The AI avalanche – and top tips to survive it

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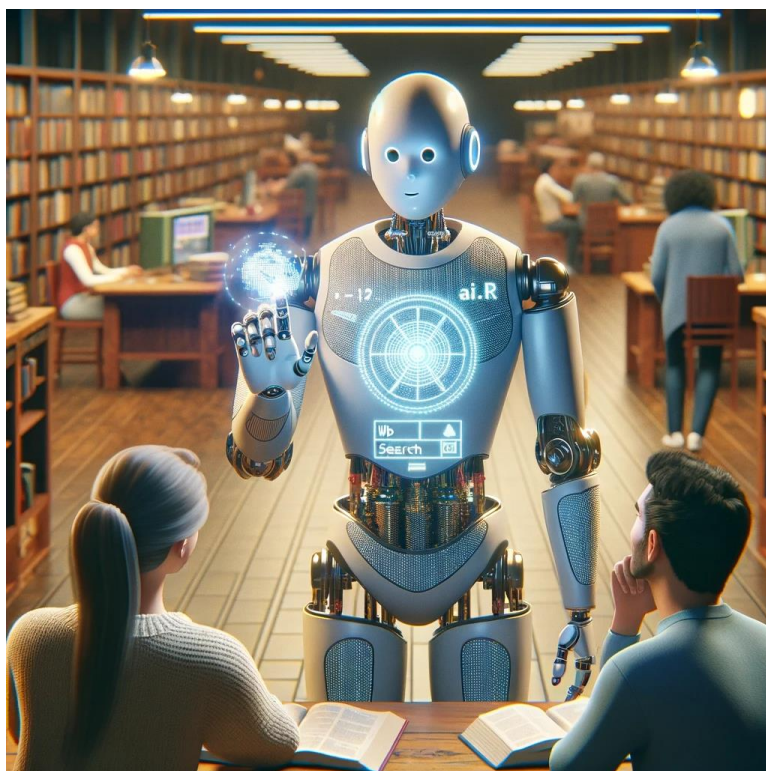
It's now been a little over a year since ChatGPT 3.5 was unleashed on a largely unsuspecting world. In 2023 the number of tools and apps that utilise AI has increased dramatically. I use a web directory called Futurepedia to keep up to date with all the new tools that are being announced. A year ago, this tool listed about 200 tools that were either AI based, or which had AI as a major component in them. Today there are over 5,000 tools in over 50 different categories. You can view them all on Futurepedia.

In 2023 I spent a lot of time exploring new tools, revisiting older ones to review new updates and enhancements, and teaching people how best to use them. In this article I have chosen my favourite tools based on a years' worth of experience, testing and playing.

Chatbots

A chatbot is an artificial intelligence (AI) program designed to simulate human conversation. It uses natural language processing (NLP) to understand and respond to user queries in a conversational manner. Chatbots can be used for various purposes, including customer service, information retrieval,

and entertainment. Some of the ones that you will in all likelihood have heard of are [ChatGPT](#), [Claude](#) and [Bard](#). These are AI assistants that use chatbot technology to provide users with information and assistance. ChatGPT is an AI assistant developed by OpenAI that uses GPT architecture to generate responses that are similar to human-like conversations. Claude, developed by Anthropic, is an AI assistant that uses a unique 'constitution' to ensure ethical behaviour and self-improvement. Bard, developed by Google, is an AI assistant that offers built-in web browsing and integration with Google Suite.

For information professionals, chatbots can be used to provide quick and efficient access to information. They can be used to answer frequently asked questions, provide recommendations, and assist with research. Chatbots can also be used to automate routine tasks, freeing up time for information professionals to focus on more complex tasks.

You should try out all three of the products mentioned – while they all work in similar ways, they have their own advantages and disadvantages. If I had to suggest one of the three above the others, I would go for ChatGPT – and specifically the professional version at a cost of approximately £20 per month. That gets you instant always-on access and the ability to use the plugin technology which means you can use the chatbot in conjunction with other tools to search the live internet, search academic databases, create images, summarise and interrogate documents and more. If you are going to be using AI a lot in your job, paying for the extra functionality is just an obvious step to take.

AI based search

There are now dozens of search engines that use AI to give you results. They will search the live web and will provide you with a summary answer to your query, rather than just a list of URLs that you have to manually visit yourself. The straightforward suggestion here is to use Bing in the guise of the Microsoft [Copilot](#). It's completely free, utilises OpenAI (which produced ChatGPT) and works in conjunction with Microsoft's Bing search engine. It's by far and away the easiest way to dip your toe into the water of AI search.

Content creation

You can use AI tools to create content for you – the chatbots will do this of course, but you might want to look at a variety of different products as well. If you want to produce an academic article then [Academic Help](#) is a good place to start. There's a freemium version to start you off. Obviously, I wouldn't suggest that you simply take anything that it produces and just use it – but it's a good place to begin a first draft.

If you're looking for a tool to create presentations my advice would be to start with [Gamma](#) because this produces really attractive presentations which can be edited within the app, you can change the design and theme, add your own content or images and more. Alternatively, just tell the tool what you want to create a presentation on, and it will do the job in a few seconds – literally.

Summarising tools

If you routinely have to go through long documents to get a specific piece of information you could just use ChatGPT and upload the document, or you could use a tool like [Humata](#). You can upload a pdf document (less than 20 pages) and ask it to summarise the paper in say 50 or 200 words or you can ask it specific questions about the content and get instant answers.

Alternatively, if you're going to be spending time watching a long YouTube video you could utilise a tool such as [You-TLDR](#) which can do that for you. There are limitations with the free version but for

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less than $10 a month you can generate summaries for any YouTube video up to five hours long and generate 100 hours of summaries every month.

Video creation

If you want to create videos you've needed a particular set of skills in the past, but this is really not necessary today. You can use a tool like Synthesia to create your avatar and Eleven Labs to create a voice – or adapt your own. You could also use Heygen and upload your own picture and get it to animate it, with your own voice or another of your choosing. Furthermore, you can use the same tool to translate your videos into other languages, and it will make a fair attempt at using your own voice and lip synching into the language you've chosen.

Image creation

If you want to create images you have an almost limitless selection of tools. I use DALL-E as provided by ChatGPT for a lot of my images, but you could use the Microsoft Designer or another favourite of mine, NightCafe.

Summary

This doesn't even begin to give you an overview of what tools are available, so I'd encourage you to explore for yourself – Futurepedia as previously mentioned is going to be a really good place to start. Just try out as many tools as you can, have fun and explore. Some of them are priced, others give you freemium options and others again are entirely free. The more you explore, the better you will be positioned to advise your colleagues in your organisation and be the go-to person for AI, which is never a bad thing.

Phil Bradley is an internet and AI expert - and a librarian. He is a past President of CILIP. His focus is on harnessing the potential of AI and the internet to enhance library services and user experiences.

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