terms of qualitative market research"*.

(Blake Foster, Research Executive, Sugata Research, Japan)

optimism is high

Overall, experience is low

Yet optimism is high

Have you ever used Generative AI tools within the context of Qualitative Research?

38% YES

62% NO
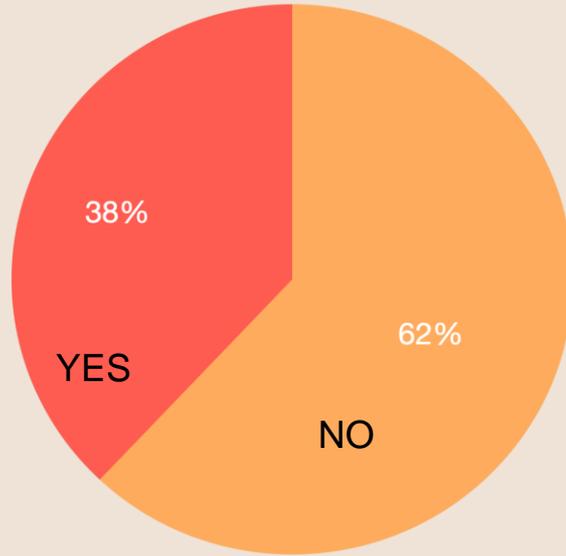
How do you feel about the impact of Generative AI on qualitative research?
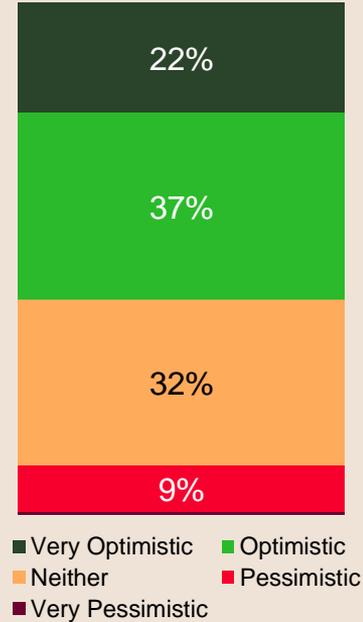
22%

37%

32%

9%

■ Very Optimistic ■ Optimistic
■ Neither ■ Pessimistic
■ Very Pessimistic

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AI IMPACT

Expectations are highest for analysis

and then developing hypotheses, DGs and reports
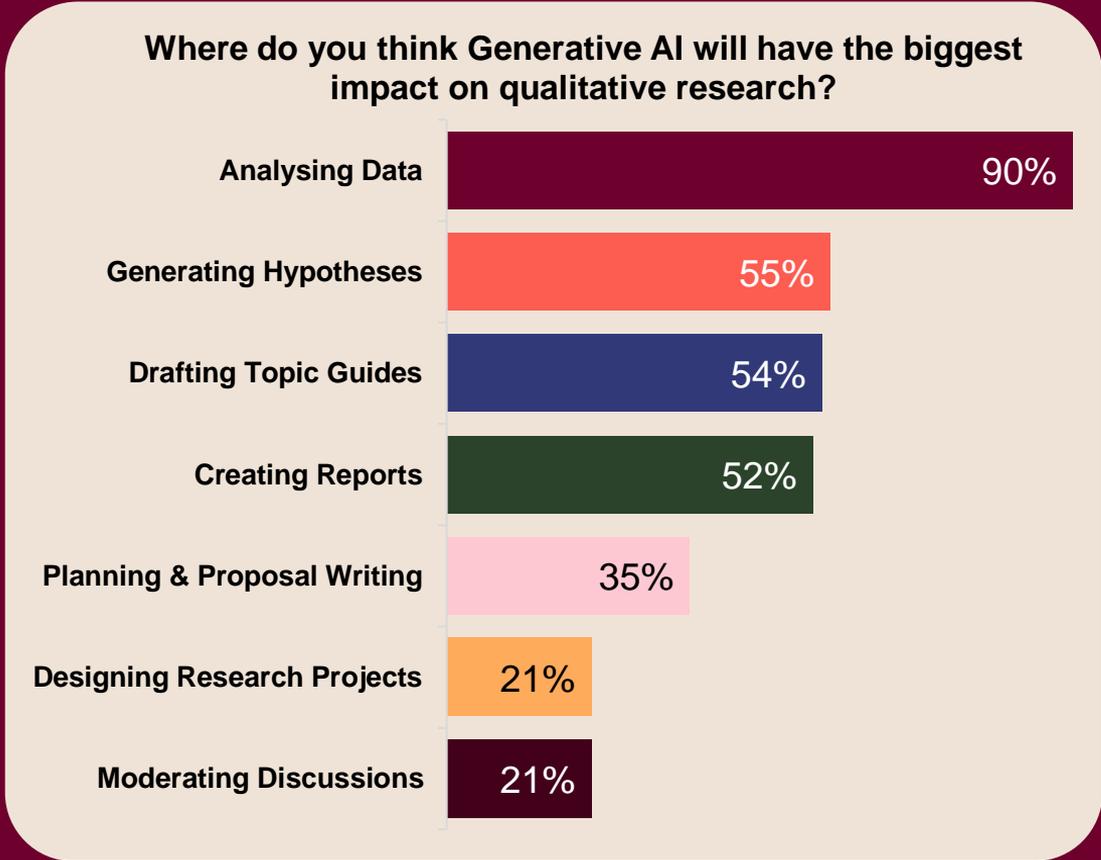
Where do you think Generative AI will have the biggest impact on qualitative research?

