GovComms
PODCAST

#176: From Google to AI: The Search Revolution Explained

WITH ADRIAN BROWN

TRANSCRIPT

Jim Stewart:

When ChatGPT launched in late 2022, I looked at it and I just went, "This is extraordinary. This is like 1994 all over again. It's like the birth of the web again. This is something different." And it didn't really chill me to the core until I saw when they gave it internet access in February of 2023. And as soon as that happened, I went, "Okay, the game just changed." Start doing some searches yourself about your own organisation. All of a sudden it's going to give you some insights.

Voice Over:

Welcome to the GovComms Podcast, bringing you the latest insights and innovations from experts and thought leaders around the globe in government communication. Now here is your host, David Pembroke.

David Pembroke:

Hello everyone and welcome to GovComms, a podcast about the practice of communication in government and the public sector. My name is David Pembroke. Thanks for joining me. As we begin, may I first acknowledge the traditional owners of the land from where we are broadcasting today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to elders past, present, and emerging and recognise the ongoing contribution they make to the life of our city and this region.

And indeed, may I also pay my respects to all First Nations people of the lands from where anyone listening to this podcast today is joining us from. So what happens when citizens start searching for important government information and they can't find it? In our digital world, search engines and now AI-driven shape not only how people access information, but what information is provided to them.

Whether it's a policy update, emergency advice, or information about key government services, if it can't be found easily and it can't be found quickly, it might not well exist. And if government is not providing that information in the forms and in the channels that people prefer, somebody else probably will. So risks of mis and disinformation really potentially muddying the waters, it makes it so much more important that government sources of information rank highly in search.

For government communicators, it means going beyond just publishing accurate content. It's about making sure the right people find the right information at the right time. And with AI-driven search now changing the way people seek and consume information, how can government communicators keep up? Well, we're going to explore that conversation today with my Jim Stewart, who's the CEO of Stewart Media.

He's the founder of one of YouTube's longest-running search marketing channels and also the author of Beyond Google: Mastering Search In A World Of AI Assistants, which explores how AI is reshaping search and what organisations such as government must do to stay visible and to stay relevant. Jim's mission, to help organisations thrive in a rapidly evolving digital world without getting lost in the jargon. Jim, welcome to GovComms.

Jim Stewart:

Thanks, David. Awesome intro.

David Pembroke:

So Jim, before we jump into what it is that government communicators need to know and understand about not only search engine optimization, but how to treat results that are generated by artificial intelligence

platforms, what is the Jim Stewart story, and how is it that you made your way into this part of the communications ecosystem?

Jim Stewart:

Thanks, David for the question. It's been a long story. I'll try to keep it short. So back in the early '90s, I got involved with the internet because at the time I was selling newspaper advertising. And being in that space, I could see the writing on the wall, and I thought this is going to be the future of advertising.

So in about 1995, I was selling websites and I was working with a lot of small businesses trying to help them understand this new medium called the internet. And that led me down a path of basically being an internet business consultant for a number of years. And then in the late '90s, we were doing a lot of streaming video, a lot of streaming audio. Then YouTube came along and wrecked that, and so we had to reinvent ourselves again.

So what we decided to do was, well, we can't do the video anymore, but we are working a lot with businesses and their videos and all the rest of it. Why don't we just move into this area that we call SEO or search engine optimization, which we were doing for ourselves at the time, but we weren't doing for any other businesses? And that just started us on the journey of doing digital marketing.

And since then, we've been doing SEO, Google Ads, user experience, all those sorts of things. And when AI was launched or when ChatGPT launched in late 2022, I looked at it and I just went, "This is extraordinary. This is like 1994 all over again. It's like the birth of the web again. This is something different." And it didn't really sort of chill me to the core until I saw when they gave it internet access in February of 2023.

And as soon as that happened, I went, "Okay, the game just changed." Because that I could see was really going to threaten Google, because everyone's used ChatGPT now and what we know from this, it's really easy to get answers to complex topics. Prior to that, we had to go to Google and we don't need to do that anymore.

