



What Is AI and What Does It Mean To Us Today?

Artificial intelligence, or "AI," is the ability for a computer to think and learn. With AI, computers can perform tasks that are typically done by people, including processing language, problem-solving, and learning.

Unlike humans, machines don't require sleep or vacations. They learn as they work and make logical decisions with that information.

We use AI every day without realizing it! Think of Siri, Alexa, WAZE, Grammarly, self-driving cars, and AI recommendations based on previous purchases. Digital assistants process real-time data and use it to make calculations faster than humans.

Who is OpenAI?

OpenAI (OpenAI.com) is an AI research and deployment company. According to their website, their mission is to ensure that artificial general intelligence benefits all of humanity. Their website also states that they are governed by a non-profit and their unique capped-profit model drives their commitment to safety. This means that as AI becomes more powerful, they can redistribute profits from their work to maximize AI technology's social and economic benefits. They are an American company headquartered in San Francisco.

What is ChatGPT?

Created by OpenAI (OpenAI.com) ChatGPT is "generative AI," meaning it's a chatbot that al-

lows you to have very human-like conversations with original text that it writes on the spot. ChatGPT is a large language model that was trained on the vast amount of text available on the internet.



ChatGPT was fed some 300 billion words systematically scraped from the Internet: books, articles, websites, and posts—including personal information obtained without consent. OpenAI's first-party web-browsing plugin allows ChatGPT to draw data from around the web to answer the various questions posed to it. (Previously, ChatGPT's knowledge was limited to dates, events and people prior to around September 2021.) The plugin retrieves content from the web using the Bing search API and shows any web-

sites it visited in crafting an answer, citing its sources in ChatGPT's responses.

If you've ever written a blog post or product review, or commented on an article online, there's a good chance this information was consumed by ChatGPT. A chatbot with web access is a risky prospect, as OpenAI's own research has found. An experimental system built in 2021 by the AI startup, called WebGPT, sometimes quoted from unreliable sources and was incentivized to cherry-pick data from sites it expected users would find convincing — even if those sources weren't objectively the strongest.

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From the desk of

DAVID SNELL



Hello!

AI has been taking over the news lately and we wanted to share what we know about it. It really is a 2-sided coin; it has some tremendous benefits as well as terrifying negative consequences!

One of the issues is that it is becoming more powerful by the moment! In an "Open Letter to all AI labs", Elon Musk, Steve Wozniak, and over 5,000 others have asked "*all AI labs to immediately pause for at least 6 months the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4.*"

The concern is "Advanced AI could represent a profound change in the history of life on Earth, and should be planned for and managed with commensurate care and resources." Others think that a 6 month pause would give the threat actors more time to develop more negative uses.

We use AI in many ways at ACTSmart IT. Justin has been using it to write program scripts that allow us to deploy services to our clients in a quicker manner. Could he write these scripts himself? Yes, but not as quickly and efficiently. He still needs to check everything because AI is not infallible.

Pam uses a program called Grammarly to check spelling, punctuation and understandability as she writes articles for this newsletter and others. Originally, it was just a spellchecker. Now, it offers suggestions to re-write sentences and the proper uses of tenses of verbs.

We've added a new page to our website to help you keep up to date with Artificial Intelligence. Go to **ACTSmartIT.com/ai** for continuing information.

On other matters of learning, we have webinars coming up:

Debra Parent's series on Recruiting continues with "**Recruiting Tactics**" is on Tuesday, April 18th at 8:30am.. You can register for her webinar at **ACTSmartIT.com/recruit** .

Mark your calendars! Susan Rooks, the Grammar Goddess, is presenting "**Linked In Basis, Part 1.**" When she started giving this webinar, she only needed one session. Now, she's had to break it into 2 parts because there is so much to know! It's Wednesday, May 10th at 9:30am You can sign up at **ACTSmartIT.com/susan**

We're looking forward to beautiful Spring weather and being able to enjoy more time outside. We hope you are able to enjoy it, too!

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Meta's since-disbanded BlenderBot 3.0 had access to the web, too, and quickly went off the rails, delving into conspiracy theories and offensive content when prompted with certain text.

Is this an issue?

None of us were asked whether OpenAI could use our data. This is a clear violation of privacy, especially when data is sensitive and can be used to identify us, our family members, or our location.

Accessing ChatGPT is free. You set up an account and then begin using it right away. Once you enter a prompt and read its answer, you can further refine it as many times as you'd like to get closer to what you're looking for.

