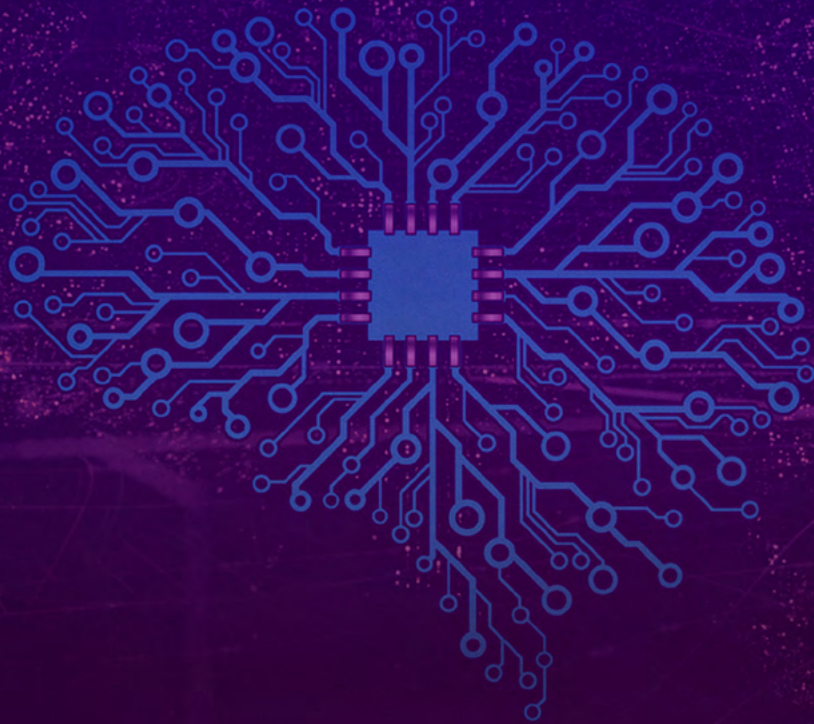


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How AI Will Ease L&D Admin Pain Points

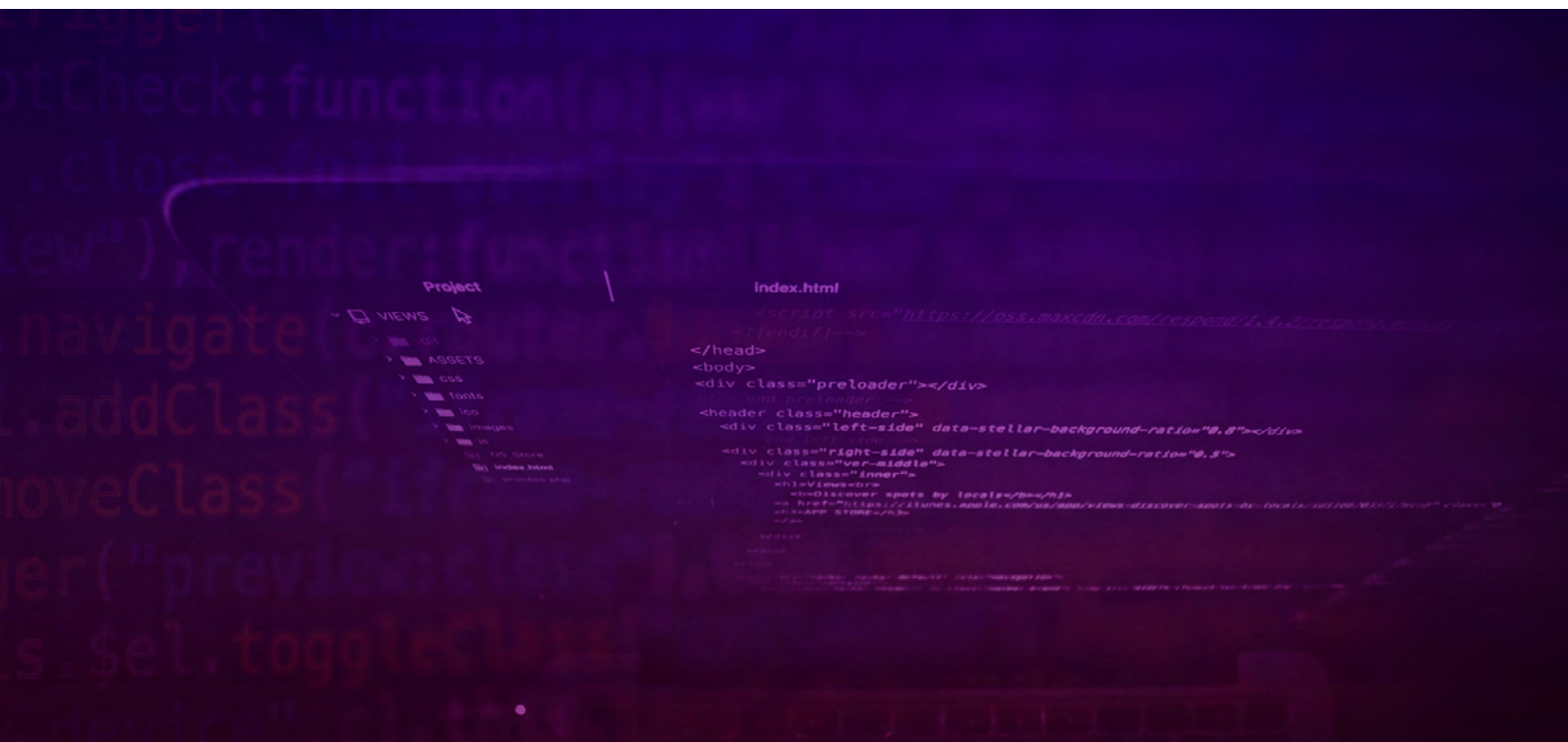
You may have heard of a thing called Artificial Intelligence (AI) – or maybe you haven't... If you haven't, do a quick Google® search of “top disruptive technologies” and AI will likely be at the top of whatever list you happen to find.

