



All Things AI with PJ Utsi, Chief Creative Officer & Co-Founder at Vaimo

As co-founder at Vaimo, PJ Utsi has been with the company since its inception in the summer of 2008. He serves as Chief Creative Officer, and in that role, he wears many different hats, but what he does most of the time is support and track key engagements, clients, and projects. After a few years in the U.S., PJ is now based in Sweden. A self-described technologist, PJ attended engineering school at Chalmers in Gothenburg, where he received a master's degree in engineering physics.

What's your perspective on generative AI tools?

PJ: A big part of the magic of generative AI tools is how easy they are to use. I think everyone recognizes that there is some serious engineering going on behind the scenes, but the fact that it can spit out super high-quality images and almost human-like talk with seemingly very little effort is pretty wild.

To me, speech-to-text is still pretty awesome. I wonder how on earth Siri can recognize my voice from across the house and differentiate my voice from my family's voices. And how does Siri switch from doing calculus to playing music to telling jokes? To me, that's still magical, especially from an engineering perspective. But maybe I'm just old. My kids definitely aren't impressed by Siri and Alexa.

ChatGPT feels like it's too good to be true because it's so cheap. And it's strange for me to be able to interact with something that feels like it's alive. Still, my kids get annoyed at how slow ChatGPT can be at times.

How do you use AI in your daily life?

PJ: Personally, I use ChatGPT and Midjourney most frequently. I use it to help my kids with their homework. I secretly read up on any topic to become an expert on the fly. I'm a much better tutor in subjects that I'm not an expert in. I also use it for random questions and topics that come up. I love it. I even tried to convince my kids. My oldest, who still has this anti-AI stance, said, "No, I'm not going to use it. I'm going to Google it." I said, "Same thing. This is just faster and more to the point."

At Vaimo, we've developed an internal tool that lets you switch between different LLMs and even between custom datasets. Professionally, I use AI to produce documents or presentation outlines and summaries. Lately, I use Gemini frequently, since we do all of our work in Google Workspace and the integration gets better by the day.

How do you avoid defaulting to older workflows?

PJ: I think the challenge for me is not using AI. It's like spellcheck. You don't have to force yourself to use spellcheck. You just use it because you want to spell properly, right? For example, I have Grammarly everywhere because I want to make sure my English is on point. It's the same thing.

The challenge is not to start with ChatGPT. Whenever you want to be original or come up with a topic, point, or perspective, it's very easy to just say, "I'm going to discuss this. Give me a few opening thoughts, or give me an outline for it."

It's very easy. It's scary because we're all going to sound and speak the same if everybody's using the same script in the background, right? The challenge, at least for me, is to not jump into a ChatGPT soundboard session immediately. I try to force myself to think at least once or twice, and spend two cycles before I use AI. But I cannot imagine writing texts without spellcheck and Grammarly. I'd be super scared to write code on my own without having the AI overlords to make sure that my indentation and everything is on point. So it's a natural thing.

From a workflow perspective, not everyone has realized how good or valuable this can actually be for productivity or creativity. We have to remind each other about these things.

We have the perfect tools for that already. Businesses need to move quickly to not be left behind because the competitor who is able to put out 10 times more content and newsletters and is better in terms of precision when it comes to personalization or targeting is going to outperform you really quickly.

What is an AI workflow that an ecommerce business can

PJ: First, our clients are beyond ecommerce these days. I think any manual cognitive labor that is done, such as coming up with newsletter content or translating text, will go away. We're still going to need original content and someone orchestrating the whole thing or coming up with the initial idea. But just writing texts for a newsletter, an ad, or any content piece out there, especially translating that to multiple languages, is going to be automated, and for many companies, it already is.

Soon, you'll be able to prompt your way around any image you want to produce. For now, if you're shooting your product in a studio, you're going to be overrun pretty quickly by someone who's managed to figure it out to do this in software instead.

Those kinds of labor-intensive, cumbersome, and expensive types of tasks will be a thing of the past. We have a role to help our clients quickly find ways to be more efficient and faster. I meet big marketing and sales teams regularly that move a lot slower than they would like because they're performing many tasks manually.

AI has already made a huge impact on customer service. Right now, if you're trying to contact a business and get stuck talking to AI, you will most likely try to speak to a real person in the end. That's going to turn around very quickly. Why on earth would you want to talk to someone who has an imperfect memory, only knows three languages at best, types with their fingers, and has to drink coffee to stay alert? And if they have a bad day, you're going to experience a poor customer experience.

Why would you want to talk to a human that is going to give you an inferior customer service experience compared to a perfect machine? It's super exciting to see how AI will impact customer service.

What are the most interesting and innovative applications of AI that you've seen used lately?

PJ: I find myself increasingly skeptical when I look at a product page and I see perfect product photography, like a product with fifteen color variations, with twenty perfect images per color. They look unreal or almost too perfect; nothing is off. The shadows are perfect. It doesn't look fake or synthetic in any way. I think sometime in the near future, it will be impossible to tell whether photos are real or not. It stops being important. It's still pretty impressive because you can tell there's no way this product has been shot in this many angles with the number of models available.

One of the things that I'm still waiting for is the chance to upload my body measurements when shopping for clothes. I'm talking height, weight, measurements, and even looks. Then the store would display all the things that fit me, on my actual virtual body. And then show me how this outfit looks on a night out, or climbing a mountain, or any other scenario.

Generative AI can help personalized shopping get to that point. That would be something I would consider super bleeding edge: a hyper-personalized shopping experience. I'm constantly surprised by the low level of personalization I see. For example, upon logging in, zara.com shows my 16-year-old daughter and me the same exact page. Why in this digital age are we being served the same thing?

At times, you can't even default to men's or women's clothes on some of the sites. It feels like the level of personalization is still so low. I'm looking forward to a day when a homepage no longer exists; everyone has their own "feed," just like we have on social media.

How do you see the long-term future and challenges associated with AI?

PJ: I think it will be highly visible because this technology will make us superhuman, super smart. We will become hyper intelligent, we'll perform better, and be better at everything we do. But there's no way this technology will be free or equally available to everyone.

Today, even if you have every resource available to you, you can't buy a better iPhone than the latest model, nor can you increase your life expectancy. We all suffer from the same diseases and require the same amount of sleep. I think in a few years, we will see a supercharged version of ChatGPT, Gemini, Dall-E, and Midjourney. For example, if you want an answer generated by a brain with an IQ of 10,000 or 250—you will have to pay the difference. At this point, this technology is ridiculously cheap and a great value for money.

I have high hopes of AI saving the planet. We have so many big problems that we're unable to solve. We need better, bigger brains to work on sustainable energy, food production, diseases, and tech.

AI will be able to do that.

PJ Utsi was interviewed by Oleksii Lunkov, Solution Consultant at Vaimo.