If it's an informational search, we can get a better result and a better experience out of ChatGPT than what we can with Google for most what we would call informational type searches. For the last two years, we've been full steam ahead trying to get ahead around everything with generative AI. We've built a lot of systems internally that we use for ourselves to augment our skills.

I thought we were going to have to replace ourselves, but what I'm finding is that we've got better tools now, so we should be able to do a better job. And that's the way that I look at it. We should be able to do the job more efficiently. And that's the way I'm looking at the tool. So that's how we got here. In that 25 years we've been doing SEO, we've been doing it differently to a lot of businesses.

And the way that we approach it is that it's not about tricking Google, it's about presenting the best possible picture to the search engines of your business or organisation, and now it's also making sure you're presenting that to all the various large language models or AI platforms that are out there.

David Pembroke:

So just in terms then of those changes that you're observing around the use of ChatGPT and other AI platforms for search as it relates to perhaps not as great a use of Google, how comprehensive has that switch been? Or is Google still dominant?

Jim Stewart:

Google's adapted and they had to. Long story short, yes, Google is still dominant, but a few things and a few major things have changed. So Google's now had to have this AI Overviews on top of all the search results, which some of you may have seen, some of the listeners may have seen. It doesn't come up all the time in

Australia, it's fairly ubiquitous now in the US. And this has replaced another feature that they previously had at the top of the search results.

But essentially this is a response to ChatGPT taking a lot of that, what we would call informational search, away from them. So now what happens, initially we saw a lot of traffic that would be around, say coding programming, those sorts of searches all of a sudden that just dropped off a cliff in February 2023 in Google because programmers didn't need to do then anymore. They could just speak to ChatGPT directly and get answers about their code.

And to put this into perspective, the Python coding language is probably the most popular language. Well, it is the most popular language out of any coding language out there. It is the number one coding language that programmers will use when working with generative AI, and searches in Google for it are dropping through the floor. So that tells me that people aren't Googling those sorts of things anymore. They're going straight to ChatGPT or whatever other large language model that they're using.

And we see it in not only coding, but just little simple things that another one, search query that's dropped through the floor. And people can go to Google Trends and look at these searches for themselves, just trends.google.com. And you can go there and you can type in a phrase, Instagram quotes or quotes for Instagram, and you'll see in 2023, that drops off a cliff in Google for people searching for it, 'cause they don't need to do it.

And those people who were doing those searches were looking for great quotes that they could share on Instagram and get shared. Well, now they don't need to do that now they can just get great quotes directly from an AI language model. So that's the sort of things that it's affected. Where Google still has a major, major edge is in what we call brand search. And this isn't just commercial brands, this is personal brands, also known in Google terms as entities.

Anything that's to do with a brand, most people don't know they're doing a Google search when they do this. But if I want to go to a large retailer, I'm just going to type the retailer's name straight into my location bar in my Chrome browser. That then does a Google search and then I click on the destination retailer and the search results.

So that's where Google has its edge because ChatGPT and those sorts of tools don't do that well. But what Google really does well is when we're trying to find things quickly, and it's called navigational search. And it's still got the edge there, but that could change radically as well if another browser comes out that's not Google Chrome. OpenAI is meant to be bringing out their own browser. Another AI search engine Perplexity has just announced their own browser as well. So these are real threats to Google.

David Pembroke:

So the book that you've written, Beyond Google, obviously explores a lot of these changes around AI, around Google, around the use of the different platforms. What is it that government communicators should take away from your book as they think about the way that they can better and more effectively explain government policy programmes, services, regulation?

Jim Stewart:

I think one of the first things is to make sure that all your content is accessible. That's the number one thing because quite often in legacy systems and those sorts of things, they're, I guess, blocks to Google and AI bots because AI, these generative language models also have their own bots that go out and crawl the sites.

So you've got to make sure that you're not actually blocking some of these AI bots that are out there because back in 2023, I guess it was, and even last year, there was a lot of talk around generative AI is theft. And that's an argument, I can say a very valid argument for some of those attitudes towards generative AI. And a lot of

people were blocking their websites from being crawled by these bots because they didn't want their content, let's just call it stolen, which is what they said. And the models were basically training on their content.

