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# Humans Strike Back: Creative Jobs Surge as 'AI Slop Fatigue' Sets In

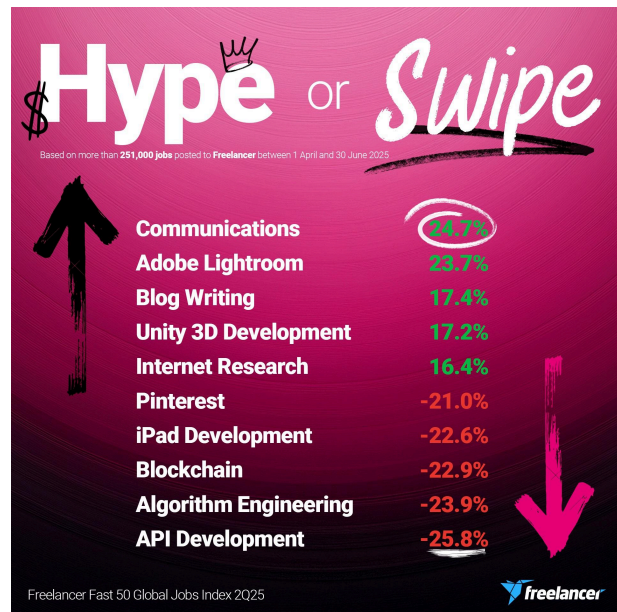
## Highlights:

- **Content creators cashing in, according to Freelancer's global jobs survey**
- **Dramatic pushback against wave of 'AI slop'**
- **Brands scramble amid Google search shutout**
- **Worrying signs for Apple and Pinterest**

**Sydney – 30 JULY, 2025** – Despite global AI mania, new data suggests human creativity is staging a comeback. The **Freelancer Fast 50 Global Jobs Index** for 2Q25 reveals soaring demand for communicators, designers, and video creators - while jobs in blockchain, machine learning and backend dev tumble, and once popular products and platforms appear to be on the outs.

Freelancer is the world's largest freelancing and crowdsourcing marketplace by total number of users and projects posted. The Fast 50 is based on more than 251,000 jobs posted to Freelancer between 1 April and 30 June 2025.

*"AI hasn't replaced humans - it's just made their creativity more valuable. That's the story behind these numbers,"*  
**Freelancer Chief Executive Matt Barrie explained.**



The index reveals a 25.2% jump in **Communications** jobs, making it **the fastest-growing category** this quarter.

**Communications** job postings this quarter have ranged from creating contracts and affidavits, proofreading PhD proposals, editing children's books and researching and writing cybersecurity news articles.

One client recently requested a “sincere and heartfelt speech for my good friend. The speech should focus on the challenges we faced together and how those experiences shaped our bond.” An example of the need for a human touch, nuance and sensitivity - something AI tools often neglect and that is evidently in increasing demand.

Other surging categories include:

- **Adobe Lightroom** (+23.9%, to 1258 jobs)
- **Blog writing** (+17.4%, to 1229 jobs)
- **Unity 3D development** (+17.2%, to 859 jobs)
- **Internet research** (+16.4%, to 688 jobs)
- **Branding** (+15.4%, to 839 jobs)
- **Instagram content creation** (+14.2%, to 910 jobs)
- **After Effects** (+14%, to 8677 jobs) and **Video Production** (+9.6%, to 8592 jobs)

*“The Freelancer Fast 50 Global Jobs index is the world’s largest forward indicator of trends in online jobs related to industries, technologies, products, and companies.”*  
**Freelancer Chief Executive Matt Barrie** said.

*“In a world drowning in AI-generated content, humanity hungers for authenticity. Deep down, we’re all starving for something else. We don’t crave perfection, we crave connection. The raw edge that reminds us we’re alive. The illusion is lost when you see an emdash,” he added.*

## **AI fatigue: we’re tired of the ‘slop’**

Much has been made about the *Slopocalypse*. Commentators have lamented social media feeds and society broadly as swimming in a sea of [‘slop’](#) - vapid, generic, manipulative, erroneous content created by AI tools far too readily used.

