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<https://www.wired.com/story/how-software-engineers-coders-actually-use-ai/>

# How Software Engineers Actually Use AI

Par WIRED, 24 MARS 2025

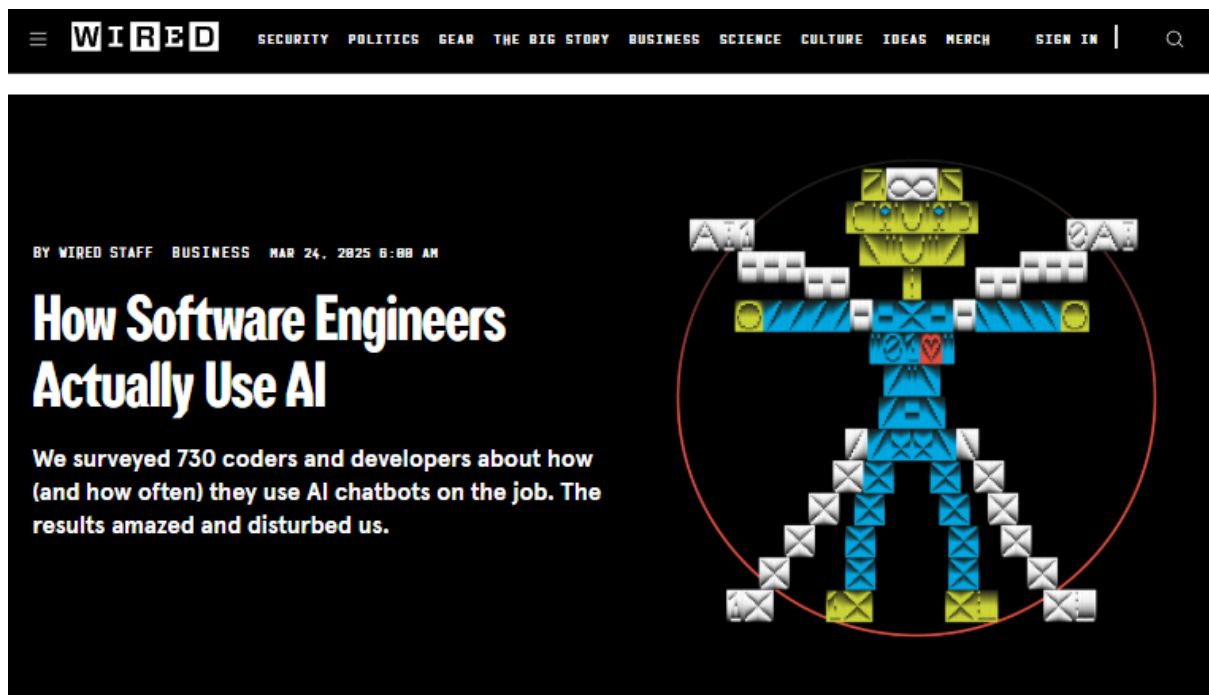


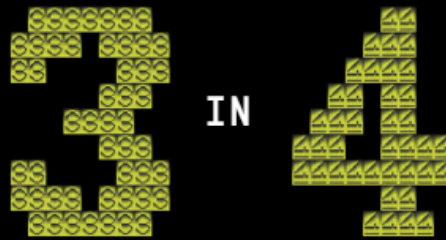
ILLUSTRATION: LENA WEBER



**CODE CREATED AI.** That much is obvious. Less obvious is the extent to which AI is now, in a snake-eats-tail way, creating code. We kept hearing conflicting accounts. This programmer used AI every day; that programmer wouldn't touch the stuff. This company paid for AI services; that company banned them. So which is it? Are chatbots liberating human programmers—or programming them right out of their jobs? To find out, we blasted a survey to every software engineer and developer in our orbit, from casual dabblers to career vets. The results amazed and surprised us, capturing an industry at fundamental odds with itself. And did we then upload that data to ChatGPT, just to see what it might make of things? Yes. Yes we did.\*

\*ChatGPT mostly did spreadsheet-processing grunt work, offered trend analyses, and made the occasional design recommendation. Human editors and fact-checkers were there every step of the way (and needed to be).

## 1. HOW MUCH DO YOU USE AI?



Three in four coders have tried AI. Of them, the vast majority use it at least once a week.

