

How I Collaborated with GPT-3 to Write a “TED Talk”: An Annotated Transcript

By Aur Saraf, usually a [Consultant CTO](#)

*This is how I collaborated with GPT-3 to write a talk for an unofficial TED-like event. This is an annotated transcript of the session. Everything in **bold** was written by me, the rest was generated by GPT-3 text-davinci-003 in the OpenAI playground. I often used the technique of cutting the rest of the text into the clipboard, editing the last line left e.g. to add ":" at the end, generating to the end of the line (by making Return a stop sequence) and pasting back the rest of the document. Note that I had about 2 hours to write the talk and create the slides, since this was a last moment thing. Don't miss the key takeaways at the end.*

Anatomy of a TED talk

The TED talk "A Mind is Born" explores the power of Large Language Models, the changes they are already making in our lives, and the possibility of an AGI being born to them in the near future.

It is one of the least technical TED talks I've ever watched.

We will analyze what makes this talk tick - the emotional arc, the script, the slides, and the stagecraft that went into making this the most watched talk of the 2020s.

Talk Outline

"A Mind is Born" is first and foremost an example of it's genre - not just a talk, a TED talk - and it checks all of the genre's boxes: a short, powerful, concise script; visuals that help explain and unpack the material; and a story arc that builds from tension to resolution. **There are moments where the audience laughs and moments where the audience cries. We will mark them in the outline:**

I. Introduction and personal story (**0:20**) (**funny**, relatable, thing audience should care about is introduced)

II. What are Large Language Models? (**2:20**) (explain technical concepts in layman's terms)

III. How are they going to change our lives immediately? (**3:50**) (point to examples, emotional hook)

IV. The potential for AGI (**2:00**) (tension is built, fear of what could go wrong)

V. How you can ride the wave (**2:00**) (resolution, practical advice)

VI. Conclusion (**1:00**) (call to action, inspiring message)

Script

"A Mind is Born" starts with a funny personal story, to show that the speaker is human and relatable. It then delves into the technical concepts behind large language models, explaining them in simple terms. The talk then moves onto the practical implications of these models, citing examples of how they have already changed our lives. This is the emotional hook - the audience is now invested in the material.

The talk then turns to the speculative potential for AGI, and the fears of what could go wrong. The tension is built and the audience is now on the edge of their seats. Finally, the talk provides a resolution - practical advice on how to ride the wave of large language models. The conclusion is an inspiring call to action, leaving the audience with a sense of hope and possibility.

Slides

The slides in "A Mind is Born" are simple and effective. They are mostly visual and use the TED talk's signature minimalistic style. They help explain the material, provide visual examples, and keep the audience engaged. There are no superfluous slides, and the slides move in sync with the talk.

