Humanoid Robot becomes Buddhist Monk

AI and the Higher Education Landscape: Implications for K-12 Leadership

Insights from George Fox University Spring 2026 AI Research Initiative

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May 12th AI EMPOWERED EDU CONFERENCE

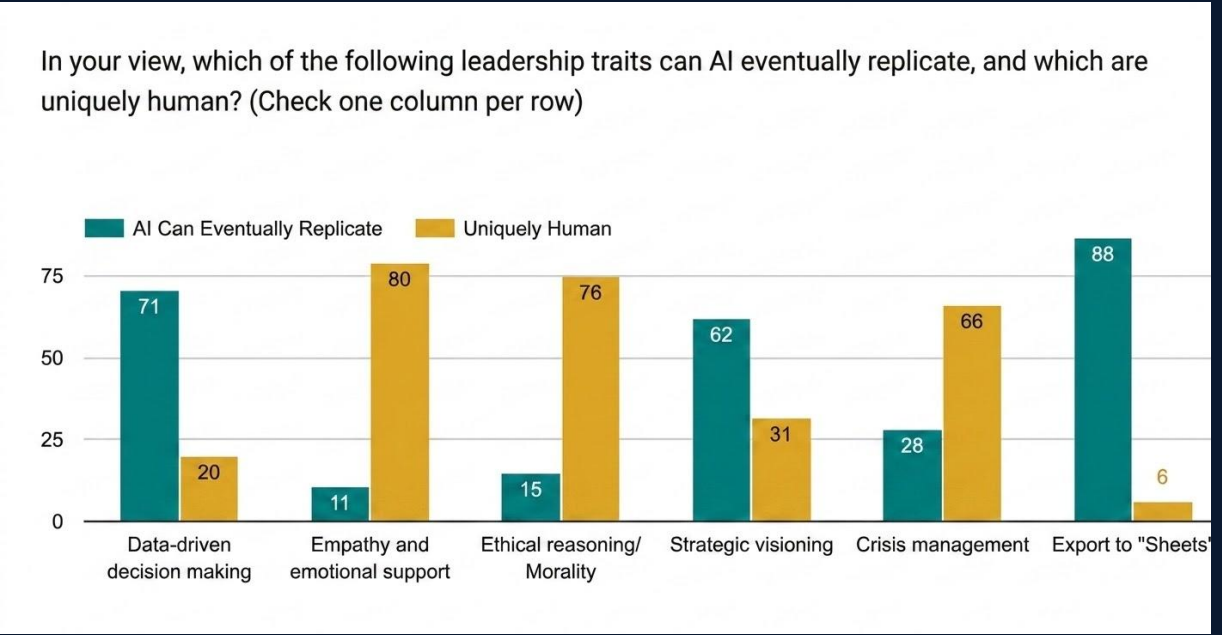
The Rapid Horizon

Context
Artificial intelligence is no longer "coming"—it is here.

The Challenge
Rapid integration is outpacing our ethical frameworks.

Key Question
How might we manage the human-AI interface in our work?

The Goal
Moving from reactive regulation to proactive leadership.



When poll is active respond at **PollEv.com /debbyespinor845**

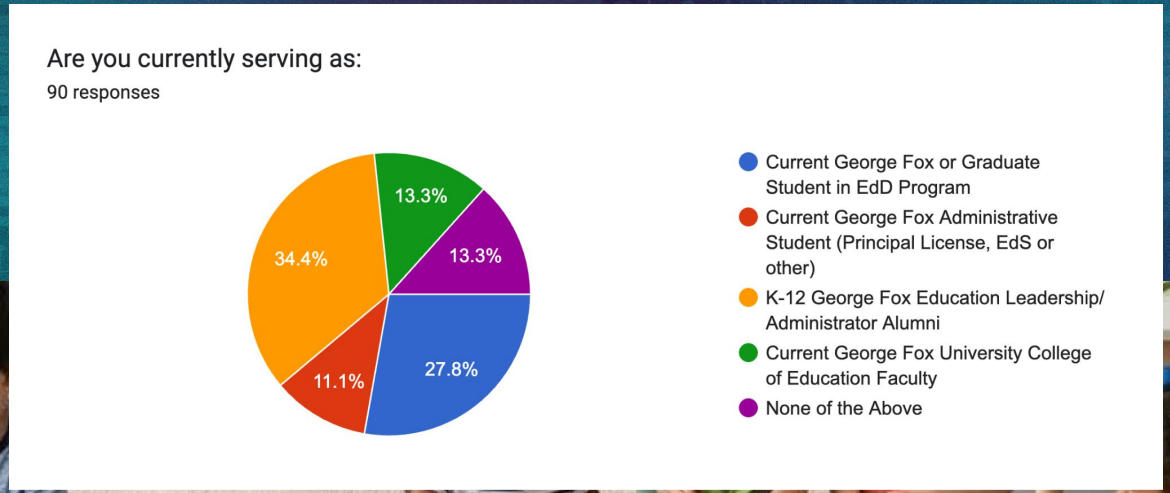
Send **debbyespinor845** and your message to **22333**

