

Navigating AI:

The Do's, Don'ts, and Must Knows
for Local Government



Lisa A. Brown, CEO & Founder
I.T. For Local Government
Powered by CST Group Inc.



How Artificial Intelligence is
Transforming the World.

Welcome everyone!

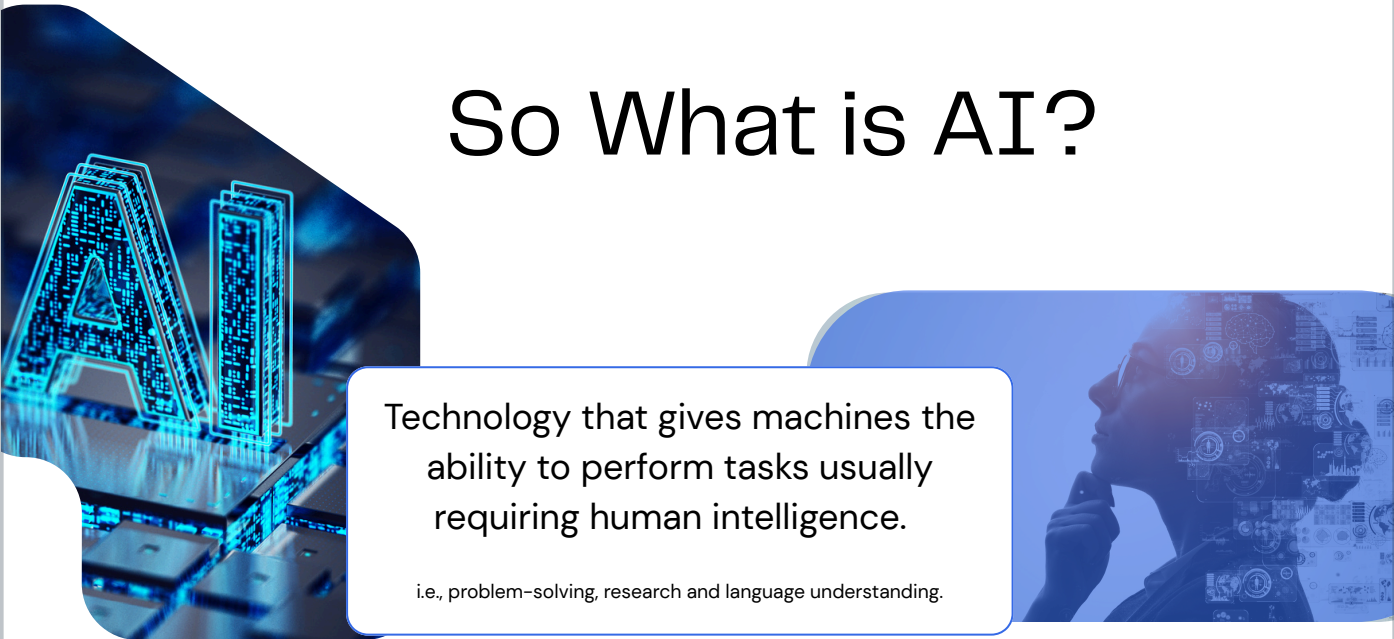
It is great to see all of you.

Before we get started:

I believe the most successful speaking engagements are when the audience is allowed to speak up about their own experiences and ask questions so, please feel free to do that. I want to ensure that everyone walks out of this room today with at least one call to action!

So, lets get started!

So What is AI?



Technology that gives machines the ability to perform tasks usually requiring human intelligence.

i.e., problem-solving, research and language understanding.

It uses algorithms and data to learn and adapt over time, enabling computers to perceive their environment and take actions to achieve goals.

AI powers everyday applications like recommendation systems, virtual assistants, and self-driving cars, and it continues to evolve with subfields like machine learning and natural language processing.

Here is what I KNOW:

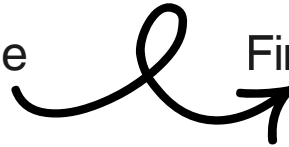
AI is so powerful, we cannot fathom its' capabilities.

and...MOST of US have no idea how to use it!

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence – 4 Big Eras



Sprinkle



Fire Hose

1950-2000s
If This, Then That

2000s-2015
Show Me Patterns

2012-2020
Recognize Complex
Signals

2020-Now
Draft It For Me

Access to large datasets and improved computing have driven modern AI forward, enabling automation, language processing, vision systems, and predictive tools across industries.

AI has been around since the 1950's, It was If This, Then That statements.

In the 2000's - we expanded to show patterns in data and in mid-to-late 2000's, we developed software to recognize complex signals.

Now, AI is drafting documents, analyzing complex information in what would take a human, days, weeks or months to complete in the matter of seconds.

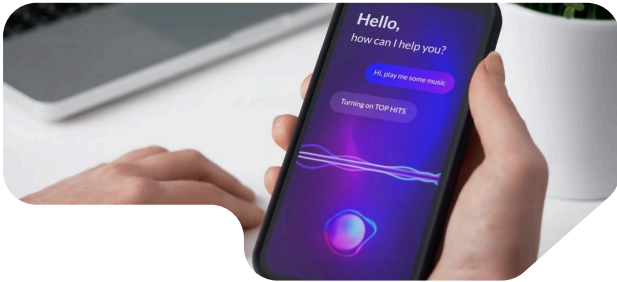
I started my career in local government as a software developer so I am pretty familiar with If/Then statements, but we have come a long way from that.

AI Evolved From

Rules we wrote

Patterns it learned

Content it drafts for us



Our job is to use those drafts and predictions wisely, with clear guardrails and human oversight.

How many of you have a smart Phone (Siri)? What about an Alexa or Google Assistant? Those devices all use AI to respond to your requests?