Analysing Data	90%
Generating Hypotheses	55%
Drafting Topic Guides	54%
Creating Reports	52%
Planning & Proposal Writing	35%
Designing Research Projects	21%
Moderating Discussions	21%

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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PLANNING

PLANNING

Around half expect a big impact in drafting discussion guides, generating
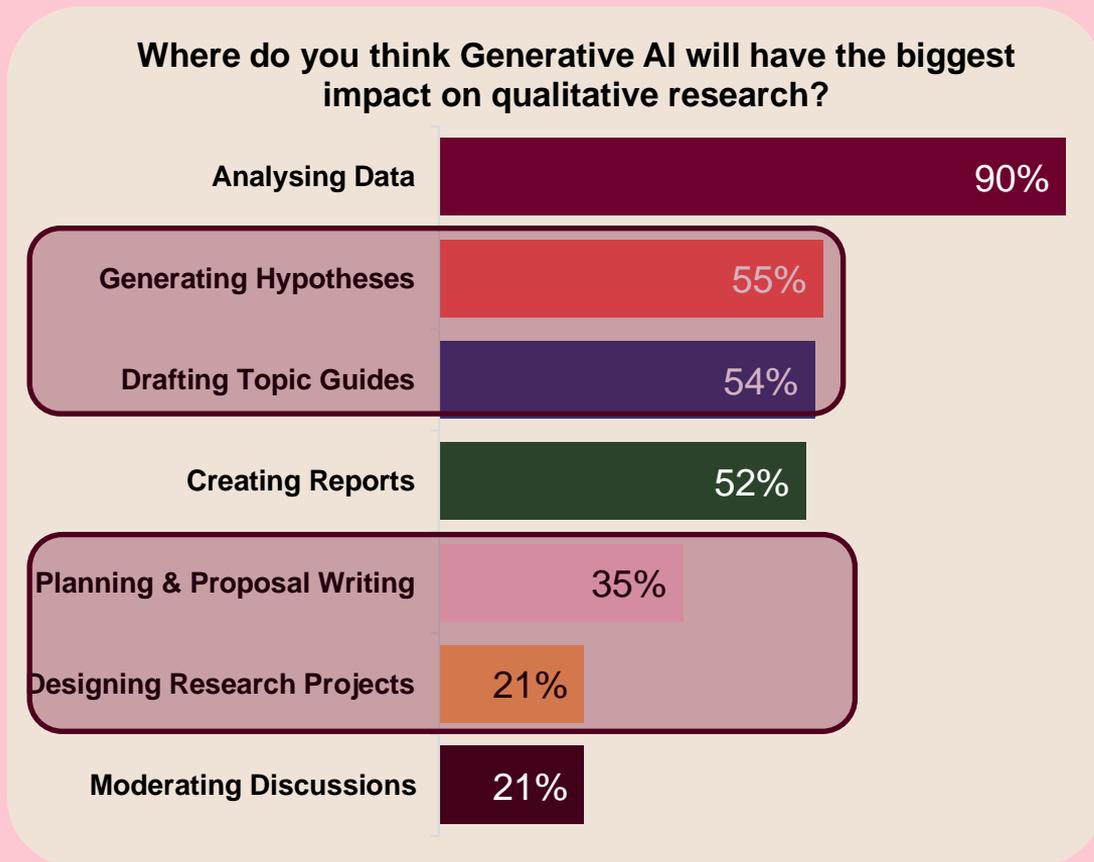
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PLANNING