17%

Percentage of coders who use AI "like, at all times."



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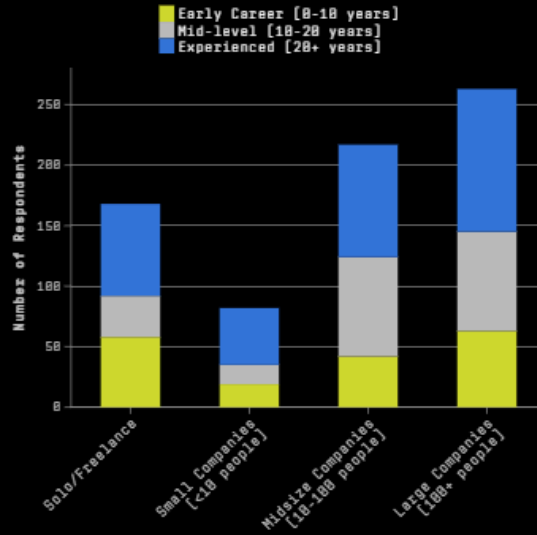
It's all they talk about. You have to get with AI if you want to move up.

—Survey respondent

## 2. WHO'S WHO?

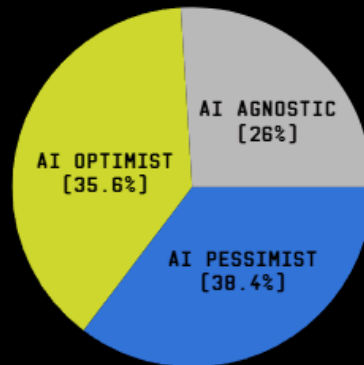
# 730

A total of 730 people took this survey—at every level of employment and experience. Here's the breakdown:

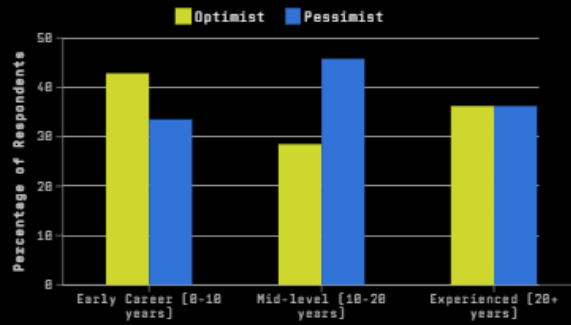


## 3. BUT HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL?

We asked how each coder identifies—and the responses were almost evenly split.



#### 4. DOES EXPERIENCE AFFECT ATTITUDE?



**3 IN 4**

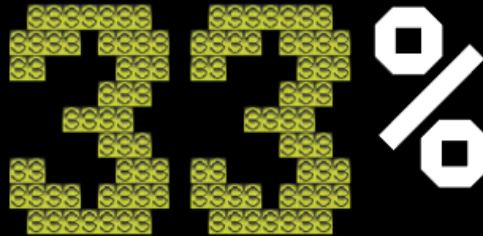
Early-career coders have a higher likelihood of being pro-AI. And baby coders most of all: Three-quarters of people who've been coding for less than a year call themselves AI optimists.

**1 IN 2**

The most anti-AI group? It's not the grizzled, late-career vets—it's mid-career coders: Nearly half of them identify as AI pessimists. As it was analyzing these results, ChatGPT offered—unprompted—an explanation: "This group likely feels the greatest tension about AI's impact on job security."

#### 5. WHAT ABOUT EMPLOYMENT STATUS?

No big shocker here: Freelance coders seem to like AI more than full-time coders.



Percentage by which freelance coders are more likely than full-time coders to identify as AI optimists.

## 6. DOES YOUR BOSS KNOW?

1 IN 2

More than half of employers, per survey results, pay for AI services.

2 IN 3

In those cases, more than two-thirds of employees use them.

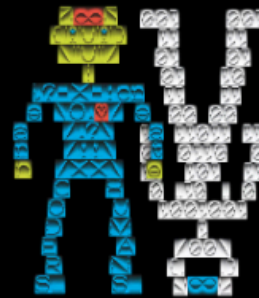


Percentage of full-time programmers who use AI *without* their employer's knowledge.

