

State of AI in Content Marketing

*A 2023 Report by Content Connect
and Stories by Us*



State of AI in Content Marketing in 2023

Over the last several months, we've all been drowning in AI hot takes, like:

- ChatGPT is taking over the world
- 10 tricks for using AI to edit
- 75 AI tools you need to know about RIGHT NOW

You're not alone if all this chatter makes you want to lie down in bed and never get up.

The problem with the chatter isn't the content itself. People are excited about AI and its capabilities. But it's hard to figure out if we're stuck in a hype cycle or if AI has suddenly revolutionized everything we do.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING?

We know that AI is more popular than ever and has gained mainstream traction—within 5 days of its release, [ChatGPT had reached 2 million users](#), according to Greg Brockman, co-founder of OpenAI. The market for generative AI is exploding and is [projected to reach \\$110.8 in 2030](#). AI is here to stay. But what do things look like in our space right now?

Rather than guess, [Content Connect](#) and [Stories By Us](#) distributed a survey to 220 content marketers to learn how they are using AI. We wanted to understand:

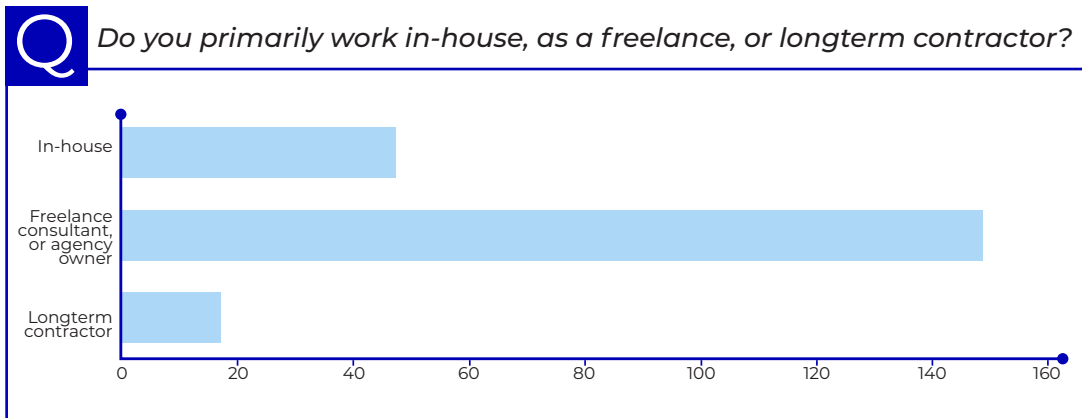
- How people are using AI in their workflow
- Whether it's directly resulting in layoffs or loss of work
- What tools are most popular

In this report, we're outlining the results of the survey and working to separate fact from fiction about the state of AI in 2023.

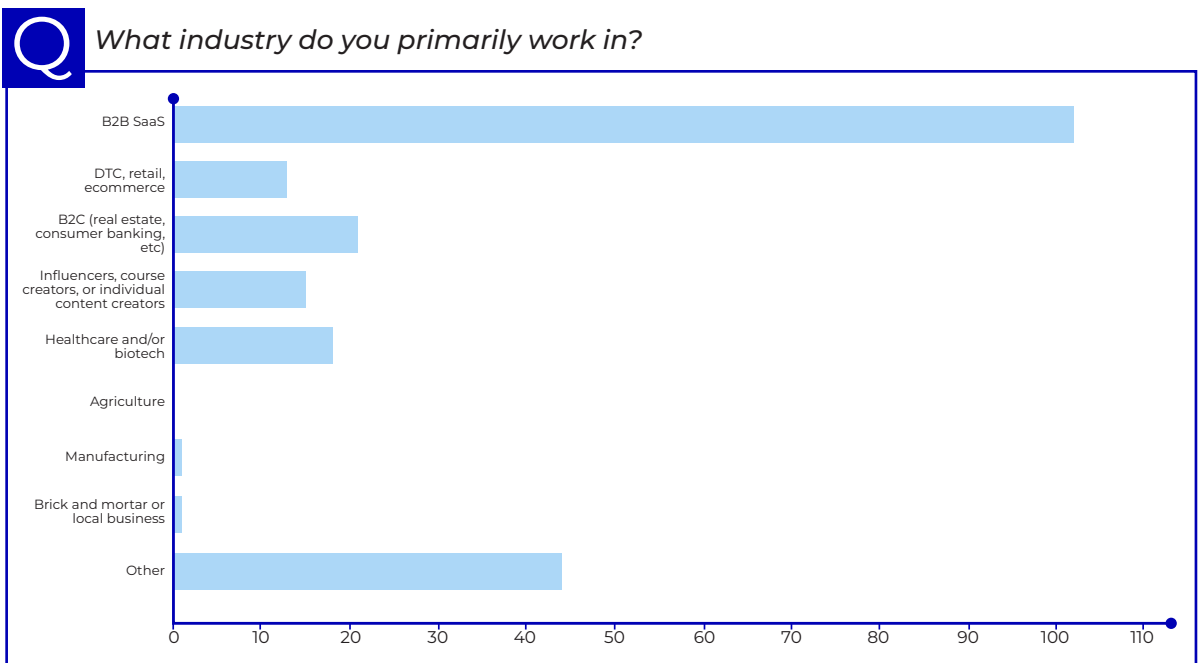
Who took this survey?

