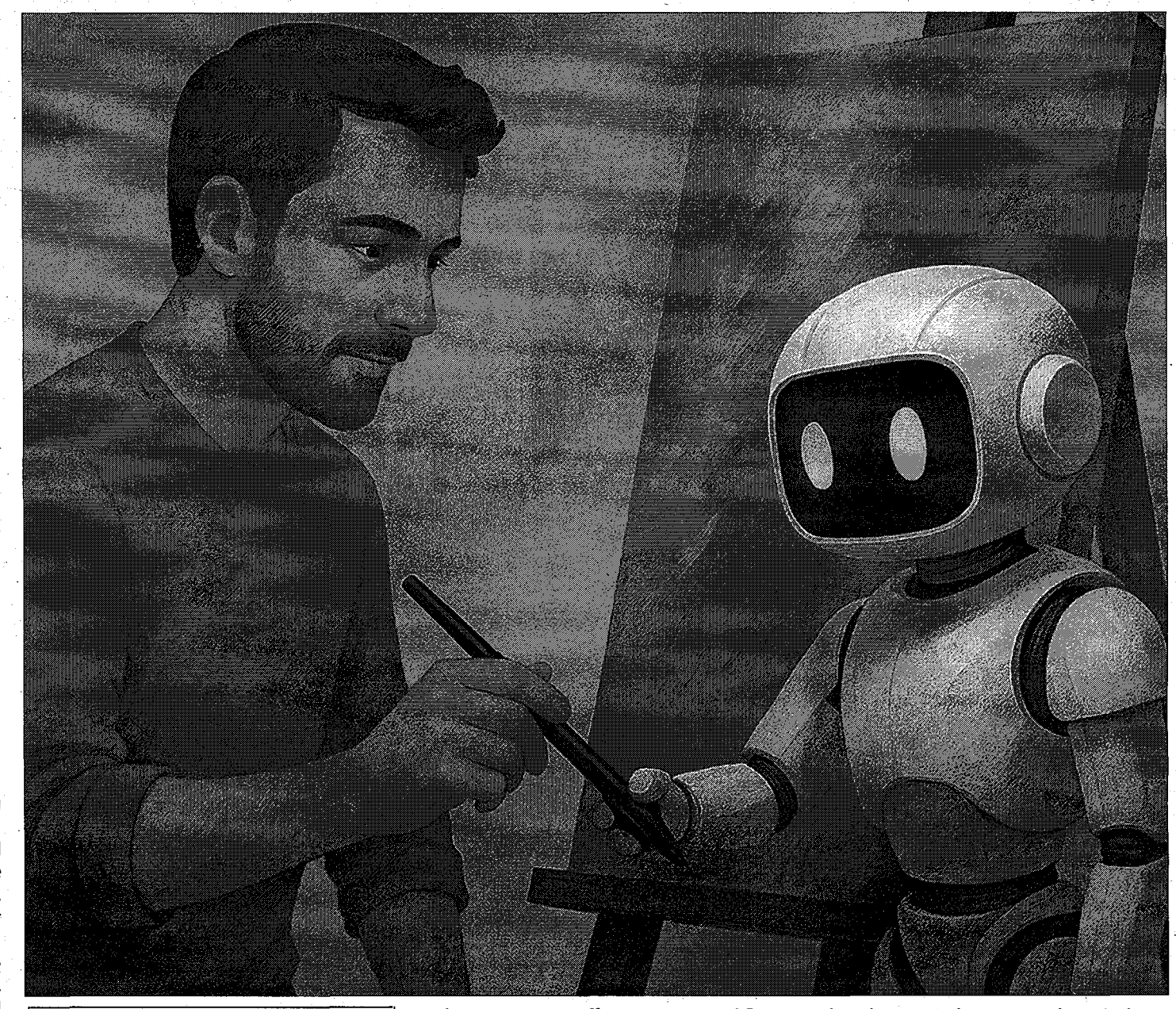
The unexpected effect of AI on creativity

By Christopher Dixon



CREATIVE agencies are abuzz with the transformative power of AI, feels like we have teleported into an unimaginable future.

Every day seems to reveal a new AI tool that promises another revolution on how we create.

Well-crafted prompts can generate artwork in seconds, deliver instant mood boards, produce diverse forms of copy, and even analyse market data.

Ask any creative: it's thrilling; a good time to be alive.

Not to say the implementation of AI is frictionless, challenges always arise out of change, as you master one, five more emerge.

Still, the impact is undeniable, AI proponents have positioned AI as a tool to streamline creative work, allowing creatives to concentrate on big ideas while machines take care of the "heavy lifting". Yet beneath the surface, a troubling paradox emerges: as AI's creative capabilities expand, there is a growing chorus of demotivation among creatives, who report experiencing a profound "lack of creating".