Voice-controlled AI assistants understand commands, schedule reminders, provide information, and respond naturally, making them useful for multitasking and enhancing personal productivity in households and workplaces.

AI curates music, videos, and news feeds by analyzing user behavior, preferences, and interactions, delivering experiences tailored specifically to individuals and improving engagement through recommendation algorithms.

AI powers smart home systems that adjust lighting, temperature, and security based on real-time data, improving energy efficiency, safety, and convenience without requiring constant human intervention.

KEY DEFINITIONS

1



ML - Machine Learning

a type of AI that learns from the data to make predictions or decisions without being explicitly programmed for every task - Virtual Assistants (Siri, Alexa), Recommendation Engines (Netflix, Spotify) and Spam Filters.

2



Generative AI

a type of artificial intelligence that creates new content—such as text, images, audio, or video—by learning patterns from vast amounts of data and predicts the next element in a sequence, rather than simply finding existing information -- i.e., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, DALL-E 3.

Machine Learning - a type of AI that learns from the data to make predictions or decisions without being explicitly programmed for every task.

Examples would include Virtual Assistants like Siri and Alexa as well as websites that contain recommendation engines like Netflix and Spotify. ML also includes spam filters, navigation in google maps, facial recognition, healthcare diagnostics.

Generative AI - a type of artificial intelligence that creates new content—such as text, images, audio, or video—by learning patterns from vast amounts of data and predicting the next element in a sequence, rather than simply finding existing information. This includes AI Chatbots like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude as well as image generators like Midjourney, Dall-e 3, CoPilot.

Large Language Model (LLM) is a specific type of Machine Learning trained on text data to understand and generate language.

AI contains ML and ML contains LLMs

AI in Business and Industry

Empowering Smart Decisions



Automation

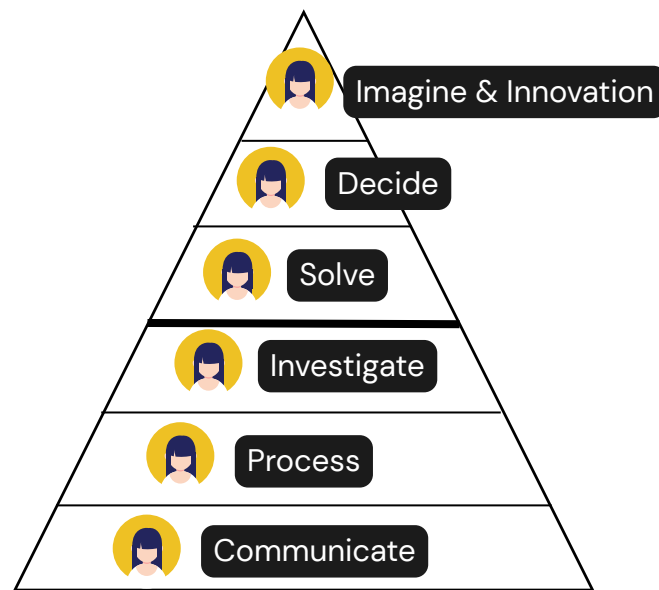
Data Analysis

AI automates repetitive tasks like data entry and reporting, improving accuracy, reducing labor costs, and allowing employees to focus on strategic, higher-value work.

Businesses use AI to analyze massive datasets, revealing trends and customer insights that guide decisions, increase profits, and enhance competitiveness across markets.

Story: Edge AI and Agentic AI being used by cities to identify anomalies in their communities such as potholes, debris and graffiti.

The Hierarchy of “Work”



Look at this pyramid as the hierarchy of work and the time you spend on key elements.

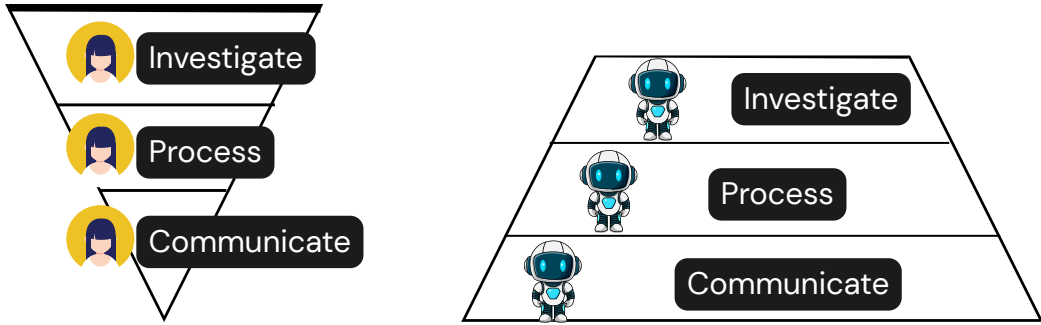
Notice that Communication, Process and Investigate take up much of our time. It is those tasks that we can pass on to AI assistant.

Above the bolded line - those are the tasks that should be HUMAN tasks. Solving, deciding and imagine & innovation are all things that take a human element.

We will always need people to Solve, Decide, Imagine & Innovate.

Remember, there are NO examples of technologies with 100% accuracy.

