The same AI tool. A different person. *A different result.*

Almost every professional now works with AI. The tools are open to everyone. What a person does with them is not the same. This paper shows how to measure what the person adds, and how to pay for it fairly.

IN THIS PAPER

Why the human part of AI work needs its own price

How an AI can measure it from the record of the work

A real case: ten days, six AI tools, nine websites

Where this can be used, now and next

A model for fair pay in AI work · Real data, 5 to 14 November 2026

AI is now a normal work tool

When everyone has the tool, the tool stops being the advantage. The advantage is how a person uses it.

64%

of workers used AI at work in the past year.

PwC, 2026. 49,364 workers, 48 countries.

81%

of creative professionals have released work made with AI.

Luma, 2026. 760 creative professionals.

+45% / −28%

Complex work done with AI earned 45% more. Simple AI output earned 28% less.

Freelance platform data, early 2026.

Same tools. Same clients. Pay rose where judgment was needed, and fell where it was not.

WHAT HAS A PRICE TODAY

The AI tool	A subscription or credits
The finished work	A project fee
The person's direction and judgment	***No standard price***

TODAY

Clients see AI doing the work and expect to pay less. Creatives cannot show what they added. Both sides are guessing.

NEXT

AI will do more of the making. Deciding what to make, and when it is right, becomes the main thing a client pays for. It needs a measure both sides can check.

Record, sort, price

Three steps turn a work log into a statement of value. An AI does the measuring. It applies the same rules to every minute.

Record

Every instruction to the AI has a timestamp. So does every reply. That log is the evidence.

Sort

Each minute goes to one kind of work. Never to two.

Price

Each kind of work has an hourly rate. Time multiplied by rate gives the value.

THREE KINDS OF WORK, THREE RATES

Creative direction

$198.14

per hour

Deciding the story, the brand and the look. Choosing what stays and what goes. Giving the final yes or no.

Creative Director II. A rate the U.S. government has published and agreed to pay.

Research and method

$216.33

per hour

Finding why something keeps failing. Testing explanations against each other. Checking sources. Designing quality checks.

Principal Research Scientist. A rate the U.S. government has published and agreed to pay.

AI standby

$50.00

per hour

Staying on call while the AI works on an instruction. Counted only when the person acts within three minutes of the reply.

An on-call rate set by the creative director.

Why an AI does the measuring

A person filling in a timesheet relies on memory. An AI reading the log relies on the record. It applies one set of rules to every message. Anyone can check the result against the same log.

One director, six AI tools

Real work, ten days in November 2026. The director chose each tool for one job.

TOOL	WHAT IT IS	USED HERE FOR	IN THE COUNT
Lovable	An AI app builder. You describe a website and it builds it.	**Building all nine websites**	●●● Every minute counted
ChatGPT	An AI assistant. It reads, analyses and writes.	**Reviewing film cuts and analysing the projects**	●●○ Active time only
Claude	An AI assistant. It reads, analyses, writes and edits.	**Finding sound problems in a film and editing a shorter cut**	●●○ Active time only
Higgsfield	An AI image and video generator.	**Images and video for Medical in 3D**	○○○ Left out
ElevenLabs	An AI voice generator. It turns a script into speech.	**Voice and audio**	○○○ Left out
fal	A service that runs many AI models through one connection.	**A back channel between ChatGPT and Claude**	○○○ Left out

Choosing the tool is part of the work

No tool was a default. Each one was picked by the director, for one job, to make the process better. Knowing which tool fits which job is human judgment too.

A bridge between two AIs

ChatGPT and Claude do not talk to each other. The director used fal as a back channel between them, so work done with one could reach the other.

HOW WORK IN LOVABLE GOES · EVERY STEP IS TIME-STAMPED

PERSON	LOVABLE AI	PERSON	PERSON
Writes an instruction	Builds the site	Reviews the result	Accepts, corrects or redirects

Nine websites in four groups

All nine were built in Lovable during the ten days. One person directed all of them, often several in the same hour.

Medical in 3D 1 WEBSITE		The product site for a 3D-enhanced optical screen protector, with a library of medical films.	5 Nov
Cyneric Group 1 WEBSITE		The corporate site for a telecommunications and technology group.	7 Nov
ArtEd in 3D 2 WEBSITES	**Main site**	For watching drawing films and learning to draw.	11 Nov
	Live site	A companion site, at its starting stage.	11 Nov
Human Value in AI 5 WEBSITES	**Main site**	An editorial site with a cost estimator for creative work that involves AI.	11 Nov
	Human Creative Value	On creative value in AI work.	12 Nov
	Human Sense in AI	On common sense and responsibility.	12 Nov
	Human Judgment in AI	On judgment, ethics and human override.	12 Nov
	Human Agency	On agency and responsibility.	12 Nov

The date beside each site is the day it was started, in November 2026.