ChatGPT has gotten so much attention because it's remarkably capable of generating original content, and while we wouldn't recommend it replace human writers, there are practical applications for this new technology. Here are six use cases to consider:

- A starting point for writing
- A way to generate responses to customer service queries
- A way to create rough drafts for longer pieces of writing
- A powerful brainstorming tool
- A way to write technical instructions
- A name generator for a new product or service

Some Cons:

- Machines may be considered "intelligent," but they are not aware of ethics, morals or right and wrong. It can't distinguish between correct and incorrect information as it scrapes the web.
- AI tools like ChatGPT can be used to craft persuasive emails that

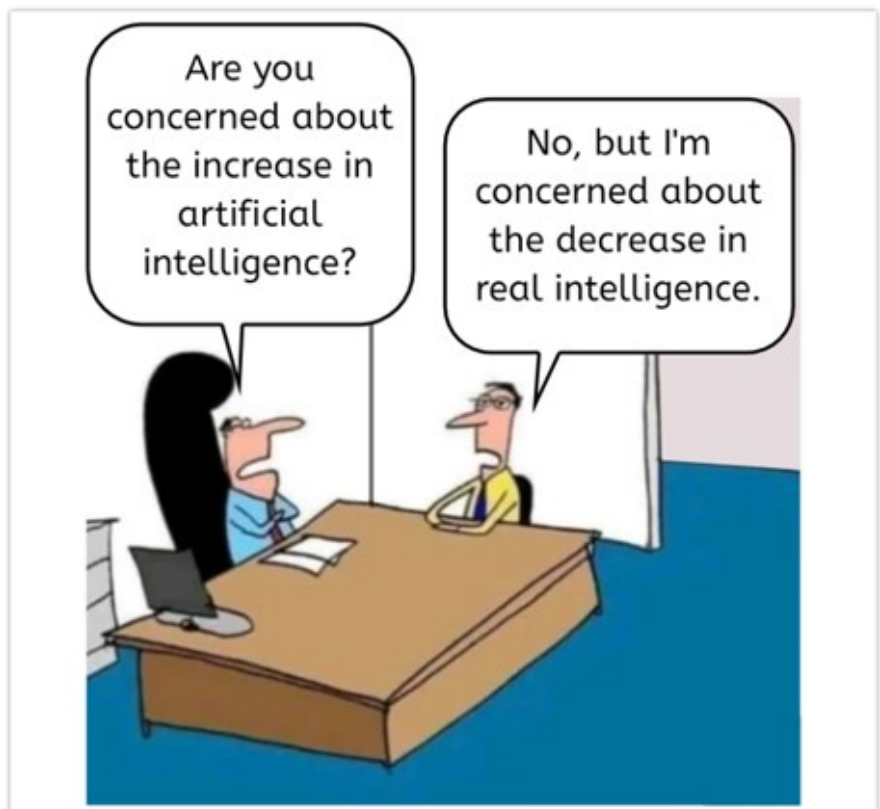
hackers can easily use to "phish" unsuspecting targets with information gathered through social media or other platforms. Cybercriminals can use AI to create autonomous systems and bypass security measures. It can create malware and hacks.

- If someone is using an AI chatbot to create a communication that includes sensitive or private information, how is that information kept secure in the process?

AI can have positive or negative effects on the real world; it entirely depends on the creators' intentions regarding how they want to use Artificial Intelligence.

We've only scratched the surface of reporting on AI. We're sure more controversy has been reported since we wrote this article; things are changing by the moment!

For more information, links to other chatbots, resources and helpful links, go to **ACTSmartIT.com/ai**



Recognition – You Can't Afford

Countless studies have highlighted the importance of recognition. Offering each other recognition is one of the ways we can create moments of pride in others. Carolyn Wiley of Roosevelt University reviewed four studies on employee motivation, which took place from 1946 – 1992. Employees were asked to rank the factors that motivated them in these studies. Popular answers included:

- Interesting work
- Job security
- Good wages
- Feeling of being in on things

No surprises there. However, through the 46 years and across all the studies, only one factor was cited every time as among the top two motivators. That factor was:

Full appreciation of work done



The research from these studies also showed that:

More than 80% of supervisors claim they frequently express appreciation to their staff, while less than 20% of

employees report that their supervisor's express appreciation more than occasionally. This may be true, or just a gap in perception.

