ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Human-System Boundary

Executive Briefing

Understanding AI systems begins with how models are developed, how they are used and how they can be connected to tools to take autonomous action within defined permissions.

Artificial intelligence enables computer systems to perform tasks such as recognizing patterns, making predictions and generating content. Many of these systems are developed by training software on examples, allowing it to learn patterns rather than requiring people to write a separate rule for every situation. Those learned patterns can then be used to assess new information: identifying a potentially fraudulent transaction, forecasting demand or recognising an object in an image. Generative AI applies this approach to producing content, including text, images, audio, video and code, in response to instructions and other inputs. The distinction matters because different AI systems perform different functions and require different forms of evaluation and oversight. A system that predicts an outcome, one that drafts a document and one that takes action on a user's behalf should not be assessed as though they are the same. Understanding AI therefore begins with identifying what a system is designed to do, what information it uses and how its outputs influence decisions or actions. Its value depends on how reliably it performs that role and how effectively people can review and control its use.

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How a Language Model Works

From training data to everyday use

Stage	What happens	Examples
GATHER DATA	Collect information for the model to learn from.	Books, articles and other text
PREPARE DATA	Clean and organize the information into training examples.	Remove duplicates, correct formatting and filter unsuitable material
TRAIN THE MODEL	Use computing power to process examples and adjust the model to improve its predictions.	The model learns language patterns by repeatedly predicting pieces of text
TEST AND REFINE	Assess performance on separate examples. Use the results to guide improvements.	Check accuracy and instruction-following, further training can address weaknesses
DEPLOY THE MODEL	Set up the trained model to run on computing infrastructure and connect it to an application.	Make the model available through a chatbot or workplace application
USE THE MODEL	Give the model a request and any information it needs. It uses these to produce a response.	Summarize a public submission or draft a briefing note

Chatbots, Workflows and Agents

How systems respond, follow processes and act

These terms describe different aspects of an AI system and can overlap. A chatbot provides an interface. A workflow follows predefined steps. An agent can select steps and tools in pursuit of a goal.

CHATBOT | Interaction through conversation

A chatbot allows users to interact with a system through text or speech. Users can ask questions, request drafts and refine responses through further instructions.

Example: An analyst asks for a summary of a public submission, reviews the response and requests clarification.

WORKFLOW | Execution of a defined process

A workflow follows a sequence established by people. AI may perform one or more tasks within that sequence, while the overall process and decision rules remain predefined.

Example: A system receives public submissions, uses AI to draft a summary of each and routes the drafts to an analyst for review.

AGENT | Choosing steps and using tools to achieve a goal

An AI agent can select its next steps and use connected tools to carry out tasks. These tools may allow it to search document collections, query databases, perform calculations, edit files or send messages. It can examine the results and adjust its approach. People define which tools it may access, which actions it may take and when approval is required.

Example: An analyst asks an agent to compare public submissions on a policy issue. The agent uses a search tool to find relevant documents, a document reader to examine their contents and a writing tool to prepare a comparison. If it identifies missing information or conflicting statements, it can decide to search again, examine additional documents and revise its comparison before presenting the result for review.

Questions for assessing a system

- What task is it intended to perform, and what demonstrates its reliability?
- What information and tools can it access, and what actions can it take?
- Who reviews its outputs, authorizes consequential actions and remains accountable?