



Can AI Replace Business Analysts? An Empirical Study of AI-Assisted Requirement Gathering and BRD Preparation

Tejas Dilip Wagdarkar

School of Business, Indira University, Pune

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is now enabling tools to transcribe meetings, summarise conversations with stakeholders and create first drafts of the Business Requirement Document (BRD) and Functional Requirement Document (FRD), so a real question is being raised in the profession: Can AI replace the Business Analyst (BA)? This article investigates that issue in light of the current literature in the field of AI-facilitated requirement gathering and documenting, as well as a generalized case study based on the author's own experience as a Business Analyst intern where requirements were gathered directly from the client stakeholders via interviews and video conferencing and documented in the form of structured requirement documents. The research is purposefully organisation free and does not make mention of any organizational specific recruitment process, the internship serves as a medium to consider how AI could possibly be integrated into every phase of the requirement gathering lifecycle. The results point that AI has potential to significantly automate many of the "mechanical" aspects of a BA's job - recording screen-shared process steps, offering probing questions in real-time, and auto-drafting BRD/FRD sections, - while the BA role shifts toward review, validation, and emotional/relational judgement as opposed to vanishing altogether. The paper argues that AI is more a co-pilot reshaping the BA role than a full replacement of it, and it suggests a simple oversight-oriented model of how human BAs and AI tools might collaborate on gathering requirements in the future.

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1. Introduction

As long as there has been a role, the Business Analyst has lived in the space between what a client or business stakeholder wants and what a technical team can deliver. That space has traditionally been filled with interview, workshops, process walkthroughs and lots of documentation – meeting minutes, As-Is and To-Be process maps, and formal BUSINESS REQUIREMENT DOCUMENTs (BRDs) or FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENT DOCUMENTs (FRD) that turns conversation into specification. Generative AI tools also say to be able to handle some of these activities directly: transcribe a client call, summarise what was said, draft a requirement document, and even pointing out gaps or ambiguities which could be overlooked by a human reviewer (TextCortex, 2025; XCentium, 2026).

It has created a detectable nervousness in the trade. Among practitioners, online discussion ranges from the “Business Analyst role is officially dead” to a more tempered view that AI is a co-pilot taking away the grunt work and not the BA's judgement (Giwa, 2025). The ba - We're here to help you The What Does An Business Analyst Do In A Case Study To



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In order to clarify the headlines question-step by stage-which elements of the business analyst's (b a's') requirements gathering and documenting workflow are truly automatable by contemporary artificial intelligence tools and techniques, and which are not the purpose of this article is to chase answers to these questions. with reading a stakeholder's hesitation, dealing with competing political interests in a room or deciding which requirement actually matters.

The paper is deliberately generalised at the level of methodology. It talks about none of the specific employer systems, account payable workflow, or confidential project detail rather it is based on the intern's experience as a Business Analyst — where the work was to understand a business process from the It was the work of gathering requirements through Interviews and Video Conferences with Homosapiens, and creating Structured Requirement Documentation — but only to serve as an educational example for considering where AI assistance would reasonably be introduced in that lifecycle.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Changing Scope of the Business Analyst Role

A series of recent sector analysis went in a direction similar to what is now a well-established view in the markets: The repetitive, document-heavy part of business analysis — which includes note-taking, first-draft writing, and simple data gathering — is being automated by AI, while the strategic aspects of the job, such as bringing stakeholders together and navigating trade-offs, continue to be led by humans (iCert Global, 2024; H2K Infosys, 2025). Industry pundits also claim that requirement gathering is not performed in purely objective setting: stakeholders have conflicting interests and hidden agendas that influence what they say on a meeting which is not an environment for AI to make any political or relational interpretation (MockLingo, 2026). That said, the advice for analysts is now to consider AI literacy — the ability to prompt, validate, and collaborate with AI tools — as a fundamental skill area for future BAs and not one to be feared and resisted (International Institute of Business Analysis, Bluegrass Chapter, 2025; Knowitol, 2026).

2.2 AI-Assisted Requirement Documentation

There is an increasing number of commercial offerings promising to create BRDs and similar artefacts straight from unprocessed data like meeting minutes, product design, or even records of stakeholder dialogs, yielding organized outlines that contain functional needs, hazard areas, and, in some cases, regulatory audits in moments as opposed to days used for creating a draft manually (EltegraAI, 2026a; EltegraAI, 2026b; Cohesive, n.d.). Vendors claim that AI-assisted requirement gathering can help find a significantly higher percentage of requirements than manual elicitation, and can flag ambiguity or inconsistency in draft requirements before they reach a developer (EltegraAI, 2026a). But the same sources warn that generic AI models lack organisational memory and domain-specific regulatory knowledge, and that a human reviewer still needs to verify that the AI-generated content corresponds to the actual business context, not just a plausible approximation of it (EltegraAI, 2026b).