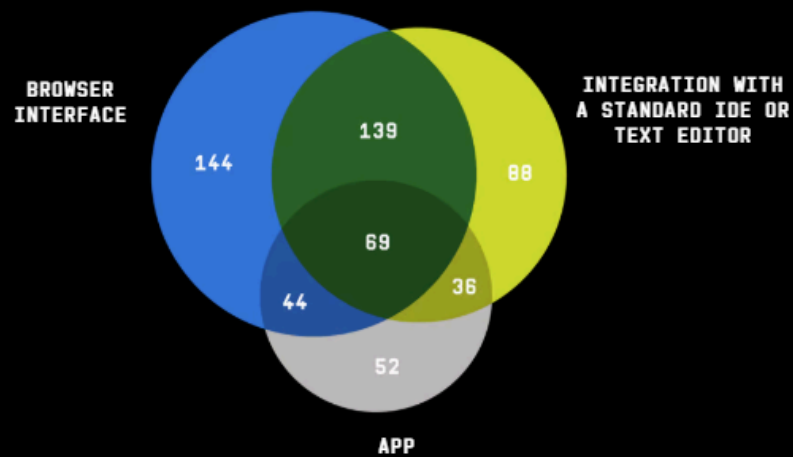
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Upper management does not understand what AI is and thinks it will solve untold problems. Junior devs rely on it too much without understanding their code first.

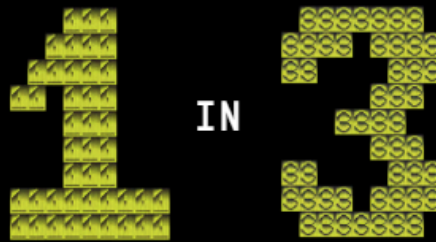
—Survey respondent



## 7. HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY INTERACT WITH AI ASSISTANTS?



## 8. AND DOES EXPERIENCE OR EMPLOYMENT AFFECT THESE INTERACTION PREFERENCES?



The more experienced you are, the more you go beyond browser interfaces and apps. Nearly one in three veteran coders (20-plus years) integrate AI tools directly into their coding environments.

## 9. HOW HAS AI CHANGED YOUR JOB?

Frequency of  
words in write-in  
responses →

67 **TIME**

53 **FASTER** (+)

38 **NEW**

37 **LESS**

36 **SEARCH**

33 **WRITING**

31 **SPEED** (+)

26 **FIND**

26 **SOLUTIONS**

25 **HELP** (+)

25 **TASKS**

24 **BETTER** (+)

21 **CHANGE**

20 **EASIER**

20 **WITHOUT** (+)

53 **WRONG** (+)

41 **TIME**

37 **ANSWERS**

34 **CONTEXT** (+)

28 **KNOW**

28 **WRITING**

27 **UNDERSTANDING** (+)

26 **FAILS** (+)

26 **PROBLEM** (+)

26 **FIND**

23 **ANSWER**

23 **INFORMATION**

23 **SPECIFIC**

23 **SOLUTIONS**

22 **TASKS**

## Will AI Fully Eat Programming Jobs One Day?

Almost every coder we surveyed had strong opinions on the matter. Here's ChatGPT's summary of the responses (with its boldface emphasis preserved):

"The coders have spoken—and they're not packing up their keyboards just yet. While a small but vocal group insists AI will **devour** programming jobs in time, most dismiss full automation as a pipe dream. The **doom prophets** warn that corporate bosses will **slash payrolls** the moment AI looks capable, leaving human engineers debugging their own obsolescence. The **skeptics** scoff, arguing AI is more like a hyperefficient intern—**useful, but clueless**—that can't handle context, edge cases, or real problem-solving. The **realists** see AI as a **force multiplier, not a job killer**—automating repetitive coding but leaving the creativity, architecture, and debugging to humans. "If AI does eat programming," one put it, "I'll just switch to debugging AI."\* The real verdict? AI isn't coming for your job—but it is changing it. Adapt or get left behind. 🚀"

\*Nobody actually said this! ChatGPT—bless it—made several mistakes throughout this process. Not only did it fabricate quotes, it also misread results, generated incomprehensible graphs, and, at multiple points, stopped counting "freelancers" as a category entirely. Rude.\*\*

\*\*In its way, ChatGPT invited this feedback. When asked for final tips, it suggested "a touch of snark, because AI discourse is full of strong opinions."