Apocalypse Incoming, or Additional Interns?

Making strategic use of AI

John Fitzgerald
Digital Evolution Manager

Who am I?

John Fitzgerald
Digital Evolution Manager,
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

With my team, I help thousands of Scottish charities make sense of technology so they can use it to achieve their missions

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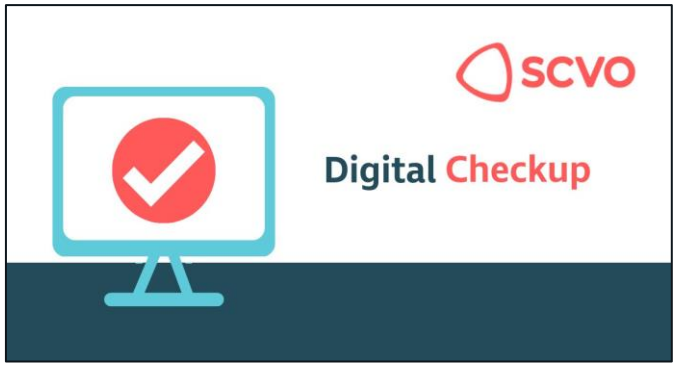

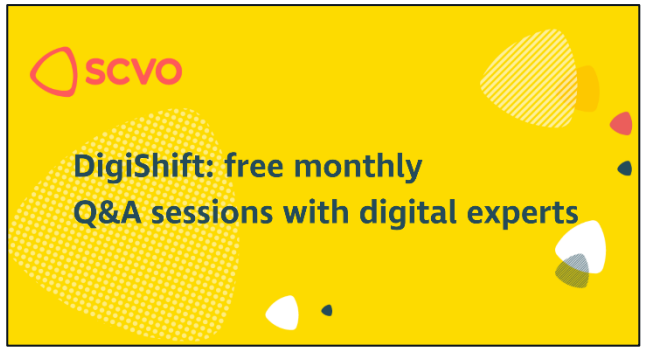

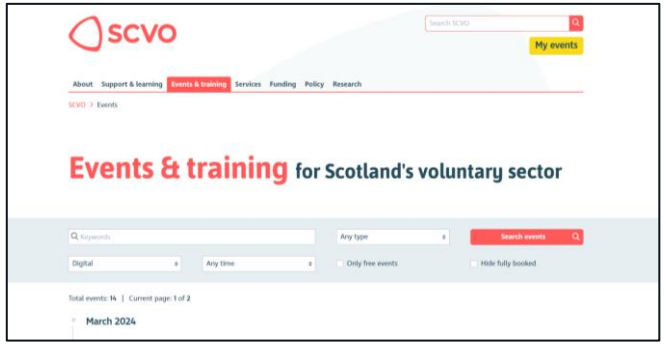

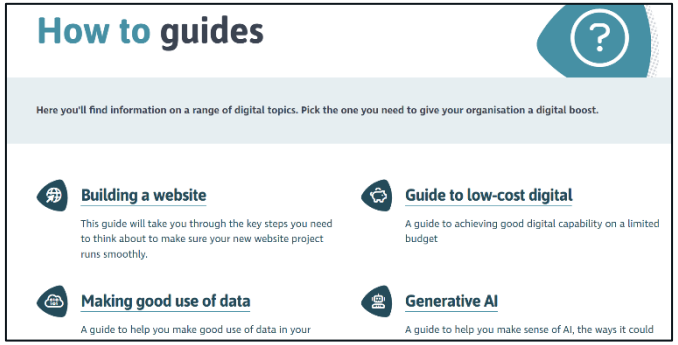

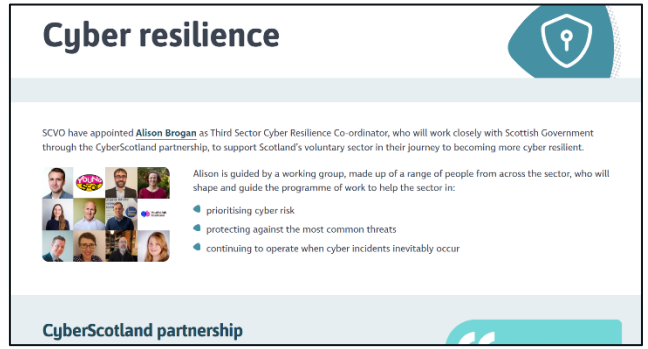

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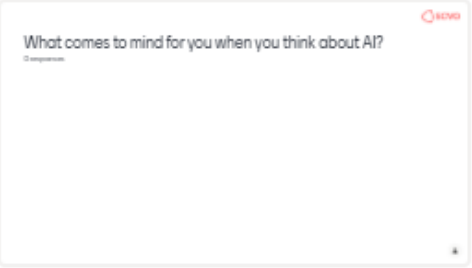

Where are you now in your experience with AI?

