Letter From the Editor - September 2024

By: Scott St. John, Pipeline

It's hard to believe there is so much skepticism around Artificial Intelligence (AI). Some have gone so far to say AI "overly inflates the expectations" and "distracts" from business operations. Add to that recent, underwhelming earnings reports from a few mega-cap tech companies, and you have others going so far as to attempt to redefine AI as an "Artificial Investment." But the reality of and momentum behind AI is undeniable, and the previously mentioned seem to be missing the point. Sometimes what glitters is – in fact – gold.

Pipeline has been evaluating AI in all its previous iterations, including Machine Learning (ML), for many, many years. We have been looking closely at the trends, technology, and tangible use cases. Interesting enough, as I was thumbing through past issues of Pipeline, I came across a salient article where we discussed AI with industry leaders like AT&T, BT, and IDC. We also examined what industry leaders like Microsoft, Nvidia, and IBM were doing with AI at the time. It seems like we wrote the article yesterday, or shortly after the ChatGPT boom. But it was 2016.

To put that in perspective, the major news headlines from 2016 included Apple removing the earphone jack from the iPhone 7, AT&T was looking to acquire Time Warner, Facebook was still Facebook, Samsungs were catching fire in people's pockets, and we said goodbye to the Vine. RIP. Yet AI was real, way back then.

What the skeptics are failing to realize is that AI is simply following the typical technology trajectory, or "Hype Cycle" as Gartner puts it. As all the clamor around AI dissipates, we are left with real AI applications that provide tangible and productive business outcomes. According to Gartner, this is a natural progression between stages of the hype cycle, which include: The Innovation Trigger, Peak of Inflated Expectations, Trough of

Disillusionment, to finally The Plateau of Productivity. In short, this is routine, to be expected, and AI isn't going anywhere. As a matter of fact, it's just getting ready for prime time.

Yes, all the hype around AI has probably peaked and is finally beginning to die down. And yes, there may be some truth in the distraction all the buzz around AI has created. But I left out a bit from the Harvard Business Review (HBR) article above. The full quote reads, "[The term AI] overly inflates expectations and distracts from the precise way ML will improve business operations. And it is.

You can see real AI applications all around us as shining examples permeating through the dust as it settles. AI is being used in many truly productive ways, including automating many once-manual tasks, acting as a customer-service agent, and by being our own personal assistant. Today, AI can create an advertisement for you, AI can target and place the ad for you, and AI can optimize the ad's performance. AI is real, it's here now, and has been for quite some time. But how do you decipher fact from fiction, hype from reality? How can you ensure your organization isn't being distracted from the real, tangible value AI can provide? This is why this edition of Pipeline is so important.

In this issue of Pipeline, we explore how AI and analytics are transforming industries. Pipeline's Dr. Mark Cummings offers an [executive guide to navigating the complexities of AI](#). Oracle presents [five significant generative AI innovations](#) for technology leaders to put on their radar. ServiceNow provides a [roadmap for customer experience (CX) leaders to adopt generative AI](#). SAS cuts through the hype to reveal the [true state of AI in the telecoms industry](#). VIAVI discusses the [transformative impact of AI on modern telecommunications networks](#). Icect demonstrates how [AI and XML are a perfect match for creating and managing intelligent content](#). SS&C Blue Prism outlines the [foundational pillars of Intelligent Automation (IA)](#). Tollring explains [how businesses can capitalize on the growth of Microsoft Teams through AI](#) and automation. Dryad Networks shows [how artificial intelligence is being deployed to mitigate wildfire risks](#). LYT reimagines urban mobility by creating a picture of [how cities can leverage cloud-based AI platforms](#) for traffic management. All this, plus the [latest enterprise and communications news](#) and [more](#).

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