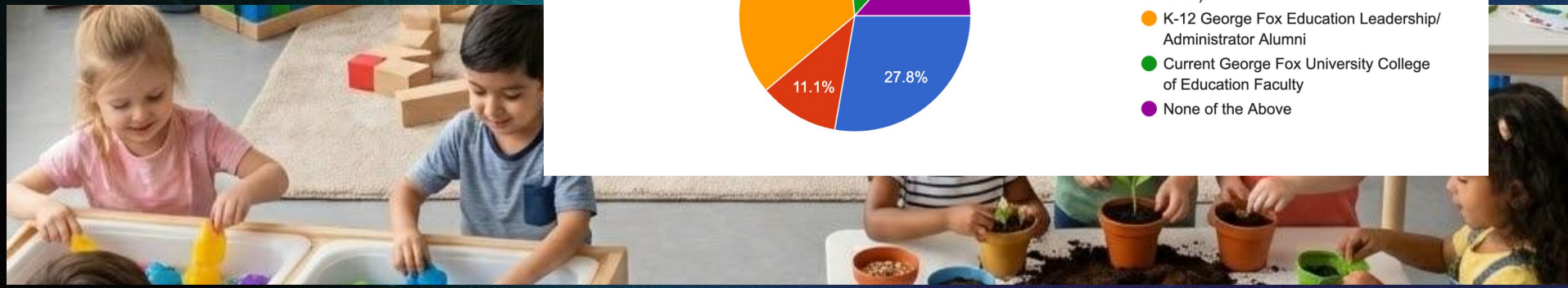
How might we manage the AI interface in our work?

