WEEK 07 · Monday, October 26, 2026

Midterm Presentations + The Labor Debate

Show us your decisions. Then we talk about who does the work.

Since we last met.

Musk pledged SpaceX shares to every US child, Anthropic shipped Claude Duet, and AI found a flaw in 70% of the web.



OCT 19 · SPACEX

Musk: one SpaceX share for every US child.

A day after Anthropic's 5% pledge. About 72 million children, roughly $10.5 billion. No details yet on how.

OCT 21 · ANTHROPIC

Anthropic releases Claude Duet.

A proactive agent on Opus 5.5 that keeps working in the background and asks before it acts.



OCT 21 · OPENAI

OpenAI finds a PHP flaw affecting 70% of the internet.

Researchers found it with GPT-5.6 Sol and built working exploits in two weeks. Patches are out now.

Midterm Presentations

Five minutes, about your decisions

Show the work quickly. Spend the rest of the time on why it looks the way it does.

1. Show the finished piece in the first 30 seconds.
2. Walk us through two decisions: one AI made easier, and one you had to make yourself.
3. Show one thing you threw away, and say why.
4. Tell us one thing AI could never have done for this project.
5. Take questions from the room.

THE LABOR DEBATE
Who does the work when AI can do it?

No right answers today. I want to hear where you land, and why.

Where do you stand right now?

Raise your hand for each one you agree with. We will ask again after our discussion.

1

AI will take work I want to do.

2

AI will make the work I do better.

3

If a monthly check covered my life, I would stop working.

DISPLACEMENT
The job that never gets posted.

So far most of the loss is hiring that slowed, more than people being fired.

The first jobs to go are first jobs.

US workers aged 22 to 25, employment change since 2022.

−11%

in the most AI-exposed 40% of jobs

e.g. software developers, customer service reps, accountants

Design is here too: graphic designers, art directors, industrial designers

+10%

in the least AI-exposed 60% of jobs

e.g. health aides, maintenance and repair workers, movers, housekeepers

HOW IT HAPPENS

Fewer people hired.

Not more people fired. The cut is at the bottom of the ladder, and older workers in the same jobs are mostly fine.

Source: Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the Coal Mine?" (August 2026 update), ADP payroll data.

Image work got hit before writing did.

Freelancers on Upwork, after the first image generators and after ChatGPT.

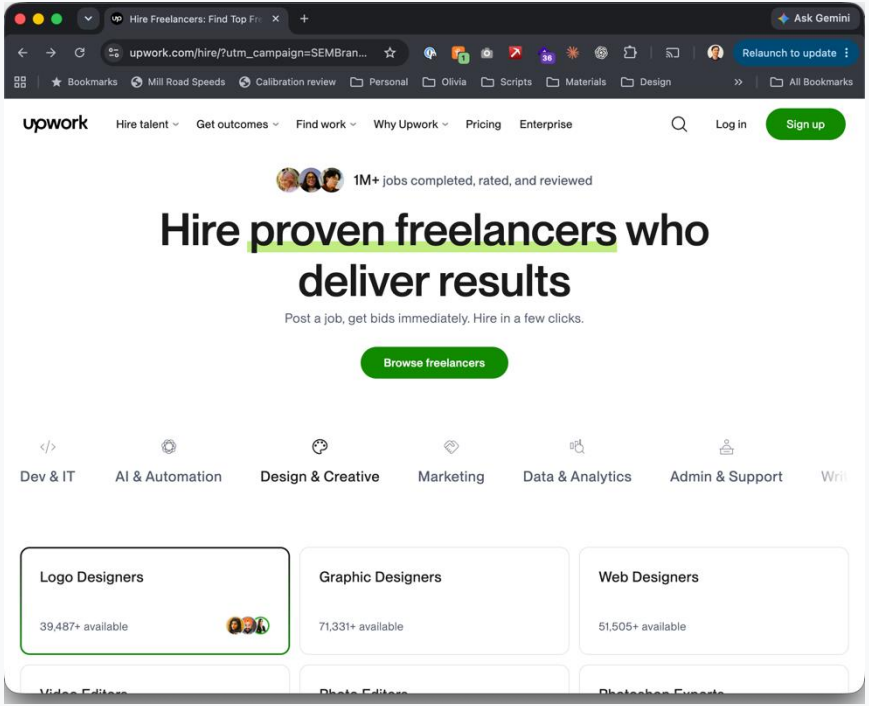


IMAGE FREELANCERS

Design, image editing and art · after DALL·E 2 and Midjourney

−9.4%
monthly earnings

−3.7%
monthly jobs

WRITING FREELANCERS

Content writing, editing and proofreading · after ChatGPT

−5.2%
monthly earnings

−2%
monthly jobs

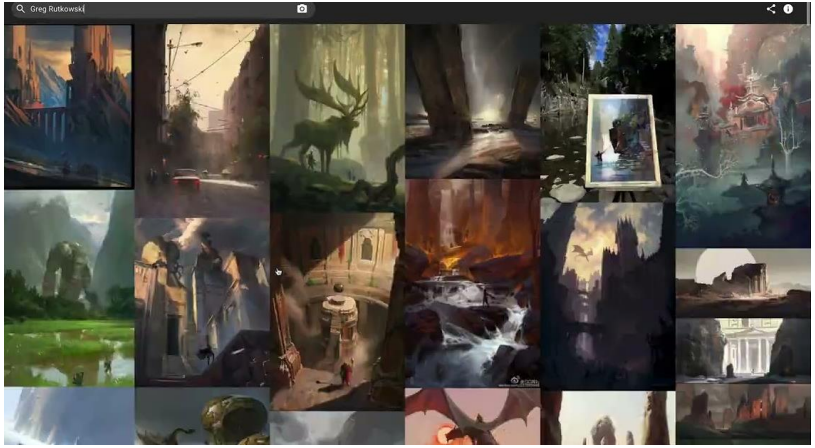
2023 working paper figures. The published 2024 version found image freelancers lost about 5% of earnings and 2% of jobs, the same as writing; 2026 US data shows little earnings impact on artists so far (Makridis).
Source: Hui, Reshef & Zhou, "The Short-Term Effects of Generative AI on Employment," 2023 working paper. Upwork data.

