



Embracing AI tools in UX research

Interviews with 50 researchers across 24 countries

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Executive summary

Throughout 2023, Bold Insight conducted a comprehensive study with more than 50 UX researchers worldwide to assess the influence and utility of generative AI (GenAI) in the UX field. Methodologically, the study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collected over the course of nine months.

What did we uncover? Individual UX researchers' opinions on GenAI were cautiously optimistic; the overall sentiment remained high and stable with an evenly split shift in attitudes over the year. Global media representations mirrored insights from our in-depth interviews: a majority neutral stance, followed by a significant share of positive and then negative sentiments. Over the nine months, UX researchers exhibited a moderate, evolving understanding of GenAI, with a cycle of enthusiastic adoption and subsequent reassessment emerging as a global trend.

GenAI's role in UX research workflows is expanding, with data wrangling and language support noted as particularly beneficial. Policy formation within UX research agencies is in its infancy, centering on ethical application, data security, and the necessity for human oversight.

Our experiments with GenAI tools displayed variable language translation performances, underlining the need for human precision. While notetaking trials showed promise, they confirmed the indispensable value of human skills. In coding qualitative data, GenAI demonstrated potential efficiency gains, yet it also emphasized the importance of skillful prompt crafting and human nuance.

Overall, our study advocates a strategic approach to GenAI, highlighting the critical need for well-posed inquiries and a reflective perspective on integrating these technologies into UX research methodologies.



01

Introduction

02



Data, machines, AI, humans, curious researchers

In late 2022, there was a shift in the way people think and talk about artificial intelligence (AI); it felt seismic and sudden. Even though we've been quietly surrounded by AI for some time, the media's perfect-storm reaction to Bard, ChatGPT, and others caused ripples in the user experience (UX) community. We're hearing the pulse of this community beating with excitement and anxiety, and plenty of questions. How are we all, as individual n=1s and teams, cozying up to the black box? Which sandboxes and walled gardens should we frolic in? What's the smartest strategy for embracing the power of generative AI (GenAI), and helping our clients embrace it as well, without it getting weird (read: awkward or intrusive)? Will it take our jobs? As experienced researchers who have been working with this tech for years, we wanted to attack these questions systematically.

In March 2023, we quickly mobilized our vast global network to explore the ethical and practical considerations surrounding human-machine collaborations across cultures. We launched a 24-country research program that captured the stories of 51 UX researchers – junior researchers, UX agency founders, and everything in between – on how AI tools might change the way UX researchers live

and work. We asked participants about their relationship with the internet and technology, their feelings toward AI and experiences with emerging technology products, and their thoughts on the future of AI in their careers and everyday lives. With this initial dataset, and subsequent follow-up interviews, we explored the exciting range of potential collaborations between researchers and AI, and the benefits and drawbacks of such partnerships. We cast aside the limited “researcher vs. AI” mentality and experimented with different strategies for achieving outcomes with generative AI that are transparent, trustworthy, and reliable. Outcomes that enhance, but don't replace, our trusted techniques as researchers to expertly capture data and extract it without bias.

We worked across our diverse team to surface critical questions and experiment with AI tools for basic tasks like transcription and notetaking. At the highest level, we're reinforcing our understanding of the unique value of AI and the challenges associated with integrating it into user experiences effectively. AI needs to be more than technology—the prescription for success is to deliver a great user experience, after all, not just embed AI into a product.

03

Methodology

Our study spanned March to December 2023, employing a dual-method approach, combining ethnography and autoethnography. It merged qualitative in-depth interviews (IDIs) and quantitative survey techniques to create a robust, multilingual data set. The study kicked off with 26 semi-structured interviews in English from March 16-22, 2023, conducted remotely via Zoom. Professional UX researchers were recruited from our global network, representing a mix of age, gender, location, and experience level. By April 20, we expanded to 51 interviews in 28 languages and dialects, utilizing snowball sampling

for effective outreach in the multilingual component. Follow-up surveys were administered on June 7 (n=36), September 8 (n=35), and December 1 (n=28) through Google Forms. Various individual follow-ups and member checking processes were conducted via email throughout the study period to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. This multiphase, mixed-method approach was orchestrated and carried out by Bold Insight, under the leadership of Senior UX Researcher Lindsey DeWitt Prat, PhD.

Our idea

Take pulse of global UX research community about GenAI and track changes

Create a dataset to use for internal experiments with GenAI tools

Study objectives

Understand the GenAI impact on UX research

We investigated UX researchers' in their work since ChatGPT's emergence in late 2022. Interviews focused on perceptions, comprehension, expectations, and use cases across over 20 global teams and languages, identifying both universal trends and ethnographic specifics.

- We explored the real and potential impact of GenAI on UX researchers' work processes, including professional and ethical implications related to time and labor investment.
- We assessed how UX researchers can integrate GenAI's transformative power while preserving essential human elements.
- We considered the range of complex challenges that could be addressed with augmented synthesis and accelerated resources.

Create a qualitative data set

To analyze people-technology relations at the GenAI inflection point, we needed to create a dataset for analysis and experimentation with AI-driven tools that would not jeopardize our stringent data protection policies. We always safeguard our client & internal proprietary data.

Comparative analysis

We examined similarities and differences between human and GenAI-assisted analyses in UX research.

Enhance global research

At a high level, the study aimed to promote more efficient, resilient, and impactful global UX research practices.

In-depth interviews (IDIs)

Internet usage and expectations

The interviews investigated how UX researchers use the internet in their professional and personal lives, focusing on their digital proficiency and views on the internet's functionality and limitations.

Perceptions and mental models

Participants discussed their initial and current perspectives on GenAI, including their emotional responses and conceptual understanding of AI technologies.

Usage, discovery, and future prospects

UX researchers shared their experiences with GenAI, discussing how often they use it, where they learn about it, and their expectations for its impact on UX research.

Surveys

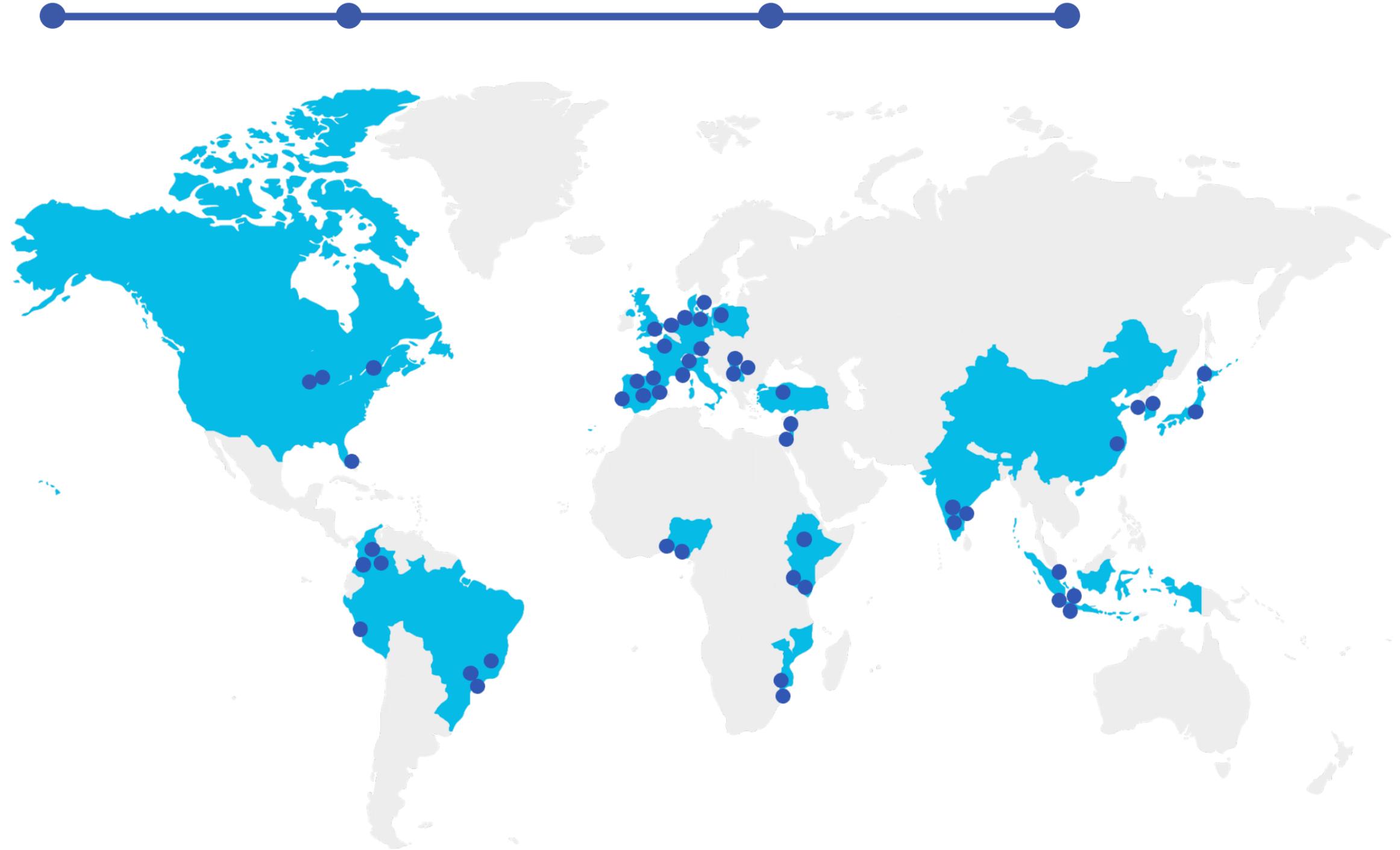
Surveys followed up on the IDI topics, tracking changes in UX researchers' perceptions and use of GenAI over time. Specific questions explored GenAI's effectiveness in language translation and transcription tasks, assessing its utility in different linguistic settings. The surveys also collected fresh insights on GenAI's influence on company policies, team dynamics, and the evolving trends in UX research.

