

Economically Impossible Software

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Claude Code is an AI tool for building software and handling office work. Somehow it got out of hand on me. 10 projects, 10 directories — who keeps track of all that? The authors didn't see this coming. So I asked Claude to build me a launcher — a small program that lets me pick a project first, then fires up Claude for it. I just described what it should do. Five minutes later, done.



Out of curiosity, I checked how much code it wrote. Four full pages. I also threw in a few niceties, like a last-used timestamp. My god, I'd never have written this by hand. That's a solid day of work, easily. And it's in a language I wouldn't even know how to use — only a handful of weirdos do.

Do the math: Claude built me something for about 1 % of the traditional cost. The result is something I'd never have written on my own — nobody spends a whole day on something this small. And on top of that, it's making my life noticeably nicer.

Then it hit me.

AI isn't taking programmers' jobs. The opposite, actually. **The world is full of these tiny tasks, and full of people doing them by hand, every single day — because they can't afford anything else.**

But now it's completely different. A program exists that would never have come into being without AI. And I've got several of them already. Every time something repetitive and annoying catches my eye, I get another one written. I never did this before — it cost too much time. Now I can.

What people usually say

You hear the same line everywhere: **AI reduces the amount of coding.** Fewer programmers, fewer hours, fewer lines. Classic automation — same output, lower cost.

Except that's not how it actually works. The laws of economics tell a different story.

It's called **Jevons' paradox**, discovered all the way back in 1865.

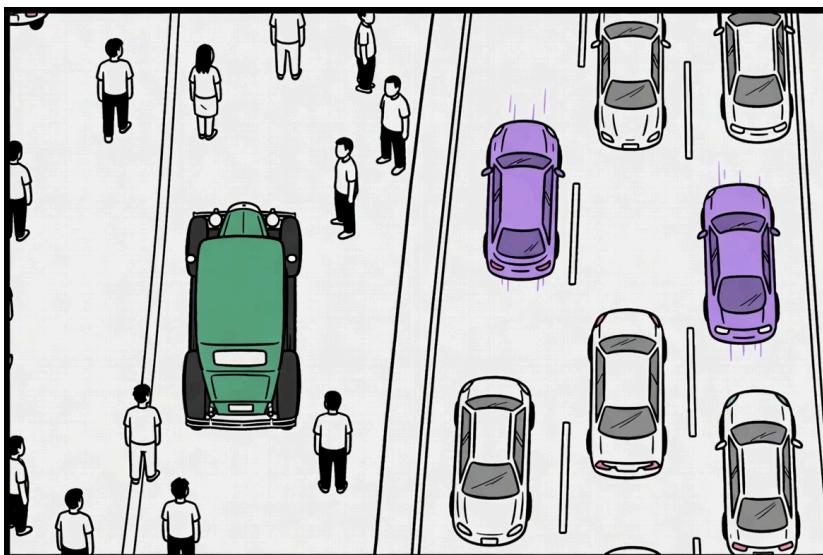
When something gets cheaper, consumption doesn't stagnate — it grows, often to the point where people end up spending more on it than they used to. Because suddenly it makes sense to use it in places it didn't before.

- Computers: more powerful every year, yet the total computing load keeps climbing.
- International calls: a minute got 1000× cheaper, and people talk more, not less.

• Internet: bytes got cheaper, and people stream more video, not less.

Computer power has grown by a factor of a million since 1990. Yes, that's the power you've got at your fingertips. Did Nvidia go bust because of it? Not a chance — they're drowning in profit.

Computers in the US today consume 10 % of all energy. Insane.



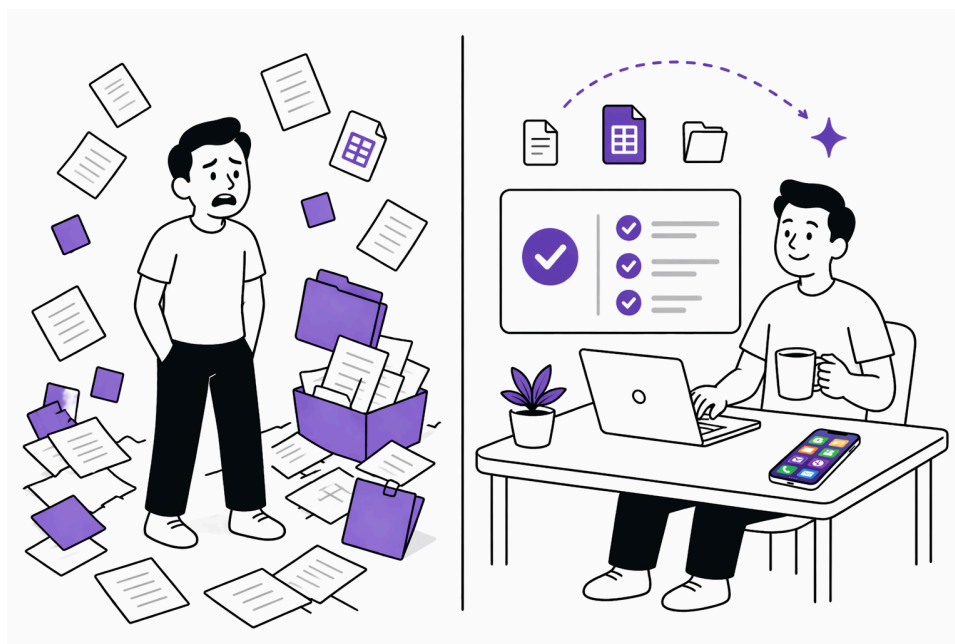
What's actually happening

AI doesn't reduce coding. It creates **software that would never have economically existed** — because no one would have paid for it.

My launcher is a case in point. A four-page script that saves me a few minutes a day. If I had to write it myself — a full day's work — I wouldn't bother. Worth it? No. If I had to hire a programmer for a few thousand? I wouldn't pay that either. The math doesn't add up.

But when the cost drops from a day to five minutes, the math flips. A whole class of software comes into existence — one that never existed before. Not because no one could write it, but because **no one would have thought it reasonable to pay for**.

What this means



It's pretty silly to cry about AI taking programmers' jobs. It won't. If anything, it's about to give people the software they've always wanted. A golden age of software is starting — the kind everyone actually needs and wants. One for every little annoyance that eats a few minutes of your day.

You just have to tell the spooked crowd: it's possible now. Everything is different. What used to cost hundreds of thousands now costs tens

of thousands. People don't trust software because it used to cost a fortune and still didn't quite do what they wanted. They're literally allergic to software subscriptions. But none of that is necessary anymore. Anyone can have software that does exactly what they need, exactly the way they need it.

Welcome to a new world, where software does whatever you want, and doesn't burn a hole in your wallet.

Goodbye Excel. Goodbye paper.

This isn't a decline, it's expansion

Looked at this way, everything changes. Instead of "same software, fewer people," what's actually coming is "much more software, for many more situations, at much smaller scales."

A small program just for you — say, one that emails you an order summary every morning. A one-off helper, written today, used three times, thrown away next week. A bridge between two apps that normally don't talk to each other, the kind that saves you hours of work. A simple report that only makes sense in your office and nowhere else.

Nobody ever wrote this kind of software — not because it wasn't needed, but because **the economics didn't work. Now they do.**