And since then, of course we've had ChatGPT launch SearchGPT, which allows you to do a search and go and find things like you would a search engine, and it has its own bots. OpenAI right now has three different bots that you've got to make sure you're not blocking. So most sites probably won't, but we have seen situations where that does happen because of a legacy setup of what's called a robots file and things like that.

So ChatGPT has three bots. One is their training bot, so this is the bot that comes out and trains its model on your site. And then there is, if I do a search for something, and it might be about your brand, your council, whatever it might be, SearchGPT will then send a bot out to your site to retrieve the information that I've requested about your site.

And then there's a third bot that is just going around and updating ChatGPT's database for search. So you've got to make sure that your sites can be crawled by those bots. The messaging itself-

David Pembroke:

Is that a simple matter of just opening up access to your content to the bots that they... Is it a simple matter of just ticking something and it opens it up?

Jim Stewart:

Pretty much. Pretty much. Certainly most government sites will have a robots.txt file, and in there it outlines what bots have access and what bots don't have access. By default, I would think most OpenAI chatbots would have access, but we have seen situations where that's not the case. But it's simply a line in a file that needs to be changed to give them access.

David Pembroke:

What are the other things that government communicators need to be able to do or need to be mindful of to ensure that the information is getting through to where it needs to get to? The first answer to the question was around accessibility, which is exactly what you've just answered. But are there other things that government communicators need to be thinking about in order for not to block access to valuable content to citizens and stakeholders?

Jim Stewart:

Yeah. So the first thing, as you said is accessibility. The other thing that comes into play is the crawlability of the site. How difficult is it for a bot to understand what the site is about, the information? And most of these things are what you would call standard SEO practices that you would do, and these are things like structured data.

So structured data is basically a way of labelling content across your site so robots understand what it's about. So for instance, if you had two words, which might be Mark Grey, you can put those two words in structured data so that the bots know that's actually someone's name. It's not someone marking something grey. So it just gives definition and context to the content on the page. That's what structured data does. Especially around things like pricing events, anything to do with numbers, dates, all that sort of stuff can use structured data.

And if you use structured data throughout your site, it's going to be easier for the bots to understand the context of that content. And this applies also to things like imagery. Whilst these large language models are getting very good at understanding imagery, if they don't have to download the image to understand what it's about, then that's better because faster for the bot and for the user.

So things like that, it's another SEO exercise called making sure your alt tags are populated. And it's also an accessibility exercise too. So every council should be doing this. Good SEO generally is good accessibility. So if you're doing things like we talked about, the crawl, but also things like structured data so we understand context, but also things like heading tags on the site and also things like alt tags on the site.

Now, both of those last two are really important for people who are vision impaired. If you're using a screen reader, you will be using alt tags and heading tags. Then these are very important for the bots as well because they, once again, give context. They tell you what the image is about. So if the large language model doesn't have to download an image and it can just read the alt tag, which tells what the image is, then that's better. It's faster.

It's better for users, it's better for people who have reading difficulties because their screen readers can use them. So best practice for these large language models for the most part is what you would consider best practice for SEO. Great sites, signposted, accessible, clear information. Using things like FAQs is also another great way because people ask longer questions when it comes to using AI.

When we talk about structured data, making sure that that's always around things around the council name, so the brand of the council or the entity of the council, so the bots know that this is actually a council, it's an entity. Doing all those sorts of things is really important. The second part of that is what others are saying about you elsewhere, off your site. So in the case of government communicators, it's about where are people getting their information from?

So previously we had Google. Now we've got Google, we've got Bing, which has seen an uptick or a resurgence over the last couple of years because of its involvement in AI. We've got DuckDuckGo out there, which a lot of people may use who listen to the show. And now we've got SearchGPT, we've got Grok, we've got Perplexity, we've got Google Gemini.

Which gemini.google.com is not a great large language model when compared to, say, ChatGPT and the other ones, but it is a tool that could be used for search. And we will have more of them. We will have ones that are just in. I say to people, "Think about search as becoming something like a function rather than a destination where it's just going to be ubiquitous. Search is going to be in every piece of software that we use because your AI assistant is going to be doing those searches for you."

