AI is All the Rage!

Opinion Piece

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Most people don't realize that the field of AI has been around for almost 70 years. With the advancement in machine learning over the past ten years, along with the rollout of Large Language Models (GenAI) and now Agentic AI, AI is certainly all the rage.

However, with this excitement comes concern in many areas. First, it seems that almost every vendor has an AI-enhanced, AI-powered, or AI product or service. It is difficult to distinguish the Charletons from the Charlemagnes (per a line in my favorite musical, Pippin). Second, along with the theme of "being real and authentic", AI has clouded society in terms of what is truly real. Deep Fakes and AI-created images are so amazing that they look so realistic and we can't normally tell the difference. Third, the issue of AI ethics is an ongoing theme, so much that the U.S. AI Lead Act is a current bill on the Senate floor that would establish a federal cause of action for individuals harmed by AI systems to sue AI companies. Related to this issue of ethics is privacy as it seems that whether one is casually talking out loud or looking at something online, AI is "listening" and Big Brother or Sister is watching. And last, should AI replace us, as many CEOs have indicated, or rather should there be more "human-centered AI" where a person is still the key, ultimate decision maker?

I am certainly a great fan of AI and someone who has seen the Springs and Winters of AI over my past 43 years in the AI field. I am thrilled that AI has become more mainstream and can achieve great results for organizations. But I am also cautious, especially seeing such reports by MIT indicating that 95% of the GenAI implementations in organizations surveyed haven't created the value and associated outcomes anticipated. I also see in the classroom how GenAI is being used by students without giving much thought. Namely, the students aren't using their own creativity and originality and simply letting the GenAI system do the work for them. GenAI systems could enhance brainstorming and critical thinking if used correctly by the students, but I fear the students are "copping out" and getting lazy in their thinking and writing.

So, where do we go from here? It is only going to speed up as we move closer to the Quantum Computing era. My feeling is that AI will continue to be ubiquitous in the years ahead. Everyone will have at least one personal agent who will be their personalized assistant. Students entering college will bring their agents with them to further individualize their educational experience through adaptive learning. Organizations will continue to apply AI to improve their business and operational activities.

Even though AI will continue to permeate society in many ways, I hope we don't reach (and I believe we won't) the point of AI singularity whereby AI surpasses human intelligence and self-improves at an exponential rate leading to unpredictable explosion and existential threats. Towards ensuring our safety, we have been investigating Frontier AI issues whereby the most advanced AI models are being developed and we must prepare for proper transparency and catastrophic risks. In fact, California recently passed the first U.S. Frontier AI Law in September 2025 which, among other things, requires large developers to publish their frontier AI frameworks to explain how they plan to mitigate catastrophic risks.

Exciting, fast moving times are ahead as we further accelerate in this age of AI. However, we must continue to be mindful of keeping a "human-centric AI" perspective so that we won't be "in a rage" as we move forward.

AI or IA?

No matter what your read, what you hear, and what you are told, AI is omnipresent. The "AI University" is a title that universities are starting to cling to, such as the University of Florida striving to become the AI University in integrating AI across all disciplines. The Chronicle of Higher Education (April 8, 2025) published an op-ed piece about whether you are ready for the AI University. And countries, like Singapore, are actively integrating AI into education at the K-12 levels, not just in their higher education institutions.

Skeptics of AI have talked about "devouring" the web, energy concerns, AI bias, and job loss from AI. An MIT report in August 2025 found that only 5% of custom GenAI tools survive the pilot-to-production cliff, as integration with existing systems and workflows have been challenging for companies.

Although there are truths to these potential downsides of AI, the era of AI opens up tremendous opportunities for innovation and productivity. Even going back to 2023, Forbes found that 55% of U.S. educators surveyed indicated that AI improved learning outcomes. The Digital Education Council Global AI Faculty Survey 2025 cited that 86% of global faculty see themselves using AI in teaching in the future. Penn Wharton's Budget Model estimates that AI will increase productivity and GDP by 1.5% by 2035, nearly 3% by 2055, and 3.7% by 2075. They also predict that 40 percent of current GDP could be substantially affected by GenAI. And, get ready for the next era…of Quantum Computing, where quantum computers can accelerate AI tasks.

So, two key questions surface, "How should organizations, whether universities, businesses, government, or not-for-profits, be prepared for integrating AI into their bloodstream?" And, "are we moving in the right direction in terms of the focus being on Artificial Intelligence versus perhaps Intelligence Amplification (IA)?" By IA, we mean a more person-centered AI approach where the ultimate decision maker is the human and AI systems are being used more in a decision support mode to assist us as the key decision makers.

