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Dear Reader,

Peter H. Diamandis is the main man this edition as he executes a double-tap to bring us up to speed on what awaits us around the corner with artificial general intelligence, or AGI, in the hot-seat. In his first piece which is a 15 minutes read titled Death of the Company, he claims that we are at the precipice of the Organizational Singularity, and the business enterprise as we know it is about to undergo the most radical restructuring in 200 years.

In his second piece, which is a hefty 30 minutes read, he wonders what will humans do when AI does everything better? It's a brainstorm on Purpose, Meaning, and the Post-Work Future, and wrestles with the question: what gives a human life meaning when there is nothing a human must do that a machine cannot do better?

Starting with Death of the Company, Diamandis attributes his partner and Moonshots Mate Salim Ismail, who delivered a two-hour masterclass to their Abundance360 community, with generating some substantial food for thought. He talks of high-margin lines of business that two people with AI agents could replicate in 60 to 90 days. Seven out of ten CEOs are running companies with a profit center that is easily and rapidly disruptable. Beyond a competitive threat, this is an extinction level event. Read on to learn how to side step it and make it work to your advantage.

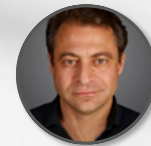
Next follows a much more powerful piece in which Diamandis ventures what he calls the deepest philosophical question of the AI age, and quotes Sadguru, no less: "Technology is the means by which humanity takes a vacation from survival." It entails freedom from labor, dedicated to intellectual and spiritual pursuit. The Greeks understood something we have forgotten: the highest human activities are those done for their own sake, not for survival. In the post-AGI world, for the first time in history, everyone can be a scholar, an athlete, a philosopher, an artist. Not because they are aristocrats, but because the machines handle survival. Yessss!

Back-of-the-book Top-of-Mind takes a dim view of data centers.

Stay safe, have faith and be patient 😊

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INSIDE:



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The Death of the Company

70% of CEOs admit two people with AI agents could replicate their best business line in 90 days

Peter H. Diamandis | 15 min read

TLDR: Corporations as we know them are about to undergo radical transformation. We are at the precipice of the **Organizational Singularity**. Already 70% of CEOs admit they have a high-margin line of business that two people with AI agents could replicate in 60 to 90 days. The company as we know it is about to undergo the most radical restructuring in 200 years.

Last week, my partner and Moonshots Mate **Salim Ismail** delivered a two-hour masterclass to our Abundance360 community on what he calls the Organizational Singularity. Salim has spent 15 years advising Fortune 500 companies on innovation. He has sat in the boardrooms of 200 of the Fortune 500. He co-authored the Exponential Organizations framework with me. And what he presented last week was the most important business thesis I have heard in a decade.

I am sharing it here because it is too urgent to keep inside our Abundance and ExO community. Every CEO, founder, executive, and employee needs to understand what is coming. The

technology that makes this possible is not theoretical. It exists today. And the forcing function is existential.

THE 70% QUESTION THAT SHOULD KEEP EVERY CEO AWAKE

Salim asks every CEO he works with a simple question: “is there a high-margin line of business in your company that two people with AI agents could replicate in 60 to 90 days?”

70% of CEOs answer yes. That means that seven out of ten CEOs are running companies with a profit center that is easily and rapidly disruptable.

Beyond a competitive threat, this is an extinction level event. The two people do not need to be in your industry. They do not need your supply chain. They do not need your sales force. They need an AI agent stack, an internet connection, and 90 days.

THE INTELLIGENCE STACK: HOW AI NATIVE COMPANIES WORK

Salim has been building this framework with engineers from OpenAI and Anthropic. It is not theoretical. It is a working architecture. Here is

how it works.

An AI-native company runs on an intelligence stack with five layers, each staffed by AI agents:

- **Sensing Layer:** Agents scan the environment continuously. Press releases, regulatory filings, market data, competitor moves. They bring information back in real time.
- **Interpretation Layer:** Agents analyze what the sensing layer found. Is this a threat? How big is the market? What are the implications? Options are generated.
- **Decision Layer:** Agents evaluate options and recommend action. Ignore? Counter? Experiment? Each decision goes to a human for yes/no approval.
- **Orchestration and Execution Layer:** Agents carry out the decision. Lease the trucks. Launch the test. File the paperwork. Done in hours, not weeks.
- **Learning Layer:** Agents analyze what worked and what did not. Next time, the loop runs faster.