So you look at the likes of perplexity.ai and also SearchGPT, you're actually not doing the search, it's the AI that is doing the search for you. You're saying, "This is the sort of thing I want, this is the sort of thing I'm looking for." It goes off based on your request and looks for those things on your behalf. Rather than you doing it in Google, clicking on the link, going to the page, hitting the back button, it's doing all that stuff for you and it's finding the citations for you as well.

So we're expect that sort of level of instant access to information. And so therefore, search is just going to be everywhere. So actually on your site, making sure that you are delivering the right messages in a way that the bots can understand it is going to be so important because there's going to be so many of these different large language models accessing your site for that information.

David Pembroke:

So how does that then impact on the way government communications teams should set themselves up and how they should allocate resources in order to be more effective? How should people be thinking about how they assemble their teams as to whether or not this is an outsourced function? It's obviously critically important, given the need for information to reach the right people at the right time. What's your advice to government communicators about how to think about managing this transformation?

Jim Stewart:

I think, and this is probably something that everyone who says this who's been working with these tools for a couple of years, and that is use the tools, number one. Make sure you are using the tools and getting cognizant with them. But I think that the major thing, if you are using those tools, start doing some searches yourself about your own organisation, start understanding what the models are saying about you, number one.

And that, all of a sudden, is going to give you some insights into what these models already know. They may not even know about you. Most of them will. Most of them will, but how much of their data does it know about you? The other thing that you should be doing when you're using these tools is start asking questions, like Bin Day. People are going to be using these tools to try to work out what Bin Day is.

So just go to some of the tools and just see which ones know what day is Bin Day accurately because some of them may not and they may make it up. And then you've got a path of going, "Okay, well why doesn't this model know what Bin Day is in the morning in the Shire? Why doesn't it know that?" And then you start working out, well, has it been to the site?

And it's similar to the things that we have always done for Google, and it's like, has it been to the site? Can we look at the log files? Does it know we exist? But you can't actually submit your sites to the large language models. For the most part, they're going to be accessing them and have knowledge of them. But if that knowledge is wrong... And I'll give you a little example here.

There might be some generic services that are provided by all councils that have a standard operating procedure or something like that. And the example that I'm going to use here is SEO. So search engine optimization, there's so much information out there about it and everyone has a slightly different way of doing it, but when I first went to ChatGPT and started asking questions about SEO, the advice was terrible. There's no way I'd known I'd give this advice to anyone.

And the reason why the advice was so bad is because it had been trained on bad data because there was a lot of bad advice out there on the internet and it has trained on all that information on the internet. Now, that might be true with Bin Day as well. Maybe there's old blog posts out there on Reddit or somewhere else that the model has learned from that's just completely wrong. And then you've got to set yourself a plan to go, "Okay, how do we address this?"

The first issue that you've got is if it's in the training, that training's probably not going to be updated until it could be six months away. So then you've got to assess, well, where is it picking it up from? And one of the things that you can do with this is you ask the model, is, "Where did you get this information from or why do you think that's the case? Why do you think Bin Day's a Thursday when it's actually a Wednesday?"

And it will start giving you those resources back to go, "Oh, okay." Or why do you think rate payments are due on a weekly basis, and all of that sort of stuff. It'll start telling you why it thinks those things, and then you can start to look at addressing them. So it's either going to be in the training itself and it's picked that up from somewhere. And that was the case with SEO.

And so my strategy for that was I built what's called a custom GPT in, I think it was 2023, just about the way that we do SEO. And anyone could go and then use that custom GPT. So it's on my LinkedIn profile, people can just click the link and ask questions about SEO. And it gives great advice about SEO because I've given it 20 years' worth of YouTube transcripts of my weekly show, and I've given it two books that I've written, only one of those published.

And so it's got all that data. And then I've got a really long system prompt, and I say to it, "How to approach SEO, what our approach is, how to interact with users, what to say to users, what not to say to users." All those sorts of things. And that's how I've addressed the bad training data.

