LA TECH WEEK · LIVE VIRTUAL FIRESIDE CHAT

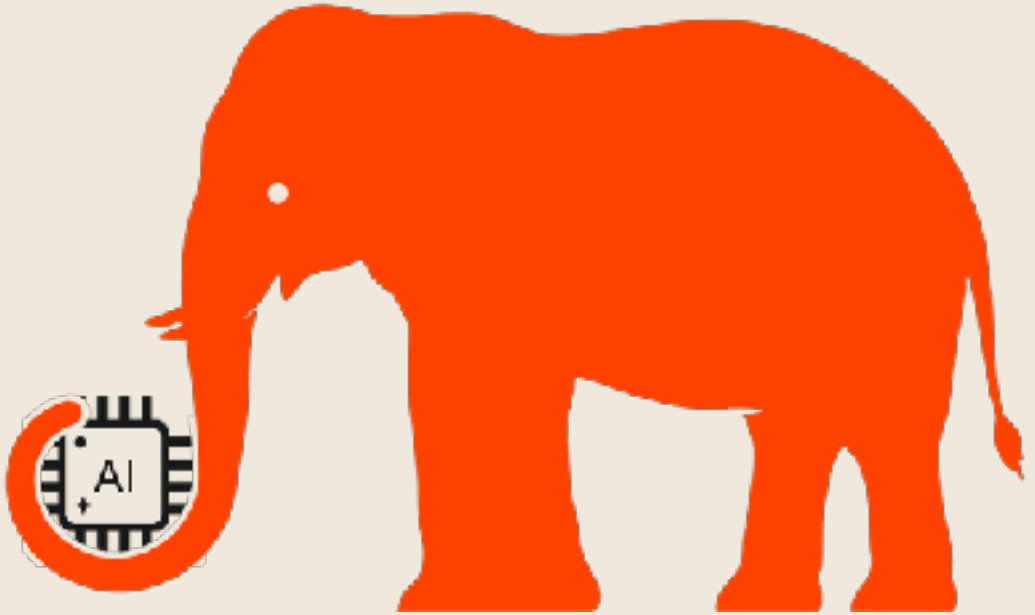
The Elephant in the Algorithm

What AI is doing to creative teams

Thursday 15 October 2026 · 10:00 to 10:45am PT
Virtual on Zoom · #LATechWeek

Matt Perry, Co-Founder & CEO
Rob Cannon, PhD, Co-Founder & CPO

While we wait: one word in the chat.
How does your team feel about AI right now?



PERSPECTIVE

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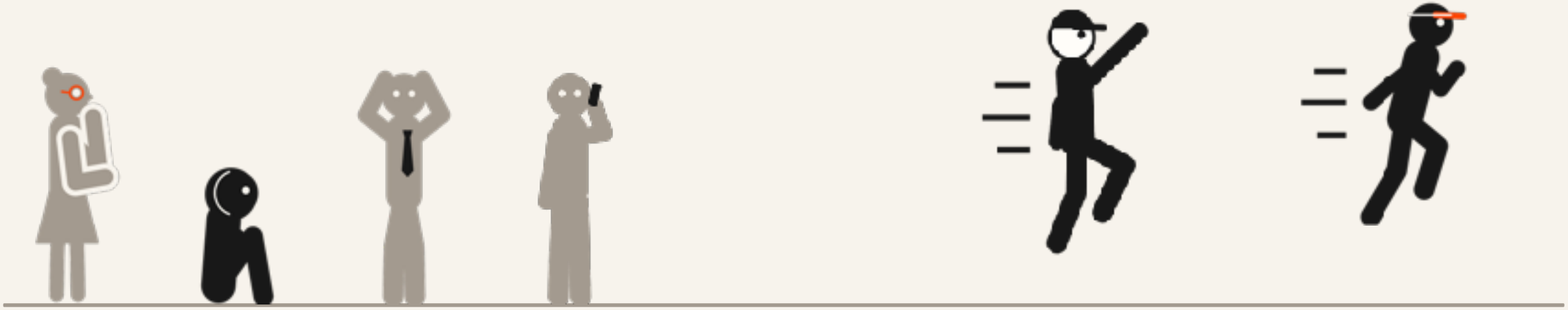
For AI, it's... 1998

A few people are flying. The rest are still at surface level.



WHO WE ARE

Your hosts.

Matt Perry

Co-Founder & CEO, Average Robot

A career in marketing and creative, at M&C Saatchi, WPP, Omnicom and Genero. In recent years, AI strategy and building AI solutions.

