

Chapter AA: Where We Are: The Audience and the AI Moment

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: author's opening question works well as opening hook - "Where are we?" creates immediate engagement and sets up the chapter's diagnostic purpose]

Where are we? This question matters because where we are determines what we need. And when it comes to AI, where we are is changing rapidly—so rapidly that writing a single book that speaks to everyone's place feels almost impossible.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: good pastoral opening - acknowledges difficulty ("feels almost impossible") while maintaining forward movement. The author's honesty about the challenge is valuable.]

Let me start with a fundamental reality: AI, as we're experiencing it now, is just over three years old. For everyone except AI scientists and science fiction writers, this is brand new territory. The rest of us never saw this coming. Period.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "Period." - strong, definitive statement. This is prophetic voice - clear, direct, truth-telling. Good balance with the pastoral opening.]

This matters because it means we're all learning in real time. There's no established playbook. There's no generation of elders who've navigated this before us. We're the first generation to face this particular challenge, and we're doing it while the technology is still evolving at breakneck speed.

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: good transition from the reality check to the implications. The author's recognition of being "first generation" is important - this creates both urgency and humility.]

I see my role as a guide. In many ways, I've been going down this trail my whole life—thinking about technology, communication, community, and how tools shape us. But in many ways, that trail wasn't possible until three short years ago. I did start on day one. I have not stopped. I have obsessively charted what's possible and terrifying about AI, and I've worked closely with my two heroes to build this.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: author's self-positioning as guide is humble but clear about expertise. "Obsessively charted what's possible and terrifying" - good balance of acknowledging both opportunity and risk. "My two heroes" - personal reference that could be expanded or clarified depending on context.]

[AGENT NOTE – ALAN HIRSCH CONTEXT: "my two heroes" - likely refers to Alan Hirsch and possibly another movement leader. Consider: should this be made explicit? Or kept as personal reference? Depends on book context and whether these figures are introduced elsewhere.]

But where is our audience? This question haunts me because the research reveals something important: we're not all in the same place. Not even close.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "haunts me" - strong emotional language, shows author's care and concern. This is pastoral voice - acknowledging the difficulty of the task. Good transition to the research.]

According to recent surveys, about 95% of adults have heard at least a little about AI, with 47% saying they've heard a lot—nearly double since 2022. But awareness doesn't mean understanding, and understanding doesn't mean comfort. About 62% of U.S. adults report interacting with AI at least several times a week, but

that interaction ranges from casual use to deep integration. Among younger adults under 30, around one-third engage with AI several times a day. But even among regular users, there's significant variation in understanding, comfort, and concern.

[AGENT NOTE – TECHNICAL ACCURACY: verify these statistics are current as of 2026. Update with most recent data if available. The author's use of "recent surveys" suggests these may need updating.]

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: good use of data to set up the "different places" theme. The progression from awareness → understanding → comfort is helpful.]

The research reveals a landscape of different places:

The Overwhelmed: About 50% of U.S. adults say they're more concerned than excited about AI, up from 37% in 2021. Only about 10% say they're more excited than concerned. Roughly 57% rate the risks of AI for society as high or very high, while only 25% say the same about benefits. About 60% want more control over how AI is used in their lives, but only 13% feel they have a lot of control. These are people who feel the technology is moving too fast, who don't understand it, who feel powerless in the face of change.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: author's description of "The Overwhelmed" is compassionate - "feel powerless" acknowledges their experience. This is pastoral voice - validating their struggle. Consider: does this section need more hope/invitation, or is the acknowledgment enough?]

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: the categorization approach works well - breaking down the audience into segments. Consider: should these be formatted as subsections with headers? Or kept as bolded categories within the flow?]

The Anxious: About 49% believe AI will create significant job displacement. About 50% think AI will worsen people's ability to form meaningful relationships. About 53% believe AI will worsen creative thinking. About 67% believe AI will eliminate more jobs than it creates. These are people who see the risks clearly—job loss, erosion of human connection, loss of skills, economic disruption. They're not wrong to be concerned.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "They're not wrong to be concerned" - important validation. This is pastoral voice - acknowledging their concerns are legitimate. Good balance with the data.]

The Disengaged: While 95% have heard about AI, that still means 5% haven't. And even among those who have heard, many haven't engaged. They're not worried because they're not paying attention. They're not interested because it hasn't touched their lives directly yet. But that's changing rapidly.

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: "But that's changing rapidly" - good forward movement, creates urgency without alarmism.]

The Enthusiastic Early Adopters: About one-third of adults under 30 engage with AI several times a day. These are people who've integrated AI into their daily workflows, who see the potential, who are experimenting and learning. But even among this group, there's significant variation in understanding and wisdom about how to use AI well.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "But even among this group" - important nuance. Author doesn't dismiss their enthusiasm but acknowledges limits. This is wise, prophetic voice - truth-telling about limitations.]

