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Expectations vs. Reality: A.I. in technical document's writing and management

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Generative artificial intelligence has started to make a place for itself in people's professional life. As an emerging solution, it evolves quickly and new features appear every day. Consequently, past research and data on this field may not be as relevant today as they used to be.

Focusing on the field of technical communication, this exploratory pilot study aims to investigate the prevalence of these A.I. based solutions, and their relevance in the work of technical writers and knowledge managers. We interviewed two professionals to learn about what they think technical writers and knowledge managers need in terms of A.I. features, and their views on the future of A.I.. We also conducted a survey, this time targeted towards technical communicators to know about if they use generative A.I., what they use and what they think about it. Our findings indicate that companies show a strong interest in generative A.I., and most of them are considering implementing A.I. solutions. Respondents of the survey agree with the interviewed professionals on what is needed from A.I. solutions: reliability and data safety. Generative A.I. should allow us to save time and work more efficiently.

Keywords: technical communication, generative artificial intelligence, A.I. tools, A.I. solutions, technical writers, knowledge managers, limitations, advantages.

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) has been widely talked about since a few years back, and heavy venture capital investments in generative A.I were made back in 2023, mainly by companies from the United States (OECD.AI, 2025). Its plausible uses are mentioned and researched in almost every field, be it law, bank or medicine; with it, promises of saved time and funds, simplified work, and days absolved from redundant tasks.

Nevertheless, we are still exploring A.I. potential, and the first big wave of craze has now been followed by the realization that while A.I. 's potential seemed to grow, its complexity has risen too.

In the field of technical communication, as generative A.I. can't create new, reliable content from scratch, it's making a place for itself in the form of an assistant, a catalyst in technical writers' and knowledge managers' activities.

The most commonly known example would be ChatGPT: from scientific articles to posts from social media, it uses everything on the web as its source of information and is programmed to be able to give an answer in natural language. However, it is not entirely fit to be used in a professional context as it does not necessarily make the distinction between reliable and unreliable information, and can even make up false data. More than that, in fields where people work with sensitive data, are very mindful of intellectual property, and/or work at a high level of specialization, public models like ChatGPT are inadequate (European Parliament, 2023) (OpenAI, 2025).

ChatGPT uses Large Language Model (LLM) to generate contextual answers. This is possible as LLM are trained on a wide pool of content that allows them to recognize and understand patterns in language. While ChatGPT in itself may not be the most interesting A.I. solution in a professional context, its creation in 2022 has sparked a lot of interest in LLM.

In companies, LLM are often used to perform simple tasks like translating documents, generating texts such as emails and summaries or assisting developers by detecting mistakes. They also assist clients in the form of chatbots. However, there are other more interesting possible uses to LLM, as it is possible to fine-tune its uses (IBM, 2023).

Published in 2023, the research paper "Generative AI in the Workplace: Employee Perspectives of ChatGPT Benefits and Organizational Policies" by Peter W. Cardon et al. tackled a few questions in common with our own paper. For example, they are interested in people's opinion on A.I., the perceived benefits and what they use it for.

The studied samples are composed of working adults in the United States and focused on ChatGPT as an A.I. solution. The first study group was composed of 148 people, while the second study group had 395 people.

Through a survey given to the first study group, it was discovered that about half of them believe A.I. to have a positive impact on their job by increasing their productivity and helping them with their tasks.

As for the second study group, 41.5% of them have used ChatGPT to research a topic or generate ideas, 26% of them have used it to draft long documents, and 22% of them used it as an editing tool.

Unfortunately, this study does not take into account the participants' field of work, except their work position (non-managerial job, manager, or executive). Moreover, nowadays people have turned to a wide range of A.I. based solutions instead of ChatGPT (Cardon et al., 2023).

As a field with clear advantages, unexplored possibilities, and complexities, the current situation on A.I. in the technical communication world will be the subject of our paper. Past research has been done on people's relationship with A.I., but they mainly focus on ChatGPT.

That is why we first wonder how prevalent those generative A.I. functionalities are in technical communication.

We then strive to understand if these functionalities fulfil the needs of technical writers and knowledge managers. By studying this question, we want to know if the companies developing those A.I. solutions have fully grasped what technical writers and knowledge managers need today.

In order to answer these questions, we first carried out 2 interviews with professionals of companies developing solutions for content authoring and management. We then sent out a survey targeted towards technical writers and knowledge managers.

Methodology

To complete the research and understand the prevalence and use of generative A.I. in the technical communication workforce, a mixed-method approach was adopted, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

Before the writing of this research paper and the design of the primary research instruments were initiated, a literature review was conducted to identify existing knowledge on the topic. This initial step allowed for an overview of current perspectives on the benefits, limitations, and practical applications of generative A.I. in professional settings to be gained. These foundational understandings were then used to guide the direction and development of the overall research approach.

The interviews

The research was first approached through a qualitative phase, during which two one-on-one interviews were conducted: one with a pre-sales engineer and the other with a senior product marketing manager, both involved in the development and promotion of generative A.I. solutions.

The interviews were carried out with the aim of gathering insights from the provider side, that is, those who design, build, and promote generative A.I. solutions rather than those who use them. The technological and strategic perspectives of these professionals were explored in depth.

More specifically, the interviews focused on:

- The core promises and value propositions of generative A.I. tools.
- The primary use cases envisioned for technical communicators.
- Client adoption experiences and feedback that have been observed.
- Perceptions on how generative A.I. is reshaping the technical communication roles.
- Long-term visions for the integration of A.I. into technical communication.

An understanding was sought regarding whether major shifts in job roles, required skills, or workflows were anticipated, and how technical communicators were expected to adapt to the fast-paced evolution of these technologies.

These interviews each lasted approximately 45 minutes. One was held in person while the other was conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams. In both cases, a prepared set of open-ended questions was used to guide the conversation. Notes were taken and thematic patterns were identified during the analysis.

Findings have helped design and structure the subsequent survey.