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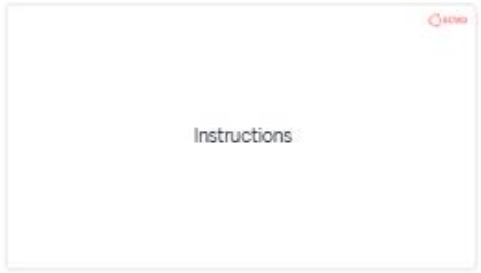

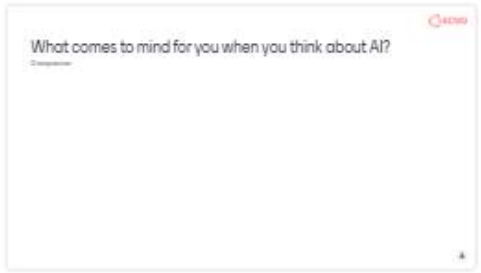

How to think about AI?

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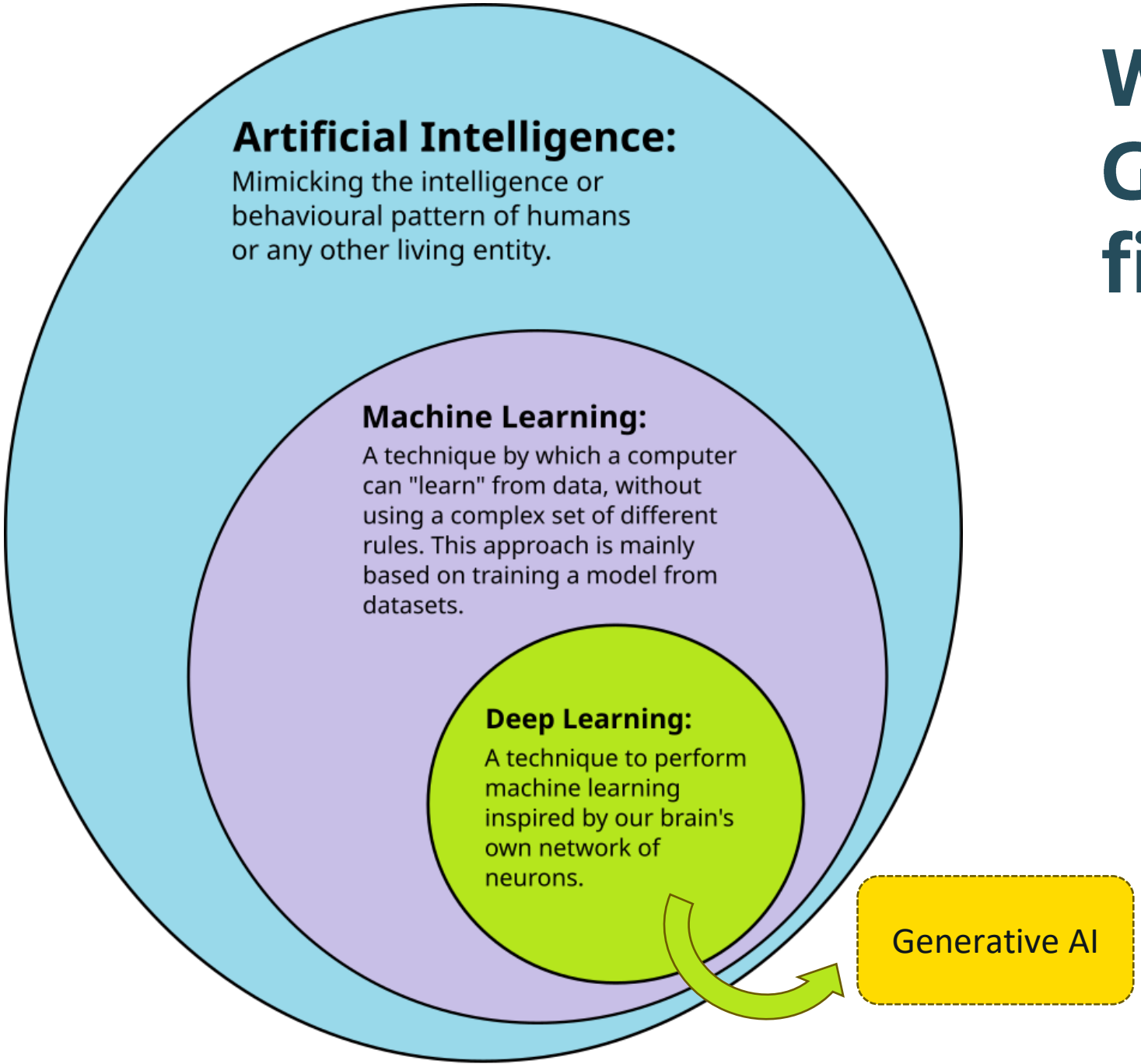
Where does Generative AI fit into AI?