For actual information on a council site or a communicator site that hasn't surfaced in the large language models, then chances are it would have to be either blocked probably from being indexed and/or it's buried so deep within the site that the crawl gave up and it didn't index that stuff for its training. But essentially, the

models that have search, like Perplexity, like ChatGPT, Grok, Gemini, they will go out and recrawl the site if you give it a URL as well.

But there's no indication that that's going to fix it for other users. So it's not going to go into the training data, it's just going to be part of your session. So hopefully though then the next time it does update its training data, it knows more about that because it's already trained itself on the stuff that you've already given it. So it will go back and then bring that into its training data rather than just in a search result, if that makes sense.

David Pembroke:

So I'd be interested to know your experience around building this agent around SEO that is now performing well not only for you, but for others. What was that experience like? And again, what advice do you have to people as they're starting to think about building these agents to support them in their work?

Jim Stewart:

There's been some spectacular failures early on with the agents or the chatbots and those sorts of things. It's matured significantly. And as far as the custom GPT agent that I built, uses a method called RAG, R-A-G. I won't get into the details, but basically it just means it's using my data to answer questions with.

If it's for internal use, I would start with a custom GPT, start building one of those because if you've got a chat GPT account, you can go and build one of those. Anyone can build those. Don't need to be a coder. If you've used Microsoft Word, you can build a custom GPT. And essentially when we talk about chatbots and those sorts of things, it's essentially that's what these things are, these custom GPTs are.

And that's a good first step if you want to use something internally, which we did. We've also used NotebookLM. And this is a Google tool, NotebookLM, and this is another way where you can talk to your documents, which is really, really handy. And there is paid level. If you use Google Suite in your organisation, you've already got access to this for free and it is such a powerful tool.

You can upload something like 300 documents to it and then just ask any question and it'll come back and give you the answers. It's not usable for rolling out to front end consumers, but it is a good tool to use internally so you can start to get the feel of things of how these things will work. The other extraordinary thing about this tool is that, you can give it things like YouTube links, you can give it things like Google Drive links, all those sorts of things.

So the other extraordinary thing though is that it will actually generate a podcast of two people talking about your documents. I've got a couple of examples how I've used this to my benefit. And I don't know if anybody can hear the renovations are going on in the background here, but we've got bathroom renovations and laundry renovations going on at the moment.

It got down to two quotes and my wife said, "Which one do you want?" I said, "Give me both of them." And I said, "I'll throw them into NotebookLM and I'll listen to a podcast about the two quotes." And the prompts that I gave NotebookLM was saying, "Which one of these contractors should I choose for my bathroom renovation?" It then builds a podcast that you can listen to.

And it sounds like, I don't know if anybody's ever heard of NPR, All Things Considered, but it's like that. It's like these two Americans talking to one another about the documents that they have access to. And I've done this twice because it is time-consuming because you've got to sit there and listen to the thing. And each time, I've got new insights that I didn't have by just looking at the documents.

In the case of the contractors, they said, "Well, B Contractor is probably more precise, more dogmatic, more locked in, no variations, whereas contractor A is a little bit looser, seems a bit more flexible." Anyway, we went with contractor A and that has actually been the case. Contractor A, I've said to my wife, "Are they coming today?" "I don't know." I don't know if they're coming.

But the podcast that we got was the large language model, looking at these two quotes and working out that one quote would be probably a little bit more flexible with time and no sorts of things, whereas the other one was just locked down, there was no variation. And it was spot on. The other thing that I did, which I found extraordinary was when the last US presidential election was going on, I took a snapshot of four hours during that debate of Google Trends search queries.

So I went into Google Trends, I put in the two candidates' names and then I just got all the search queries back of what people were actually searching for during that presidential debate. I then took all of that data, which is something like five or six different spreadsheets, I put that into NotebookLM. And then I went and got the transcript of the debate and I gave that to NotebookLM.

And then I was able to talk to her about what people were searching for and what was being talked about at the same time during the debate. And it was able to tell me that... And listening to the podcast was extraordinary because there were things I wouldn't have picked up because I'm not going to pull through these five spreadsheets and then cross-reference it with the time codes and the transcript and all those. I'm just not going to do it.