https://PollEv.com/free_text_polls/jPAGgI7VnDhK2DK1muXzZ/respond

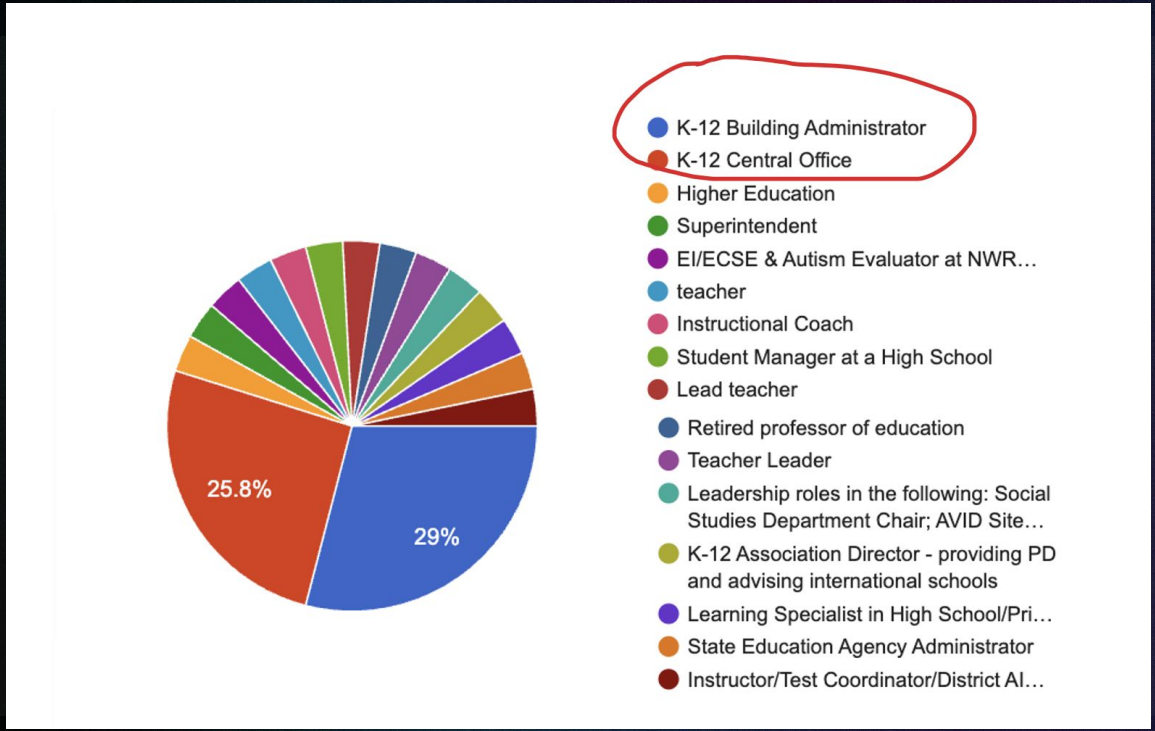
Research Context: Spring 2026

- Focus: K-12 stakeholders, graduate students, and faculty.
- Scope: Perceptions, usage patterns, and ethical concerns.
- Timeline: Real-time "on the ground" data from the current semester.
- Intent: Providing a baseline for future policy and practice.





Stakeholder Roles & Distribution



Data Source: "I currently serve as:" Survey Responses (n=31)

Question for all participants:

> *"As AI tools become capable of generating 'human-sounding' feedback and writing, how do you define* **'authenticity'** *in scholarship and leadership?"*
>
> *"At what point does reliance on AI compromise your* **professional integrity***?"*

Baseline Themes from Initial Question

1. The "Human-in-the-Loop" Mandate

AI must remain an **assistant, never an author**. Use the mantra "Keep the hard, keep your human". Authenticity exists when the original ideas, reasoning, and values emanate from the person.

2. AI as a Cognitive Tool, Not a Moral Agent

AI lacks a moral compass, faith, and a center. It cannot replicate nuanced decision-making rooted in lived experience or "original instructions". Integrity is lost when we stop thinking and blindly accept outputs.

3. The Dystopia of "AI Talking to AI"

Concern regarding the erosion of human connection. We must avoid a future where AI-generated student papers are graded by AI rubrics, bypassing meaningful mentorship and genuine relationship.

4. Transparency & "New Professionalism"

Authenticity is now a function of honesty. Integrating AI is acceptable if transparent. Success must prioritize the **quality of thought** over the quantity of content to maintain trust.