The survey

A survey was brainstormed, designed and developed collaboratively, with the aim of collecting relevant data from professionals in the field: technical writers and knowledge managers. A clear and logically structured questionnaire was drafted to align with the research objectives.

To ensure clarity, relevance, and neutrality, the questionnaire was reviewed and discussed several times with the research director. An external perspective helped refine the content and make sure that the direction of the questionnaire wasn't getting off-track.

The survey consisted of two main parts.

Part one: respondents demographics and general information.

In the first set of questions, background information about the participants was gathered in order to contextualize the data.

Sample questions included:

- What is your occupation?
- What is the size of your company?
- What is the sector of activity of your company?
- Are you familiar with generative A.I.?
- Do you make use of generative A.I. in your everyday tasks?

Part two: professional relationship with generative A.I..

Based on the response to the final question in part one ("Do you make use of generative A.I. in your everyday tasks?"), respondents were directed towards one of two tailored question paths:

- Route 1: "I use generative A.I. at work."

Participants in this category were asked questions about:

- Their overall experience with the technology.
- The features and tools most frequently used.
- Frequency of use.
- Perceived benefits and improvements in their workflow.
- Overall level of satisfaction.

- Route 2: "I don't use generative A.I. at work."

This path provided space for non-users to explain their reasons, whether personal or policy-driven. Topics explored included:

- Motivations for not using A.I..
- Willingness to incorporate A.I. into future workflows.
- Whether their company is currently considering and/or in the process of developing its own generative A.I. solutions.

The survey is attached in Appendix 3.

Sharing the survey

The questionnaire was primarily targeted at technical writers and knowledge managers, but responses from all types of professionals working in technical communication were welcomed. To maximize the number of responses and reach a diverse audience, the survey was shared on the professional networking platform LinkedIn. A post, introducing the research project and outlining its main objectives was published to provide context and encourage engagement.

Additionally, the survey was shared via email with alumni from our university, many of whom are now active professionals in relevant roles. This allowed access to a trusted network of qualified respondents who could provide valuable insights based on their practical experience with, or viewpoints on generative A.I. in the workplace. By combining both methods, broader participation and more robust data collection were achieved.

Tools

The survey was made using Google Forms, because it offers a user-friendly interface for both respondents and researchers, making it easy to distribute and collect data efficiently. One of its key advantages was its seamless integration with Google Sheets, which enabled the automatic compilation of responses into a spreadsheet for efficient analysis and organization.

Data was collected anonymously and used exclusively for this research.

Limitations

The first limitation is that we obtained fewer than 20 responses to the survey. This restricts the statistical significance of our findings and limits the extent to which they can be generalized. Additionally, both our participants and interviewees are French professionals, which further narrows the scope of study. This national focus means that our results may not reflect international trends. Moreover, we received most of our answers after sending the survey to the alumni. As they come from a similar background, it is possible that there exists a bias.

Results

From the previously described methodology, we obtained the following results.

Interviews results

A pre-sales engineer (Interviewee A) and a senior product marketing manager (Interviewee B) were interviewed. Interviewee A is currently working for a Content Delivery Platform (Company A) supporting distribution of content, while Interviewee B's company (Company B) is specialized in content management. Moreover, Interviewee B used to work in a company developing software solutions for content creation (Company C).

The core promises and value propositions of generative A.I. tools.

After asking them to present themselves and the companies they work for, we asked about the A.I. based solutions developed by their companies.

On Company A's side, A.I. is mainly used in the form of chatbots integrated into their platform. With data safety in mind, the LLM's database is built from the client company's information. They also work on case deflection, which is the use of bots to answer employees' questions and thus reduce the number of support tickets.

On Company B's side, they have a wider range of A.I. solutions which will support translation, writing and content management, once again with a big focus on data safety and intellectual property.

As for writing, the A.I. is integrated into the writing software in the form of a chatbot that can help create tables of content, or perform other simple tasks.

To help content management, their solution assists the user in finding the information they want from the database they used to build the chatbot on.

Finally, Company C developed a software to support technical writing by simplifying topic-based writing. In the form of a conversational chatbot, the technical writer could ask it to rewrite some bits of texts, make tables of content...

They also strive to automate workflows.

The primary use cases envisioned for technical communicators.

As we are focusing in the field of technical communication, we wanted to know which A.I. feature would appeal the most to technical writers and knowledge managers.

In Interviewee A's opinion, while the most used form of generative A.I. in their case is chatbots, the most appealing to technical writers and knowledge managers would be review and correction of workflow. They would want to be able to manage quality assurance and validation processes efficiently and consequently need collaborative tools.

In Company B, quality translation used to be the most demanded service. Now, more than a feature, they want to be able to trust the A.I.'s output in terms of quality. The ideal would be providing useful information at the right moment. Finally, what could be interesting would be the use of agentic A.I., i.e. a LLM with an "add-on" which allows it to perform specialized tasks. This would allow the user to obtain data analysis, a comparison of documents, graphs, powerpoint etc. from the A.I..

Feedback, insight on the future of generative A.I., and its impact on the technical communication world.

Finally, we wanted to know what these professionals thought about the future of A.I. in content creation, authoring and management.

Interviewee A believes that while there is a hype around A.I. and what it can do for us, technical writers are still unsure about what they precisely want the A.I. to do. Time is still needed to have a more accurate insight of A.I. development, but in his opinion, there is a need for a new role where people would be specialized in A.I. in a specific field (for example, an UX designer but for A.I.). As Interviewee A explained, we would need "someone who can think through the user journey, define smart use cases and integrate A.I. into real-world processes". However, A.I. will, without a doubt, change the environment of technical writing, shifting it towards more of an editorial role where critical reviewers will be needed.

According to Interviewee A, A.I. can boost productivity but there is still a long way to go to make A.I. as reliable and trustworthy as it should be, even more since clients are very concerned about intellectual property.

A.I.'s hype should be more moderate as only a handful of services are truly relevant. Taking into account all these points, there is no threat to the technical writer job.

Interviewee B agrees with the last point mentioned: A.I.'s first and foremost goal is to assist with doing menial tasks, communicating more efficiently and quickly finding relevant information by cross analyzing a large number of documents. It should not do someone's work but help them with the bothersome, time-consuming tasks.