24 Countries

28 Languages

51 Interviews

IDIs MARCH Survey JUNE Survey SEPTEMBER Survey DECEMBER



- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Colombia
- Ethiopia
- France
- Germany
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy
- Japan
- Kenya
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Peru
- Poland
- Portugal
- Serbia
- South Korea
- Spain
- The Netherlands
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- United States

Our study (2023)

Over 15 days, we executed 51 individual, in-depth interviews with UX researchers in our global network. Our participants spanned an even mix of age, gender, and experience, hailing from many locations. In total, our study covered 24 countries and 28 languages. We then followed up with multiple surveys throughout the year to measure change over time.

Key questions

What do UX researchers know about GenAI?

How can GenAI support UX research?

Who's using GenAI tools and how?

What are attitudes toward GenAI?

How do they change over time and vary globally?

How are agencies setting rules and shaping how we use GenAI?



Demographics

The study encompassed a diverse group of UX research professionals with balanced gender representation and a wide age range (Table 1). We heard from 24 females, 26 males, and one non-binary individual. Age distribution was primarily among mid-career professionals, with the majority aged 25-35, followed by those aged 36-45. The representation tapered for both younger participants and older age groups.

Table 1
Participant demographics

Gender		Age	
Female	24	18-24	4
Male	26	25-35	21
Non-binary	1	36-45	18
		46-55	7
		60+	1

Years of professional research experience

Junior (0-3 years):

10 participants, representing 28% of the total, are in the early stages of their career in UX or related fields.

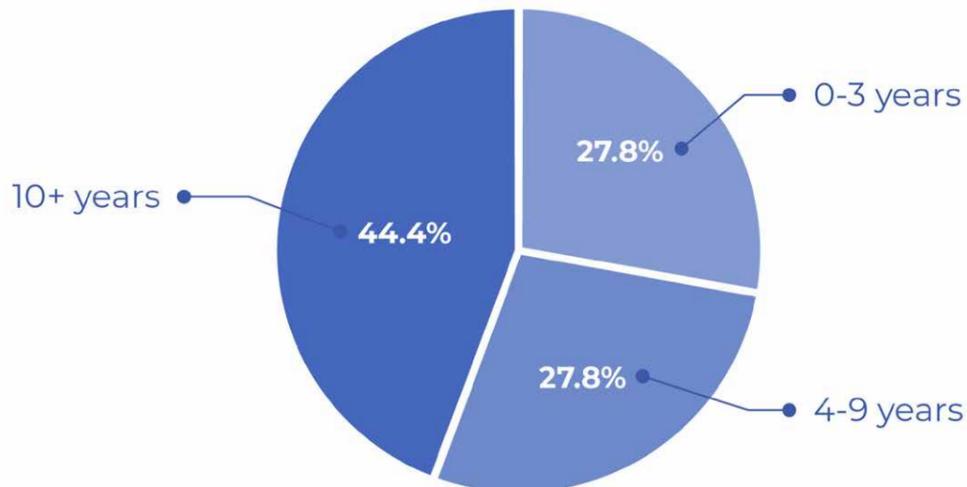
Mid-Career (4-9 years):

10 participants, accounting for 28% of the total, are considered to be mid-career professionals.

Senior (10+ years):

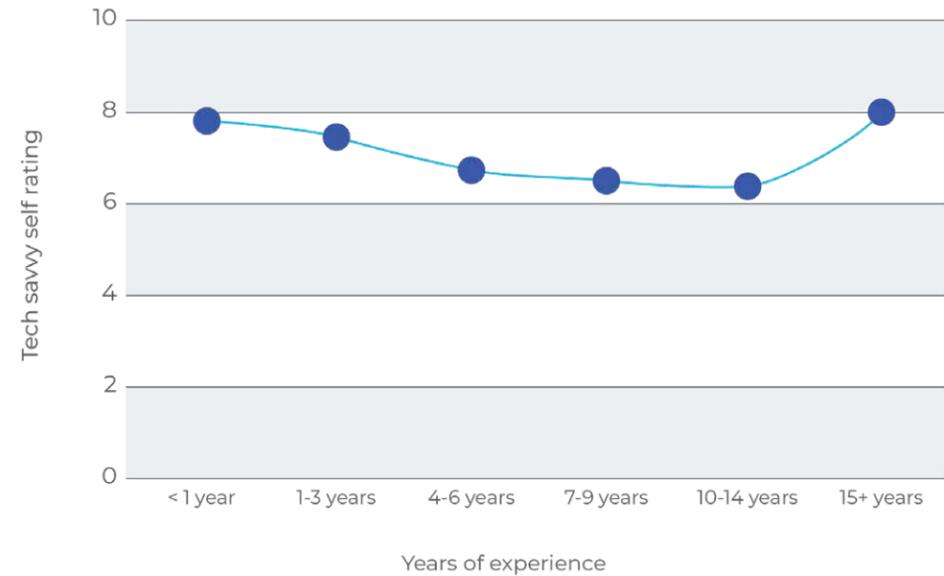
26 participants, making up 44% of the total, have a decade or more of experience, indicating a significant representation of seasoned professionals in the study.

Figure 1
Years of professional experience



Study participants consistently reported a high level of tech savviness, regardless of the number of years in the field of UX research (Figure 2). This trend indicates a uniformly high engagement with technology across the experience spectrum, which is essential for adopting new tools like GenAI at the individual and organizational level.

Figure 2
Tech savvy self rating vs. years of experience



Regarding research experience vs. GenAI interest, the findings slightly subvert the common belief that younger “digital native” researchers are more inclined towards new technologies. Instead, the study shows a slight increase in GenAI interest with more years of experience ($r = .28$ correlation) (Figure 3). Seasoned UX researchers are just as engaged, if not more, in exploring the possibilities of GenAI to enhance their work.

Figure 3
Research experience vs. GenAI interest (December 2023)





04

“

I feel like a child discovering the world.

-M, 25-35, Lima, Peru

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

Global attitudes toward GenAI tools

“When you hear the words **‘generative AI,’** what comes to mind?”

We asked, and here’s what we heard. From March to December, generative tools stayed top of mind for most of our participants. But we observed some interesting changes among the hodgepodge of other responses. Some perceptions fell off the map entirely: robots and sci-fi, specifically. Others came into clear relief: productivity gains (Table 2). And everyone, without exception, became familiar with the words “generative AI.”

Table 2

Responses March to December 2023

	March	December
Generative tools	64%	54%
Robots/sci-fi	11%	0%
Unfamiliar with GenAI	7%	0%
Automation/efficiency	4%	27%



Global media representations

To understand how attitudes vary globally, we took a different approach and looked to connect the dots between our interview data and the bigger picture. We compiled more than 400 articles on the topic of GenAI from 19 countries included in our study, averaging 21 articles per country, and aiming for a mix of political orientations and media types (90% mainstream and mix of print and digital outlets). The articles were distributed from November 2022 to August 2023, with the highest concentration in April 2023.

Sampling strategy

This desk research component of our study aimed to capture a representative sampling of mainstream headlines/articles related to GenAI across the globe.

- Five mainstream media outlets per country, five headlines/articles per media outlet. Must be in local language. Must be detailed reports (as opposed to simple briefs).
- Media outlets: different types (e.g., newspaper, television, website) and mix of political orientations when possible (left, right, and centrist political orientations). *Note: we did selective member checking to ensure we were getting the right kinds of outlets. Africa was a challenge!*

Keyword identification

We created a list of keywords and phrases related to generative AI, e.g., “GPT-4,” “OpenAI,” “deep learning,” “natural language processing,” and “artificial intelligence,” to search for relevant articles in each media outlet.

Coding scheme

We coded the compiled articles for content & tone (positive, negative, or neutral/mixed portrayals) and thematic focus (ethical concerns, economic implications, technological advancements, societal impacts).

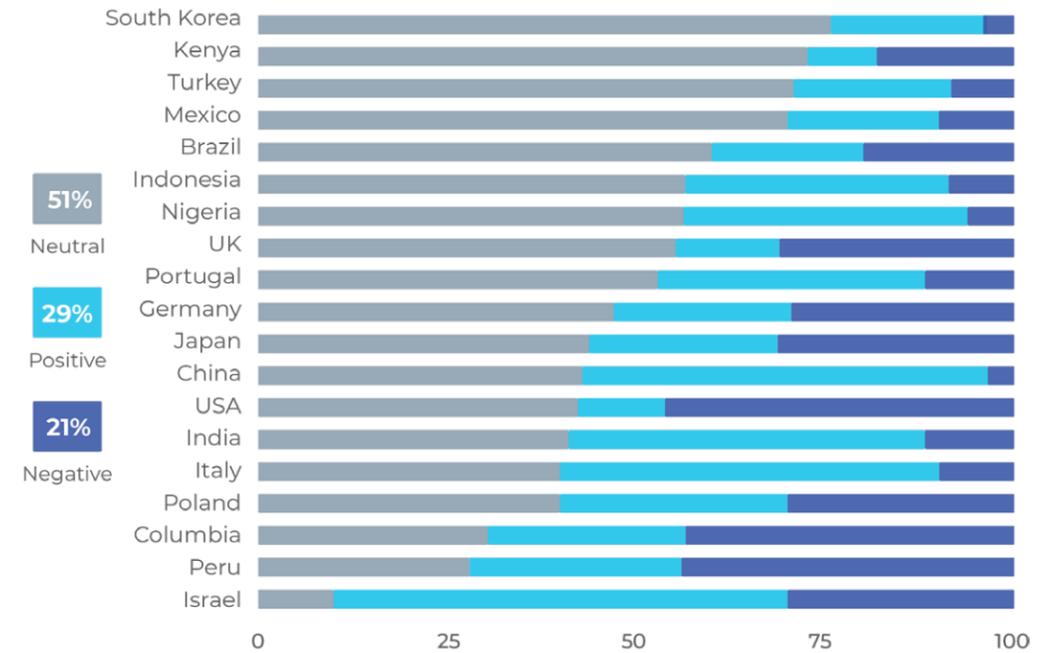
Headline/article coding

Analyze selected headlines/articles using the coding scheme, and the assigned codes will be recorded in a structured format.

