

A.I. Overview

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A.I. Basics

Here it Goes

The best friend you never knew you needed™

Got it — no em dashes.

Fuckin' A.I. am I right guys?

"Is there anything we can do with AI in this space?"

"I made an app!"

"My uncle made an app!"

"Vibe coding!!!!"

First, read about the [Ethics of using A.I.](#) and then read on...

Artificial Intelligence is being used broadly as term to describe almost-Turing-approved large language models (LLMs) as well as tools that use machine learning.

Ex. Machine Learning - Computer Vision, which uses an algorithm.

Ex. A.I. - ChatGPT Chatbot using an LLM

Ex. A.I. and Machine Learning - Topaz Video A.I.

Machine learning is not A.I. but, fine, we can call it that just to make things easier to categorize.

Model & Trim Level

There are three primary models used as the basis for tons of other tools. There are others out there, but for the general public, this is what will sound familiar.

1. **OpenAI's ChatGPT** is good for a lot of things. it excels in image generation, general chat bot support and it's pretty good with code, too.
2. **Anthropic's Claude** is good for a lot of the same things. It's not as good with image generation - in fact doesn't advertise it as an ability, but it's better with code IMHO.

3. **Google's Gemini** is good for a lot of the same things and is also embedded into Google Apps for better or worse. It's pretty good for solving problems, and image generation is pretty decent too, but image edit has a lower max resolution than OpenAI (as of May 2026, anyway). Gemini really loves to hallucinate its own abilities and tries to do things it can't actually do. It's really good at spreadsheet stuff - like generating formulas. It is less good with things like "turn all the yellow cells blue." Use Claude and Apps Script instead.

Trim Level is what I affectionately use to describe a version of each model. OpenAI uses "Pro" and "Nano" and a version number (GPT Pro 5.5); the generic version being just GPT and the version number. Claude uses different code names from version to version (Opus, Sonnet, Haiku), but also has a version number (Opus 4.6).

So You Think You Can Dance?

At its core, AI is helpful in lots of small ways. Imagine old-school Google answering your questions with continued context and follow-up, and if you're paying for the model, without advertising!

Dumb usages of AI that are pretty spot on :

- Getting specific stains out of specific clothes.
- Cooking instructions. How long should I grill this chicken?
- I've got these ingredients, what can I make in 45 minutes?
- Troubleshooting complicated European-style appliances.
- Finding a car/bike based on your requirements.
- What insurance coverage do I need for this and am I already covered by X, Y, Z policies?
Cite sources, please!
- Finding cool places to explore within a certain region.
- Organize your travel itinerary based on receipts.
- What is this piece of art called and/or what does it mean?

The most important thing with using A.I. is gauging whether what you're being told is *true or false*.

With A.I. you need to verify pretty much everything. What's the internal temp of properly cooked chicken? Maybe check that kind of thing elsewhere for safety until you are vaguely aware of what it's supposed to be. A quick, but not always fullproof thing to do is say "gimme the sources."

So, you've dipped your toes in and are interested in getting started.

Read on to [use cases](#). There's lots of ways to do other things you couldn't do before and learn something new!!

A.I. Use Cases

You can use AI in so many interesting ways. Here are some.

Making Art

Just generate some shit based on some other shit. Fun to do! [Ethical?](#) I dunno.

- Many of the images on this page were generated and/or composited.
- You can use generation tools to doctor and repair images.
- You can use style transfers to apply a look onto another image or video.

Research

Oh, what rabbit holes you can go down. Start with a question and give us much context as you can / feel comfortable with.

- What spooky things happened at this address? Check public records and cite sources.
- How can I find out if this print is authentic or a mass market production?

Technical Utility

- All the **spreadsheet** help you could ever dream of, including Apps Script. If it's possible in a spreadsheet, AI usually knows what to do. Gone are the days of hell-searching for help with complicated formulas. You need a pretty good understanding of formulae for this to be good for you, however!

Code

You can make so many things. Some simple things are one and done. Others can be really extensive and require lots of time, lots of your effort, and lots of tokens. One of my top secret Claude projects has over 140 different GitHub commits over many months.

