

## Learning to AI Episode 4

### Podcast Transcript

**[This transcript is automatically generated – to report any issues or request a verbatim copy, please email [cie@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:cie@liverpool.ac.uk)]**

Dave Webster

I'm Dave Webster and I'm joined today from the University of Mississippi. Through the magic of technology by Marc Watkins, who is associate director of academic innovation. Is that right?

Marc Watkins

It's assistant director, but I appreciate it too. It's a lot of titles, a lot of things too. But thank you so much for having me today, David. I appreciate. Get it?

Dave Webster

Well, an absolute pleasure insists we start this podcast. I've been. Thinking of getting in touch with the, I think one of the first things I read in my kind of recent dive into AI was some of your writing about TikTok, and and the all the all the learning shortcuts that were being thrown at our young people. The young people were kind of being persuaded of this idea and this thing that if you do the actual work, you're a bit of a mug. When you could just save the whole hour by installing this tool and paying the same thing. So that kind of really kind of resonated with me. So that kind of I'll follow this guy on whatever strange platform things I've been keeping an eye on some of the content then, so I think. I guess you as colleagues in the US have been wrangling with the same problems we have, which is I guess from many acting staff. The main concern that people start their conversation around ginger eye with if not finish it is with anxiety about the integrity of assessment, about cheating. And is that the same for, you know, colleagues in the US that that's where the conversation. Pass.

Marc Watkins

That is exactly where the conversation starts to. Usually a faculty member is panicking about generative AI being used to. Either offload learning entirely, or to cheat and convict academic misconduct. So that's usually the

conversation start not in not only in higher education here, but also in our K through 12 our and we've been working a lot with school districts to talk about that as well too, because they're they're equally terrified in different ways in a lot of different situations too.

Dave Webster

Yeah, absolutely. And I think many absolutely right about school teachers. I was talking to school teachers recently, having great anxieties about that as well. I think initially many people thought that if technology was going to. Present us with the problem that we might also solve it technologically through detectors and watermarks. That doesn't seem to be happening as I know. Whether that's your kind of view, but it doesn't seem to be the solution yet.

Marc Watkins

No, the technological solution to AI is not using AI to try to detect it. I don't think it's working reliably in academic context for a number of reasons. I'm also deeply concerned about moving into long term tracking of student writing and student process work on assessments. I think a lot of universities are used to using some sort of platform. Because of the pandemic, like a lockdown browser or respondents or something like that. That you can sort of make a timed assessment a little bit more secure if it's digital, but the new products that are coming online, like Grammarly's authorship, will track up students writing progress in their Google Docs over two weeks. They will time stamp, they will track everything. And that deeply concerns me because I'm a writer by practice and. I don't know what sort of chances a student would take knowing that their entire process is being tracked and what that's going to do to their creativity. What that's also going to do with their sense of. Dust and it's also easily gained. It's not academically it's not. It's something that's going to prevent academic misconduct. All you have to do is open up a new tab, generate something with ChatGPT or Google Gemini and then just hand type it in. It's not going to record that. So you have these tools that have these port port solutions also have multiple easy work arounds. We're just not really reliable in terms of what they. Actually present.

Dave Webster

And that. Yeah, that's I mean that presumption that a non cheating student who put in their terms will work steadily from the earliest period. They know the assessment till handing day and it certainly my I wouldn't say my undergraduate experience was was normative or one that I'd want other

people. And I also remember staying up all night kind of drinking coffee. On the verge of tears hammering into, you know, not typing, but around writing essays and a few hours later, having them in, they weren't the great works of scholarship, but you know it was. It was my work, but it wasn't. It wasn't this kind of idea that the process is somewhat smooth and linear for. And anybody, anything, even more so in your can agree in creative writing many of the kind of greatest gonna write. Is. Their their process is not the most healthy.

Marc Watkins

No, it's not.

Dave Webster

I mean, it was saying drunk, write drunk, edit sober, but also all the other kind of practices. And so it's kind of it. It seems like a kind of weird fiction that there is some kind of normal way of writing that is healthy or that somehow tells as a student he's.

Speaker

Yes. Yeah.

Dave Webster

Being authentic in some respect or other.