Let's tackle the first question of AI readiness. Organizations first need to have a proper data strategy and governance model to ensure that their data is accurate, reliable, unbiased, and secure. If Small Language Models, or what people are saying as Specialized Domain Models, are trained and built on flawed data, the AI output will result in a garbage-in garbage-out phenomenon.

Having Domain-Specific Language Models, along with using Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), is the current and future direction for many organizations. In addition, Agentic AI will continue to play an important role in planning, performing, and deciding on behalf of users. McKinsey talks about the need for a new paradigm for AI architecture, what they are calling the agentic AI mesh, which will allow the integration of both custom-built and off-the-shelf agents. These developments, along with the realization of needing proper AI training and education, change management processes, and human-AI collaboration, will allow organizations to become more successful in their organizational practices. In addition, even though the jury is still out, a Chief AI Officer could be helpful in spearheading the AI strategy at the enterprise level.

Now, addressing the second question of automation versus support, this issue becomes particularly “acute” (no pun intended) in healthcare. AI systems used in radiology have already exhibited high diagnostic accuracy and clinical value. In May 2025, a GenAI system deployed in real-time across Northwestern Medicine’s network of 11 hospitals, created a 15.5% boost in radiograph report completion efficiency with some radiologists having gains even up to 40%. The question of the “physician in the loop” is particularly relevant in the use of AI systems—who has the ultimate say? And, given a litigious society as the U.S., what happens if the AI system becomes the reasonable standard of care, and it makes a mistake (as we are already seeing GenAI systems hallucinate) whereby the doctor relies on the AI system as the “ultimate judgment”? Who is responsible? Certainly, we will see more physician-machine (AI) collaborations in co-existing roles, and Harvard research already suggests that physician-machine collaboration will outperform either one alone.

I wonder where we are heading. It’s almost impossible to keep up-to-date now in the AI field as new products, discoveries, and research are being created every day. Looking at education, children in grade school are already using personalized AI agents to help them in their learning process, and just imagine when it’s time for them to enter college. Compounding this scenario is how quantum computing will change the world, as pointed out by the August 1, 2025 Wall Street Journal article with the same title.

AI Governance: The Secret Sauce

As AI permeates universities, and society in general, universities and colleges are dealing with the best ways to ensure AI governance on campus. Generally speaking, there are three types of universities in dealing with our AI era. The “progressive” type, like University of Florida and Ohio State University, where the notion exists of becoming an “AI University” or “AI Fluent” in terms of infusing AI throughout education, research, business operations, and policies. The “middle-of-the-road” type, like Indiana University, which doesn’t necessarily mandate or require AI for students, but offers free AI resources for strongly encouraging the students (and faculty, staff, and administration) to become AI literate. And the third is the “resistance” type, whereby universities are strictly opposed to the AI push. For example, some universities in the Netherlands have had hundreds of faculty sign a letter advocating against the use of AI on their campus.

My perspective is that AI is here to stay and it’s imperative that proper AI “shared” governance be instituted at universities. Some universities like Brown, Touro, and others have created senior Provost in AI positions to lead and spearhead an AI strategy for the university.

Part of institutionalizing AI within the university involves an AI Council, Steering Committee, or Working Group consisting of appropriate representatives from administration, faculty, staff, and students. Typically, the Chief AI Officer or equivalent at the university will chair this entity. Faculty and student representation across the campus is an essential part of this structure. Administrative/staff representation from IT, Library, HR, Institutional Research, Advancement/Development, Finance, Marketing, Enrollment, and Legal are also key players on this AI Governance entity.

According to the Forbes September 3, 2025 article, "*AI is Everywhere in Higher Ed. Where's the AI Governance*," the "lack of governance frameworks leaves institutions vulnerable to FERPA violations, algorithmic bias, accessibility failures, and erosion of student trust." Both students and faculty want clarity and transparency. Already, there have been cases where a Northeastern University student demanded her tuition fees back after learning that her professor was secretly using AI gools to generate notes, even though he didn't allow his students to use AI tools. Students are also wondering what is the value-add of high-priced institutions if their professors overly use AI. Faculty also want AI policies and governance structures to ensure their proper utilization of AI in their teaching, research, and writing.

Unfortunately, one size doesn't fit all. Each university or college has its own culture. However, one thing is certain for sure—without proper AI governance in place, the university is taking unnecessary risks for data security breach, compliance issues, ethical concerns, and mistrust which will ultimately surface down the road.