

“The Purpose of an Essay is What it Does: Generative AI and the Writing Classroom”

Resource List

Applied

[Talking about Generative AI: A Guide for Educators](#)

Sidney I. Dobrin

Free PDF resource

[AI and Writing](#)

Sidney I. Dobrin

Free textbook (out later this summer)

“TextGenEd: Teaching with Text Generation Technologies”

Eds. Annette Vee, Tim Laquintano, and Carly Schnitzler

WAC Clearinghouse Collection (out August 15, 2023)

[Classroom Policies for AI Generative Tools](#)

Ongoing resource document curated by Lance Eaton

Conceptual

[Anatomy of an AI System](#)

Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler

Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence

Kate Crawford

[What is ChatGPT Doing...and Why Does it Work?](#)

Stephan Wolfram

[One Useful Thing](#)

Ethan Mollick’s blog on AI and education

Critical

[AI Hype and the Disciplining of ‘Creative,’ Academic, and Journalistic Labor](#)

Citations Needed, Episode 183

Nima Shirzi and Adam Johnson

Interview with Dr. Lauren M.E. Goodland

[ChatGPT Is Not Intelligent](#)

Tech Won’t Save Us, Episode 163

Paris Marx

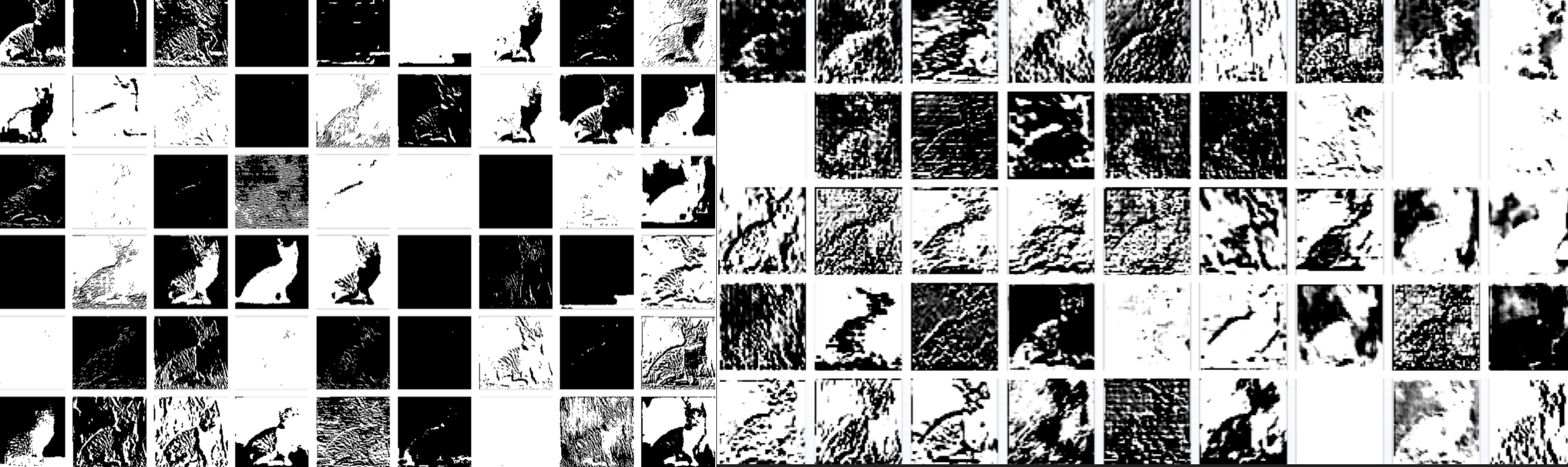
Interview with Dr. Emily M. Bender

Contact

jcrider@tamu.edu

jasoncrider.net

@jason_crider_



THE PURPOSE OF AN ESSAY IS WHAT IT DOES

GENERATIVE AI & THE WRITING CLASSROOM

Jason Crider

Assistant Professor

Department of English

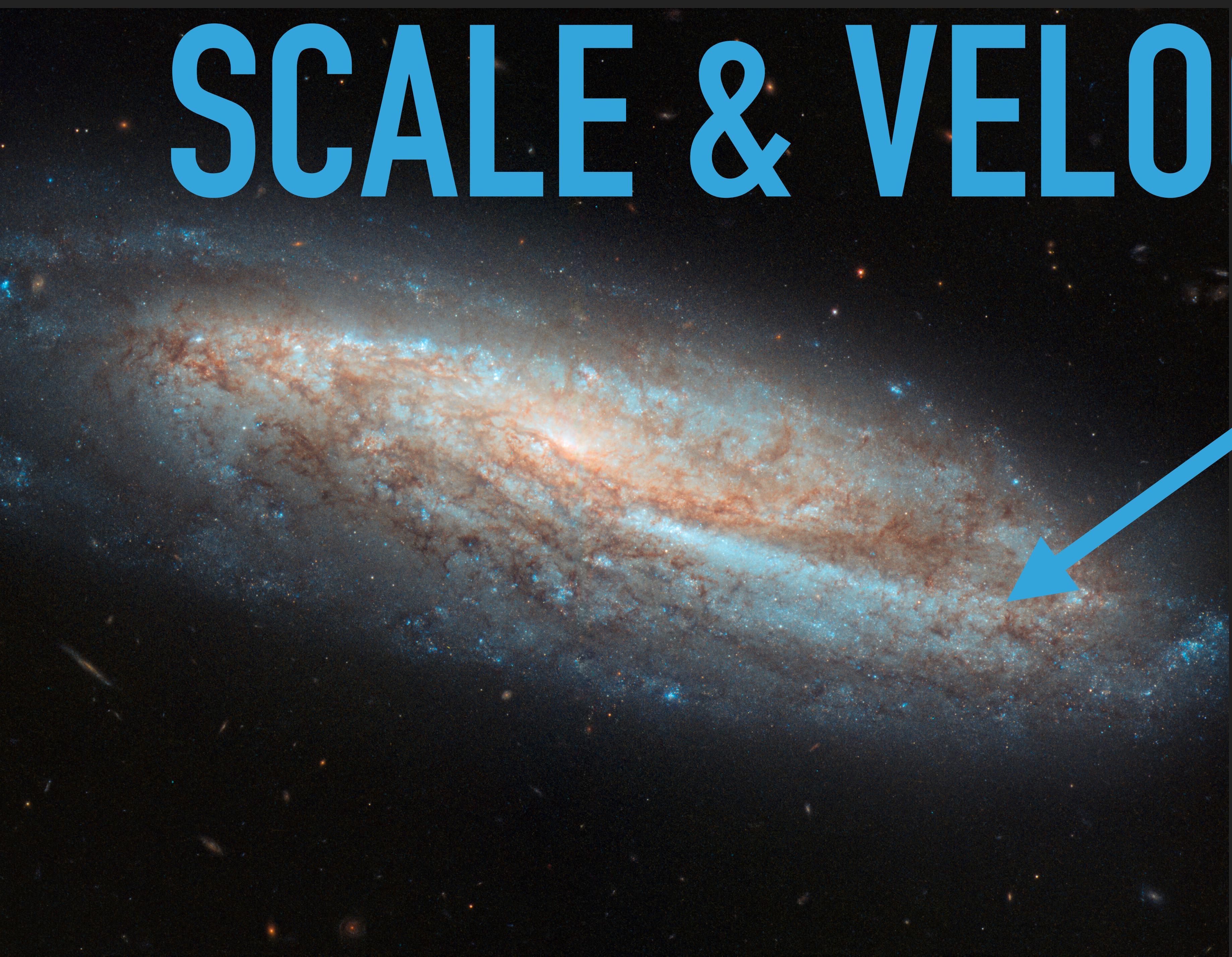
Texas A&M University

jcridertamu.edu

jasoncrider.net



SCALE & VELOCITY



YOU ARE HERE

ChatGPT Sprints to One Million Users

Time it took for selected online services to reach one million users



* one million backers ** one million nights booked *** one million downloads

Source: Company announcements via Business Insider/LinkedIn

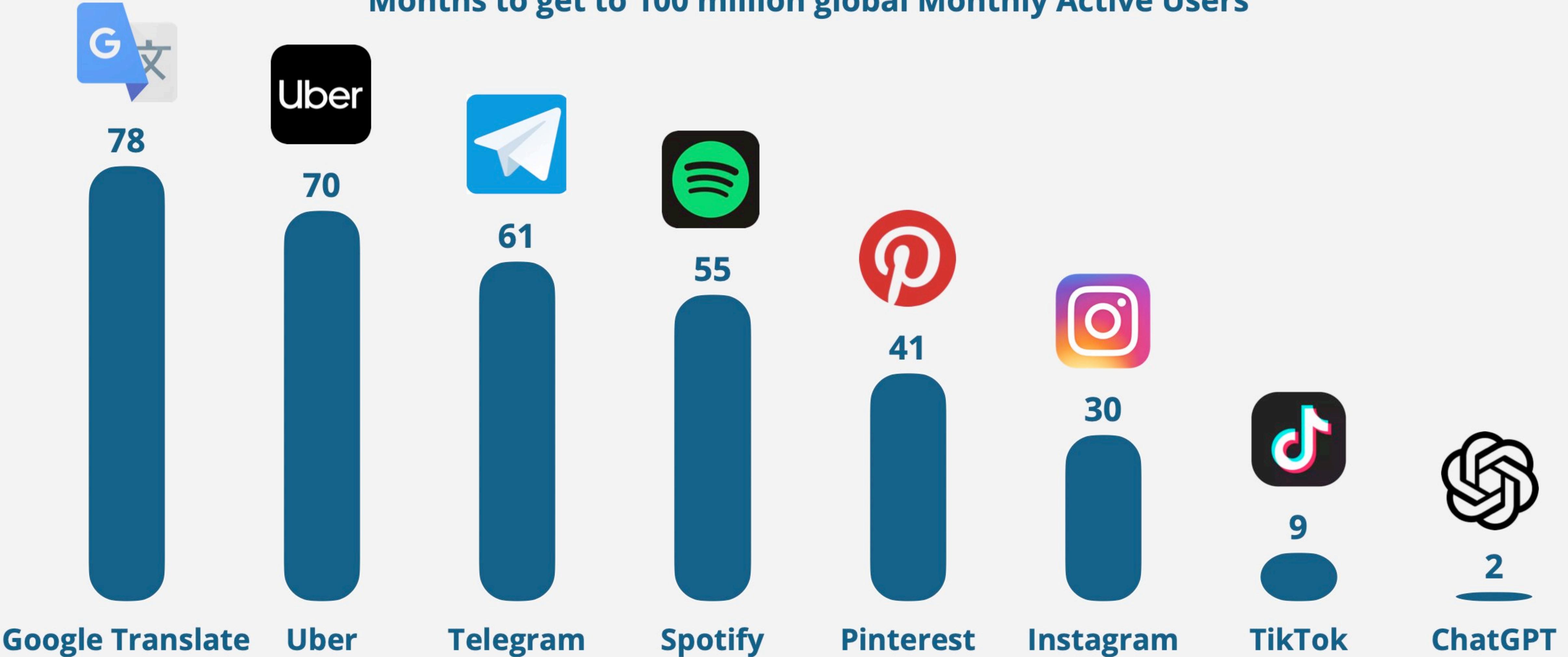


statista

OpenAI's public launch of ChatGPT set records for the fastest-growing user base in history

Time to Reach 100M Users

Months to get to 100 million global Monthly Active Users



GENERATIVE AI NARRATIVES

A.I. Poses ‘Risk of Extinction,’ Industry Leaders Warn

Leaders from OpenAI, Google DeepMind, Anthropic and other A.I. labs warn that future systems could be as deadly as pandemics and nuclear weapons.