If less juniors are hired, where do seniors come from?

Ask it about the job you want after graduation.

AI runs on labor too.

Two groups of people whose work is inside every model.



THE ARTISTS

Models learned to draw from millions of images made by people who were never asked or paid.



THE LABELERS

People rate and filter what the model says. In 2023, TIME found Kenyan workers doing this for OpenAI for less than $2 an hour.

RE-ALLOCATION
The work moves.
Do the workers?

New tools end some jobs and make others. The question is who gets the new ones.

Machines that were supposed to end a job.

Each one ended a trade. Each one also made new work, often for different people.



1839 · PHOTOGRAPHY

Portrait painters lost their steady work. Painting moved toward what a camera could not do.



1985 · DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Typesetting as a trade nearly disappeared. Graphic design as a job grew.



1970s ON · THE ATM

Teller jobs kept growing for decades, because branches got cheaper to open. Then phones did what the ATM did not.

More jobs. Not the same ones.

What large employers expect between now and 2030, worldwide.

170M

new jobs created

92M

jobs displaced

39%

of workers' core skills expected to change

The net gain is the headline. The 92 million people are the story.

Source: World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025. Employer survey; forecasts, not measurements.

Where did your hours go?

Your midterm is a small labor study. Some questions to think about as you look back on it.

What did AI do or speed up in your midterm?

Where did the time you saved go?

Which step would a client still pay a person for?



People are already bargaining.

Unions won limits on AI by striking. Most designers do not have a union.



2023 · WRITERS GUILD

148-day strike. AI cannot write or rewrite scripts, and no studio can make a writer use it.



2024–25 · SAG-AFTRA

Video game actors struck for 11 months. Studios now need consent before making a digital copy of a voice or body.

WHO IS ORGANIZING

Graphic Artists Guild
Advocacy for illustrators and designers

Art Directors Guild
IATSE Local 800, film and TV art departments

Freelancers Union
Pushes for laws that protect freelance pay

YOU

Most illustrators and designers are freelance. What protects you?

POST-WORK
What if nobody has to work?

In 1930, Keynes guessed his grandchildren would work 15 hours a week.

Two offers in one weekend.

Both companies say AI should pay everyone back. They disagree about how.



ANTHROPIC · OCT 18

A fund the company runs.

- 5% of its shares, with more as the company grows.
- Gives to nonprofits or pays specific groups directly.
- Who decides: a board. Details promised later.



SPACEX · OCT 19

A share in every kid's name.

- One SpaceX share per US child next year.
- About 72 million kids, about $10.5 billion.
- Who decides: Musk. "The first of many."

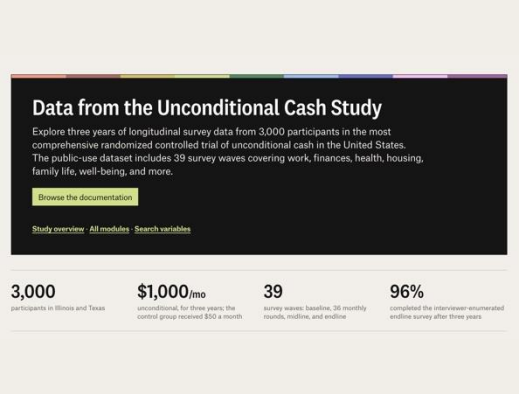
This isn't a new idea.

Older ways of handing everyone a share of the money.



ALASKA · SINCE 1982

Every resident gets a share of oil money, set by law. This year: $1,200.



OPENRESEARCH · 2024

$1,000 a month for three years. People worked about 1.3 fewer hours a week.



CT BABY BONDS · 2023

$3,200 invested for each baby born on Medicaid, claimable at 18 to 30.

Questions any fund has to answer.

WHO DECIDES?

A company board can change its mind. A law, like Alaska's, is much harder to change.

WHO COUNTS?

Kids in the US? Every person on earth? The artists whose work trained the model?

WHAT IS IT WORTH?

A share pays only if the company wins. You would own a piece of the thing that potentially replaced you.

IS A CHECK A JOB?

Work also gives people a reason to get up, people to see, and a sense of being good at something.

Would you take the check?

And what would you still make if nobody paid you for it?

Open conversation.

Pick any question. Disagree with someone.

THE MONEY

Who should hold it?

- A company, a government, or nobody?
- Everyone equally, or the people who lost work?

YOUR WORK

What do you keep?

- Which part of design would you do for free?
- Which part would you happily hand off?

THE ARTISTS

Who is owed?

- What do you owe the artists whose work trained the model you used this month?

Where do you stand now?

Same three statements. Did anyone move? Why?

Where do you stand right now?

Raise your hand for each one you agree with. We will ask again after our discussion.

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NEXT WEEK · GUEST SPEAKER

Trevor Crafts

How he uses generative AI to make film and television

AWARD-WINNING PRODUCER
Street Gang: How We Got to Sesame Street

CREATOR
Lantern City, a TV series based on his own BOOM! Studios comic

CEO
Macrocosm Entertainment, a studio based in Los Angeles

Week 08 · Monday, November 2. Bring one question about AI in your work.