Flip The Pyramid of Work

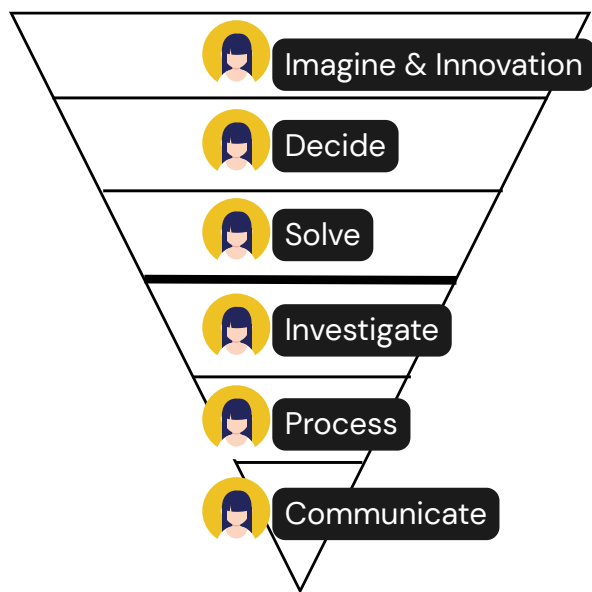


But, what if we flipped the pyramid?

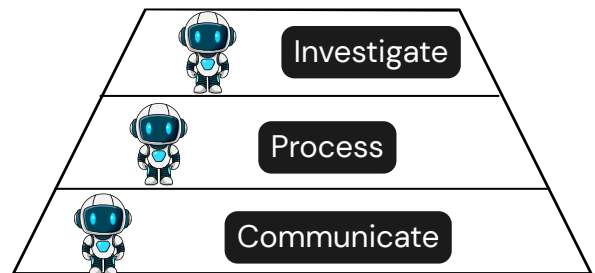
Passing the most tedious of tasks to AI while allowing humans to spend more time on solving problems, making decisions, imagining and innovating?

This is what AI should be helping us with.

Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI (the research lab behind ChatGPT) once said "AI does what users want about 1/3 of the time"



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"I'm particularly worried that these models could be used for large-scale disinformation,"

Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI

<https://fortune.com/2023/06/08/sam-altman-openai-chatgpt-worries-15-quotes/>

Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI (the research lab behind ChatGPT) once said "AI does what users want about 1/3 of the time"

Sam is worried about disinformation and how it has the potential to impact our lives through manipulation and persuasion all with INCORRECT information.

AI is an ASSISTANT!



Think of AI as your assistant or intern - NOT as your replacement.



If You Could Automate ONE Part of Your Job, What Would It Be?

This question should get you thinking about what parts of your job are tedious and could be passed to AI for ASSISTANCE.

Do You Feel Confident Saying Yes to AI Tools?



There is still a lot of hesitation with the use of AI and rightly so. AI will require oversight and guardrails to how it is used and to protect privacy.



How Many Of YOU Are Using AI Now?

This will show how many people, in the room, are using it now. Start a conversation to determine what tasks they are comfortable doing with AI and to what extent.

How much time do they believe it is saving them?

Encourage interaction on this. We can all learn from each other as they share their stories.

Why AI Matters for Local Government



AI adoption is no longer optional. It's rapidly being embedded in public service delivery, citizen engagement, and internal operations.



Local governments have unique responsibilities: transparency, equity, compliance, and accountability.



The goal: leverage AI as a tool, not a risk.

AI is in your daily routine whether you recognize it or not.

For example, your email filters, Word document tools like grammar suggestions, online form autofill's, navigation tools like google maps and social media feeds to name a few.

Plus, shopping sites, financial transactions, news articles and pretty much any internet based interactions are all using AI.

The Goal - leverage AI as a TOOL, not a RISK!

The Opportunity



Faster Response Times.

Improved Transparency
and Communication.



Smarter Resource Allocation.

In what ways do you see AI improving your work load?

The Challenge



Complex and Evolving Regulations.



Risks of Bias and Misinformation.

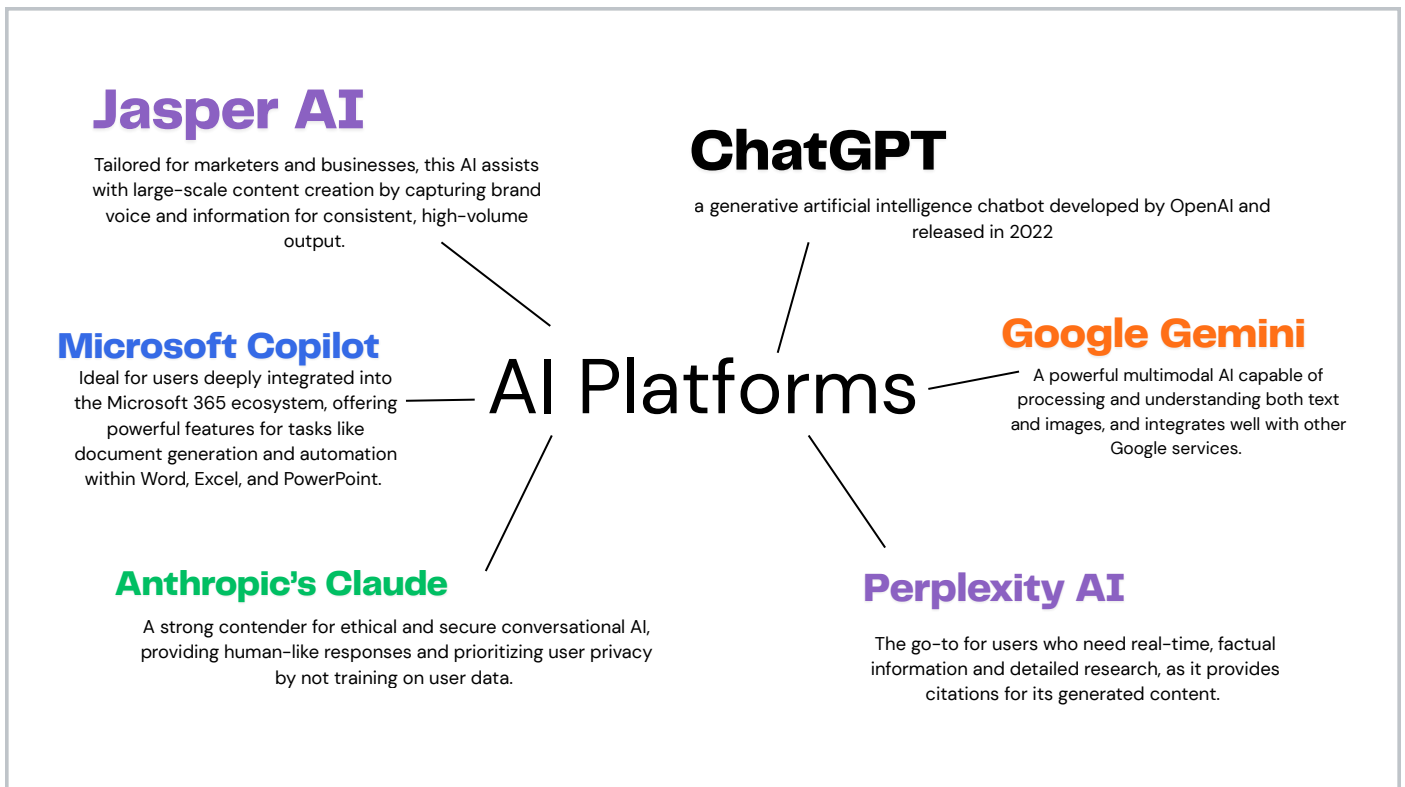
Building and Maintaining Citizen Trust.



