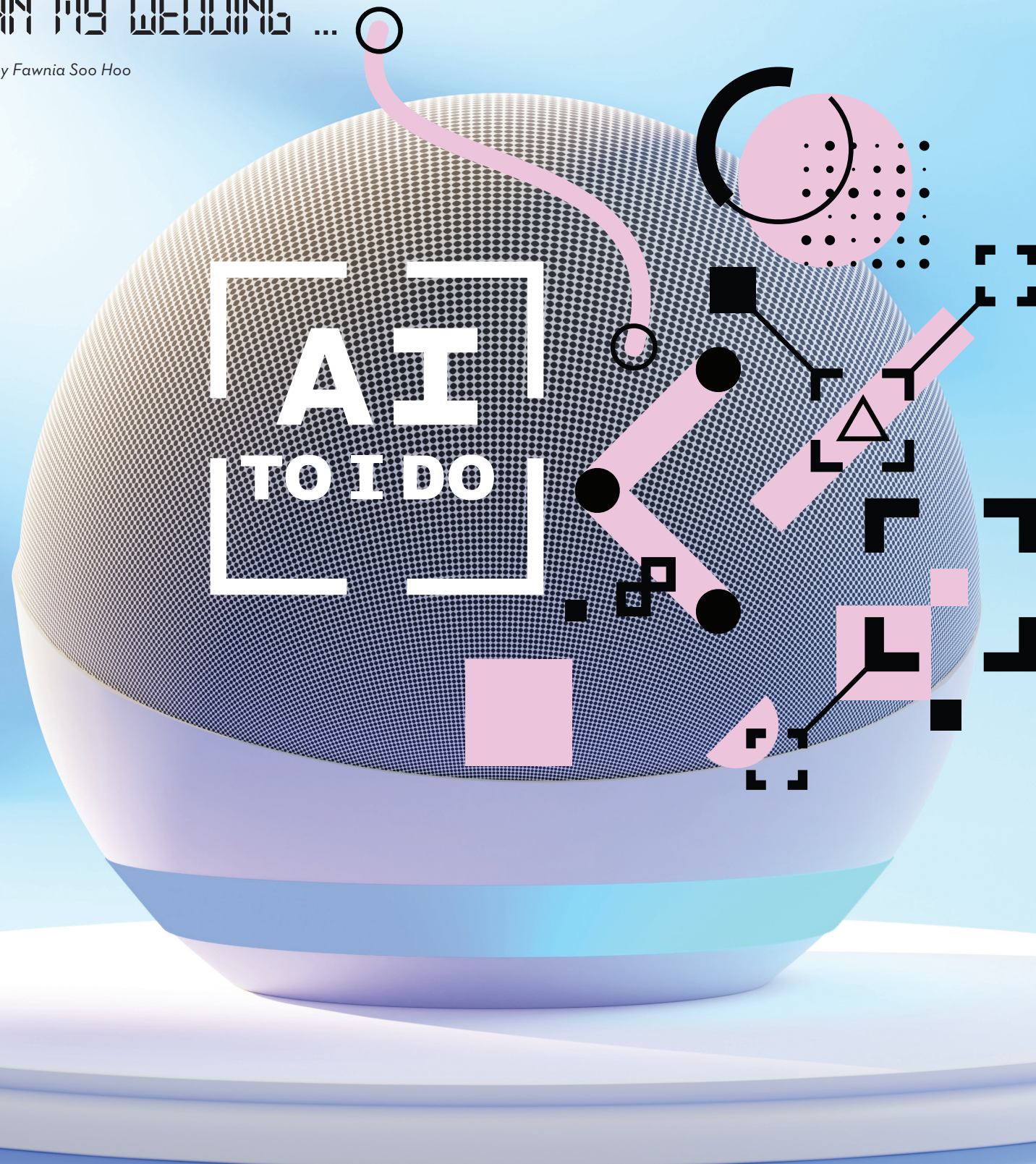


... ALEXA, HELP ME PLAN MY WEDDING ...

Written by Fawnia Soo Hoo



"Anyone building an AI agent for wedding planning? I'll pay to use it," implored Madison Hawkinson in a June tweet, as the New York City-based start-up investor was in the midst of planning her South of France nuptials.

Before flashes of *M3GAN*, *Black Mirror* and *Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning Part One* give you pause, Hawkinson only relies on a range of AI tools to make the mundane parts of her planning easier. "So many meaningless tasks that could be easily delegated," says the former data scientist. She then focused more on the meaningful (and fun) aspects of preparing for her major life event.

"[I spend] more time creatively thinking about the wedding and stimulating different ideas," says Hawkinson. "Not writing thank-you notes and emails in French."