Rob Cannon, PhD

Co-Founder & CPO, Average Robot

Organizational psychologist. Studied at the University of Cambridge, PhD from the University of Sydney. More than twenty years guiding people through change, including ten years at Sony.

Together: co-authors of The Elephant in the Algorithm, and co-hosts of its podcast.

THE QUESTION FOR TODAY

56%

of workers sit in what PwC calls the “engine room”: their skills aren’t scarce, and they’re not far along the AI learning curve.

PwC, 2026 Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey: 49,364 workers, 48 countries and regions, May to June 2026.

AI is a people question.

In creative teams, it gets personal. So what do we do with it?



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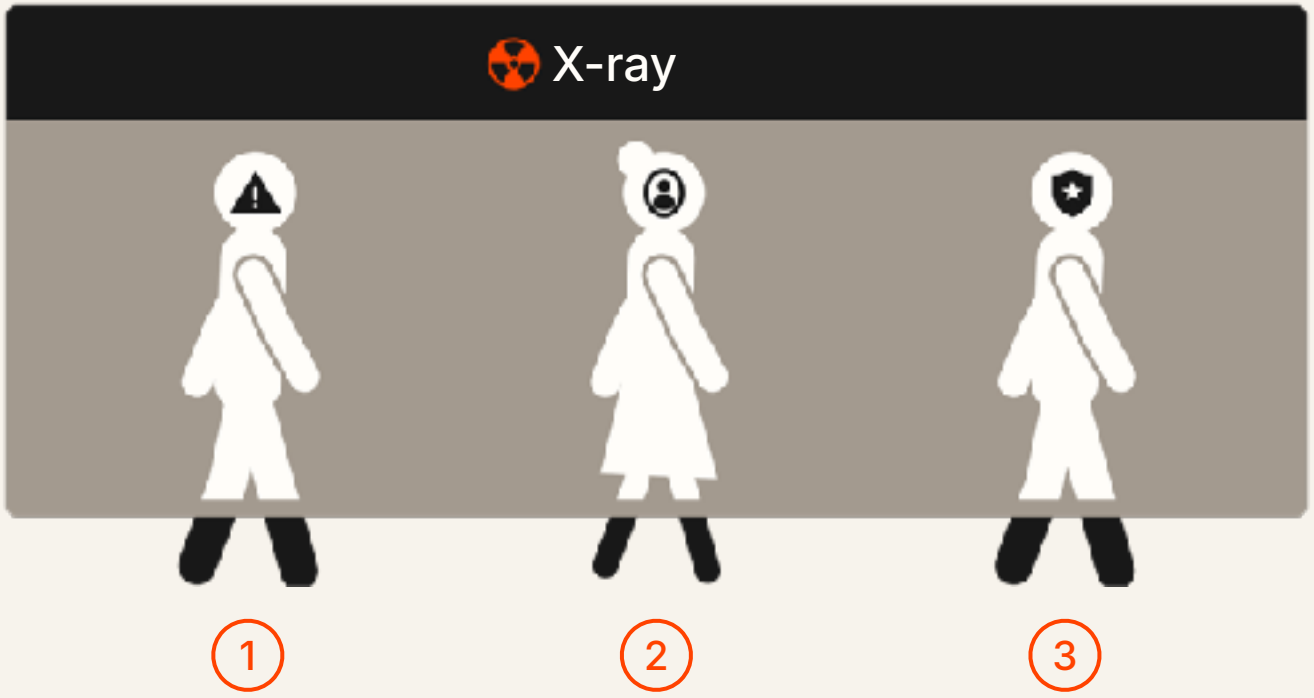
Your team’s pushback comes in three kinds.

From the outside, they all look the same.



1. **Will I be OK?**
   Threat to self
2. **Who am I now?**
   Identity
3. **This isn’t good enough.**
   Intelligent resistance

1 THREAT TO SELF

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“Will I be OK?”

- Will my role be here next year?
- What’s my experience worth now?
- Who decided this for me?



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What this looks like inside a team.

What they'd heard

What we thought



2 IDENTITY

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“Who am I now?”



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Separate the craft from the tasks.







Skills

MOVES FASTEST

Retouching, layout, first-draft copy, storyboards. The tasks AI models touch first.

Role

MOVES MORE SLOWLY

Illustrator, copywriter, art director. More directing and editing than before.

Identity

HOLDS

Taste, judgment, a sense of what good looks like. It goes wherever the work goes.

For leaders: name the layer that's moving, out loud. People cope better with change they can see.

3 INTELLIGENT RESISTANCE

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“This isn’t good enough.”