The Overconfident: Recent research on the Dunning-Kruger effect and AI reveals something troubling: people using AI tend to overestimate their performance and understanding. AI assistance boosts actual

performance but inflates self-confidence disproportionately. The classic pattern where low performers overestimate and high performers underestimate is being flattened—now, both groups overestimate when using AI. Counterintuitively, people with higher AI literacy tend to be less accurate about their performance, with more inflated self-assessments. This is the group that thinks they understand AI better than they do.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "something troubling" - prophetic voice, naming a real problem. The author's concern about overconfidence is important - this is a real risk. Consider: does this section need more pastoral invitation for the overconfident, or is the warning enough?]

[CONCEPT TO DEVELOP: Dunning-Kruger effect and AI needs careful development. The author introduces this concept but it becomes central to the chapter's concern. Expand: what is Dunning-Kruger, how does AI exacerbate it, what are the implications for learning, how do we address it? Connect to: cognitive offloading, feedback loops, self-awareness. Tone: prophetic clarity about the problem, pastoral invitation to humility and learning.]

The Relationship-Forming: There's a growing segment of people forming relationships with AI—not just using it as a tool, but engaging with it as a companion, a confidant, even a romantic partner. This raises profound questions about human connection, authenticity, and what it means to relate to non-human entities.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "profound questions" - author acknowledges complexity without dismissing or condemning. This is pastoral voice - creating space for difficult questions. Consider: should this section expand on these questions, or is the acknowledgment enough for now?]

[CONCEPT TO DEVELOP: AI relationships and human connection needs theological and anthropological development. The author flags this but doesn't resolve it. Expand: what is authentic relationship, can AI relationships support or undermine human relationships, what are the theological implications, how do we navigate boundaries? Connect to: image of God, human flourishing, community. Tone: pastoral invitation to reflect, prophetic clarity about boundaries.]

The Skeptical Experts: Interestingly, AI researchers and professionals maintain a much more positive outlook than the general public. About 56% of experts believe AI will have a positive impact over the next 20 years, compared to just 17% of the general public. But even experts share concerns about specific risks like bias, misinformation, and misuse of personal data.

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: "Interestingly" - author's voice comes through, showing engagement with the data. Good transition to the challenge.]

Where are we? We're all over the map. And this creates a fundamental challenge: how do we write one book that speaks to people who are overwhelmed, anxious, disengaged, enthusiastic, overconfident, relationship-forming, and skeptical—all at the same time?

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: author's honest acknowledgment of the challenge is valuable. This is both pastoral (acknowledging difficulty) and prophetic (naming the problem). Good balance.]

The research suggests it might not be possible. Perhaps this needs to be a choose-your-own-adventure approach. Perhaps after a 60-second assessment, it would be clear which chapters are ideal for each reader. If the reader isn't worried about AI, they need different content than someone who's overwhelmed. If they're not interested in AI, they need different content than someone who has an AI girlfriend. If they're overconfident, they need different content than someone who's anxious.

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: author's suggestion of "choose-your-own-adventure" is interesting but feels unfinished. Is this a serious proposal or a thought experiment? Consider: should this be developed further, or left as-is to show the author's thinking process?]

[AGENT NOTE – MOVEMENTAL PLATFORM: "choose-your-own-adventure" approach could connect to platform's personalized onboarding or content pathways. But keep this principle-focused, not platform-specific. The author's insight about different audiences needing different content is valuable.]

[AGENT NOTE – BOOK VERSION: "choose-your-own-adventure" - is this feasible for a print book? Consider: digital-first approach, companion assessment tool, or acknowledge limitations of single-format book. The author's concern about meeting different audiences is valid.]

But here's the complicating factor: where people are is changing rapidly. Someone who's disengaged today might be overwhelmed tomorrow when AI touches their job. Someone who's enthusiastic today might become anxious tomorrow when they realize the implications. Someone who's overconfident today might become humble tomorrow when they encounter the limits of their understanding.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: author's recognition of rapid change is important. This is prophetic voice - naming the reality of flux. Consider: does this need more pastoral encouragement, or is the acknowledgment enough?]

This rapid change makes me wonder about Dunning-Kruger more than anything. I wonder if we've even begun to learn. The research shows that AI use can lead to "cognitive offloading"—accepting AI's answers without questioning or deeply engaging. This cuts off feedback loops people rely on to calibrate how good they are. So performance might improve, but self-awareness of errors or limitations declines.

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: author's personal reflection ("I wonder") is valuable - shows the author's own uncertainty and learning. This is authentic voice - not claiming to have all answers.]

[CONCEPT TO DEVELOP: cognitive offloading and feedback loops needs development. The author introduces this concept but it's central to the concern about learning. Expand: what is cognitive offloading, how does AI create it, what happens to feedback loops, how do we maintain self-awareness? Connect to: learning, competence, self-assessment. Tone: prophetic clarity about the problem, pastoral invitation to intentional learning practices.]