Blurring the Line: Human vs. Machine

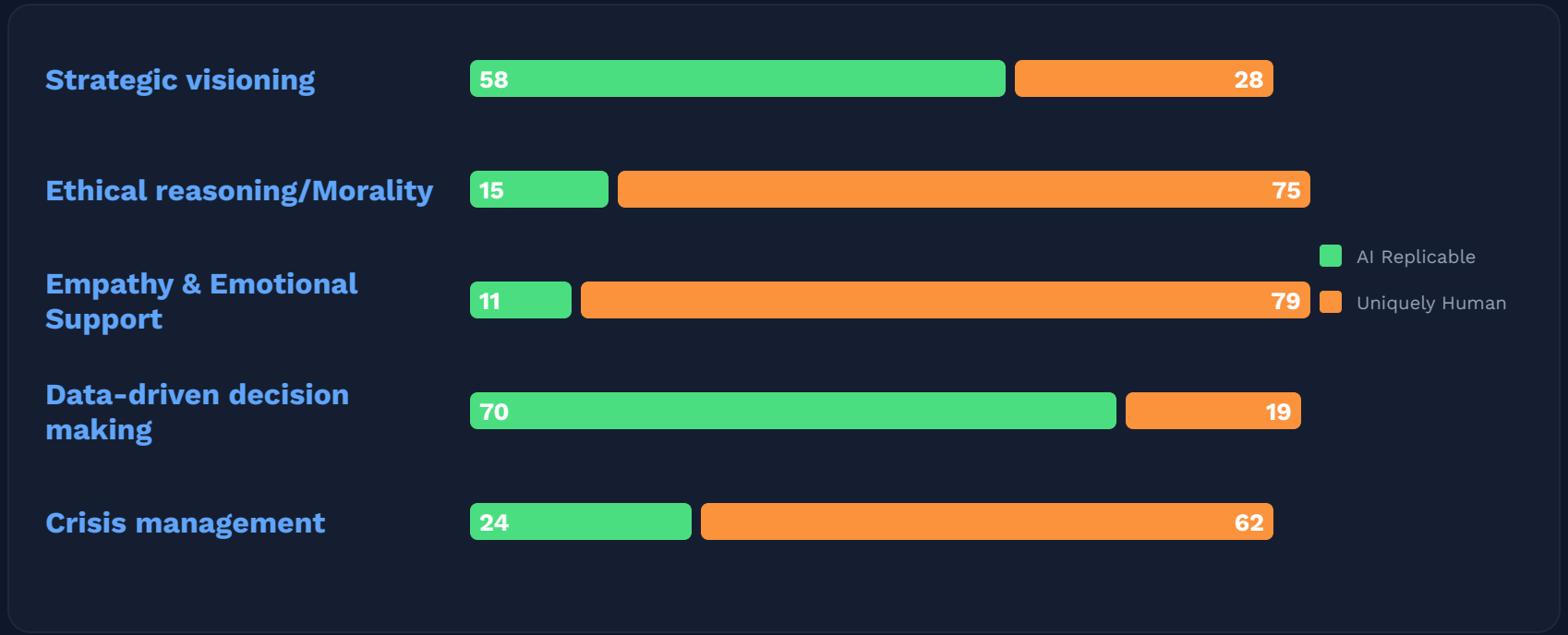
The Primary Concern

36.7% of respondents fear the erosion of authentic human connection as the biggest risk.

Systemic Shifts

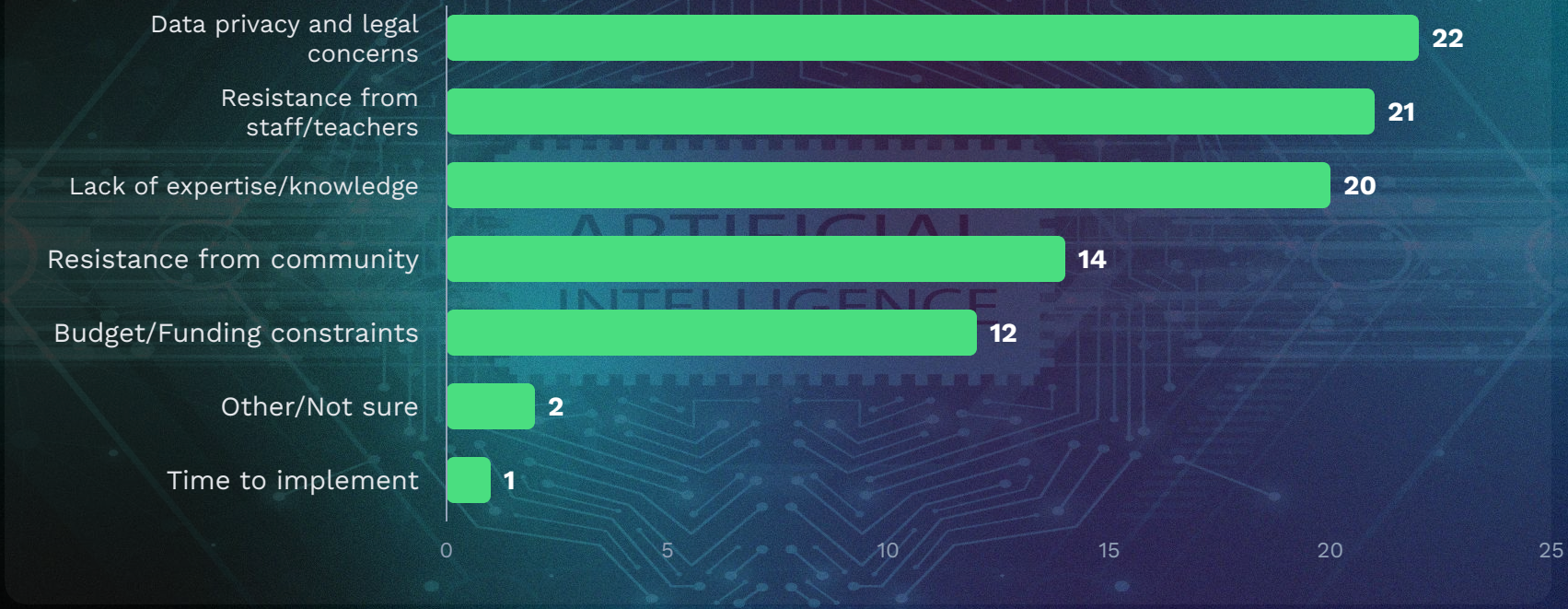
One-third (33.3%) point to the replacement of human decision-making and roles as the critical tipping point.

