

## **Artificial Intelligence in Small Business Decision-Making: Rhetorical Analysis**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping business practices across sectors, and the methods used to communicate its potential are as varied as the audiences they target. In my Project One research, I discovered that organizations tailor their messages based on whether they are addressing technical experts or everyday entrepreneurs. This observation is clearly reflected in two artifacts I have chosen: the peer-reviewed thesis *Understanding AI Innovation Contexts* and Andrew Ng's TED Talk *How AI Could Empower Any Business*. While the thesis employs a formal structure, rigorous empirical data, and a measured urgency to persuade a scholarly audience of AI's strategic necessity, Ng's TED Talk relies on personal anecdotes, accessible language, and engaging visuals to inspire a broader, non-specialist public to embrace AI's potential.

My initial research underscored that the success of technological communication hinges on aligning rhetorical strategies with audience expectations. For example, academic audiences value detailed evidence and logical argumentation, whereas non-specialists are more receptive to narrative-driven presentations that simplify complex ideas. These insights are crucial in understanding the distinct rhetorical approaches adopted by the two artifacts.

*Understanding AI Innovation Contexts* is designed for a specialized readership composed of researchers, industry professionals, and decision-makers. Its formal academic layout, characterized by clear section divisions and methodical progression, reflects the stringent expectations of its audience. The thesis supports its arguments with extensive empirical data, including detailed statistics and case studies that document AI's impact on business efficiency. Such reliance on evidence appeals strongly to logos and reinforces the text's credibility. At the same time, there is a subtle sense of urgency woven throughout the thesis—a warning that businesses risk obsolescence if they do not adapt to the rapidly evolving technological landscape.

This cautious yet persuasive call to action is particularly effective in a scholarly context, where data-driven analysis is paramount.

In stark contrast, Andrew Ng's TED Talk adopts a style that is both conversational and visually engaging. Ng draws on his personal experiences and success stories to demystify AI and make its benefits relatable. By sharing real-life examples of small businesses that have successfully integrated AI-driven automation, he creates a narrative that is both accessible and inspiring. This use of personal anecdotes not only establishes his credibility but also connects with the audience on an emotional level, appealing to pathos. Ng's language is free of technical jargon, which allows him to simplify complex concepts and draw comparisons—such as likening AI's transformative potential to the revolutionary impact of electricity in the early 20th century. Furthermore, his use of dynamic visuals and direct eye contact enhances the overall engagement, ensuring that even viewers without a technical background can appreciate the practical benefits of AI.

Despite these differences, both artifacts share a common goal: to advocate for the integration of AI in business. The thesis achieves this through its adherence to academic norms and its methodical presentation of data, while Ng's TED Talk leverages narrative storytelling and visual appeal to motivate a wider audience. By comparing these two approaches, it becomes evident that effective persuasion requires a nuanced understanding of the audience, the medium, and the rhetorical context. The academic text's structured format and reliance on empirical evidence resonate with a readership that values precision and logical rigor. In contrast, the TED Talk's emphasis on accessibility and emotional connection successfully bridges the gap between abstract technological concepts and practical, everyday applications.

In reflecting on both artifacts, it is clear that each employs rhetorical strategies that are finely tuned to their respective audiences. The formal, data-driven approach of *Understanding AI Innovation Contexts* is ideal for readers who demand depth and precision, while the relatable, visually engaging presentation in Ng's TED Talk effectively captures the interest of a broader public. Ultimately, both approaches demonstrate that the power of persuasion in technological discourse lies not merely in the presentation of facts, but in the ability to connect with the audience in a manner that aligns with their values and expectations.