

Aristotle vs AI: Will AI Replace Human Writers?

Ever since the third century B.C.E, writers have been using Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle to craft their work. This triangle is made up of three components- Logos, Ethos, and Pathos, with two additional components, Telos and Kairos, tying everything together. Writers use these elements as a tool to ensure that they are effectively communicating an idea to an audience. More recently, we have seen the rise of a new tool that has the capacity to change the foundation of writing: AI. There are certainly many benefits to be gleaned from the use of AI, but there have been concerns raised as well. Is it possible that AI could go as far as to render human writing obsolete? In this article, we'll take a look at these tools together to make a comparison: can AI ensure that all components of effective communication are met, or are human writers still an essential part of that process?

1. Logos is the part of the rhetorical triangle that is concerned with the topic and message of a piece of writing. It involves evidence, data, and structure. In order to receive communication effectively, the reader must be able to trust that they are receiving accurate information. Finding facts is an impressive feature of AI, and one that can be useful. The problem lies with reliability- the information that is given is very frequently wrong. The [Write the Docs newsletter of February of 2023](#) points out that "ChatGPT will merrily make things up, making statements that are not supported even by its own data. Also, it only has access to certain source material – for example, it can't tell you what's in your upcoming software release." AI is limited to the information it can access and the coding that allows it to communicate. This, of course, can change as software continues to evolve. However, with the current state of technology, human writers are still very much needed to fact check and ensure accuracy.

2. Ethos is concerned with the speaker or writer. It is the element of credibility, and what allows the reader to trust the speaker and the ethics of the piece. Ultimately, it is people who are behind AI. However, there are many sources from which it is able to pull- and no real way to confirm which one the information is being obtained from. To delve into even deeper concerns with ethics, even if that source is reputable, is the original author being compensated fairly for their work? When using it to produce work, at what point does it constitute plagiarism? In order to properly convey that the piece of writing is credible and ethical, human review is paramount.

3. Pathos is related to the audience, also known as the readers. It appeals to beliefs, emotions, values, and imagination. This is perhaps AI's most obvious weakness: it can never grasp the nuance of human experience the way an actual human is able to. AI is unable to feel emotions, and thus is only able to approximate the experience. The [writers interviewed by Technical Writer HQ](#) point out that writing "involves a lot of thought about human thinking and behavior, as well as an understanding of adult learning," and needs "the context only humans can provide."

4. Telos can be described as the purpose of the argument. However, arguing is not ultimately a strength of AI. In [his article, Tom Johnson](#) states that AI's "style is almost always expository, with generalized language and a muted tone. The content is more explanatory than argumentative." This is logical, considering again the lack of human experience: AI is unable to form opinions by its very nature.

5. Kairos is the context surrounding a piece of writing. A huge part of the writing process is planning, and while AI can be extremely useful in the brainstorming process and by organizing information, it still needs to be fed that information in order to produce. Context is something that must be provided by humans to get a result. Johnson points out that in fact, AI may not provide much help on new projects, because "much of the documentation we are writing is content that doesn't exist, for features and tools being in development."

Overall, AI has an incredible amount of potential. If utilized correctly, it could streamline work and cut production time drastically. There are absolutely some aspects of writing that may become automated, but at this point in the technology's development, it appears that we will need human writers for many years to come.

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