

How can I help you?

Hi I am chatGPT

GPT

The Death of Creativity and Critical Thinking

■ *By CPT Garrett H. Pyle*

What we viewed as science fiction only a few years ago has now become reality in terms of the power of artificial intelligence (AI). Our society has been fully inundated with AI from simple search engines, wearable fitness trackers, music and product recommendations, directions and route planning, and now fully AI-generated media and writing. It is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between what is human generated and what is AI generated. For example, just scroll through your reels on any social media. You might not notice them at first, but I bet you find some AI accounts. Some of the more popular ones have Bigfoot or storm troopers from Star Wars going on adventures. While they may be entertaining, without an account citation that it was AI generated, you cannot tell the difference. Many argue there is no harm in products like this. However, people's lives have been destroyed with the rise in deepfakes.

In the simplest of terms, a deepfake is when AI is used to manipulate or create images, video, or audio of people or situations that never happened. This can lead to misinformation, defamation, and erosion of trust in different organizations, which presents a huge risk to national security. In essence, AI or someone directly using AI could use this technology to create a situation or crisis that never happened, which could drive misinformed decision making. The Department of Homeland Security has recognized

this threat and compiled a guide on how to identify deepfakes using some notable examples and the risks they carry.

The risks posed by deepfakes are significant, but I argue there is one that is even greater that is currently being used to develop ourselves out of existence. The Generative Pre-trained Transformer, simply known as GPT, is the newest technology that if left unchecked will leave our Army void of any creativity or critical thinking.

What is GPT?

As we continue exploring GPT and the impacts it is having on us, I strongly recommend that you read the article, "Is Efficiency Worth Sacrificing Our Humanity?" from the spring 2025 issue of the Army Sustainment Professional Bulletin. In that article, I presented an overview of the development of AI and the current situation of some of the benefits and dangers that exist, while exploring how our humanity is being lost to efficiency.

According to IBM, GPT was developed by OpenAI and comes from a family of large language models (LLMs) that use a transformer deep-learning technique to generate human-like text based on user prompts. An LLM is an advanced AI model that is trained in immense amounts of data, which enables it to be capable of understanding and generating natural language. This ability enables them to perform a wide variety of tasks.

According to IBM, GPT generates this new data from the generative pretraining. This is the process of training the LLM on unlabeled data through a form of unsupervised learning so the system can make sense of it on its own. These parameters enable it to draw conclusions from patterns that it detects. The transformer model is the aspect that specializes in processing and understanding natural language, enabling the system to process the inputs it is given.

This technology is not foolproof. It can produce an inaccurate output based on the parameters that have been set. It can also detect patterns in the data that do not exist and reproduce bias from those who created it. Therefore, it does not distinguish between what is accurate or inaccurate and cannot detect even biases in the information it receives. Thus, you might ask the system, "what is the most effective form of resupply during large-scale combat operations?" If the parameters were off or were not linked in with the most updated doctrine, GPT could produce an inaccurate response. Also, there could be bias from the one who created it regarding which resupply methods are better than others, which could affect the results.

Understanding AI, LLM, and GPT can become very technical, and the intent of this article is to provide a basic understanding of what they are so we can further understand the impact that GPT is having. I will refer to the most common form of GPT, which is

ChatGPT, or the Army-authorized one for use, CamoGPT.

Current Landscape of Generative AI

Throughout society and even within the ranks of the military, generative AI, especially GPTs, are being advertised as a safe, precise, and reliable tool to increase productivity, efficiency, and accuracy. Some of the tasks that GPT conducts include answering questions, drafting emails or messages, scheduling appointments and managing your calendar, generating reports or summaries, and providing recommendations. This begs the question, “if the GPT is conducting all this work, then why are you even needed in the position?” As I heard one individual say, “I will just have my GPT talk to your GPT, and I will go home for the day.”

We even see this technology finding its way into academia. Policies differ between every educational institution, but the common theme is to ensure students acknowledge anytime they use generative AI. This is the same procedure for anything a student would refer to outside of their own thought. However, this can easily be abused. I have witnessed students turning in papers with most of the content generated by AI. They cited everything, but they did not produce any of the analysis or reasoning, completely negating the value of the assignment. Far too often we see people just copying and pasting the information that GPT

produces without understanding the information. If the student does not do the right thing and cites their use of AI, how can the institution know if the student produced the work? Do you really want a medical examination from a doctor who made it through medical school using GPT for all their papers and research? These are just some of the questions we must ask ourselves with this technology and how we approach education.