The idea that in-house teams can do more of their own qual is not that well received

People in marketing, design, product and other roles will do more of their own qualitative research
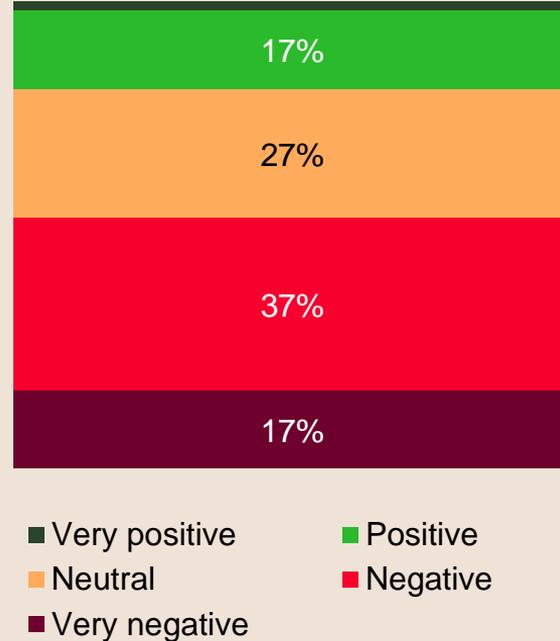
■ Very positive	■ Positive
■ Neutral	■ Negative
■ Very negative	

17%
27%
37%
17%

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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PLANNING

AI is expected to help with DG drafting by offering inspiration and efficiencies

"**Time-saving** in creating a discussion guide and potential hypotheses to explore"

(Suzanne Allers, Co-Founder, Untapped Innovation)

"AI presents a lot of efficiencies, which could result in much **more research** being conducted by my team. It could potentially **reduce the cost** of using external agencies for some research".

(Jordan Kavanah, Performance Evaluation Scientist, Oriflame)

PLANNING

AI is expected to help with DG drafting by offering inspiration and efficiencies

PROS

Inspiration - DG ideas, desk research, input into hypotheses

Efficiency - Quicker DG writing, creating materials

Democratisation - In-house teams can do more research with less budget

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PLANNING

But AI could reduce creativty, nuance and devalue qual research

"Companies using Generative AI to perform their own research and **not using research companies** to do so"
(Taylor Raymer, Research Manager, Radius Insights, US)

"Concerns that clients will try and solve research issues **in-house**, and the **nuanced skills** of human researchers will be **overlooked** as ML expands"

(Chris Hadley, Consultant, Chris Hadley Consulting, UK)

PLANNING

**But AI could reduce creativty, nuance and devalue qual research**

CONS

Uncreativity - Projects become generic, lacking human touch

Quality issue - more in-house or non-expert research could affect industry reputation / objectivity and commoditise / devalue qual research

FIELDWORK

least expected

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Some believe automated probes will inspire more openness and offer efficiency

