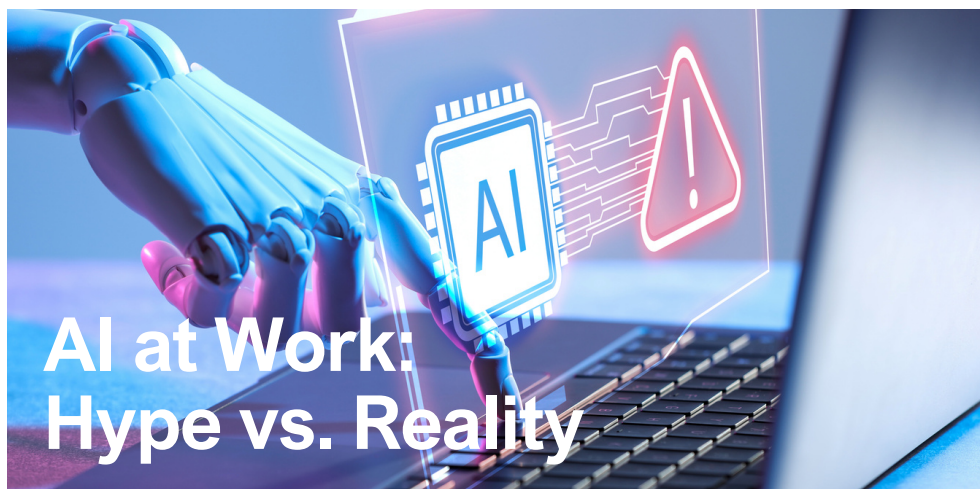


GIO Tech Times

Putting the Power of IT Back in Your Business with Insider Tips for Speed, Simplicity, and Profit



AI at Work: Hype vs. Reality

Artificial intelligence has quickly gone from a futuristic concept to a workplace tool. Employees are using AI to write emails, summarize documents, analyze information, create content, and automate repetitive tasks. But as an IT company, we see an important distinction that often gets lost in the excitement: using AI is not the same as using AI effectively.

The hype suggests AI will instantly transform productivity, eliminate tedious work and perhaps even replace entire roles. The reality is more practical. AI can absolutely save time and improve efficiency, but the results depend heavily on how it is implemented. Businesses still need the right technology, reliable data, clear processes and people who know how to use these tools responsibly. Research continues to show that organizations are moving from AI experimentation toward broader adoption, while still facing challenges around security, governance, data quality and proving ROI.

There is another reality businesses cannot afford to overlook: security.

Employees may already be using AI tools that have never been reviewed or approved by IT. This “shadow AI” can create risks when sensitive company, customer or proprietary information is entered into the wrong platform. Recent research has highlighted how quickly AI adoption is moving ahead of organizations’ ability to secure and govern it.

That does not mean businesses should avoid AI. Quite the opposite. The opportunity is too significant to ignore. The key is to approach AI strategically.

Start by identifying where AI can solve a real business problem. Establish guidelines for what information employees can share. Choose tools that meet your security and compliance requirements. Train your team. And most importantly, keep a human involved where judgment, accuracy and accountability matter.

AI is not magic, and it is not a replacement for good technology management. The businesses that benefit most from AI will be the ones using it securely, intentionally and in ways that actually make their business better.



POWERING IT with Dan

Why We’re Talking About AI

This issue, we wanted to offer you something practical: our honest take on AI, and what it means for how we serve you. We’re seeing it reshape how businesses operate, how decisions get made, and increasingly, how we work with clients day to day.

We wanted this issue of GIO Tech Times to look at AI honestly - what it actually means in practice. We’re investing real time in understanding where these tools genuinely help and where human judgment still needs to lead.

Inside this issue, you’ll find a closer look at where AI genuinely earns its keep, the safety questions worth asking before you rely on it, and how we’re putting it to work ourselves - all without losing the judgment and care that brought us together in the first place.

My honest read: the opportunity is real, and so are the risks. Getting this right takes care, not speed. That’s the approach GIO is taking - and the rest of this issue shows you why.