There is also work to be done on classifying and tagging information to allow the A.I. to understand the relationship between documents and give specific answers according to our requirements.

Like Interviewee A said, the jobs in technical communication will evolve, and people will have to gain new skills, such as knowing how to write prompts.

But beyond that, Interviewee B said that "there is something that A.I. can't do, and that is reasoning with empathy". It can't create new content, it can't take into account human's needs and feelings, which means that a person will always be needed.

Survey results

The goal of the questionnaire was to build on the insights gathered during our interviews. While the interviews provided us with detailed explanations of how generative A.I. and powered solutions are developed and implemented, we wanted to gather feedback from the primary users of these tools: technical communicators. Our objective was to collect at least 30 responses to consider our data reliable and representative. In the end, we received 17 responses. The survey was completed by professionals from our extended network, including alumni.

To begin, we asked participants to indicate their job titles to identify who is most likely to use generative A.I. (Fig. 1).

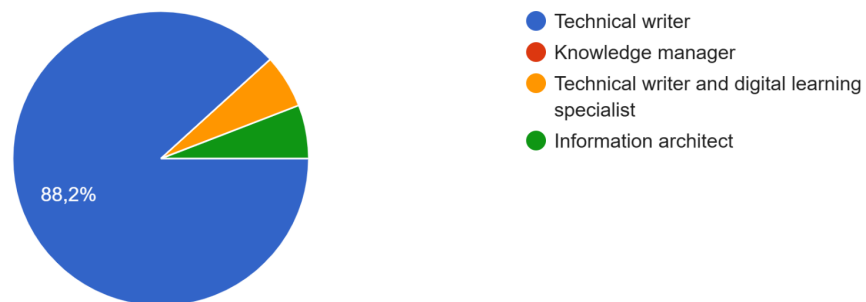


Figure 1 - Proportion (in %) of job titles to the question "What is your occupation in the company?".

The available answers were "Technical writer", "Knowledge manager" and "Other" type answers.

Of the 17 respondents, approximately 88% identified as technical writers. We also received one response from a participant identifying as "Technical writer and digital learning specialist" (5.9% of total responses), along with one Information architect. In other words, almost all respondents were technical writers (16 out of 17 participants). Unfortunately, we were not able to reach knowledge managers, who were one of the primary audiences we originally hoped to engage in this study.

We asked if the respondents had already used generative A.I. in their day-to-day work (Fig. 2).

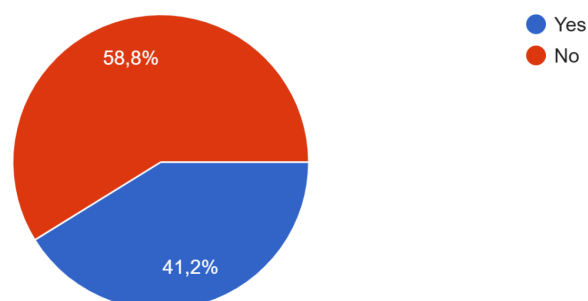


Figure 2 - Proportion (in %) of "Yes" and "No" to the question "Have you used generative A.I. in a professional context?"

7 respondents (47.2%) answered that they have used generative A.I. at least once in

a professional context, while 10 (58.8%) said they have never used it. After this specific question, we decided to split the questionnaire in two paths depending on the respondent's answer.

The respondents who have used generative A.I. in the workplace

We asked the seven participants who answered “Yes” to the previous question about their use of generative A.I to indicate which solution they use (Fig. 3).

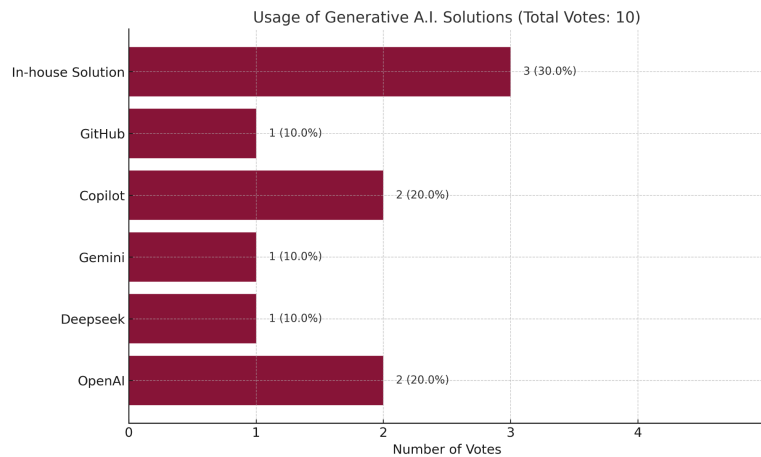


Figure 3 - A.I. solutions used and proportion (in %) of usage.

Respondents could select multiple tools and add others manually. The most commonly cited solution was an in-house developed system, which received three votes. OpenAI and Copilot followed second, which received two votes each. GitHub, Gemini and Deepseek were the least selected, with one vote each.

The results reveal that generative A.I. is most commonly used for tasks related to content creation and text refinement (Fig. 4).