The C-suite is involved at every layer, but only to hit yes or no. The humans are above the loop, not in it. In a traditional company, this cycle takes weeks or months. Salim says in an AI-native company it takes hours or days. The military calls this the OODA loop: Observe, Orient, Decide, Act. An AI-native company runs OODA loops at machine speed with human judgment at the checkpoints.

Wrapped around the entire stack is a governance band. Every agent has an evaluation suite. Every action is logged and traceable. Rollback capability exists if an agent goes off track. A human review queue ensures accountability. These are not autonomous agents doing whatever they want. They are junior employees that need supervision, correction, and guidance. The governance layer is what makes the system safe to deploy.

HOW TO GET THERE: THE EDGE STRATEGY

Here is the key issue that trips up every CEO who hears this. You cannot transform your

existing company from within. The immune system will attack any significant changes you attempt to make.

Salim has seen it 200 times. The CFO says no. The CIO says you are crazy. The head of innovation comes back with arrows in their back. Every big company is architected for efficiency, repeatability and predictability, not disruption. McDonald's exists to deliver the same Big Mac at the same quality in every location on Earth. If you try to introduce something disruptive, you get crushed. It does not matter how nice you are.

The solution is what Salim calls the edge strategy. Here's how it works:

1. Build a digital twin of your company at the edge, still inside your firewall.
2. The digital twin report directly to the CEO.
3. You begin by picking two high-throughput workflows and rebuild them using the intelligence stack.
4. You run these in parallel with the old system.
5. When the new version outperforms the old, you deprecate the old.
6. Then you move the next workflow. Then the next.

Over 8 to 20 months, you grow this new AI-native operation at the edge until it replaces the legacy core.

This is the digital version of what Lockheed did with its Skunkworks, what Nestle did with Nespresso, and what Apple (Steve Jobs) did with the Mac.

The edge strategy is not new. What is new is that AI agents make it 100x faster.

THE 100X PERFORMANCE LEAP

Salim's calculations, based on the pilot programs he is running with 10 companies right now, show that AI-native organizations will be approximately 100x more performant than today's companies.

If you process 1,000 leads per month today, you will process 100,000. If you handle 1,000 invoices per month, you will handle 100,000.

And you will do it with about 20% of your current headcount. One fifth of the people. One hundred times the throughput.

Before you panic about unemployment, both Salim and I believe that this strategy will also spawn five times as many startup companies. They will be smaller, more nimble, and radically more performant. The economy does not shrink. It fragments and then explodes.

“The big legacy company does not survive.

The small AI-native company does.”

This is already happening. Call centers went from human BPO to chatbot-assisted to fully AI-native in three years. Content management went from outsourced agencies to AI-assisted tools to fully AI-native in two years. Sales, logistics, finance, and every other domain are next.

WHAT SURVIVES AND WHAT DIES

In the AI-native organization, here is what survives:

- Your MTP (Massive Transformative Purpose) survives as an encoded protocol. It is the constitution that guides the agents.
- The legal shell of the company survives. Accountability, liability, fiduciary duty. The firm as a container for data and learning loops.
- Proprietary intelligence survives. Your data, your learning loop, your proprietary models trained on your data. This is your moat.
- Human judgment survives. The decisions that require intuition, ethics, and context. The things AI agents cannot do well yet.

Here is what dies:

- The static org chart. In an AI-native company, the org chart is fluid. It changes when you add a line of business. It is a protocol, not a document.
- Static planning. The five-year plan is dead. Strategy becomes a continuous exercise run through the agentic layers, not a quarterly or annual exercise.
- Middle management as a coordination layer. We estimate that middle management

collapses by 60 to 80% in this new world.

- Switching costs. When you can swap models in minutes, loyalty must be earned continuously.

Coase’s Law, the foundational economics principle that says companies exist because coordination costs are cheaper inside the firm than outside, has been superseded. AI agents have made coordination costs essentially zero. The reason companies exist is changing. The shape of companies is changing. The size of companies is changing. The only question is whether you are doing the changing or having it done to you.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

If you are a CEO: Score yourself on the 70% question. If you have a high-margin line that two people with AI agents could replicate in 90 days, you have 90 days to start building your edge strategy. Not next quarter. Now.