Tonal spectrum of global GenAI media coverage

Our research uncovered a varied spectrum of media tones toward GenAI (Figure 4). The majority of media maintained a neutral stance, with positive coverage also significant, and fewer negative sentiments. The findings here closely mirrored the insights from our in-depth interviews. Digging into regional nuances, European media depicted a balanced, mixed tone, while the Americas tended toward slight negativity. East Asia’s coverage was predominantly upbeat, showcasing regional media optimism towards GenAI.

Figure 4
Media tone toward GenAI



Topical focus in GenAI media discourse

Analysis of topical focus (Figure 5) showed African and Asian media concentrating on technological innovations and societal effects of AI. In Europe and North America, the technological aspect slightly dominated a balanced coverage. South American and Middle Eastern outlets placed less emphasis on economic impacts. Looking at the heatmap (Figure 6) we find distinct focal points across regions, for instance, Nigeria spotlighting technology and society, Germany on societal implications, and Colombia and Poland on ethical considerations.

Figure 5
Topical focus: Highest value

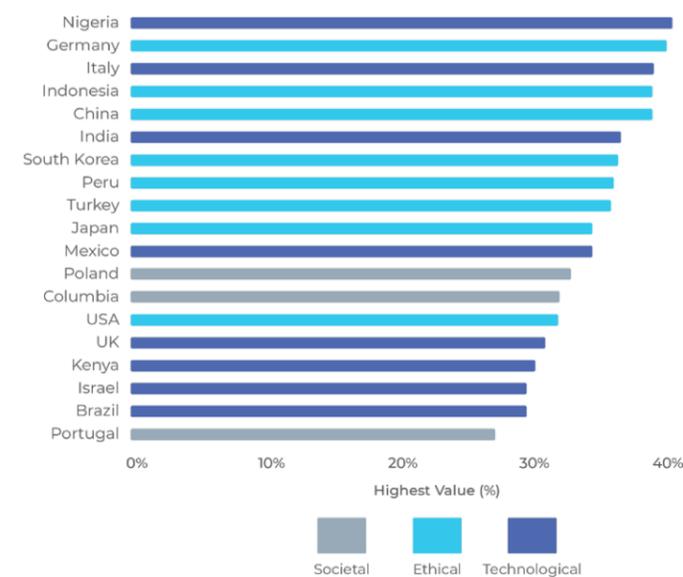


Figure 6
Focus area heatmap

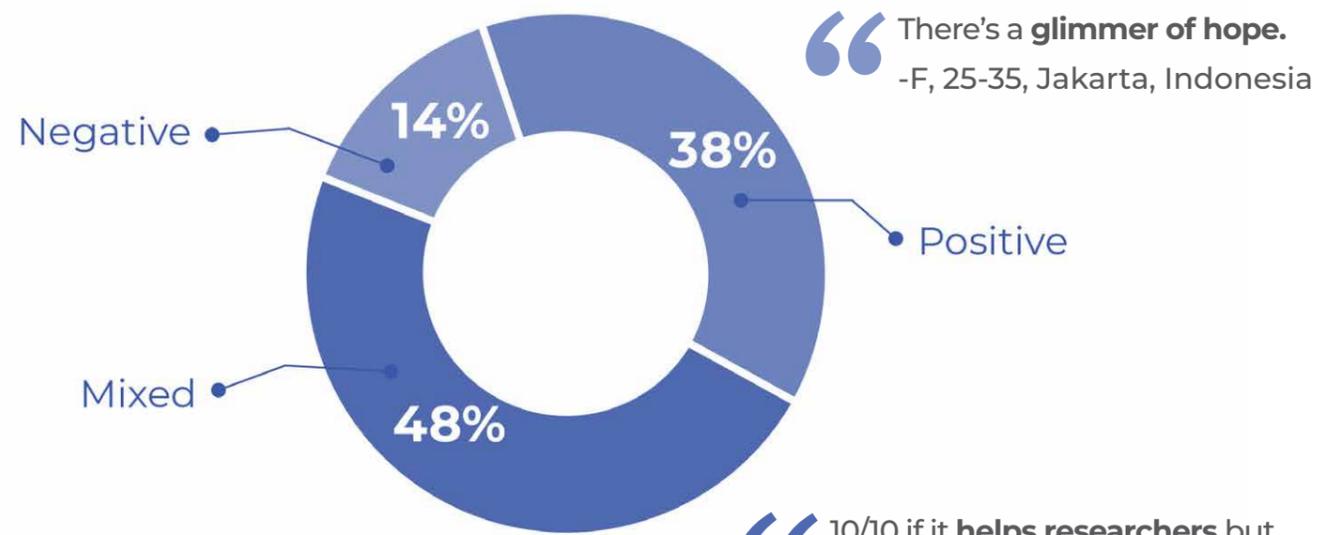
Country	Technological	Societal	Ethical	Economic
Nigeria	41%	27%	11%	20%
Germany	24%	40%	26%	10%
Italy	40%	30%	21%	9%
Indonesia	21%	39%	16%	24%
China	38%	39%	11%	12%
India	37%	37%	17%	9%
South Korea	30%	37%	23%	11%
Peru	22%	37%	29%	12%
Turkey	30%	36%	25%	9%
Japan	15%	35%	25%	25%
Mexico	35%	33%	16%	16%
Poland	29%	24%	33%	14%
Columbia	24%	24%	32%	21%
USA	24%	32%	27%	16%
UK	31%	31%	19%	19%
Kenya	31%	31%	18%	21%
Israel	30%	30%	25%	15%
Brazil	30%	28%	20%	22%
Portugal	24%	24%	28%	24%

Attitudes toward GenAI

GenAI consistently captivated UX researchers throughout 2023. Initially diverse attitudes, ranging from wonder to caution, evolved to a broad familiarity with GenAI, coupled with recognition of its productivity potential (Figure 7).

How did attitudes change over time? Interest didn't change. Throughout the year, the appeal of GenAI held strong among UX researchers, who stayed mostly positive. Yet, we saw a split—increased hope for some, waning excitement for others, and a lot more of the same mixed feelings.

Figure 7
What are attitudes toward GenAI? (March 2023)



“ There’s a **glimmer of hope**.
-F, 25-35, Jakarta, Indonesia

“ 10/10 if it **helps researchers** but **doesn’t do the work for us**.
-F, 60+, Montreal, Canada

“ The turmoil has just started in terms of the dangers of GenAI, but it’s **cat and mouse** - we will be able to **find the dangers and to prevent them**.
-M, 46-55, Lisbon, Portugal