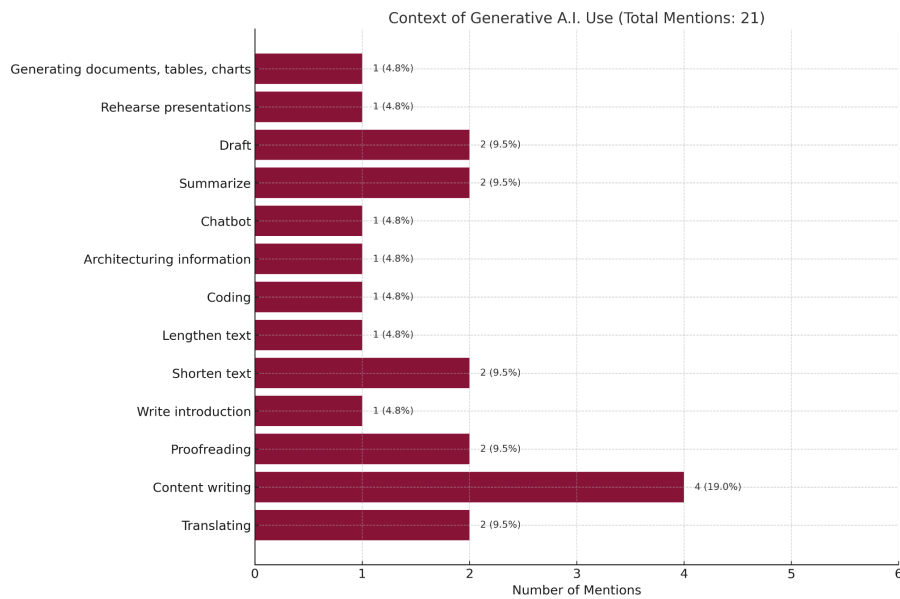


Figure 4 - Context of generative A.I. use and proportion (in %) of usage.

The most frequently mentioned use case is content writing accounting for 19% of the responses, followed by tasks such as translating, proofreading, summarizing, drafting and shortening text, each receiving around 9.5% of the total mention. Other contexts such as writing introductions, lengthening text, coding, architecting information, chatbots, rehearsing presentations and generating documents/tables/charts received 1 mention each (4.8%).

The frequency of usage was also a point of interest (Fig. 5).

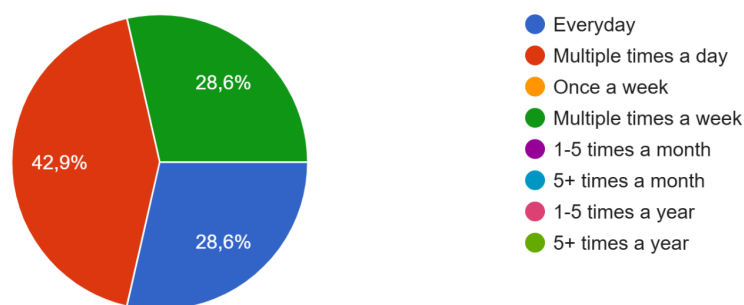


Figure 5 - Proportion (in %) of the frequency of generative A.I. usage at work. The available answers were "Everyday", "Multiple times a day", "Once a week", "Multiple times a week", "1-5 times a month", "5+ times a month", "1-5 times a year" and "5+ times a year".

Out of seven respondents, three of them use generative A.I. multiple times a day (42.9%). Two respondents use A.I. at least once a day (28.6%), and two use it multiple times a week (28.6%).

The responses indicate that generative A.I. is valued for increasing speed and efficiency (Fig. 6).

I work 4x faster and learn better
Another perspective on different subjects + for better comprehension
a headache
AI helps me work more efficiently and save time, especially when there's a lot of documentation to produce. Since I write in English, which isn't my native language, it also helps me in improving the quality of my writing.
It accelerates some tasks such brainstorming ideas, researching existing standards, preparing workshops, drafting definitions and specific types of content
Quicker search speed
It is faster to get a nice translation or get a technical information

Figure 6 - Answers to the question "What are the benefits of using generative A.I.?"

One participant reported working four times faster. Others mentioned faster access to translations and quicker search for information. A.I. was also credited with improving writing quality for non-native English speakers and supporting tasks. One respondent noted it provides another perspective and helps with comprehension. However, one participant described their experience with A.I. as "a headache".

Regarding the level of satisfaction with generative A.I. (Fig. 7), 50% of respondents are satisfied, while 33.3% reported being very satisfied. The remaining 16.7% described themselves as somewhat satisfied.

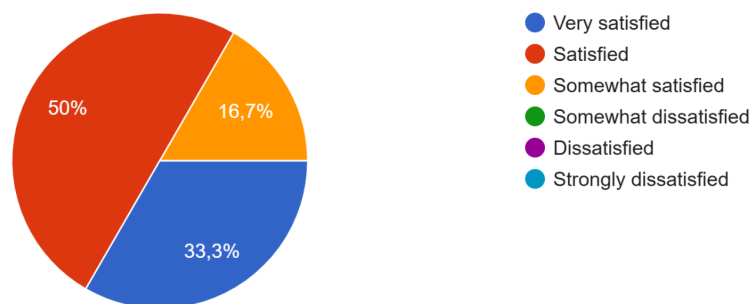


Figure 7 - Proportion (in %) of satisfaction with A.I. features .

The respondents who don't use generative A.I. in the workplace

We asked the ten participants who answered “No” to Figure 2 - “Have you used generative A.I. in a professional context?” if their company has access to generative A.I. tools (Fig. 8).

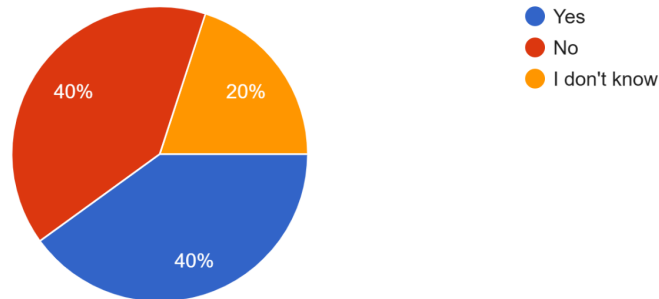


Figure 8 - Proportion (in %) of respondents' companies with access to generative A.I. features.

It's a tie between “Yes” and “No” with four votes each (40%). Two participants (20%) are not aware of A.I. availability in their workplace.

The responses indicate a range of reasons why they do not use generative A.I. tools at work (Fig. 9).