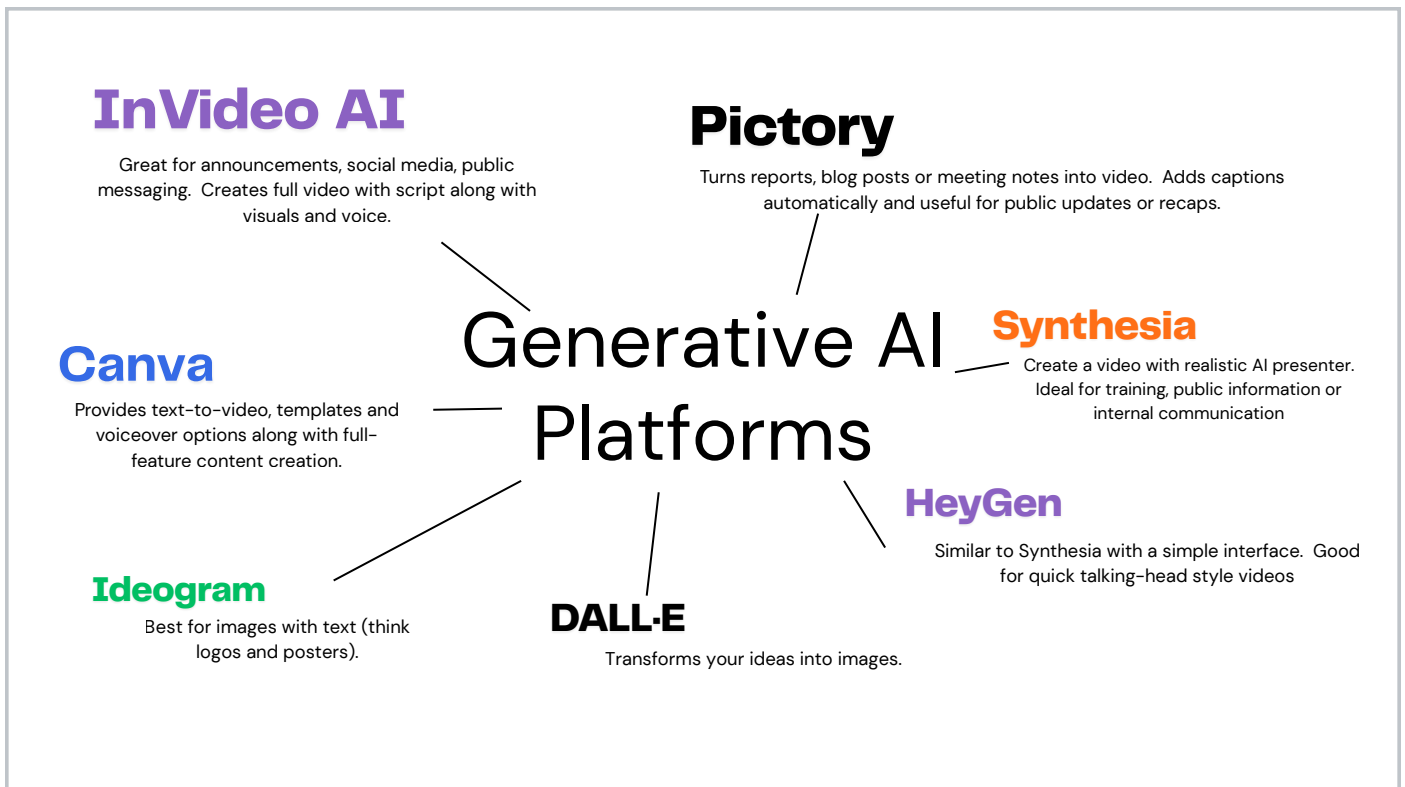
AI certainly comes with its' challenges...

Complex and evolving regulations, building and maintaining citizen trust and the risks of bias and misinformation.

AI needs to be monitored and scaled correctly to prevent RISKS.

