Welcome to AI Digest! A periodic curated digest of all things Generative AI, from AI tools to higher ed to industry and the future of jobs. Views expressed do not reflect the official stance or endorsement of Texas Tech University. Remember to ALWAYS use generative AI responsibly:

- Protect intellectual property and personally identifiable information.
- Verify all output.

Teaching

Via Faculty Focus: Effective Strategies for Sustaining Student Attention during PowerPoint Lectures

Despite debate and disagreement about how to define and measure attention spans, numerous studies have put student attention spans in approximately the 10-minute range (Bradbury, 2016). Attention is a so-called "gateway between information and learning" and is compared to "a spotlight on a large stage" (Keller et al., 2020). Students cannot make connections and learn a topic if their "spotlight" isn't turned on or focused in the right area.

Q: Why do so many educators lecture and click through PowerPoints for 30-,40-, or even 60-minutes at a time with no breaks or learning activities?

A: (Lisa) the answer is likely lack of time and/or experience. The good news is that GenAI like Claude and ChatGPT can easily take PowerPoint files and create activities that can easily be plugged into Top Hat for quick and effective engagement and formative assessment. Just upload slide deck (preferable with module learning objectives) and try the following prompt:

> Please create the following engagement materials for undergraduate students in a Principles of PR Class: an in-class quiz for learning consolidation after lecture, an in-class activity, a notetaking outline for during lecture and flashcards for individual use using the attached lecture, focusing on the module learning objectives.

Research

Generate charts and valuable insights using Gemini in Google Sheets

Starting January 29, Gemini in Sheets can perform actions or answer questions to address a wide variety of scenarios. Specifically, you can ask Gemini questions about your data and Gemini can provide valuable insights, such as contextual trends, patterns, and correlations

between different variables in your data. Gemini will also generate charts based on your data that you can insert as static images over cells in your spreadsheet.

MIT Technology Review: OpenAI's Deep Research Agent

OpenAI has launched a new agent capable of conducting complex, multi-step online research into everything from scientific questions to personalized bike recommendations at what it claims is the same level as a human analyst. In response to a single query, such as "draw me up a competitive analysis between streaming platforms," the tool, called Deep Research, will search the web, analyze the information it encounters, and compile a detailed report which cites its sources. OpenAI says that what takes the tool "tens of minutes" would take a human many hours. And it claims it represents a significant step towards its overarching goal of developing artificial general intelligence that matches (or surpasses) humans. Unfortunately, it's only available at the Pro tier ($200 per month).

Security and Technology

The EU can now ban AI systems it sees as containing "unacceptable risk" of harm.

As of Sunday in the European Union, the bloc's regulators can ban the use of AI systems they deem to pose "unacceptable risk" or harm.

International AI Safety Report 2025 Reveals Path Ahead

A group of 100 experts from 33 countries released the International AI Safety Report. Led by computer scientist Yoshua Bengio, the report brings together work from researchers around the globe to take a clear look at the upsides and dangers of advanced AI.

Until next time! Check out the Small Bytes Blog and the TLPDC website for more AI tips and workshops. Contact Lisa Du Bois Low, Faculty Fellow, at lisa.low@ttu.edu for more information or book a 60-minute consultation.