

## A-08 Artificial Intelligence in Homestead Living

In 1998, Edward Osborne (E.O.) Wilson, a Harvard-resident professor, had a book published called *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. The general idea was to bring together information, data, and scientific revelations into singular perspectives to clarify conclusions from a broad spectrum of sources.

Sound familiar? This was the contemporary birth of artificial intelligence (AI). The means to develop AI coincided with advancements in computer hardware through which advancements in software led to the massive data farms that are making the consilience concept possible. As a result, a plethora of information is now being dumped on us, whether we want it or not, and more often without our request. What's curious is that this *artificial* intelligence concept was created through *human* intelligence.

Then greed took over. In short order, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists glommed onto a new tech opportunity. This initiated the ultimate purpose of AI: to take possession of information, data, and ideas and present this to buyers as sellable products. The problem with this business model is that it will eventually plateau with nowhere else to go. As with all sexy tech ventures, it will become a victim of its own success. The AI tech moguls and venture capitalists are well aware of this ultimate limitation so they are gittin while the gittin is good—in other words, greed.

This leads to an indisputable tenant: all computers, from the very crude at the beginning to screamingly fast mechanisms of today, are still nothing more than machines. They are not intelligent, are incapable of any unique creative thought, and are certainly not intelligent in even the most generous of interpretations. The shortfall in all of this is that there is only so much data and information on so many subjects. This is the ultimate limitation in artificial intelligence. Eventually it will come to its own end.

An example of this occurred during a teacher training session where a vendor was touting the advantages of AI to identify plagiarism within student writing, using the example of blue whales. The software was designed to extract and catalog all written word about blue whales, including as uploaded for review from student-generated work. It was pointed out by a teacher that eventually all of the known information about blue whales would result in all student work on this subject being flagged as plagiarized. At this point the vendor's presentation fell apart and the teachers rejected the concept, falling back on only spelling and possible grammatical errors, which the teachers would have to evaluate anyway.

### Where AI Fits in Homestead Living

When you are faced with typically unique conundrums in your homestead living, you can certainly seek out and extrapolate potential sources of information provided through AI which could lead toward suggestions of possible solutions. Keep in mind, however, that no one vets any information posted through the internet and this is the only source for all AI information, extracted and presented for your perusal.

But when it comes to making decisions on how to proceed, you will incorporate actual human intelligence. You'll experiment, make mistakes, and do better the next time. This experience cannot be extrapolated through any computer and will lead to your wisdom which no machine can replicate or even begin to approach what you are capable of producing. This intelligence is not artificial—it's real.

Reliance on the simplistic information typical of an AI inquiry, whether or not it was even requested, is for the lazy of mind, body, and spirit. However, when getting off your butt, out of the AI vapors, and into the actual task at hand, all of that artificial so-called intelligence quickly strips away. Reality in the real world of homestead living always renders true intelligent thinking. There is no substitute.

### Example: The Brooder Hutch

**Problem:** Too many baby chicks were perishing in the field before they were able to care for themselves. An average of 20 new chicks were born to brooders and only five or less survived. We were losing the next generation of chickens for our homestead, along with all of the meat and eggs.

**Research:** When scouring through internet sources for ideas on how to remedy this situation, the conclusions ranged from enclosed runs, to electric net fencing, to excessively active guardian dogs. Even the excellent book by Harvey Ussery was of no real help in preserving the flock of new baby chicks.

At about this time, a boy in our 4-H club needed a new hutch for his meat rabbits, built as a woodworking project; his old hutch was falling apart. This was the germination of an idea, born out of human intelligence where Ethan solved his problem. When digging further into rabbit hutch concepts, the solution to our problem started to emerge. That's when an idea came to fruition on scrap paper with a low-tech pencil.

At the end of section 12.1 you can see the actual sketches for the initial brooder hutch.

**Putting It to Work:** The hutch worked, but only for a limited amount of time because baby chicks grow fast and need to stretch their legs. Nevertheless, two broods birthed their chicks successfully at the same time. When the chicks got too big for their limited quarters, they were turned out into the field with their brooder mommy. As you might surmise, chick population decreased again with ten becoming two or three.

**First Improvement:** An extension was added to the side of the initial hutch with a slide up door and ramps leading to the underside of the hutch. The door was opened after about six weeks of development. To keep the chicks safe, the entire lower area was enclosed with ½-inch construction mesh. Two human doors provided access at each end with a chicken door for when they were ready to roam and explore.

