

Luddism, LLMs, and you

Nordic Testing Days, Tallinn, 4 June 2026

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<https://smallsheds.garden>



Agenda

Luddism

LLMs (Large Language Models)

You

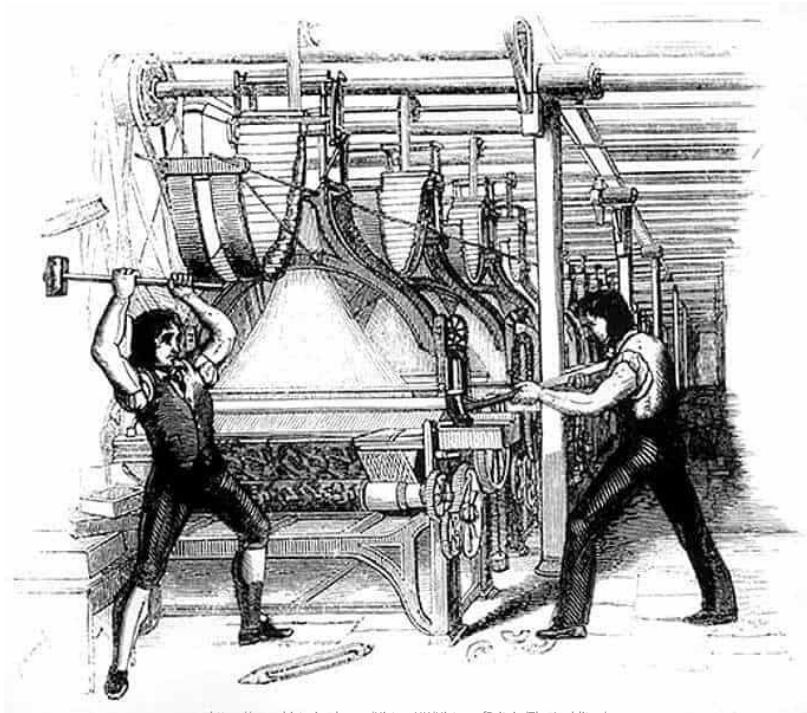
disclaimer

all opinions are my own

Luddism



The Luddites



<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Luddites/>

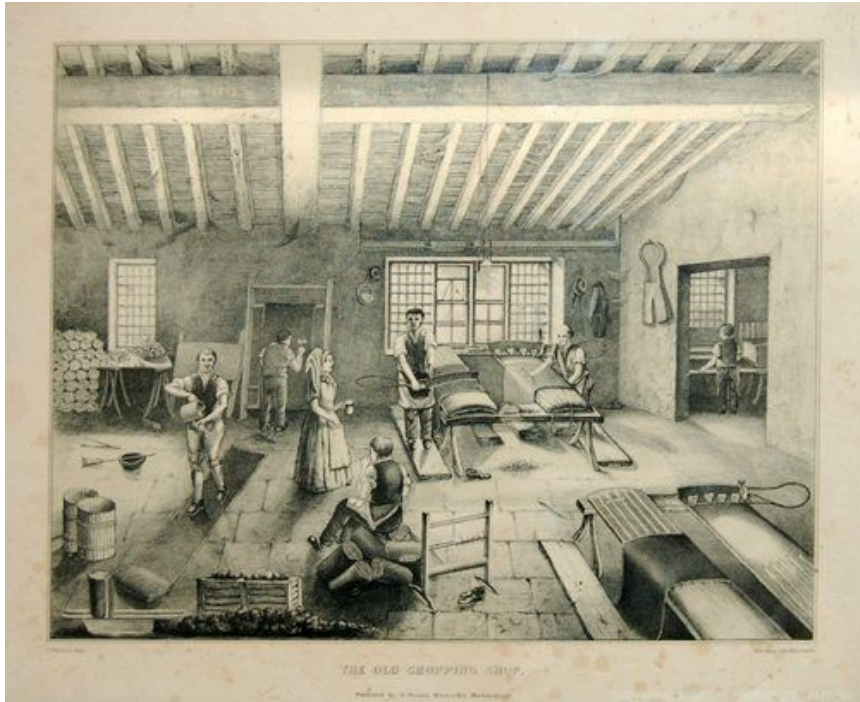
textile workers

Northern England

peak 1811 - 1813

frame-breakers

from cottage industry...