For reference, using AI tools such as spell check or grammatical mechanics is not included in these policies. They are simply tools used to improve writing. However, they also come with their own set of problems when it comes to critical thinking.

The message that is being pushed is that the more we use these systems in our daily lives or operations, the more benefits we can expect. The push is to use GPT for routine tasks to free up time for more critical and precise work, which would in theory reduce human error.

Even with all the advertisements and marketing to use these programs, the argument in my previous article “Is Efficiency Worth Sacrificing Our Humanity?” still stands. GPT is hindering our ability to think for ourselves, destroying our creativity and critical thinking skills, and making us lazier. I have also heard many comments that there is no harm in using these programs and that my thoughts are not based on any data. Well, studies now

are starting to reveal the data that supports my claim.

GPT and Your Brain

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) released a preprint study in June 2025 that analyzed the brain when using GPT to write several essays. The study involved 54 participants, 18 to 39 years old, who were then divided into three groups. One group used ChatGPT, another used Google’s search engine, and the last one used nothing at all. They used an electroencephalogram to measure and record each writer’s brain activity. Following the study, they found that the group who used ChatGPT had the lowest level of brain engagement and got lazier with each successive essay. Many resorted to just copying and pasting directly from the ChatGPT answers. The group that used Google’s search engine fell next. Those that used nothing at all had the highest level of brain engagement.

While this paper has not been peer reviewed, the main author, Nataliya Kosmyna, thought it important to release the findings to increase awareness about the use of ChatGPT, since our society is using it with ever-increasing frequency. As this awareness increases, more studies will be conducted to see the impact of using this technology. For instance, another study between OpenAI and MIT discovered a link between higher chatbot usage and loneliness. This is only the beginning of the research that is underway that highlights how this technology negatively affects our brains.

GPT Effects in the Army

As I discussed previously, there is a big push across our society to use generative AI, including in the Army with CamoGPT. My biggest fear is that we are going to create a generation of ineffective leaders who rely so heavily on technology that they will not be able to function without it. If we cannot do simple things like write an email, draft an award, or write a weekly situation report without GPT, then how can we be expected to go through the military decision-making process and build an order? This may seem like a rash statement, but let me explain.

Performing these simple tasks is like going to the gym for your brain. You keep it exercised with increased intellectual engagement, which leads to stronger problem-solving skills, increased critical thinking, and more creativity in your writing and thought. Like in the gym, you cannot expect to barbell squat 200 pounds unless you work up to it. You will break your back if you try to do this without any training. The same goes with your brain. We must do the simple things every day to keep our minds sharpened and ready for the complex problems that we are going to be tasked to solve in large-scale combat operations.

With the amplified focus on professional writing through the Harding Project, we know how vital writing is to increasing our lethality across the force. It is how we share ideas, increase our knowledge, and sharpen our individual skills. Our

brain is the ultimate weapon, and it must be trained every day. We cannot lose the ability to think critically and creatively. Our nation depends on those simple skills.

Way Ahead

As more research is conducted, I believe the evidence will continue to show that GPT inhibits brain function and decreases brain activity,, which will result in the death of creativity and critical thinking. As I mentioned in my previous article, we are constantly seeing the results of these effects due to our overreliance on technology.

I was recently at a store buying a drink and the young cashier, who was probably in their early 20s, could not calculate my change when I paid in cash. The bill was \$3.49, and I gave them \$3.50. They had to use the calculator on their phone to figure out the change was only one cent! I was completely baffled by the experience. This is not an isolated case. I have witnessed multiple cases where people could not read an analog clock or do simple calculations in their head.

I believe that GPT is not a step forward in human development but is instead a giant leap backward. Yes, it is a tool that could have some benefits if used in the right manner, such as research assistance or very limited use in condensing writing, but the tool itself can still be flawed, as discussed previously. It can give incorrect or biased results.

Additionally, GPT will begin to erode the trust in our institutions and

cause Soldiers of all ranks to question everything. How will they know what is real and what is AI generated? We consistently see the errors that GPT produces as we discussed previously and the risks that have arose from deepfakes. We need to pump the brakes and not dive headfirst into full GPT usage in every task of our lives. We owe it to our nation and the Soldiers we lead to generate critical and creative thinking with our own brain power.

We are in an age of heavy reliance on digital technology. Every new technology comes with its own set of benefits, but there are always costs associated. We cannot ignore the negative impact and damage that GPT is having on our society. Thus, I leave you with this simple question: Is the alleged increased efficiency with using this technology worth sacrificing our ability to think critically and creatively?

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