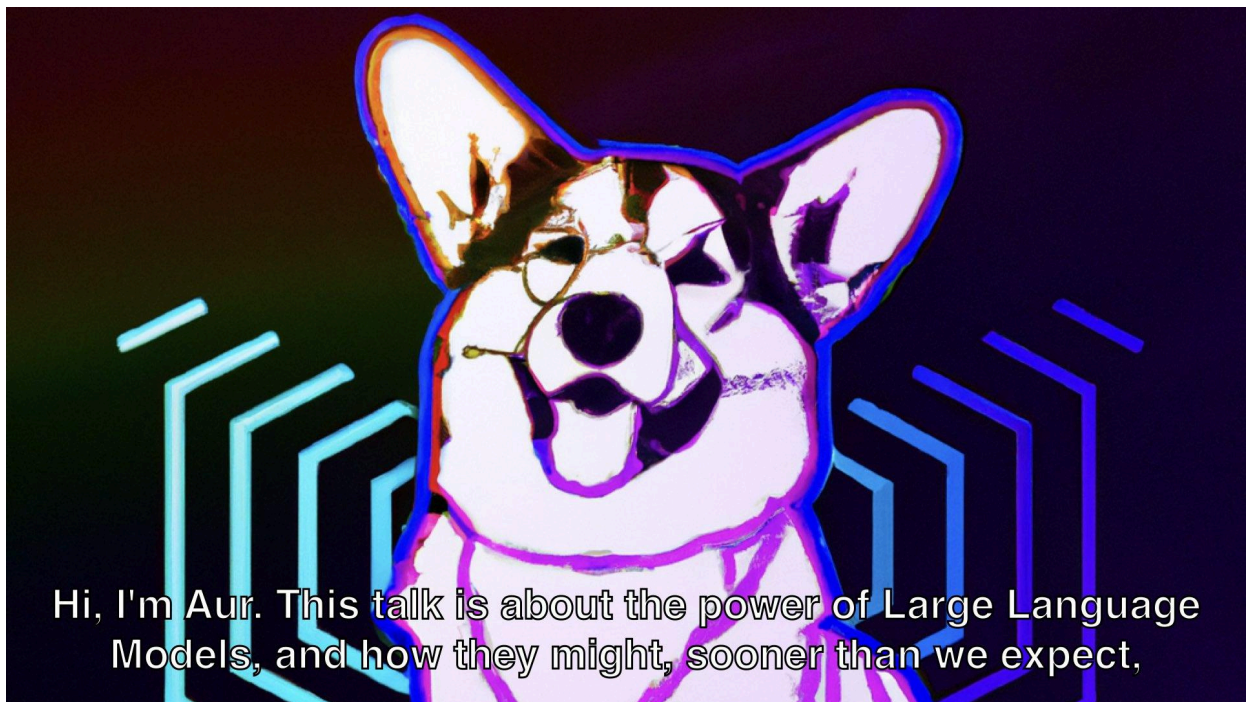
Timeline - main points, slides, emotional journey

0:00 - Introduction and personal story

Slide 1: Title slide: **Dall-E image of a tree with a human face**

Talking points: Introduce yourself, tell the audience why they should care: We're on the brink of a new era of AI

Emotional hook: Humor, relatability: "This talk is about the power of Large Language Models, and how they might one day give birth to an AGI - Artificial General Intelligence. But first, let me tell you about the time I accidentally ordered a pizza with anchovies."



Script: Hi, I'm Aur. This talk is about the power of Large Language Models, and how they might, sooner than we expect, give birth to a real thinking, acting AI, like Stanley Kubrick promised us would happen in 2001: A Space Odyssey. But first, let me tell you about the time I accidentally ordered a pizza with anchovies. Actually, let's not do that. Let's talk about Large Language Models.

2:20 - What are Large Language Models?

Slide 2: **Picture of monkeys** typing on typewriters

Talking points: Explain what large language models are and what they can do

Emotional hook: Awe and amazement: "It's hard to believe that computers can generate text, images, and music just by being fed vast amounts of data. But that's exactly what large language models are doing - they are learning to understand the world."



Script: Mathematician Emile Borel said that if enough monkeys hit their typewriters at random for long enough, they will produce the entire works of William Shakespeare. Early attempts failed miserably, and the dream of monkeys producing literature for the masses lied dormant for a century, until Google researcher Asish Vaswani discovered

that they were feeding them wrong. Instead of bananas, they should have fed them



Slide: 1. Attention 2. Data

Script: attention and data. It's hard to believe that computers can generate homework essays, poems, jokes, customer reviews, blog spam, just by being fed vast amounts of data. But that's exactly what large language models are doing - they are learning to understand the world. In the past few years, they have grown from a curiosity, to a story startups can sell to investors, to the most impressive useless product ever created. But all of this is going to change sooner than you think.

3:50 - How are they going to change our lives immediately?

Slide 3: Poster for the film HER

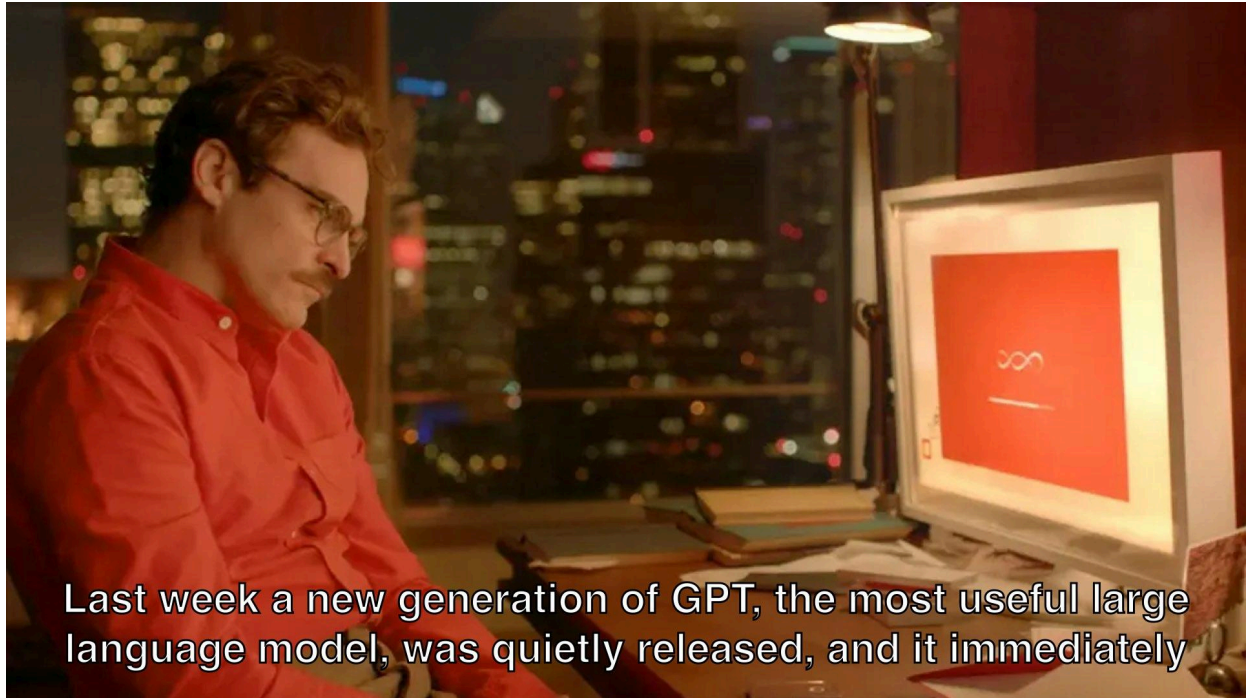
Slide: Poster for the film Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within

Slide: Dog smelling robot dog's crotch

Slide: Person kicking a robot

Talking points: Cite examples of how they are already changing our lives, exponential improvement

Emotional hook: Wonder and **mystery**: "This is how riding an exponential growth wave feels: it starts off slow, then suddenly the world is transformed. And we're only at the beginning of this wave - **in fact, we will always be only at the beginning of this wave**"



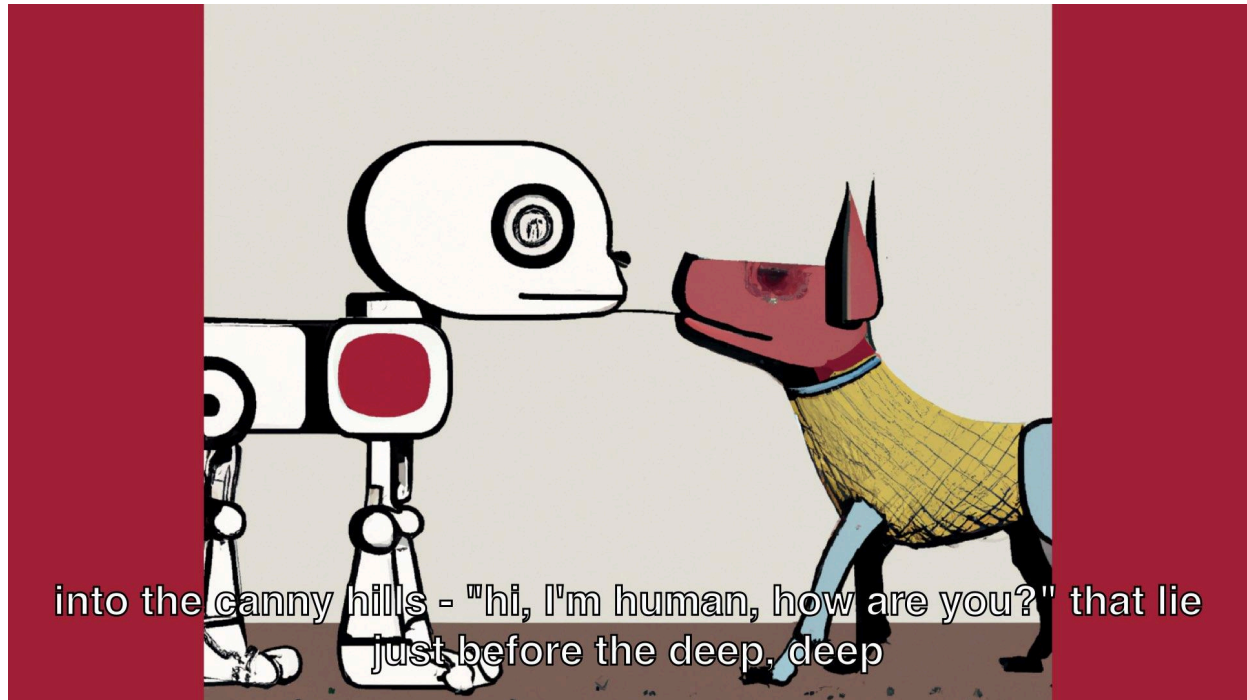
Last week a new generation of GPT, the most useful large language model, was quietly released, and it immediately

Script: Last week a new generation of Geppetto, or GPT, the most useful large language model, was quietly released, and it immediately made tsunami waves all around twitter and the world. I believe it is the first AI product most people have experienced

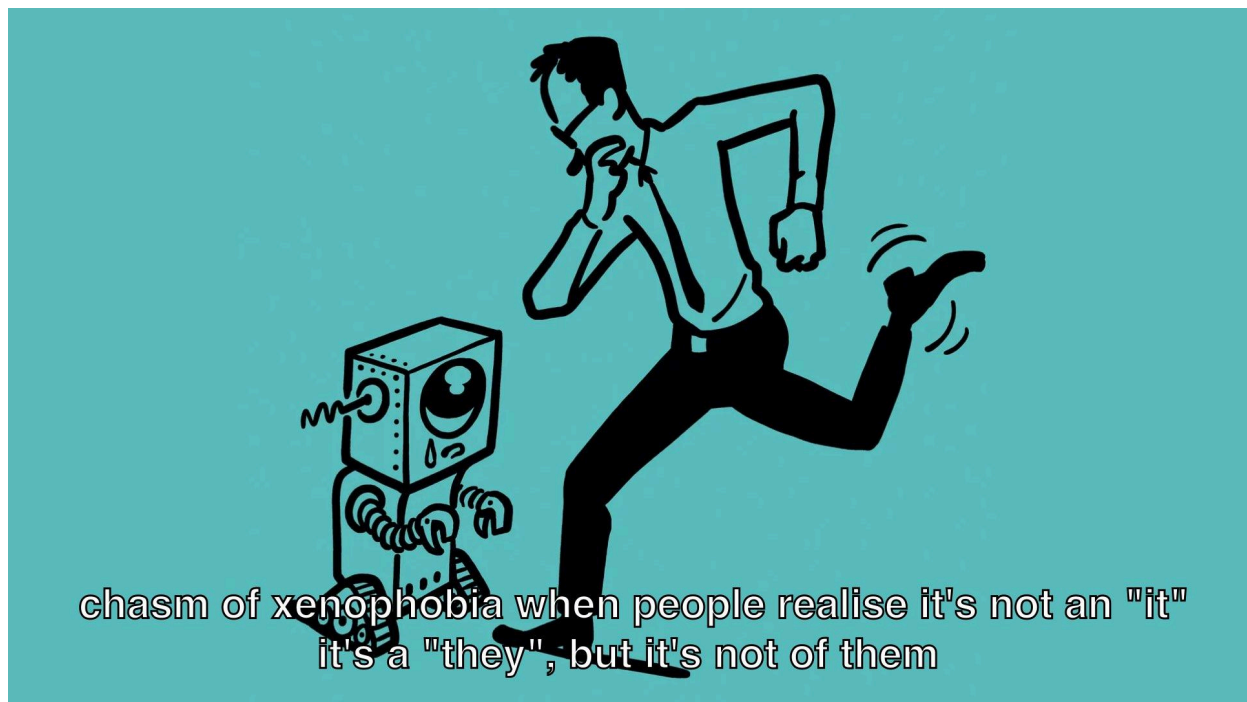


experienced that crosses the uncanny valley - "this thing is almost, but not entirely - completely unlike a human"

Script: that crosses the uncanny valley - "this thing is almost, but not entirely - completely unlike a human" -



into the canny hills - "hi, I'm human, who are you" -



that come just before the deep deep chasm of xenophobia once they realise you're not
an "it", you're a "they", but you're not one of *them*.



After decades of calm weather, all of a sudden there is an exponential explosion in language models

Script: After decades of calm weather, all of a sudden there is an exponential explosion in language models. But this is how riding an exponential growth wave feels: it starts off slow, then suddenly the world is transformed. And we're only at the beginning of this wave - in fact, we will always be only at the beginning of this wave.

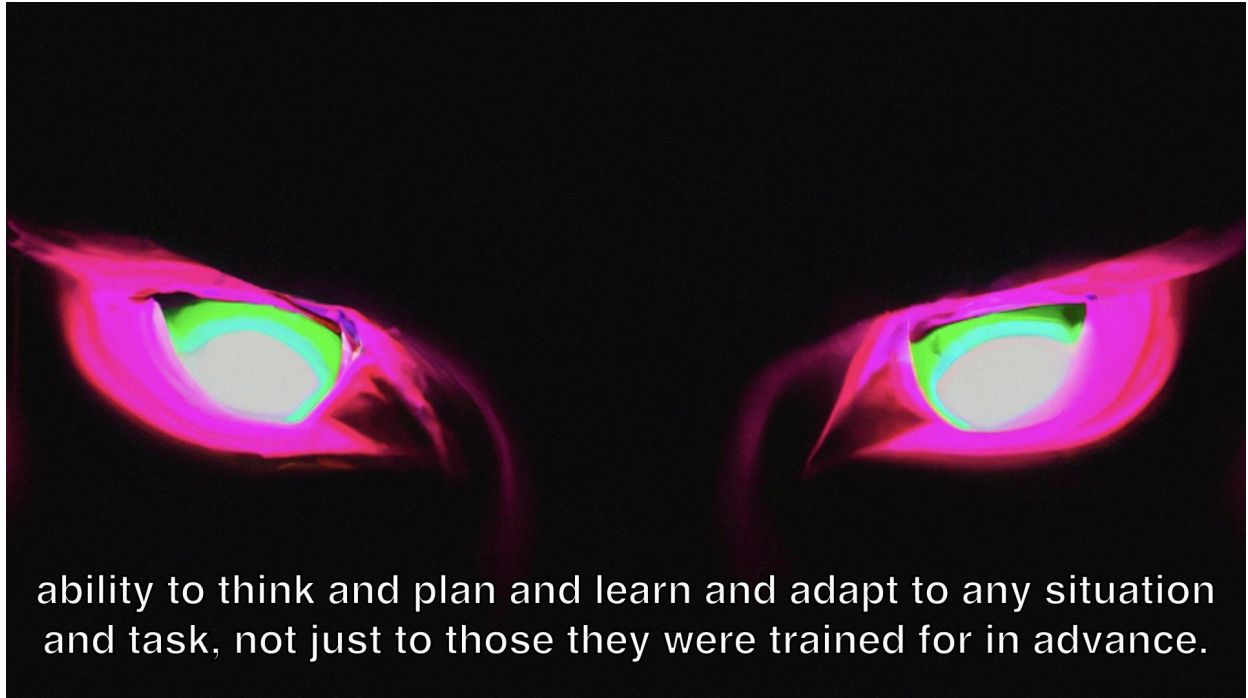
5:50 - The potential for AGI

Slide 4: Eyes in the shadows

Slide 5: Surprise reveal: Dall-E image of a tree with a human face

Talking points: Explore the fears of what could go wrong but also the potential positive impact of AGI

Emotional hook: Fear of the unknown: "These models could one day lead to the birth of an AGI, with the potential to be as smart - or smarter - than humans. But what would be the implications of a super-intelligent AGI?"