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and the Limit of Automation

Another line of literature explores the reasons behind the automation resistance of the relational side of stakeholder work. Alawamleh et al. (2024) utilise interpretive structural modelling to identify fifteen documented limitations of AI in business contexts and conclude that emotional intelligence, tacit knowledge, and contextual understanding are central structural limitations limiting the extent to which AI can be safely adopted without human oversight. Relevant literature in project and stakeholder management makes a similar argument: while AI is capable of identifying surface-level indicators like reduced email activity or a decrease in meeting attendance, the ability to understand why a stakeholder has silently withdrawn support, and to restore trust with them, is a uniquely human trait (Stanley, 2025; The Digital Project Manager, 2026). Guidance aimed at practitioners is consistent on this point — AI can support stakeholder communication



through sentiment analysis and drafting, but cannot substitute for human judgement and emotional intelligence in the relationship itself (ICAgile, n.d.; ILX Group, 2025). Recent work on human-AI collaboration in qualitative analysis reinforces this from a different angle, finding that AI functions well as a procedural and organisational scaffold while human analysts retain interpretive authority specifically around emotional nuance and contextual meaning.

3. Research Objectives

This study addresses three questions: (1) which stages of the BA requirement-gathering and documentation workflow can plausibly be automated by current AI capability; (2) which stages continue to depend on human relational and emotional judgement; and (3) how does the BA's role change — rather than disappear — once AI is introduced into that workflow.

4. Methodology

This paper uses a generalised single-case qualitative approach. The case is the author's own three-month internship as a Business Analyst, during which the work involved understanding an operational business process from the people who ran it, gathering requirements through one-on-one interviews and video-conference workshops with process stakeholders, documenting the As-Is process, identifying business rules and exceptions, and preparing structured requirement documentation for review. No company name, account-specific process detail, or confidential material from that engagement is reproduced here; the internship is used only as a lived, first-hand reference point against which the AI-assistance scenarios discussed in the literature can be evaluated realistically rather than hypothetically.

The method proceeds in three steps. First, the requirement-gathering lifecycle experienced during the internship was decomposed into discrete stages — stakeholder scheduling, live elicitation, note capture, drafting, and review/sign-off. Second, each stage was mapped against the AI capabilities documented in the literature reviewed in Section 2 to assess, stage by stage, whether that capability is already commercially available, partially available, or still aspirational. Third, stages were redefined and grouped into three dimensions -- automatable, semi-automatable with human participation and evaluation, and non-automatable at this point in time -- to formulate the results in Section 5. As the research is based on one anonymized case and secondary literature from the industry rather than a systematic survey of several analysts, the results are interpretive rather than statistically generalizable; this limitation is further elaborated in Section 7.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Requirement Elicitation The promotion of innovation depends on the structure of the innovation space defined largely by the stakeholders involved.

The initial step of any requirement gathering exercise is to build enough trust with the stakeholder such that they will talk about their process as it really is, including any workarounds and unofficial exceptions to the rule that are never documented in any sort of process manual. During the internship, this trust was built gradually through a series of conversations, follow-up questions, and by looking at the contrast between the confidence of a stakeholder in describing a step and where they hesitated or qualified their response. The literature is encouraging us to see this as a really hard step for automation: a department head might advocate a change publicly while secretly fretting about how it will affect her workload or power, and bringing that concern to light requires you to read tone and context rather than the literal text of what's said (MockLingo, 2026; Flevey Management Insights, n.d.). Current AI tools can support this stage — for example through sentiment-analysis of written communication — but the literature is consistent that they cannot yet substitute for a human reading the room in real time (ILX Group, 2025; ICAgile, n.d.).

5.2 AI in Live Requirement-Gathering Conversations

A more automatable slice of the same stage is what happens mechanically during a video-conferencing requirement session once trust has already been established. When a stakeholder shares their screen to walk through an existing process, much of the analyst's real-time effort goes into capturing each screen state, noting the sequence of clicks or fields



involved, and thinking of the next clarifying question — what happens if this field is left blank, who approves this step, what triggers the exception path. This is precisely the kind of structured, repeatable pattern that AI meeting and requirement-gathering assistants are now built to support: automatically capturing key screen states during a shared session, transcribing the conversation, and using the transcript to propose the next question an analyst should ask, in the same way that conversational AI interviewing tools already prompt structured follow-up questions to extract objectives and identify gaps during a stakeholder interview (EltegraAI, 2026a). Positioned this way, AI functions as a real-time assistant sitting alongside the analyst during the call — handling the mechanical capture of what is shown on screen and surfacing candidate questions — while the analyst still decides which of those questions is actually worth asking and how to phrase it for that particular stakeholder.

5.3 Automated Drafting of BRD and FRD Documents

The most mature area of AI assistance is document drafting itself. Several tools reviewed in Section 2 can now take raw stakeholder notes, a call transcript, or even a shared design file and produce a structured first-draft BRD or FRD, complete with functional and non-functional requirement sections, within minutes rather than the days such a first draft traditionally required (EltegraAI, 2026a; XCentium, 2026; TextCortex, 2025). During this internship (that I am recounting herein),

writing the requirement document — collating interview notes into a logical business-rule matrix, documenting As-Is and To-Be process descriptions, and assembling the document into a format suitable for user sign-off — took up an outsized share of overall project time vis-a-vis the interview work.

