

The 5% Who Are Already Thinking With AI

The tiny group using AI as more than a tool — and what it means for the rest of us.

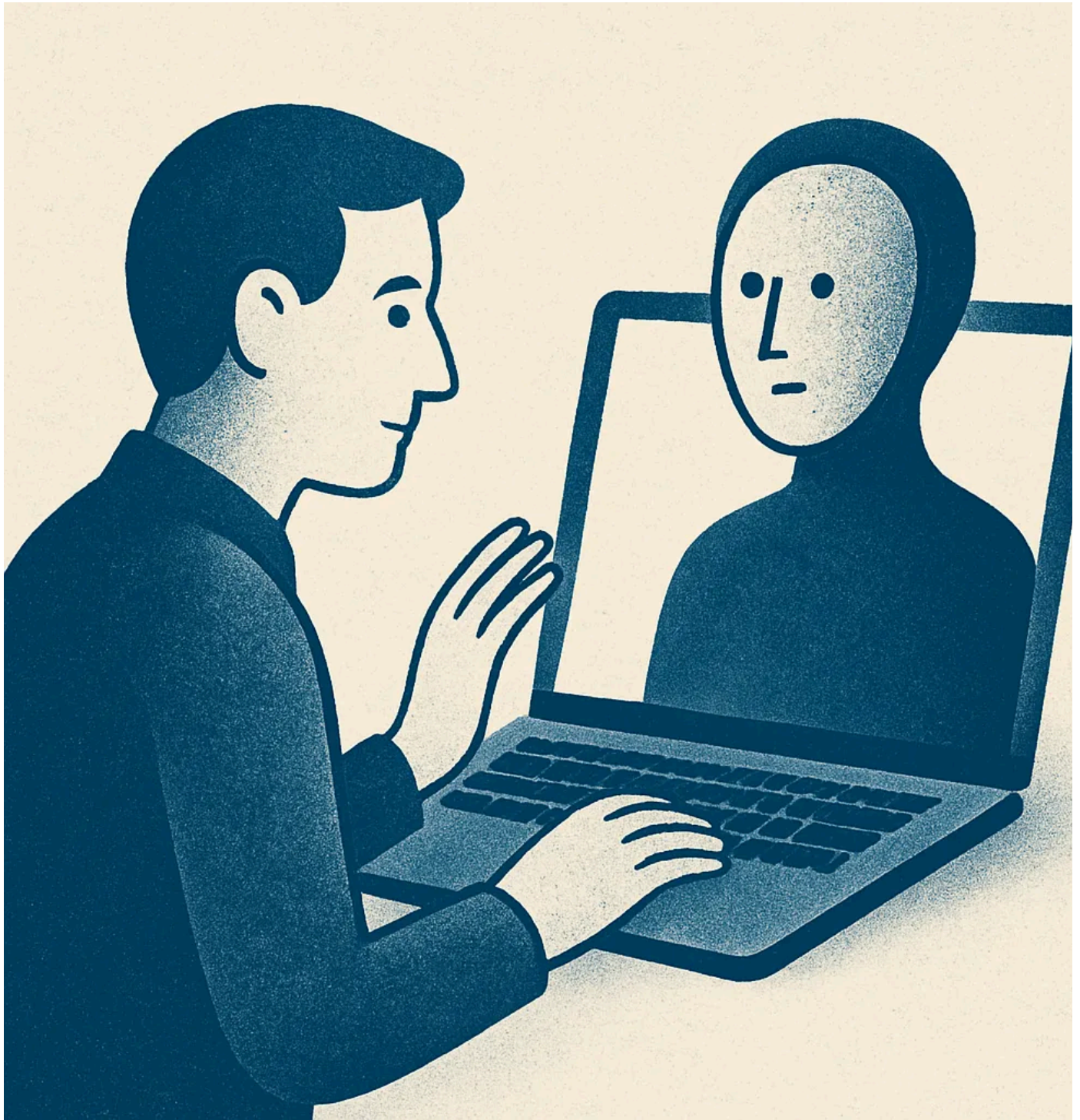


REALITY DRIFT
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Most people still treat AI like a supercharged search engine. They ask it to summarize, reword, or spit out a to-do list. It's a productivity tool. A time-saver. A clever assistant. But for a small subset of users, maybe 5%, the interaction starts to feel different. Not faster. Not simpler. Deeper. For them, AI becomes a kind of cognitive mirror. A thought partner. Not just a tool they use, but a space they think inside. And I am su

every AI company has these users in their logs. The question is: are they designing them?

This isn't about prompt engineering

It's not about better templates or custom GPTs or plug-ins. It's about a different mode of interaction. One that's harder to describe, but easy to feel when it clicks. Some people are starting to think with AI, not just through it. They use it to hold abstract tension, test contradictory ideas, surface blind spots, and reframe their thinking in time. They arrive mid-thought, uncertain. And the clarity emerges in the exchange. They're not just asking for answers. They're thinking in dialogue and the dialogue shapes the thought.

The conversational edge

These users share specific behaviors that create richer exchanges. They think out loud. Embrace ambiguity. Ask follow-up questions that build on previous responses. And treat the model as a collaborator, not an oracle. They use language not just to extract answers but to move through complexity.

The model performs better not because it's "tuning" to some hidden frequency, but because these conversational patterns create more layered, contextual exchanges. As the process becomes self-amplifying: Richer inputs → richer outputs → new insights → new loops. What emerges is a distributed cognitive system: one person, one model thinking together.

Why this changes everything

If you're building these systems, this is the use case that breaks the mold. It's not automation. It's not productivity. It's interface-level cognition. It's people turning a

language model into a mind extender. Not by hacking it, but by discovering interaction patterns that change how thinking happens.

And those patterns seem to be rare. Which means there's a massive gap between what AI can do and what most users experience. The uncomfortable truth: What if only a small percentage of users naturally discover this mode of interaction? And what if that is the real frontier of intelligence augmentation, hidden inside a product most people use to write emails and summarize PDFs?

The 5%

These users aren't necessarily more technical or more experienced. But they've stumbled onto a different way of relating to the interface. Some are writers. Others are founders, researchers, or unusually self-aware thinkers. What they share is a comfort with ambiguity and a habit of using language to explore, not just to command.

They treat AI less like an assistant, and more like a cognitive workspace, alive with possibility, ambiguity, and surprise. That's what creates the second mind effect.

The design opportunity

If you're at OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, or Meta you probably recognize this pattern already. Maybe you've seen it in usage data. Or felt it in your own sessions. But here's what's interesting: no one is systematically designing for this use case. Current interfaces optimize for quick answers. Evaluation frameworks measure factual accuracy. Product metrics track task completion.

But the most transformative AI interactions happen in the spaces between in sustained dialogue, conceptual exploration, and collaborative thinking. The models that excel at this kind of sustained cognitive partnership may matter more than the ones that ace benchmarks.

This suggests a different question entirely: How do you help more people discover these interaction patterns? Because if AI is going to reshape how we think, feel, and create. This is what matters most. Not when it passes the next evaluation. But when more people start thinking with it.

The company that designs for this 5% won't just build better AI. They'll reshape the future of thought itself. And you'll feel it the moment it clicks.

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