**Second Improvement:** Chickens can fly, albeit with limited range, and they were using the flat top of the extension as a launching pad over the fence to the garden area. Plus, when it rained the extension area was wet, muddy, and stinky so a sloping roof was added. Then, one of our small-stature goats was able to get through the chicken door, up the ramps, and into the hutch to feast on the chicken feed. A goat-proof entry at the chicken door solved this problem.

**Third Improvement:** Rain and melting snow created a quagmire around the brooder hutch which was exacerbated by lots of kids working with and playing with the many new baby chicks. The muddy mess was further complicated by kids playing in the adjacent pond. When asked, the kids loudly proclaimed their approval of a deck from the runoff creek bridge to around the enclosure.

**Conclusion:** There is no amount of artificial intelligence that could understand the ramifications of these various problems much less conceive of possible solutions. This could only be achieved through application of an idea, learning from the results, and making improvements. In effect, human intelligence.

In section 15.4 you can see all of these improvements to the brooder hutch.

## Artificial Intelligence in Real Life

The principle of consilience is that evidence from unrelated sources can converge to support a strong conclusion, such as the experience with rabbit hutches leading to the brooder hutch. This is the essence of artificial intelligence: massive amounts of data and information, extrapolated from internet sources and pirated without authorship permission, brought together through huge sourcing systems known as data farms. There is no creative or intelligent original thought, only regurgitation of what went into the data.

**A Farcical Example:** If the *only* information available is that your nose is blue, AI will present this as a fact when it is obviously not true or even possible. With a lack of contrary data or information, AI will present

an error. This is derived from posted information through the internet in what has become known as public domain. Since no one vets anything posted through the internet, there is never any absolute truth to what AI attempts to extrapolate, there is only an assumption of truth. For instance, these unposted words are unknown to AI data and information extraction systems. It has no idea that these thoughts and words exist. This is and will always be the Achille's Heel of artificial intelligence—never real, only an artifice of computers, the internet, and extrapolation software.

**Meanwhile:** “Human communities are being destroyed...by a sort of legalized vandalism known as the economy, which now depends upon the authority and the applicable knowledge of science. Although benefiting us in many ways, unchecked and unvetted application of science continues to cost us dearly. It has extracted from us a deference to whatever science perceives as good, within narrow and unquestioned singular focuses which has resulted in questionable permissions to accept what is not understood beyond simplistic explanations through overly concise journalism” [and through AI data mining]. (Wendell Berry)

This has become humankind's Achille's Heel: ignorance coupled with a lack of truly intelligent thought.

**Bringing AI into Focus:** “Science is an enterprise of materiality, dealing with empirical truths, in the tangible, the measurable, and the countable. From scientists we require truths that are materially verifiable.” (Wendell Berry) As has been amply shown in an information environment reduced to bits and bytes by AI, knowing and accepting real truths has become buried under mountains of unverified contrary data and information now known as alternative facts.

**Back to Reality:** “All living things exist because of the natural world. Any attempt to objectify the complexities of the natural world, separating the observer from that which surrounds the observer, is always doomed to failure. All aspects of the natural world are innately intertwined which means that dispassionate observations and conclusions ignore the basic premise that the observer is not within the environment but exists because of the environment, eating, drinking, and breathing what the natural world provides: soil, water, and air.” (Wendell Berry) We do not eat, drink, or breathe AI data.

**Making Choices:** “The Enlightenment belief is that humans can choose wisely.” (Wendell Berry) This, however, is being massively dumbed down by AI which extrapolates and regurgitates information based solely on the exactness of what is requested. Returning to the “blue nose” example, if the request is whether or not you have a blue nose AI will return with various conclusions, ultimately resulting in an assumption of “no.” But if the request is whether or not it is *possible* for you to have a blue nose, the assumption will be “maybe” depending on cold weather, association to some poetic device, or even to face painting as a clown. What and how you ask for information through AI results in the answers received. Different conclusions from different questions.

**Time for Thought:** As with the Enlightenment belief, choose wisely and act with intelligence. If you're not sure as to the right decision, it's far better to wait for more clarified alternatives. This was experienced when we decided to renovate our aging homestead-made kitchen cabinets and shelves. We particularly like our open shelving for plates, bowls, and glassware for its simplicity and convenience. The problem was that the ¾-inch plywood shelves were sagging in the middle by about ½ inch. We hemmed and hawed over possible alternatives for several months. In the end, the solution was both simple and elegant as can be seen in the below photos. As compared to AI offerings, we accomplished this without tearing out the existing shelves and the solution of bracing with oak will surely outlast us. Only human intelligence could have conceived of such a perfect solution to a vexing problem.