Earlier generations had *slackers*; nowadays we have [sloppers](#).

It’s a relatively recent phenomenon that’s already seeing strong pushback.

The **Fast 50** data reflects an apparent ‘AI fatigue’ - as consumers reject bland, auto-generated material. While search giant Google is actively stamping out slop - according to a recent [Core Update](#), it will down-rank AI-made material.

After a year of remarkable AI adoption, companies are realising that true originality drives engagement - they’re hiring writers, editors and comms pros to make content that’s real, not robotic, and stay visible in search.

That's not to say creatives are rejecting AI - most are using generative tools to brainstorm, storyboard or speed up workflows. But the final product still demands a human touch. The **Fast 50** data suggests businesses are looking for that finishing polish: the nuance, emotion and originality that only people can bring.

Barrie elaborates: *"In a world drowning in generic content, businesses are deliberately paying a premium for the human touch."*

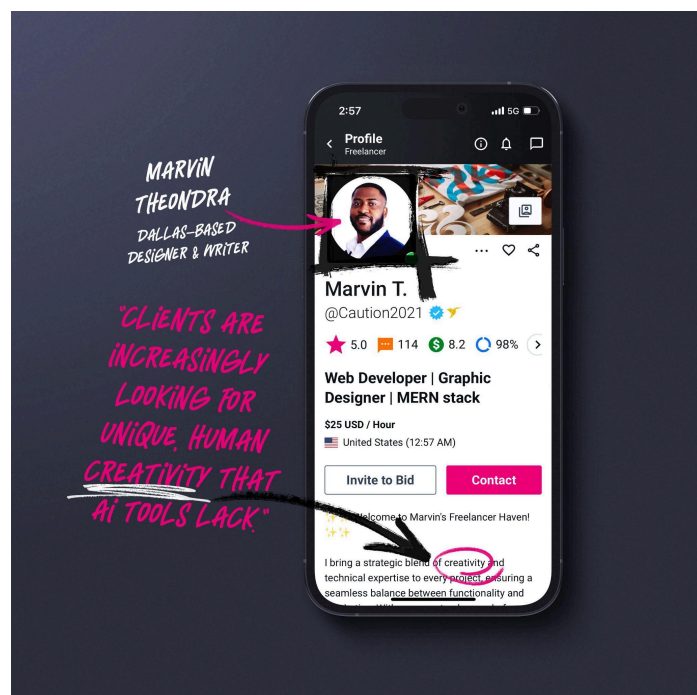
AI isn't killing off creative fields, just like cameras didn't put painters out of business - the data suggests creative *humans* are thriving with the explosion of areas in which they can work.

Marvin Theondra is among them. The Dallas-based designer and writer's inbox has been inundated with Freelancer users seeking out his services.

*"I've definitely seen a surge in demand for creative services lately, especially in areas like branding, design, and social content,"* Mr Theondra said.

*"Clients are increasingly looking for unique, human creativity that AI tools lack. They want strategic thinking, emotional nuance, and tailored solutions that only real human creatives can provide."*

*"Freelancer has been instrumental in helping me connect with clients globally and build long-term relationships. It's a space where I've been able to grow my business and reputation over time."*





## Creators cashing In

In a digital world increasingly mediated by short-form video, visual platforms and personal branding, the **demand for content creators and creative technologists is exploding.**

The rise in job postings for **After Effects** (+14 %, to 8677), **Video Production** (+9.6 %, to 8592 jobs) and **Instagram content** (+14 %, to 910 jobs), charted by the **Freelancer Fast 50 Index**, suggests businesses are doubling down on bite-sized, bespoke, personality-driven

content - fields where freelancers are thriving.

The influencer economy is estimated to be worth \$33 billion. Brands no longer see bite-sized vertical videos as silly and superfluous - they're a key way to attract new customers.

Clients have connected with talented Freelancer creatives to work on projects including low- and mid-budget films, video games, home designs and launching businesses' social media videos and strategies.