This displacement from the creative process represents a significant and concerning psychological phenomenon.

Should creatives stop using AI?

Absolutely not, the challenge isn't AI itself but our psychological response to its capabilities.

The automation of ideation, drafting, and iteration is eroding intrinsic motivation among creatives.

AI has hijacked their reward pathways and reduced the emotional, psychological struggle inherent to authentic iterative creation. Creatives must rediscover the meaning of their craft and redefine their relationship with AI.

Organisations and creatives underestimate their susceptibility to the behavioural, psychological, and physiological effects of AI driven demotivation.

From a creative's perspective, diminished motivation can trigger a cascade of effects, including; procrastination, reduced initiative, lowered self-efficacy and cognitive fog.

Suddenly, creatives are not experimenting, avoiding feedback loops and undershooting briefs.

Organisations are likewise impacted by AI-related demotivation, as overall innovative output diminishes, creative disengagement intensifies, and a culture of complacency begins to take root. Brainstorming sessions turn into silent reviews of AI outputs, client feedback shifts from excitement to polite approval and leadership becomes satisfied with a "good enough" asset delivered on schedule.

While these consequences may seem predictable, the more subtle psychological effects of AI-related demotivation remain largely unexplored. Creativity is truly a 'use it or lose it' skill.

Over-reliance on AI for ideation and execution gradually erodes a creative's ability to think originally and problem solve. Skill atrophy does not only affect creative employees, but the diminishing practise of creative activities also weakens the entire company's capacity for meaningful innovation.

Teams begin to lose the depth and agility needed to stand out and, over time, they risk losing the ability to initiate projects without prompt assistance.

Established March 14, 1879
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE
www.chamber.org.tt
The Voice of **BUSINESS**

At the management level, performance metrics might show improvement, yet beneath the surface, creatives' dopamine-driven motivation and intrinsic satisfaction gradually diminish as their work grows more mechanical and less engaging.

The solution requires a fundamental shift in mindset, from seeing AI as a replacement or mere "answer machine" to embracing it as a powerful collaborator and a catalyst for inspiration, effectively positioning it as an ideal augmentation tool.

The deliberate use of AI to enhance human creativity preserves the value of human emotional insight and cultural nuance, while reducing role ambiguity through clearly defined AI-human responsibilities.

Early adopters in the creative field have found that AI still falls short of the complex human insight required for high-quality work.

Each AI tool brings its own constraints and embedded biases—limitations that may soon become obsolete.

For large agencies willing to invest in AI adoption, the roadmap is clear: phased implementation, staff training, workflow adjustments, collaborative creative ownership, rigorous evaluation of AI outputs, and thoughtful process redesign all provide practical, achievable solutions.

For smaller agencies with tight budgets and laissez-faire management structures, comprehensive adaptation may seem impossible.

Yet these agencies can still make a difference by teaching their creatives to view AI as a collaborative partner for brainstorming and overcoming creative obstacles, rather than a generator of ready-made solutions.

The endgame is to create a comprehensive "AI playbook" that clearly identifies routine tasks suitable for automation.

This strategic approach eliminates workflow obstacles, promotes deeper flow states, and redirects focus toward the soulful, rewarding elements of creative practice.

Yet responsibility extends beyond the organisation—creatives themselves must deliberately preserve time for AI free creative exploration and experimentation to prevent skill deterioration and reignite their passion for the craft.

No solution is free from pushback, and both employees and organisations bring genuine concerns to the table.

Creative resistance to AI adoption is deeply personal, often rooted in the fear of becoming obsolete as automated tools threaten to replace human judgment and erode long-cultivated expertise. Honest communication is essential to acknowledge these hard facts: AI may indeed outperform lower-level creatives in certain routine aspects.

However, this discussion must be reframed to emphasise that AI adoption should enhance employability, not threaten it.

Employees should see mastery of AI as a way to increase their value and future-proof their roles, recognising that upward mobility will increasingly favour those who invest in levelling up their AI skills.

Meanwhile, organisations may resist implementing balanced, augmentation-focused strategies because they prioritise getting more work done at the lowest possible cost, often viewing AI as a pure automation tool rather than a means of augmenting human talent.

Addressing these tensions requires clear policies, cultural alignment, and a commitment to ensuring AI integration supports both employee growth and sustainable business goals.

Mr Christopher Dixon, BA, MBA, LLM is the co-owner and CEO of Monster Media Group Limited, a digital and traditional advertising agency employing 16 people. Mr Dixon is currently pursuing a PhD at The UWI, specialising in marketing and AI. He sits on the Digital Business & Technology committee, at the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce.