

The Internet's AI Slop Problem Is Only Going to Get Worse | Intelligencer

By Max Read

September 30, 2024

Slop started seeping into Neil Clarke's life in late 2022. Something strange was happening at [Clarkesworld](#), the magazine Clarke had founded in 2006 and built into a pillar of the world of speculative fiction. Submissions were increasing rapidly, but "there was something off about them," he told me recently. He summarized a typical example: "Usually, it begins with the phrase 'In the year 2250-something' and then it goes on to say the Earth's environment is in collapse and there are only three scientists who can save us. Then it describes them in great detail, each one with its own paragraph. And then — they've solved it! You know, it skips a major plot element, and the final scene is a celebration out of the ending of Star Wars." Clarke said he had received "dozens of this story in various incarnations."

These are prime examples of what is now known as *slop*: a term of art, akin to *spam*, for low-rent, scammy garbage generated by artificial intelligence and increasingly prevalent across the internet — and beyond. From their weird narrative instincts and inert prose, Clarke realized the stories came straight from [ChatGPT](#). Sometimes they would arrive with the original prompt included, which was often as simple as "Write a 1,000-word science-fiction story."

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