Have we even begun to learn? Or are we in the early stages of a massive overconfidence crisis, where we think we understand AI better than we do, where we trust it more than we should, where we've lost the ability to assess our own competence?

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: rhetorical questions create space for reflection. This is pastoral voice - inviting reader to consider, not demanding agreement. Good use of questions.]

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: the progression from "I wonder" to "Have we even begun to learn?" to the question about overconfidence crisis - good escalation of concern while maintaining invitation.]

I don't know. But I suspect we're still in the early days of learning, and that the real education is just beginning.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "I don't know" - powerful humility. This is pastoral voice - acknowledging uncertainty. "But I suspect" - then offering what the author does know. Good balance of humility and wisdom.]

This is why I see my role as a guide. Not because I have all the answers—I don't. Not because I've figured it all out—I haven't. But because I've been on this trail from day one, I've been charting what's possible and terrifying, and I've been working to build something that serves movement leaders well.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: excellent pastoral voice - humble, clear about limitations, but also clear about calling. "What's possible and terrifying" - good acknowledgment of both sides. This is the author's authentic voice - preserve exactly.]

Where are we? We're in different places, and those places are changing rapidly. But we're all in this together, learning in real time, trying to figure out how to navigate a technology that's reshaping everything—and doing it while the technology itself is still evolving.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: "But we're all in this together" - pastoral invitation to community. Good balance with the acknowledgment of difficulty.]

The challenge is meeting people where they are while acknowledging that where they are is changing. The opportunity is creating content that can adapt, that can speak to different places, that can serve people whether they're overwhelmed or enthusiastic, anxious or overconfident, disengaged or deeply integrated.

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: good transition from challenge to opportunity. The author's reframing is helpful - acknowledges difficulty but also sees possibility.]

Where are we? We're here, together, learning. And that's where we start.

[AGENT NOTE – VOICE BALANCE: beautiful closing - pastoral, invitational, hopeful but realistic. "We're here, together, learning" - simple, profound, authentic. This is the author's voice - preserve exactly.]

[AGENT NOTE – NARRATIVE FLOW: circular structure - begins and ends with "Where are we?" - creates coherence. Good chapter ending.]

Suggested Next Pass (Human-in-the-Loop)

1. **Develop Dunning-Kruger concept:** This concept is introduced but becomes central to the chapter's concern. Expand: what is Dunning-Kruger, how does AI exacerbate it, what are the implications for learning, how do we address it? Connect to cognitive offloading and feedback loops. Tone: prophetic clarity about the problem, pastoral invitation to humility and learning.
2. **Develop cognitive offloading concept:** The author introduces this but it needs more development. Expand: what is cognitive offloading, how does AI create it, what happens to feedback loops, how do we maintain self-awareness? This is crucial for the learning concern.
3. **Clarify "choose-your-own-adventure" proposal:** Is this a serious proposal or a thought experiment? If serious, develop how this might work (digital-first approach, companion assessment tool, etc.). If thought experiment, consider whether to keep it or refine the language.
4. **Develop AI relationships concept:** The author flags "profound questions" about AI relationships but doesn't develop them. Consider: should this be expanded here, or flagged for a later chapter? If expanded, connect to theological anthropology, human flourishing, community.

5. **Verify and update statistics:** Check that all statistics are current as of 2026. Update with most recent data if available. The author uses "recent surveys" which suggests these may need updating.
6. **Clarify "my two heroes" reference:** Depending on book context, consider whether this should be made explicit (Alan Hirsch and possibly another movement leader) or kept as personal reference. Check if these figures are introduced elsewhere in the book.
7. **Consider chapter placement:** This chapter diagnoses where the audience is. Consider: does this work better early in the book (to set context) or later (after establishing framework)? The author's question about meeting different audiences suggests this might work well early, but the complexity of the concepts might suggest later placement.
8. **Expand on "overconfidence crisis":** The author asks a powerful question about whether we're in an "overconfidence crisis." Consider: should this be developed further, or is the question enough? The question is powerful as-is, but might benefit from some development of what this crisis looks like.
9. **Connect to Movemental platform:** The "choose-your-own-adventure" insight could connect to platform's personalized onboarding or content pathways, but keep this principle-focused, not platform-specific.
10. **Consider format implications:** If the "choose-your-own-adventure" approach is serious, consider: is this feasible for a print book? Digital-first approach? Companion assessment tool? The author's concern about meeting different audiences is valid and might require format considerations.

Document Status: Processed with Human-in-the-Loop Method

Original Source: [pre-writing-synthesis.md](#) - Chapter AA

Last Updated: January 2026

Related Documents:

- [human-in-the-loop-narrative-synthesis-method.md](#) - Method protocol
- [method-demonstration-example.md](#) - Additional examples