Whether you know it or not, AI is already having an impact on your everyday life. The past few years have been rife with rumblings related to how AI will change the world forever, some of which we're already seeing with developments in home automation (Google® Home, Alexa) and content recommendations based on previous consumption.

It's also important to point out that in the context of this paper, we're not talking about the death-to-all-of-humanity Terminator robots guys like Elon Musk are worried about. Indeed, when Hollywood movies play out AI worst-case scenarios, they tend to cultivate a stigma around the technology. The reality is that developments in the field of AI expose endless possibility for civilization – and in incredibly positive ways. Think smart automation of tasks, anticipated needs, and, ultimately, serving humanity in all its enterprises, including learning and development (L&D) and e-learning.

These tasks aren't being powered at this point by technology that could morph itself into the apocalyptic machinery you see at the cinema. In the current iteration, AI doesn't have the autonomous thought processing capabilities that would allow it to make its own decisions. The difference is important because at this point, for the most part, AI is based almost entirely off algorithms written by humans, solely to perform the actions those algorithms have been written to do.

We're going to look at AI in the context of learning and how you, as an L&D administrator, can expect it to help you not only create better learning experiences, but also alleviate the majority of those menial and irritating administrative tasks that likely take up too much of your time.



AI IS ALREADY MAKING AN IMPACT IN YOUR REAL LIFE, EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW IT.

1

AI is making how you interact with your email platform easier, and saving you time, by generating automated quick responses. Furthermore, Gmail™ uses a tool called 'Nudging' to remind you to follow up or respond to messages that are older than two or three days, making sure you don't fall behind on important communications.

2

It's not always easy to find a place to park your car, especially if you live in a major urban centre where parking spaces are at a notorious premium. AI takes into account parking availability in given areas and learns traffic patterns to give you an idea of where it might be easiest to find a place to park your vehicle.

3

Instagram© uses AI to give different words (or slang) contextual meaning and serve the user a fun emoji they might use instead in their image captions.