The survey was completed by 220 respondents who self-identify as content marketers or copywriters. All responses were collected in May 2023.

- **LOTS OF FREELANCERS.** We had substantially more freelancers (70%) take the survey than in-house marketers (9%), which we kept in mind when we analyzed the results. 70% of respondents are freelancers, 21% are in-house marketers, and 9% are long-term contractors.



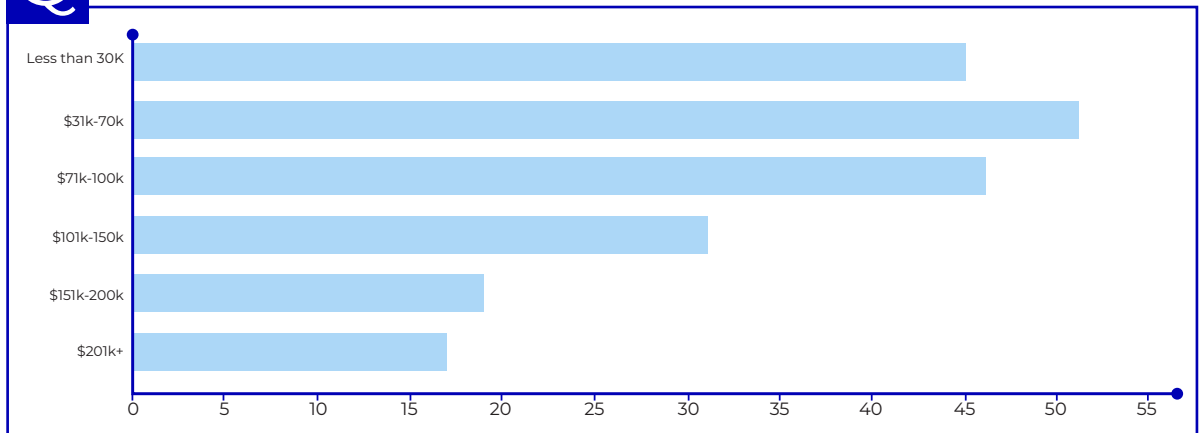
- **SMALLER COMPANIES.** The majority of in-house marketers (61%) work for a company with between 0-50 employees. There were not a lot of respondents from corporate settings.
- **MANY ARE IN B2B.** Most respondents (41%) work in the B2B industry.



- **VARIED INCOME LEVELS.** There was a large disparity between how much respondents make: 24% make between 31K-70K, 22% make between 71K-100K, 22% make less than 30K, 14% make between 101K-150K, 15% make between 151-200K, and only 8% make over 201K.



How much do you make on an annual basis?



- **LONGFORM CONTENT WAS A TOP SPECIALTY.** Respondents create all different types of content, but 83% create some type of long-form content, 58% create content marketing strategies, and 50% do email copywriting.

The survey was shared in our networks via LinkedIn, Twitter, Slack channels, email newsletter, and via personal asks. As such, there may be some natural bias in the respondents. Basically, friends of ours and those in our close network. We work in the B2B space providing content marketing services.

