

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1744 Small Ways AI Can Help Without Total Reliance on it

Yesterday, we talked about how AI — artificial intelligence — is used by many students to do their homework and other assignments, and how this reliance is resulting in people who do not develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This has major implications for employers as these young people move into the workforce. So, are there ways that students can use AI to do better work, while developing their skills? I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's our focus today, coming next on The Extra Point.

How can students use AI in their work, without caving in to the temptation of using these tools to do most or all of their work?

First, we have to understand what ChatGPT and other similar platforms are. At the core, their knowledge base comes from a wide range of data and opinions found on the Internet.

This base is built on a vast array of texts, articles, and other written materials, which include factual information, literature, and user-generated content.

What you get back from the program are responses generated based on patterns in the data rather than subjective judgment. AI claims to not have opinions or beliefs. Some people believe that AI models can be slanted with the beliefs of those who program them.

I have used AI in the writing of The Extra Point in three ways.

1. I write my commentary and then I ask AI to write one on the same topic, and I compare them. Did I miss something in my writing? Did AI reveal a source that I didn't know about?

A student could do something similar. They complete the assignment, then feed it into AI to see another way of looking at the topic.

The goal here is to learn from the AI, and to see how the work can be improved — not just copy the AI version and hand it in.

2. I may ask AI to find opinions that both agree and disagree with mine. Encountering opinions that are different from ours expands our view. I may not agree with those opinions, but now I'm more aware of them, and might factor them into a rewrite. If not that, it could inspire the writing of a followup piece.

Here's an example. You may know that I have taken the following position: I believe that managers should not generally entertain problems from workers, unless the worker shows he/she has first taken time to carefully think the problem through and then offers potential solutions.

I asked AI to tell me who might agree and disagree. The results came back:

Agreement: Managers and workers who are proactive, experienced, and goal-oriented.

Disagreement: Workers who are disengaged, fearful, low-effort, and overworked.

I wanted to go deeper. What would be the opinion of:

- A staunch conservative
- A far left liberal
- The average Gen Z member
- The average retiree who spent 40 years in the workforce
- A senior leader who wants to develop talent
- A front line worker with little experience

The staunch conservative agreed with me. For them, it was all about personal responsibility and accountability in the workplace.

The far left liberal argued that it places an unreasonable burden on employees, and wanted a more collaborative approach.

(Con't.)

The average Gen Z member had a mixed response. While they value innovation and initiative, plus the opportunity to think critically, they would want the guidance and support of the manager in that situation.

The average retiree with 40 years under their belt also had a mixed feeling. They agreed that problem-solving is important, as is respect for a manager's time. However, they recognized that the modern workplace has changed and younger workers might face pressures that they did not encounter in their day.

As for the senior leader, I was caught offguard when AI said he/she would likely disagree. They might argue that coaching and mentoring are critical components of talent development, and the manager should use the encounter as a teaching moment.

Finally, the inexperienced front line worker would also disagree, instead looking for a more supportive approach, emphasizing the need for the manager to be involved early-on.

3. I use AI to assess the readability of the end product. I try to write at a level where your average fifth- or sixth-grader can understand. Whether it's here on The Point or in the pages of The Guam Daily Post, my goal is to be clear without anyone needing a dictionary.

AI can be a great tool to assist students as well as workers. If we simply use it to do our work instead of helping us do it better, I think we're shortchanging ourselves.

You, working with AI, can make for the best combination.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