INVITATION COPY AND DESIGN

When Stacy Witten, content manager and co-founder of LensesPro blog, was planning her big day, she used Canva's Magic Design for the invitations. The popular presentation platform uses AI to guide users through the process, beginning with a choice of eight templates to be customized with select keywords, like Witten's "rustic, elegant, navy blue and silver." She also appreciated a mail merge function "to tailor

each invitation," says Witten, who sent out print and email versions. "This made every guest feel uniquely included and special."

ChatGPT and Google Bard—AI-powered chatbots—can also help compose copy for invitations, the wedding website and even thank-you cards. Just enter descriptive "prompts"—i.e., a series of bullet points or written-out instructions—that provide important details (time, date, location), personal tidbits ("we went on our first date at the wedding venue"), traditions to recognize and even the preferred tone (formal, funny, etc.). It's helpful to continue tweaking your prompts and then edit and further personalize the final draft, plus ensure the wording respects cultural and religious nuances.

COLOR PALETTE AND THEME

ChatGPT and Google Bard can also serve as brainstorm partners or inspiration engines to determine your color scheme and/or theme. Just ask the bot for suggestions based on your individual prompts, like locale, season, level of formality and ideal ambiance, and evocative inspiration, such as favorite flowers, treasured vacation spots and/or favorite rom-coms.

Helping plan her friend's traditional Indian wedding, technologist and entrepreneur Nikita Sherbina devised a consistent aesthetic motif. She created original designs with generative AI tool Midjourney by entering inspo prompts and uploading photos that illustrated her friend's vision. "It is unbe-

lievable," says Sherbina. "It was beneficial for us to get some new design ideas and enhance our [existing] designs."

THE WEDDING WEBSITE

Hawkinson avoided some busy work by using ChatGPT to "populate" her destination wedding website, including providing clear travel instructions. "It's a tricky place to get to, so I'm able to ask ChatGPT to write out directions and recommendations for how people should best get there, very simply," says Hawkinson. To generate the most accurate directions, suggested prompts for ChatGPT and Google Bard include specific departure and destination points, day of the week and time of day, type of transportation, plus explicit orders, like "please provide step-by-step directions" and "fastest route."

Hawkinson also composed a draft of the Our Story page by entering a few bullet points about the couple's relationship. Helpful prompts include preferred length, how you met, shared values and interests, relationship milestones and writing style.

VOWS AND CEREMONY SPEECHES

Wedding vows and officiant invocations need to come from the heart. But sometimes people need a little nudge to open up and articulate their feelings. Jeff Hood, founder of his self-named custom menswear label, and business development consultant Allison Flynn planned to read their vows to each other, in private, before the ceremony. So

they looked to AI-powered Provenance to help write their heartfelt promises. Both found that answering the platform's comprehensive and targeted questionnaire with the most specific and expressive responses helped generate successful—and authentic—results.

"I had a joke in my vows," says Flynn. "I used the 'comedic tone' option and the AI Vow Builder knew where to place that line." "I mean, it worked," responds Hood. "I laughed!"

To support Flynn's uncle, who officiated, the couple went through a similar Q&A process with Provenance's Ceremony Builder, which is stacked with a library of over 300 traditional and non-traditional readings, plus recognizes religious and culturally specific preferences. (Both services run from \$19.99 to \$49.99.) "We could pick and choose which religious pieces we wanted to bring into it," says Flynn about their Jewish ceremony.

Sherbina used the enhanced ChatGPT-4, a paid level, to help compose her friend's vows. Without a detailed questionnaire to elicit optimized prompts, ChatGPT-4 works best when users are as proactively clear-cut as possible. "This way, it will work as your writer who just puts the words to your feelings and story rather than a random vows generator," says Sherbina.

VENDOR RESEARCH

ChatGPT and Google Bard can also cut down on research time by filtering through the noise. Toronto-based wedding planner Codey Erin regularly uses the former to determine ideal venues for her clients. "I would actually type into ChatGPT, 'Give me five different options at different price points,' or 'a venue that can hold 150 people that has outdoor and indoor capacity,'" she explains. "You can basically set any parameters you want."

Erin's found unique, unexpected options by including prompts that define a select aesthetic and vibe, even if they might seem subjective. Once, while honing searches for appropriate locales fitting a "French garden party theme," she asked ChatGPT to "remove anything that is 'tacky'"—which it did.

Witten upgraded to ChatGPT-4 to secure her New York City venue, florist, photographer and caterer. Her prompts specified her exact budget, guest count and location, plus relevant review ratings, like "find 4-star vegan caterers." Both Witten and Erin recommend tweaking your prompts and questions more than once to cull the final lists.

RING DESIGN

Midjourney and, similarly, OpenAI's Dall-E can also help dream up original engagement and wedding ring design, via written text prompts and uploaded inspo photos. Suggested prompts/images include favorite jewelry trends, metal and gemstones, shapes, colors and even emotions you want to express. Experiment with different combinations to develop a final product for a jeweler to create.