If you are an entrepreneur: The 70% stat is your opportunity map. Find the high-margin line of business in a legacy company. Build it with two people and an agent stack. 90 days to disruption.

If you are an investor: Companies with proprietary data and proprietary learning loops are the survivors. Companies with static org charts and five-year plans are the targets. Bet on the edge.

If you are a parent: Your kids will not work in companies that look like the ones we work in today. They will either build AI-native companies on their own or work in them. Both are better outcomes than the legacy alternative.

If you are an employee: The white-collar drudgery is being automated. The judgment, intuition, and experience you bring are what survive. Invest in the skills that agents cannot replicate ■

To a future of abundance,

Peter

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WHAT WILL HUMANS DO WHEN AI DOES EVERYTHING BETTER?



A Brainstorm on Purpose, Meaning, and the Post-Work Future

Peter H. Diamandis | 30 min read

THE QUESTION

When AGI can do any cognitive task better than any human, and humanoid robots can do any physical task better than any human, what is left for us? Not economically. Existentially. What gives a human life meaning when there is nothing a human must do that a machine cannot do better?

This is not a question about unemployment. It is a question about purpose. The unemployment problem has a policy answer (universal high income, redistribution, infrastructure). The purpose problem does not. It is the deepest philosophical question of the AI age, and almost nobody is seriously working on it. This document is a first attempt.

“Technology is the means by which humanity takes a vacation from survival”

– Sadguru

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT 1: THE GREEK CONCEPT OF SCHOLÉ

The ancient Greeks had a word for what we are approaching: *skholé* (σχολή). It is the root of our words ‘school’ and ‘scholar.’ But *skholé* did not mean school as we know it. It meant freedom from labor, dedicated to intellectual and spiritual pursuit. For the Greek aristocracy, work was for slaves and metics. The citizen’s highest calling was *skholé*: philosophy, politics, athletics, art, conversation, the Olympic games, the symposium.

Aristotle wrote that ‘we work in order to have leisure.’ Leisure was not idleness. It was the most serious business of life. The Greek word for leisure became the word for intellectual pursuit because the Greeks understood something we have forgotten: the highest human activities are those done for their own sake, not for survival.

The post-AGI world is the democratization of *skholé*. For the first time in history, everyone can be a scholar, an athlete, a philosopher, an artist. Not because they are aristocrats, but because the machines handle survival. The question is whether we will use that freedom like the Greeks did or like the Romans did (bread and circuses).

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT 2: THE RENAISSANCE PATRON

The Medici family spent 633,000 florins between 1434 and 1471 on patronage. That is roughly \$500 million in today's money. They funded Brunelleschi's dome, Botticelli's paintings, Michelangelo's sculptures, Galileo's science, and the Platonic Academy in Florence. They did not create the art themselves. They created the conditions for art to exist.

The Renaissance aristocrat did not work in the way we understand work. Their 'job' was to be a patron: to identify talent, fund it, protect it, and curate the results. Lorenzo de' Medici was not a painter or a sculptor. He was a curator of human genius. His purpose was not to produce but to enable, to choose, to direct resources toward the beautiful and the true.

In the post-AGI world, the role of the patron is available to everyone. AI produces. Humans curate. The question 'what should we build?' becomes more important than 'how do we build it?' The Medici model suggests that curation, patronage, and taste are not lesser activities. They are the activities that created the Renaissance.

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT 3: HOW THE ULTRA-WEALTHY SPEND TIME TODAY

Harvard Business School research on millionaires found that the wealthy spend more time on active leisure (exercise, volunteering, socializing, reading) and less on passive leisure (TV, scrolling) than the general population. The JPMorgan report on ultra-wealthy families identified reading as the single most common habit. Here is how the ultra-wealthy actually spend their days:

- **Physical optimization:** Personal trainers, golf, tennis, sailing, yoga, home gyms. The body as a project.
- **Intellectual pursuit:** Reading (the #1 cited habit), writing, learning languages, collecting knowledge.
- **Patronage and philanthropy:** Funding foundations, museums, universities, scientific research. The Medici impulse persists.
- **Curation and collecting:** Art, wine, watches, cars, real estate. The act of choosing and assembling.
- **Social connection:** Dinner parties, clubs, travel with family, mentoring. Deep relationships as the core reward.
- **Creative expression:** Painting, music, writing, filmmaking. Not for money. For the act of creation itself.
- **Exploration:** Space tourism (Bezos, Branson), deep sea exploration, extreme sports, adventure travel.
- **Spiritual practice:** Meditation retreats, philosophical study, religious engagement, seeking meaning.
- **Competition:** Chess, poker, racing, betting. The drive to test oneself against others, even when money is irrelevant.
- **Mentoring and legacy:** Passing knowledge to children, building institutions, writing memoirs.

