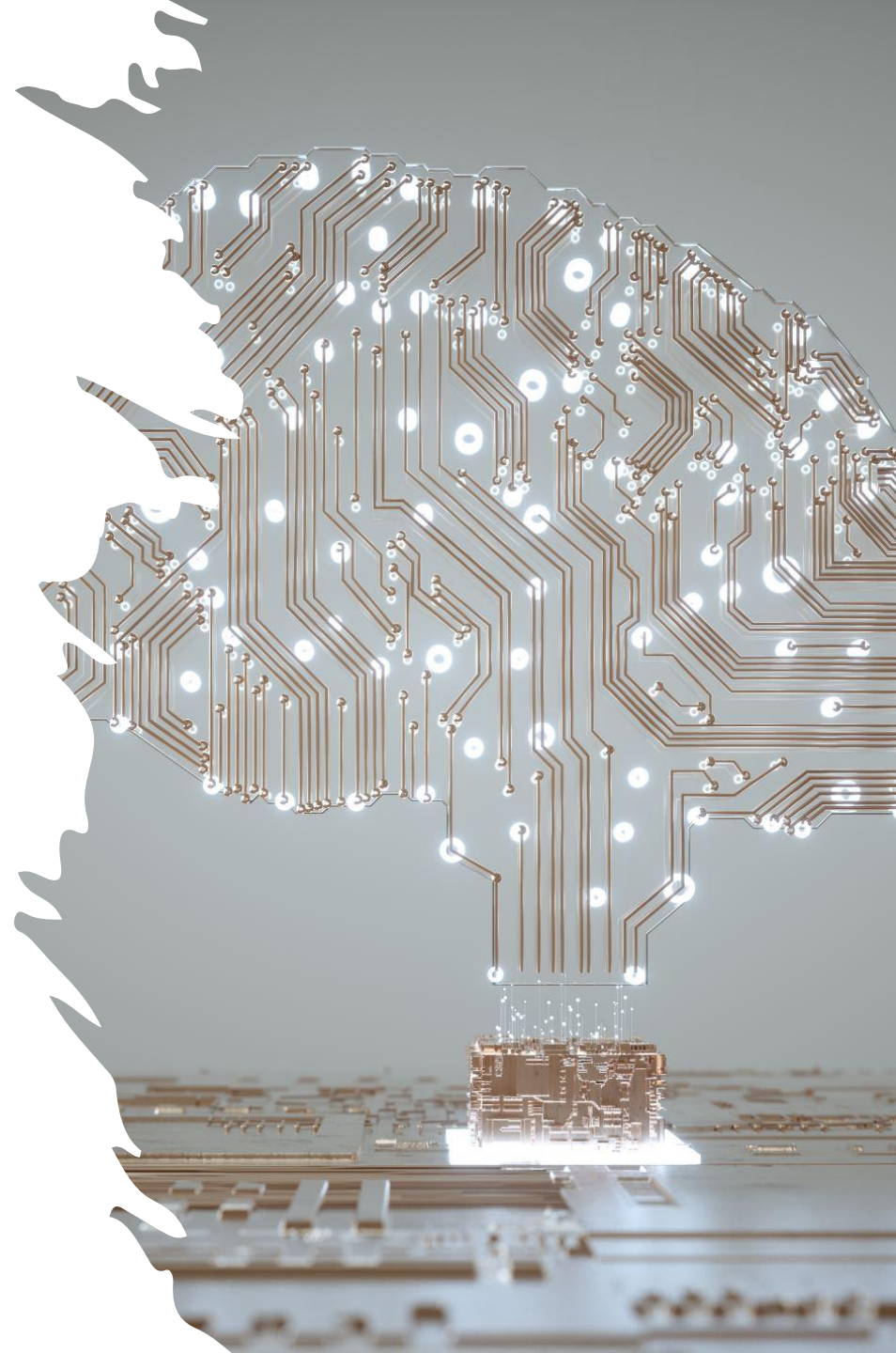


Understanding Artificial Intelligence

Jim Herrington
Bismarck Rotary Club
NCPELS Conference, 2026

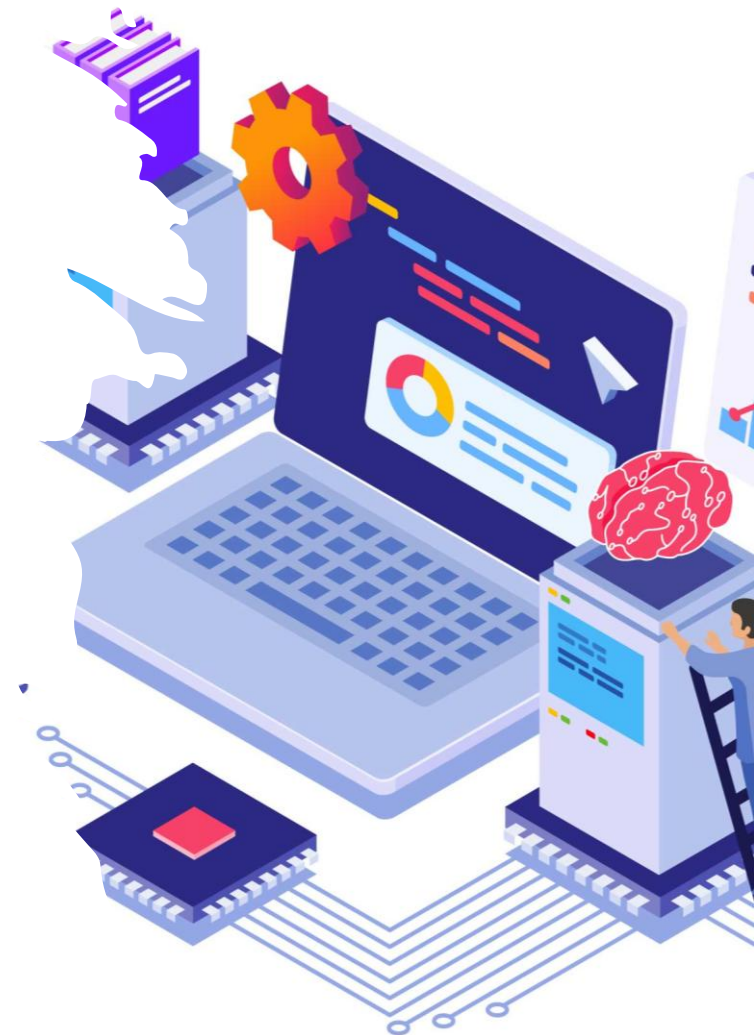


What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, like **recognizing patterns, learning from data, and making predictions.**

Examples:

- voice assistants
- email autocomplete
- smart recommendations



AI as a Tool

AI is a tool, just like a hammer or a wrench.

A hammer can build a home or break a window. The tool itself isn't good or bad. **The user and intent determine the outcome.**

AI's value depends on how humans use it.



The Reality of AI

- AI is not magic or conscious thought
- Relies on mathematical models and vast data
- AI is powerful but remains a tool and is not a replacement for judgment



How Does AI Work?

- **Learns from examples** (data). AI detects patterns and applies them to new inputs.
- Think of it like **teaching by example**.
 - Show AI enough cats and dogs, and it learns what distinguishes one from the other.
- It's **math and statistics**, not magic.