Attitudes over time

34%
Increased interest

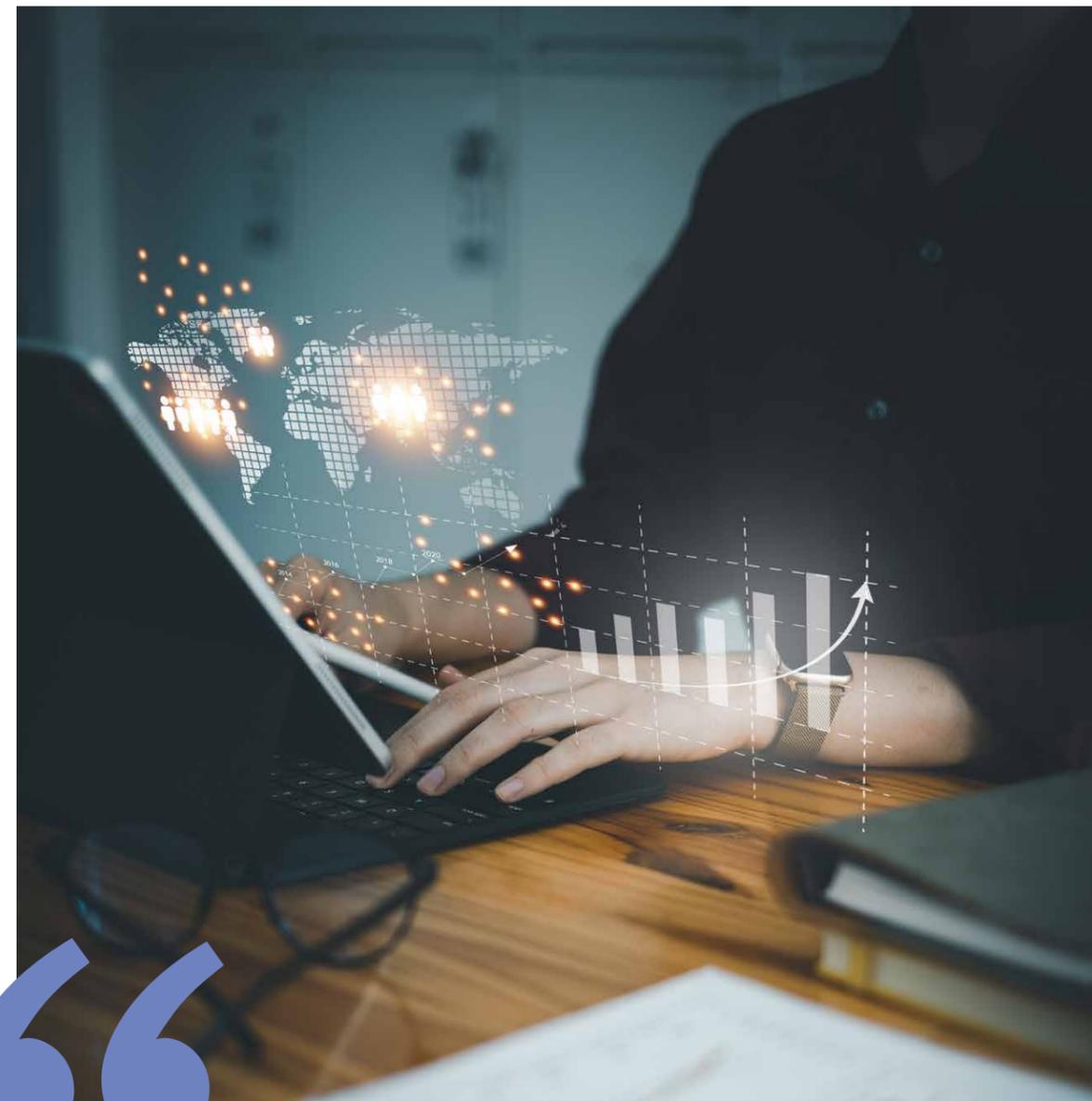
34%
Decreased interest

32%
No change

The **hype train/bubble** rose spectacularly then settled.
-M, 25-35, London, UK

Time has made it a less menacing novelty...there is a **positive evolution** for the prospects of generative AI once it’s more inclusive.
-F, 25-35, Maputo, Mozambique

Higher hopes and some fear at the same time.
-M, 46-55, Tokyo, Japan



KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

Global awareness of GenAI tools

UX researchers' understanding of GenAI showed a significant rise and then a leveling, indicating a cycle of enthusiastic adoption followed by a period of reassessment and stabilization of knowledge. Confidence levels indicated room for growth (steady 5.5 out of 10 self rating), yet increased over time for half.

Throughout the study, UX researchers' self-assessed knowledge of GenAI tools averaged at a moderate level. On average, the UX researchers we spoke with had a fair grasp of GenAI, scoring themselves 5 out of 10 in knowledge. Across time we saw evolving knowledge and engagement, increasing for most (Figure 8). We also spotted an interesting global trend: Across 13 countries and 4 continents (Israel, Mozambique, Ethiopia,

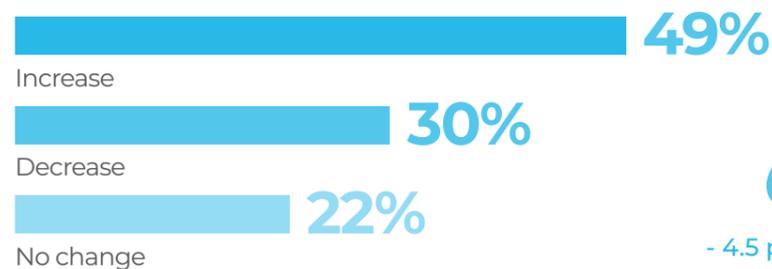


UK, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Poland, Indonesia, the US, Japan, and Spain), GenAI knowledge among UX researchers spiked during the year, then settled back to where it started. Our findings point to a cycle where initial excitement and learning about GenAI peaked, followed by a stabilization period as the novelty wanes and the technology becomes a standard part of the UX research toolkit.

“ Initially I was skeptical... however, I found [ChatGPT] to be **great in analysis & synthesizing data.**
+ 5 points
-M, 36-45, Jakarta, Indonesia

“ I haven't found other **epoch-making new use cases** than I saw at the beginning and the news is getting more and more techy...it's still almost a **blackbox for me.**
- 4.5 points
-F, 26-35, Munich, Germany

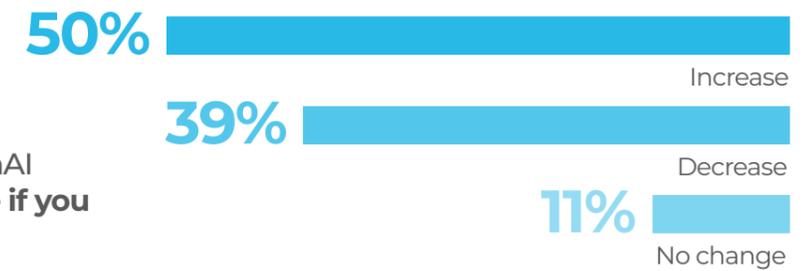
Figure 8
GenAI knowledge & experience (March-December 2023)



“ I didn't learn much about it **after the first wave** of excitement about ChatGPT.
-M, 26-35, Belgrade, Serbia

Confidence in GenAI output reflected a similar trend of growth and variability (Figure 9). While half of the UX researchers we spoke with gained confidence in GenAI, nearly as many felt a decrease, emphasizing the importance of reliability and the impact of first-hand experience on trust. This duality showcases the evolving relationship between UX researchers and GenAI technologies, highlighting the importance of both education and practical application in ramping up confidence.

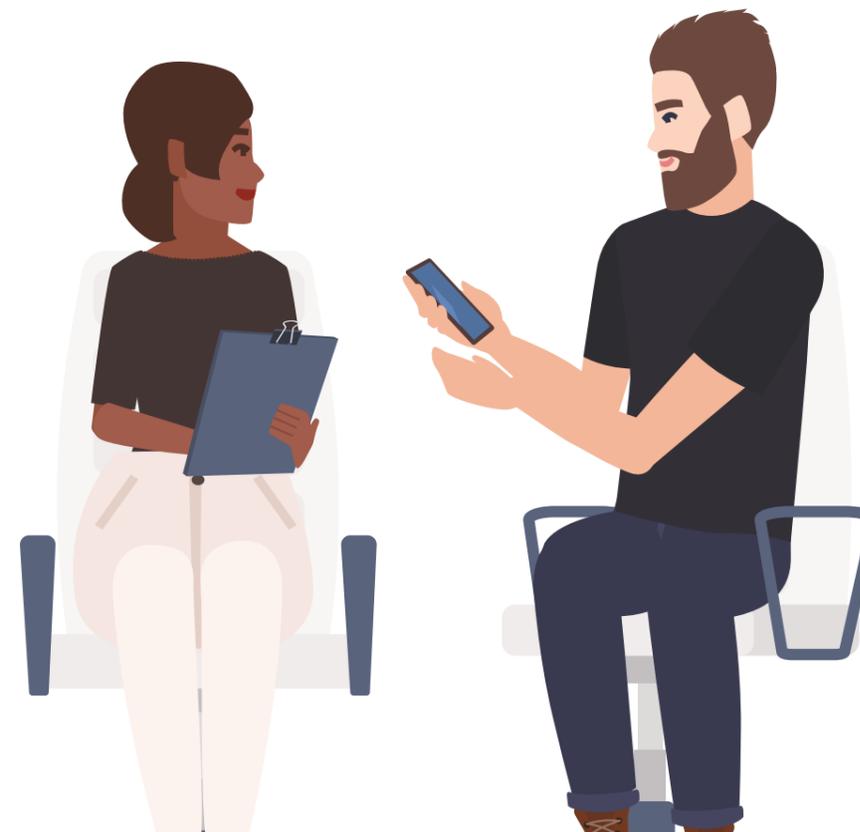
Figure 9
Confidence in GenAI output (March-December 2023)



“ Evolved positively. GenAI became **more reliable if you use it smartly...**
+ 3 points
-M, 46-55, Ankara, Turkey

“ The **quality, accuracy, and utility** of generative AI seems to have **fallen over the past year.**
- 4.5 points
-M, 26-35, Chicago, USA

“ The fact that I **have to verify the result** has not changed.
-F, 18-25, Seoul, South Korea



06

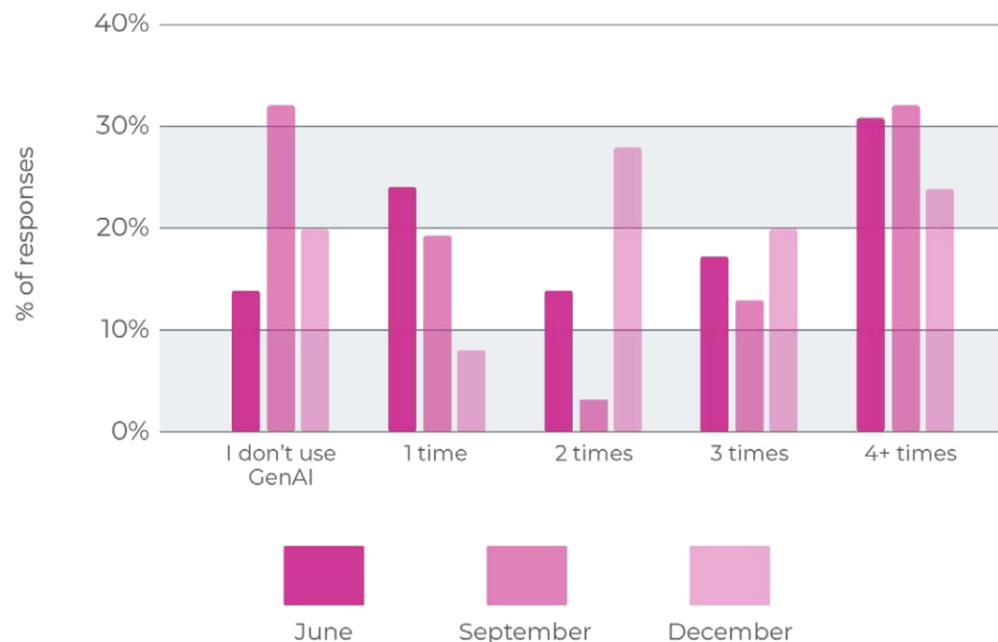
KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

GenAI tools to support UX research

Weekly GenAI usage

A significant majority (84%) had already engaged with GenAI by March, showing an early broad engagement. As the year progressed, June reflected a balanced usage spectrum, spanning from non-users to those employing GenAI tools multiple times per week. By September, the trend had moved towards more consistent usage, with fewer non-users. The December figures (82% active usage) underscored this evolution towards regularity, with substantial growth in researchers using GenAI tools three or more times weekly (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Weekly GenAI usage (March-December 2023)



Are usage patterns changing?