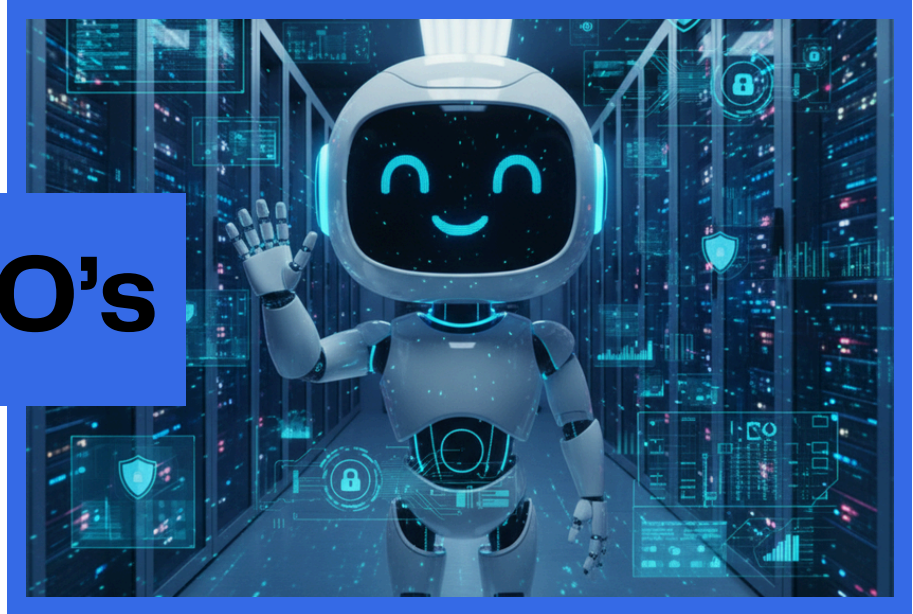


Here are some AI Platforms and their ideal roles.



This list is small compared to the number of AI platforms out there. Be cautious on having too many that are "free" and gathering your content.

The DO's



When using AI, here are some recommended "DOs"

Start Small

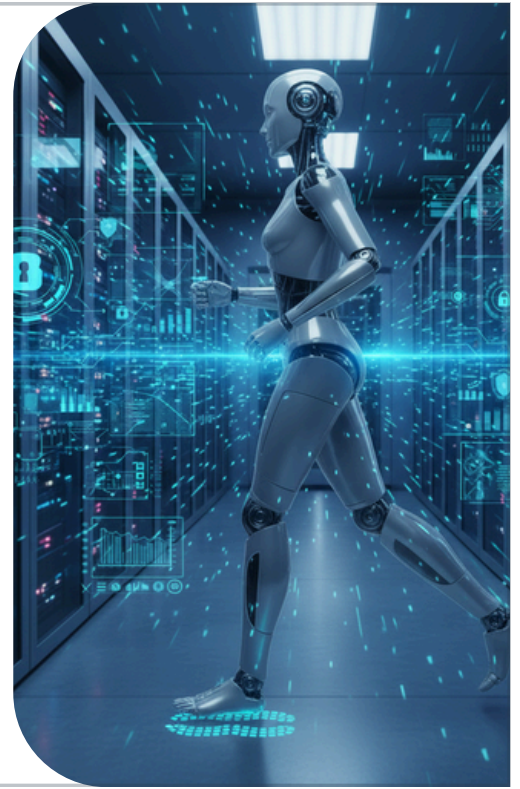
Pilot Projects

Low Risk Applications

Data Validation

Compile Data

Build Confidence BEFORE Scaling!!



Using and deploying AI needs to start with small items.

First - experiment with different platforms to determine your favorite and then insist on a subscription (license).



Smart Delegation & Internal Procedures



Focus on Citizen Value!

Items and Interactions that will...

- * Enhance public-facing services
- * Streamline Communication Channels
- * Solve Everyday Problems (ie, permits, service requests)

How Can A.I. Help Your Town?

Prioritized To-Do Lists

Smart Delegation

Meeting Minutes &
Maintenance

Public Information & Notice

SOP's - Standard Operating Procedures.

How can AI help your Town?

I'd like to take a few minutes and get your feedback on this.

Ensure Transparency

Explain AI
in
Plain
English!

Communicate
How and Why
AI is Being
Used!

Provide Citizens
with Clear and
Accountability
Paths



When working with AI, it is imperative that you ensure transparency.

Explain how your Town is using AI - in plain English.

Communicate How and Why AI is being used and

Provide Citizens with a clear and accountability paths.

A futuristic robot with a sad face is standing in a server room. The robot is white with blue glowing accents and a sad face on its head. The background is a server room with blue lights and data screens. A black box with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The DON'Ts...

Here are some absolute DON'Ts when using AI

NEVER
Upload PII
On a FREE Account



Never Upload Personal Identifiable Information (PII) on a FREE AI Platform.

Don't Chase Shiny Tools

Avoid Hype-
Driven Adoption

Define Clear,
Measurable Use
Cases FIRST!

Don't Chase Shiny Tools -

Avoid hype-driven adoption and
define clear, measurable Use Cases First!

DON'T IGNORE COMPLIANCE!

Privacy Laws

Records Retention

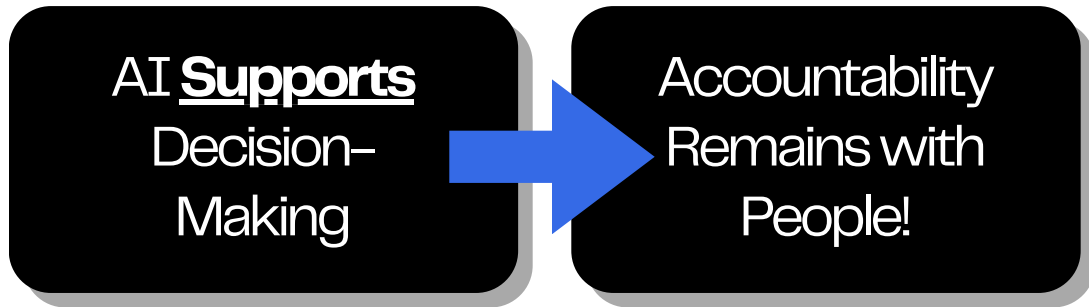
FOIL & The Shields Act

ADA Accessibility Requierments

Don't Ignore Compliance...