“It doesn’t sound like us.”

“It looks finished, but it says nothing.”

“I’ve seen this somewhere before.”

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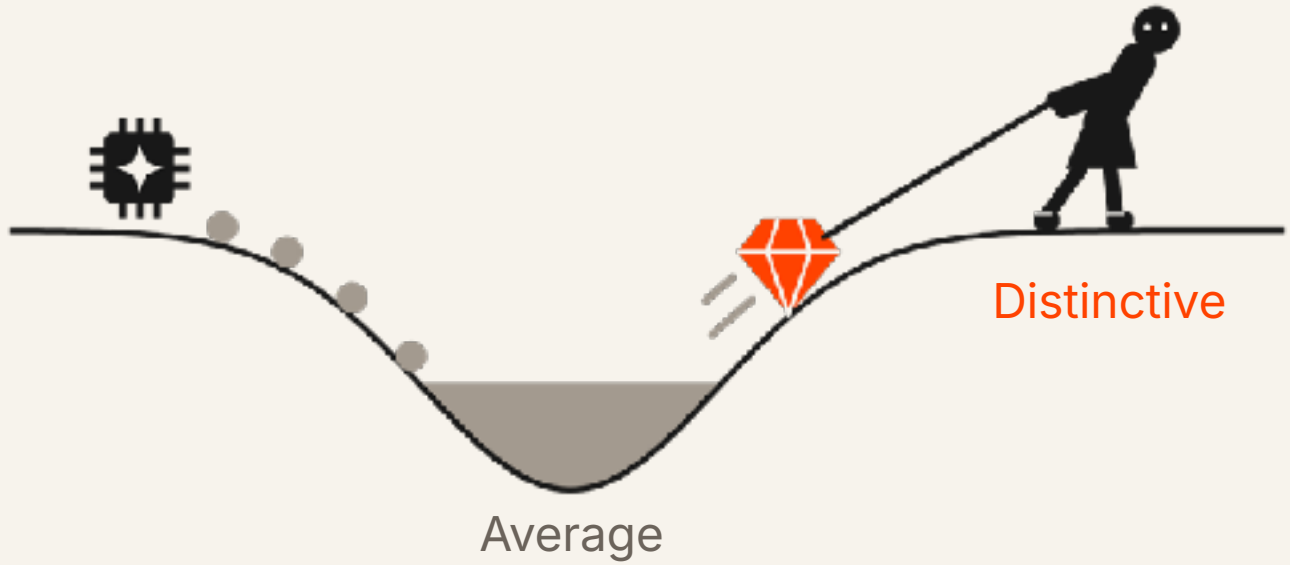
AI gets you to average, fast.

Getting to distinctive still takes someone who knows what good looks like.



WHAT LEADERS DO WITH IT

Listen for the warning signs.

01

Name the kind

Threat to self, identity, or intelligent resistance. Each one needs a different response.

02

Ask where it points

Where is it telling you to pay attention, fix something, or step in?

03

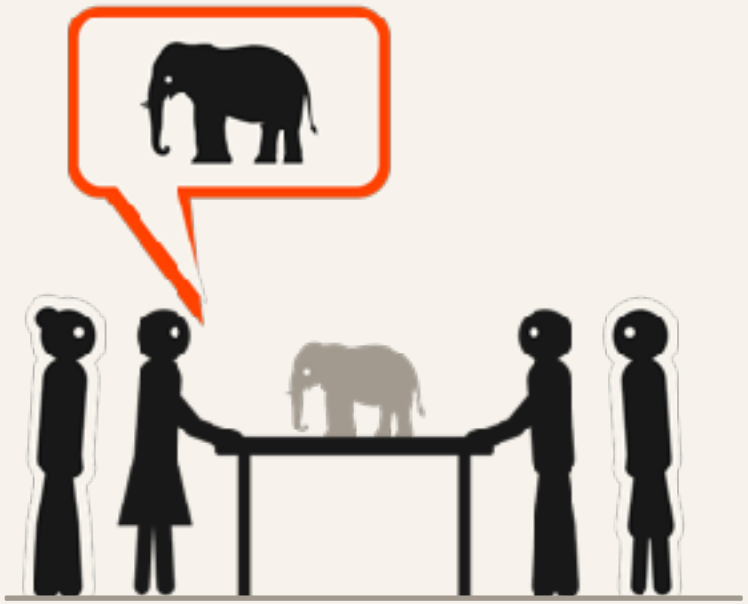
Keep the useful friction

When your best eye objects, write down why. That becomes the standard.