Marc Watkins

Yeah. And it goes back to a desire from some faculties perspective. If we could just sort of have our digital eyes of our students shoulders every single moment to just to ensure that their assessments are their own, not just for AI, their family members helping them, their actual roommates or other situations too. Contract cheating is a problem over here, as I'm sure as it is there in the UK and elsewhere. There. So there is that desire. But again from my teaching perspective, these solutions just don't work when you put them out of the lab and out of testing into the real world because human beings are complicated and we do things in very different ways than what we might assume. So what we'll do?

Dave Webster

Yeah, I think that I think that kind of point about surveillance, you know, students are already surveilled in a number of ways, some which you might be comfortable with, some less so through this is even further ahead of many US universities in terms of learning analytics and big data. And and you know, we're tracked by our devices constantly in a possible way and more ways. We can quite kind of often makes sense of. So adding an extra layer to that students perhaps isn't isn't like this go down well or another term that you use to generate trust. And that that may be gonna. There may be a kind of hint there perhaps of some alternative ways.

Speaker

Yeah.

Dave Webster

Are thinking about how we work with students.

Marc Watkins

Yeah, I I would like us to focus on human beings in this situation and how we use technology and if we are going to disclose generative tools, which I think is an important thing to do, to disclose if you're using it to make sure that that agency remains in human hands. I don't want that to be offloaded to a machine. And so that's really what we've been working on this semester. Since the fall started too, with some open disclosure policies, not just for our students, but now since this technology is being sold to us. We are still a Blackboard university for the Blackboard Learning Management system, which is one of the more antiquated learning management systems on the market.

Dave Webster

I've had. I've had my hours trying to upload things to it in the previous decades I. Know it well. Yes. Yeah.

Marc Watkins

But they they hustled. They were the first learning management system to incorporate generative AI. I guess to stay relevant. And we've had that activated now since October of 2023, sort of full year with very little training or insight. And so now we're faced with the situation where students can use these generative technologies. Teachers can, too, to provide instructional materials and very soon to provide feedback and grading well, what's the

ethical baseline for doing? And that's where we're coming up with some questions here too, about what sort of baselines we'd like to have. And for that, I think it's going to start off with open disclosure regardless of who's using the tools.

Dave Webster

Yeah, I guess like cultural transparency and openness, it does some good to be open with students and say the the slides from my overhead projections or my my PowerPoint, whatever might be for this set of classes I've generated using this tool. And here's my prompts and you know, so that that culture. Of declaration becomes kind of widespread and I I you were the point you made a minute or two ago was that. About preparing students for the world that lies outside the universities and universities have always had half or something of an eye towards the world outside of universities, and I guess there's a there's a balance between preparing students to face the world as it currently is and what it's becoming, and also students. Shaping the world. And universities, you know, trying to make their students become change change agents makes it sound very kind of ground, slightly kind of slightly kind of 90s or palm maybe that kind of language of the of a past time but but yeah, we do if we want our students to both change will be ready for the world then then trying to hang on to a.

Speaker

Yeah. Yeah.

Dave Webster

Model of university practice.

Speaker

Yeah.

Dave Webster

And that isn't necessarily from this century. That seems like rather an odd thing to go all out.

Marc Watkins

It is and I think this generative AI era, if that's what you would call the last 22 months, since ChatGPT was released, has really ripped off the facade of how

very slowly we move in higher education, both in the US I think and other geographic locations too. We don't change rapidly. Erratically and we don't alter things and that is really become a problem when technology that is a gigantic public experiment is released for everyone to use at once. You have to adapt and you have to adapt quickly. And So what we're talking about now too, is really training faculty to start thinking about the possibilities of what this technology could do to help their students be prepared with their disciplines and also try to maintain some degree of control and guard rails within their classes. We will eventually get to the point where we're going to teach our students. Gender. Today, I I don't know how that's going to work or who's going to pay for that. That's the been the other big discussion too. But that will happen at some point.

Dave Webster

No, absolutely. It's a number of things. I was thinking about you. You were when you were kind of. Speaking then you. Part of them is that last point about kind of facts cause the companies who are most to the fore in the Gentry. I would are not charities and they're I mean.

Marc Watkins

No, you're not sure.

