



learn.ai for NTNL

truth, trust, and faithful discernment
in the age of artificial intelligence

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W E L C O M E

the hour ahead

0 1

ai fluency

What is this technology?

how would I explain ai to my congregation? (how might learning about it impact my use???)

0 2

using ai

How can I use this technology?

two use cases for church work flow.

0 3

digital discernment

How should Christians respond?

Open discussion about usage and policy.

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:25

“putting away falsehood,
let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors,
for we are members of one another.”

W E L C O M E

why this hour matters

people are using it...and trust it.

48% of people trust AI more than their pastors to facilitate their spiritual growth and direction.

<https://www.barna.com/research/christians-trust-ai-flourishing-spiritual-authority/>

people (on both sides of the pulpit) are concerned

83 percent of practicing Christians worry about AI misinterpreting scripture, and 72 percent worry about AI replacing the role of pastors or spiritual leaders.

<https://www.barna.com/research/christians-trust-ai-flourishing-spiritual-authority/>

people trust us less

The continued drop in pastors' reputation—down from 40 percent to 32 percent over the past four years—corresponds with more skepticism toward professions (and institutions) across the board.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/01/pastor-trust-credibility-reputation-gallup-poll-clergy-ethi/>

we need to speak clearly (and truly!) about ai.

part one

ai fluency

what is this technology?

how to explain it to the folks in the pews

ai is an umbrella term.
generative ai presents
lots of opportunities.

"ai" does not think.
it predicts patterns.

