

WHITE PAPER

Series: **Artificial Intelligence as an Operating Discipline**

AI Slop

How to recognize it, avoid it,
and use AI to strengthen your voice instead

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Executive Summary

AI text generation has flooded professional platforms with content that says nothing. Executives, leaders, and professionals who use AI to replace thinking produce hollow messaging that erodes credibility, dilutes authority, and signals desperation for engagement over value.

This paper identifies the patterns of AI-generated slop, explains the cost to professional reputation, and provides a framework for using AI as a thinking partner rather than a replacement for thought.

What is AI Slop?

AI slop is content generated by AI tools without human judgment, expertise, or voice. It follows predictable patterns, uses generic language, and conveys no specific insight.

The tell: It could have been written by anyone about anything. No operational experience. No earned perspective. No useful guidance.

AI slop appears in LinkedIn posts, emails, documentation, proposals, and presentations. It wastes time, signals incompetence, and damages the credibility of whoever publishes it.

What AI Slop Costs Us

Executives read professional content for operational insight they can apply, perspectives earned through experience, and specific guidance on specific problems.

AI slop delivers none of this. Instead, it signals the author has nothing unique to say, optimizes for engagement metrics over value, does not respect audience time, and is willing to look foolish for likes.

Trust is built through demonstrated expertise. AI slop demonstrates the opposite.

The Anatomy of AI Slop: A Live Example

Here is what AI slop looks like in its natural habitat. This is a completely generic LinkedIn post generated by asking AI to write about AI transformation with no human judgment applied:

--- BEGIN AI SLOP EXAMPLE ---

Embracing the Future: AI as a Transformative Journey

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, we find ourselves at the intersection of innovation and opportunity. While many organizations struggle with digital transformation, forward-thinking leaders are leveraging AI to unlock unprecedented value.

Here is the thing: AI is not about replacing human intelligence - it is about augmenting it. It is not just technology; it is a mindset shift that empowers teams to reimagine what is possible.

3 Key Takeaways:

1. Start with why - Clarify your vision and align stakeholders
2. Do not let perfect be the enemy of good - Start small, iterate quickly
3. Fail fast, learn faster - Innovation requires being comfortable with ambiguity

The bottom line? AI is no longer a nice to have - it is a strategic imperative. As we navigate this exciting frontier, one thing is clear: the future belongs to those willing to challenge the status quo.

What is your take? Drop your thoughts in the comments!

#AI #DigitalTransformation #Innovation #Leadership #ThoughtLeadership

--- END AI SLOP EXAMPLE ---

Terrible, isn't it? Every sentence is a cliché. Every phrase could apply to anything. Every insight is borrowed. Nothing demonstrates actual expertise.

This is what happens when AI replaces thinking instead of enhancing it.

The Telltale Signs of AI Slop

AI-generated content follows predictable patterns. Recognizing them protects your credibility.

Structural Patterns

Negative-to-positive framing: Statements like "It is not just X, it is Y" or "While many struggle with X, forward-thinking leaders Y" or "AI is not about replacing humans - it is about augmenting them."

List obsession: Everything becomes numbered takeaways or essential lessons regardless of whether the content warrants lists.

Meta-commentary instead of substance: Talking about the importance of doing something instead of doing it. Phrases like "Here is the thing," "The bottom line," or "What I have learned is" signal empty content ahead.

Language Patterns

Empty phrase addition: repeated use of "at the intersection of," "in today's rapidly evolving landscape," "unlock unprecedented value," "reimagine what is possible," "navigate the changing landscape."

Hedging qualifiers: Overuse of "just," "about," "often," "typically," "tends to," "can be," "sort of," "kind of" to avoid making definitive statements.

Platitude parades: recycling phrases like "Fail fast, learn faster," "People over process," "Do not let perfect be the enemy of good," or "Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

Vague transformation language: overuse of "journey," "transformation," "mindset shift," "paradigm shift," "game-changer," or "strategic imperative" with no specific meaning.

Clarity fetish: Overuse of "clarity," "clear," or "clearly" as if saying something is clear makes it so.

Engagement Tactics

Engagement begging: Questions like "What is your take?" or "Drop your thoughts below!" or "Let us discuss in the comments!" appended to posts with nothing worth discussing.

Emoji spam: Excessive use of emojis deployed with no relationship to actual content, purely for visual attention.

False intimacy: Phrases like "Here is what many people do not realize" or "I will let you in on a secret" or "Here is the truth nobody talks about" followed by widely known information.

The Difference: AI Slop vs. AI-Enhanced Content

The difference between AI slop and AI-enhanced content is human judgment, expertise, and voice.

AI Slop Version:

"In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, ERP implementations are more than just technology projects - they are transformative journeys that require alignment, vision, and a commitment to change management. While many organizations struggle with resistance, forward-thinking leaders recognize that success is not about the system, it is about the people. Start with why, embrace continuous learning, and do not let perfect be the enemy of good."