 Give this article



 1.4K



TECH · A.I.

Marc Andreessen, the VC who famously said software will ‘eat the world,’ now says A.I. will save it — so people should stop ‘freaking out’ about A.I.

BY ANDREA GUZMAN

June 6, 2023 at 5:25 PM CDT



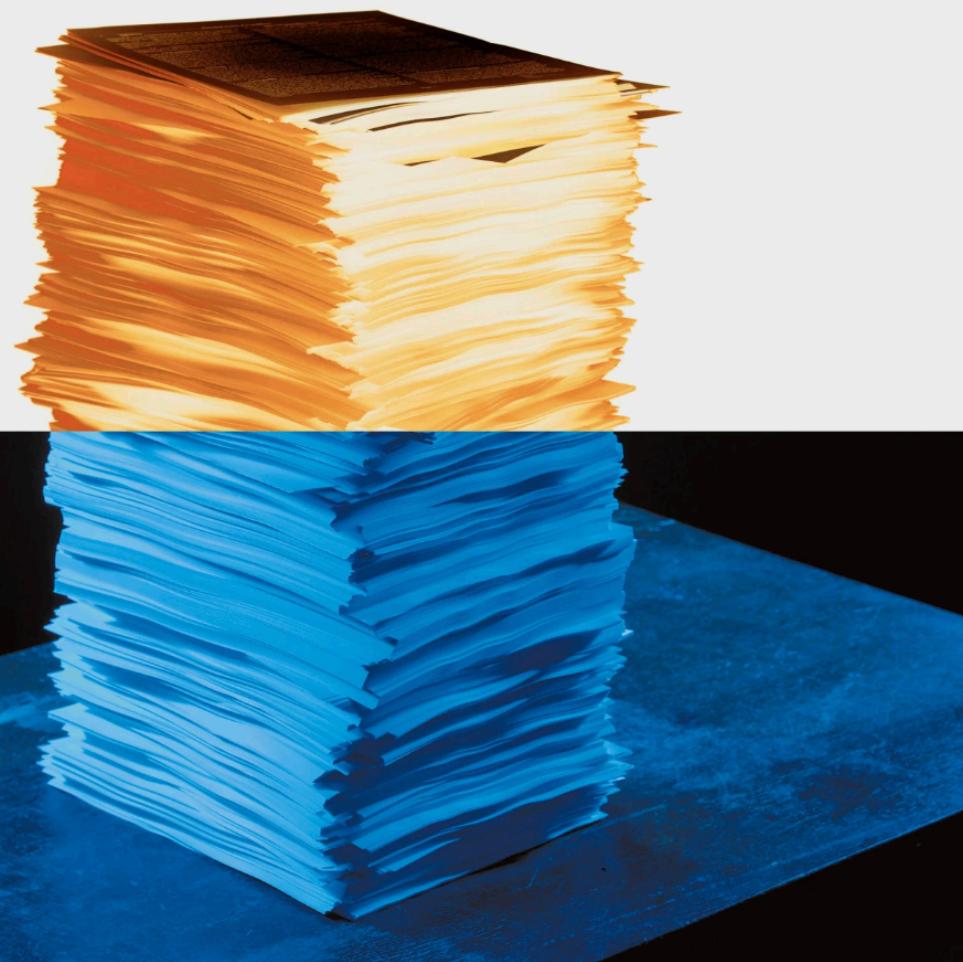
REGISTER FOR A FREE
ACCOUNT

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

SUBSCRIBE

Sign In

NEWS | ADVICE | THE REVIEW | DATA | CURRENT ISSUE | VIRTUAL EVENTS | STORE ▾ | JOBS ▾ | 



ChatGPT Is a Plagiarism Machine

So why do administrators have their heads in the sand?

RollingStone  

GOT A TIP?