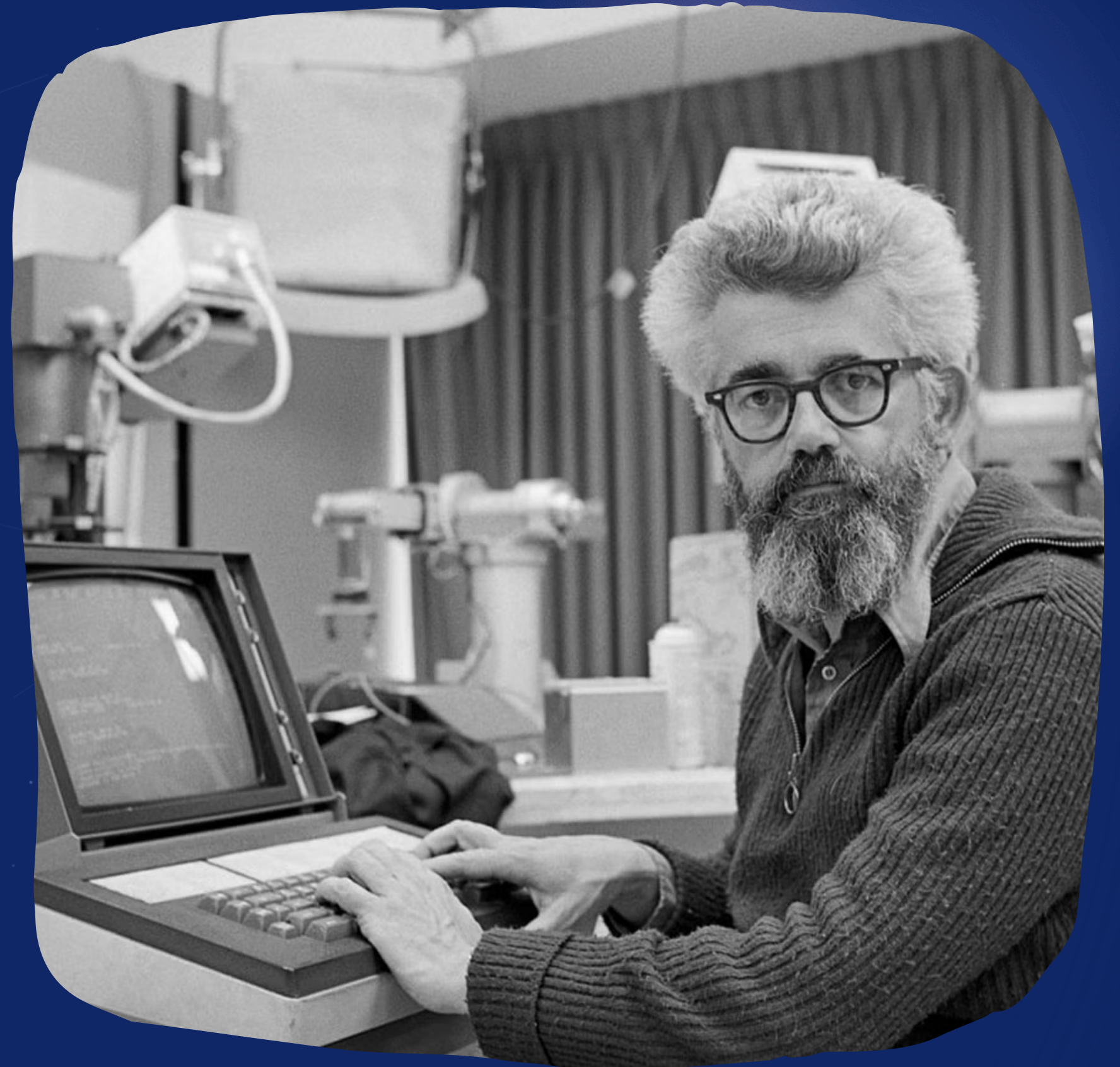
AI FLUENCY

what is ai?

Q. What is artificial intelligence?

A. It is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence, but AI does not have to confine itself to methods that are biologically observable.

<http://jmc.stanford.edu/articles/whatisai/whatisai.pdf>



John McCarthy officially launched the modern history of AI in 1955 by co-authoring the proposal that coined the term "Artificial Intelligence." The following year, he organized the historic 1956 Dartmouth Workshop

AI FLUENCY

wait, what is intelligence?

Q. Yes, but what is intelligence?

A. Intelligence is the computational part of the ability to achieve goals in the world. Varying kinds and degrees of intelligence occur in people, many animals and some machines.

<http://jmc.stanford.edu/articles/whatisai/whatisai.pdf>



AI FLUENCY

general intelligence vs. narrow ai

STRONG AI

self-aware, sentient,
science-fiction-grade consciousness.

does not exist.

The version Hollywood sells.

WEAK AI

narrow, task-specific software.

everywhere.

Almost every form of AI any of us has actually used.

AI FLUENCY • WEAK AI SPLITS

predictive vs. generative

PREDICTIVE

sorts, filters, recommends.

- Spam filters
- Pac-Man!
- Fraud-detection alerts
- GPS routing
- Netflix / Amazon recommendations
- Autocorrect

GENERATIVE

produces new content.

- ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, LutherBot (text)
- DALL-E, Midjourney (images)
- Music generators (audio)
- Voice cloning (speech)
- Video synthesis (deepfakes)

what is an llm?

Large language models (LLMs) are a type of generative AI that has transformed how we interact with computers.

If you've used LutherBot, ChatGPT, Claude, Grok, or Meta AI, you've experienced an LLM in action. These systems can write emails, answer questions, summarize documents, generate code, and engage in conversations that feel surprisingly human-like.

These models are trained on massive amounts of text data from books, articles, websites, and other sources, learning patterns in how language works.

The "large" in large language model refers to both the size of the training data (billions of words) and the model's complexity (billions or even trillions of parameters that help it make predictions).



AI FLUENCY • HOW IT WORKS

"parsing" a large language model

Chat

what it does

Text in, text out. Like texting with a computer.

G

generative

Original content, made in response to your prompt.

P

pre-trained

Learned from massive amounts of human-written text. Recognizes patterns; does not know facts.

T

transformer

A neural-network architecture that handles context and predicts the next word.

ai, faith, and you

what lms “know” and what they do

Models are trained on a variety of data on the internet including: social media, internet blogs, Wikipedia, books, chat logs, and curated files to learn statistical patterns in human language to **UNDERSTAND** and **PRODUCE HUMAN-LIKE** language.



may

the

force

be

with

you

peace

of

Christ

be

with

you

AI FLUENCY • WHAT AI ISN'T

three things ai isn't.

not intelligent (like you) It does not think, feel, or understand. It identifies patterns; it does not make meaning.

not spiritually aware. It can echo sacred language because it has been trained on sacred texts, but it is not spiritual. The denominational nuances are often lost.

not neutral. It is trained on human language – rich with our creativity, and shaped by our biases, blind spots, and brokenness.

Govered AI

controlled corpus (only sources from certain files)

queries are able to be audited and scene

the assistant will refuse or provide bounded responses

p a r t t w o

using ai

how should I use ai?