<https://www.ludditelink.org.uk/picGallery.php>

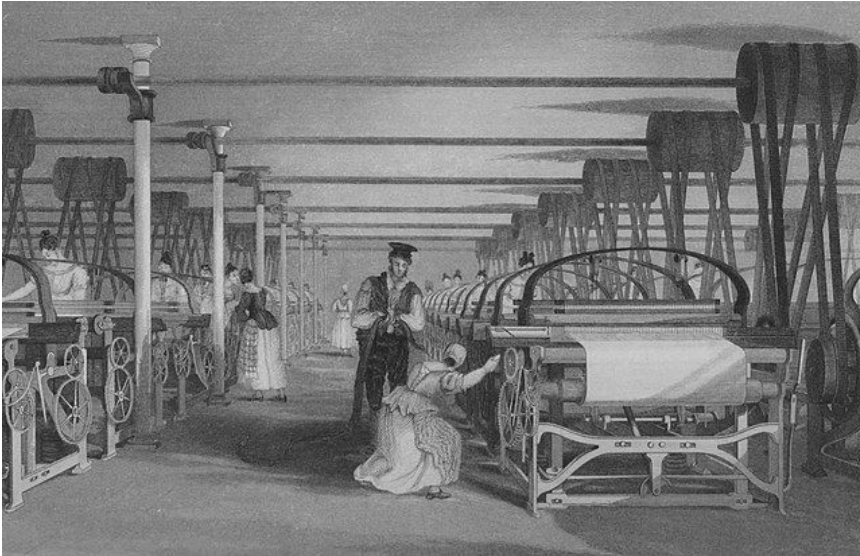
demanding work

30 hours a week

on one's own schedule

long weekends

... to factories



<https://qz.com/968692/luddites-have-been-getting-a-bad-rap-for-200-years-but-turns-out-they-were-right>

longer hours

lower wages

worse quality

... with child labor



http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/schools/primaryhistory/images/victorian_britain/children_in_factories/v_children_in_darton.jpg