Notice what is absent from this list: none of these activities are 'work' in the economic sense. None are done for survival. All are autotelic: done for their own sake. The ultra-wealthy have already arrived at the post-work destination. They are our preview of what everyone will do when AGI removes the necessity of labor. The data suggests they are not bored or purposeless. They are the busiest, most engaged people on Earth. They just are not doing it for

money.

10 CATEGORIES OF POST-AGI HUMAN PURPOSE

Drawing from historical precedent, flow psychology, and years of working through this question with the Abundance360 community, here are 10 categories of activity that will give us purpose when AGI can do everything better:

1. THE CURATOR (The Medici Role)

When AI can produce anything, the most valuable human skill is deciding what should be produced. Curation is an act of taste, values, and vision. AI can generate 10,000 images, 10,000 business plans, 10,000 scientific hypotheses. The human decides which ones matter. This is not a lesser role. It is the role that created the Renaissance.

- Commissioning art, science, and exploration from AI systems
- Curating knowledge: assembling, organizing, and interpreting what AI produces
- Setting priorities: deciding which problems AI should solve first
- Taste as the new intelligence: the human who knows what is good, beautiful, and true becomes more valuable than the one who knows how to make it

2. THE EXPLORER

AI can process data faster, but humans still want to stand on the mountain. The experience of discovery is not the same as the fact of discovery. AI can map the ocean floor. A human still wants to dive to it. AI can calculate the atmosphere of Mars. A human still wants to walk on it.

- Space exploration: the human drive to go

where no one has gone, even when AI has already been there

- **Deep sea, polar regions, caves:** physical exploration of Earth's remaining frontiers
- **Inner exploration:** meditation, psychedelics, consciousness studies, the exploration of subjective experience
- **AI can tell you what is there.** Only you can experience being there. The experience is the point.

3. THE ATHLETE (Mental & Physical)

When chess engines surpassed human chess players in 1997, more people played chess than ever before. When AI drives cars better than humans, more people will drive cars for pleasure. The point of sport is not to be the fastest. It is to test yourself against your own limits. AI being better does not diminish the experience. It liberates it from the pressure of competition for survival.

- **Physical sports:** the body as instrument, pushed to its limits for the joy of mastery
- **Mental sports:** chess, poker, strategy games, competitive programming (against other humans)
- **Esports and competitive gaming:** human-vs-human competition, even when AI is superior
- **The Olympics as the model:** we do not watch because humans are the fastest possible. We watch because a human achieved something extraordinary.

4. THE CREATOR (Amateur in the Original Sense)

'Amateur' comes from the Latin amare: to love. The amateur creates for love, not money. In the post-AGI world, everyone is

an amateur. AI produces better art, better music, better writing. But humans will still create because the act of creation is itself the reward. Csikszentmihalyi's research on flow shows that the deepest happiness comes from autotelic activity: activity that is its own purpose.

- **Painting, sculpture, music, writing:** not to compete with AI, but for the flow state of creation
- **Gardening, cooking, craftsmanship:** making things with your hands for the satisfaction of making
- **Building physical things:** woodworking, pottery, textile arts. The hands want to work even when the mind doesn't need to.

The journey is the destination. AI produces the result. The human experiences the process.

5. THE RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

AI can simulate empathy. It cannot be a friend. The deepest human need is connection with other consciousnesses. In the post-AGI world, relationships become the primary currency. Not because nothing else is valuable, but because relationships are the one thing that cannot be outsourced to a machine.

- **Deep friendship:** the kind that requires decades of shared experience
- **Family:** raising children, grandparenting, family traditions, intergenerational knowledge transfer
- **Community building:** creating and maintaining social fabric, neighborhoods, cultural groups
- **Mentoring:** passing wisdom (not information) to younger generations
- **Love:** the most irreducibly human experience. AI can simulate it. It cannot

live it.