4

The majority of large banks, in the western world at least, now offer mobile apps users a way to deposit cheques through their mobile apps instead of having to manually deliver a physical cheque to an ATM. This is made possible through AI algorithms that decipher and convert handwriting on cheques into text via optical character recognition (OCR).

5

Even video games, such as Call of Duty® and Far Cry®, use AI to train computer-generated enemies to analyze different in-game environments to find areas/actions that could be beneficial to their survival, and making it more difficult and realistic for the human player at the controls.

WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - IN THE CONTEXT OF LEARNING?

AI is the development of computer systems that are able to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence, using algorithms to complete various tasks, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making and translations between languages. In the context of enterprise learning, AI has the incredible potential to amplify technology to make data-driven analysis and decisions (faster), emphasize areas of improvement for individual learners and create immersive learning experiences – not just lessons.

In the realm of learning, it's also important to understand a critical distinction. AI-powered enterprise learning can be significantly enhanced with learning-specific algorithms (a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations) powered by a fine-tuned combination of machine learning, deep learning and natural language processing.

For example, in machine learning capacities, a computer program is trained to recognize patterns or complete an action, such as identifying someone's face or responding to a request for information. Training the system requires it to be exposed to as many variables to completing a task as possible, using different types of input data. Furthermore, some AI systems create their own tasks after they've identified the goals for the data they've been fed. Consider Google's © DeepMind AlphaGo project, a computer software that played itself in millions of games to have the skills it needed to beat the world's best human Go player, Lee Sedol. The system used data from more than 100,000 "Go" games to develop its knowledge.

AI: A STATE OF THE UNION

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In its present incarnation, AI is limited by the engineers who program it, and requires the following parameters in order to provide output:



INSTRUCTION: AI's application in e-learning has yet to transcend instructional-based decision making. As it currently stands, AI requires a certain set of parameters within which it can make logic-based 'decisions' about automation, execution, and productivity. Without this human-provided instruction, AI cannot make sentient choices – as per the fears of its detractors.



GOALS AND KPIS: By nature, human beings ask questions and make decisions to better understand the world. We question our environment, adapt, and wonder 'what it all means' to be alive. Unlike us, AI is – fortunately or unfortunately – unencumbered by this existential question. Instead, AI is simply motivated by the explicit doctrine of achieving a specific end goal or else monitoring its achievement according to a specific set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that determine its effectiveness. There's no reliance on intuition, feeling, or rationale. AI is simply designed to achieve what it was programmed to do.



METADATA: The importance of metadata and properly tagging content is paramount. The benefit is twofold: it enables users to discover and learn from relevant content they might not have otherwise been exposed to; and, because metadata and content tagging enables AI to learn where to find relevant content – quickly and effectively. When we tag content effectively, we teach AI to understand what content is relevant, where to find it, and why we need it. Without effective learning content tagging and high-quality data, AI engines are unequipped to intuitively deliver the right content to the right user at the right time.

AI's core purpose in enterprise learning is to simplify the software environments used to deliver it, no matter the format, by simulating human behaviour, natural language, planning and reasoning. AI creates intelligent environments that help those who work within it to eliminate unnecessary and time-wasting tasks that would have previously been on humans to complete. It is all about leveraging intelligent software that analyzes environments and makes intelligent decisions to elevate the quality of the learning experience holistically to amplify human intelligence.

5 WAYS AI WILL RESHAPE ENTERPRISE LEARNING

1

Real-time questioning: Learning tools will incorporate AI systems that process learner queries and respond to them in real-time, conveying reasoning, counselling and clarification to those questions. Additionally, AI would help learners uncover resources by suggesting various learning assets, eliminating the time and effort it would take to do this task manually.

2

Natural Language Processing: Learners can interact with an AI assistant embedded in various e-learning platforms that recognize their spoken language. AI-enabled systems “hear” and understand language as complete sentences and connotations while a learner talks to the learning platform. Further, AI-powered virtual coaches can understand various pronunciations, languages, background sounds, and variation in human sounds and more.

3

Fast-paced and efficient learning: The goal of any technology is always to do something better, without sacrificing quality. This is exactly what AI will do for learning: speed up the learning process by eliminating various mental obstacles, without sacrificing the quality of the learning experience.