LOG IN
SUBSCRIBE

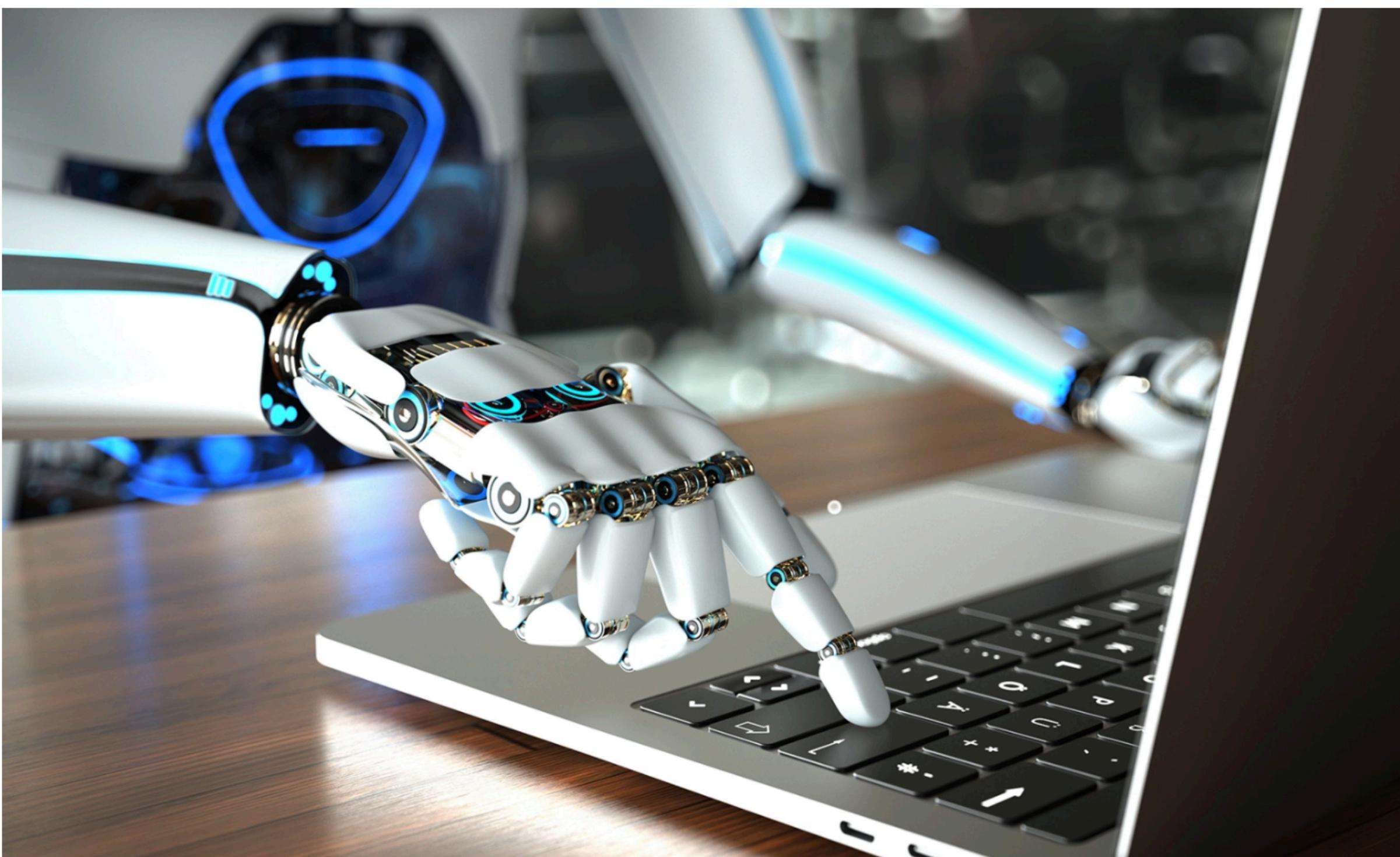
FAIL TALE

She Was Falsely Accused of Cheating With AI – And She Won't Be the Last

UC Davis student Louise Stivers became the victim of her college's attempts to root out essays and exams completed by chat bots

BY MILES KLEE

JUNE 6, 2023



REGISTER FOR A FREE
ACCOUNT

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

SUBSCRIBE

Sign In

NEWS | ADVICE | THE REVIEW | DATA | CURRENT ISSUE | VIRTUAL EVENTS | STORE ▾ | JOBS ▾ | 



I'm a Student. You
Have No Idea How
Much We're Using
ChatGPT.

No professor or software could
ever pick up on it.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