Dave Webster

And the the opposite, whatever that is. But but they're certainly, you know, they are not in this in the pursuit of objective truth. Or art, but in terms of shareholder value. You know, so there is that kind of and our students being conscious of what they're using is not as in these cases, isn't a scholarly tool that we provided them for their use, but something which operates on a very different kind of business model.

Speaker

Yeah.

Marc Watkins

Very different to using their own data to sell them back either learning shortcut or time saver in some cases, and that has been a huge problem here in the US because we're still, we're still married to FERPA here in the United States, and FERPA is over 50 years old as our sort of. Educational Privacy Act we have not updated that for the 21st century, and that is something that has

been on the docket since well before the COVID pandemic hit, and it desperately needs to be updated too, so we can put this into context too, because we have no idea. What this new technology is going to do in terms of data privacy, it could obviously help student. That's what I was just thinking about. The new multimodal models that come online too. I'm I'm holding up my my smartphone here on on our thing too. This right the podcast. Just to to show that open the eye. Now how's the voice released on all their smartphone devices for plus plans if you pay \$20.00 a month you can talk with the AI in real time you're going to disclose things to that voice that you probably would not disclose in.

Speaker

Sure.

Marc Watkins

In different situations. So that's going to have issues with your personal identifying information with your medical records, with your school. Kids, Google also has this meta has this, so that's another sort of framework we haven't really even thought about and we're still trying to grapple with the old text generated technologies. We're not really used to this new multimodal wave of technology that's just here.

Dave Webster

No, I think you, I think it is and I I'm I'm not a fan of this word and it's misuse and it makes me think of the class onion, but this very disruptive.

Speaker

Oh, yes, indeed.

Dave Webster

In that sense, you know in, in, in the kind of multimodal, in the kind of voice because we interact with in discursive conversation and very, you know those memberships right. It is very different from UM, a kind of written interaction or even the kind of halfway house for chat bot in the corner of a web page. Or something.

Marc Watkins

It is and I think the implication here too is that you can program this voice to be anything that you want eventually, and not just with open AI's Model 2, but there's going to be open models. On the market, and we're so polarized here in the United States with political. Stuff you can have. Your conservative Chabot your liberal chabot your gender chat bot, your identity specific Chabot there for you, and we really don't know what impact that's going to have on students. We don't we we have no data to actually support that because it's all new and we also don't have any frameworks to actually discuss what this actually means. So for right now, if a faculty member is doing a discussion in a classroom, a student brings their mobile phone with them and they open up the ChatGPT voice and brings that into the discussion. There's no real policy in place to keep them from doing that here in the United States for any. Higher education institution that I'm aware of, there's individual teacher policies and classes, but those teachers actually have to be aware of what's going on, and most of them, they don't have the bandwidth just to. Keep up.

Dave Webster

You know, and I think that makes a kind of an important point in that those colleagues in, in universities who are very conscious of this or are quite engaged are probably able to recognise or so far obviously change all the time relatively able to spot kind of AI generated content or ahead of the game in terms of. Altering their assessments such that if they're not proof against generative error, they at least get students to demonstrate their learning in ways that are not dependent on things that can be generated out between us, so that there is there are alternative ways of of doing that. But for those colleagues who are drowning. To keep up with their existing workload and generating articles and teaching classes, you know it is often a very high demand level profession for many colleagues and the fact that adding on a holder thing on top of. That it's just not possible for many colleagues and so they they have no idea when students are in class that their their phones are not only listening but doing some of the talking.

Marc Watkins

Exactly there, there's no real space for those faculty members to have this, and that's why we've been advocating for professional development to shift, to give faculty a lot more options, not just in terms of programming provided. For them, by giving them stipends to actually either buy a course release so they can spend some time on this to reassess their assignments too, or give them a little bit of fellowship so they can go out and do some research on their own to. Do this we. Have to do a variety of things very quickly to adapt



just to give our faculty the space and time that they need. In order to respond to this, because there's great things that this technology could do, it's not. It's not all bad. There are things that this can do to help our students and our faculty with their actual workloads. But it's never going to happen unless we can give people the time they need and proper support to actually explore it. It would be a whole lot easier if the technology would calm down for just a year. Or so and give us some space, yeah. That's not there yet.