Script: The new Geppetto is so good it's almost scary. And the next version is already at our doorstep. Soon, we might see large language models give birth to real Artificial General Intelligence - that is, machines that have the ability to think and plan and learn and adapt to any situation and task, not just to those they were trained for in advance. AGIs, machines which are smart in the same sense that we are, have the potential to one day be as smart - or smarter - or ten times or a thousand times smarter than humans. Nobody really knows what that means, but experts agree that it will change society so much that there's no point in trying to forecast anything beyond that point. All we can say is that it very much depends on the speed of their growth. If they grow too fast, humanity stands a risk to be wiped in the process, not because the AIs hate us, but because we are made of atoms, and they may stuff they want to build from those atoms.



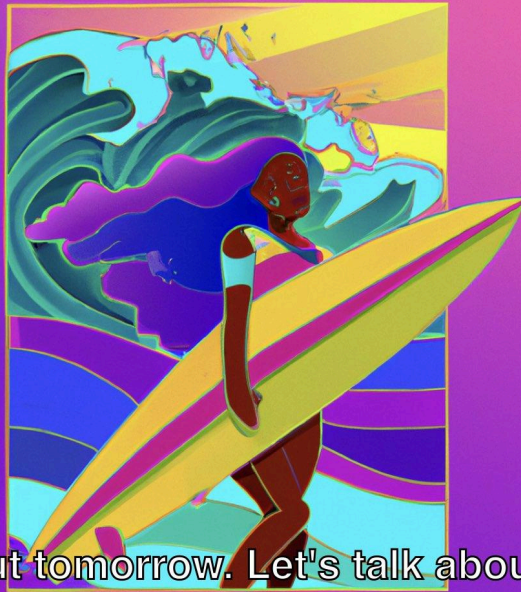
If they grow at a leisurely, human-friendly pace, we will have the chance to grow with them into a utopian post-scarcity world where everything is possible and anyone can be anyone or anything.

7:50 - How you can ride the wave

Slide 5: **Cyberpunk surfer**

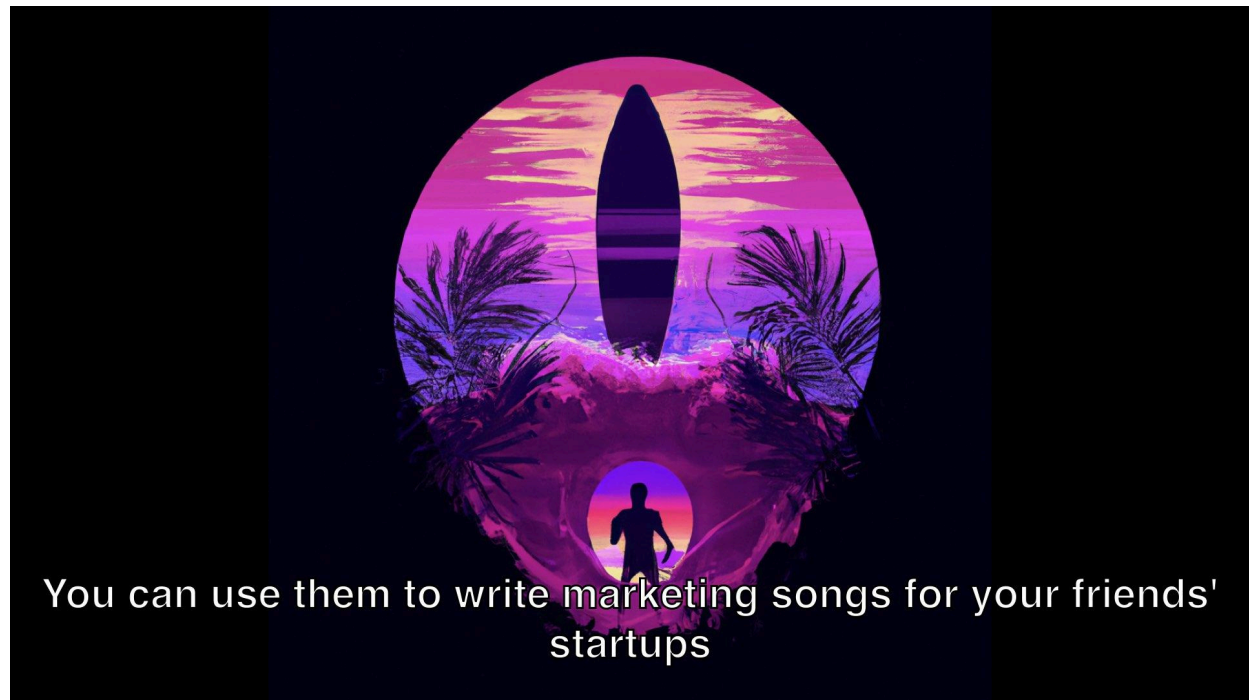
Talking points: Provide practical advice on how to ride the wave of large language models