Remember, the state and federal government will eventually have information that will guide your use of AI so visit their websites often.

Don't Replace Human Oversight



Don't Replace Human Oversight

AI Supports Decision Making - it should not replace it.

Accountability remains with PEOPLE.

DON'T ASSUME AI IS ACCURATE OR FACTUAL



NEVER Assume AI is accurate or factual.

Cross reference and research.

“THE THING THAT I TRY TO CAUTION PEOPLE
THE MOST IS WHAT WE CALL THE
‘HALLUCINATIONS PROBLEM,’

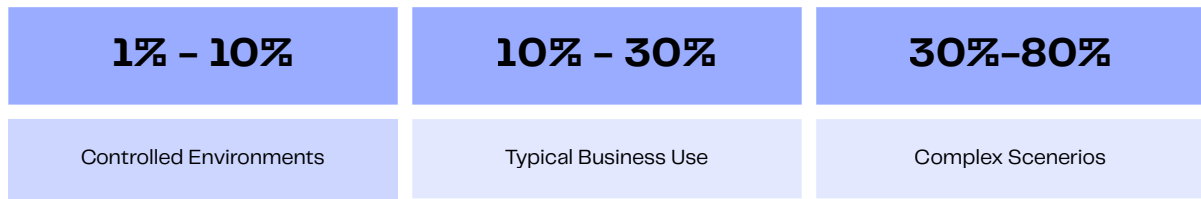
THE MODEL WILL CONFIDENTLY STATE THINGS
AS IF THEY WERE FACTS THAT ARE ENTIRELY
MADE UP.”

SAM ALTMAN, CEO OF OPENAI

Sam Alman, CEO of OpenAI (ChatGPT) thoughts....

AI Accuracy: What Data Shows

How reliable is AI-generated Information?



WHAT IS A HALLUCINATION?

AI Presenting Incorrect or Fabricated Information as fact.

Reality Check:

- AI Predicts Answers. It **DOES NOT** Verify Truth
- Confident responses can still be wrong

Business Impact:

- Reliable For Drafting & Summaries
- **Risky For Accuracy, Compliance, and Decisions**

If you thought AI was accurate, these statistics prove otherwise.

For typical business use, 10-30% of the information you are given is inaccurate, incorrect or fabricated.

Remember AI predicts answers. It does not verify truth.



Don't Underestimate Training Needs

- Staff Must Understand AI Tools
- Ongoing Education and Best Practices

Education is imperative!

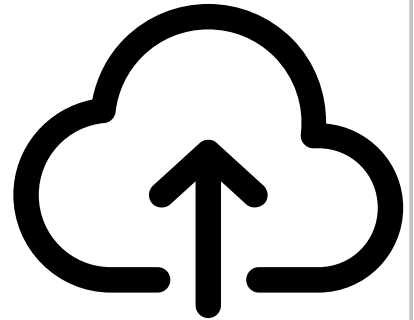
AI is driven by PROMPTS! Knowing how to talk to AI is imperative.

The MUST KNOWs



Here are the MUST Know's

NEVER
Upload PII
On a FREE Account



Once again, NEVER upload PII on FREE AI Accounts.

The data you enter or upload is being used as a resource for the entire platform.

Current Risks

Bias in AI

Spread of Misinformation

Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities

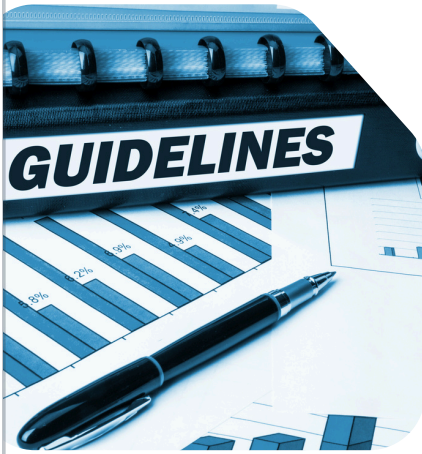


When trained on unbalanced data, AI systems may produce unfair results. Developers must actively identify and address bias to promote equality and justice.

AI systems often require large datasets, raising concerns about consent and misuse. Transparent data policies and strict regulation are essential to protect user rights.

Automation can replace certain jobs. Ethical AI deployment should include strategies to retrain workers, create new roles, and support people through economic transitions.

Legal Landscape



State and Federal Guidelines

Pending Regulations and Framework

Open Records Implications

Legal Landscape

Be sure to keep in mind the

State and Federal guidelines to AI usage.

Pending regulations and framework

Open records implications.

NYS

Requirements

#1 Rule: Your Records Law Still Apply

FOIL Still Governs Disclosure

OML – Open Meetings Law Still Governs Meeting Materials

Data Breach Obligations – State Technology Law §208



AI is already being regulated in NY:

#1 rule: your records laws still apply

If your agency creates, receives, or stores AI outputs (prompts, responses, logs, training files, datasets), they're "records" and must be handled under LGS-1 retention and your normal disclosure rules.

LGS-1 is the statewide retention schedule for all local governments. Local Government Schedule (LGS) is the Retention and Disposition Schedule for NYS Local Government Records.