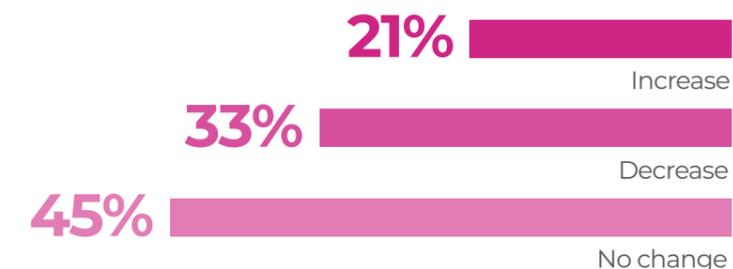
Figure 11 shows the dynamic nature of GenAI adoption among UX researchers, with around 21% of UX researchers increasing their usage, discovering added value in GenAI capabilities. Close to half maintained a consistent usage pattern, indicating an emerging group of power users who have deeply integrated GenAI into their workflow. In contrast, about 1 out of 3 UX researchers we talked to scaled back their use of GenAI tools or stopped using them altogether over the course of the year.

“It’s not a priority at the moment.”
1 time a week -F, 36-45, Lagos, Nigeria

“I started the year with very little knowledge and curiosity... and along the year found them pretty useful.”
2 times a week -F, 36-45, Tel Aviv, Israel

“No change, I’m really happy investing time in how to use generative AI in the user research and design process.”
4+ times a week -M, 46-55, Zaragoza, Spain

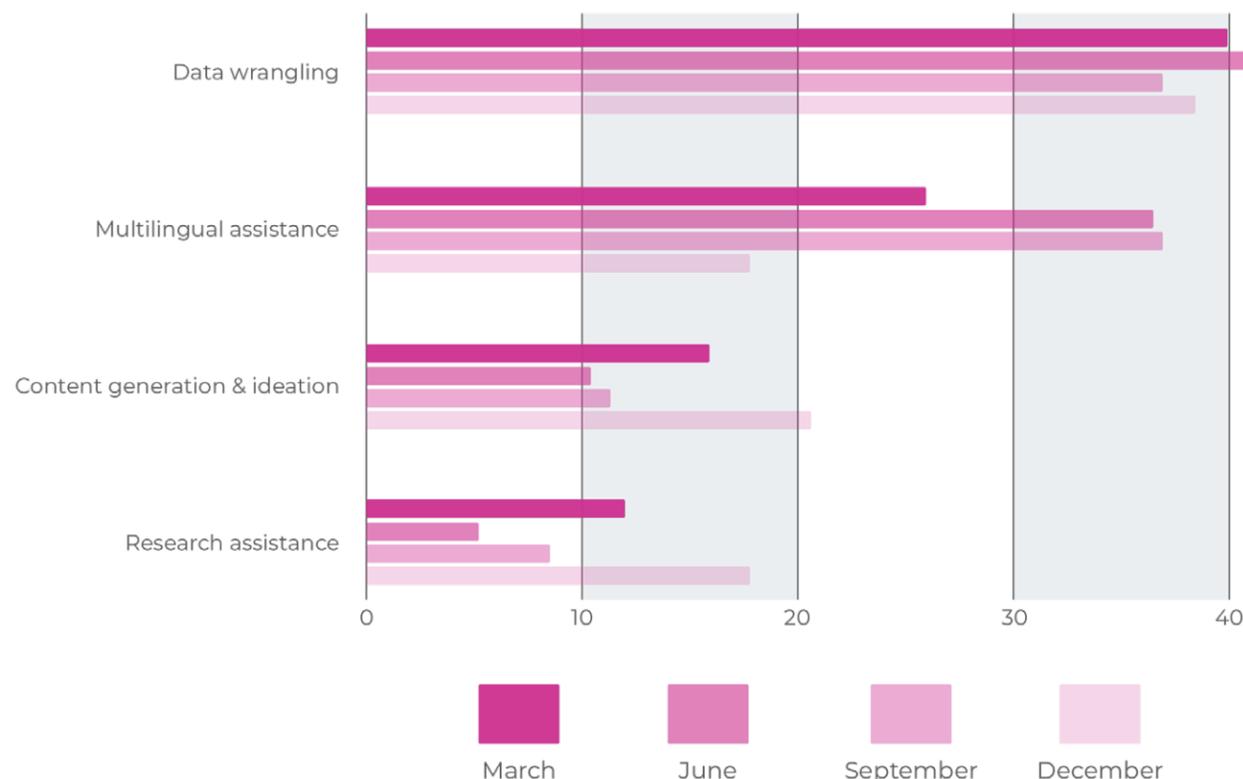
Figure 11 GenAI usage patterns (March-December 2023)



GenAI applications in UX research

Emerging GenAI use cases span foundational tasks as well as more advanced areas of UX research such as complex data analysis and creative ideation. Data wrangling was recognized as top beneficial areas for GenAI application in UX research, highlighting its critical role in the field. Multilingual support, reflective of the globally diverse group of UX researchers interviewed, also ranked high in GenAI application, mirroring the necessity for effective cross-language communication. Despite this, the decline in December suggests ongoing challenges in language support, an area where GenAI’s promise still grapples with complexity.

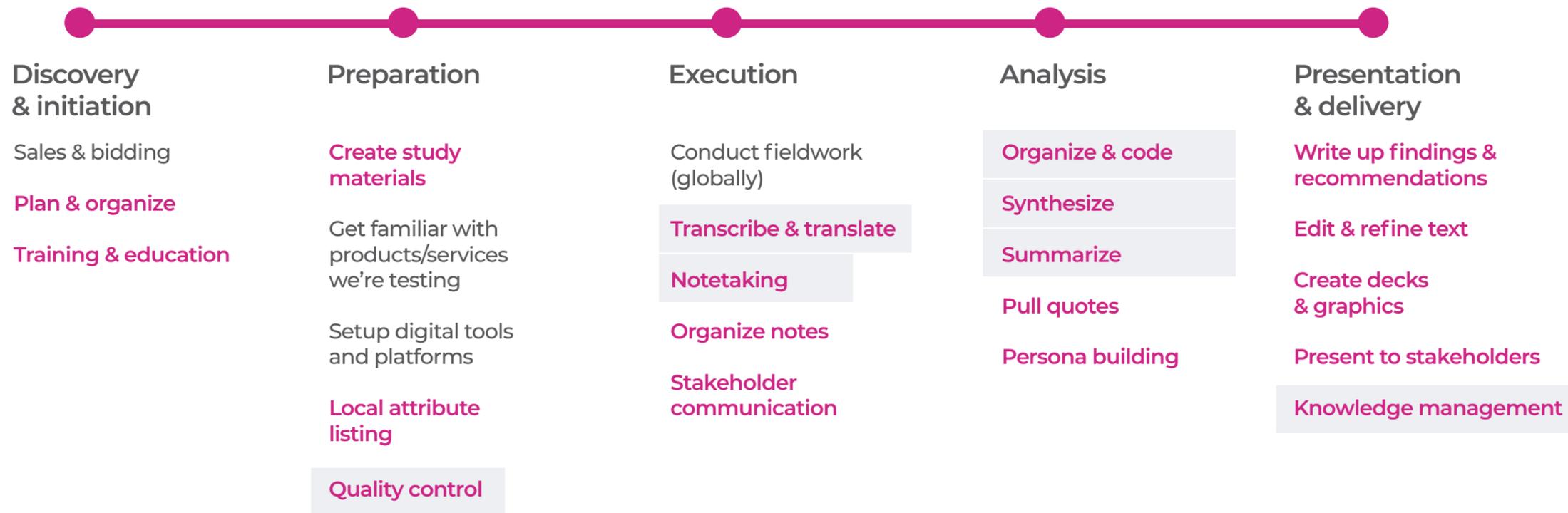
Figure 12 Where can GenAI support UX research? (March-December 2023)





A look at our UX activities

This detailed overview of the UX research workflow identifies emerging GenAI use cases, spanning foundational and advanced tasks. Participants have successfully integrated GenAI in areas indicated by pink text. However, the gray-highlighted areas, such as notetaking and multilingual support, represent GenAI “pain points” due to trust and tech capability concerns, as voiced by global UX researchers.