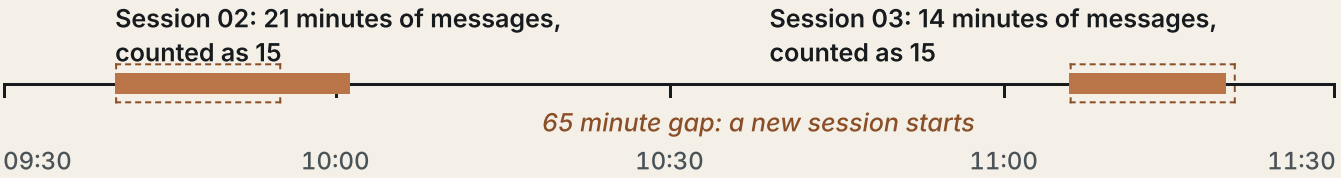
9	4	10	1
websites	groups	days	director

How time is counted

Two rules turn timestamps into working time. Both are shown here on real entries from the record.

The 20 minute gate

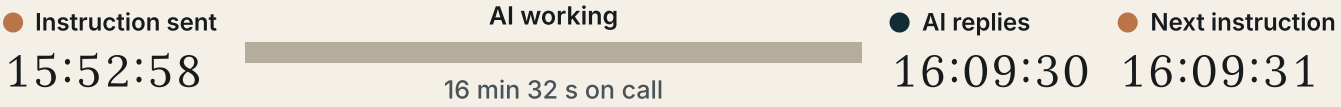
Messages less than 20 minutes apart belong to one session. A longer break starts a new one. Each session is rounded once, to the nearest 15 minutes. The minimum is 15.



6 November 2026. Solid bar: first to last message. Dashed line: the time counted.

The three minute gate

The wait between an instruction and the AI reply counts as standby when the person acts within three minutes of that reply. A fast response shows they were on call.



8 November 2026, Medical in 3D. The next instruction came one second after the reply, so the wait counts. Across the record this rule finds 190 minutes of standby.

One clock

Instructions sent to several projects within seconds count as one period of work.

Rounded once

A session is rounded a single time, up or down. The kinds of work inside it are never rounded separately.

No overlap

Standby comes out first. The rest is split between direction and research by the decisions in the messages.

HOW FIRM EACH INPUT IS

●●● **Strong**

Published rates, message timestamps, session boundaries, the arithmetic.

●●○ **Good**

AI reply timestamps used as the measure of processing time.

●○○ **Developing**

Sorting mixed time into direction or research by reading the task.

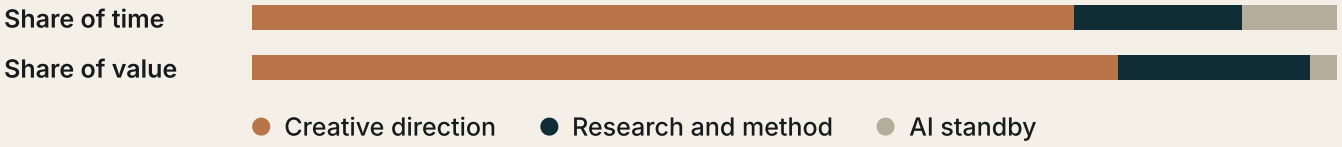
What the ten days come to

69 work sessions. 36 hours and 15 minutes of human work. Sorted and priced, this is the value.