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What can AI and machine learning help with?

Perception and detection

Pattern recognition

Recommender algorithms

Sorting and categorising

Decision support

Risk scoring

Translation

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Instead of ‘Artificial Intelligence’
(invented as a marketing term), how about:

‘Automation’?

Better AI framing

- Automation
- Additional Interns
- Fancy Data Science
- Computers imitating humans (to a plausible standard)

(No-one is an expert in deploying AI in our sector – yet)

...but you could all become experts, with your professional expertise and contextual knowledge

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Big picture ethical issues

Big picture ethical issues

🌎 Energy use & climate impacts

⚖️ Bias and discrimination

💸 Concentrated wealth & power

🤐 Lack of transparency

🪫 Exploitative labour practices

© Copyright and plagiarism

…these are all inherent to Big Tech, and to a large extent, outside our control. We'll focus more on areas you have more agency over

Considerations, risks and ethics of using generative AI

Limitations and pitfalls

To use generative AI tools effectively, you need to understand their limitations. Tools like ChatGPT can quickly produce impressively fluent and plausible-sounding text. But it's crucial to understand that they are doing this by pattern-matching, working out the most probable next line of text after a particular input or prompt.

At this stage, most generative AI tools are **not able to research or reliably check facts** in the real world. So be careful when using these tools to produce factual or informative content. Use your own judgement and knowledge to ensure any final text is factually correct.

Things to think about

- Data protection issues
- Bias of data sets
- Climate impact
- Copyright and low-paid labour
- Risk of content quality degrading over time

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>> How to guides

>>> Generative AI

>>>> Considerations, risks and ethics of using AI

>>>> Making use of AI

>>>> Ethics, risks and limitations

>>>> AI policies

>>>> Generative AI glossary

What are the current and real risks with AI?

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What is wrong with this picture?

Key risks to watch for – more general

- Personal or confidential data being leaked
- False or unreliable information
- Hard to spot when responses are wrong
- AI could generate offensive or harmful content
- Little or no ability to audit or review how responses are generated

Vision and values

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How might we make use of AI in ways that align with our vision and values?

AI organisational policies

Some of the information on this page is based on a growing list, curated by the Civic AI observatory, and reproduced with their permission.

The Civic AI observatory is a joint initiative of Nesta and Newspeak House. You can find out more and sign up for their newsletter here. If your organisation has a policy one already, or are planning to make one, you can share it with the Civic AI observatory: hello@civicai.uk

Internal policies for staff use

People in your organisation will already be using AI, so you'll want a policy on employee use. This will be similar to a "use of social media" policy. Individuals and teams across organisations are already actively experimenting with tools such as ChatGPT, and it's imperative to acknowledge this and introduce appropriate structures to steer experimentation in the right direction.

A policy should cover both opportunities and risks. Employees may benefit from training or allocated time to share and explore AI tools together. Depending on your organisation there may also be pressing issues related to security, privacy, reputational risk, or wider ethical concerns. In general, the policies we have seen have been quite balanced, both recognising the possibilities of the technology as well as warning against the dangers.

Here are a selection of examples which may be useful in forming your own policies:

- The **official guidance** for how civil servants should use this technology from the UK government
- **A sample policy** that considers the ethical guideline for use in campaigning from a smaller organisation

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What could we do with AI?

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What kind of uses of AI have you seen or heard about?