4

Content Discovery: Beyond automating processes, AI will also be able to discover new learning content for a given population of learners by analysing what is available through online systems, such as video platforms (e.g. Youtube, Vimeo) and online learning and teaching marketplaces (e.g. LinkedIn Learning). Similarly, AI will be able to crawl social platforms (e.g. Slack), learning how specific content or Q&A threads generated positive outcomes that can then be applied to new tasks, providing learners with new, highly personalized learning opportunities that a human-centered system wouldn't ever be able to identify.

5

Content Creation: Consider even the authoring of content. If you think every article you have read online in recent years was authored by a human, think again. Even media outlets are deploying AI to craft simple articles, such as financial summaries and sports recaps. Imagine the capacity to scour an instructional article and automatically produce a new learning asset drafted by combining video pills derived from previously published content. The resulting augmented learning asset can be automatically adapted to specific channels (e.g. mobile vs. desktop) for specific usage scenarios. Furthermore, AI can be used to extract and summarize key points from a longer article and enrich each section with relevant multimedia content – or content validated as high performing by the AI.

As AI becomes better and more affordable, more of the basic tasks of creating a learning program will become automated. As an L&D admin, familiarizing yourself with the various ways AI could help you will improve your workflow and make sure you're spending your time on tasks that deliver true and measurable value to your learning programs.

AI GIVES L&D LEADERS MORE TIME TO FOCUS ON TASKS OF VALUE, ELIMINATING MANY ADMINISTRATIVE PAIN POINTS

It's a shame that a significant portion of an L&D professional's time is spent at their desk, designing course catalogues for their learners, especially considering this is a function of that person's job that could be sufficiently mitigated by AI. It's possible because, as outlined above, by applying the right metadata, the machine could develop and provide course catalogues to specific users based on roles and habits, via recommendation engines.

While AI is disruptive on a macro scale, it's beauty is in its simplicity: it helps us in ways we want it to, that we might have not thought of on our own.

So, if we go back to our course catalogue design example, offloading these tasks to AI would afford L&D leaders a lot more time to focus on what's truly important to the overall success of the learning programs: the content! Further, it provides them the face time necessary with executives to develop fresher learning strategies that better align with their organization's overall corporate strategy, which truly illustrates the intersect between L&D and organizational performance – and gives L&D leaders a way to validate ROI in the investment of new and shiny learning technologies.

That being said, there are a number of other ways AI will allow L&D professionals to focus more time on what's important and less time on pesky administrative tasks while leaning on technology to produce better learning experiences, such as:

Deeper search capabilities: AI deeply analyzes learning content of any nature, understanding and categorizing keywords to exponentially improve learning content discoverability.

Content that's automatically tagged within your learning platform: AI analyzes all learning content, identifying keywords and creating tags automatically, making it easier for learners to discover content that is more relevant to their interests and professional development.

Elevate social learning – without human intervention: When AI anticipates what learners want and need to know, it can develop an understanding of what to suggest to users. A functionality that would invite different users to consume or watch new learning content based on similar assets they've already engaged, allowing users to easily share content with those who will value it most.

RECOGNIZE (AND EMBRACE) THE POTENTIAL OF AI... THEN SOAK IN THE RESULTS

The impact that AI can have on L&D leaders and their learners is fundamentally important to the future of learning. In fact, the effectiveness of AI depends on how much people actually use the system. The more someone uses an AI-powered learning platform, the more the AI learns about that user's needs, making the learning platform as a holistic learning experience more and more effective over time.

L&D administrators have a lot on their plates, and it's likely they're spending a lot of time on tasks that could benefit from a game-changing technology, such as AI. The success of any L&D program in today's learning environment is dependent on establishing immersive and personalized learning experiences.

Doing so requires time and carefully thought out content that is developed and designed in a way that connects with learners on a deeper level than traditional modalities. AI will truly change the enterprise learning game forever, particularly in the way L&D administrators develop and design their programs to create more captivating experiences for their learners.

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