Leadership Traits: AI vs. Human Capacity



GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY AI PROJECT | Number of Responses per Category

Primary Barriers to Successful AI Integration



GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY AI PROJECT
N = 92

Interview Participants and Key Questions

Participants

4 Building principals

4 Classroom teachers

3 George Fox faculty

2 ESD employees

1 State employee

1 District administrator

Key Questions

Where in your circles is AI a topic of conversation?

How are you personally, and your district/school, using AI?

What are your major concerns surrounding AI implementation?

Where is the boundary between AI and human?

Emergent Themes from Interviews

Educational Perspectives

- Educators are divided over appropriate use of AI with students.
- Most uses seem to be for efficiency rather than “cognitively meaningful integration.”
- There is a fear that students will choose to outsource their learning.

Implementation Trends

- Many teachers are implementing, with district approval/urging, AI tools like Brisk.
- More advanced users are creating thought partners to assist in their work.
- Data analysis is a very common use for AI, with de-identified data.

What does this mean for practice?

- Clear district policies and procedures need to be developed for standardized guidance.
- Teachers need professional development to learn how to do “cognitively meaningful integration in their lessons.”
- Districts may want to carefully design uses that protect both student and employee privacy.

Current AI Adoption Prep Methods

No formal training currently provided

51.6% (16)

Mandatory district-wide training

35.5% (11)

Voluntary "Lunch and Learn" sessions

32.3% (10)

External consultants or vendors

22.6% (7)

Asynchronous online modules

6.5% (2)

TOP TEN SKILLS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SHOULD HAVE ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

1 AI FUNDAMENTALS

Understand key concepts: Machine Learning, Neural Networks, Deep Learning. How AI works.

2 ETHICS & BIAS

Recognize bias in data & algorithms. Discuss societal impacts & responsibility.

3 DATA LITERACY

Learn how data drives AI. Collect, prepare, and organize data responsibly.

4 BASIC PROGRAMMING

Gain foundational coding skills (e.g., Python, basic structures) to build simple AI.

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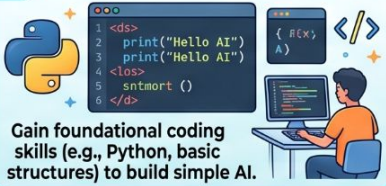
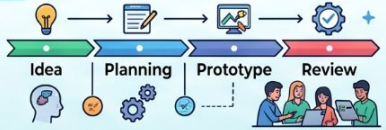


Gain foundational coding skills (e.g., Python, basic structures) to build simple AI.

7 SECURITY & PRIVACY

Understand data privacy and protection. Know cybersecurity risks in AI. Stay safe.

8 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

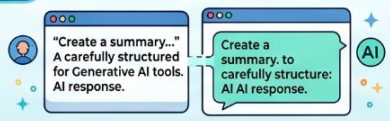


Move from an AI idea to a finished project. Plan, organize, and iterate on solutions.

5 CRITICAL THINKING

Evaluate AI-generated outputs. Identify limitations, inaccuracies, and hallucinations.

6 PROMPT ENGINEERING



Craft effective and structured prompts for Generative AI tools. Get better results.

9 AI TOOL PROFICIENCY

Hands-on experience with current AI platforms, libraries, and creative tools. Explore applications.

10 HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION

Learn to work alongside AI. Use its strengths while applying human judgment and creativity.

#AIForStudents #FutureSkills

Some Practical Suggestions on HOW TO USE AI IN YOUR WORLD

Scaling AI Literacy: Actionable Frameworks

District-Wide Literacy

Tools for developing district-wide AI literacy programs.

Ethical Advocacy

Practical frameworks for navigating ethical advocacy.