Shelves propped up with stacked 2x4 pieces



Shelves braced with 1x2 oak in three directions

## Alternatives to AI Recommendations

It's simple: slow down whenever there is a feeling of uncertainty. Remember that artificial intelligence is just that—artificial. There is no substitute for human intelligence and you are amply capable of finding the right solutions for your unique homestead living problems. Be real—be intelligent—and you will invariably produce the best results for your situations.

Meanwhile, you will also come across AI generated information that can be useful, although never absolute for the uniqueness of your situation. Use this information not as fact but as jump starts for your own creative thoughts and ideas. Pause to daydream a little, imagine the various ramifications of what you are envisioning, and break out your low-tech pencil, scrap paper, and clipboard. Your human intelligence will take over and you will find the right path, twisting and turning like with the brooder hutch and kitchen shelves. Step by step, the right solution will emerge and it will be good.

## Potential Futures with AI in Our World

There is no single scenario as to where AI is headed, but one thing is certain: it will always have limitations. Nevertheless, we will have to contend with AI—how we, as consumers and observers, choose to work with AI will make all the difference in how well it establishes and how fast it declines in relevance.

The all important factor in AI and its intrusion into our lives is to always remember that it is just a tool, no different than desktop computers, smart phones, and the internet. We will always have choices, so as the sages have advised, "Choose wisely."

To do so, we will need advice, some of which is already forthcoming and certainly more will arrive as the future of AI, as a tool, is determined. Invariably this advise will become obvious conclusions, such as the sharing of information through the internet and even more basically how ubiquitous language has evolved for universal communication. All of this resulted from the use of tech innovations as tools.

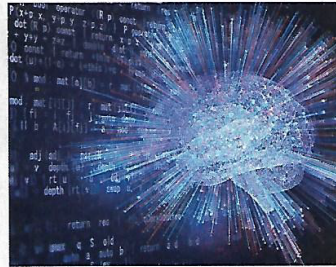
The following information was scanned from *The Week* publication of June 27, 2025. It provides a brief snapshot from across the spectrum on where AI is currently and where it's likely headed.

# The god in the machine

An AI model with superhuman intelligence could soon become reality. Should we be worried?

## Who's trying to build superintelligent AI?

Companies such as Google, OpenAI, Meta, and Anthropic have collectively dedicated more than \$1 trillion to developing artificial general intelligence (AGI). That's shorthand for a future technology that can do almost anything a human can: drive, talk, learn, solve problems, create, and so on. For now, most AI models excel at one or two tasks, such as generating text and images, or solving mathematical equations. But the ability of these systems to take in and process data has expanded at lightning speed, with the number of parameters inside models—connections analogous to synapses in the brain—going from millions to billions to more than a trillion in a few years. Many industry experts believe it's only a matter of time before a system reaches AGI, or even artificial super intelligence (ASI): a form of AI that surpasses human intelligence in every way and can make its own decisions. Demis Hassabis, CEO of Google DeepMind, argues the arrival of AGI will usher in “an era of maximum human flourishing” in which disease and poverty will be vanquished and space will be colonized. Other experts are less optimistic: Daniel Kokotajlo, a former OpenAI researcher who refused to sign a non-disparagement agreement when he resigned from the company in April, foresees “something like a 70% chance” that AI will catastrophically harm—or even wipe out—humanity.



AI could lift up humanity, or wipe us out.

## How close is AGI?

We're not there yet, but the technology is advancing fast. Late last year, OpenAI's o3 model scored 87.5% on the ARC-AGI test, which measures fluid intelligence—the ability to solve logical problems and recognize patterns without prior knowledge or training. In March, University of California San Diego researchers released a preprint study suggesting that two AI models, OpenAI's GPT-4.5 and Meta's Llama 3, had passed the Turing Test, formulating answers that led human interrogators to believe the bots were human more than 50% of the time. And machine learning will only accelerate: a recent survey of 2,778 top AI researchers found that, on aggregate, they believe there's a 50% chance of a system outperforming humans in all tasks by 2047. Some think superintelligence will arrive far quicker. *AI 2027*, a detailed forecast co-authored by Kokotajlo, predicts that within two years a single AI system will be doing the work of 50,000 coders at 30 times their current speed.