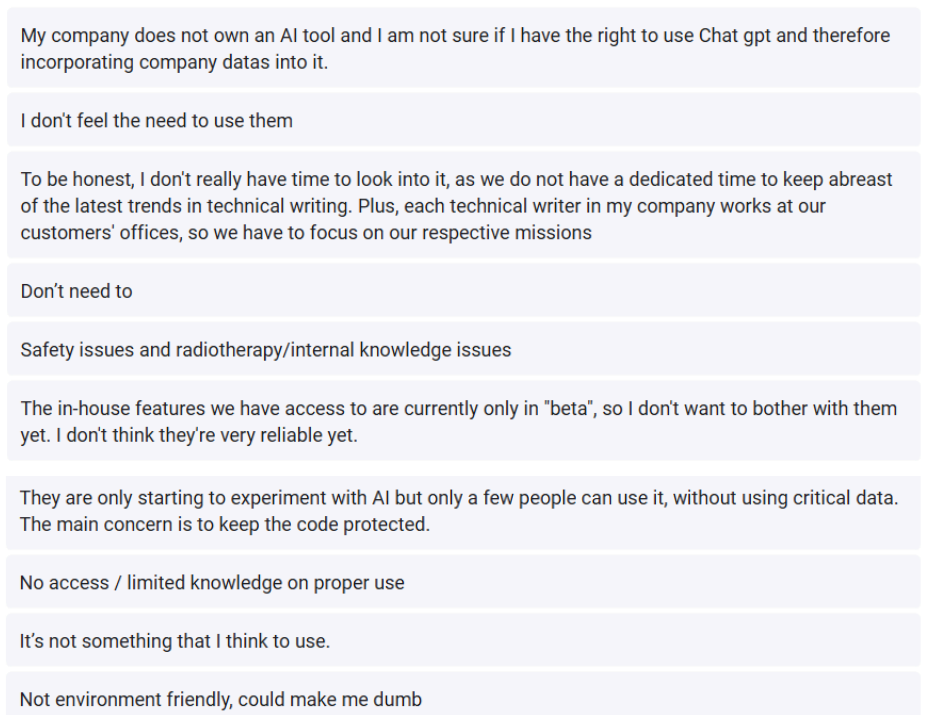


Figure 9 - Respondents' explanation to why they do not use generative A.I. tools at work.

Several participants mentioned limited or no access to A.I. tools and uncertainty about permissions. Some state that their companies are only beginning to experiment with A.I. and therefore restrict its use. Some answered lack of time or opportunity to explore with A.I tools. Others stated they did not feel the need to use

them. Concerns related to safety, data protection and internal knowledge security were mentioned. One respondent expressed doubt about the reliability of current in-house features, while another referred to a negative view of A.I.'s impact on thinking.

We then asked whether the company they currently work for is considering incorporating some form of generative A.I. into their workflows (Fig. 10).

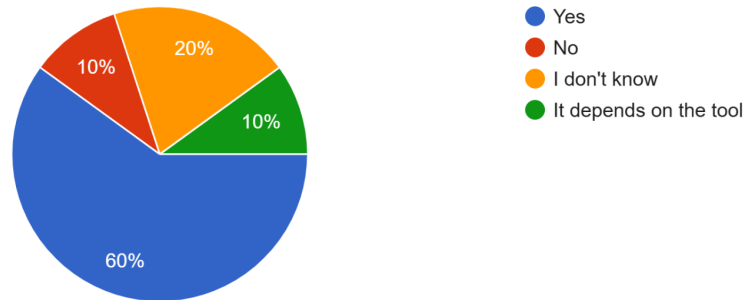


Figure 10 - Proportion (in %) of respondents' companies willing to incorporate generative A.I. in the workflow.

Six participants responded "Yes", one said "No", two said they "don't know" and one said "It depends on the tool".

We added one last question for the participants who had responded "Yes" or "It depends on the tool" whether their company might be inclined to adopt generative A.I. by developing its own solution or using an existing one (Fig. 11).

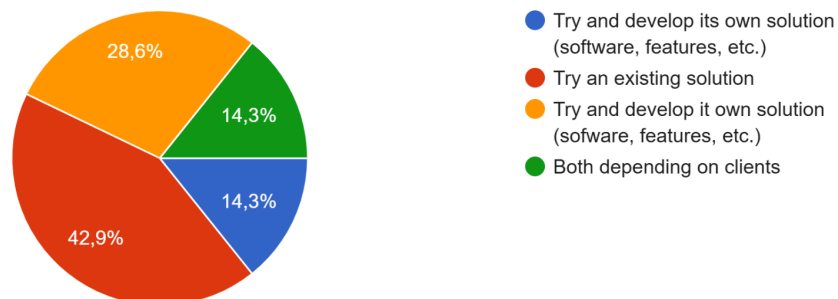


Figure 11 - Proportion (in %) of preferred implementation solution of A.I. features by respondents' companies, in the case they do not use A.I.

The available answers were "Try and develop its own solution", "Try an existing solution" and "Other" type answers.

Three participants indicated that their company would likely develop its own solution (42.9%), three stated the company would prefer using an existing solution (42.9%). One participant replied "Both depending on clients".

Discussion

The majority of the 17 respondents are technical writers (88.82% of them), and more than half of the respondents (58.8%) use A.I. and their day-to-day work.

For the respondents using A.I. features, they mainly use in-house solutions or, just as mentioned by Interviewee A, chatbots. In that context, they rely on chatbots available on the internet to accomplish simple tasks such as text editing, summarizing content, proofreading or translating content. As stated by Interviewee B, one of the main values of generative A.I. is to assist the user with simple and time consuming tasks.

Indeed, both Interviewees and the majority of respondents using A.I. features agree on the fact that generative A.I. allow an increase in work efficiency and thus improve productivity.

While all the respondents using A.I. showed at least some satisfaction with the features they use, one respondent stated that its use was “a headache”.

As for the respondents not using A.I. features at work, it is explained by :

- a lack of need to use these features;
- in-house A.I. solutions still being in development;
- a lack of time to research the subject;
- data safety issues;
- a lack of relevance to their work;
- environmental concerns;
- not knowing if they are allowed to use A.I. solutions.

However, the majority (70%) of those respondents' companies do consider implementing A.I., with about half of them thinking about creating in-house solutions, and the other half relying on existing solutions. As the interviewees predicted, generative A.I. will be more present and impact the world of technical communication, and these features will have to be developed with data safety in mind.