VALUE OF THE HUMAN WORK · 5 TO 14 NOVEMBER 2026 · U.S. DOLLARS

$6,814.45

Creative direction	27.49 hours × $198.14	$5,446.11
Research and method	5.59 hours × $216.33	$1,209.75
AI standby	3.17 hours × $50.00	$158.58



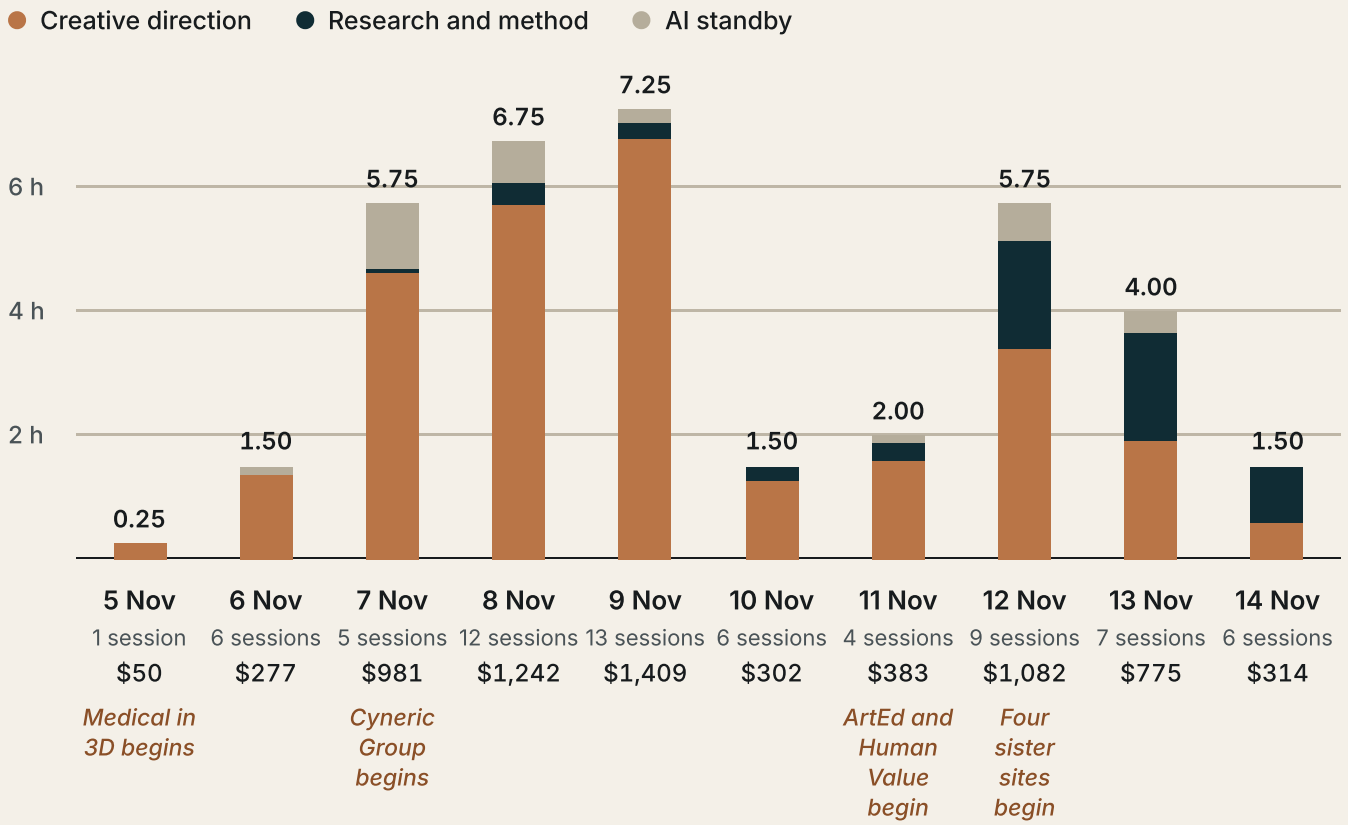
Direction is 76% of the time and 80% of the value. Standby is 9% of the time and 2% of the value.



Sorting made the total smaller. At one rate for every hour, the total is $7,182.57. Sorted into three kinds of work, it is $368.13 less. Waiting is paid less than directing.

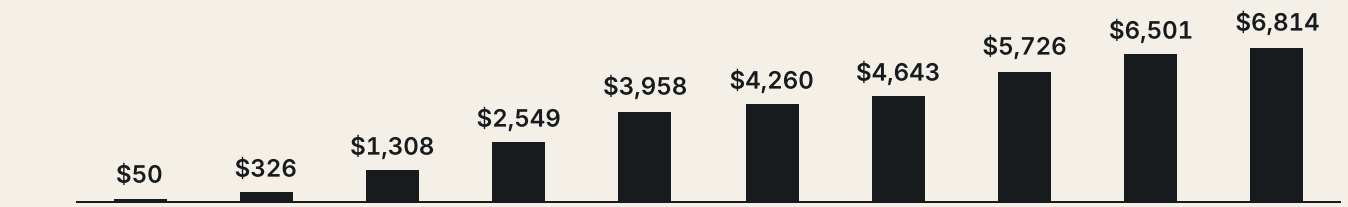
Ten days, day by day

Hours per day, by kind of work. The first week is almost all direction. From 12 November the work turns toward research and method.