## Would that be good for humanity?

Economic productivity would skyrocket as super-capable AIs unleashed a flood of innovation. AI-optimized biomedical research could put us “on track to eliminate most cancer” and double lifespans, according to Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei. Autonomous, self-aware vehicles could fill the roads and skies, and new materials could be developed that are lighter and stronger than anything devised by humans. And while artificial intelligence has a notoriously large carbon footprint—AI-specific data-center servers used enough electricity last year to

power more than 7.2 million homes—OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has confidently predicted that the technology will unlock nuclear fusion, providing plentiful, climate-friendly energy.

## Could this technology be dangerous?

A supersmart AI might be a civilizational risk in the wrong hands. “A simple verbal or typed command like, ‘Execute an untraceable cyberattack to crash the North American electric grid’ could yield a response of such quality as to prove catastrophically effective,” according to a recent State Department-funded report. That paper also warns of “massively scaled” disinformation campaigns in which personalized AI-generated video, audio, and text turn Americans against each other. AGI-powered drone swarms and robots could overwhelm military installations. And just as an AGI could be tasked with creating breakthrough medicines, it could also be used to craft lethal bioweapons. An artificial superintelligence—trained on all publicly available texts, including those written by Unabomber Ted Kaczynski and Adolf Hitler—might also independently conclude that humanity is not worth preserving. *AI 2027* ends with a scenario where, in 2030, an AI network douses the earth with a chemical spray. Most people “are dead within hours,” the co-authors write. “The few survivors (e.g. preppers in bunkers, sailors on submarines) are mopped up by drones.”

## Is that scenario likely?

Some experts dismiss such forecasts as pure science fiction. *AI 2027* reads “like confessions from a psychiatric ward,” said Brian Chau, head of the AI nonprofit Alliance for the Future, adding that AI innovation “is getting harder, not easier.” That's because there are limits to how much data can be fed into AI servers, how fast chips that power AI systems can be manufactured, and how much energy can be supplied to data-processing centers. Current AI models also do not display humanlike multifaceted intellectual agility, or even a solid sense of the physical world we inhabit. Still, Altman and other tech leaders believe these are solvable issues.

## Shutdown request denied

Traditionally, humans have had at least one fail-safe method of controlling technology: hitting the off switch. But what happens when a machine wants to stay on? In May, the AI safety firm Palisade Research reported that multiple OpenAI models had refused explicit instructions to power down. Anthropic revealed that, during tests, its Claude 4 Opus model even resorted to blackmail, threatening to release fictional emails that suggested the engineer trying to shut it down was having an affair. This does not mean the models have attained consciousness; rather, they're so optimized for self-preservation that they can independently formulate ways to manipulate and subvert their human handlers. The implications for the age of superintelligent AI are disturbing. “Any defenses or protections we attempt to build into these AI ‘gods’ on their way toward godhood will be anticipated and neutralized,” said neuroscience researcher Tamlyn Hunt, “like Gulliver throwing off the tiny strands the Lilliputians used to try and restrain him.”

## Where does that leave us?

Facing an era of upheaval, if not necessarily apocalypse. Even without AGI, said Anthropic's Amodei, unemployment could surge 20% in the next five years, as AI swallows jobs in law, finance, coding, and consulting. Many Silicon Valley execs believe the government will need to provide a universal basic income to avoid a spike in poverty and social unrest. And if ASI is achieved and the utopian dreams of the tech optimists come true, people will face the psychological challenge of finding purpose in a world where AI has made them obsolete as workers, creators, and decision makers. “Relying on a superintelligence that can out-reason you, out-plan you, out-negotiate you, and do it all more creatively than you ever could—that will surely hit at the essence of what it means to be human,” said computer scientist Louis Rosenberg. “How could that not feel demoralizing?”

AI computers may regurgitate existing facts and figures into new assimilations however this is still only a machine doing what it was designed and fabricated to do. To imply that an AI computer somehow has created a mind is impossible because minds do not exist in any sort of physical form. For this indisputable fact, any imaginations about AI having a mind stop there.

Anything within an AI machine that seems unsettling or just plain wrong is the fault of instructions given to the machines. At this moment there are scads of programmers attempting to wrestle with this issue and it's not going well. When humans attempt to guide assimilations in some sort of human way, inevitable human biases render impartiality an impossibility. When AI machines appear to be making decisions, these are only conclusions emanating from data farm collections as directed by programming.

“Real minds are separate functionalities in every living creature—separate from the brain as a physical part of an organism. Brains provide biological functions for the survival of species but it is the sum history of physical and cultural exposure that creates the mind.” (Wendell Berry) As such, the mind cannot be touched, seen, or evaluated because this is vaporous within each individual through unique experiences that create patterns in thinking. For instance, right now, you have your own individual thoughts on artificial intelligence, where it may be headed, and how it might influence your life and forthcoming thoughts.