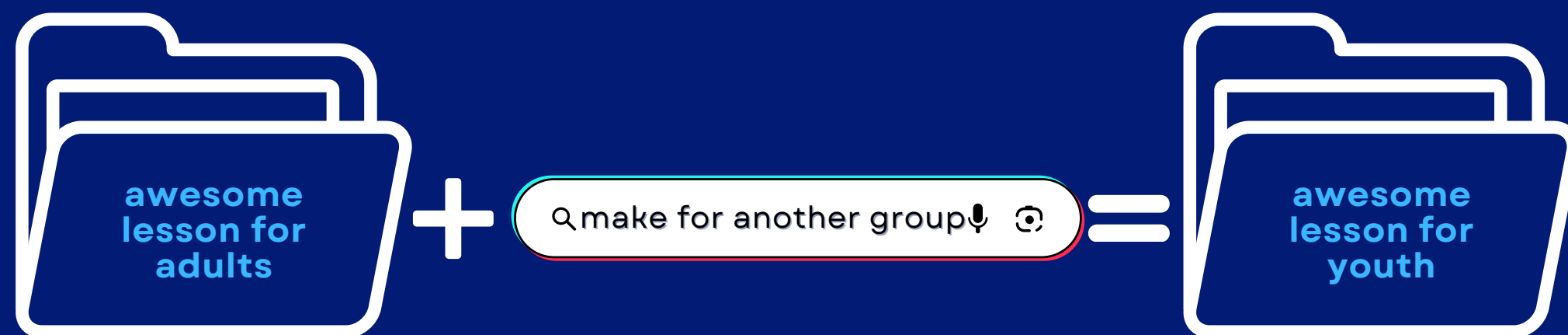


what can I use AI for?*

*that isn't creating funny pictures or letters of recommendation?

transcreation

Transcreation is the process of adapting existing content for a new audience or purpose by preserving its core meaning and emotional impact while creatively reshaping its language, tone, and context. Unlike translation, which focuses on literal accuracy, transcreation aims to make the message feel authentic and native to the new audience.



examples:

- Accommodations for the neurodiverse
- Scale programs for youth for other audience (inter-generational)
- Create games/activities based on a lesson (even if there is not one)



what if i'm doing church work?

theology and ministry

If you are doing biblical interpretation, lesson plans, or any other ministry-facing work using AI, a consumer-grade LLM (like ChatGPT) is not advisable for several reasons: opaque training data, it will give you a response (even if it shouldn't). For theology related matters, governed ai systems (like LutherBot) can mitigate errors (hallucinations) and more tightly catch theological nuance.

examples:

- policy questions
- catechesis/formation questions
- doctrinal clarification
 - children's sermons
 - social media explanation
- (On the other side of the digital table)
 - be a contact for sensitive queries on: inclusion, abuse, addiction, financial instability, theological crisis
 - helping to audit and provide context for responses

consumer-grade ai = approximation
governed ai is = precision.

p a r t t h r e e

digital discernment

how shall Christians respond?

christians are called
to be trustworthy
witnesses.

D I G I T A L D I S C E R N M E N T • T H R E E P O S T U R E S

three ways we respond to a new technology.

"it's just a tool."

Keeps autonomy intact, but lacks awareness of how the tool already shapes us.

"it's amazing / i'm scared."

Ascribes infinite power to the technology. Leaves us reactive and passive.

"let's live together."

Recognizes the technology's pervasiveness AND the formed conscience's capacity to engage, critique, and re-purpose.

Kate Ott, Christian Ethics for a Digital Society, 2019.

D I G I T A L D I S C E R N M E N T • A N E V O L U T I O N

from citizenship to discernment.

C I T I Z E N S H I P

asks what is permitted.

How do I leverage technology for my values? Where are the conflicts? How do I advocate for change?

D I S C E R N M E N T

asks what is faithful.

How do I become trustworthy? Does my sharing love my neighbor? Is my witness credible?

Discernment is what citizenship grows into when neighbor-love is the test.

D I G I T A L D I S C E R N M E N T • T H R E E C O M M I T M E N T S

three commitments.

and one habit grown from each.

01

T R U T H F U L N E S S

verify before you share.

Ephesians 4:25 • BSF 11.3

02

N E I G H B O R - L O V E

consider your neighbor.

"We are members of one another."

03

W I T N E S S

choose truth over
speed.

D I G I T A L D I S C E R N M E N T • C O M M I T M E N T 1 O F 3

truthfulness.

B R I E F S T A T E M E N T O F F A I T H • 1 1 . 3

“...we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature...”

H A B I T

verify before you share.

Trace the source. Cross-check. Ask who benefits. If you cannot stake your reputation on the claim, do not put it in front of your neighbors.

neighbor-love.

E P H E S I A N S 4 : 2 5

"...for we are members of one another."

H A B I T

consider your neighbor.

Every share lands on a member of you. Picture them. Protect the most vulnerable. Agree on a family safe word. Ask: is it true, necessary, kind?

D I G I T A L D I S C E R N M E N T • C O M M I T M E N T 3 O F 3

witness.

B O O K O F O R D E R • F - 1 . 0 3 0 1

“The Church is to be a community of witness.”

H A B I T

choose truth over speed.

Being slow is not a defeat. A correction one day late is still the work. The credibility of the church's witness is built in small choices to refuse what is loudest and fastest in favor of what is true.

questions.

thank you for your courage in this work.