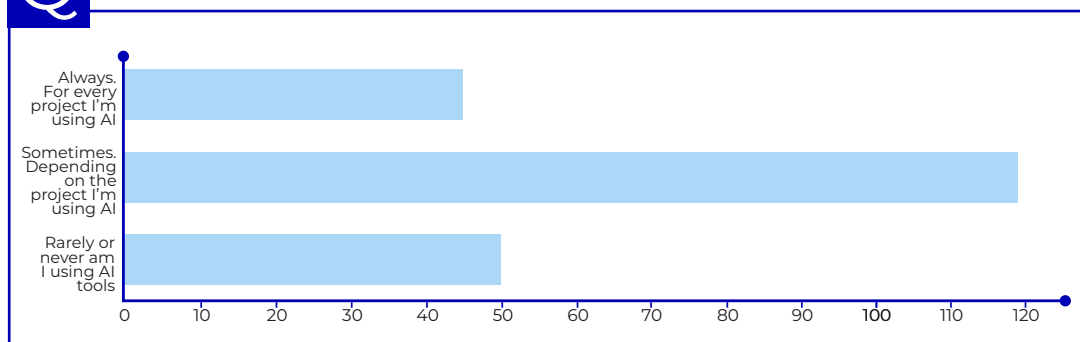
Content marketers are using AI and are lukewarm on its ability

AI is all the rage right now. Everywhere you turn, there's a new article, a slew of social posts, and courses about how to incorporate AI into your content marketing strategy.

But, how many marketers are actually using AI in their day-to-day, and how helpful are AI tools? The survey found 76% of content marketers are either always or sometimes using AI for different projects. Only 24% have never used AI for tasks like writing, editing, and SEO.



How many marketers are using AI each day?



While most content marketers are using AI, a majority of respondents (57%) said it was only moderately helpful. And only 5% of marketers said it was extremely helpful.

This suggests most marketers are buying into the hype of using AI and testing it out in their

day-to-day operations, but have yet to find ways to use AI to fully streamline operations or completely take over everyday marketing tasks.

Chat GPT is the most commonly used tool followed by Grammarly

ChatGPT has gotten a huge amount of media attention. It is, indeed, the tool that content marketers are using most. Forty-five percent of respondents are using some version of the tool— 28% reported using Chat GPT (free version) and 17% reported using Chat GPT 4 (paid version).

AI TOOL	PERCENTAGE OF MARKETERS USING THE TOOL
ChatGPT	28%
ChatGPT4	17%
Jasper	4%
Writer	2%
Grammarly	35%
Google Bard	6%
Other	9%

Grammarly followed closely behind with 35% reporting that they use it, which is a large contingency. Content marketers are not taking much advantage of Google Bard with only 6% of respondents using it.

Premium tools like Writer (1.75%) and Jasper (4%) were even less widely used, but we can reasonably infer that this may be because they are premium tools targeted for large enterprises. Our survey respondents were mostly freelancers and those at small companies.

Brainstorming and research are the top AI use cases

MOST POPULAR TO LEAST POPULAR AI USE CASES	PERCENTAGE OF MARKETERS USING AI FOR THIS PURPOSE
Brainstorming	71%
Research	49%
Outlining	49%
Improving grammar and flow	47%
Creating briefs	19%
Other (e.g., rewording, summarizing, and creating social posts)	15%
Writing complete assets	11%
Creating visuals	8%

Seventy-six percent of content marketers are using AI in their daily operations, but what exactly are they using it for?

Respondents reported they were using it for several tasks, including research, brainstorming, outlining, creating briefs, improving grammar and flow, creating visuals, and writing complete assets.

While marketers are using AI in various ways, the most popular use case was brainstorming (71%), followed by research (49%), outlining (49%), and improving grammar and flow (47%). The least popular use case for AI was creating

visuals, with only 8% of content marketers reporting they use it for this purpose.

While almost 59% of marketers are using AI for research, respondents pointed out in their

qualitative responses that AI often hallucinates and plagiarizes. In other words, AI makes things up when it doesn't know, needs intense fact-checking before publication, and can't be fully trusted to be unique.

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AI helps me form a writing base, but it's not perfect. It still needs a lot of editing to get the voice, tone, and information correct—and it takes the same amount of time to get it there.

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AI is wonderful for outlining, starting research, and ideation. But, it's only a starting point. It takes longer, makes stuff up, and can't write anything engaging to save its life. If you're looking to make something completely weird and off the wall (where accuracy doesn't matter), then it's great. I can see its value as a writing partner/brainstorming tool, but it can't write a decent article. Yet.

