

Exclusive: ChatGPT - A friend or foe to the PR industry?

 By [Ronelle Bester](#)

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There's a new AI chatbot in town: ChatGPT. And even if you're not into artificial intelligence (AI), you'd better pay attention. This bot has the ability to write clear, human-like text at the click of a button.



Source © Sergey Soldatov [123rf](#) Is ChatGPT a friend or foe to the PR industry? Ronelle Bester, founder and account director of Red Ribbon Communications, ponders the question

Based on simple prompts, ChatGPT can become your new best friend. Struggling to come up with a witty comment on your colleague's LinkedIn post? ChatGPT has your back.

Taking hours to bring your article's word count down? ChatGPT can do it in seconds. It can draft marketing content, generate ideas for office parties, summarise text and even automate email responses.

PR's days numbered?

The possible applications of having a robot writer are seemingly endless, but also unnerving.

As PR professionals we earn our daily bread by strategising, conceptualising, briefing and ultimately writing compelling copy on behalf of our clients.

Does that mean our days are numbered?

Not at all.

ChatGPT, a so-called language model chatbot developed by the American AI research laboratory OpenAI, generates its output based on terabytes of existing text fed to its machine learning algorithm. ChatGPT uses these texts to generate an answer to whatever prompt it was given.

This effectively means ChatGPT is incapable of having original thoughts as it simply repeats and presents existing ideas in various ways as a result of how its AI has been trained.

B2B communications agencies have always relied on the expertise, skills, and emotional intelligence of their team and copywriters to effectively build and increase their clients' brand positioning and their spokespeople's profiles as experts in their respective industries.

This will never change.



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Characteristics a chatbot cannot have

On the contrary, the abilities essential to success in PR are becoming more significant than ever. As per the World Economic Forum, employers are looking for employees with strong analytical and critical thinking skills as well as those who possess the ability to independently manage challenges, adapt to changes, and handle stress with resilience and flexibility – characteristics a chatbot cannot have.

Thought leadership articles provide a valuable platform for industry leaders to showcase their expertise and credibility by sharing their perspectives on pressing issues affecting consumers or businesses in their field.

In today's highly interconnected digital landscape, this type of content not only enhances engagement with existing clients, whom you want to retain, but also attracts potential buyers, who you aim to convert into paying customers.

Never fully replace the human touch

Chatbots like ChatGPT can impress by quickly stringing coherent – and even creative – sentences together.

However, it's incapable of having an original thought or idea that will demonstrate a company's knowledge and understanding of the industry in line with the latest trends.

Tools such as ChatGPT can help to lessen the workload of PR professionals by automating certain tasks, but they can never fully replace the human touch that's inherent in everything a PR agency does.

So sorry ChatGPT, we humans are here to stay.

ABOUT RONELLE BESTER

Managing Director at Red Ribbon Communications. With over 20 years of experience in PR and Marketing, Ronelle is one of the South African communications industry's most influential voices.

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