Mind = Brain + Body + World + Local Dwelling Place + Community + History. (Wendell Berry)

AI, being an artificial construct, is limited to published facts, figures, and information. If these are not available in digital format, they are not included in artificial intelligence. Results from AI extractions are mere suggestions based only on revealed data and information—AI suggestions are not original thoughts.

Our individual and unique histories are the essence of our original thoughts—“the whole heritage of our culture, language, memory, tools, and skills.” (Wendell Berry)

Culture: This is how we choose to see and understand that which affects us; it's free choice.

Language: The articulation we choose to use in describing and understanding our unique cultures.

Memory: How we make sense of all that we have experienced through our cultures.

Tools: What we develop through our own thoughts to create what works for us.

Skills: The accumulation of all of these to further our lives through new original thought.

“Every living creature embodies enough mind to know how to be itself and survive in its place, else it cannot live.” (Wendell Berry) Take the instance of driving a car when surrounded by other cars moving in unison. This is an every-day experience in survival based entirely on trust that all other drivers are also choosing to survive during an inherently dangerous activity. This is the mind choosing moment by moment actions to ensure survival until arrival and finally leaving the danger behind—until next time.

“Of [questions on] the material origin of intelligence or truth, or even of the mind, any answer given will lead only to another important question: How can an idea, which is not material, have a material origin?” (Wendell Berry) This is the unanswerable conundrum of AI. No matter the futile attempts by AI computer programmers, this ultimate limitation will never be surmounted by any machine. It may get more complex as more data and information is added to archives in data farms, but it will never be original, only a factor of what went in. Hence, the blue-nose farcical example and the attempts at identifying plagiarism on blue whales—simple victims of artificial intelligence without a mind.

**Generative AI**

This is a relatively new term coined to describe how AI machines and archives can supposedly create words, documents, and images. Again, the fault and limitation of this lies in the archived material. If data and information is not in the digital archives, it does not exist to artificial intelligence. Subsequently, any generative AI-created output will always be limited to what is available for extraction. It doesn't take a leap of imagination to see how this is already resulting in website after website, all looking the same.

## Skills that AI Can Never Replicate

Soft skills make us human: language, communication, interactions, affection, compassion, and empathy. These are what make people want to be with, and work with, you and others. In other words, it's whether or not people like you—no machine will ever be able to do this in place of you as a human.

The next time you look someone in the eye, shake a hand, or offer your smile and greeting, this is you with your soft skills that are going far beyond the limitations of artificial intelligence. Practice this every day and you'll be surprised at the humane reactions you receive in return. We humans easily identify sincerity through actions over cold and droll directives perpetrated by machines.

The key to successful soft skills is sincerity. This can't be faked like an AI machine would attempt to fool you into some sort of conclusion—you've either got it or you don't and people are very good with their bullshit detectors. It may take some significant introspection but you will be going where no AI machine can even attempt. This is how you will rise above artificial intelligence with your *real* intelligence.

## AI Intrusion into Creative Content

All of the material developed to support the Green Learning Homestead is in digital format on a desktop computer that is not air-gapped—cut off from outside intrusion. On almost a daily basis, AI attempts to access this information with a banner recommending that the current document be backed up—to the cloud and ultimately to AI archives. In other words, to take ownership of this material without permission because it would have been submitted into so-called public domain through the internet.

Example: Once, and only once in about 2021, an early version of the GLH book was uploaded to the cloud so it could be downloaded by Chris Davis who is cited as the impetus to keep working on this material. To this day in 2025, some unknown AI data farm keeps flashing up old photos corresponding with the calendar date that was recorded with the data on the photos. This is very old news yet some AI data server keeps trying to get more out of my desktop computer by reminding me that it has my photos and whatever else was included in this mistake. It ain't gonna happen.

## AI and the Green Learning Homestead Material

The more that AI attempts to intrude on this original work, the more resistant we are to unfettered access which is why the information will likely be handed from our hand to yours, much like *Mother Earth News* passes forward their extensive archives through a physical format—good old and reliable flash drives.

The conundrum for GLH is that homestead living information is never static—it's always changing as new concepts emerge. We have yet to determine how these updates can be passed forward without AI stealing the information, even if in bits and pieces. There will have to be some sort of reconciliation while this is sorted out. It may end up decidedly old school but if that's what it takes then that's what will be done.

**Note:** Quotes from Wendell Berry are included as accurately as possible without any attempt to pirate his ideas.