*"If it's **good enough** and they **can't tell the difference**, I think this is a **terrific tool**, particularly in ongoing **communities**. I personally don't think it is something that needs to be disclosed - it's very **similar to what already occurs** where there is a generic name and may be several people involved in the moderation sitting behind that". (But if it's a **sensitive topic,** then yes, I think it's respectful to disclose the approach)".*

(Fiona Buchanan, Insights Director, MDI Australia)

Some believe automated probes will inspire more openness and offer efficiency

PROS

More efficiency - less time, managing large samples, good for simple probes e.g. *'welcome / thank you / generic elaboration '*

Reduced researcher effect - less posturing, more disclosure if taboo, getting more used to AI chat over time

There are concerns that AI probes will reduce quality

"Mixed - on one hand it could be useful to have an **additional pair of hands** to probe. On the other, participants might find that **creepy**. We'd **need to communicate that upfront** for sure.

(Jasmin Mayfield, UX researcher, Float, New Zealand)

"There is **a risk** of them adopting a 'robotic' posture in response, for example offering **bland, functional and formulaic opinions,** devoid of **emotion** and **nuance**. Older participants in particular may feel aggravated, **disengaged** and **unmotivated** - much as they do when calling their bank and being unable to 'talk to a human being".

(Simon Shaw, MD, Ignite, China)

There are concerns that AI probes will reduce quality

CONS

Disengagement - demotivation, lost rapport and reciprocity, trying to game or sabotage the chatbot

Insensitivity - lack of nuance culturally, strategically, empathetically, giving offense

Poor probes - erroneous, superficial,

**Distance** - between researcher and data

Fraud - Fake participants

Overall expectations for automated moderation in asynchronous online qual, are largely negative

Chatbots will moderate online discussions and communities
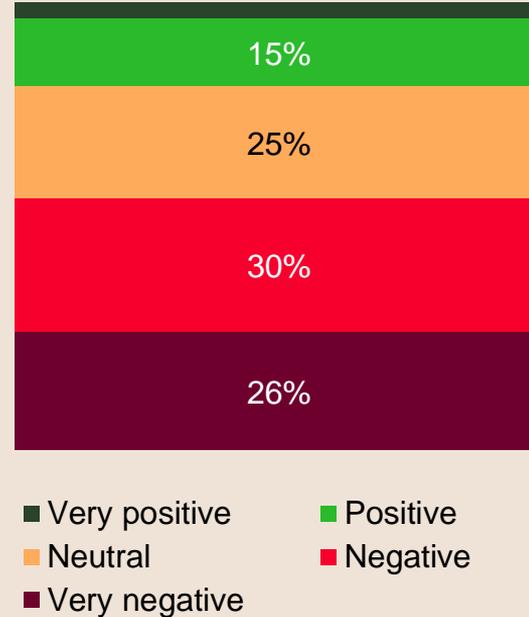
15%

25%

30%

26%

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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Even if participants believe the AI probes are from a human,

Participants will be unable to distinguish between human and AI moderators
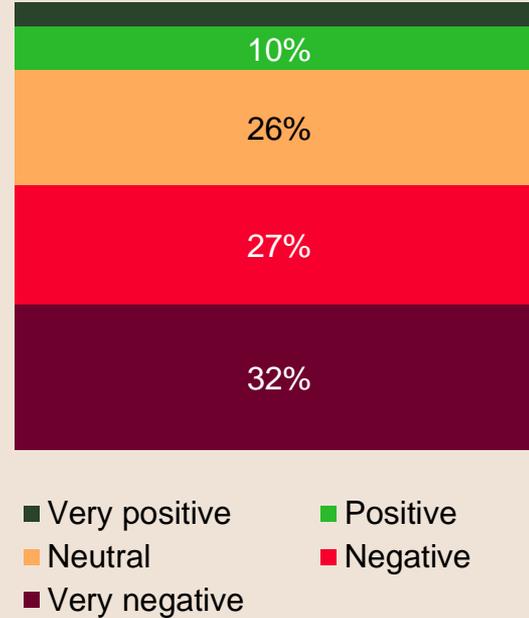
- 10%
- 26%
- 27%
- 32%