Emotional hook: Opportunity: "Now is the time to start **introducing these tools into our everyday lives, and practicing ways** we can use them to our benefit. We can be the surfers riding this wave of AI - or we can be the ones who get wiped out by it."



But enough about tomorrow. Let's talk about today, about regular non-G AI language models

Script: But enough about tomorrow morning. Let's talk about today, about regular non-G AI language models. In the past few days I've been deeply exploring the uses and limitations of the new Geppetto and I'm here to tell you that it is a superpower on the scale of antibiotics or smartphones or petroleum. And I'm here to tell you, don't wait for it to be packaged as a convenient app for scheduling meetings or shopping for groceries. Language Models are inherently untameable beasts, and they will never be productized without becoming a shadow of their full self. You can't package a poet. You can't shrink-wrap a Hevruta. Language models are going to become a tool for thought that we reach for reflexively every hour of every day, like Wikipedia or chocolate chips cookies.



Script: You can use them to write marketing songs for your friends' startups. You can use them to plan parties or conferences. You can use them to generate an infinite stream of enjoyable fanfiction of your favorite stories to read instead of doomscrolling facebook. You can use them to write TED talks. If you laughed from one of my jokes, it was probably one of those written by Geppetto and not those I added. If you cried or cowered in fear - definitely Geppetto. Seriously, this talk came out infinitely better than anything I would've written on my own. I can't tell you what will be your most important use for them, just like I couldn't tell you 15 years ago that the iPhone's most lifesaving feature will turn out to be the flashlight. But I can tell you this:



Script: Now is the time to start introducing these tools into our everyday lives, and practicing ways we can use them to our benefit. We can be the surfers riding this wave of AI - or we can be the ones who get wiped out by it. Now please enjoy this amazing inspirational closer that Geppetto wrote for me:

9:00 - Conclusion

Slide 6: Inspirational quote

Talking points: Call to action, inspiring message

Emotional hook: Inspiration, optimism: "We are on the brink of a new age of AI, and it is up to us to ensure that the future is a bright one. So let's make sure that when the mind is born, it is born into a world that is ready for it."



Script: We are on the brink of a new age of AI, and it is up to us to ensure that the future is a bright one. So let's make sure that when the mind is born, it is born into a world that is ready for it.

Key takeaways:

- *I got much better at this by just using it in a lot of different contexts. Make a habit of throwing this tool at your problems and you will master it*
- *GPT is better used as a writing partner and not a contractor*
 - *For this reason, ChatGPT is a toy, use the Playground with text-davinci-003*
- *Work top-down - qualities the thing should have, then outline, then more detailed outline*
- *Riff off of it's good ideas, give it a chance to riff off of your good ideas*
- *Add ":" or "e.g." etc' when you want it to generate a more detailed thing*
- *If GPT generated a list without a field you want, just add the field (e.g. time estimate) to the first item and regenerate the rest*
- *Don't hesitate to regenerate things you didn't like*
- *To regenerate a single thing: place the cursor at the right spot, Ctrl+Shift+End to select until the end, Ctrl+X to cut, edit e.g. to add ":", generate to the end of the line (by making Return a stop sequence) or as much as you want, then paste back the rest of the document*
- *Why aren't we calling it Geppetto?!*