04

Protect the reps

Keep juniors making real work with real feedback, so judgment still gets built.



IN THE CHAT

Which type of resistance is loudest in your team?

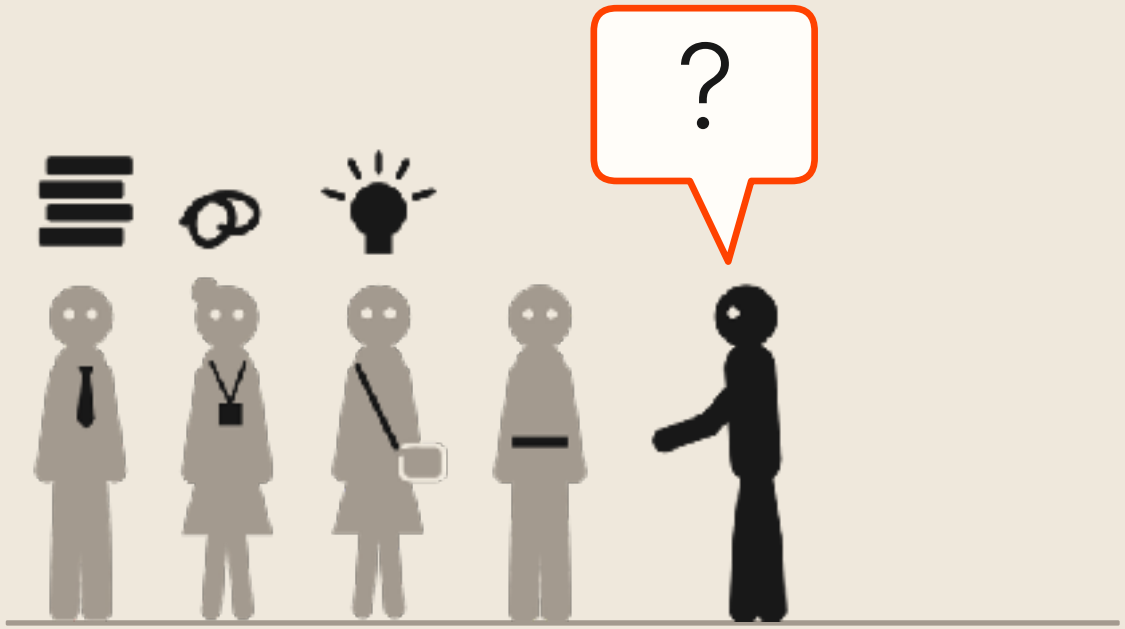


1. Will I be OK?
2. Who am I now?
3. This isn’t good enough.

TRY THIS ON MONDAY

Ask one quiet person what would make AI transformation easier.

Ask privately, then listen for the type of resistance.



OUR APPROACH

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Close the gap where the work happens.



1 Find what's in the way, person by person.



2 Learn from the few already flying.



3 Get the leader ready to lead it.



4 One small step a week, on real work.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

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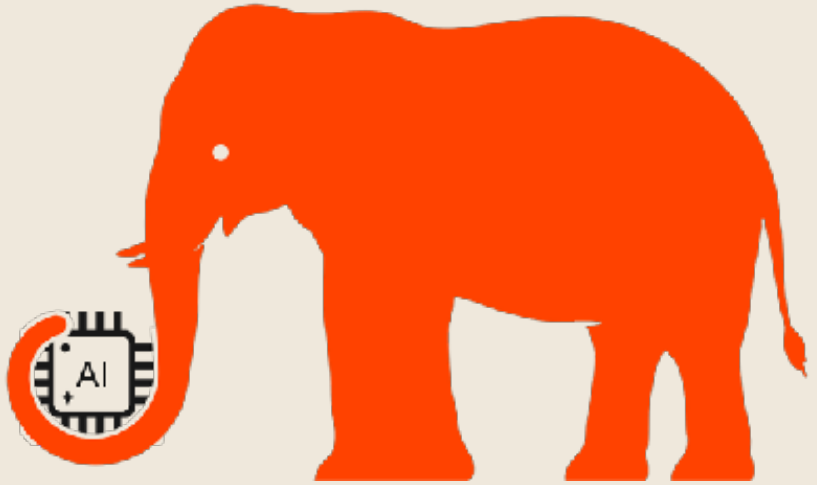
Everything from today, in one place.

Scan to:

- Book 15 minutes with us
- Take the free AI Profit Readiness Assessment
- Join the book list

average-robot.com/techweek



Questions? Drop them in the chat.