- Emerging GenAI use cases
- Areas of concern (Highlighted)

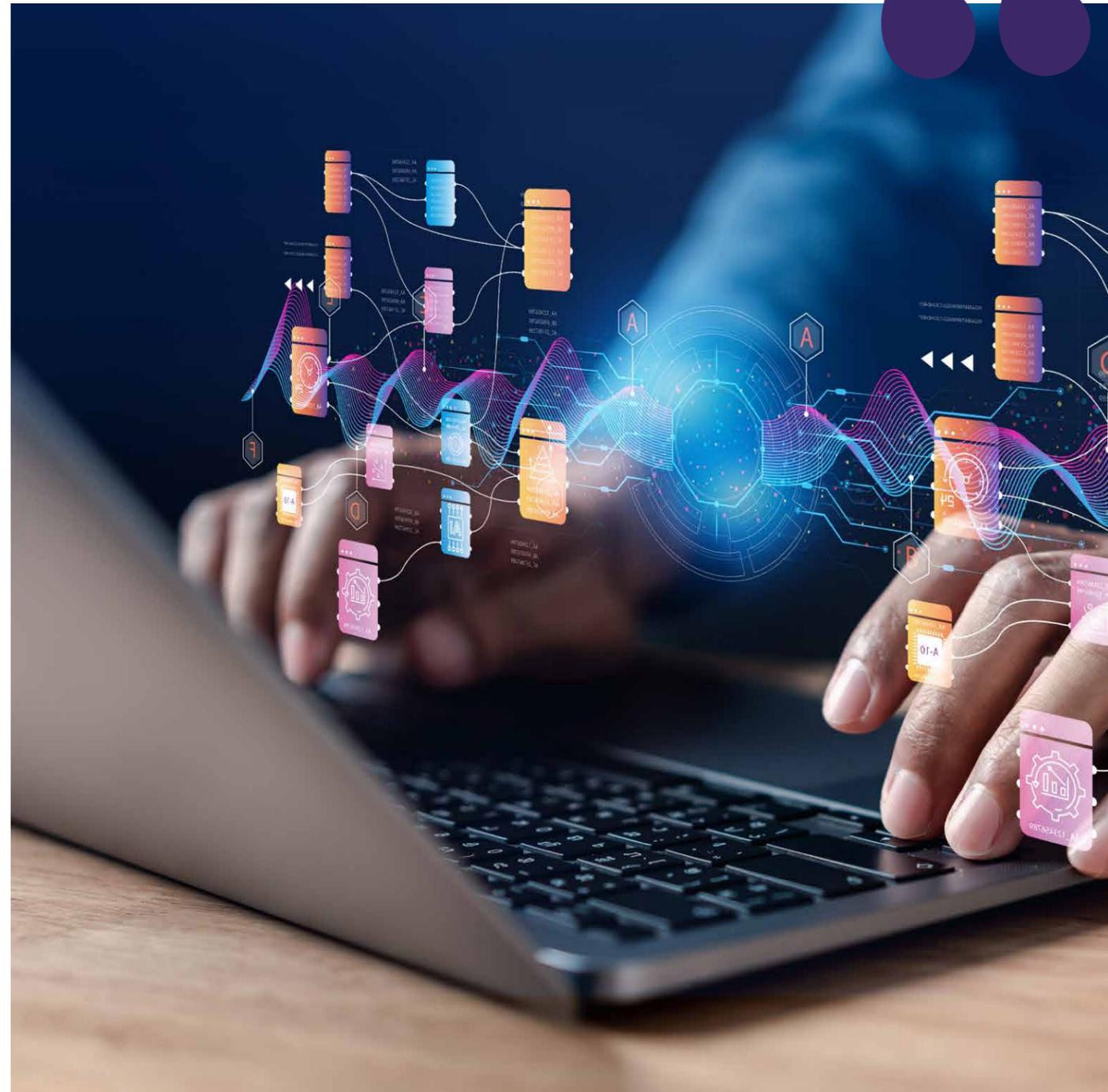
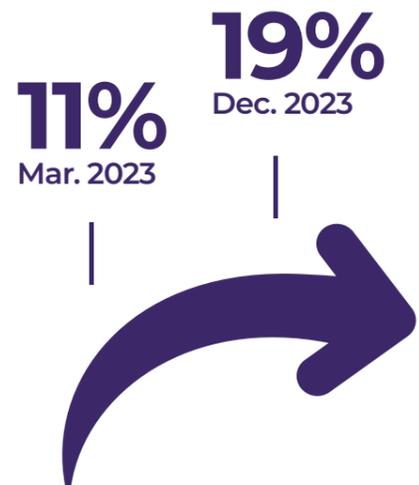
KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

Governance

UX research agencies are gradually shaping their policies around GenAI.

We observed a slow growth from 11% to 19% over the year. A modest uptick, but still relatively low policy adoption rate.

By the end of 2023, most UX research agencies lacked formal policies but demonstrated an emerging focus on providing structured guidance on ethical and practical use. These guidelines primarily emphasized data security and the critical need for human oversight in GenAI applications.



“

Here are three takes from agency owners around the world reflecting on the emerging guidelines and practical applications.

We don't use AI for analysis, only for technical / operational tasks.

-F, 36-45, So Sebastiao do Paraiso, Brazil

Still more a guideline than a policy, [but without one] they are too good to resist for literally any work purposes.

-M, 36-45, Tokyo, Japan

The company policy regarding generative AI is to **use**, **experiment**, and try to **find a way it works for them**.

-M, 46-55, Zaragoza, Spain

07

Dataset AI experiments

08

For our GenAI experiments, we looked at three foundational tasks: transcription & translation, notetaking, and coding qualitative data.

Transcription & translation

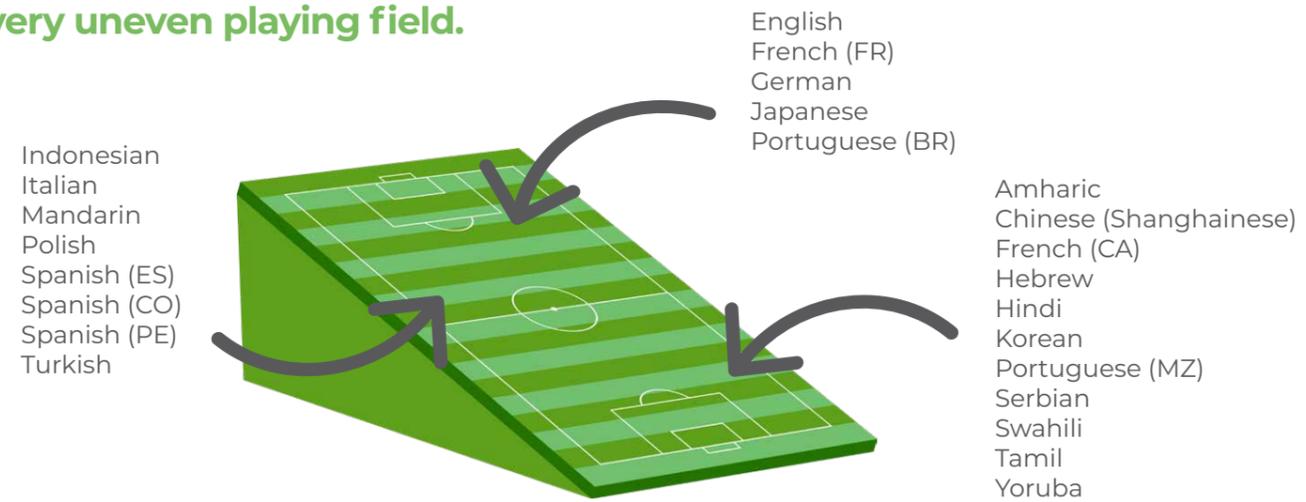
With a global pool of interviews conducted in 28 diverse languages, from Amharic to Yoruba, we explored the efficacy of AI tools in streamlining the translation process back to a working language, in this case, American English. This effort led us to quickly recognize that the performance of machine translation tools across multiple languages is highly imbalanced. AI-driven tools vary significantly in translation proficiency, giving some language “players” a distinct advantage. Automated solutions are already showing clear and consistent value for languages like French (France), German, Japanese, and Brazilian Portuguese. A larger subset of the languages we experimented with, including Bahasa Indonesian, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Spanish, and Turkish, demonstrated moderate, if patchy, success with AI-driven tools.

But the largest group of languages we worked with for this study received minimal translation & transcription support from AI tools, when those tools attempted to support these languages at all. The challenges are real for languages and dialects like Yoruba, Hebrew, French Canadian, and Hindi, which face an uphill battle when it comes to accurate translation and transcription. Even accented English poses a considerable challenge with many tools.

28 languages and dialects

- Amharic
- Chinese (Mandarin)
- Chinese (Shanghainese)
- Dutch
- English (US)
- English (UK)
- French (FR)
- French Canadian
- German
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Indonesian (Bahasa)
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Polish
- Portuguese (Brazil)
- Portuguese (Mozambique)
- Portuguese (Portugal)
- Serbian
- Spanish (Catalan)
- Spanish (Colombia)
- Spanish (Peru)
- Spanish (Spain)
- Swahili
- Tamil
- Turkish
- Yoruba

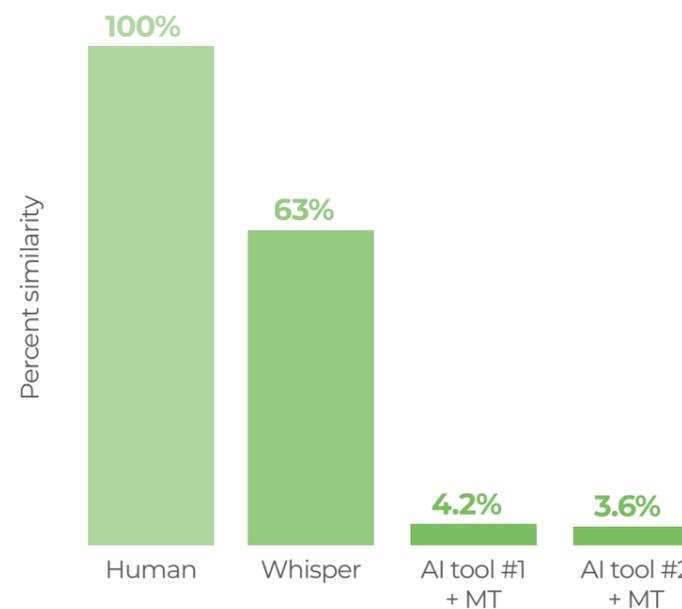
Working with our interview data in 28 languages came out like this: a very uneven playing field.