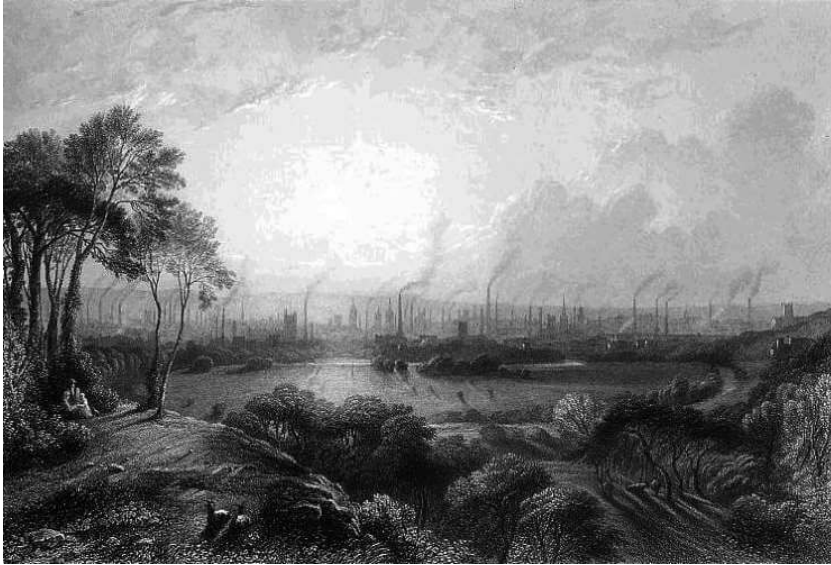
unemployment

unskilled labor

14 hours a day

6 days a week

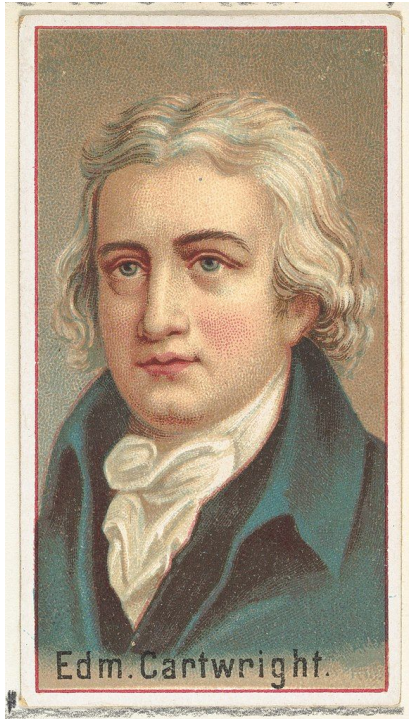
the environmental cost



<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Luddites/>

foreboding plumes
of smoke
and pollution

the original tech bro



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Cartwright

*“I know nothing about weaving,
but surely it can be
mechanized!”* (paraphrased)

- Edmund Cartwright

What did the government do?



http://mirfield-2ndlook.info/Luddites/Luddites_9/luddites_9.html

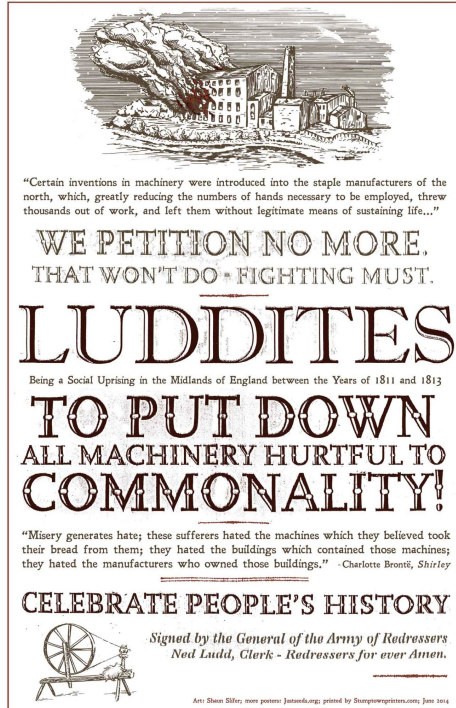
1802, 1803, and 1806:
petitions to Parliament

1788: Protection of Stocking
Frames, etc. Act

1812: Destruction of Stocking
Frames, etc. Act

army deployed domestically
(35,000 troops)

How did it end for the Luddites?



<https://justseeds.org/product/luddites/>

1813: mass trial at York
14 men executed

delay industrialization

inspiration

What were the Luddites all about?



<https://www.ludditelink.org.uk/picGallery.php>

collective bargaining by riot
not against tech or “progress”
against extractive capitalism

LLMs

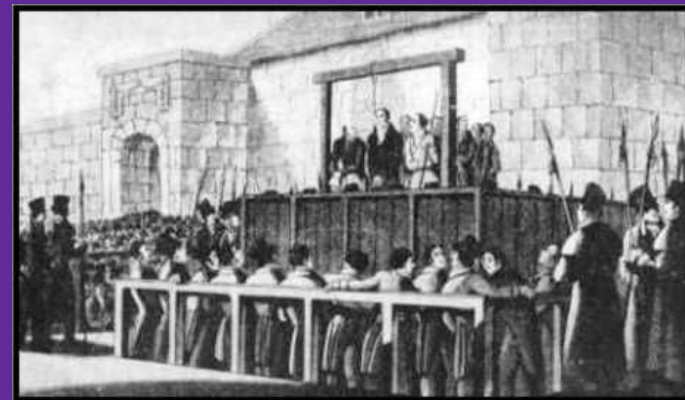


LLMs harm people



references omitted because they're everywhere

LLMs
are trained on
stolen data



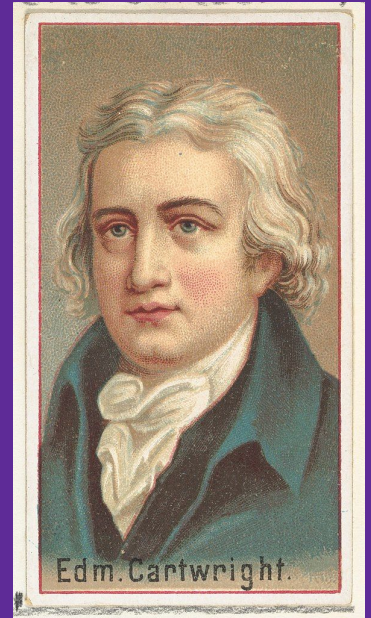
references omitted because they're everywhere

LLMs harm the environment



references omitted because they're everywhere

**LLMs
are tools to sell
cloud services,
GPUs, and stocks**



references omitted because they're everywhere

You



LLMs will not replace you, capitalists will.