This could lead technical communication jobs to be reshaped in the future, with new skills necessary to follow the ever growing development of generative A.I. features.

From our results, we can conclude that professionals working in the development of generative A.I. features in technical communication understand the needs of their users, while the prevalence of those tools keep increasing in this field.

Conclusion

The benefits highlighted by the respondents in our survey, who use generative A.I. in their day-to-day tasks, reflect a generally positive perception of artificial intelligence in the context of writing technical content.

Their insights closely align with Interviewee B's opinion: A.I.'s primary purpose should be supporting users with repetitive or time-consuming tasks and help quickly retrieve relevant information.

The interviewees also implied that A.I. will be a part of our day-to-day work life in the future. We can indeed observe this tendency through our survey: for the companies who do not have access to generative A.I., more than half of them are willing to incorporate generative A.I. in the workflows.

Similarly, respondents and interviewees shared concerns over data security, intellectual property issues and lack of output reliability.

All in all, the interviewees' input seemed to match with our respondents' answers, showing an understanding from the companies developing A.I. solutions.

Claudia Sistig, a technical writer at Compart GmbH in Böblingen, has also highlighted the rise of A.I. features in applications, and the strong focus on chatbots and agentic A.I.. According to her, A.I. application can be divided into two categories which are tools that provide easy access to A.I. features, and applications that assist the development of new A.I. tools without requiring deep programming knowledge. That last point is an interesting subject that would have deserved deeper research on our part as it could become a one of the tasks assigned to a technical writer or knowledge manager in the future (tekomp.eu, 2025).

There are a few other limitations to our study. On the one hand, we did not ask participants about their views on the future of A.I. or whether they feel concerned about its impact on job security. This could have given us more insight on the future from the point of view of potential A.I. features users.

On the other hand, our research lacks input from knowledge managers, who were also the target of our study. They are capital to the creation and maintenance of technical documentation. This limits our perspective on how generative A.I. is expected versus how it is used in documentation workflows and content strategy.

Despite the limitations, our findings contribute to the existing body of research. Previous papers were mainly focused on the use of ChatGPT and similar conversational A.I. models. However, this technology has quickly evolved, and on top of having a better understanding of A.I., users now have access to way more features than before.

We consequently bring a more nuanced understanding of how generative A.I. is integrated into day-to-day workflows beyond simple chatbot interaction.

Finally, the interviews still bring us up to day, qualitative information from professionals directly involved in those A.I. solutions that literature and surveys could not provide. This allowed us to gain insight on companies' future endeavors involving A.I., and what new skills seemed relevant to learn.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview with a Pre-sales Engineer - Transcript (edited for clarity)

Interviewer: Could you briefly introduce yourself? What is your position, what field do you work in, and what are your main responsibilities?

Interviewee A: I'm currently a pre-sales engineer. In the past, I worked as a project manager with a strong consulting component, primarily focused on content authoring and technical writing, mostly structured, though I also have experience with other authoring paradigms.

My background is in technical communication, with a strong software focus, as I work for a company that specializes in software development.

As a pre-sales engineer, my job is to work closely with the sales team. Salespeople don't always have a technical understanding of the challenges at stake, so my role is to support them during client meetings by gathering requirements, clarifying technical aspects of our solution, and designing Proofs of concept (POC) to demonstrate feasibility. I'm often involved in content-related questions: I support prospects, demonstrate feasibility using our internal tools (like APIs), advise on best practices, and help design appropriate content architectures. I also work on the look & feel to ensure the client's content is accessible from a UI/UX perspective, particularly regarding WCAG standards, which are increasingly requested and sometimes legally required. Internally, I act as a content expert for other teams like product, support, or professional services, who often lack in-depth content expertise. Externally, I also speak at conferences to share the research directions we're working on and to contribute to the broader professional conversation.

Interviewer: Can you tell us more about the company you work for and the solution you offer?

Interviewee A: We're a Content Delivery Platform (CDP) provider. It's a software solution dedicated to the distribution of content, mainly technical documentation, both for internal and external use. Our platform supports multi-source publishing and offers a wide range of features that professionals expect, such as: access control (for secure and/or restricted content), custom pages with specific navigation logic, and taxonomy management to enrich metadata.

Interviewer: You mentioned implementing A.I.-based solutions. Can you tell us more about that?

Interviewee A: Yes, it's definitely a trending topic. Nevertheless, it's a conceptually interesting movement. In our case, A.I. is mostly used in the form of chatbots integrated into the platform. These bots are built on semantically indexed content bases, specific to each client. We use LLMs (Large Language Models), but always in a closed, secure environment: the data remains protected. The idea is to have a chatbot that works with a contextualized, client-specific knowledge base. The chatbot allows for "smart" search, delivering contextualized links. It complements

traditional search (per filters, facets, and keywords). We also talk about case deflection: the goal is to reduce the number of support tickets, as each one takes time to resolve and costs money. Thanks to the bot, users are directed to the right documentation section before opening a ticket. We're no longer just doing keyword search, we're offering a more conversational, efficient experience. The A.I. can understand the context and determine if the documentation already contains enough information to resolve the issue. Thanks to the LLM, the structured documentation, and relevant use cases, it can actually resolve a support ticket.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what features are most valuable to technical writers?

Interviewee A: Without a doubt, review and correction workflows. Technical writers need collaborative tools to manage quality assurance and validation processes. You could imagine add-on snippets that check whether a publication complies with a style guide or a project's requirements, for example, "Here are all the rules to follow, does this publication meet them?".

Interviewer: What do you see as your solution's key strengths compared to others?

Interviewee A: First of all, data security. Yes, the data is hosted on our servers but it remains the client's property. It's never shared with OpenAI or Google. Second, and this is a major differentiator, is the ability for clients to choose their own LLM. They could use OpenAI but only for linguistic analysis not for indexing or training. If they have an internally trained LLM, they can integrate it into our solution. This ensures full control, traceability and localization of data. Third, our product is constantly evolving. A.I. integration is still quite recent. Our R&D teams, for example, are working on incorporating metadata into chatbots, allowing more contextual search, like narrowing down results by publication periods. And if clients have in-house developers, they can build their own snippets and customize their prompts. Clients are fully in control of their needs. If their implementation is imperfect, that is their responsibility, but of course we are here to support them if needed.

