The Age of the High-Tech Writer: How AI is Changing the Face of Literature

Artificial intelligence (AI) is disrupting the publishing world. I call it "the age of the high-tech writer," because those who master these technologies are likely to succeed professionally and financially.

While sceptics may disagree with using AI in writing and publishing, it's beneficial to writers and the publishing industry in many ways.

What is AI and how does it change publishing?

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The premise of AI technology is its unprecedented ability to continually learn from collected data. Thus, the better the algorithms, the more data obtained, and the more comprehensive the analytics, the more accurate the resulting predictions.

Cited from Stanford University's page dedicated to Professor John McCarthy, the Father of Artificial Intelligence, AI is "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence, but AI does not have to confine itself to methods that are biologically observable."

In theory, Big Data and data-driven analysis should be able to create the "perfect" piece of literature, which is both superior in literary quality and best-selling. Authors needn't fret just yet, however. Scientists predict that they will need another two decades of development, as the current algorithms lack "intuition."

At the moment, we can benefit from AI for increased understanding of reading preferences, connecting multi-genre (or genre-ambiguous) books with readers, predicting best-selling books, producing data-driven works, and editing manuscripts with tools like ProWritingAid.

AI used in writing

Outside of literature, however, the robots are already writing. Yes, Bloomberg, other news agencies, and financial firms have been using robot journalists to write data-driven content with an AI writer that turns data into narratives, like Wordsmith. It provides the technology for users to automate their writing using rules-based templates with various scenarios.

And you can already have a robot write the lyrics for your rap song with DeepBeat!

Interestingly, one of the best 10 short films at Sci-Fi London was written by the first screenwriting software created by scientist Ross Goodwin. The short film was titled "Sunspring" and was directed by filmmaker Oscar Sharp.

AI used in publishing

AI is tremendously useful in understanding the readers' expectations and preferences, which will help make marketing and promotional decisions.

For instance, "reading analytics" gives a glimpse into how readers engage with books, chapters, and sections. Such analytics collects data on how long it takes to finish and what you do with the texts when you're reading. The goal is to understand readers' behaviors, their demographics, and problems related to the books. Jellybooks provides such services to authors and publishers.

Inkitt is another AI-driven service for understanding readers and connecting them with authors. It's a community of authors and readers, where new works are discovered, and the most popular ones win the competition and get published. This allows best-selling manuscripts to get discovered before they're published, which can be a huge boon for initial sales.

In the past, multi-genre and genre-ambiguous books had a hard time getting published, because literary agents and publishers weren't sure on how to market them. Booxby provides a data-driven service that authors can use to understand whether their manuscripts are likely to sell.

How AI works in creating literary pieces

In the past, it was challenging to predict which books would sell well. Today, publishers can inform their decisions by analyzing historical data sets.

To illustrate, many Kindle self-publishers utilize Kindle Spy, an app that curates information from best-selling e-books. It's a piece of research software for finding lucrative topics based on keywords occurrences in bestsellers, approximate royalties earned, and niche potentials.

Once you've found the title of your next best-selling novel, check and compare the style with thousands of fiction works with ProWritingAid. It serves as your critique partner, so you can strengthen your writing with pacing and momentum, dialogue, word choice, and other stylistic issues before sending it off to a publisher or having it self-published. The plagiarism checker is extremely valuable to ensure that you cite appropriately and reduce the risk of any future copyrights issues.

Capitalizing AI to create best-selling books

Combining AI technology that analyzes reader preferences with the best-selling titles Kindle Spy app and a "book discovery" app like Booxby, self-published authors or publishers can capitalize on their collected data to create books that are guaranteed to be highly sought after. In other words, today's AI technologies provide a solid foundation to justify publishing specific titles.

Callisto Media states that algorithms and Big Data are transforming publishing with a new age of predictability, profitability, and explosive growth.

Isn't using AI like "cheating" in an exam?

No. Look at it this way: You can draw or paint that beautiful beach scenery by hand, or you can take several photographs with the latest SLR camera. Both painting and photography require different skill sets, and none is superior to the other.

The same thing with publishing: the book is yours, but you can choose to write it the "analog way" or the "AI way."

Don't we need literature works that are "purely" for the sake of literary pursuit?

Sure thing. For this very reason, we still need the School of Literature at universities. And we definitely need human poets, linguists, MFAs, and MLAs trained by purist academics whose job is ensuring that this liberal arts tradition continues.

After all, all those AI technologies, which include natural learning to process (NLP) and machine learning (ML), are based on human language characteristics that are broken down by quantifying readability, phonology, writing density, and others. These components can only be developed by real human beings with intuition, feelings, and emotions.

What does all of this mean for self-published authors?

All authors and publishers can expect to enjoy continued success as long as they have the latest data on what readers need and want. However, if you're self-published, how can you access those data sets? Isn't it too expensive to hire a data scientist?

As long as you have access to historical, social, and market trends data, you're ready to go. You can access these datasets using tools like Google Analytics, Buzzsumo, Long Tail Pro, Ahrefs, and other related tools. You can also go to Amazon and analyze their best-selling titles with apps like Kindle Spy.

In conclusion, AI technologies can become our friend or foe. If you prefer to make them the former, master them well, so you can combine your strengths as a human writer with AI's data-driven opportunities. Your "perfect" best-selling literary works are waiting to be written.

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