I'm a Student. You Have No Idea How Much We're Using ChatGPT

Owen Kichizo Terry, May 12, 2023

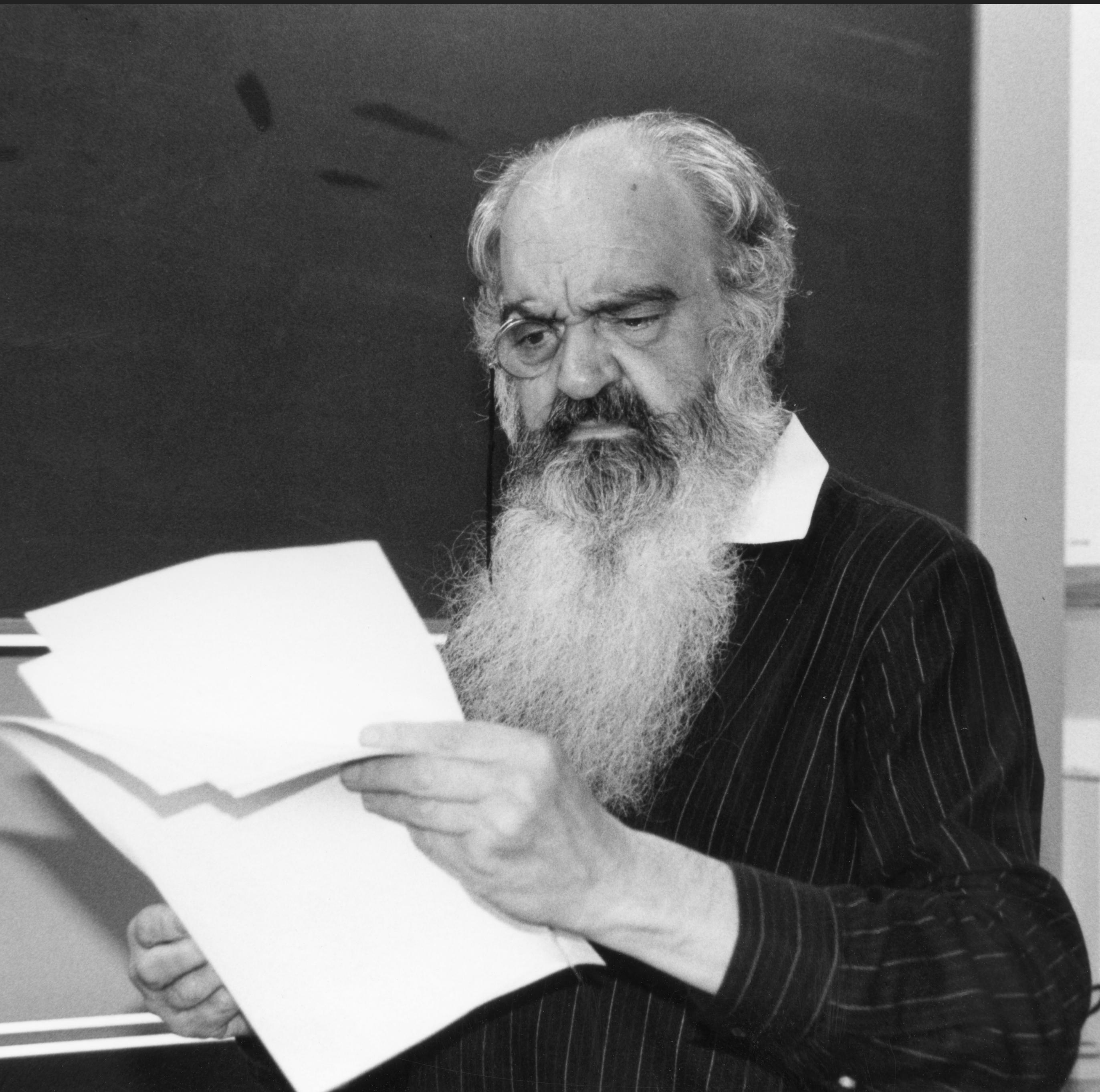
Look at any high school or college academic integrity policy, and you'll find the same message: submit work that reflects your own thinking, or face discipline. A year ago, this was just about the most common-sense rule on Earth. Today, it's laughably naive.

There's a remarkable disconnect between how those with influence over education systems — teachers, professors, administrators — think students use generative AI on written work and how we actually use it. As a student, the assumption I've encountered among authority figures is that if an essay is written with the help of ChatGPT, there will be some sort of evidence — the software has a distinctive "voice," it can't make very complex arguments (yet), and there are programs that claim to detect AI output. This is a dangerous misconception. In reality, it's very easy to use AI to do the lion's share of the thinking while still submitting work that looks like your own. Once this becomes clear, it follows that massive structural change is needed if our schools are going to keep training students to think critically.

"THE PURPOSE OF A SYSTEM IS WHAT IT DOES"

POSIWID

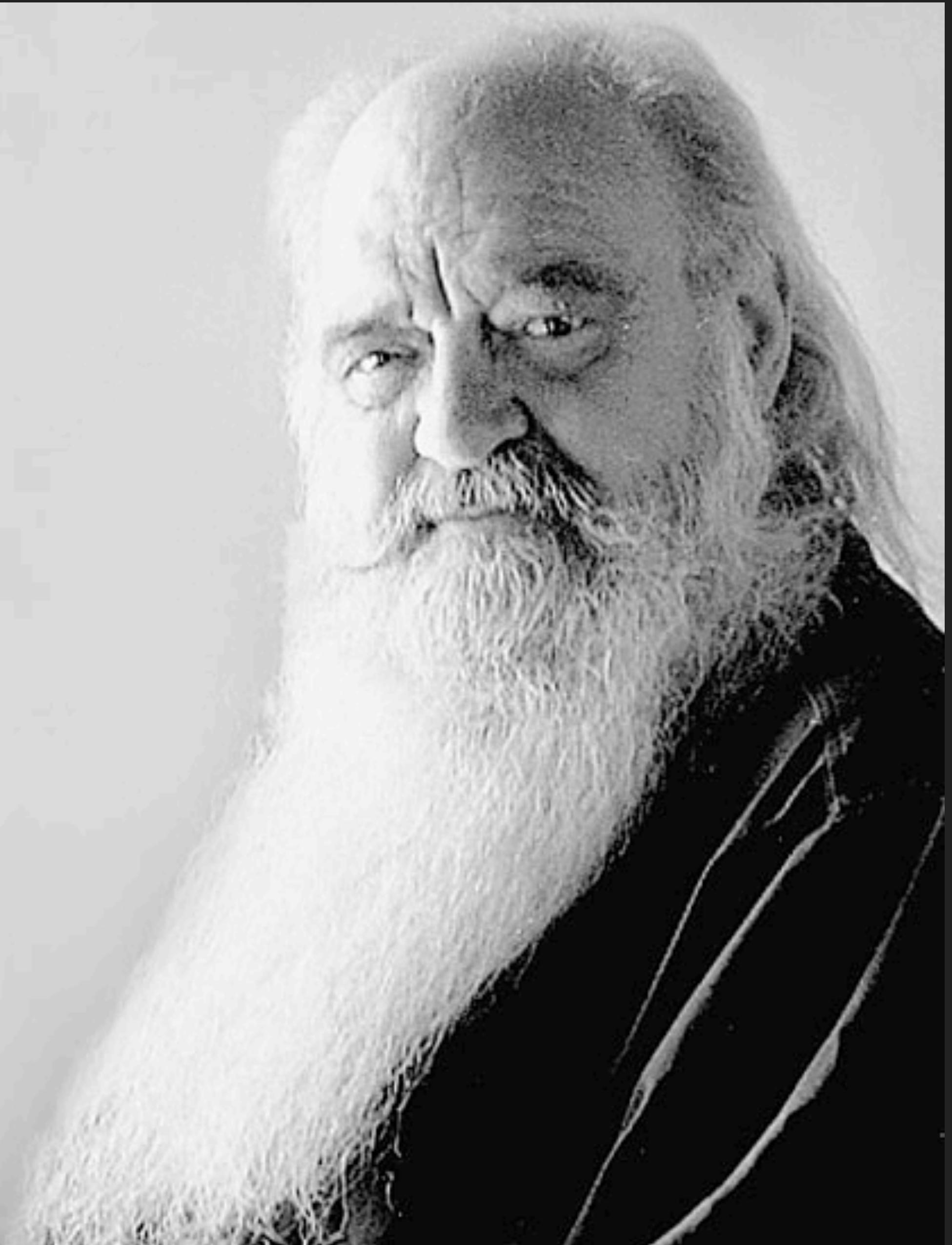
- ▶ Stafford Beer (1926-2002)
- ▶ The "father of management cybernetics"
- ▶ "There is no point in claiming that the **purpose of a system** is to do what it constantly fails to do"