- Make me a web app that auto-launches a series of URLs that I paste into a field.
- Make me a front-end for YT-DLP that suits my exact use case.
- Make me a Mac OS widget that is a launcher for Zoom links.
- Make me an Audio plug-in that uses UVR within a DAW.
- Make me a Mac OS tool to lock the dock to a specific display.
- Help me make my Bookstack better than it is please.

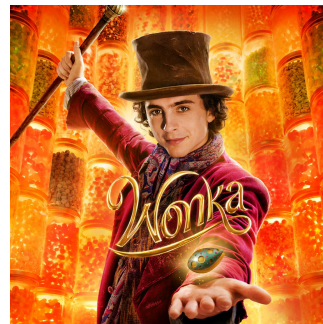
A.I. Ethics

Ethics

Ethically, LLMs and AI (in general) are complicated. They use all knowledge, text, sound, video, and images that they can scrape to create things and help answer things. A.I. can generate images, video, code, sound, and text. It can help edit a book. Or it can write one. It can help you write a script to audit for specific file conditions. It can help you write a log for that script. Or it can make an app. My take is : it's a great tool but woof, the ethics are TROLLEY PROBLEM level.

First you have to think about inspiration : *Is it ethical for a filmmaker making a work in the style of Tim Burton?* Alright, Hot Topic, while I think Edward Scissorhands is pretty good, maybe you should come up with something original! Personal taste aside though, it's great that you were able to make something using by being inspired by something else. What if the filmmaker tries to sell it? Probably fine unless they market it as "Tim Burton." Intellectual Property is complicated!

What if an artist takes the 2005 **Charlie and The Chocolate Factory** film and manually replaces Johnny Depp's head with Timothee Chalamet's head? You can kind of see it, right? In a museum or something? But what if it's fucking perfect and the artist has done a clean face replace that looks totally real using some version of RunwayML (video A.I.). Pretty gnarly, probably violating some IP laws, but as a piece of art, it's ethical IMHO.



2 years ago the graphics for this joke would've taken me 16 minutes to produce, now it takes me less than a minute.

Is an art student making work in the style of Van Gogh ethical? Yeah this is probably ok, because the student is using the work of another artist to learn their craft. That's how everyone learns whether they admit it or not. We are inspired by what's around us

consciously or unconsciously. What about an artist using an A.I. style transfer of Shepard Fairey on to 60s Soviet propaganda? Wow, I'm having fun with this. While that's a snake-eating-its-own-tail, is it inherently problematic? I don't know. As long as the artist doesn't pass it off as by "Shepard Fairey" it's probably fine.

Is a musical mash-up of The Beatles and Jay-Z ethically complicated when both works are used to create a new work? Since no one wants to get sued, the safe thing is to not sell it, and distributing it at all might be tricky. Personally though, I think this is ethical and a pretty good idea that I wish I came up with. Danger Mouse beat me to it in 2004!

Ok so derivative works and works inspired by other works are generally ethical, right? Cool, yeah, they are.

So you're down with [Girl Talk](#), but what if Girl Talk uses AI to help with audio stem separation?

“ But Tech Almanac, you're really taking a rosy point of view! A.I. isn't just about making art, or using it to help make works. It can also be used for evil !!!! ☹️

The Bad News



What about these hypotheticals :

An artist created a package of UX vector graphics. A preview image of these UX graphics was included in an LLM's training data. The same artist is using that LLM to prototype some app idea, and her UX graphics are used in the prototype. YIKES! The LLM didn't differentiate between public domain and paid products because (I'm using an analog here) the LLM was inspired by the artist's images and conveniently, they don't remember where the inspiration came from. Whoops!

And what if that same LLM was used to help with some war somewhere? Uh oh. But how's your 401k doing? It's hard to draw a line here. We do what we can, where we can, but as technologists, we kind of need to keep up.

And what if that same LLM was installed without an opt-in on your entire Google Drive where you track your expenses and invites to your kid's birthday party? Uh oh, that's kind of scary.

Subjective Verdict

So let's do our best. Use the thing, understand it, don't be dumb about it. Don't do anything evil with it, either! Just don't blame me when the robots take over and all music sounds like Taylor Swift was produced by the Weeknd.