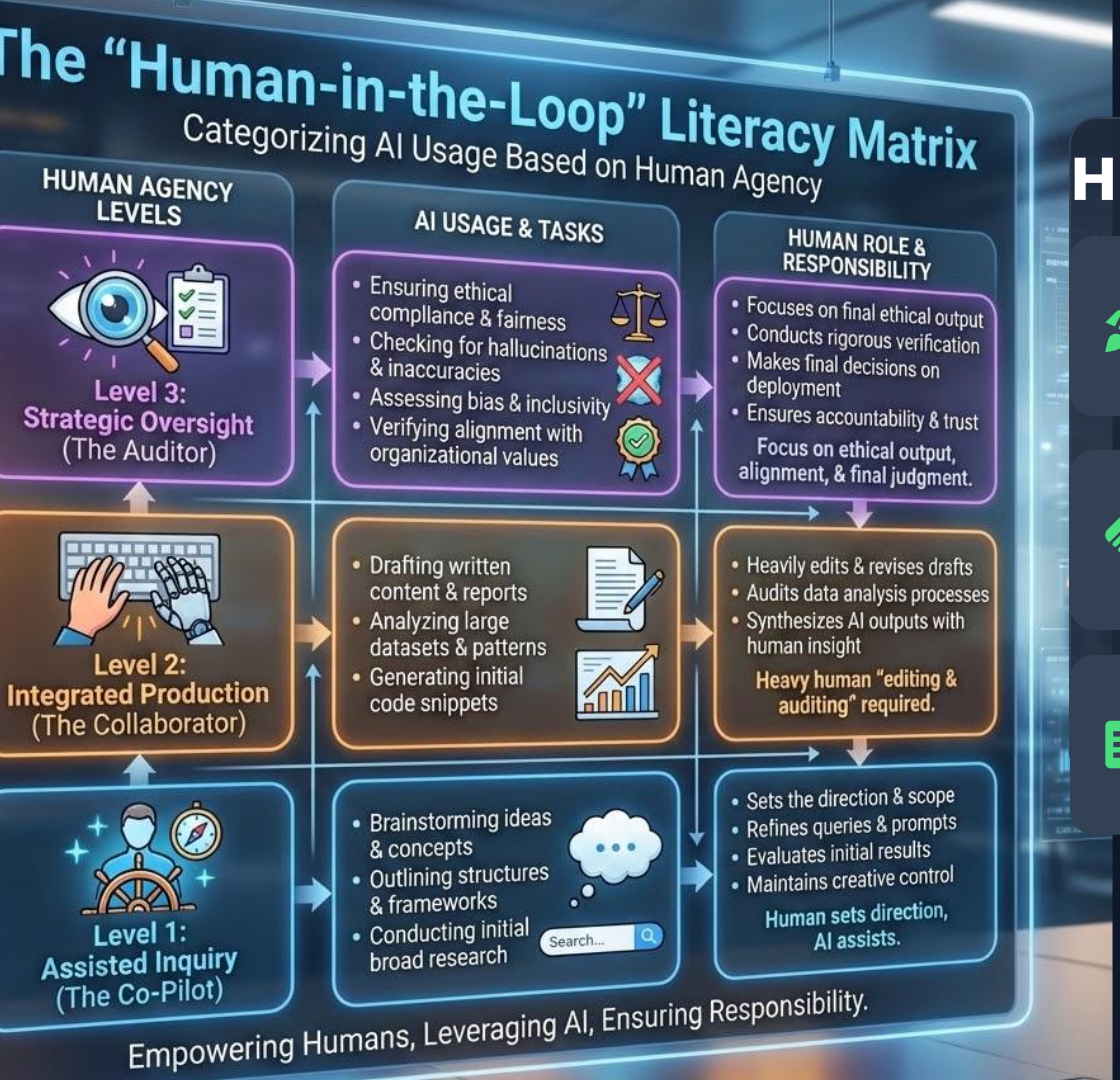
Leadership Strategies

Implementation strategies for K-12 and higher education leaders.

AI-Ready Educators

Developing educators through continuous support systems.

Scaling literacy through actionable frameworks ensures ethical and practical AI adoption across education levels.



Human Agency Levels

Assisted Inquiry (The Co-Pilot)
Brainstorming, outlining, and initial research. The human sets the direction.

Integrated Production (The Collaborator)
Drafting content and data analysis with heavy human "editing and auditing."

Strategic Oversight (The Auditor)
Focus on ethical output, bias detection, and alignment with district values.

Empowering Humans, Leveraging AI, Ensuring Responsibility.

Framework #2
TRAFFIC LIGHT FRAMEWORK

THIS IS A "YELLOW LIGHT" COURSE: AI tools will be allowed or encouraged for **some** activities but not others. The instructor will clarify when, where, and how AI may be used—see assignment details for clarification.