POSIWID

- ▶ "According to the cybernetician, the **purpose of a system is what it does.** This is a basic dictum. It stands for bald fact, which makes a better starting point in seeking understanding than the familiar attributions of good intention, prejudices about expectations, moral judgement, or sheer ignorance of circumstances."

- ▶ Stafford Beer in 2001



AI System



ChatGPT/
GPT-3.5

What is it

This is the free version of ChatGPT that came out in November. It is very fast and pretty solid at writing and coding tasks.

Major Thing People Get Wrong

It is not connected to the internet. If you ask it to look up anything since late 2021, it will get those things wrong. Doesn't do math



ChatGPT/
GPT-4

New. Currently available to paying customers. Disturbingly powerful at times, it is the most capable model. Slow. Does a lot.

It is also not connected to the internet, though it is better at not making stuff up. Does better at math.



ChatGPT/
Plugins/Web/
Code Interpreter

Adds new capabilities to ChatGPT. Plugins and web browsing still have rough edges. Code Interpreter lets the AI run Python code.

As a system in early testing, plugin and web capabilities are not completely clear, but Code Interpreter is a huge advance.



Bing AI

Connected to the internet. Extremely powerful. Somewhat weird. Creative mode uses GPT-4, the other modes (precise, balanced) don't seem to

Being in the wrong mode will get you bad results (Creative mode is most full featured). AI with personality.



Google Bard

Current model is not very good. Future models may be very powerful.

Since it is Google, expecting it to not lie. It makes stuff up more than other models.



Anthropic
Claude

Equivalent to GPT-3.5, but with a model that feels much more sane to use. Less popular