Dave Webster

Absolutely, absolutely nothing. It doesn't look like it's about to happen anytime soon, but absolutely I think you're right, it's that. But I think I can detecting kind of comments and a relative optimism about the fact there is there are possibilities for this technology because you know universities aren't about necessarily the outputs that we generate in terms of pass. Exams, but about the learning about the process of learning. You're so you know, even though what we do for assessment of what we set students for assessment may may shift in technology and kind of build, but it's a bit technology, it's already enabled us the last 30-40 years, 100 years to do very different things in learning because things that were previously necessary. And have been taken away from us. You don't have to search through huge document libraries by hand in person. You have to go in there on a train. We can just do it on a on a because then I see wrong. We could have, you know, via via the Internet thing. So there's already been endlessly shifting expectations. So there is.

Speaker

Right.

Dave Webster

Boom. I think there's that there's and there's the issue now is the is the speed of change means it's not a generational shift, it's within weeks, not, you know, over over sort of 50 years. But I had a kind of conversation with some colleagues this morning who are responsible for academic integrity and we're not cheating. Payments and things across there. All the departments here, you know, the University of Liverpool, but one challenge from some colleagues, incoming humanities type areas which which both don't share. Kind of levels of interest with is, but the essay matters, or students writing matters, and students being able to not just do generate short piece of content or short piece of content in an observed fashion. But students be able to write at length with the to deal with the complex matter and entertain

arguments and reject them and sustain them, and advocate them and engage with existing literature demonstrate understanding of new. Once, and I'm talking over most student essays might look like.

Speaker

MHM.

Dave Webster

But I think that's. You know, the idea is that we should be able to produce people who are good writers, who can write, engaging, engaged, intelligent prose, and that I think was raised to me by these colleagues. OK, so we can reassess. We can redesign our assessments. So they're commenting on. That GPT script or we can get, you know, all the kind of things that we are doing with mitigation effort, many which are great. But what about this problem of getting students to be good writers, and I was flailing a bit for a really good answer to them. Then I remember I was talking to you and thought I don't have to worry now. So I was talking to mark in a couple of hours when he gets up in every Mississippi. But I mean that those kind of those kind of skills that seem foundational for some disciplines. And seeing like quite big. Challenges.

Marc Watkins

They're huge challenges and we're having a discussion right now just in my home department, the Department of writing rhetoric here at the University of Mississippi about where is the line where we would say that our students need to have certain skills that are what we call analog that exist, that involve their own writing, their critical thinking, their close reading skills. And when. When we start saying, OK, here's something. You can then use to engage jitter to AI. My personal feeling is that we probably want to advocate for as much of the rough draft being done by a human being without any machine assistance. If we can't now, that doesn't mean there can't be accommodations for students. That doesn't mean you can't evolve generative eye for brainstorming in some ways, but I think most of the thinking, the decision making, that's close reading. Skills and the writing skills happen in that drafting phase after the end of that first draft. If they want to call upon AI assistance as an editor, as something that can get the feedback which is really popular use case for the technology, I think there are good legitimate arguments to. Have but for me the challenge is going to be how can we preserve as much of those skills in that first draft process as possible? And we're still working on that. We don't have an answer for it yet. I.

Dave Webster

Don't know if anyone does for sure and it makes me come to think about the way universities often in the sense become work quite fixing and thinking in the past. The differencing process and product and it was always the final version, was where you did it yourself and actually it looks more like from what you were kind of thinking about that maybe be examined bit in a hall is the drafting bit.

Marc Watkins

Yeah, yeah, I think it's going to be processed. We want to see how our students are actually grappling with these big ideas, putting them there, engaging in opposing points of view, developing their counter arguments, actually reading the articles they're supposed to be citing for evidence instead of just clicking on ChatGPT and asking it to cite a source which used to hallucinate how these new models that are coming up there. That are there too can actually cite pretty accurately academic sources and integrate that into our draft. Those are skills that we want our students to still explore to still use for their own. Mistake. So it really is it going to be a balancing act going forward and I I wish the sand would keep from moving beneath our feet and we would have a little stability in the AI space. So we can come up with some. Frameworks that would. Work and tweak and sort of deploy, but for right now we're just trying to see what works for one semester. Next, sometimes for one month and the next within the semester.