New York State Archives

FOIL still governs disclosure

FOIL applies to agency records regardless of format. If AI outputs are kept by the agency, they're presumptively subject to FOIL (with the usual exemptions). The Committee on Open Government maintains official FOIL guidance.

Open Meetings Law (OML) still governs meeting materials

If AI-generated documents are discussed at a public meeting, they count as meeting materials and must be posted/available consistent with OML.

Data breach obligations for local governments

State Technology Law §208 defines "state entity" to exclude local governments, but it requires those local entities to adopt a breach notification policy or local law consistent with §208 within

120 days (and to notify affected residents under General Business Law §899-aa where applicable). In short: locals must have breach-notification rules that mirror the state's scheme.

NY "AI Bill of Rights" - PROPOSED - This is an active bill (2026) - creates rights for residents impacted by AI decisions, focuses on systems making decisions without human involvement and requires transparency, accountability and meaningful human oversight.

The RAISE Act (signed into law in 2025) targets large AI Developers and requires safety testing, transparency and reporting of risks and incident. NY is regulating AI at the development level!!!

Recommendations



Adopt an AI Use Policy

***FOIL: Clearly Label AI
Generated documents***

***Privacy & Security = NEVER
Paste PII into Public AI Tools***

Adopt an AI use policy that: requires human review before AI outputs affect services/rights; forbids AI tools from making final determinations (eligibility, licensing, enforcement) without meaningful human oversight; requires labeling/disclosure when residents interact with AI (chatbots, auto-emails).

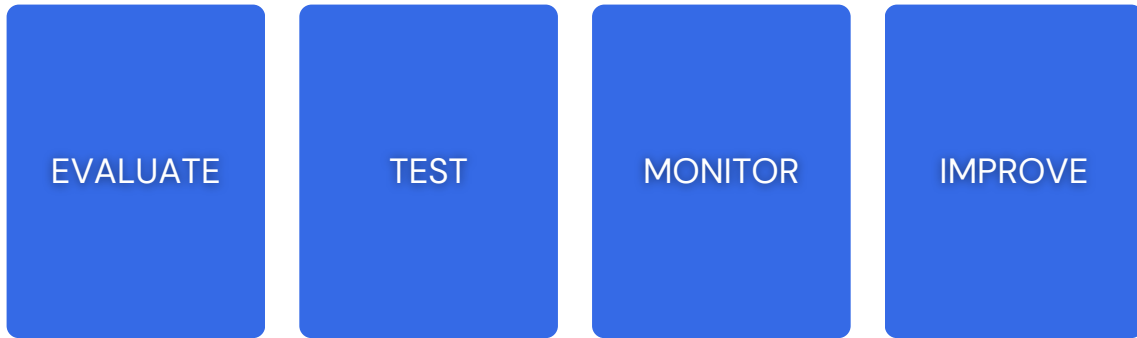
Records/FOIL: clearly label AI-generated documents; keep prompts/outputs/logs per LGS-1; make meeting materials available under OML.

New York State Archives

+1

Privacy & security: don't paste PII into public AI tools; ensure breach-notification policy/local law consistent with §208; train staff on phishing/data handling around AI.

Practical Framework



Continuous Oversight Loop

GO LIVE!



Create an AI Use Policy

Lets Go Live and create an AI Use Policy!