- ■ Very positive
- ■ Positive
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Negative
- ■ Very negative

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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The idea of AI probe suggestions

AI will suggest probes to moderators in online interviews or group discussions
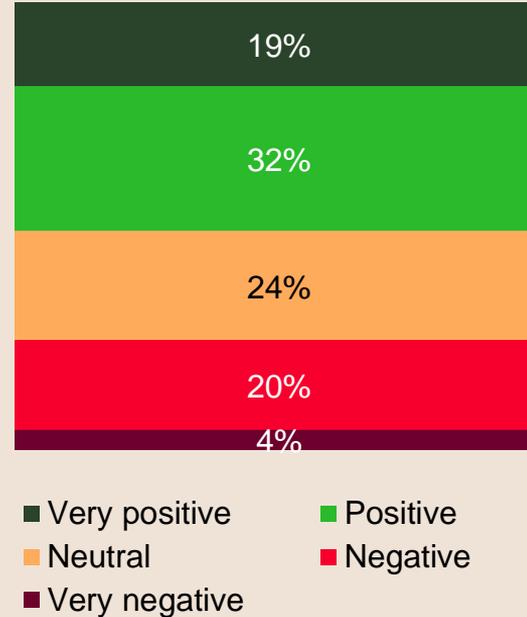
19%

32%

24%

20%

4%

- ■ Very positive
- ■ Positive
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Negative
- ■ Very negative

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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ANALYSIS & REPORTING

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Highest expectations are for the impact on analysis

"*If it really can conduct **thorough, detailed and sensitive** content analysis, then it does have the potential to **save me huge amounts** of time poring over transcripts and listening back to interviews/groups. Equally, if it can start to **synthesize key insights** to feed into reporting, then that would be very **helpful**".*

(Rachael Barriga, MD, Barriga Consulting, US)

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Potential AI efficiencies in analysis are appreciated

AI will reduce the time that researchers spend on content analysis
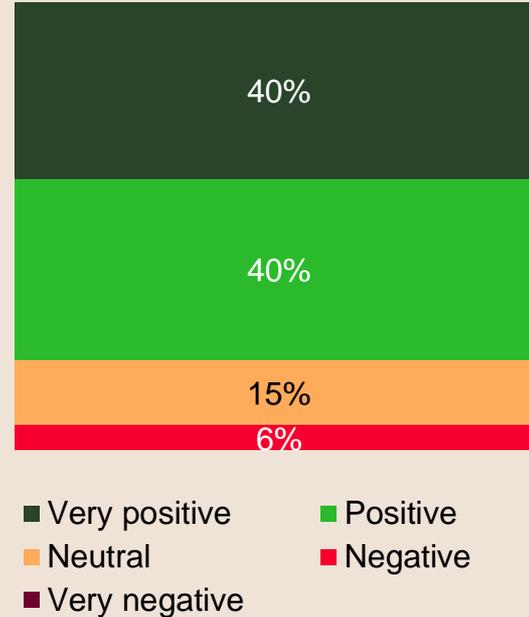
- 40% (Very positive)
- 40% (Positive)
- 15% (Neutral)
- 6% (Negative)

■ Very positive   ■ Positive
■ Neutral   ■ Negative
■ Very negative

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Potential AI efficiencies in analysis are appreciated

AI will automatically transcribe interviews and focus groups
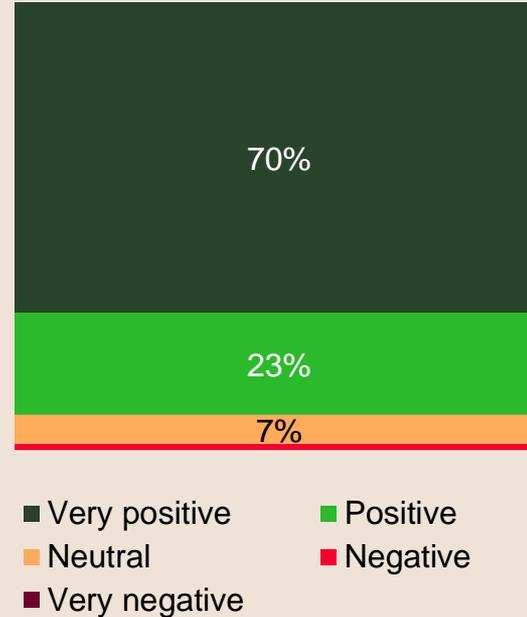
70%	
23%	
7%	