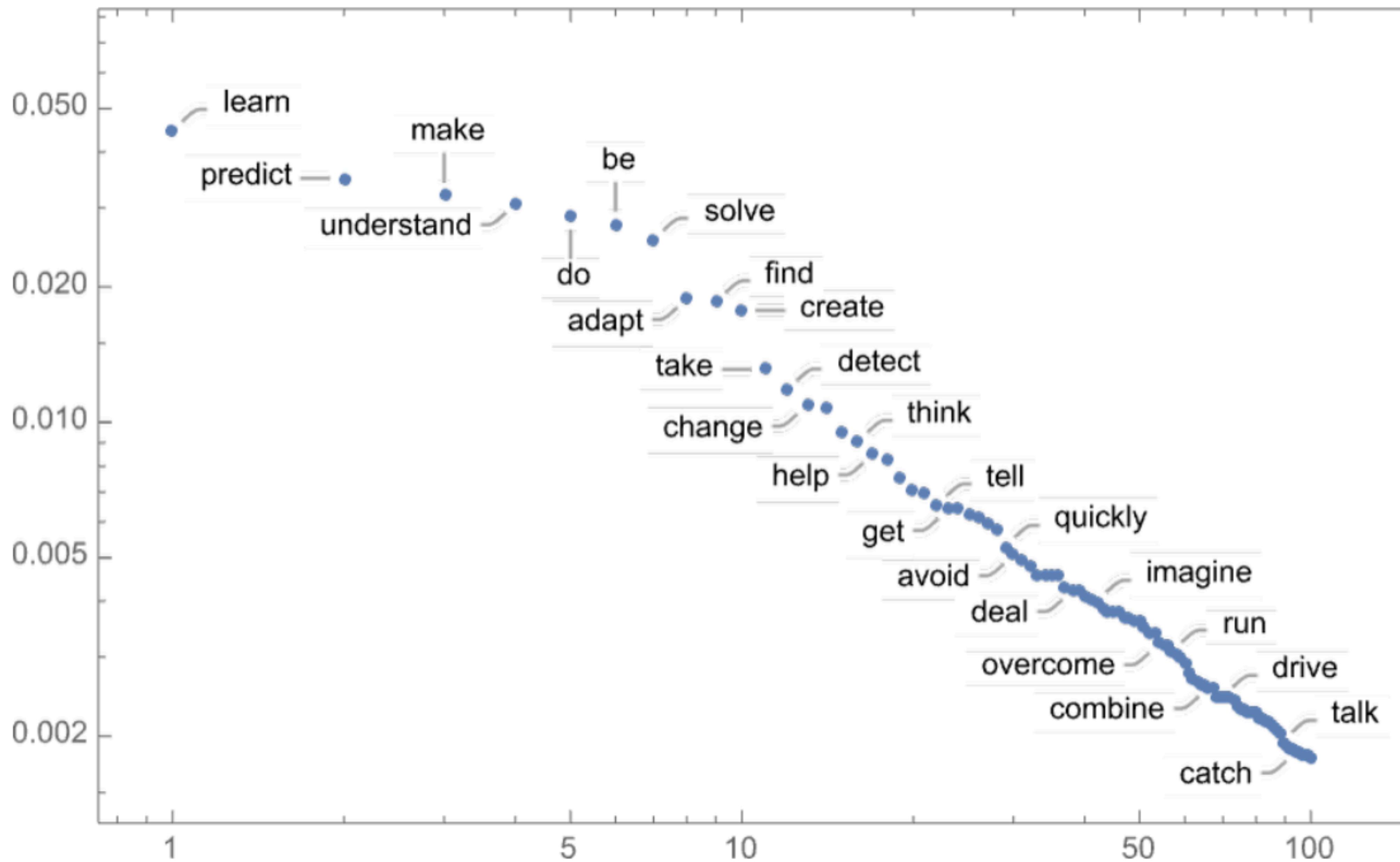
Also not connected to the internet



HOW LLMS (LANGUAGE LEARNING MODELS) WORK (KINDA)

The best thing about AI is its ability to

learn	4.5%
predict	3.5%
make	3.2%
understand	3.1%
do	2.9%



eagle
deer
camel
bear cow duck
elephant chicken
chimpanzee dog fish
cheetah dolphin
alligator crocodile
ant bee