Either way, this is a problem. I consider problems opportunities to improve, however.

From an employee retention perspective, it is commonly known that one of the top reasons for someone to begin a job search, is lack of praise and recognition. As a recruiter, I know this to be true. Employees have so many employment options choices today and many initiate a job search, not because of low pay or lack of bene-

fits, but because of their perceived lack of recognition for what they do day-in and day-out. How do I know this? My first question when interviewing is, "Why are you looking to leave your current employer?" The candidate answers are enlightening.

Large corporations often respond to our need for recognition in the workplace with global recognition programs such as the Employee of the Month Program. These programs are not generally adequate, however, as only one employee can win, and only once per month. That doesn't help the majority of your workforce's recognition needs.

Recognition experts recommend the following:

- Recognition must be personal
- Recognition must spontaneous and targeted to specific behaviors
- Recognition must be visible
- Recognition must be based on your company values
- Recognition must be delivered timely – right after the behavior

Some good examples of recognition:

Instead of "Thanks-you did a good job on the report.", specify, "Thank you for doing such a great job with the visuals on that report. The graphs on page 14 were very effective in demonstrating your point. Excellent work!"

Being specific helps employees understand what they did that was noteworthy, and what behaviors we might want them to repeat in the future.

An employee was recognized by their supervisor for organizing the file room, on their own initiative.

An employee was recognized for catching an error which would have created a rather poor customer

Not to Do It, and Do It Well

experience for a customer.

An employee was given a set of Bose headphones after he saved a large client who was going to take his business elsewhere, by "listening" to what the client was looking for, and quickly responding.

One employee, letting another employee know that they did a fabulous job by de-escalating a difficult client/customer situation today.

In the cases above, managers made the employee feel noticed for what they did. **"I saw what you did and I appreciate it". That is all there is too it. Doesn't cost much to make this known to an employee.**

But, a culture of recognition, includes not only managers offering employees recognition, but employees offering each other recognition as well. Leadership must encourage this however for it to happen. This also applies to clients/customers, vendors and other company business associates offering recognition to the employees of the company.

Why care about recognition in the course of the busyness of the day?

- Recognition has been shown to increase morale and motivation – 65% of employees say they would put forth more effort into their work if they were recognized more often
- Increases in morale and motivation lead to enhanced productivity, performance and work quality, and employee engagement
- Recognition helps retain top employees, as 56% are less likely to search for a new job if

the company they work for recognizes their efforts.

- Leaders rated on their performance review in the bottom 10% for providing recognition, had employees at the 27th percentile on employee engagement. By contrast, leaders rated in the top 10% were at the 69th percentile on employee engagement.

Remember that recognition must be done publicly, so others can understand what the employee did to be recognized. This is how you spread the wealth and end up with an entire work team all stepping up to match the quality of work of the employee who was recognized.

Verbal praise, emblematic recognition, tokens of appreciation, company branded material and gifts, and monetary rewards are all important. Not one, or the other. You want your recognition to be dynamic and varied. Please don't give out rewards without an explanation as to why the employee received the reward. Everyone must understand why the employee received the award.

In the end, you foster a culture of appreciation by deliberately recognizing employees regularly, in creative and interesting ways. Effective recognition can be a powerful force and one you must tap into, as workplaces with regular positive reinforcement tend to have less turnover and more engaged staff.

Note: Each month, Debra will cover one recruitment tactic you must be maximizing today to help support your recruitment needs, and to make your recruitment efforts both easier, and more successful. Last month's can be found at ACTSmartIT.com/recruit



Debra can be reached at rightfitrecruiting@comcast.net or 508-884-6798.

FREE Webinar Tuesday, April 18th at 8:30am
"Recruiting Tactics"

For more information and to register: ACTSmartIT.com/recruit

8 Reasons Every Company Is

Whether you sell shoes or run an accounting firm, you need some type of technology to operate. Today's companies aren't just in the business of selling their own goods and services anymore. They also must master various types of digital tools.

These include software, payment systems, computers, Wi-Fi networks, mobile devices, and more. Companies also need to protect their devices and network. If that technology isn't working, it can impact a business significantly.

98% of surveyed organizations say that just one hour of IT downtime costs more than \$100,000. The reliance on technology means that every company is now a technology company.

This is the case no matter what products you sell or services you provide. Let's discuss exactly why this is the case in today's world.