Dan Giordano
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Data Privacy 101:

What Happens to What You Paste Into an AI Chatbot

Every day, people paste all kinds of things into AI chatbots - draft emails, contract language, customer data, meeting notes, even financial figures - without thinking about where that information goes afterward. It's worth understanding, because the answer isn't the same for every tool.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR INPUT

When you type or paste something into an AI chatbot, it typically travels to the company's servers to generate a response, and in many cases a copy is also logged - stored temporarily or longer-term for things like abuse monitoring, service improvement, or, depending on the tool and your settings, to train future versions of the model. That last part is the one that matters most: if your input can be used for training, pieces of it could theoretically resurface, in altered form, in someone else's conversation down the line. Most reputable providers say this is rare and heavily filtered, but "rare" isn't "never."

CONSUMER VS. BUSINESS TOOLS

This is the most important distinction to understand. Free, consumer-facing versions of AI chatbots often default to using conversations to improve the product, sometimes including for

training, unless you actively opt out in settings. Business or enterprise versions of the same tools typically come with contractual guarantees that your data isn't used for training and is handled under stricter retention and security terms. If your organization has a paid or enterprise AI subscription, there's a good chance you're already better protected than you'd be on the free consumer version of the same tool - but it's worth confirming rather than assuming.

CAN YOU DELETE IT LATER?

Many tools let you delete individual conversations after the fact, and some offer bulk data-deletion or export requests, especially in regions with privacy regulations like GDPR or CCPA. But deletion requests can take time to fully process, and if your input was already used to train a model, that influence typically can't be undone after the fact. A delete button existing isn't the same thing as your data being fully gone.

WHAT SHOULD NEVER GO IN

Regardless of which tool or tier you're using, some categories of information deserve caution: client financial details, personally identifiable information (Social Security numbers, dates of birth, account numbers), anything covered by a confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement, unreleased business plans, and login credentials or API keys. Treat an AI chatbot the way you'd treat a public-facing tool until you've verified otherwise -

because in a meaningful sense, that's closer to the truth than most people assume.

A FEW PRACTICAL HABITS

A short list of habits goes a long way: check whether your organization has an approved, business-tier AI tool before defaulting to a free consumer app; look for a "don't use my data for training" setting and turn it on; strip or anonymize sensitive details before pasting something in, when possible; and when in doubt, ask before you paste rather than after.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR US AND YOU

At GIO, we think about this constantly, because the same questions apply to how we use AI in our own work. We hold ourselves to a higher bar: business-grade tools, data-use agreements we've actually read, and a simple rule that anything client-sensitive doesn't go into an AI tool without a clear answer to "where does this data go." We think that's the standard worth expecting from any partner using these tools today - including us.

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The bigger picture: AI chatbots aren't unsafe for business use, but they aren't private either. The privacy protection you get depends entirely on which product, which tier, and which settings you're using - so it's worth checking before you paste something you wouldn't want to see again somewhere else.





A Day in the Life: With AI

Every AI conversation eventually turns theoretical. So instead, here's what a normal Tuesday looks like for a project coordinator, with AI woven into the ordinary parts of the job rather than replacing any of it. We're sharing this because it's easier to see what AI changes in daily work by watching one ordinary day unfold instead of reading about capabilities and limits.

8:15 AM - EMAIL

Matt opens his inbox to eighteen new emails, including two from clients that need same-day replies. Rather than starting from a blank cursor, Matt pastes the longer client email into an AI assistant along with a quick note on the key points to hit, and gets back a clean first draft in under a minute. It's not sent as-is. Matt reads it over, cuts a sentence that sounds too formal, adds a specific detail about a project timeline, and sends it. AI didn't know the client relationship or the history behind the request; Matt did. What it saved was the fifteen minutes of staring at an empty reply box trying to find an opening line.

9:30 AM - MEETING NOTES

A kickoff call with a client covers a lot of ground fast: budget questions, timeline

changes, a couple of action items buried in the middle of a forty-minute conversation. Matt uses an AI notetaking tool to transcribe the call, then asks it to pull decisions made and next steps into a short summary. Matt skims it against memory, catches one action item the tool attributed to the wrong person, fixes it, and sends the corrected summary to the team within ten minutes of hanging up. Before, that recap might have gone out the next morning, if at all.