Interviewer: What's your perspective on the future of A.I.-powered tools in technical documentation? And how do you see the role of technical communicators evolving?

Interviewee A: I think there are two key aspects. On one hand, there's a lot of excitement, maybe even hype, around A.I. But the truth is that many technical writers don't yet have a deep understanding of the challenges or a clear idea of what they want to implement. There's this magical thinking "A.I. will do everything for us", but it's not that simple. When I talk to clients (usually tech writing teams), they often lack perspective. There's a real need for a new kind of role: an A.I. designer, like an UX designer but for A.I. Someone who can think through the user journey, define smart use cases and integrate A.I. into real-world processes. Interestingly, most requests I get are not outrageous or futuristic. On the contrary,

clients want structured, conventional solutions, with a strong emphasis on content integrity. They don't want to generate random text: they want controlled and reliable outputs. For me, a useful A.I. is a well-controlled A.I. I'd be curious to see how things evolve in two years. I believe A.I. will reshape the landscape of technical writing. It will enable auto-generation of first drafts, which is a real productivity gain. But it will also require more careful reviewing and validation. The job is going to evolve. It won't be about saying "this is my documentation" anymore. Writers will need to collaborate more, with each other and with A.I. services. We'll see more real-time content generation, but also a shift towards editorial roles, where writers act as critical reviewers ensuring no false information is introduced. So yes, the profession is changing but it's an evolution not a replacement. And let's be clear: the current A.I. hype needs more moderation. Yes, some services are incredibly powerful but you can count them on one hand. And there's another challenge we can't ignore: the concentration of knowledge and power. Today, a few big companies own the major LLMs. Clients are rightly concerned about data leakage and intellectual property. Clients don't care if A.I. can write about cooking recipes or vacation plans. What matters to them is getting precise, trustworthy information about their own documentation and expertise, and avoiding hallucinations at all costs. Sometimes LLMs are impressively accurate. Other times, they completely miss the mark. That's the real battleground: making A.I. solid, reliable and context-aware.

Appendix 2: Interview with a Product Manager - Transcript (edited for clarity)

Interviewer: Could you start by introducing yourself? What is your position, what field do you work in, and what are your main missions?

Interviewee B: I used to work in technical writing in finance software and in the medical field. I've changed jobs since then; my current position is senior product marketing manager. My main missions are presenting my products, promoting CCMS and structured writing.

Interviewer: In the past, you used to work at Company C. Could you briefly present Company C and B differences in terms of A.I. solutions? What are the different products available at Company C and B?

Interviewee B: Company C is a company which recently acquired a CCMS, and is one of the first which has developed an especially simple interface for topic-based writing in their software. When the A.I. craze started with ChatGPT etc., they started working on how to integrate chatbots, conversational A.I. in their products. One of their products is an integration with Oxygen XML. They use what Oxygen already has, A.I. Positron (it's a connection via API to a chatbot). It's used to do tables of content, re-writing, other light tasks with which we can trust A.I.. They also acquired a team to work more on A.I., and particularly on knowledge graphs (relationship between documents for A.I. to understand how documents are related). They also work on means to automate workflows with A.I. for the client companies.

On Company B's side, they have a software to help translators. A.I. is not new for translation, it has always been here with machine translation. What happened now is that translating is faster now, and a lot of automating has been added compared to before. With this progress, Company B has been able to set a few A.I. strategies in place. Company also deals with protection of intellectual property, so they have a good knowledge background about how to read, protect, classify and link information. Company B also created a unit where they are pushing the limit of A.I. by relying on crowd knowledge (asking people to come work with them) to validate what the A.I. does, to make sure that what the A.I. does what it should be doing. They also work on the automating of A.I. for a lot of processes like translation with A.I.. There is a service with translation with A.I. and another with a person who checks everything that has been translated. This is a process that can still be improved. As of writing, we have an interface that can connect with a conversational A.I. to make tables of content for example.

Interviewer: Among all of the services you talked about, what is the most popular or the most demanded by clients?

Interviewee B: What is the most used and demanded would be translation by A.I.. Before, we had machine translation. Now we have A.I. that is also capable of understanding the context instead of only translating mechanically words by words. This is where, I think, the clients have more trust in A.I. in the beginning. For the

other features, as they are integrated in the product, I can't exactly say which usage they make of it as each person uses the product as they want, but what the clients ask for today is to be able to trust what the A.I. does. One of the things they do with our products is, in processes of automating or content creation, people want to create new procedures, want to understand the product, and consequently generate new procedures for internal uses.

Another thing Company B is working on is an A.I. that can generate a procedure according to a specific problem based on information coming from procedure A and procedure B, and generate an answer after understanding what I want to do, but with links to where it found the information. This is one of the things, in the world of technical documentation, that the clients want. We are not specialized in the delivery of the final product, but this is an example of what we can do.

We also have a button where the A.I. give us the main document on the subject of our research, and suggest other documents that it believes is related to our research. The goal here is to deliver the right information at the right time without excessive research and with understanding of the context of the research. This is where there is a lot of work for us, I think, to be able to understand the A.I. and personalize information output for the client; knowing that for an A.I. to work well, we need structured content with links created between these units of information.

Interviewer: Among these products you talked about, do you believe them to be useful and usable for knowledge managers and technical writers?

Interviewee B: Yes, but A.I. progress at such a speed that once you've talked about one thing, it has already become old-fashion. What we are talking about today is agentic A.I., it's A.I. using A.I.. With agentic A.I., I create an automating of A.I. that is able to put to use another automating of A.I.. For example, if we look at how ChatGPT functions, you now have the tool "Deep research". By clicking it you can extend the research to the web. Before, when you searched for something, the information stopped where we trained the Large Language Model. Everything that happened after, ChatGPT couldn't say anything about it. Thanks to agentic A.I., there is a part LLM, but there is also a bot capable of doing the specified task of searching through the web. As for data analysis, LLM is not able to do it by itself either. When companies say that their A.I. is able to create your website, or powerpoint, all of this is possible thanks to the specific agents created to do one task in particular.

