AI Reality Reflection Workshop – Hype vs Reality

# Objective

Explore what working in AI really involves, beyond the hype, and reflect on whether AI aligns with your interests, skills, and career goals. You will use 10 facts about AI to research real-world examples, analyze them, and create a creative narrative.

# Overview

AI is often portrayed in movies, media, and social media as glamorous, futuristic, or fully autonomous. The truth is more nuanced. In this workshop, you will:

* Read the whole document first before starting, skim the details.
* Explore facts about real AI work
* Research real-world examples illustrating these facts
* Reflect on what these facts mean for you personally
* Create a slide contrasting AI hype with reality, integrating your reflections:
  + Which aspects of AI work appeal to you most?
  + Are there aspects that surprise or concern you?
  + How does this change your perception of an AI career?

# Deliverables

* **Team:** Slide or visual narrative showing hype vs reality for at least 3 facts
* **Individual:** Personal reflection summarizing insights about AI work and personal fit (to include in your Portflow for LO1 Orientation)

# Team Research & Narrative Activity

**Step 1 – Form a Team**

* Teams of 2–4 students.

**Step 2 – Pick Facts**

* Choose at least **3 facts** (any combination) that interest your team.

**Step 3 – Research Facts**

* Use news articles, case studies, or industry reports.
* Include memes, social media posts, or other examples to illustrate the facts you picked.

**Step 4 – Create a Slide Deck or a word document**

For each fact, include:

* Explanation in your own words
* Real-world examples from research (stories, memes, videos)
* A **brief reflection**: Why does this matter for someone considering AI as a career?

**Step 5 – Feedback Walk**

* Leave one presenter at your slide deck.
* The rest of the team walks around, views other teams’ slides, and gives **written feedback**: What surprised you? What did you find interesting?

# Personal Reflection

After sharing and receiving feedback, answer these questions individually:

* What does these facts mean for you?
* Which type of AI work excites me most?
* Which aspects of AI work concern me or seem uninteresting?
* Could I see myself exploring AI further based on what I’ve learned today? Why or why not?
* What skills or knowledge would I need to develop to succeed in AI?

Tip: For each fact you explored, note how it challenges the AI hype you’ve seen and how it relates to your interests.

# Tips for Success

* Focus on **real-world examples** to make facts tangible.
* Be **creative**: memes, stories, graphics, or videos are welcome.
* Reflections should be **honest and personal**.
* Avoid large teams — ensure everyone talks and participates. Multiple perspectives make the narrative richer.

# AI Reality Fact Groups

These facts are grouped to help you explore different dimensions of AI work. Pick the ones that resonate with your team.

**Group 1 – Day-to-Day Reality of AI Work**

* **Fact 1:** 80-20 Rule – Most AI work is data cleaning, labeling, and pipeline management; only a small portion is writing models.
* **Fact 2:** AI is rarely fully automated – Humans are needed for monitoring, labeling, validating, and interpreting results (*human-in-the-loop*).

**Group 2 – Technical Challenges**

* **Fact 3:** AI models are fragile – Small changes in data or context can break a model (*context drift*).
* **Fact 4:** Deployment is the hardest part – Building a model is fun, but putting it into a real system that runs reliably day-to-day is complex.
* **Fact 5:** Models can be biased – AI reflects the biases in the data, so ethical thinking and critical review are essential (*explainable, interpretable, fair AI*).

**Group 3 – Skills & Teamwork**

* **Fact 6:** Domain knowledge matters more than coding – Understanding the problem and data is often more important than fancy algorithms.
* **Fact 7:** Collaboration is key – AI projects involve data engineers, domain experts, product managers, and designers, not just data scientists.
* **Fact 8:** Soft skills matter – Communication, explaining results to non-technical stakeholders, and critical thinking are crucial.

Note: Pick at least 3 facts that resonate or interest your team. You do **not** need one from each group.

Sources:

[Hidden Technical Debt in Machine Learning Systems](https://proceedings.neurips.cc/paper/2015/file/86df7dcfd896fcaf2674f757a2463eba-Paper.pdf)

[The Humans Working Behind the AI Curtain](https://ghostwork.info/2017/01/just-how-artificial-is-artificial-intelligence/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

[Human-in-the-loop AI balances automation and accountability - Trilateral Research](https://trilateralresearch.com/responsible-ai/human-in-the-loop-ai-balances-automation-and-accountability?utm_source=chatgpt.com)