11:00 AM - RESEARCH

Midmorning is research time. A client asked a question about a regulatory requirement Matt isn't deeply familiar with. Rather than starting from scratch, Matt asks AI for a plain-language overview to get oriented, then verifies the specifics against the actual regulatory source and a colleague who handles compliance regularly. AI got Matt oriented quickly; it didn't get the final answer right on its own, and Matt doesn't treat it as if it did. Anything going to a client gets checked against a real source first. Matt also jots down which source ultimately confirmed the answer, so the next person who has the same question doesn't have to repeat the whole process.

1:00 PM - SCHEDULING

After lunch, Matt is staring down a calendar with six people, three time zones, and everyone's usual conflicts. Matt describes the scheduling constraints to an AI scheduling assistant, which proposes three workable time slots instead of the usual back-and-forth email chain. Matt



Powered by Alex

Prompt Engineering Basics: Get Better Results from AI

The difference between a basic AI response and a useful one comes down to the prompt, not the tool. A few simple habits can make a big difference.

Be specific: "write a follow-up email to a client about a delayed shipment, apologetic but not defensive" beats "write an email." Give context: paste the background AI needs rather than assuming it already knows your situation. Tell it the format you want, whether it's a short paragraph, a bullet list, or a table. Treat the first response as a draft, not a final answer, and refine it with prompts like "make it shorter," "more formal," or "add a deadline." For bigger requests, break the task into smaller steps instead of asking AI to tackle everything at once.

Another trick : give AI an example of what "good" looks like, a past email, a sample format, or a previous piece of work you liked, always beats describing with just words.

Think of it like working with a new colleague: the more clearly you explain what you need, the better they can deliver. Nothing takes technical skill, just direction you'd use when talking to someone on your team. Better instructions get better results, every time.

-Alex Gallamozza
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picks one, sends the invite, and moves on. This is the most purely mechanical use of the day - and also the one that saves the most back-and-forth time.

3:00 PM - HEADS-DOWN WORK

This is where AI shows up least, and that's intentional. Writing a client proposal that reflects real judgment about what this specific client needs isn't a drafting task - it's a thinking task, and Matt does that part without a chatbot's help. AI touches the outline and a bit of formatting cleanup at the end, nothing more. It would be easy to lean on AI here too, but the tradeoff wouldn't be worth it - a proposal that sounds polished but misses the client's actual priorities costs more time to fix later than it ever saves upfront. Matt treats this block of the day as protected time, phone on silent, notifications off, so the thinking gets the focus it needs.



5:00 PM - WRAP-UP

Before logging off, Matt reviews the day's AI-assisted work one more time: the email draft became a sent email a person stands behind, the meeting summary went out correct and on time, the research got double-checked, and the schedule got locked in without a reply-all chain. None of it replaced Matt's judgment - it just gave him more time in his day.

TEAM GIO TAKEAWAY

That's the pattern we see across teams - not AI doing the job, but AI clearing the small stuff off of desks so the people doing the job have more time for the parts only a person can do well. It doesn't replace expertise, relationships, or judgment - it gives people more room to use all three well, one day at a time.

GIO MONTHLY MOMENTS

TEAM GIO OUT & ABOUT



It's been a busy and exciting month for Team GIO! Between keeping our clients' technology running smoothly and watching our office buildout come to life, there's been plenty happening around here and plenty to smile about.

We had the chance to hit the course for the Harford Family House Annual Golf Tournament, supporting local families experiencing homelessness. We went in hoping for a great day on the course and somehow came home with the win! To make the day even better, Nate took home closest-to-the-pin honors.

Not a bad way to spend August! We're wrapping up the month feeling grateful, proud, and already looking forward to what September has in store.

**6 YEAR
WORK
ANNIVERSARY!**

Kaitlyn



Kaitlyn, our IT Support Desk Coordinator, marks her 6th work anniversary on 9/23! Over the past 6 years, Kaitlyn has been a reliable presence keeping our IT support running smoothly. Thank you for six great years - here's to many more!

**5 YEAR
WORK
ANNIVERSARY!**

Bryan



Bryan, our IT Support Engineer, celebrates his 5th GIO anniversary on 9/29! Over the past five years, Bryan has been a go-to resource for our clients, keeping their technology running smoothly. Congrats on 5 years - we're lucky to have you on the team!