MCP (Model Context Protocol) is an initiative to create a common language, a standard between all the agents, because people code their agents in their own way, so each time the LLM is updated, they need to update their code and test it again to make sure it still works as it should.

This approach is also a way to really understand what we are doing with the A.I. and understand the reasoning behind it.

Interviewer: According to you, what makes the strength of products integrating A.I. compared to the ones without A.I.?

Interviewee B: We are always trying to minimize learning necessary to use our products. It's also very individualized, each service is adapted to the client's company activity. If possible, we add the new feature in the form of a button that directly does the action. For new features, they could always contact an expert, but we try to codify actions. Information used this way is always protected.

This is one of the main strengths of A.I., you have a solution that is catered to your needs, and your data is protected while you use it.

Interviewer: What does the use of A.I. products bring, compared to solutions without A.I.?

Interviewee B: It depends on the product. In the world of technical writing, it removes the tasks that we do not want to do, the repetitive tasks, the ones that does not create plus-value in an intellectual way. I can ask the A.I. to give me information in the form of bullet points, analyze data, create the charts and graphs from an excel. All of this takes a lot of time, but I can just give it to the A.I. and it will take one second.

If I want to write a document, I can ask the A.I. to give me all the related documents instead of searching for it manually.

Notification of changes by A.I. can prevent people from not receiving the information, and it can also check for validation of requirements. Before publishing, it will check what has been changed and if validation for these changes has been given. If it doesn't have the link to this validation, it will check with the involved person. We tried doing this with the workflow, but it involves a lot of manual and rigorous work of finding each possibility. We are human, we will always find a way to avoid the A.I.'s rules.

Before, we had spell-checkers, and then we had grammar-checkers. Now, A.I. can verify the context. For example, we can miss a comma, but A.I. will notice it and warn us. A.I. can help with this kind of thing.

They can also improve personalized answers from help bots. Almost all websites have this now. If you want to manage your account or you have a problem with a product, you go to the website, and there is a chatbot. The first created chatbots are very dumb. They haven't been trained well, and not with structured content. When you ask them a question, they only give you pre-determined questions you can choose from. But today, we have chatbots which can really understand the context. They can search relevant information from reliable sources, identify you from the company's database, and give you personalized information. As consumers, we are relieved to have a real, accurate answer, and that changes everything. And that's what companies want the most, because customer retention is often more important than gaining new clients.

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that training wasn't necessary to use your product, as they were very intuitive.

Interviewee B: There is some training on how to use the product, but there is above all training for the one that will act as the admin of the product. Sometimes,

the admin has to authorize or forbid some actions, or even change the parameters of the product. There are free and paid training modules.

For technical writing, training is done through modules. For example, there is how to interrogate the A.I., write prompts. There is also informal training, through blogs or other resources. But today, we try to make it intuitive enough that there isn't a need for additional training other than the basic module.

Interviewer: We wanted to know about your opinion on the future of solutions integrating A.I. in the technical writing and content management world.

Interviewee B: First of all, there is the MCP which allows us to interconnect the different A.I. agents more easily. There is work to do on how to create relationships between the different content for the A.I. to understand and interpret them in a reliable way. The MCP should allow the A.I. to be connected to all databases of a company. As a technical writer, with a few commands given to the A.I., I should be able to scan the databases and obtain a draft of documentation based on existing content specific to the requirements I made. For example, I want to personalize a manual for different countries. They all have different requirements, and the A.I. can help us select, analyze, verify and personalize our work.

I think these tools will become more widespread, there will be more connections, more data processing by different systems, always with data safety in mind.

To ensure that A.I. gives personalized answers, we will have to classify information, for example with tags, which will be a lot of work.

Interviewer: As for the job of technical writer, does it mean that in the future, our work will mainly be checking what the A.I. does?

Interviewee B: A.I. can't create content, so technical writers will always be here to create new content. We will use A.I. as a tool to be more efficient. It won't only be proofreading because there is something that A.I. can't do, and that is reasoning with empathy. There are changes that are motivated by our empathy, as we write with our public in mind. A.I. is a tool to make us faster, reliable in what we do. We use it to verify information, analyze data, or to create the first version of our document from existing documentation. Sometimes, we ask ourselves if a document already exists to reuse it, but there is a lot of similar content. Instead of manually searching for the paragraph we want, the A.I. is here to do this kind of task. Instead of taking hours, it takes seconds.

A.I. is not a tool to be feared, it's to be used smartly. We just have to learn how to ask the A.I. questions as there is a way to have the answer we want.

I believe that it is a positive tool.

Appendix 3: The survey's questions

- What is your occupation?
- What company do you work for?
- What is the size of your company?
- What is the sector of activity of your company?
- What are your main responsibilities?
- Are you familiar with generative A.I. tools and solutions?
- Do you use generative A.I. tools at work?
 - Yes:
 - From what solution?
 - Which features do you use the most?
 - How often do you use generative A.I. tools at work?
 - What are the benefits of using generative A.I. tools at work?
 - How satisfied are you with the A.I. features you use?
 - If not satisfied, please state why.
 - If you could suggest improvements, what would they be?
 - No:
 - Do you have access to generative A.I. tools at work?
 - Explain why you do not use generative A.I. at work.
 - Is your company willing to incorporate A.I. tools in your workflows?
 - If yes, would they want to adopt an existing solution or try to develop its own?

About the authors

This research project was completed to fulfil the requirements for a Research course for the second year of a Master's Degree in Multilingual Technical Communication at Paris Cité University. As final year students, we, Sylvie and Stéphanie, chose this topic out of curiosity as we were not familiar with this topic. We were also aware of the growing presence of A.I. in our field and wanted to study a topic that would impact us directly.