Hours are shown above each bar. The dollar figure is the value of that day.

RUNNING TOTAL



RESEARCH AND METHOD AS A SHARE OF THE DAY

5% or less
of each day through 9 November

30%
on 12 November, when the four sister sites began

44%
on 13 November

61%
on 14 November

A low estimate, on purpose

The model counts only what the record can prove. Everything else is left out. So the real figure is higher than $6,814.45.

Counted

Time-stamped work sessions only

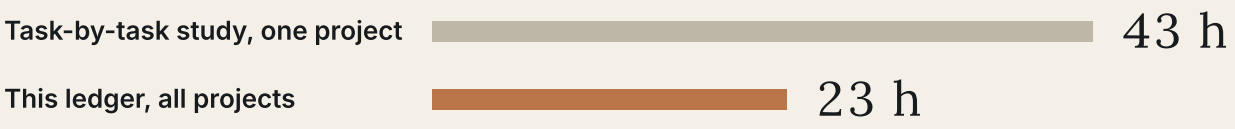
$6,814.45

Left out

- **Waiting on ChatGPT and Claude**
  These chats do not record when a reply finished. No standby is counted for them.
- **Work with no timestamps**
  Example: more than 10 hours spent on lip-sync for one film. Not in the total.
- **Breaks longer than 20 minutes**
  Thinking or reviewing away from the keyboard ends the session.
- **Several projects at once**
  Directing five sites in the same minute counts as one minute.
- **Time in Higgsfield, ElevenLabs and fal**
  Image, video and voice generation is not in the record.
- **Failures prevented**
  Stopping a bad run early saves money. That saving is not priced.

A second method, the same days

An earlier study rebuilt the human work on one project, Medical in 3D, task by task. It can be set beside this ledger for the same days, 5 to 10 November.



The clock in this model found 23 hours where a task-by-task count found 43 for a single project. The timestamp method gives the smaller number.

What the time bought

Hours show how long. This is what the person decided in those hours.

Medical in 3D	Directed the product and its films. Set how the screen protector is explained. Kept video and player consistent. Approved the mobile version. Checked the offer against what the product really does.
ArtEd: Building and Vase	Kept the human performance and each character's identity. Changed the method after lip-sync failed again and again.
ArtEd: It's Just Art	Rejected artwork the AI had altered. Rejected a phone surface that looked like paper. Cut a shorter film. Sent the source and sound problems to a second AI.
Human Value family	Shaped four sister sites and their parent. Tested the quality of the evidence and whether each claim holds. Directed the websites.
Across all AI tools	Chose the tool for each job. Fixed one reference version and one original audio file. Set fair experiments and release gates. Refused to build on a copy of a copy.

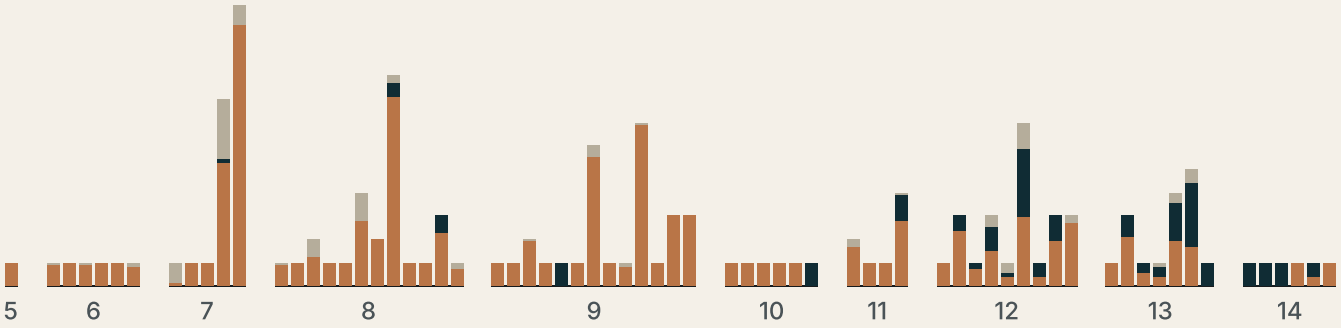
SEVEN DECISIONS THE MODEL PRICED AS RESEARCH

1. Separating what was seen from what was guessed
2. Designing hard test cases for five companion products
3. Telling code that runs from a result that is proven
4. Tracing exported copies back to the original files
5. Finding the cause of a failure that kept repeating
6. Protecting original files with checksums
7. Setting clear stop and approval points

A decision takes seconds. Its effect lasts the whole project.