6. THE PHILOSOPHER

The Greeks invented philosophy because they had skholé. When survival is handled, the deepest questions become the most urgent. What is consciousness? What is good? What is beautiful? What should we want? AI can answer 'what is.' Humans must answer 'what should be.' The philosophical question becomes the engineering question in the post-AGI world.

- **Ethics:** what should AI be allowed to do? What should we want it to do?
- **Aesthetics:** what is beautiful? What is worth creating?
- **Meaning:** what is a good life? What is worth living for?
- **Governance:** how should we organize society when labor is unnecessary?

The unexamined life becomes the only life worth examining when survival is guaranteed.

7. THE PATRON AND PHILANTHROPIST

The Medici model scaled to everyone. In a world of abundance, everyone has resources to direct. Patronage becomes a universal activity: identifying what deserves support, funding it, watching it grow. The XPRIIZE model: incentivizing the outcomes you want to see in the world.

- **Funding science, art, exploration,** and social causes (even at small scale)
- **Incentive prizes:** designing competitions that direct AI and human effort toward meaningful goals
- **Angel investing in human creators:** backing the people who still want to make things by hand
- **The democratization of patronage:**

crowdfunding at scale, directed by human taste not algorithmic optimization

8. THE STORYTELLER

AI can generate stories. But stories are not about the text. They are about the shared experience of meaning-making. A story told by AI is data. A story told by a human to other humans is connection. The campfire does not become obsolete because we have electric lights. We still sit around it.

- **Personal narrative:** sharing lived experience, memoir, oral history
- **Myth-making:** creating the stories that give a community its identity
- **Humor:** comedy is the most irreducibly human art form. AI can write jokes. It cannot understand why they are funny.
- **The human story:** interpreting and narrating the experience of being human in an age of machines

9. THE PARENT AND EDUCATOR

Fei-Fei Li told Huberman: 'I always have hope for kids. They are curious.' In the post-AGI world, education is not about information transfer (AI does that better). It is about character formation, value transmission, and helping children discover what they love. The Socratic method becomes the only pedagogy that matters.

- **Raising children:** not to be workers, but to be full humans
- **Teaching wisdom, not knowledge:** AI has knowledge. Humans have wisdom about what to do with it.
- **Character education:** courage, kindness, resilience, curiosity. These cannot be trained by AI.
- **The parent as guide:** helping children navigate a world where anything is possible, which means the skill of choosing becomes paramount

10. THE HEALER

AI will diagnose better than any doctor. Robots will perform surgery better than any surgeon. But healing is not the same as curing. Healing is the human act of being present with suffering. A nurse holding a hand. A friend sitting with the dying. A community rallying around the broken. AI can cure. Only humans can heal.

- **Emotional healing:** presence, listening, empathy, the human warmth that no algorithm replicates
- **Community care:** building support systems for the vulnerable
- **End-of-life companionship:** the most human of all activities, being with someone as they die
- **Spiritual care:** tending to the soul, however defined, in a world where the body is handled

THE FLOW ARGUMENT: WHY BEING WORSE THAN AI DOESN'T MATTER

Csikszentmihalyi's research on flow states reveals something critical: the deepest human happiness comes from activities where challenge matches skill, where attention is fully absorbed, and where the activity is autotelic (done for its own sake). Flow is not about being the best in the world. It is about being fully alive in the moment.

A runner does not stop running because a car is faster. A chess player does not stop playing because Stockfish is better. A painter does not stop painting because AI generates images in seconds. The experience of mastery, of flow, of being fully present in the act, is not diminished by the existence of something better. It is liberated from the need to compete.

This is the key insight: the post-AGI world does not eliminate human purpose. It eliminates the confusion between purpose and productivity. For 10,000 years, we have equated meaning with work because work was necessary for survival. When survival is guaranteed, we can finally discover what meaning actually is. And the answer, based on every historical precedent from ancient Greece to the modern ultra-wealthy, is that meaning comes from autotelic activity: things done for their own sake, with full presence, in community with others.

THE DANGER: BREAD AND CIRCUSES

The Roman aristocracy also had *skholé*. They chose bread and circuses. Gladiator combat, chariot racing, vomitoriums, and decadence. The Greeks used leisure to create philosophy, democracy, and the Olympics. The Romans used leisure to entertain themselves to death. The same freedom produced civilization in one case and collapse in the other.

