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Navigating Modern AI: Risks and Rewards Process Paper

Have you ever had a grandparent, employer, or other senior citizen show you a video bearing a wide grin, only for you to painfully interject that the content they are presenting to you is AI-generated? It's getting more and more common. Not only does the amount of artificial content on the internet exponentially grow, but also the knowledge gap on AI between younger and older populations grows. To help combat AI misinformation, I created a presentation titled Navigating Modern AI: Risks and Rewards. The presentation was designed to teach senior citizens about what modern artificial intelligence is, how it can be used in scams and data collection, and also how it can benefit them. Over the course of the project, I ran a sample presentation at my grandparents' retirement community, interviewed Livermore Mayor John Marchand, and scheduled a presentation with the Livermore Rotary Club on June 3rd.

Artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly common on the internet. According to a 2025 study, "over 40% of Facebook's long-form posts are likely generated by AI" (Thekkethil). Despite this, a 2023 Foresight Study found that only 17% of adults over 50 say they know "a lot" about AI, with 9% saying they know nothing at all on the subject (Tyson and Kikuchi). With the moderation of social media platforms overwhelmed with AI-generated content, it is up to the viewer to differentiate between real and artificial content, which starts by knowing what modern AI is and its capabilities; exactly what my presentation aims to cover.

In its final state, the presentation covered four main types of AI: text (large language models), image, video, and audio-generating AIs. One key risk of using AI for misinformation, such as text-generating AI, is that models tend to spew misinformation as they are programmed to give answers more than to be fully accurate. Such is the case in 2023 when a New York lawyer used ChatGPT to generate his argument, citing 6 cases that never occurred (Merkin).

Image-generating AI can generate a range of pictures from mimicking art styles to photorealism. To demonstrate this, I opened the presentation with two photos that appeared to be real photos of me. On the next slide, I revealed that both of them were generated by AI from a singular reference photo and two short prompts. Video AI tools like Sora have similar capabilities to image-generating AI, simply generating videos instead of pictures, though this takes much more computing power, so they are less common on the internet. Finally, audio AI can clone someone's voice from as little as three seconds of audio, making them a dangerous tool for scammers to use against those unfamiliar with AI.

The risks section of the presentation covered scams, data and privacy, and misinformation. For scams, the biggest threat for older adults is AI voice cloning, where a scammer clones the voice of a family member and calls pretending to be in trouble and needing money. Despite seeming easily identifiable, one individual within my grandparents' retirement home had encountered a cloned voice of their granddaughter, and only recognized that the call was a scam when their grandchild called later that day. The simple solution is to always hang up and call back on a number you already have saved. For data and privacy, the main point was that anything you do online can be turned into data and sold, so it is important to check your privacy settings on social media and email. For misinformation, I used the real example of a fake AI-generated image of an explosion near the Pentagon that went viral in 2023 and briefly crashed the S&P500, although

only 0.3%, before anyone confirmed it was fake (Donie O'Sullivan and Passantino). To call attention to the possible political use of AI in scams, I interviewed Livermore Mayor John Marchand. Marchand gave me a story about how he had previously run into issues in a campaign when doctored images made to look like he was in poor health were sent to local voters by mail. With the modern ease of creating fake images with AI and spreading them via the internet, Marchand said that for politics, "people need to be wary of social media and always validate the sources they come across" (Marchand). Additionally, I aimed to emphasize how AI-generated social media posts typically use strong emotional imagery to dissuade anyone from critically thinking about the post and instead impulsively reacting, much like the over-the-phone scam calls. Also, like the scam calls, the key to recognizing that a social media post is fake is to try to not to react impulsively but instead to examine the content, not the appearance of the post, to determine whether it is even possible, and if so, to simply fact-check the information from outside, trusted sources.

For the rewards section, I, begrudgingly, had to modify the presentation away from showing ways I find AI useful in technology, but how it could be relevant for senior citizens. For example, I focused on accessibility and medical applications that could operate with little intervention from humans. I had to emphasize that AI was a tool for medical professionals and any large language model should in no way provide individual medical advice, to avoid giving any audience member any dangerous ideas. Another benefit of AI is photo restoration, allowing seniors to not only store old physical photos digitally but to convert them from negative film, black and white, or even cracked photos to accurate replications of the original images. I heavily debated whether I should include the controversy around using AI in a manner that could take the job of an artist, but I ultimately cut that section out, as the complaints of my generation and

my personal disappointment from several wasted years learning Photoshop would not be of much relevance or use to senior citizens.

Most changes were made to my project after running a sample presentation at my grandparents' retirement home. The original version of the presentation assumed the audience already had some familiarity with AI and focused mainly on risks and rewards. However, confused audience reactions and a slurry of questions made me realize I had made a false assumption. Many residents, for example, did not know that AI could generate images as well as text, so the risk and reward sections of the presentation made less sense. Therefore, I had to add descriptions of the most commonly used types of modern AI. I also had to completely redo the formatting of the slides themselves. The original font sizes were too small for senior residents to read, so I enlarged the text size and increased the color contrast for easier readability. Though I am proud and confident of the presentation, to film a video of it for the District 1 website, having the Livermore Rotary Club presentation scheduled for June 3rd allows me to keep improving it and reach more of the community.

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