But I was able to then, podcast told me, that during certain part of the debate, everyone's running to Google Trends to search about this particular topic or issue and then it linked it directly back to, this is because one of the candidates said this and that's triggered all these searches. Now I wouldn't have picked that, but from that podcast I was able to work out that hey, this is going to be an issue. So NotebookLM is extraordinary. So use that, custom GPT.

For actually setting up things on your site that you want consumer facing, it's still early days, but there are a number of systems out there, and it's going to be dependent on the platforms internally that you would use. Microsoft Azure has their own version. So if you're on Microsoft Teams and all those of things, you'd probably want to go down that path and use some of the solutions that they have.

There's open source solutions for having chatbots on your own site. There's all sorts of options, but it really just gets down to, what are the things that you need this chatbot to answer? Do you have that in clear documented form? And it's better to have that in smaller documents than one big large document because if you're going to set up an agent or a chatbot on your own site, you need it to understand these documents or been trained in these documents. And that's what you have to put together.

So for instance, I'm talking to a franchise at the moment where they want all their franchisees to have access to a chatbot to ask about procedural information. And so we've got nine documents that we're training the large language model on, and then we're integrating it into their internal portal for their franchisees. And so really, the level of difficulty of setting these things up depends on what questions you want it to answer, what subject matter that you have that's in a good format so it can easily be absorbed by the large language model.

And I think that's the main thing to keep in mind, and in the case of the franchisee, it was about nine different training documents. So it's about getting that data and making sure it's clean and can be used for training and then implementing those systems.

David Pembroke:

But obviously getting started as well, as you mentioned before. It's really about getting started, about learning about getting better at being able to train these models such that they will give you the outputs that you're looking for.

Jim Stewart:

Yeah, exactly. And as I say, look, there's a number of different ways to do that, but the models are just getting better and better all the time. And we've seen another catalyst this year with... A lot of the listeners might've heard of the model, DeepSeek that got a lot of press recently, the one out of China. And a lot of the press was

about how, hey, if you use this model, all your information is going straight back to China. That was one part of the story.

The other part of the story that wasn't covered, which is more important, in my opinion, is that the way that this model was created and the fact that it was open source, meaning that anyone could download this model and recreate it or build their own or adapt, that, in turn, has seen a massive change just since it's released across the whole industry.

Because what we learned from that was, is that it was possible to have a large language model as smart as, at the time, ChatGPT's top model, which cost reportedly billions to train, don't know how much, but let's just say it was tens of millions. The DeepSeek was trained with $5 million. Once it went open source and it was released to everyone else in the public, someone else replicated that for $30.

So we've gone from tens of millions of dollars to $30 to build one of these models. Then last week, someone did it for $3. So we're seeing this flurry now of releases out of OpenAI, we'll see another one soon, because they realise that open sources is catching up, this idea that the software out there is free and anyone can work on it and build on it and the community can build with it. And it's happening now and we're seeing so many developments really, really quickly. So be prepared for change is what I'm saying with whatever.

David Pembroke:

How are you not intimidated by this in terms of staying relevant and staying up to date to know that you are providing either a YouTube audience or your clients with the right type of information? How do you avoid the anxiety of am I staying on top of everything?

Jim Stewart:

I take it back to what our fundamental core is, and that is to help our clients. And so it falls into help our clients' customers connect with them. So if it falls into that basket, then I have to be all over it. And it's a costly exercise, I'll say that because you've got to be subscribed to so many of these different models. I have less fear now. I don't have the fear of the-

David Pembroke:

2023?

Jim Stewart:

Yeah, I don't have that anymore and I certainly don't have the Arnold Schwarzenegger, this is going to kill us all type mentality with it either. I don't think it's going to go there. I don't think it will go there. I think a lot of that is hyperbole. But I certainly think that a lot of the things that we do today is that, and I know, this is that if I don't know how these systems work, I'm going to become fairly redundant fairly quickly because Google's had to respond to this.

So if Google's had to respond to it, I have to respond to it. And look, I'm really excited about it because the reason that Google became the dominant search engine that it did is because it gave better results and it gave them faster than any other search engine. And that's what's happened now with these tools.