For a more guided experience, Witten and her partner custom-designed their wedding rings via Jweel. The platform offers a range of foundational templates, guides the user through an intuitive design process and culminates in a special 3D visualization preview. A professional jeweler then created Witten's one-of-a-kind rings based on a downloadable 3D print model. "Experiment with various designs, be patient in the search for the perfect design and consult others by sharing your design with friends and family before finalization," advises Witten.

BUDGETING

"You can basically have a conversation with [ChatGPT] about your budget constraints and how to allocate your funds effectively," says Erin, who will ask, *How can I save costs on X, Y and Z?*

Sherbina, who's also co-founder & CEO of AIScreen, went a step further by creating a superpowered budget spreadsheet that answers crucial questions through a combo of ChatGPT-4, Google Sheets and the plug-in, GPT for Sheets. So she could write into a cell: "What venue in Sonoma can hold 150 people under \$X?" Then the sheet would incorporate the answer into the calculations. Granted, this process may be a tad sophisticated for non-tech normies. But later this year, two Gen Z tech entrepreneurs, Megha Torpunuri and Shreya Sudarshana, will launch Whimsy (planwithwhimsy.com), an AI-powered all-in-one wedding-planning tool, which will simplify this very process.

TIMELINE ORGANIZATION

Wedding planning also involves a litany of scheduling. "It is a nightmare," says planner Erin, who used ChatGPT to efficiently coordinate glam sessions for a wedding party. "By entering detailed prompts for each party member, such as 'Bridesmaid 1 must go with this stylist for hair and makeup and be done by 2pm' and 'everyone needs to be done by 4pm,' ChatGPT spits out a detailed schedule," says Erin. "I was sitting there with my mouth open, like, 'Okay, this will save me hours and hours.'"

ChatGPT and Google Bard can also pinpoint important dates and deadlines to build out an overall timeline. Just ask the chatbot to give optimal dates for essential events. For example, "I'm getting married on September 24, 2024. Can you help me build a work-back plan for teeth whitening, final dress fitting and haircut, within X time range?"

TAILORED SUITS

Last year, D.C.-based tech solution product leader Jae Henderson and his wife Lajuanda needed to find coordinating suits for their wedding parties for their Oakland, California, nuptials. After an extensive online search, he found The Black Tux, which spoke to their specific needs: accessibility for friends and family scattered across the country and inclusivity, comfort and ideal fit for their mixed-gender and body-diverse party members. Most importantly, "it has to look good," says Henderson, who, as a trans man, understands the challenges when it comes to wedding outfit shopping. The Black Tux uses a proprietary AI fit model via an online quiz to determine a client's exact measurements, while Henderson and Lajuanda selected the styles and colors to fit their blue-and-terracotta color theme. (The Black Tux showrooms and Nordstrom pop-ups also offer in-person fittings, if preferred.)

"It was super-intuitive," says Henderson, who also enjoyed using the platform to completely manage the process for his wedding party, a.k.a. The Groom Squad.

THANK-YOU NOTES

Of course, post-festivities, couples need to express their gratitude through thank-you notes—a task oft prolonged, but can be eased with ChatGPT or Google Bard. For the foundation of the text, be specific with prompts detailing preferred length, tone, maybe a memory from the wedding, etc. Whimsy's Sudarshana suggests composing a few



Jae Henderson's "Groom Squad" utilized The Black Tux's AI functionality for suit fittings. Photo credit: Revilla Photography

of your own examples to enter into the chatbot and ask the AI to match your writing style. You should also personalize each note to highlight the gift and guest, whether manually or per another tech concoction. Sherbina combined Google Sheets and Selzy's bulk email platform with GPT for Sheets to basically mail merge the base copy with appropriate "cultural, age-specific and language nuances" provided in the spreadsheet.

"It's also worth considering whether couples want to mention that the notes are written with an AI tool—and whether guests will be receptive to that," says Sudarshana.

VIRTUAL REALITY

"It almost felt like we were stepping into a video game," says New York City-based beauty editor Stephanie Saltzman, about taking a virtual tour of Brooklyn Winery. At the time, her wedding venue was completing renovations on its new Greenpoint location, so they offered clients a 3D digital experience to engage with the space.

The virtual walkthrough was a true tour though, as Saltzman and her partner were guided, in-person, by a sales director. "We did still need them to explain what we're looking at and to answer anything that we were concerned about," adds Saltzman, who remains impressed with the virtual visit of the now-finished space. "I was actually amazed at how spot-on accurate it was, like the finishes, the lighting and the fixtures."