■ Very positive ■ Positive
■ Neutral ■ Negative
■ Very negative

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Potential AI efficiencies in analysis are appreciated

AI will summarise text from qualitative research
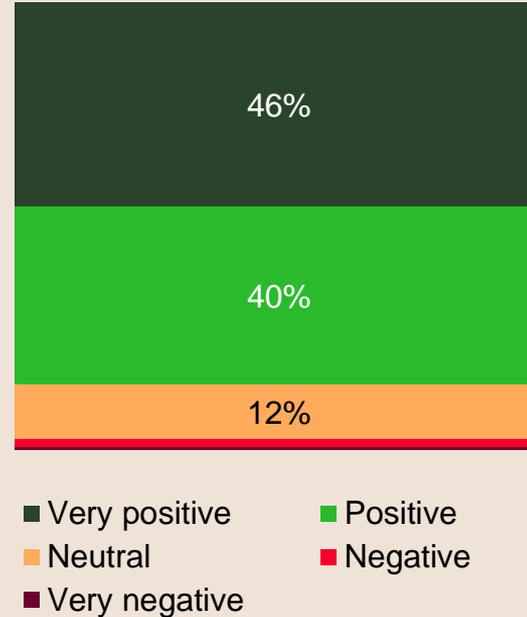
46%

40%

12%

■ Very positive ■ Positive
■ Neutral ■ Negative
■ Very negative

SOURCE: Qualzy / Insight Platforms Gen AI Survey, 02/23
BASE SIZE: 164 Researchers

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ANALYSIS & REPORTING

New insights, efficiency and inspiration

PROS

More efficiency - less time to process content (written, video and imagery), smart searches by topic or hypothesis, easier to find verbatim, faster transcription, managing larger qual samples, semi-automated reports, more time free for thinking and reporting

New insights - uncover missed-insights, suggest themes to explore

Inspiration - ideas for client recommendations

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Biases, inaccuracies and lack of critical thought

"*There are **ethical considerations** such as the perpetuation of **biases** from data AI is trained on. And not knowing for certain whether outputs are **accurate** or some sort of AI **hallucination**. There's a **risk** in taking outputs at face value, **without critically questioning** them, especially as we become **desensitised** to the new technology*"

(Vanessa Ribolini, Insight Manager, Chartered Insurance Institute, UK)

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Biases, inaccuracies and lack of critical thought

CONS

Invalidity - Mistakes, gaps, inventions, biases from learning data, illusion of competency

Unoriginality - It defaults to the expected, we use less critical thinking and rigour

Lack of synthesis - Failing to join dots, prioritise objectives

Lack of nuance - Unable intuit, empathise, read subtle non-verbal cues and cultural or client-political contexts

Data security - issues if sharing client data with Open AI

CONCLUSIONS

Explore your own boundaries

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

"We will find ourselves...in the position of 'sorcerer's apprentice': **we conjure a force, autonomous but totally compliant, give it a set of instructions, then scramble like mad to stop it** *once we realize our instructions are imprecise or incomplete."*