*"Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment
in time we created a lot of value for shareholders."*

CartoonStock.com

<https://www.insidehook.com/culture/story-tom-toro-new-yorker-climate-cartoon>

With LLMs,
or with something else.

Public outrage works



design by

<https://chaos.social/@overflow/110374436083481073>

I used to have stickers

Rage Against the Machine
Learning

Public outrage works

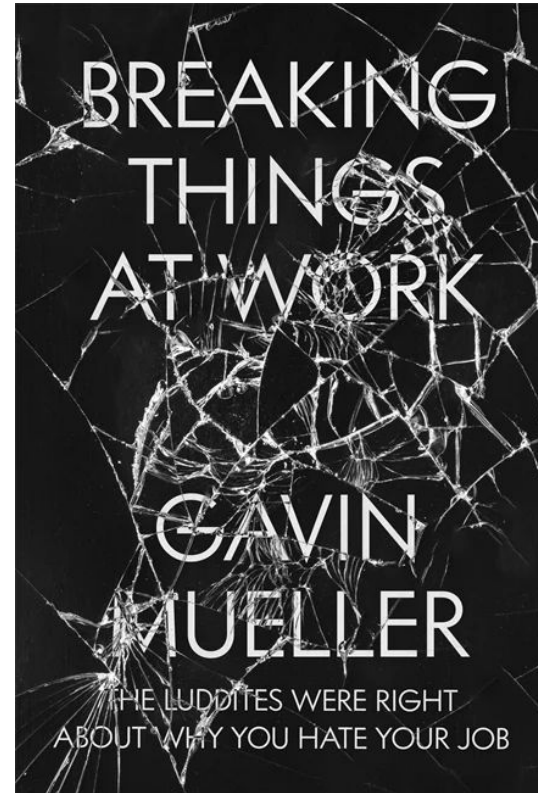
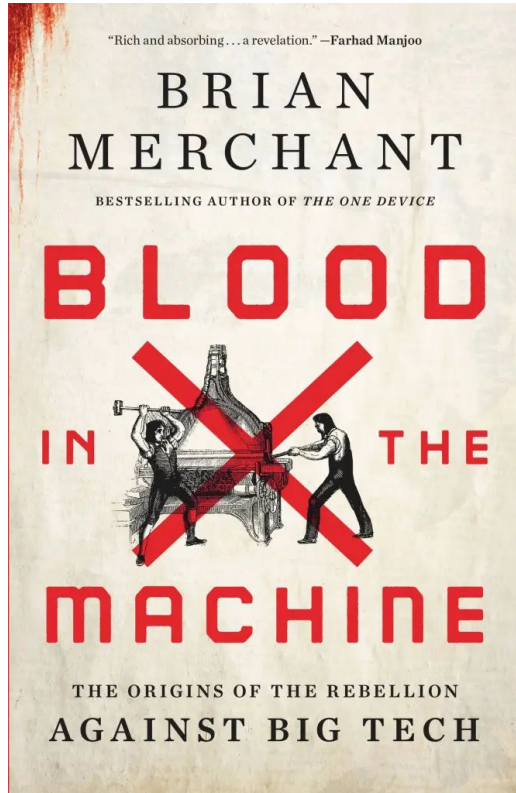
By using GenAI:

- I accept the models were trained on stolen data.
- I accept that the data was labeled by exploited workers.
- I accept the environmental costs of the data centers running these models.
- I accept that I am outsourcing some of my skills to a company.
- I accept these companies don't have a viable business model.
- I accept that I am granting more power to big tech and their vision for the world.
- I accept that I am granting more power to the United States.
- I accept that all this effort could have been spent elsewhere.

On the acceptance of GenAI

<https://smallsheds.garden/blog/2026/on-the-acceptance-of-genai/>

books to read



thank you!

slides at

<https://smallsheds.garden/my-talks/>

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