Dave Webster

No, absolutely. And that shifting sounds kind of images, unfortunately all too familiar. I imagine the people are listening, but I guess the kind of an underlying principle that this kind of emerging, what you're saying that that never mind the output kind of feel the process or you know let's look at the you know the. Really. No matter how we assess it. Students being able to understand the passage in context of a writer rather than just see the quote that's been generated. UM, but actually understand the context of something in the whole book and the whole a a writers kind of generate of output and and in the context of other things that are being written at the same time is what we want. We want them to understand that when. Meteorites about the death of God or whatever. But that specific, really specific to both their own work and the way that he uses those phrases. But. Also in in. The context of a whole discussion that's happening towards the end of the 19th century and in the that he's also kind of referring back to the books and when he makes other comments and books, he's parodying people and these things aren't

kind of there aren't just kind of phrases that we can treat as a kind of T-shirt, quotable. Thing and think that the context free what we want. It's a bit of learning. I guess and it's.

Marc Watkins

Yeah, a little bit learning definitely.

Dave Webster

And what we know is is has learning taken place. I mean that's what yeah, universities should be able to say this. With them has learned some stuff which they didn't know before, and that you know that's that's our reassurance to the employers, to the societies, the funder, to the kind of broader people with an interest in why higher education matters. We don't know. It should be everybody. But you know it's not they've got they can pass an exam. It might be that they can pass an exam. Ultimately, they've learned something, or they have to do something or have to understand something kind of context that it's. I guess it's thinking about how we, how we can prove they've learned something is a different question saying how can we check they're not cheap.

Marc Watkins

Exactly, yeah. Yeah, I think we want to shift gears away from just trying to track down to students cheating to show show that if they are using these generative tools, OK, well, what did you learn when you used generative AI? Did you do more than just save time with this? So we've been giving them some templates that asked them to reflect on their use of these tools within their writing process. To say hey, did AI actually help you learn something here too? Or did it hinder your learning? Be honest with you or not take you out points. We're just trying to collect as much information as possible to see how this is actually impacting it, but I echo your feeling too, especially about close reading and why that matters so much since we're both in the background of the. Entities. The idea of reading a text is putting it into conversation with other authors, with other arguments, with your own ideas. I'm not sure if that works if you only use AI to summarize another authors ideas or reading and put those summaries together. I'm not sure what that does to our critical thinking our close reading. Fields to me how I am as a brighter critical figure. Teacher comes from the readings that I've done and I can absolutely help certain students who are newer diverse, who are working on second or third language acquisition go through. Reading but it could also dislike them by turning the world into clip notes on demand, where they just

go up there and turn any digital document. Or even if you handle the paper copy, they can take a picture of their mobile phone, scan it into the AI, and have a neatly generated summary that just sort of flattens the text. So we're gonna have to figure out ways we can use this technology to obviously help those. Things that need it, but also kind of talk about the value of those skills that we're trying to impart on them that we've done for centuries now reading is. Fundamental for that it.

Dave Webster

And I I yeah, absolutely. I completely agree with you. I think that that thing was saying about getting students to to write reflections on their use of it is, it's slightly defanged. The people who would would be dishonest by saying you use it all you. Can. Yeah. Let's see what, let's see what you can do. If you use all of that and your own skills, and that's still quite. And then tell us how you've used it. And so there's quite a bit, I think there about asking students to, you know, if they're all using it all allowed to use Gen. for our tools, then it kind of levels the the levels, the playing field that's not too bad a phrase, but it certainly gives a kind of less advantage to this honor student. And more scope for students to do, I guess interesting or crazy things of their own.

Marc Watkins

It does. It gives them creativity and also I think it's very surprising to the faculty member because usually our actual judgement of the tool, especially the thing I've been trying to dispel most of my faculty too, is that gender data is more than just. LGBT they usually will play around with the free version of ChatGPT. They will have a very almost sort of blase experience with it. Not very. They'll think that that is the end all be all of it and you really have to give students the opportunity to explore this technology beyond just that interface to see what they can do with it and see if this is actually helping them or hindering them because we're not going to have that information distilled in journals for years. We really aren't. We're in that sort of experimental scholarship of teaching and learning right now, just to figure out what is working with our students and how they're using it. We were talking before this reported to you about notebook LM. It's new podcast feature that was coming out.