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I am against using AI to create content. Currently, there is NO WAY to reliably fact check AI work or prove that it is not plagiarized. Therefore, I think writers who use AI to generate content run the risk of misleading clients into paying them to create original content that is, in fact, plagiarized. At the same time, AI checkers are horrifically unreliable so there's also no way to reliably check whether a writer used AI to create content or not. I also worry about writers being able to keep up with others using AI to generate content.

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AI writing isn't better than (most) human writing

When you first try an AI writing tool, you may find yourself impressed with its ability. But is it better than a human writer?

Although 76% of respondents use AI for writing tasks and 11% are using it to write complete assets, 0% of respondents rated AI writing quality as “excellent” or better than a human writer. In fact, 53% rated it as either below average (worse than a human writer) or terrible (much worse than a human writer).

That said, AI can write better than some writers. One respondent reported: “AI scares me because it's much better than some of the subcontractors I've hired.”

There's a lot of talk about job loss from AI, but respondents aren't feeling the heat

With recent advancements in AI, there's been widespread talk about how the marketing industry will change and how drastically. Namely, marketers wonder how competent AI really is and whether or not it will replace the jobs humans do.

We wanted to understand both the current state of anxiety among marketers about potential job loss due to AI and whether or not they've already lost a job to AI.

Only 8% of respondents said they were "extremely stressed" about AI and how it will affect the future of content marketing, and 31% said they were "moderately stressed." The remaining 61% were only "a little stressed" or "not stressed at all."

We also asked how many had experienced job loss in the past 6 months. 41% said they had lost work in general, but only 12% said it was due to AI.

There's also been worry that if, with easier access to AI tools, freelancers will need to lower prices to remain competitive. A large majority (88%) of freelancers haven't changed their prices in light of advancements in AI, and 5% have even raised their prices.

Qualitative feedback

AI IS A COLLABORATOR

Scores of respondents said that AI was a helpful collaborator. Some said it reduced time, while others said writing with AI took the same amount of time but helped with brainstorming and ideation.

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I still view AI as a collaborator rather than a competitor. And to collaborate effectively, I need to know how to ask for what I want and build upon the results I get. It's invigorating to have that kind of help—it frvees me to spend less energy getting started and more on being creative.

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AI helps me form a writing base, but it's not perfect. It still needs *a lot* of editing to get the voice, tone, and information correct—and it takes the same amount of time to get it there.

“

My best use cases for AI are brainstorming and ideation. It's great for getting past the 'scary blinking cursor on a blank page' stage of writing. Truly wondrous to get to a bad first draft of something so I can flip on editor mode, decide why I don't like what it produced, and work from there.

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IT'S TOO EARLY TO KNOW ABOUT AI

Some respondents felt that it is too early to know how things will turn out with AI. One of them even thinks that AI is a fad.

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I think it's a fad. In the near years, I imagine it to be how how people have started writing 'hand made' on quality clothing items, the same will follow in the writing industry too — blog pages will have “written and researched by a human writer.”

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I see a ton of people posting how-to articles related to using AI, and to me, it's still pretty early for that.

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LARGER COMPANIES ARE WARY

Due to privacy and legal concerns, large companies might not be keen on using AI tools. Fact checking remains an issue, as well.

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For larger companies, many content teams will be restricted from using AI due to procurement and legal issues. Lawyers see massive intellectual property concerns with AI, and so public companies or those about to go public likely won't be able to get these tools approved.

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THE FUTURE IS UNCERTAIN

No one knows what will happen with generative AI. The future is uncertain— that's scary for many content marketers.

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What scares me is, marketing is on the fringe of being cut at most companies at the best of times. It's difficult to tie marketing efforts directly to revenue, which makes it easy to turn marketing into the scapegoat and place it first on the chopping block. I see companies looking at AI and thinking 'mediocre' is good enough and worth it for the cost savings.

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I am concerned about how AI will be shown to perform against copywriters in long-form copy like blog posts. I don't believe AI is currently capable of doing the kind of research I do for blog posts and formulating ideas into a cohesive, flowing post nearly as well as I would do—but who knows about the future, and more importantly, who knows if potential future clients will see it that way?

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About the researchers

This study was conducted by Emma Siemasko from Stories By Us and Ashley R. Cummings from Content Connect.

We conducted this study because we wanted to understand what's actually happening with AI. There has been a lot of hype, but it's been difficult to understand how content marketers are using the tools, as well as how they feel about them.

Emma and Ashley have a combined 20 years of experience in freelance writing, research, and content marketing.

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