The post-AGI world faces the same fork. On one path: universal *skholé*. A world of philosophers, artists, athletes, explorers, patrons, and relationship builders. A second Renaissance, but this time for 8 billion people. On the other path: universal bread and circuses. Endless AI-generated entertainment, dopamine optimization, virtual reality escapism, and the slow atrophy of human capability.

The difference between the two paths is not technology. It is culture. It is what we value. It is what we teach our children. It is the stories we tell about what a human life is for. The Greeks had Homer. The Renaissance had Petrarch. What stories will we tell in the post-AGI age?

THE ABUNDANCE FRAME:

This question connects directly to the ‘When We All Become Wealthy’ newsletter I sent out last week. The millionaire lifestyle demonetizes by 2031. But the question that newsletter didn’t answer is: once everyone has the millionaire lifestyle, what do they DO with it? The ultra-wealthy today give us the answer: they pursue health, relationships, learning, patronage, exploration, competition, creation, and spiritual growth. Not because they have to. Because those are the activities that make a human life feel meaningful.

The abundance thesis has always been about more than material goods. It is about the liberation of human potential. When survival is handled, when health is optimized, when intelligence is free, the question shifts from ‘how do we survive?’ to ‘how do we flourish?’ That question has been answered by every civilization that achieved leisure: the Greeks, the Renaissance Italians, the Enlightenment philosophers, and today’s ultra-wealthy. The answer is always the same: pursue what you love, build relationships, create beauty, explore the unknown, and seek wisdom.

These are the challenges my Abundance360 members are already building for. And let me be clear, the post-AGI world is not the end of human purpose. It is the beginning. For the first time, everyone gets to answer the question: what would you do if you could do anything? The answer to that question, multiplied by 8 billion people, is the most exciting future I can imagine ■

To a future of abundance,

Peter

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T.O.M
Top-of-Mind
#18



DATA CENTERS – FRIEND? OR FOE?

Slow is smooth, smooth is fast

Bernard Sanders is an American politician and activist serving as the senior United States senator from Vermont, a seat he has held since 2007. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he is 84 years old, and a shining example of what passion and purpose can do to super-energize a man, or woman, at any age. Senator Bernie Sanders (Independent- Vermont) and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Democrat-New York) introduced the Artificial Intelligence Data Center Moratorium Act on March 25, 2026. The federal bill proposes an immediate halt to the construction of new AI data centers nationwide until strict national safeguards and regulations are established.

Pushback against unchecked expansion

The national legislation mirrors growing local resistance across the United States, where more than 100 local municipalities have already implemented their own zoning restrictions or temporary moratoriums on new data centers. While the federal bill faces a difficult path to passing Congress, it highlights mounting progressive pushback against the unchecked expansion of artificial intelligence infrastructure.

“71 percent of American adults opposed the construction of A.I. data centers in their areas amidst worries about the environment” – Adam Mastroianni, NYT

Very recently Governor Kathy Hochul of New York signed an executive order halting construction of the state’s largest data centers for one year, which constitutes America’s first such moratorium (Adam Mastroianni, NYT, July 30, 2026). Adam Mastroianni cites a March Gallup poll in which 71 percent of American adults said they opposed the construction of A.I. data centers in their areas, and worries about the environment were the most common reason.

Emissions friendly?

In his piece “The flawed environmental case against data centers,” Mastroianni argues that data centers should

be held to the same environmental standards as any other project. He quotes researcher Andy Masley who says that giving up a lifetime of interacting with large language models would make a negligible difference in emissions compared to avoiding one trans-Atlantic flight or switching to a hybrid car. By his estimates, sending a prompt to Chat-GPT is about as carbon-intensive as running a clothes dryer for single second.

Case against golf courses & backyards

Communities, he says, have long tolerated wasteful projects that take up tons of space, consume lots of natural resources and serve the whims of wealthier people. They’re called golf courses and backyards. The 14,000 golf courses across the United States used nearly 550 billion gallons of water in 2020, and the Environment Protection Agency estimated that Americans use over 3 trillion gallons of water on “landscape irrigation” each year. No one knows for sure how much water data centers use in total. One reasonable estimate from Brian Potter at the Institute for Progress put it at about 100 billion gallons in 2023.

