

# Foolish AI:

## Can We Use AI Without Being Simpleminded?

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### Summary

Many organizations are buying and using technologies that use artificial intelligence (AI). Some persons in some situations at some time are using AI in their ventures without thinking clearly. These ventures will fail and hurt many people involved. We can do better. Always THINK, consider past problems and solutions, and understand motivations for AI.

### Not-So-Smart Recent Uses of AI

AI is here in a big way. Organizations are using AI and associated technologies in greater measure monthly (Singla et al., 2025). What is disturbing, however, is uses that when viewed from a short distance evoke cries of, “Of course that won’t work.” Some of these misuses appear thoughtless (pardon the blunt candor).

Consider a few recent examples.

Data centers, which are increasingly devoted to AI machinations, draw electrical power—large amounts of it. These power draws are also large proportions of what power companies supply to a given area. The data centers have backup generator power. At times the data center operators turn on the generators, flip a big switch, and POW—the data center drops off the commercial power grid (McLaughlin, 2025). This causes problems for the commercial provider. Of course it does. Who would have thought otherwise? Other ways to swap between “shore power and ship power” are plentiful and obvious. People have observed and solved this problem decades ago. The AI community, however, seems oblivious to history.

Disney has 1,500 pages of scripts from its *Andor* series ready to be placed online. Persons at Disney don’t want to have the scripts mined by AI as training data (Robison, 2025). What to do? Don’t put the scripts online. It seems like it took some really smart people awhile to find this obvious solution. Of course you don’t put the scripts online.

Some AI companies are submitting their AI-generated papers to conference peer reviewers. These peer reviewers, without neither their knowledge nor consent, are providing free expert feedback that improves the AI systems (Wiggers, 2025). Some persons at some of

these AI companies see no problems in gaining expert help at no cost. Surprise #1: this is unethical. Surprise #2: people eventually notice this. Surprise #3: such notice can ruin a company.

At the top of my list (or is it the bottom?) of questionable human intelligence in the use of the artificial cousin, is computer programs written by AI systems (Kerner, 2025). I like using AI to write small and useful routines. I call this hobby programming while the term vibe coding is becoming widely adopted (Karpathy 2025). Some people in some places, however, are using AI to create large pieces of code—sometimes complete applications. Then some people wonder how much they should “trust” this code. The thought never occurred to them to read the code, edit the code, test the code, and repeat several times. As someone who has written code for almost 50 years, I cannot comprehend this amount of ... just plain ity.

## Consequences

When used thoughtfully, AI significantly cuts costs and multiplies the abilities of employees. Answer a question. Provide an explanation. Provide software and other draft designs. This is smart use of AI. This allows people to focus on strategic and creative aspects of their jobs. Less mundane work. Looking up answers is replaced by productive questions.

The consequences of being short sighted, however, are bad. AI is not intelligent enough to eliminate bad consequences.

I am old enough to have lived through the dot com bust of the 1990s. Companies were pouring resources into Internet technologies. Employees played ping pong all day and took monthly weekends in Las Vegas. These perquisites attracted and retained employees. Sometimes just to do nothing but keep employees from other companies.

Strategy? Understanding? Sustainable business models? Absent. Businesses failed. People lost their jobs. Worse, people lost the ability to provide food, shelter, clothing, etc. to their families.

I see the lack of thought characteristic of that tech bust again today. AI is powerful, but it is not magic. Sprinkling a little AI dust here and there or dousing everyone with gallons of it won't work wonders.

## Advice

Given all this, here is some advice for managers of organizations (and one bit for people therein).

**First: THINK.** Consider the basics of problems and solutions. Nothing can scrape scripts without access. Never field software—even software written by humans—without code inspections and tests. Smart people are required no matter what marketers tout.

**Second: move forward after consulting the past.** Wasting resources, like in the 1990s, won't bring success. What is the situation? How did people solve prior, similar problems? Cutting from one power source to another in stages reduces the shock to the system. Unethical behavior is always discovered.

**Third: understand why we are seeking help from AI.** Do we want fewer employees? Are we trying to automate people out of jobs? Do we want different employees, those we can ask piercing questions instead of mundanely finding answers? Are we starting a new company with minimal staff that outperforms companies with ten times the personnel?

**Finally, advice for people in organizations diving into AI:** don't be the type of person that others wish AI would replace. For generations, those who understood the business of business have sought to replace programmers and other technologists with thinking systems.

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