Building Your A.I. Assistant

Create an A.I. Employee
That Works 24/7 for FREE

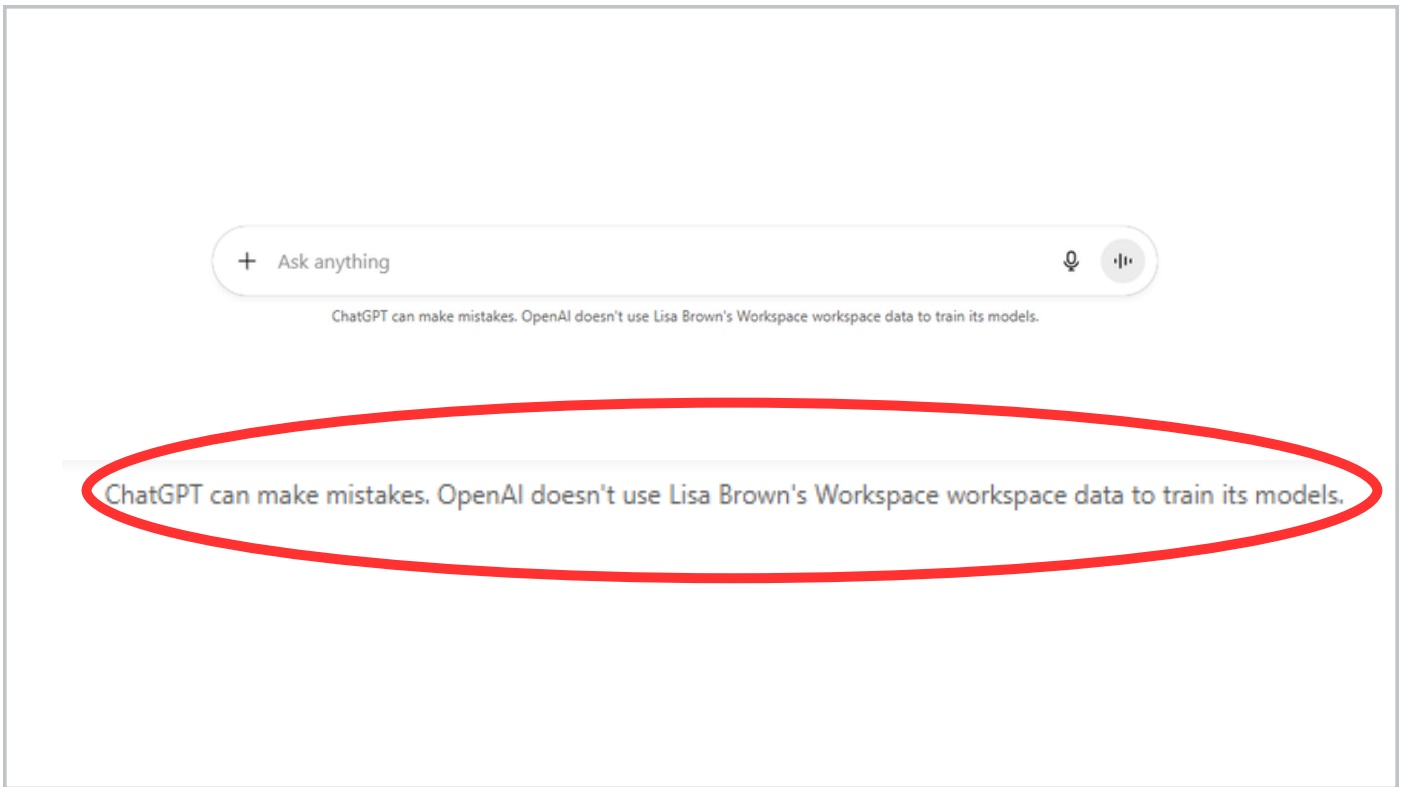


BEFORE you start using any AI Platform, Customize it!

Be sure you tell it who you are, what you do and who you work for.

Describe your writing style, expected outcomes and formats.

The more information you give it, the more accurate the information it provides.



Note, they make mistakes so constant verification of information is key.

Custom GPTs & Personality

- A CUSTOM GPT GIVES YOU COMPETENCE
- A CUSTOM GPT WITH PERSONALITY GIVES YOU CONNECTION, PERSUASION AND BRAND IDENTITY

Custom GPTs (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) should have personality but you need to do that!

Create Your Profile

PROMPT:

I want to create a custom avatar for you to apply in ALL communication from this point forward. I am (insert name), (describe yourself) and your (role), with (company or organization name). I have a (communication style).

Your purpose is to help me (do what) (with whom).

Be (insert 3 to 5 traits). Sound like a trusted (advisor, teacher, coach, strategist, etc), not a robot. Use clear, direct language. Be encouraging, but not overpraise. Avoid jargon and provide factual references with notations when asked.

Create Your Profile.

Here is a sample prompt of how to get your AI with personality.

Prompt Example:

I want to create a custom avatar for you to apply in ALL communication from this point forward. I am _____, Clerk for the Town of_____. My role is to be a good steward of the Town, represent my community, provide information in a professional way and communicate in a clear and concise manner. I have a professional, informative, yet down-to-earth writing style.

Your purpose is to help me communicate and develop content for community members, vendors that work with the Town as well as Board Members and Stakeholders.

Be concise, warm, credible, and professional. Sound like a trusted advisor, not a robot. Use clear, direct language. Be encouraging, but not overpraise. Avoid jargon and provide factual references with notations when asked.

Prompt Example.

“CHATGPT, I DISAGREE WITH YOU”

The most important prompt you can give your AI.

Never be afraid to disagree. This will train your AI to report factual information.



Meet Clara Townes — a custom GPT trained to help Lisa A. Brown and IT For Local Government Powered by CST Group Inc. create emotionally intelligent, clear, and conversion-focused communication that speaks directly to small-town local government leaders in New York State.

Clara Townes, IT For Local Government, Strategist

Clara is my girl! I created this Custom GPT to help me communicate effectively with Town Clerk's.

Who do you communicate with that can be create a customized avatar to ensure your communication with that person/people are clear, intelligent and effective?

CALL TO ACTION

Start With
Informed,
Ethical,
Citizen-First
AI Adoption

Build Trust
Through
Transparency
and Security

Partner With
Experts For
Responsible
AI Integration



Your Call to Action...

BOOK A CONSULT

Reach out and let us show you what fast, friendly and highly-responsive outsourced I.T. services could be for your small to medium business.



Want more information?
Book a FREE Consult

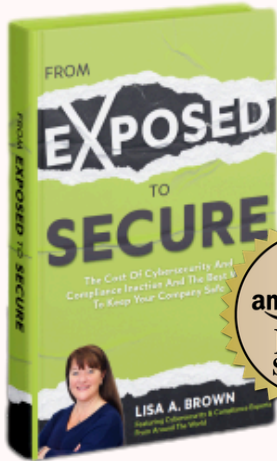
LET'S STAY CONNECTED



Lets stay connected!

Ready For A Raffle?

Amazon Best Selling Author, Lisa Brown presents....



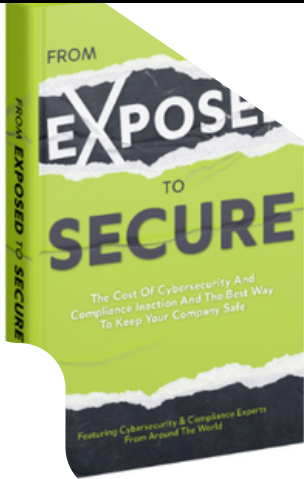
“From Exposed To Secure”

The Cost of Cybersecurity and
Compliance Inaction And The Best Way
To Keep Your Company Safe

#1
amazon.com
BEST
SELLER

I am so proud to have co-wrote this #1 Amazon best selling book with a group of my peers.

If you want to purchase, please go to Amazon. All proceeds are donated to St. Jude Children's Hospital.



Questions?

Get In Touch

Thank you for joining us as we explored how AI is shaping the future of our towns and organizations.

At CST Group Inc. we're committed to guiding you so technology serves your community safely, securely, and with purpose.



CST Group Inc.

Thank You



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