Hindi to English

Our Hindi-to-English case study clearly demonstrates the language-specific limitations of current speech technology (Figure 13). Here, OpenAI’s Whisper showed promise, capturing a substantial portion of a human translator’s accuracy (63%). Other tools that purported to support Hindi lagged considerably behind at around 4%. This experiment underscores both the strides made in advanced speech technology and the considerable ground yet to be covered for AI to match human expertise in translation fidelity.

Figure 13 Accuracy across methods



Human

Human vs. AI tools

Human vs. AI tools

Legend: Similar word (Yellow), Same word (Green)

Automated tools, although continuously advancing, may struggle to understand linguistic subtleties, idiomatic expressions, and cultural context. And despite the hype surrounding GenAI, frictions and pain points remain across both common and less-common languages alike. These are all liabilities when conducting high-quality global UX research.

Notetaking

We took three sets of notes for each session, adhering to our best practices for UX research notetaking. We analyzed those sets of notes for consistency of hitting these three task goals:

- Capture relevant data
- Identify emerging trends
- Facilitate reporting

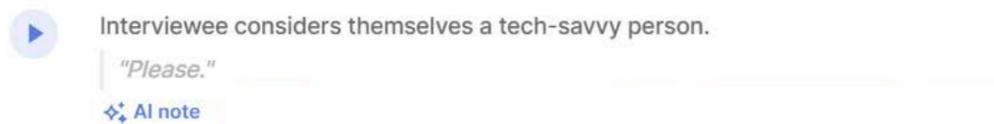
We then looked around for potential AI tools that could match that level of accuracy with consideration of research objectives. This led us into a conversation with the designers and engineers of a new product on the market. Through a collaborative effort spanning several months, they fine-tuned an AI tool targeting our style of UXR notetaking.

The AI notetaking tool proved to be quite the scribe, churning out a substantial volume of notes — about 20 to 40 notes per half-hour session. Impressive quantity, but as we know, quantity doesn't always mean quality, and that became clear when we sifted through the notes (Figure 14).

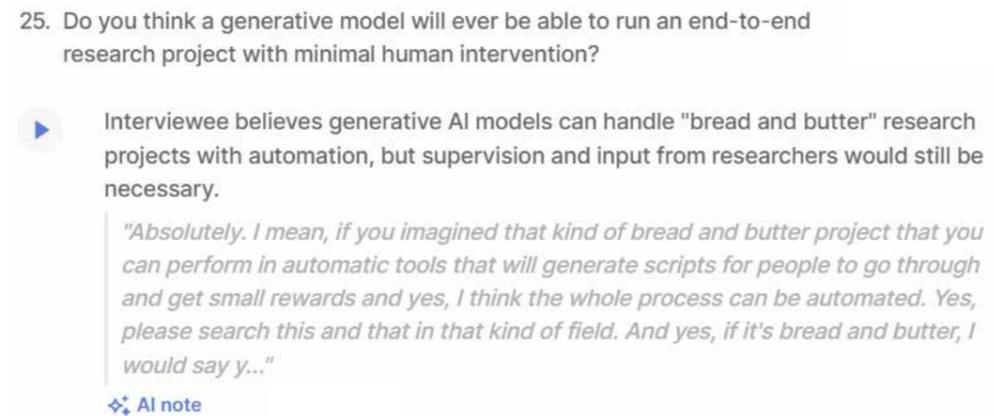
Wrapping up our experiment, AI has proved itself as promising, yet nothing beats the trained eye. The tech is exciting, but doesn't compare to the trust in our team. The technology delivered inconsistent results, often requiring additional human time for verification, rather than streamlining research processes.

Figure 14
Notetaking example

AI miss—we were looking to capture a quantitative self-rating here.



AI win—a clear summary and accurate quote.

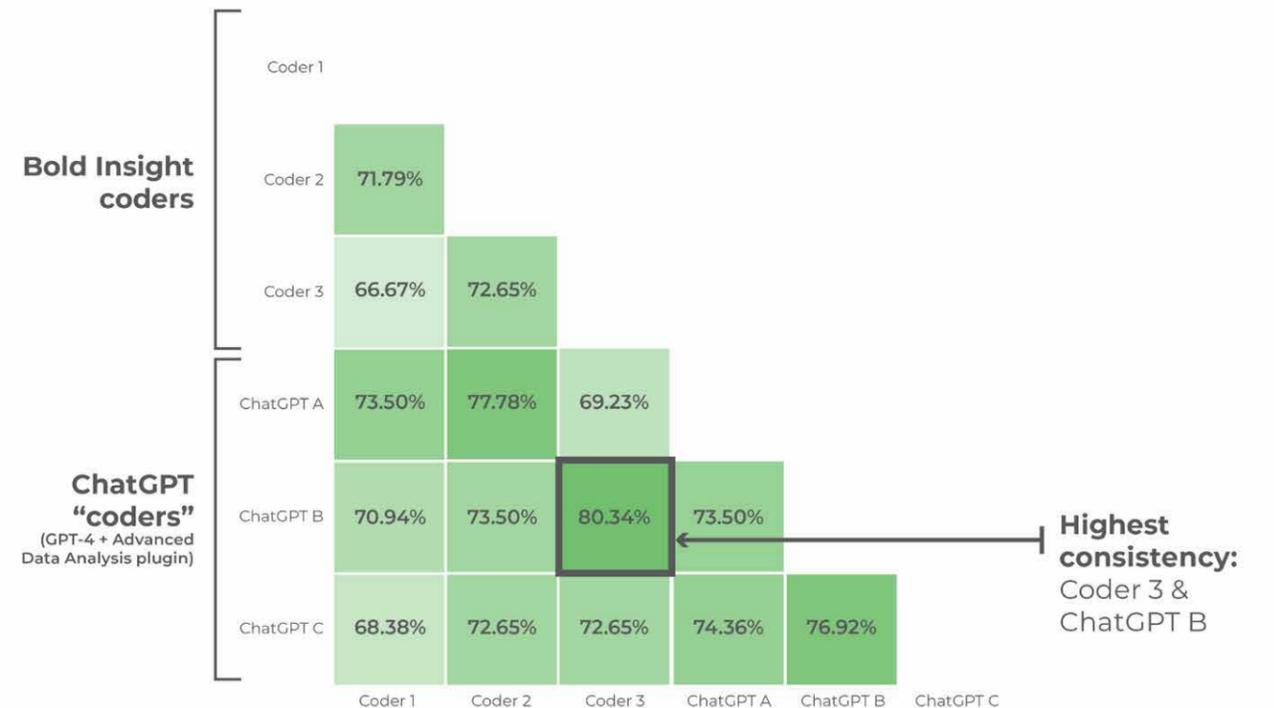


Coding

For our third experiment, the task was twofold: classify the insights into themes and count the number of responses. We focused on this question "In what areas do you think generative AI, in its current state, is or could be most useful/valuable?"

In our GenAI experiment focusing on thematic coding, we compared the outcomes of Bold Insight researchers against ChatGPT 4, guided by the same directives. The percent agreement analysis (Figure 15) shows a notable congruence. Our human coders displayed a high level of consistency with each other and also with ChatGPT "coders," with a standout 80.3% agreement between Coder 3 and ChatGPT B. Despite this alignment, human coders demonstrated a more nuanced approach, identifying an average of 13 unique themes versus ChatGPT's 8. This exercise shows the bright potential of GenAI to help summarize and synthesize data. It also raises a recurring theme from UX researchers: the balance between leveraging GenAI's efficiency and navigating its current constraints plus the required investment in skill and understanding.

Figure 15
Coding results



Study outcomes

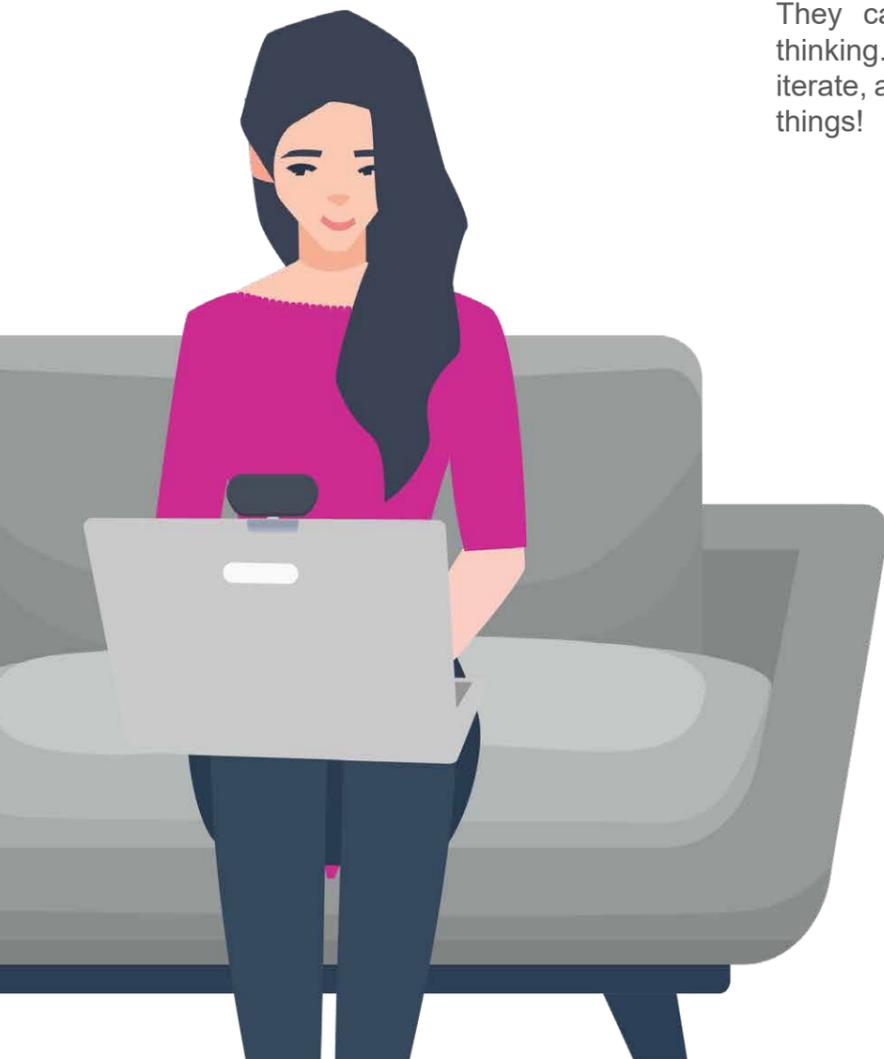
We took the pulse of the global UX research community and experimented with GenAI tools. When we reflected on all the promises and pitfalls, the risks and the rewards, the asymmetries of trust, we realized that asking the right questions is the smartest starting point for UX researchers to embrace GenAI.