The idea of virtual reality and weddings may conjure images of nuptials in the Metaverse, packed with your nearest and dearest in avatar form, but in a practical sense, VR can be harnessed to help the planning process along, while still involving a much-appreciated human touch and customer service. "All we're doing is simplifying and cutting down the time that you spend on traveling," says Michelle E. Oley, head of strategic partnerships at Feeel (feeel.io). Based in Israel, and in early launch stages Stateside, the innovative company offers immersive VR tours, via headsets, of event venues to planning professionals (and eventu-

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While ChatGPT can be a tool for creating the thank-you note wording, it's still proper etiquette to handwrite them!

ally consumers). Formerly a wedding planner herself, Oley appreciates the ability to conduct exacting, detailed venue research from her desk, thus saving precious commute time and energy (and billing hours for clients). "Instead of visiting 20 venues in person, visit them all in VR, and then narrow down the ones that you want to see in-person," says Oley.

Heading toward the previous Metaverse scenario, but in a more genuine way, Feel also plans to capture clients' wedding content via VR video, filmed from the perspective of a guest. So after the event, couples can share the experi-

ence with loved ones who couldn't make it to the wedding. "When they put the headset on, [it's as if] they're reliving that entire day," says Oley.

Luxury event and wedding planner Lisa Lafferty already offers AI- and VR-powered experiences into her sought-after services. "Whether it's a fairyland or a wicked wonderland, [guests] will be fully immersed in it," says Lafferty, also pointing to custom multimedia presentations within LED tunnels. So guests feel as if they're entering an enchanted garden or like they're floating on the moon with custom images. Lafferty works with specialized multimedia technicians, custom graphic artists and video engineers to bring the spectacular concepts to life via 3D mapping and custom AI-generated imagery.



For Christine Quinn's headline-making Gothic wedding, Lafferty enhanced her former *Selling Sunset* castmate's dramatic concept to have the cake "bleed" once cut. While the caterers handled the physical aspects of the dessert carnage, Lafferty collaborated with her specialized vendors to augment and blast the shocking moment on multiple LED screens throughout the room. "We then put her on screen," says Lafferty. "And the cake virtually bled onto her hand."

AI IN ACTION

WE PUT AI TO THE TEST OF CREATING COPY FOR A WEDDING WEBSITE. COLOR US IMPRESSED!

ChatGPT prompt: write wedding website copy that is fun and informal, inviting our loved ones to our wedding weekend in Catskill, NY. Our names: Shelley and Kristen. Include our love story about how we met on Bumble and how a year later Shelley proposed while we were vacationing in San Francisco.

🎉 Get Ready to Celebrate!

Hey there, awesome family and friends!

If you're reading this, you must be pretty special to us because you're invited to join the party of a lifetime! 🌈💕 We're Shelley and Kristen, and we can't wait to have you with us as we say "I do" in the gorgeous Catskill, New York!

💕 **Our Love Story:** 💕 Once upon a swiping adventure on Bumble, two souls swiped right, and that's where our magical love story began! Who knew that a digital connection would lead to the real deal? But here we are, crazy in love and ready to embark on this wild journey together.

Fast forward to a year later, and we found ourselves in the breathtaking city of San Francisco. Little did Kristen know that Shelley had a sparkling surprise up her sleeve (well, more like in her pocket!). Under the twinkling lights of the Golden Gate Bridge, Shelley got down on one knee, and the rest is history! 🏡👰

🌲 **The Catskill Celebration:** 🌲 Now, we're thrilled to invite you to our wedding weekend extravaganza in the stunning Catskill mountains! Trust us; this isn't just any old wedding—it's going to be a weekend full of love, laughter, and epic memories!

🥳 **The Party Plan:** 🥳 Kicking off the festivities on [Date], we'll be throwing an epic welcome bash to warm everyone's hearts. Let's gather 'round, tell hilarious stories, and get pumped for the big day ahead!

On [Date], it's the main event! The ceremony, where we'll officially become partners-in-crime for life. And don't worry; our vows won't be all mushy-gushy (well, maybe just a little!). Expect laughter, happy tears, and all the feels! Then, it's time to put on those dancing shoes and join us for a rockin' reception! We've got a live band ready to blow the roof off, delicious eats, and drinks that will keep everyone's spirits soaring high! 🕺🍹

🌟 **Explore the Catskills:** 🌟 Aside from partying like rockstars, we encourage you to explore the incredible Catskill area! From stunning hikes with jaw-dropping views to charming local spots, there's something for everyone's taste. Make it a vacation and a celebration rolled into one!

🏠 **Where to Rest Your Heads:** 🏠 Worried about finding a cozy spot to crash after all the fun? We've got you covered! Check out our website for accommodation suggestions and take advantage of the special room rates we've arranged for our fabulous guests.

💕 **RSVP and Join the Fun:** 💕 You know you don't want to miss this, right? Head over to our website [Website URL] to RSVP and find all the deets you need. We can't wait to see your names on the guest list!

New York City planners test out Feel, virtual venue touring platform.

Photo by Trent Bailey Studio