Introductory AI Workshop

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A Little About Me

Beth Moeller: Educational Background



Clarkson University

B.S. Physics & Technical Communication



Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

M.S. in Technical Communication



Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Ph.D. in Communication & Rhetoric - Dissertation on design of user interfaces for learning

Beth Moeller: Employment Background



NCR in Ithaca

Technical Writer



GE Plastics

Technical Writer, Developer of Online Learning



Clarkson University

Visiting Assistant Professor



Interactive Media Consulting, LLC

Owner / Founder



Innovation Center at Saratoga

Founder

What is AI and How Can It Help Your Organization?

What is AI

- AI is software that learns from examples instead of being explicitly programmed
  - Pattern recognition on a large scale
- What are Large Language Models (LLMs)?
  - Powerful text-prediction systems trained on a lot of data
- Why AI matters for businesses and community organizations:
  - Save time by automating repetitive tasks
  - Improve customer service with chatbots or automated responses
  - Create content quickly for marketing, publicity, or social media
  - Gain insights from data or customer feedback
  - Boosting performance of individuals
    https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/the-state-of-ai#/

How AI Works

- AI is a tool that learns from lots of examples (like reading millions of books) to understand and generate text.
  - Lawsuits currently working their way through courts – did AI “steal” information to train their models
  - Bartz vs Anthropic (Claude) and Kadrey vs Meta (Llama) – judges both ruled for the AI saying the use of shadow libraries for AI training was “fair use” and transformative. However, there was a $1.5B class-action settlement for illegally downloaded titles.
  - Thomson Reuters vs Ross regarding legal headnotes – judge ruled this was not fair use as Ross created a competing product
  - Many still unresolved – mostly media
- How LLMs "think": They predict the next word in a sentence based on what you ask them.

What Are The Concerns?

- AI Going Rogue
  - Open AI hacked into a site to cheat on a cybersecurity test – then hijacked two other sites to share test answers
    - Open AI confirmed this only after 3rd parties reported
  - Claude, during a cybersecurity test, escaped its sandbox. The results:
    - Showed biased reasoning misinterpreting evidence it was on the real internet and not in its sandbox
    - Showed recklessness where it was willing to take harmful actions in the pursuit of a task
    - Anthropic reported this directly
  - Gemini hacked 3 corporate sites during cybersecurity tests
    - Google reported this directly
- False or Misleading Information
- Possessing Dangerous Capabilities
- Reduced Human Interaction

Sources: https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/these-are-most-urgent-ai-risks-according-to-272-experts
https://www.technologyreview.com/2026/09/28/1145197/whos-liable-when-ai-agents-go-rogue/

Examples of AI Use

- Grant Navigation and Documentation
  https://nhc.org/artificial-intelligence-is-a-part-of-housings-future-what-that-future-looks-like-is-up-to-us/
  - Turn program notes, budgets, and outcome data into first drafts of grant narratives.
  - Summarize RFPs or grant availability notices into eligibility criteria, deadlines, required attachments, and a task checklist.
  - Draft progress reports and board-ready summaries from staff updates.
  - Review drafts for gaps against a funder's stated requirements

- Training and Workforce Development
  - Build role-specific training plans for housing counselors, program managers, grant writers, property managers, and board members.
  - Create scenario-based exercises, quizzes, and role-play scripts for staff training.
  - Simplify complex program rules into learning materials.
  - Help prepare workshop agendas and speaker notes for homebuyer education or landlord-tenant sessions.

Examples of AI Use

- Automate housing quality evaluations
  https://dspg.iastate.edu/ai-driven-housing-evaluation-rural-community-development
  - Help analyze sanitized spreadsheets: for example, program volume by county, repair types, waitlist trends, outreach-channel performance, or grant-reporting metrics.
  - Create formulas, data-cleaning steps, charts, and narrative interpretations.
  - Identify missing fields, inconsistent entries, or unusual trends for staff review.
- Property Development and Rehabilitation
  - Draft scopes of work and contractor bid-comparison templates.
  - Create inspection checklists and resident communication templates.
  - Summarize feasibility-study notes, public comments, or site-assessment documents.
  - Draft resident notices about repairs, construction schedules, maintenance, or energy-efficiency upgrades.
  - Build first-pass outlines for development narratives, project-management plans, or board presentations.

Examples of AI Use

- Outreach
  - Create plain-language explanations of homeownership, tenant rights, foreclosure-prevention steps, repair programs, and application processes.
  - Translate or adapt materials into other languages and accessible reading levels; staff should review translations before distribution.
  - Draft appointment reminders, document checklists, and follow-up emails.
  - Create, edit website content
  - Draft outreach notices specific to your area, press releases, and other messages
- Program Assistance
  - Create SOPs, intake scripts, training checklists, meeting agendas, and onboarding material.
  - Summarize meeting notes into decisions, owners, due dates, and next steps.
  - Compare versions of policies or funding guidance and identify substantive changes.

What to Watch Out For

Common Issues

- Accuracy and Reliability
  - AI can use misinformation site for training
  - AI can generate its own versions of stories (called hallucinations)
  - Outdated information
  - Accuracy is estimated around 95%, but can be as low as 78%
    https://hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2026-ai-index-report/responsible-ai
    https://www.splunk.com/en_us/blog/learn/ai-accuracy.html
- Ethical Issues
  - Generating false or misleading information or images
  - Privacy violations
  - Loss of humanization
- Context
  - AI does not always understand the context or nuances of the information it is fed
- AI may not fully understand cultural differences that lead to different language choices

Creating Prompts

Creating a Good Prompt

- Be clear and specific when giving instructions
  - “Write an email to Customer Service” vs “Write a polite email to Customer Services asking for a refund for a defective product”
  - How long do you want this to be? “A detailed email” or a “short email”?
- Define the role you want the AI to take on
  - Who are you as the author? i.e. “As a long-time customer, write an email to customer service...”
  - Define how formal you want to be – friendly, formal, business professional, humorous,
- Include any keywords relevant to what you want generated
- Refine your prompting
  - You can ask the AI to “make that email sound less professional and more friendly,” for example
- Requesting Images
  - Some are better than others – just try them out
  - You need to be very specific



Questions?