Dave Webster

Absolutely.

Marc Watkins

I gave that a few weeks ago to my students and my digital media writing class as just an artifact for them to look at and explore, and some of them were sort of home with it. But one student used it to upload her own notes in a separate class, made a podcast, folded laundry, cooked dinner with it, and said she got in much better grade because she was able to actually. Put the sort of cognitive load of just reading through her notes off there and listening to a podcast talking about her own writing and an energized manner that was exciting when she didn't even feel that excitement after she'd taken those pills. After, you know, 3 or 4 weeks in the class. So I had no idea that that was going to be the the actual outcome.

Dave Webster

I mean and that I think is the kind of exciting as well as the kind of fear that we've got the scary side of GI is what dominates a lot of the conversations in universities. But I think on the, on the flip side, I think there you begin to say get that energy of people playing with things are exciting. And because we are privileged enough to. But with clever, interesting young people, they came up with loads of cool stuff that you wouldn't imagine their ever able to do. You just gotta frame in such way that's. What's? Possible, and what is rewarded and make sure the kind of motives are there not for them to not hide these they I, but to show off with it. And then actually I think encoding. And in the nicest possible user to to show off to do things, to impress us, to do things that will impress themselves and impress, you know, people who show it to is a really nice, etc. Because it and it goes to come from a certain way, it comes against the ethos as a kind of piece that you were talking. We were talking about of yours at the start, about time saving for everything. It, I mean, I read that thinking, but what are they going to do all the time? You've. Saved. When you get passive income on your side hustle or something. But is this?

Marc Watkins

Yeah.

Dave Webster

Kind of idea that. If. Every hour that you're meant to be studying could be reduced to 4 minutes that you do the entire week studying into 20 minutes, and then what would you do? So yeah. So rather than sort of thinking of the technology tools as just a way to navigate around learning around the work.

Marc Watkins

Yeah.

Dave Webster

But actually something to make the work more productive, more exciting, more interesting. And I'm saying, I think when I I was telling before going about using notebook 11 this morning, experimenting with, with, with one of my colleagues Rob Lindsay from our sense for innovation education and initially asked that, oh, you're gonna show me another way. I haven't got brain space for another. And about 15 minutes later, he was leaving. I was like, this is cool. I can get. I can't believe I managed to make that very quickly. This is quite a good thing and I've shared it with about 5 people by e-mail straight away because I thought that's impressive and I kind of I thought some of the impressiveness of the tool reflected back on me for using it in. The way. No, that's I think I think that for students is going to be encouraging them to feel they've got something they can't wait for the people to see.

Marc Watkins

Oh yeah, I think getting them excited. And the one thing that has been a joy with this and it's hard to talk.

Speaker

I'm sure.

Marc Watkins

About joy generative. Eye teaching has been when you bring it up for your students to they're engaged. They're wanting to talk with you. They're wanting to actually come to class. They want to know how to use this, both in their studies. But they also want to start thinking about how they're going to use this in the world. Outside of college, once they graduate, and that's a big thing for them to start considering too, once they start peeling back the layers. Of this because it's like an onion, you pull back one layer after the other layer, it goes deeper and deeper and they're got some interesting conversations about what this might do for their work, their life, their labor, what it's going to do for their ability to complete these tasks with they go out the world. And for us, you know, having them explore this to me. It's been a great deal of fun. I like to include include reflection because it adds a little bit of friction in the process, and I think it's good to have that there just so they can slow down and kind of talk about. What they basically their experience, because when we first started playing around with these tools before

ChatGPT was released, the thing that was wild to me was we would use AI to do an existing assignment. I think there's a counter argument exercise within 45 minutes of the class, and we had an interface that was set up for us and that was a little counter argument generator just before. That GPT and it did the entire assignment for the students in less than like 5 minutes. And so you left at that time. It's like, OK, well, what do we do? Here's the activity. Let's talk about, let's talk about what's happening here too. Let's talk about if this is actually. Valuable. So I think there's those are going to be the pathways forward to, to show our students their energy, their engagement with this and also getting them to sit down, just talk about it. Really getting to. Think about this, not just academic misconduct, to just talking about how you're using these tools. So important for us to know.