Freelancer [Ijaz Ahmad](#), has benefited from what he sees as an explosion of interest in this area. From his home in Pakistan, he's creates engaging content tailored for Instagram and LinkedIn for employers from around the world.

*"Content is and always has been, king," he says. "The need for standout content is going up."*

*"When it comes to creative work, I truly believe people still value the human touch over AI. Let me put it this way: if I tell you a painting took me 20 hours to make by hand, you'd probably value it more and appreciate the effort behind it. But if I say the same painting was generated by AI in 5 minutes, even if it looked amazing, it just wouldn't feel the same."*

Social media isn't the sole platform seeing a demand for quality human-created content.

The **Fast 50** shows steady **growth in fiction writing** (+10.2%, to 633 jobs), perhaps reflecting demand for narrative-driven games, marketing campaigns and branded storytelling.

## **No, AI's not killing graphic design jobs**

It's quite the opposite.

Despite the abundance of available AI-powered design tools, real human graphic designers evidently aren't being replaced; they're more popular than ever.

The latest **Fast 50** shows strong growth across a range of visual and design-related roles, from motion graphics to 3D modelling and layout design.

Among the fastest-growing categories this quarter are those involving:

- Adobe Lightroom (+23.9%)
- Unity 3D (+17.2%)
- Canva (+15.6% to 799 jobs)
- Adobe InDesign (+15.9% to 1,797 jobs)
- Adobe After Effects (+14% to 8,677 jobs)
- Maya (+12.3% to 886 jobs)

While AI tools can assist with layout ideas, template-based outputs or batch resizing, brands still turn to skilled humans for standout work with creativity and emotional impact.

This trend reflects a broader recalibration in how companies approach AI. Instead of replacing creatives, businesses are increasingly integrating AI into human-led workflows - using it to speed up production but relying on real people for originality and direction.

*"The idea that generative design tools would wipe out creative jobs just hasn't materialised," said **Freelancer Chief Executive Matt Barrie**. "Designers who understand how to work alongside AI are more valuable than ever."*

3D development, in particular, is experiencing something of a boom. The growth in **Unity 3D** jobs (17.2%, to 859 jobs) reflects recent reporting showing **3D adoption spreading** beyond games to enterprise training, retail and aerospace.





Hassaan Ansari's 3D creations

Renders ranged from fun and fanciful to potentially lifesaving. Superheroes, whisky bars, youth cafes and heart monitors were designed to exact specifications.

Hassaan Ansari says he's earned over a quarter of a million dollars over the past seven years through 3D projects with Freelancer clients across the globe.

*"Lately, I've seen a noticeable surge in demand - especially for Unity 3D work in fields like AR/VR, educational content, and interactive product showcases," he explained.*

*"Clients still seek human creatives for their ability to bring depth and emotion to a project - and Freelancer has been absolutely vital in helping me connect with clients, build a portfolio and grow as a digital artist."*

## Vision Pro Fizzles, iPad Fades & Pinterest Gets Pinned to the Past

It's not quite a klaxon heralding the imminent collapse of the multi-trillion-dollar company - yet the stats regarding interest in Apple's key products may be cause for concern.

The Fast 50 shows significant quarter-on-quarter declines in job postings requiring expertise in **iPad** (-22.6%, to 1002 jobs) and **iPhone** (-6.5%, to 6927 jobs).



Apple recently announced updates for certain iPad models - it remains to be seen whether that will revive the apparent fading interest in a product that was under so many Christmas trees in 2010.

The Apple Vision Pro - a newer and more novel device - was meant to bring '[spatial computing](#)' into the mainstream. The data shows precious little interest in the development of products tailored to the headset, which reportedly is experiencing underwhelming sales numbers.

There remains barely any interest in **Vision Pro** development, with just a single job posted on Freelancer in the quarter, a 33% decline on last quarter - a total of 34 Vision Pro development projects have been posted in the product's 17-month existence.