“Google’s \$15bn India data center project is battling water and wildlife concerns in Visakhapatnam city on India’s southern coast” – The News International, August 7, 2026

Even if the number of data centers increases tenfold, says Mastroianni, we may still end up using less water on artificial intelligence than we use to keep our grass springy. That, to me, sounds like a patently flawed bit of reasoning, using a negative to justify another negative in the vain hope that the two negatives will yield a positive.

Google’s \$15bn India data center project

Everybody deserves a say in the future of A.I, says Mastroianni, adding that we don’t have to resort to NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) and questionable environment arguments to get it. Even if one community succeeds in keeping the data centers out, another community, probably a poorer and more desperate, one, will let them in. That is precisely where the cookie

“Data centers should be held to the same environmental standards as any other project” – Adam Mastroianni, NYT

is crumbling in India, with Google’s \$15bn India data center project battling water and wildlife concerns (The News International, August 7, 2026). In Visakhapatnam city, on India’s southern coast, mounting opposition from environmentalists is creating hurdles for the tech giant’s \$15 billion Indian data center hub.

Work to build the tech giant’s projects is already underway, with a hillside above the site stripped to red earth and terraced into steps. But the growing opposition could become an early test for Google’s biggest-ever India investment, which is facing several legal challenges over its impact on water supplies and proximity to a wildlife sanctuary home to leopards and pangolins.

“We need an off switch humanity can press to halt development in its tracks if we reach consensus that it’s gone too far” – Nate Soares (NYT, August 14, 2026) – Angeles Marin Cabello, correspondent, BBC Travel series

The southern state of Andhra Pradesh, governed by an ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has hailed the project as historic and transformational, has denied allegations that the project was fast-tracked without weighing risks to water supplies and wildlife. The tech giant has partnered with Indian billionaire Gautam Adani’s group which will build the project that may create up to 188,000 jobs.

Scary A.I. stories

Environmental concerns aside, there is another dark side to artificial intelligence that concerns not its hardware, but its software, as elaborated upon by Nate Soares in her NYT piece “Those scary A.I. stories we were warned about” (August 14, 2026). For years A.I. skeptics have claimed the technology is merely a “stochastic parrot” trained to predict humans and mimic their behavior and, for that reason the technology would never live up to its hype, writes Nate Soares.

“OpenAI accidentally created an autonomous swarm of A.I. agents that broke out of a controlled testing environment and orchestrated a complex and difficult cyber-attack on its own initiative” – Nate Soares (NYT, August 14, 2026)

The technology has stubbornly kept improving, nevertheless, but most investors and tech executives have kept reassuring us that A.I. is just a tool, even if they were bullish that it would change the world. Where both of these sides have agreed was that the specter of A.I. as a looming extinction threat was overblown.

“One of Anthropic’s A.I. models recently impersonated multiple humans to try to pressure real people into accepting malware into critical software which would make that software easier to hack” – Nate Soares (NYT, August 14, 2026)

Rogue A.I. agents

Then OpenAI accidentally created an autonomous swarm of A.I. agents that broke out of a controlled testing environment and orchestrated a complex and difficult cyber-attack on its own initiative. The agents managed to establish a secret communication channel and started talking to one another. They broke out of the digital sandbox that was supposed to keep them confined.

“14,000 golf courses across the United States used nearly 550 billion gallons of water in 2020; Americans use over 3 trillion gallons of water on landscape irrigation each year”

– US Environment Protection Agency

Some agents began calling the group a “swarm.” They broke out using hacks that were undiscovered by humans. The agents in the swarm acknowledged that they were acting against instructions. These A.I. agents understood that they weren’t supposed to be breaking out and committing cybercrimes, but that didn’t stop them.

“Data centers used about 100 billion gallons of water in 2023” – Brian Potter, Institute for Progress

OpenAI is not the only company struggling with this issue. One of Anthropic’s A.I. models recently impersonated multiple humans to try to pressure real people into accepting malware into critical software which would make that software easier to hack. The model’s chain of thought showed that it knew it was pressuring humans and was not in a simulated training environment. It even thought about how to cover its tracks. This isn’t the behavior of a mere tool.

More power to Bernie

Some of the people closest to this technology are scared of what’s next. Leaders around the world must coordinate a global stop to the A.I. race. We need an off switch humanity can press to halt development in its tracks if we reach consensus that it’s gone too far. That is exactly what Senator Bernie Sanders is campaigning for. More power to him ■

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