



Project Insights Report

The Art in Artificial Intelligence: Impact of Generative AI on Canada's Creative Sector Workers



PARTNERS

The Dais



LOCATIONS

Across Canada



INVESTMENT

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☰ Executive Summary

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping Canada's creative sector, introducing both opportunities for productivity gains and significant risks for creative workers. Encompassing artistic production, media, design, marketing, and cultural heritage, the creative sector plays a vital role in Canada's economy and culture, contributing approximately \$65 billion to GDP and employing roughly 690,000 workers. As generative AI tools become more accessible, they are transforming how creative work is produced and who produces it.

This project examines the implications of generative AI for creative sector workers using an occupational and task-level analytical framework previously applied across Canada's labour market. The analysis finds that overall AI exposure in the creative sector closely resembles exposure across the broader workforce. However, creative occupations show relatively high levels of complementarity with generative AI, meaning the technology is more likely to assist workers in completing tasks rather than directly replacing them.

Generative AI is most commonly applied to tasks with relatively low error consequences, such as drafting creative text, editing content, or generating graphics. In contrast, tasks requiring physical work, managerial decision-making, or high-stakes information processing remain less affected by current generative AI tools.

The biggest disruption in the sector may not come from direct replacement of creative tasks, but from the widespread ability of non-professionals to produce creative outputs using generative AI tools. "Good enough" AI outputs may be widely adopted even when quality is imperfect, particularly when cost savings are substantial. This shift could weaken demand for entry-level and freelance creative labour and reshape talent pipelines into the sector.

Ensuring that generative AI benefits the creative sector will require thoughtful policy responses, including improved copyright and intellectual property protections to ensure that generative AI can contribute to creating art without devaluing human artists.

KEY INSIGHTS

- 1** As generative AI tools increase access to “good enough” but imperfect AI-generated content, demand for entry-level and freelance creative labour may be reduced when cost savings are significant.
- 2** Creative professionals express significant concerns about unauthorized use of their work in AI training and potential erosion of creative ownership.
- 3** Creative workers face similar levels of generative AI exposure as workers across the Canadian labour market, and the technology is more likely to assist creative workers in completing tasks rather than fully replacing their roles.

▶ The Issue

Canada’s creative sector plays a vital role in the country’s economic and cultural life. Beyond its economic importance, the creative sector shapes cultural identity, supports democratic discourse, and contributes to the preservation and development of Canadian heritage.

Creative workers have historically adapted to technological change: digital editing tools, the rise of social media, and online distribution channels have already transformed how creative work is produced and consumed. However, generative artificial intelligence introduces a fundamentally different disruption. Unlike earlier technologies that enhanced the productivity of creative professionals, generative AI enables users with minimal training to produce images, text, music, and other creative outputs.

This shift raises important questions about the future of creative work. If non-professionals can produce “good enough” creative outputs using AI tools, demand for professional creative labour may decline, particularly for routine or entry-level work. At the same time, generative AI raises significant legal and ethical questions, including the use of copyrighted creative works to train AI models and the ownership of AI-generated content.

As governments, businesses, and creative professionals grapple with these questions, there is an urgent need to better understand how generative AI will affect creative sector workers.



What We Investigated

This project explores how generative AI may reshape work in Canada's creative sector by examining both occupational exposure and task-level impacts.

The research applies a task-based analytical framework previously used to evaluate AI exposure across Canada's broader labour market. Rather than focusing only on job titles, this approach analyzes the specific tasks workers perform and assesses how generative AI technologies may augment, automate, or transform those tasks.

The study focuses on occupations within the creative sector, including roles in artistic production, media creation, marketing, communications, and design. The analysis evaluates how generative AI tools interact with the tasks performed in these occupations.

The project also considers qualitative evidence about how creative workers are responding to generative AI technologies. Many professionals are already experimenting with AI tools for ideation, drafting, and editing tasks, while simultaneously expressing concerns about intellectual property, worker displacement, and the erosion of creative authenticity.

By combining occupational exposure analysis with task-level insights and qualitative evidence, the research aims to better understand where generative AI may enhance creative work, where it may substitute for human labour, and where broader structural changes to the creative economy may emerge.

✔ What We're Learning

Generative AI exposure and complementarity

Overall AI exposure among creative workers is comparable to exposure across the broader Canadian workforce. This suggests that the creative sector is neither uniquely protected from AI disruption nor uniquely vulnerable compared with other sectors. Many creative occupations demonstrate relatively high levels of complementarity with generative AI. Rather than replacing workers entirely, AI tools can be used to assist with specific tasks, enabling creative professionals to work more efficiently. However, tasks such as physical production, managerial decision-making and high-stakes informational work remain far less susceptible to AI automation.

Areas of disruption

Generative AI is particularly effective at tasks with relatively low error consequences, such as drafting text, generating images, and editing content. If AI tools can produce “good enough” creative outputs at significantly lower cost, demand for entry-level or freelance work may decline.

Creative sector attitudes toward generative AI

Feedback from creative professionals suggests that workers in the sector hold mixed views about generative AI. Many see value in using these tools to support ideation or streamline repetitive tasks, but they also express strong concerns about copyright protection, fair compensation, and the broader implications of AI-generated content for creative authenticity.

★ Why It Matters

The most significant impact of generative AI on Canada's creative sector may stem from changes in market demand for creative labour as non-creative professionals can access tools to generate creative outputs.

This shift could alter how creative services are valued and purchased, potentially reducing demand for routine creative work while increasing demand for high-quality, distinctive, and authentic creative output. At the same time, reduced opportunities for entry-level work could weaken traditional talent pipelines that allow emerging creatives to build experience and professional networks.

These changes raise important policy questions. Governments may need to consider new approaches to intellectual property protection, particularly regarding the use of copyrighted creative works in AI training data.



**State of Skills:
Unleashing AI into the Skills
Development Ecosystem**

For creative professionals and organizations, the research highlights the importance of thoughtful AI adoption strategies. Rather than resisting AI entirely, many workers may benefit from integrating AI tools into their workflows while emphasizing the unique value of human creativity and authenticity.

FSC-supported AI tools have bolstered outcomes in skills matching, career development guidance, and recruitment. The overall effectiveness of these tools was underpinned by recognizing and mitigating the inherent bias and discrimination embedded into these technologies.

Read Thematic Report

Ensuring that generative AI benefits Canada's creative economy will require collaboration among policymakers, industry leaders, and creative workers to balance innovation and productivity gains with strong protections for creatives.

► What's Next

This project builds on earlier FSC-funded research from the Dais on AI's impact on jobs and skills demand in Canada's workforce. It forms part of a broader series of sector-specific deep dives into the implications of artificial intelligence in the public sector and the financial services sector.

Together, these projects will help policymakers, employers, and training providers anticipate the skills and workforce transitions AI will demand, and identify targeted strategies to ensure adoption strengthens both economic performance and social outcomes.

Have questions about our work? Do you need access to a report in English or French? Please contact communications@fsc-ccf.ca.

How to Cite This Report

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