fly

cranberry blueberry grape
strawberry raspberry

apricot peach
fig cherry pineapple coconut

mango

papaya melon

banana

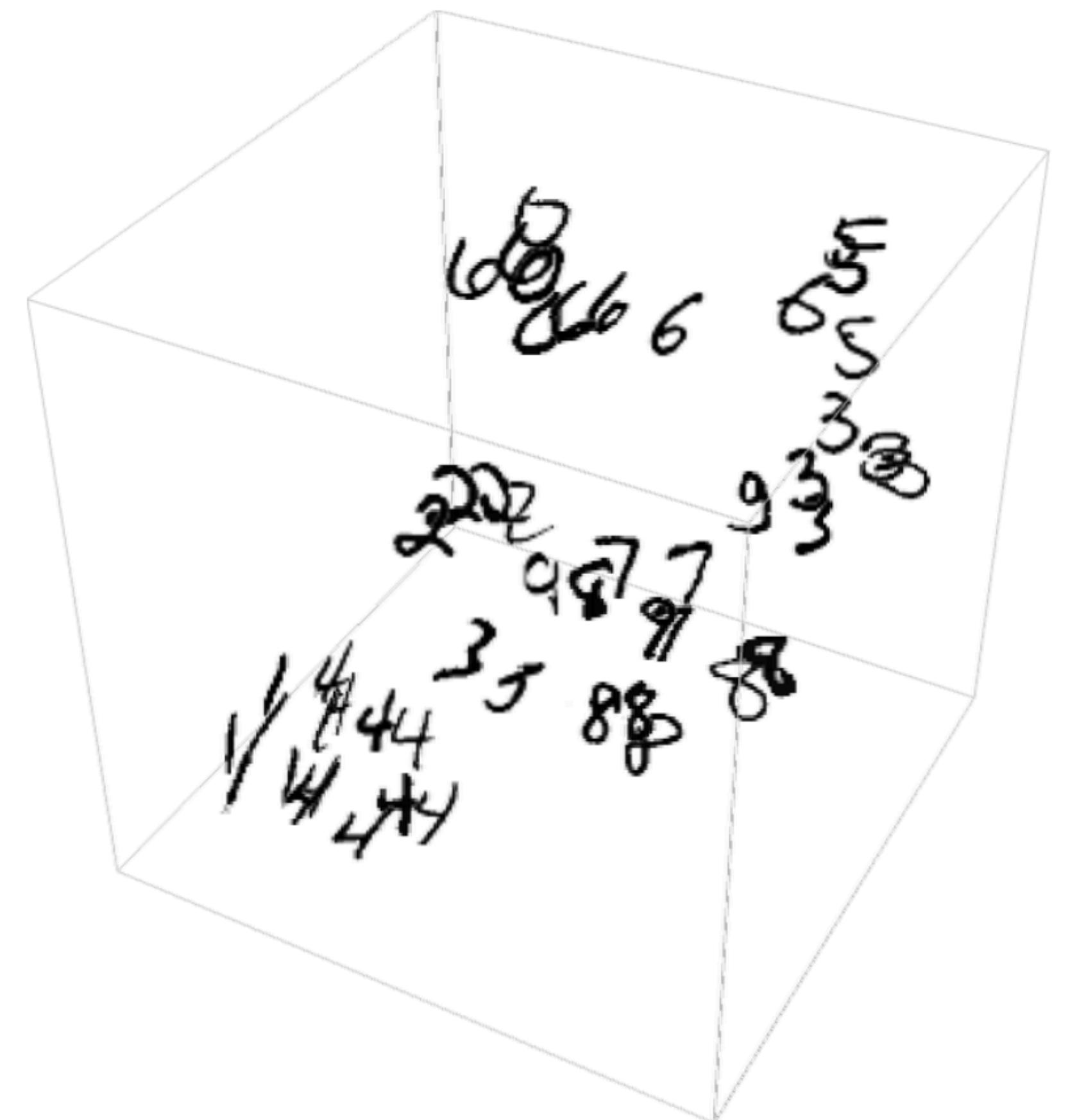
apple

blackberry

avocado

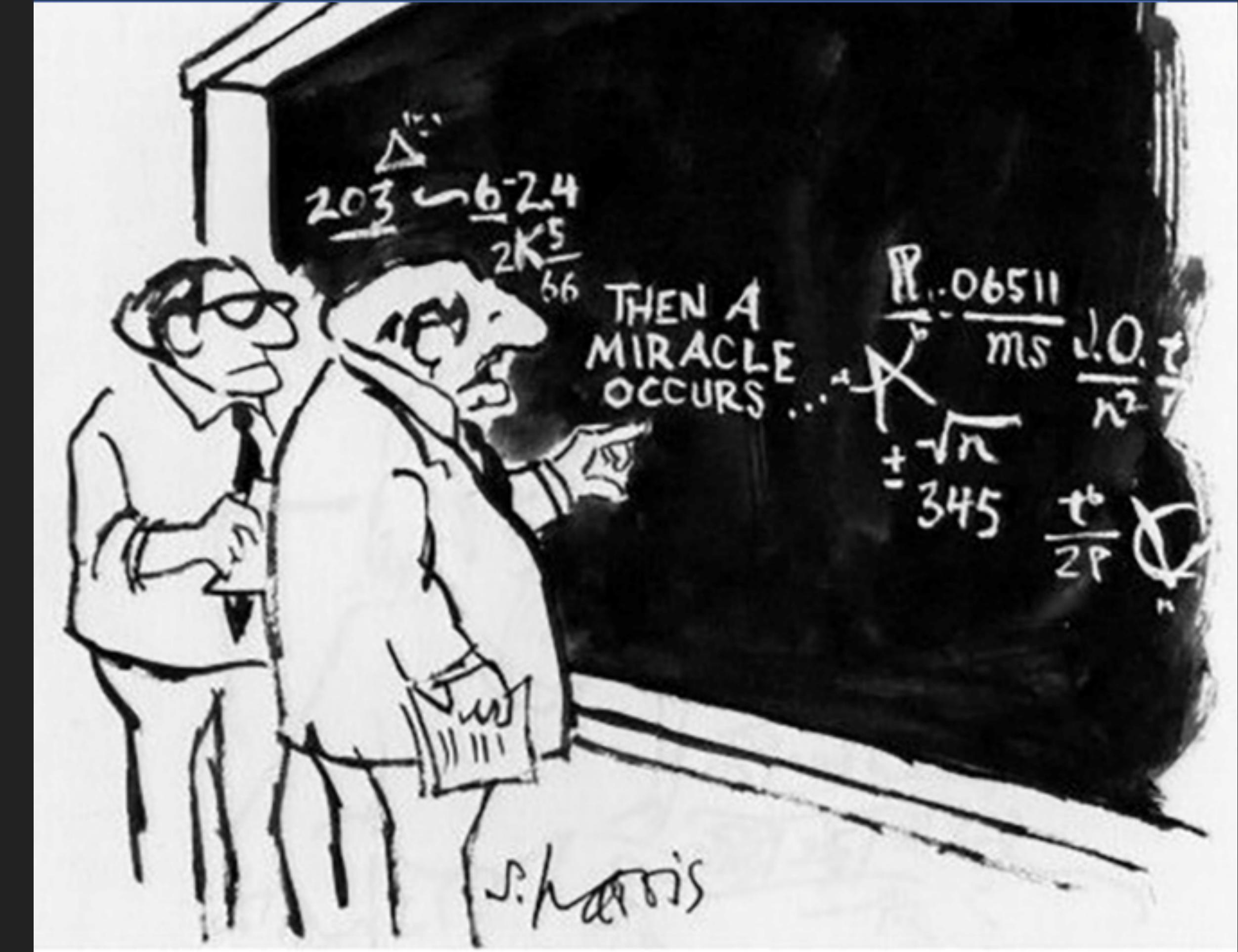
ribes

turnip



ETHICS AND AI

- ▶ LLMs train on billions of images, words, writings, etc. without permission
- ▶ Most AI systems use the material you upload to train on
- ▶ Environmental impact
- ▶ Biases in data models



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

GENAI & WRITING

- ▶ Undetectable
- ▶ Ubiquitous
- ▶ Disruptive
- ▶ Demanding of new literacies



MY SPRING SYLLABUS AI POLICY

Artificial Intelligence Policy*

Students are permitted to use AI assistants, such as ChatGPT, to assist in their writing process in this course. However, there are certain guidelines that must be followed to ensure the integrity of the student's work.

1. An explanation of prompts must be submitted alongside the assignment, as well as a brief summary of how they were helpful in drafting the assignment.
2. Students are responsible for fact-checking all information generated by the AI assistant. Any inaccuracies found in the final submission will be considered a violation of academic integrity. Please note that although these programs are very good at creating answers that sound authoritative, there is nothing on the backend that performs any fact checking.
3. The use of AI assistants should be used as a tool to improve the student's writing skills, not to cheat on assignments. Submitting work generated entirely by an AI assistant will be considered plagiarism.
4. Students who violate these guidelines will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy, which may include, but is not limited to, failing the assignment and/or disciplinary action.
5. Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor if they have any questions or concerns about using AI assistants.

*This policy was generated by ChatGPT and revised for clarity.

THE PARANOID MEMO

FINAL TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ “The plagiarism question”
 - ▶ Resist blanket AI policies
- ▶ Reinforce deep knowledge
- ▶ Demystify the tech (POSIWID)
- ▶ Be adaptable (and humble!)
- ▶ Exceed the Template
- ▶ Process over Product