Using AI in Daily Life

DRAFT EMAILS,
LETTERS, AND
REPORTS

BRAINSTORM
IDEAS OR
SUMMARIES

TRANSLATE OR
REWRITE TEXT

PLAN TRIPS,
MEALS, OR
WORKOUTS

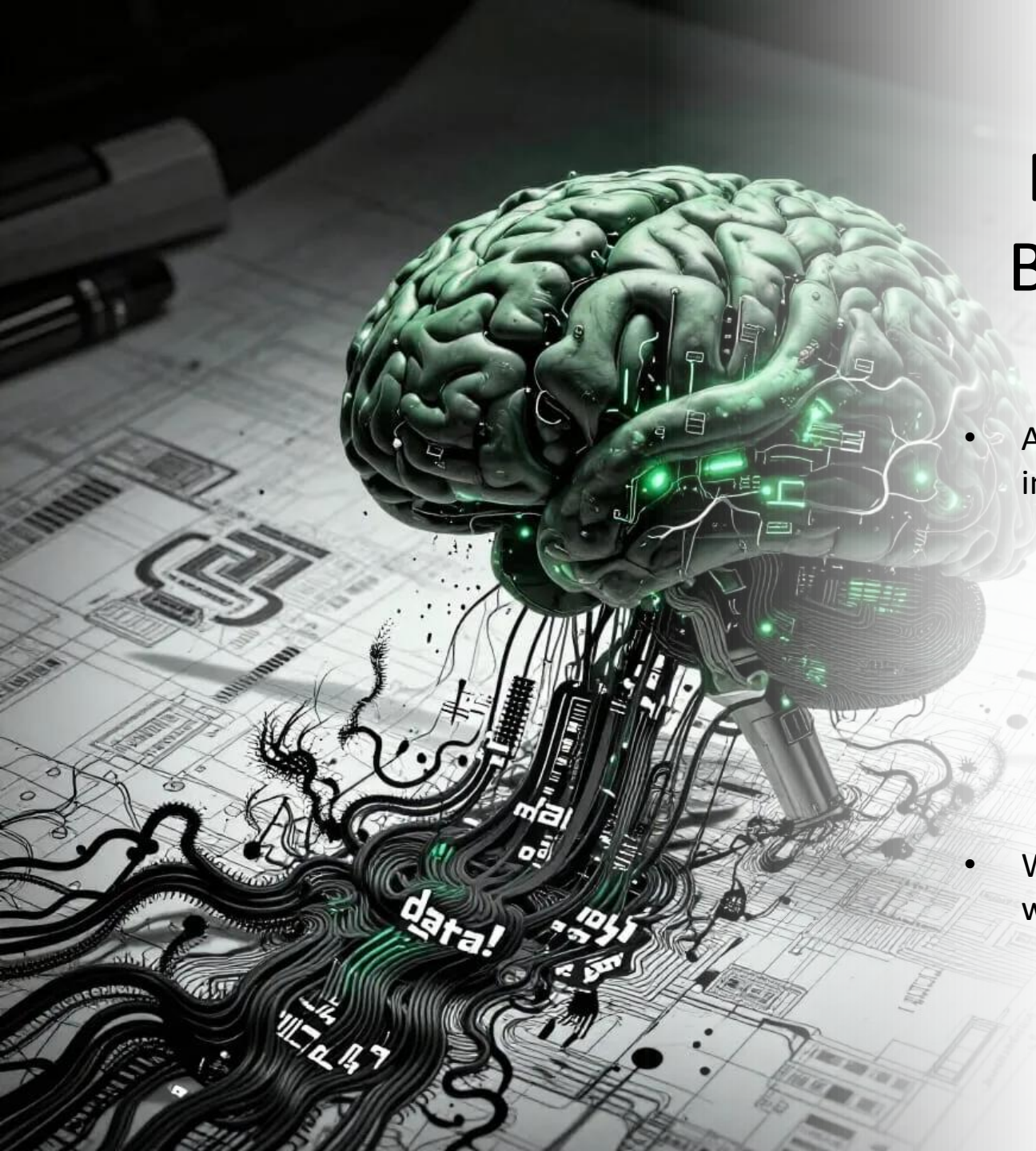
LEARN NEW
CONCEPTS OR GET
EXPLANATIONS

TRY SMALL TASKS
TO SEE WHAT
WORKS BEST FOR
YOU.



Dangers of Blind AI Use

- AI mistakes can be high-impact
 - Bias in data leading to unfair outcomes
 - AI hallucinations: making up plausible but false information
 - Privacy concerns: Data misuse
- What might go wrong with bad data?





When AI Fails

- Facial recognition misidentifies individuals
- Chatbots generating harmful or incorrect responses
- Algorithmic bias in hiring, lending, or law enforcement
- Always review and verify AI-generated content.

Using AI Responsibly

- Double-check facts
- Be transparent about using AI tools
- Use diverse and representative data
- Never delegate final decisions entirely to AI





AI for Rotary Clubs

- Streamline club communications (AI-generated newsletters, emails)
- Organize and analyze membership data
- Social media post scheduling and content suggestions

AI in Service Projects

- Identify community trends using data analysis
- Survey analysis for program effectiveness
- Translate project materials into multiple languages
- Interactive: Group brainstorm on ways to use AI in a current project



AI in Service Projects



Create a 6-month plan for a community food drive



Draft a marketing plan for a fundraising event



Generate a list of volunteer roles and timelines



AI can be your assistant, not your replacement.

Benefits and Risks for Youth

Benefits:

- Learning support
- Creative brainstorming
- Accessibility (translation, reading help)

Risks:

- Over-reliance or reduced critical thinking
- Misinformation or bias
- Privacy and ethical issues



Key Takeaways

1. AI is a **powerful tool**.
Use it **responsibly**.
2. It **enhances**, not replaces, human judgment.
3. You can **use it** in everyday life and Rotary service.
4. Always **review and verify** AI-generated content.