*"These are trends Apple is unwise to ignore," Freelancer Chief Executive Matt Barrie said.*

*"Decreasing demand for developers working on a particular product typically suggests the general public is losing interest in it. During the early days of the iPhone/Android wars, the Freelancer Fast 50 predicted that Android would end up with a larger install base from the higher developer activity requisitioned on Freelancer."*

*"One might look at this Fast 50 data and think perhaps it's time for Apple to innovate - to do something new and bold, rather than continue to make minor tweaks to existing products."*

It's a similar picture for **Pinterest** - the social media platform allowing users to share mood boards and inspirations.

629 Pinterest job postings were made on Freelancer in the second quarter of 2025, a 21% quarterly drop.

The decline reflects waning interest from consumers and small businesses in hiring freelancers for Pinterest-specific work, which has struggled to keep pace with faster-moving, video-led social channels like Instagram and TikTok. While Pinterest remains popular for personal use and inspiration, it appears to be falling down the priority list for companies investing in content creation and social marketing.

The Fast 50 data suggests businesses are shifting their budgets towards platforms that offer greater reach and engagement.

## **Amazon stumbling in the AI jungle**

**Amazon Web Services** job postings on Freelancer fell 11.4% in Q2 2025 to 1,162 postings. The drop comes amid a wave of layoffs within Amazon's own AWS division, where "[hundreds](#)" of specialist roles were cut in July.

Analysts have framed the move as an AI-driven efficiency pivot, with Amazon embedding more automation and foundational intelligence directly into its cloud services.

The data raises an important question: is this drop in AWS freelance demand a result of internal streamlining - or does it point to a wider slowdown in cloud infrastructure demand, particularly among small businesses?

It may be a mix of both - and related to the decline in demand in **API development** in 2Q25 (-25.8%, to 599 jobs).

As more off-the-shelf AI capabilities become integrated into AWS and other major cloud platforms, businesses may no longer need bespoke infrastructure or custom API development to get AI projects running. While the rise of low- and no-code platforms is empowering non-developers to build applications with minimal backend support.

According to [Gartner](#), 70% of all new applications will use low-code platforms by the end of 2025.

These trends suggest that while AWS remains critical infrastructure, the demand for freelance specialists to configure and customise cloud environments is softening - at least in the short term.

## Fast falling skills & other trends

This quarter, some of the **steepest declines** came in categories once considered unshakable:

- **Algorithm engineering** (-23.9%, to 526 jobs)
- **Blockchain** (-22.9%, to 504 jobs)
- **Machine Learning** (-17.2% to 1164 jobs)
- **Java** (-14% to 3666 jobs)

Certain artificial intelligence-connected trends, outlined above, could explain at least a few of these falls.

Bitcoin's price can fluctuate wildly - but there is a clear trend regarding the technology that backs the cryptocurrency. Demand for **blockchain** specialists nosedived last quarter.

**Freelancer Chief Executive Matt Barrie** put it bluntly: *"The demand for tulip bulbs isn't equating with demand for blockchain developers. It turns out, 99% of blockchain applications would be better off in a SQL database."*



## A Real-Time Lens on the Global Workforce

The **Freelancer Fast 50 Global Jobs Index** is widely regarded as a leading indicator of global economic and technological trends, offering a unique, real-time snapshot of what businesses and entrepreneurs are prioritising across industries.

The Fast 50 captures shifts in hiring behaviour across more than hundreds of categories, reflecting not just what skills are in demand, but how industries are reacting to global forces - including AI disruption, inflationary pressures, remote work adoption and shifts in consumer behaviour.

This quarter's results reflect a widening gap between hype and execution: while AI dominates headlines, businesses are recalibrating towards applied use cases and leaning on freelancers to fill gaps that require emotional intelligence and creative finesse.

*"The data tells a clear story - AI isn't replacing jobs, at least yet!"* said Barrie.