Dave Webster

Absolute. I think that kind of one of the things you noticed there was about kind of what they gonna do in the world with them. You know, we've already seen how kind of some of them, not so much genes are, but they I thought is really revolutionising kind of scanning in, in medical context and picking up things that human detectors wouldn't and really. Making huge difference. Huge positives in people's lives. Those diseases were caught radically earlier because of AR systems and things and and. And so you think our students not only are going to as we said, be able to cope with the world as they find it, but hopefully if we can inculcate them, the confidence in using AI, they're going to change the world. And to use it in kind of beneficial and benign ways and that when we're kind of old and kind of retired and nursing homes, whatever the the AI, we've helped our students get to grips with is going to make our lives much. Rather than degrading it.

Marc Watkins

Yeah, I hope it doesn't degrade our lives. And you know, when we are old in the nursing home, hopefully we have an option of both talking with the AI voice to make us a little bit more, less lonely and also maybe that brings in our children a little bit more often. I have two kids in my home, too. I think about that. But I do think there is when we get down to the. Actual sort of basis. This moving beyond applied AI in our day-to-day work task and thinking about what this is gonna do to our world with medical industry, I think it's a massive change they were talking about the possibility of just what this would do for transportation if they put this behind every stop light here. In the United. States and would actually change the stoplight, so if cars. And idle, if that would actually help negate some of the energy costs of the generative AI tools. If you could actually use that as a system to to actually



make sure people are getting. Room faster and not just sitting away idly away of their cars, making emissions go. Through the roof. There might be some gains there and we just. Really haven't even thought about that.

Dave Webster

No, absolutely. And that's kind of the unforeseen outcomes that we were kind of alluding to earlier on thinking when we put tools in the hands of say intelligent kind of into actually hungry young students and try and encourage that curiosity and also don't encourage them to hide the tools but to fully engage with them. Then there really are all sorts of things that we can't possibly have dreamt of that potentially gonna really come to life for that. That's a really optimistic kind of kind of. We started this conversation so, so worried and I think and so concerned, but I think that's taken us to a kind of really potentially quite interesting. Uh. But maybe that you know, although we're not sure how we're going to get there, that we perhaps think what the university in five or six years time might look like, we've got a bit of the the problem will be the. The transitional period.

Marc Watkins

Oh, definitely. And the transitional period is going to take a lot of time. I think that some faculty will just never quite get there, which again, we're going to have to deal with that one way or another, but it is going to be a point to where these tools stop developing and we get into a wall. I hope that my fingers are crossed and get into the wall. Because once we get there, we can then really figure out how we're going to use this to be innovative with our students too, and how we're just going to set up normalized guard rails and just normalize the actual use of the tool in our everyday life. That's the big thing. And I think that we are those of us who have been really into this and deep into it feel exhausted. You certainly feel exhausted. Too, but I I still can't believe we're still not even two years since the public release of ChatGPT. It's it's not even been. Two years yet. So we we're still very much early days of all this.

Dave Webster

Absolutely. I think, I guess we've people I suspect slightly older and I, but I remember kind of what the launch of the the web you know over the over the rather than just the Internet and people then were it was just changing really really quickly people. We're gonna. And now you know, people talk about, you know, their Internet. They're, in fact, it's just lots of bots talking to each other and liking weird Facebook nonsense. That's been AI generated.

Like by 1000, fake people on the Internet. So it's kind of that there seems a real slowdown in that and that I don't have to replace my laptop every four months.

Marc Watkins

I know. Yeah. It's interesting how one area of our technology has slowed down now that it's been mature for the lack of better word. And now another area of our technology is just accelerating wildly for it too.

Dave Webster

And. Many I think I haven't even noticed, to slow down in some areas because the rest has overtaken it so much that. But it's got a whole different thing that's been really interesting. I'm gonna say thank you to me, to my I'm sure we'll see lots more real content and look forward to having more conversations together. But. But thank you for talking to me. What is this afternoon? Very early morning for you.

Marc Watkins

Well, I really do appreciate it, David, thank you so much for having me on the show too. I hope that your listeners will have something of value from this conversation and not just go out and panic more because that's not really helpful in these situations.

Dave Webster

Me too. Thank you.