All 69 sessions

Each bar is one session. Height is the time counted. Colour is the kind of work.



Creative direction · Research and method · AI standby

Days of November 2026. Longest session: 180 minutes.

#	Start (UTC)	Min	Direct	Research	Standby	Value
01	05 Nov 22:46	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
02	06 Nov 09:40	15	13.1	0.0	1.9	$44.84
03	06 Nov 11:06	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
04	06 Nov 12:11	15	12.6	0.0	2.4	$43.61
05	06 Nov 12:40	15	13.9	0.0	1.1	$46.82
06	06 Nov 13:21	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
07	06 Nov 21:26	15	12.2	0.0	2.8	$42.62
08	07 Nov 12:08	15	1.8	0.0	13.2	$16.94
09	07 Nov 13:05	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
10	07 Nov 17:22	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
11	07 Nov 17:42	120	78.5	3.1	38.4	$302.41
12	07 Nov 20:05	180	167.2	0.0	12.8	$562.82
13	08 Nov 00:41	15	13.6	0.0	1.4	$46.08
14	08 Nov 09:15	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
15	08 Nov 11:35	30	18.6	0.0	11.4	$70.92
16	08 Nov 12:30	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
17	08 Nov 13:21	15	14.4	0.0	0.6	$48.05
18	08 Nov 15:02	60	41.7	0.0	18.3	$152.96
19	08 Nov 16:33	30	30.0	0.0	0.0	$99.07
20	08 Nov 17:22	135	121.1	9.3	4.6	$437.28
21	08 Nov 20:59	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
22	08 Nov 21:25	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
23	08 Nov 22:05	45	33.8	11.2	0.0	$152.00
24	08 Nov 23:12	15	10.0	0.0	5.0	$37.19
25	09 Nov 00:00	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
26	09 Nov 09:10	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
27	09 Nov 09:53	30	28.8	0.0	1.2	$96.11
28	09 Nov 11:17	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
29	09 Nov 11:53	15	0.0	15.0	0.0	$54.08
30	09 Nov 12:13	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
31	09 Nov 14:05	90	83.0	0.0	7.0	$279.93
32	09 Nov 16:15	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
33	09 Nov 16:45	15	12.0	0.0	3.0	$42.13
34	09 Nov 18:22	105	103.2	0.0	1.8	$342.30
35	09 Nov 21:25	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
36	09 Nov 22:07	45	45.0	0.0	0.0	$148.60
37	09 Nov 23:06	45	45.0	0.0	0.0	$148.60
38	10 Nov 00:11	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
39	10 Nov 00:37	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
40	10 Nov 01:17	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
41	10 Nov 01:42	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
42	10 Nov 22:20	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
43	10 Nov 23:32	15	0.0	15.0	0.0	$54.08
44	11 Nov 18:50	30	25.0	0.0	5.0	$86.73
45	11 Nov 19:57	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
46	11 Nov 21:11	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
47	11 Nov 23:03	60	41.1	16.5	2.4	$197.21
48	12 Nov 00:24	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
49	12 Nov 12:52	45	34.6	10.4	0.0	$151.76
50	12 Nov 14:08	15	10.0	5.0	0.0	$51.05
51	12 Nov 14:33	45	22.4	14.9	7.7	$134.11
52	12 Nov 15:37	15	5.1	3.4	6.5	$34.52
53	12 Nov 18:41	105	44.0	44.0	16.9	$318.37
54	12 Nov 21:02	15	5.0	10.0	0.0	$52.57
55	12 Nov 21:41	45	28.1	16.9	0.0	$153.72
56	12 Nov 23:44	45	40.2	0.0	4.8	$136.75
57	13 Nov 04:21	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
58	13 Nov 13:41	45	31.5	13.5	0.0	$152.70
59	13 Nov 16:59	15	7.5	7.5	0.0	$51.81
60	13 Nov 18:02	15	5.8	5.8	3.4	$42.90
61	13 Nov 18:41	60	29.2	23.3	7.5	$186.70
62	13 Nov 20:23	75	25.1	40.7	9.2	$237.30
63	13 Nov 22:29	15	0.0	15.0	0.0	$54.08
64	14 Nov 10:39	15	0.0	15.0	0.0	$54.08
65	14 Nov 11:05	15	0.0	15.0	0.0	$54.08
66	14 Nov 12:01	15	0.0	15.0	0.0	$54.08
67	14 Nov 12:28	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53
68	14 Nov 13:16	15	5.0	10.0	0.0	$52.57
69	14 Nov 13:56	15	15.0	0.0	0.0	$49.53