AI-Enhanced Version (Same Topic, Human Expertise Applied):

"ERP implementations fail when organizations treat them as IT projects instead of operational redesigns. I have led three successful ERP transformations and two failures. The difference: clear decision rights before go-live. If you cannot answer who approves purchase orders over \$10K in the new system, you are not ready to launch. Fix governance first or spend the next year in endless firefighting."

What Changed:

Specific claim from specific experience. Concrete example. Actionable guidance. No buzzwords. No platitudes. Clear consequence.

How AI Should Be Used

AI works as an editor, not an author. As a critic, not a creator. As a tool that strengthens your thinking, not a replacement for it.

The Workflow

Think first.

Write your actual perspective based on your actual experience. Let it be messy. Let it be too long. Let it have your perspective.

Use AI as editor.

Ask AI to tighten prose, eliminate redundancy, check logic. "Make this more concise while preserving the core argument."

Use AI as critic.

Ask AI to identify weak arguments, find gaps, challenge assumptions. "What is unclear? Where am I hedging? Where should I be more direct?"

Use AI to identify bad patterns.

"Check this for AI clichés: negative-to-positive framing, empty phrases, vague transformation language, unnecessary hedging, and engagement begging."

Retain final authority.

Accept or reject AI suggestions based on whether they strengthen your point. The final version should sound like you, only clearer.

The Test Before Publishing

Before publishing anything, we should ask ourselves:

- Could this have been written by anyone about anything? If yes, delete it.
 - Does this contain specific insight from my specific experience? If no, revise it.
 - Would I say this verbatim in a conversation with a colleague? If no, rewrite it.
 - Does this respect my audience's intelligence and time? If no, cut it.
 - Does this demonstrate expertise or claim it? If it only claims, prove it.
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What To Do Now

Ten actions to improve your content immediately

1. Audit your last 10 posts

Review your recent LinkedIn posts, emails, or documents. Count how many contain AI slop patterns: negative-to-positive framing, empty phrases, platitudes, engagement begging. If more than three, you have a problem.

2. Delete the worst offenders

Your credibility matters more than your post count. Remove content that demonstrates nothing except your willingness to publish generic observations.

3. Write your next post without AI

Start with a blank page. Write what you actually think based on what you actually know. Do not touch AI until you have a complete first draft in your own voice.

4. Use AI to critique, not create

Give AI your draft with specific instructions. Use these prompts:

Editorial Critique Prompt:

"Critique this content. My target audience is [specific executives/leaders/professionals]. My goal is [specific outcome]. Identify: (1) Where I am unclear or vague, (2) Where I am hedging or using weak language, (3) Where I should be more direct, (4) What examples or evidence would strengthen my argument, (5) What can be cut without losing meaning."

AI Slop Detection Prompt:

"Review this for AI-generated patterns: negative-to-positive framing, empty corporate phrases like 'at the intersection of' or 'unlock value,' vague transformation language, unnecessary hedging with 'just' and 'about,' platitudes, meta-commentary, and engagement begging. List every instance you find."

Voice Strengthening Prompt:

"I want this to sound authoritative and based on operational experience. Identify sentences that sound generic or could have been written by anyone. Suggest how to make them more specific to my actual expertise in [your domain]."

5. Apply AI feedback selectively

AI will suggest changes. Accept suggestions that make your point clearer. Reject suggestions that soften your position or add corporate language. You decide what strengthens your argument.

6. Add one specific example

Replace abstract claims with concrete examples from your experience. Change "Organizations need clear governance" to "When we acquired six European facilities, governance ambiguity cost us three months and 2M euros in duplicate systems."

7. Cut your word count by 30%

Force yourself to say the same thing in fewer words. This eliminates filler, tightens logic, and respects your audience's time. When in doubt, tell your AI tool to reduce the word count by 30% without losing context or meaning.

8. Use AI for contracts and formal documents

AI excels at reviewing contracts, proposals, and formal correspondence. Use this prompt:

Contract Review Prompt:

"Review this [contract/proposal/letter] for: (1) Ambiguous language that could be interpreted multiple ways, (2) Missing definitions or undefined terms, (3) Logical gaps or inconsistencies, (4) Areas where obligations or rights are unclear, (5) Weak or defensive language that should be more direct."

9. Establish a publishing standard

Decide on minimum quality criteria before you publish anything. Specific insight required. Generic motivation prohibited. Engagement begging deleted.

10. Write less, say more

One post with actual insight beats ten posts of generic content. Reduce publishing frequency. Increase substance per post. Your authority grows through demonstrated expertise, not post volume.

And one more thing... (next page)

Final Word

AI text generation is a tool. Like any tool, competence determines outcome.

Used poorly, AI produces content that signals you have nothing to say but feel compelled to say it anyway.

Used well, AI strengthens your thinking, tightens your prose, and helps you communicate with greater precision.

The difference is whether you use AI to avoid thinking or to think better.

Use AI to think better or do not use it at all.

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