And the thing that's stood out is that Google didn't do any advertising when it launched and it didn't do any advertising, I think it was probably three or four years and it became the dominant search engine in that period. And you look at ChatGPT, ChatGPT now services 5% of the planet. 400 million people use ChatGPT.

And to me, I just keep taking it back. It's a much better tool. How do we use these tools to do what we're already doing but do it better and do it more efficiently? And that's the way I think everyone should be looking

at it. I was scared for writers, I was scared for artists, but I was also scared for my own neuroplasticity. I thought it was going to become dumber.

And there are studies that suggest that that might be the case, not with me personally, but people generally. But what I have found with using these tools is that it makes me break down the problem into its component parts more consistently and I have to understand the problem. And I just said to the staff this morning, "Still the hardest thing to work out with this sort of stuff is what is it we want? What's the output that we want? What's the outcome we want?"

And by forcing us to think about those things, I think it's made me better at a lot of other things as well, because I thought it was going to be like the calculator, I thought I'm not going to be able to add up if I start using. So I always have always done calculations in my head rather than reach for a calculator for that reason. But I don't think that's the case.

I think if you use it consistently for writing all the time and don't put any thought into that, then yes, but I don't write in our business. I still employ our writer and head of content. He does all that. He's our content guy and I'll always defer to him, but he uses it as a writing buddy. Whatever you can do, you're going to do it better with these tools. But you've got to use them and you've got to understand them.

And to me it's incredibly exciting. And I could be wrong, but I don't think everyone's going to be out of a job. I think we're going to see, as a friend of mine, David Meerman Scott said the other day, he said to me, "I don't think jobs are going to disappear." He said, "I think tasks will." And I think that's a good way of looking at it. We don't have to clean out the stables anymore, but we do have to go to the petrol station.

David Pembroke:

Indeed. Well, Jim, thank you so much for sharing your wisdom and expertise with our audience of government communicators because it is transforming the work of most people, as you just mentioned. And certainly for those with the responsibility of ensuring that useful, relevant, consistent information is available to citizens at the time that they need it in the form that they need it in the channels that they prefer, that is the job of effective communication.

I think what you have done today is really set the table in a nice way to understand just exactly the attitudes and the mindset that people need to take on right now, that these tools are extraordinarily powerful, extraordinarily useful, but they can only be useful if they are used and if you train them and you train yourself to be able to use them the right way.

Because if you do do that, I think that mission and that objective of being able to better explain policy, program, services and regulations to citizens and stakeholders, which is the mission of all government communicators, well, that will be achieved if indeed you get on top of your game.

And really, I think the other lesson I suppose, or advice that I certainly will take away from this is that really it's not an optional task, really it's not an optional thing. You really are going to have to build this into your skills. And so what better time than today to start learning and to become more effective? So Jim, thank you so much for spending some time with us today. Very grateful that you're able to do that.

Jim Stewart:

Thanks, David. Appreciate it very much.

David Pembroke:

And thanks to you, the audience, for coming back. Once again, what a great conversation there with Jim Stewart, an acknowledged global expert in search engine optimization. And can't you just imagine that time when Jim opened up ChatGPT and thought, oh my God, what is this?

I shared exactly the same thought at exactly the same time, just wondering just exactly where this is all heading. And as Jim says, maybe it's not quite as scary, and as David Meerman Scott said to Jim, maybe it's not going to eliminate all of the jobs. It will start to eliminate tasks. But again, where do we sit inside of all that to continue to add value?

But certainly lots of value in there for you as you're starting to think about how is it that you are going to use agents, how are you going to start using these models to become more effective in your work? So listen, a rating or a review does help the program to be found. So wherever you're listening to the podcast, please jump on that and do that. It doesn't take much time to be able to do that and it is very useful for that.

And we are very grateful for all of those of you who have given us ratings in the past. For all of the latest information, updates and insights for this and all of our other government communications episodes, you can find that on LinkedIn at the GovComms Institute. And indeed, a joy to speak to Jim today.

And we look forward to bringing you another great story from the world of government communications in the next fortnight, but for the moment, my name is David Pembroke, and it's bye for now.

Voice Over:

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