Current developments in AI language models have educators asking: what does it mean to be a human writer among faster and more prevalent machine writers?

This project examines mechanical, spiritual, procedural, and computational approaches to automated writing across history to answer that question.

Potential Impact

A lot has been written about large language models and the use of AI writing in education and professional settings, but very little attention has been paid to the historical contexts of automating writing.

This book and articles supported by this project will be useful for courses on generative AI and writing, which are beginning to be launched at universities.

A historical context will help designers and users of AI writing to understand what’s gained and lost in automation of thought work such as writing.

By breaking up writing into mechanical, spiritual, procedural, and computational components, writing researchers will gain greater understanding of the writing process.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Pitt Microgrants for funding this project.