*"We're seeing freelancers being hired not just to complete tasks, but as strategic partners helping brands navigate complexity, stay visible and stay human."*

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### Freelancer Fast 50 Global Jobs Index

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## Data: Freelancer Fast 50 Global Jobs Index Q2 2025

### Fastest Growing Jobs for Q2 2025

Rank	Skill	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Growth
1	Communications	675	845	25.2%
2	Adobe Lightroom	1015	1256	23.7%
3	Local Job (Trades & Professionals)	823	981	19.2%
4	Blog	1048	1230	17.4%
5	Unity 3D	733	859	17.2%
6	Internet Research	591	688	16.4%
7	Adobe InDesign	1551	1798	15.9%
8	Canva	691	800	15.8%
9	Branding	729	841	15.4%
10	Telemarketing	1451	1657	14.2%
11	Instagram	798	911	14.2%
12	After Effects	7610	8682	14%
13	Lead Generation	561	634	13%
14	Maya	771	866	12.3%
15	User Interface / IA	4830	5363	11%
16	jQuery / Prototype	537	596	11%
17	Photography	2491	2759	10.8%
18	YouTube	952	1052	10.5%
19	Article Rewriting	2223	2455	10.4%
20	Node.js	2533	2796	10.4%
21	Business Card Design	1308	1443	10.3%
22	Fiction	576	635	10.2%
23	Icon Design	1936	2127	9.9%
24	Video Services	8893	9765	9.8%
25	Video Production	7844	8598	9.6%

## Fastest Falling Jobs for Q2 2025

Rank	Skill	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Growth
1	API	809	600	-25.8%
2	Algorithm	691	526	-23.9%
3	Blockchain	654	504	-22.9%
4	iPad	1295	1002	-22.6%
5	Pinterest	797	629	-21%
6	Microsoft SQL Server	582	465	-20.1%
7	Objective C	1484	1206	-18.7%
8	Business Writing	784	641	-18.2%
9	Google Plus	551	453	-17.8%
10	Business Plans	1109	917	-17.3%
11	Machine Learning (ML)	1407	1165	-17.2%
12	Trading	561	472	-15.9%
13	Software Development	765	651	-14.9%
14	Java	4267	3667	-14%
15	Business Analysis	2705	2338	-13.6%
16	Copy Typing	4299	3729	-13.3%
17	MySQL	8912	7780	-12.7%
18	Advertising Design	671	586	-12.7%
19	Transcription	751	657	-12.5%
20	eCommerce	5683	4981	-12.6%
21	Full Stack Development	645	567	-12%
22	SQL	1102	970	-12%
23	HTML5	3174	2804	-11.7%
24	Database Programming	676	598	-11.5%
25	Amazon Web Services	1312	1162	-11.4%

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## Forward-looking statements

This document contains certain "forward-looking statements". The words "anticipate", "believe", "expect", "project", "forecast", "estimate", "outlook", "upside", "likely", "intend", "should", "could", "may", "target", "plan" and other similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. Indications of, and guidance on, future earnings and financial

position and performance, including Freelancer's FY25 outlook, are also forward-looking statements, as are statements regarding Freelancer's plans and strategies and the development of the market. Such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors, many of which are beyond the control of Freelancer, which may cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in such statements. Freelancer cannot give any assurance or guarantee that the assumptions upon which management based its forward-looking statements will prove to be correct or exhaustive beyond the date of its making, or that Freelancer's business and operations will not be affected by other factors not currently foreseeable by management or beyond its control. Such forward-looking statements only speak as at the date of this announcement and Freelancer assumes no obligation to update such information. The release, publication or distribution of this document in jurisdictions outside Australia may be restricted by law. Any failure to comply with such restrictions may constitute a violation of applicable securities laws.

### **About Freelancer**

Thirteen-time Webby award-winning Freelancer is the world's largest freelancing and crowdsourcing marketplace by total number of users and projects posted. More than 80 million registered users have posted over 25 million projects and contests to date in over 3,000 areas as diverse as website development, logo design, marketing, copywriting, astrophysics, aerospace engineering and manufacturing. Freelancer owns Escrow.com, the leading provider of secure online payments and online transaction management for consumers and businesses on the Internet with over US\$8 billion in transactions secured. Freelancer also owns Loadshift, Australia's largest heavy haulage freight marketplace with over 800 million kilometres of freight posted since inception. Freelancer Limited is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange under the ticker ASX:FLN and in the United States as FRLCY.