The Alignment Problem
- Machine Learning and
Human Values'
-by Brian Christian
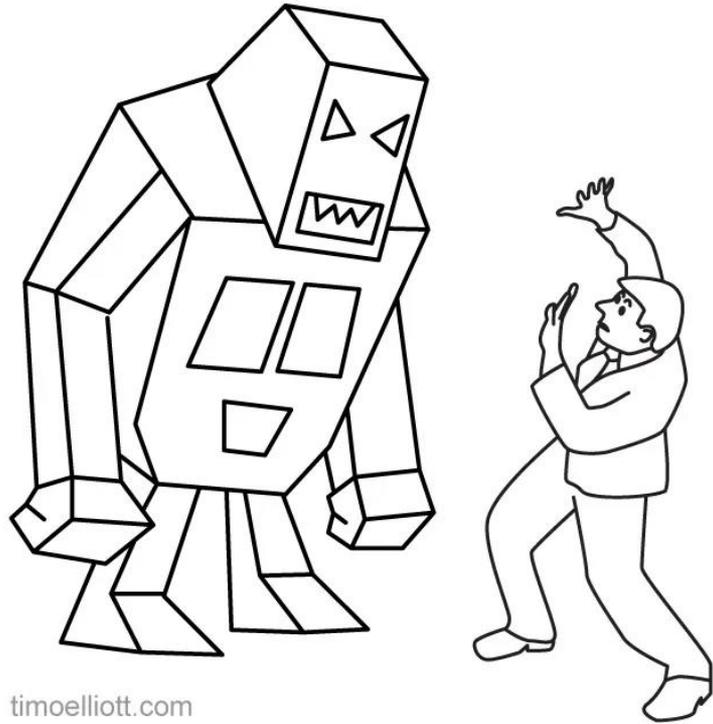
"I have been sent from the future to kill you...
Also, you have a dentist appointment tomorrow."

THE AI PARADOX:

We want AI to get 'better' but not 'too good'?

PROBLEM: AI will get better than us and replace us

SOLUTION: Keep on improving by using AI

1) **Use it for what it does better than us**

2) **Check it does it well enough**

3) **Reinvest time saved, into what we do better**
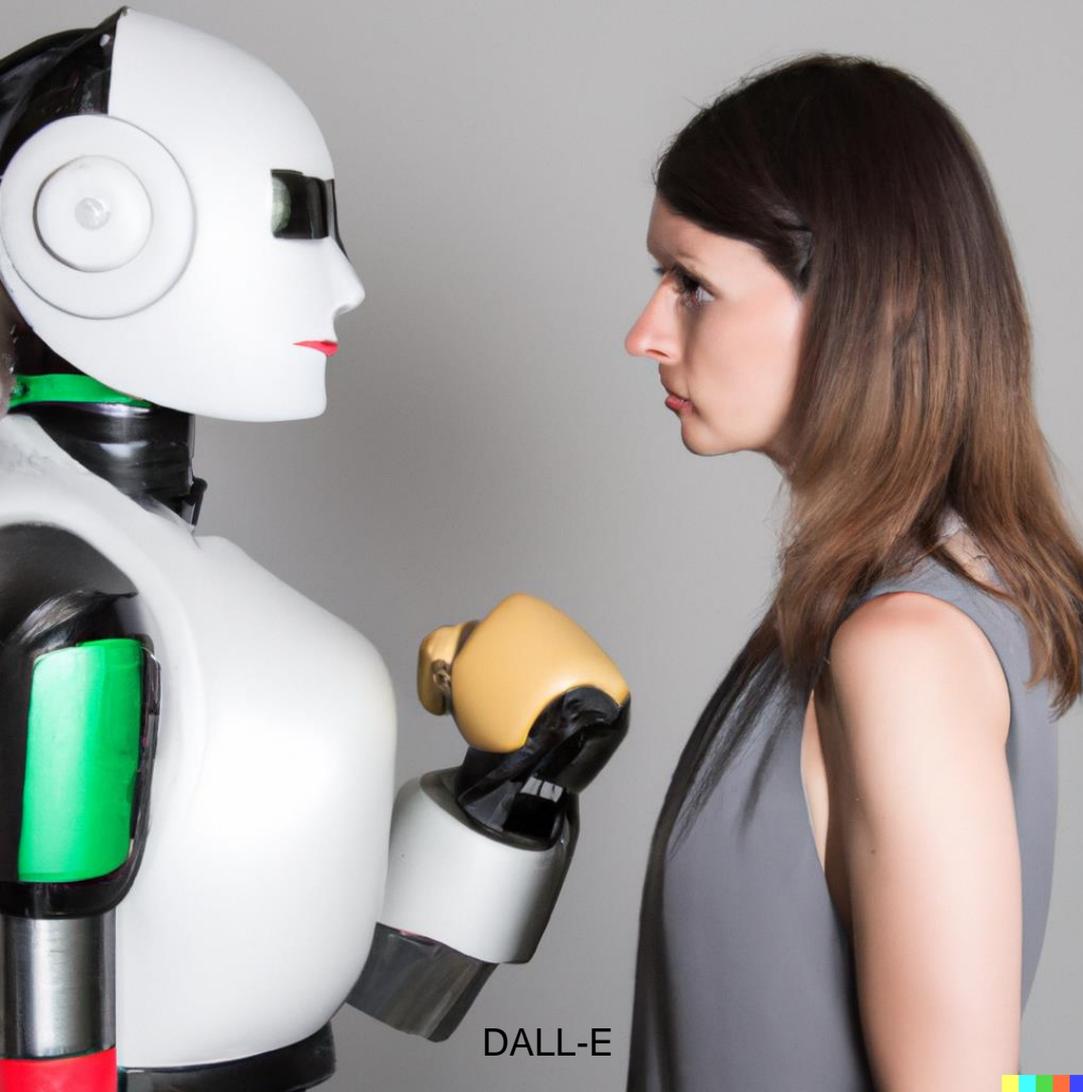
DALL-E

Remember it does not (yet) have what we do

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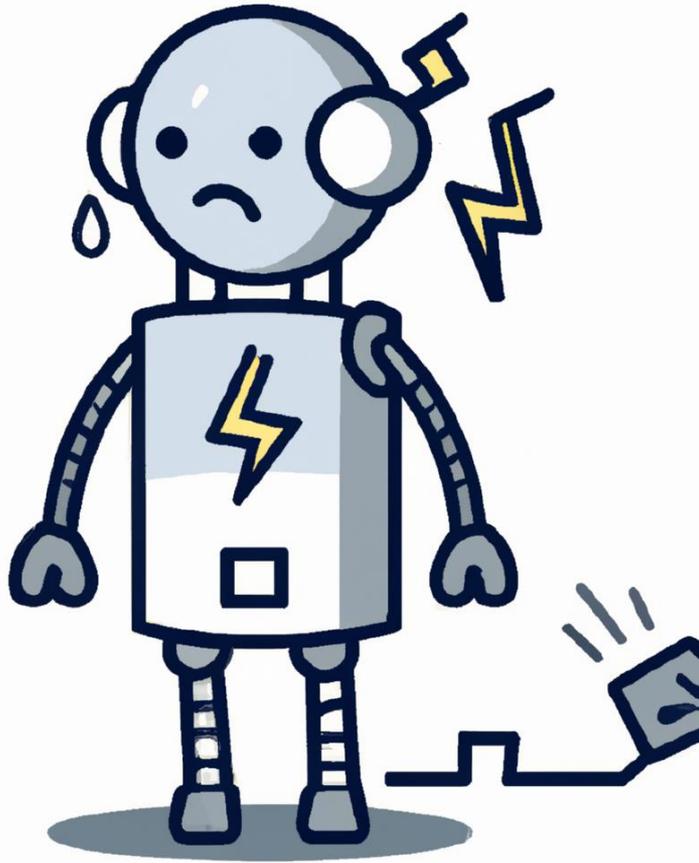
CHAT GPT Says human qualitative researchers are better at:

1. Understanding context
2. Flexibility & adaptability
3. Creativity & Innovation
4. Intuition & emotional intelligence
5. Ethical judgements

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DALL-E

....become an "AI whisperer"?

Source:
'ChatGPT AI: A market
researcher's best friend?'
Research News Live
By David Wright,
16/1/23,

"KEEP YOUR *friends* CLOSE, BUT YOUR *enemies* CLOSER"

This space is changing FAST

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Getty images

Think Cyborg Chess....

Honey from the hive mind!