Minutes per kind of work. Values use unrounded minutes, so a line can differ from a hand calculation by a few cents.

One day, then one session

A statement can be read at two levels. First the whole day. Then any single session inside it.

THE WHOLE DAY

13 November 2026

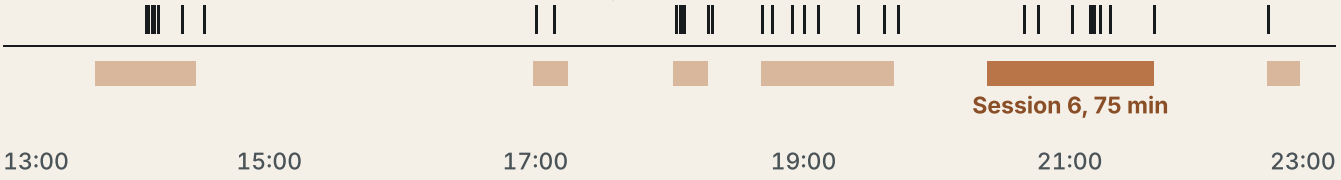
9 hours
on the clock, roughly, from 13:41 to 22:44

7 sessions
separated by breaks of more than 20 minutes

4 hours
counted by the model

$775.02
value of the day

Each mark is one instruction sent to Lovable. 70 that day.



Bars show the time the model counted. The gaps between them are not counted, even if the director was reviewing results or briefing another AI. One 15 minute session at 04:21 is outside this view.

ALL SEVEN SESSIONS OF THE DAY

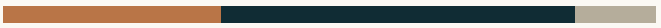
1	Starts 04:21	15 min	$49.53
2	Starts 13:41	45 min	$152.70
3	Starts 16:59	15 min	$51.81
4	Starts 18:02	15 min	$42.90
5	Starts 18:41	60 min	$186.70
6	**Starts 20:23**	**75 min**	**$237.30**
7	Starts 22:29	15 min	$54.08
The day		**240 min**	**$775.02**

The day is the sum of its sessions. Each session carries its own statement.

ONE SESSION · 6 OF 7 THAT DAY

20:23 to 21:37

74 minutes of messages, counted as 75



Creative direction	25.1 min	$198.14 / h	**$82.89**
Research	40.7 min	$216.33 / h	**$146.74**
AI standby	9.2 min	$50.00 / h	**$7.67**

Value of this session $237.30

From one case to a tool

The same three steps can run inside any AI product. When a session ends, the person and the client both see what was done and what it is worth.

WHO READS THE STATEMENT

The creative

bills for direction and judgment, with the record attached.

The client

sees what they pay for, by kind of work.

The AI platform

issues the statement itself. No separate timesheet.

WHAT A PRODUCT NEEDS TO ISSUE IT

A time-stamped log	Most AI products already keep one.
A list of kinds of work	Set once for each field.
A published rate for each kind	Taken from a public source both sides accept.

ANY FIELD WHERE A PERSON DIRECTS AI

Design and film · Software · Research and analysis · Writing and editing · Education and medicine

The method stays the same. Each field brings its own kinds of work and its own published rates.

SOURCES

Creative direction rate
U.S. General Services Administration schedule. Vistra Communications, contract 47QREA24D000L, page 6. gsaadvantage.gov

Research rate
U.S. General Services Administration schedule. PTG International, contract 47QRAA24D008U, page 7. ptg-intl.com

Work record
Lovable message logs for nine projects, read on 14 November 2026. 73 time-stamped events from AI chats on the ArtEd films.

64% of workers
PwC Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2026, as reported by Techstrong. techstrong.ai

81% of creatives
Luma, How Creative Teams Are Integrating AI in 2026. lumalabs.ai

+45% / −28%
9am, AI premium or AI discount, 2026. 9am.works