This is precisely the sort of work that AI can take over, according to the literature: the

mechanical transformation of information that has already been collected into a structured house-style document, with the analyst expected to spot-check the draft for correctness, completeness, and business logic rather than writing it line-by-line (EltegraAI, 2026b).

5.4 Emotional and Relational Component of acting

Even when AI generates a technically complete document, a requirement document is a negotiated artefact, with different stakeholders usually having conflicting demands, and one of the jobs of the analyst is to find ways to express requirements that are true without reopening old disagreements, or to find out when what a stakeholder states is a requirement really a proxy for some hidden concern (Alawamleh et al., 2024) perceives just that gap - emotional intelligence and tacit contextual knowledge - as fundamental barriers to current AI integration within enterprise environments, indicating that eliminating human oversight from this phase would not just de-scale quality inchwise, but would entail the loss of a capability that AI has yet to duplicate. This is in line with what turned out to be a common internship experience described here: a requirement was sometimes written a certain way (or spelled out a particular way) not because the business rule behind it required it, but because a stakeholder needed to have their worry explicitly recognized in the document before they'd sign.

5.5 Redefinition of the BA Role: From Author to Overseer

In summary, the picture that emerges is not of the Business Analyst no longer existing in the requirement-gathering and documentation process, but of the Business Analyst having their point of contribution shifted. The areas most open to the assistance of AI are mechanical capture (screenshots, transcripts, note-taking), first-pass question generation in a live session, and first-draft document assembly. The human analyst still needs to build stakeholder trust, read the emotional and political signals, reconcile conflicting requirements, and ensure that an AI-generated document truly embodies the underlying business rule, not just a plausible approximation of it. This is often presented as the analyst being replaced, but in reality it is more like the analyst transitioning from being the main author of every document to being the main editor and validator of every document — the exact change that several practitioner sources have identified as enabling analysts to focus more on stakeholder alignment and less on manual documentation (Giwa, 2025; iCert Global, 2024).



6. Discussion: Can AI Replace Business Analysts? The evidence examined here does not lend itself to an easy yes or no answer, and the literature itself is divided into two camps, with no consensus. With the rise of AI, many sources in the vendor and tool space have highlighted how much of the BA's documentation burden can be reduced from days to minutes (EltegraAI, 2026a; XCentium, 2026). . The second perspective, more prevalent in workforce and stakeholder management literature, suggests that the types of tasks that AI does well are structured and repeatable, and that much of the BA's value is in the unstructured part of the job — judgement calls that require context, trust and organisational politics (MockLingo, 2026; Alawamleh et al., 2024).

If we try to reconcile these two views, the more sustainable conclusion is an augmentation model, not a replacement model: AI handles the high-volume, speed-sensitive portions of the workflow — capture, first-draft generation, question generation — and the rest of the workflow, specifically the final requirement document and the relational work to get a stakeholder to trust and approve it, remains the responsibility of the human analyst, who takes on an oversight role. This aligns with market feedback that the lowest-level, purely documentation-oriented BA work is under the most competitive pressure, while analysts who transition to facilitation, validation and AI-tool oversight are better positioned (Knowitol, 2026). Understood this way, the question “can AI replace Business Analysts” is somewhat mis-specified; the more useful question is which sub-tasks within the BA role are being reassigned to AI, and what new oversight skill set analysts need to develop in response.

7. Limitations of the Study

This paper is based on a single, anonymised internship case combined with secondary industry and practitioner literature rather than a structured multi-organisation survey of practising analysts, so its conclusions are interpretive rather than statistically generalisable. Much of the supporting literature on AI-assisted BRD generation is drawn from vendor and practitioner sources rather than peer-reviewed studies, and vendor claims about efficiency gains were not independently verified against real project outcomes. Future research could address this by surveying a larger sample of Business Analysts across industries on their actual use of AI tools at each stage of the requirement-gathering lifecycle, and by comparing the quality of AI-drafted requirement documents against human-authored ones on a matched set of real projects.

8. Conclusion

Current AI capability is well matched to the mechanical, repeatable portions of the Business Analyst's requirement-gathering and documentation workflow — capturing what is shown during a stakeholder call, suggesting the next clarifying question, and assembling a first-draft BRD or FRD from gathered notes. It is not yet well matched to the relational portions of the same workflow — building stakeholder trust, reading emotional and political undercurrents, and resolving conflicting requirements — which the literature consistently identifies as structurally resistant to automation. The internship experience reflected on in this paper supports the same conclusion at a practical level: the time-consuming, mechanical work of documentation is where AI assistance would have helped most, while the judgement calls involved in stakeholder conversations are where a human analyst's presence mattered most. Overall, the fact is that AI will transform the Business Analyst role (and Business Analysis in general) into a more oversight, verification based role-level of activity instead of removing it being a shift for BAs to be aware of and prepare for. more about working alongside AI through improved documentation tools, and continuing to develop the stakeholder-facing skills that are, and will continue to be, distinctly human.



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