Working with the “new” AI makes us better researchers through dynamic interaction (not machine output). The output of well-known large GenAI can’t be trusted, and we can’t entrust them with client data. “Garbage in, garbage out” applies here, and so does “gold in, garbage out.”

Much of the value for responsible researchers lies in the interaction. Think of it like a fencing match. Instead of seeking that (mythical) magic command or perfect output, embrace AI as your sparring partner. Touché.

Experiment with different kinds of prompts and observe the AI’s responses. Engage the model in dialogue: ask it challenging questions and demand step-by-step explanations to find its sweet spots and edges. Better yet, turn the tables. Encourage the AI to question you, give you feedback, and trigger your curiosity and innovativeness. Your thinking matters most.

Interactions with AI “sparring partners” can push us to refine and clarify research objectives. They force us to communicate clearly and effectively, both with prompts and with our teams and clients. They can spark our creativity and strategic thinking. Ultimately, they can lead us to validate, iterate, and engage more with the data – all good things!



09

What’s next

Embracing GenAI in UX research involves a strategic approach, evaluating a tool’s fit, the complexity of the task, stakes involved, and the quality required. Validation and user-centric application remain paramount. Below, we detail this five-step strategy, advocating for a user-focused, ethically-conscious integration of GenAI.

10

1

AI fit

Your starting filter. Ask yourself if the AI tool truly meets a need or just complicates your workflow. If the answer is no or not yet, you’ve saved yourself valuable time. If yes, proceed with intention.

2

Complexity

Break down your task and compare it to the strengths of GenAI. It’s crucial to ensure that the AI can navigate the complexity of the task at hand.

3

Stakes

High stakes mean more oversight and a possible rethink of AI’s role. Low stakes could be more suitable for AI, but it’s not a given.

4

Quality

‘Quality’ should be your guidepost. What do you need from your data: accuracy, deep insights, immediate utility? Does the AI tool meet those quality markers?

5

User centric

Keep the focus on the user. Any GenAI application should ultimately help improve the user experience. If they’re not, they’re not worth your time.

Thank you to our partners who participated in the research!



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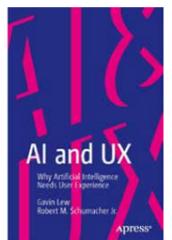


About us

Bold Insight is a user experience and human factors research agency based in Chicago. Our work spans the product development life cycle – from early product design to global human factors validation – all to ensure the user experience is useful, usable, and satisfying. We work with digital, next-generation technology including medical devices, mobile apps, in-car systems, home appliances and more, delivering research-based insights to empower confidence in design.



Our team has been focused on the symbiotic relationship between the UX of AI for years. We predicted that context, interaction, and trust would be prerequisites for AI adoption and two of our founding partners published a book on AI and UX based on early work explorations of AI in technology, electronics, and healthcare. Since then, our AI work has been ongoing, guided by the needs and ambitions of clients representing a range of industries.



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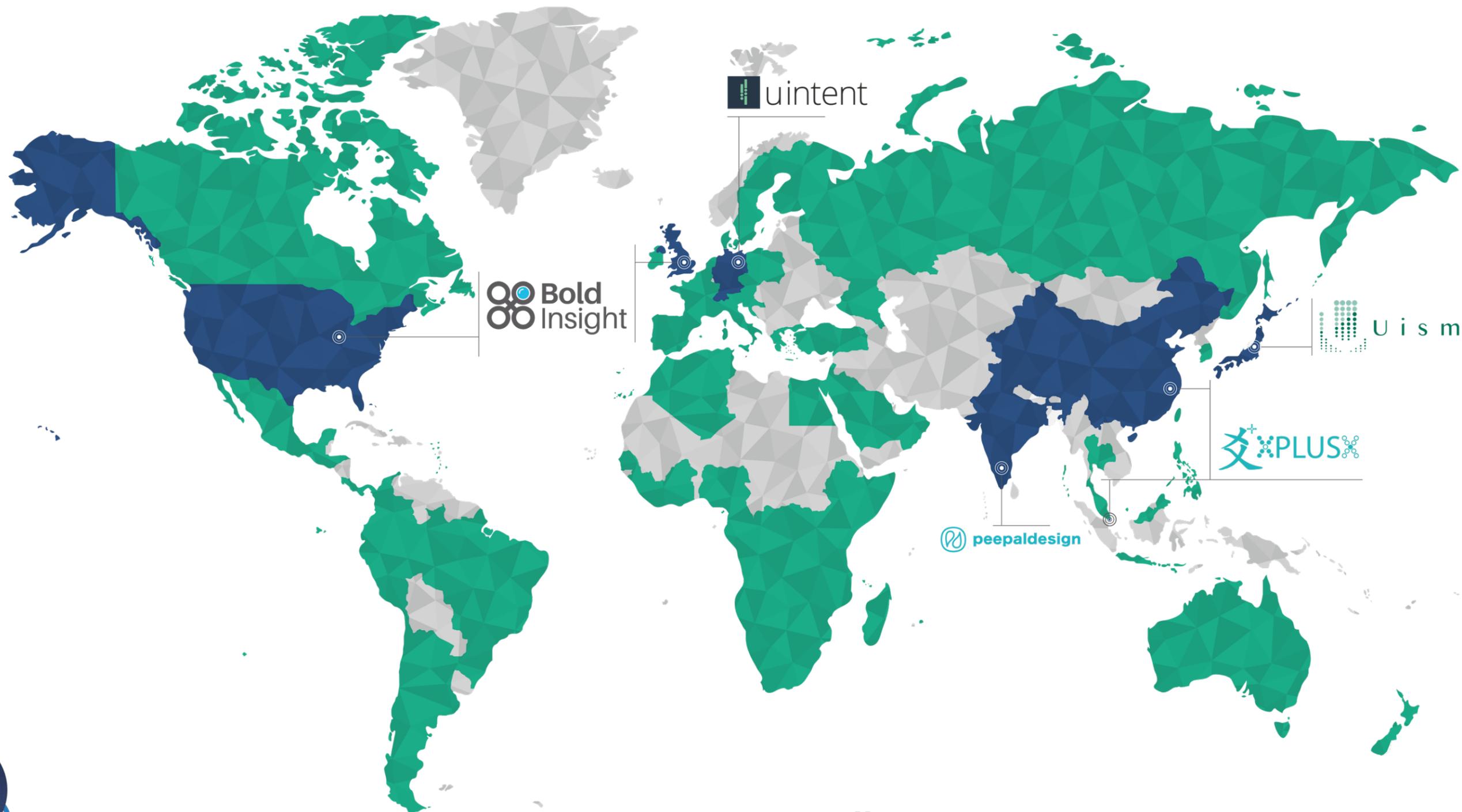
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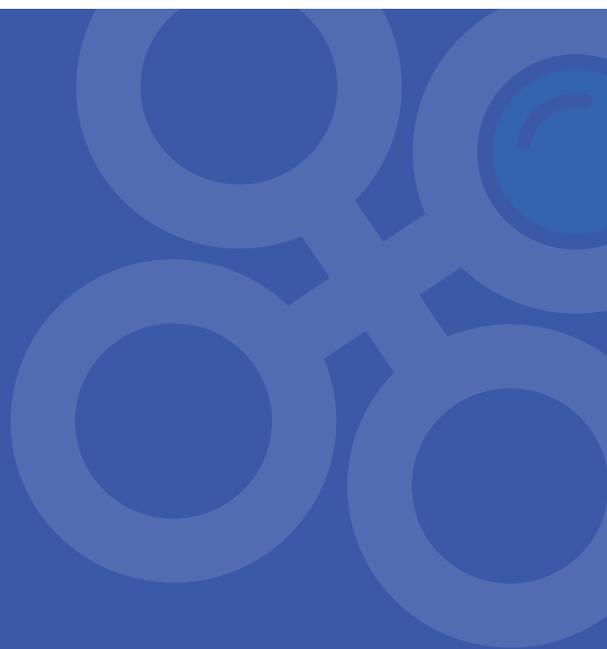
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We are a part of ReSight Global, a family of UX and human factors research agencies with offices in seven countries. However, our global coverage extends to over 100 countries. We offer a broad set of tools and methods, seamlessly extending your reach to understand users across borders, and reducing the challenges often associated with global user research. We also maintain an ISO-9001 certified quality system to ensure excellence in service delivery across all locations. [Learn more by visiting resight.global](https://resight.global)

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