What Makes Technology a Backbone of Any Business?

1. Technology Is a Critical Part of Business

Even farmers use tech to check commodity prices, sell livestock, and keep their books. Most companies couldn't operate without their software. Or without databases filled with important information.

IT downtime is so devastating for this very reason. Remember the breaches impacting global meat producer JBS and Colonial pipeline? Those companies had to halt operations because of ransomware attacks.

They both paid the ransom to their attackers so they could begin operating again. Without the technology that's become a normal part of our day, a lot of companies would close.

2. Customers Expect an Excellent Digital Experience

Customer experience came in first in a survey of top business priorities for the next 5 years. Nearly 46% of respondents said it was at the top of their list.

If a customer has just one bad experience with your company, they will likely go elsewhere. In a digital world, those experiences are often:

- Navigating your website
- Checkout experience
- Appointment scheduling ease
- Shipping notifications
- Helpfulness of online chat
- Response time from customer support
- Ability to contact your company via social media

To keep up with consumer expectations in



Now a Technology Company

2023 and beyond, means you need to use technology. From your website to your payment experience, people expect a smooth digital flow.

3. Employees Need Devices to Drive Productivity

How do employees work productivity without the use of a computer, tablet, or mobile device?

These devices keep staff connected to each other and your customer data. Devices enable communication and are how much of the work in offices gets done. If they don't run well, business productivity suffers.

4. AI & Automation Help Companies Stay Competitive

AI and automation help organizations move faster. AI can personalize a consumer shopping experience. Automation can help sales teams close 30% more deals and improve conversions by over 200%.

To stay competitive, companies must integrate technology tools with AI and automation capabilities. This means they need to know the best ways to use these tools. Plus, integrate them well with existing solutions.

5. Information Is Being Generated at a Rapid Pace

Companies generate information digitally at a dizzying pace. Can you imagine what it would be like if you had to go back to all the paper files? You'd need a separate building just for all the filing cabinets.

Files, documents, and customer records are largely digital now. Keeping track of all that information and making it searchable requires technology skills.

6. Vendors/Suppliers Are Leaving Legacy Systems Behind

Think of the vendors you use to run your business. Could you interact with any of them offline only? No email, no digital documents? In most cases, the answer is, "No."

The companies that you rely on for your business are also "technology companies" in the same way. Most will be leaving behind legacy systems like fax machines and paper documents. Thus, you need to use digital means to interact with them.

7. It's Difficult to Grow Without Tech Innovation

People are limited by what they can mentally and physically do in a day. Computers and technology have exponentially increased that. They do a lot of the processing and manual work.

The cloud is often touted as leveling the playing field for small businesses. It allows smaller companies to leverage technology to do more affordably.

It's hard to continue growing your business without the smart use of digital tools. This includes reviewing your technology infrastructure and looking at innovations on the horizon.

8. Business Continuity Needs

Business continuity is about keeping your company running despite any crisis events. One natural disaster could severely impact a building and everything in it. But, if you are storing your data in the cloud and using cloud software, your business can still operate.

Companies that aren't employing backup systems are at significant risk. Tech solutions create the ability to continue operating from anywhere, increasing business resiliency.

What Does Your Innovation Roadmap Look Like? Using technology securely and to its fullest can be a full-time job. ***Give us a call today, we can help take that burden off your shoulders. 855-WOW-SERVICE***

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FREE Webinars

Recruiting Tactics

Debra Parent & Kate
Thursday, April 18th at 8:30am
Register at
ACTSmartIT.com/recruit

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*Mark Your Calendars*  
Susan Rooks' LinkedIn Basics Part 1  
Wednesday, May 10th at 8:30  
[ACTSmartIT.com/susan](http://ACTSmartIT.com/susan)

...the Password Manager that WE use at ACTSmart:

# Passportal

Take control of your passwords and system access—and get peace of mind

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- Faster access to websites and applications
- Centralized system for both corporate and personal passwords
- Folders to organize and categorize credentials
- Automatic generation of audits and reports to help with tracking and regulatory compliance reporting
- Save time with instant credential insertion—no more remembering lists of passwords
- Centrally control employee access to systems, so only those who should be on critical systems have access
- Easily terminate access to systems following an employee's departure
- Track and record system access to help meet compliance audit requirements

Go to [ACTSmartIT.com/passportal](http://ACTSmartIT.com/passportal) for more information and pricing