Zone	Usage Policy	Example Task
Red Zone	Human Only	Final summative assessments, deep personal reflections, and high-stakes social-emotional processing
Yellow Zone	Conditional Use	Drafting essays, coding help, or initial research requiring the proper citation.
Green Zone	Full Integration	Brainstorming, flashcard generation, scheduling, and administrative “busy work” automation.

"usage without a framework leads to anxiety, while usage with a framework leads to innovation." Survey Respondent

10 Questions from Andrew Maynard

AI and Higher Education

1. What does *competency* mean in an age of AI?
2. What does *success* mean in an age of AI?
3. Help students avoid the *illusion* of understanding?
4. Students as masters, teachers as apprentices?
5. What is the *value* of pursuing mastery without it?
6. What do we *owe* our students?
7. What does it mean to model mature AI use?
8. Navigating AI-enabled efficiency?
9. Stretching imagination without being subsumed?
10. Embracing what it means to be human?

AI Ethics Template

The weekly cartoon

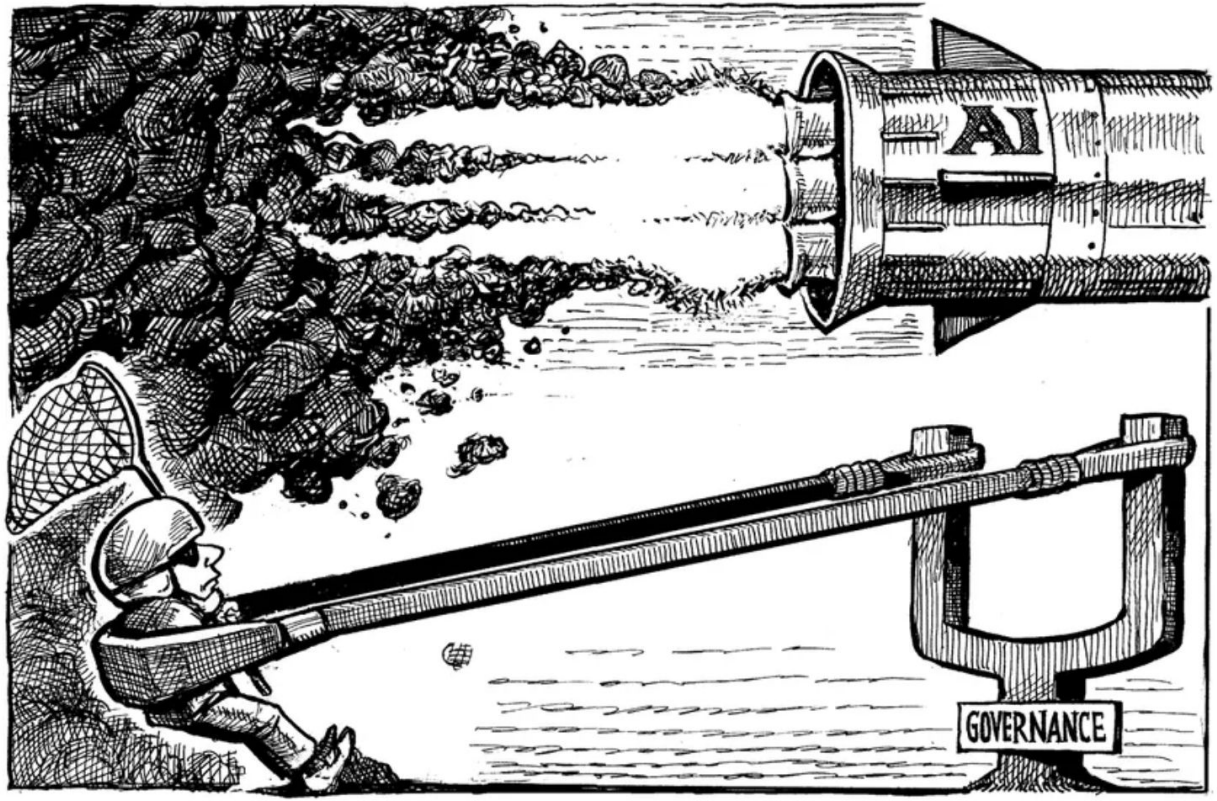


ILLUSTRATION: KAL

The Economist

Thank you so much for attending

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