All responses to your question will be shown here

Each response can be up to 200 characters long

Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites

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My quick answer, think: ‘minibus full of interns’

A few suggestions

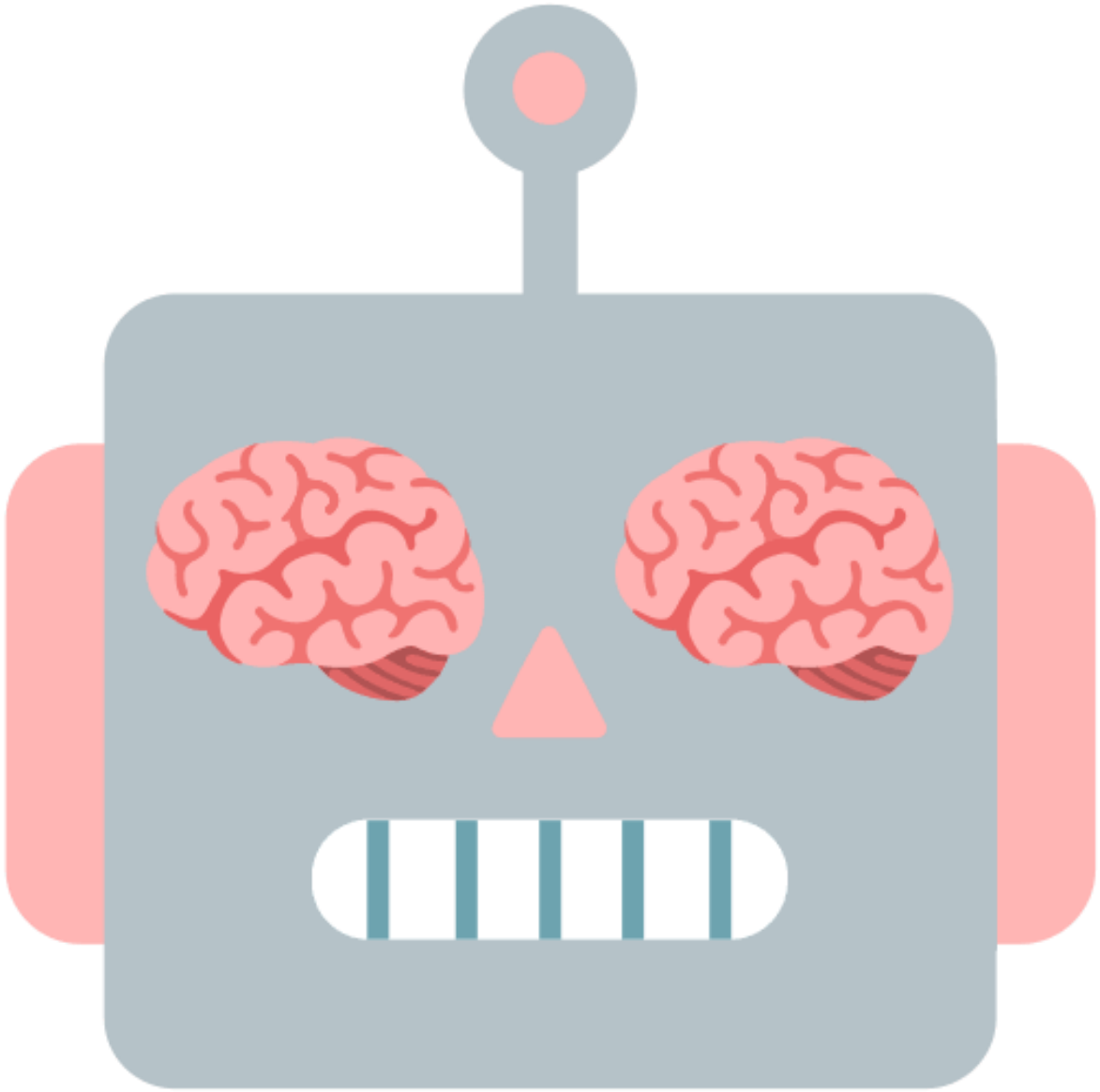
- Transcribing and summarising calls and meetings
- Summarising longer form documents
- Retrieving key points from a library of in-depth information
- Sentiment analysis/basic pattern-spotting from semi-structured information
- Drafting communications from outlines

Using GenAI to repurpose content into new formats

(eg meeting recording to document outline, document outline to blog post, blog post to audio...)

Using GenAI to help with drafting new content, or for generating video

(care is needed to check accuracy…)



What are the longer-term impacts of AI tools on skills and learning?

You might have a bespoke knowledge base at your fingertips, but how do you learn?

🚨 Spoiler alert! 🚨

Your AI strategy on a slide coming up

Your AI strategy cheat sheet

- **Have a policy** – even a sentence like:
  ‘We encourage our team to try out AI tools safely, as long as we don’t put people, data, or our reputation at risk, and we’re transparent about what we’re doing’
- **Give it a try:** Encourage some hands-on experience, especially with tools you already have
- **Open conversations:** Safe space to learn

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Starting to develop your AI roadmap

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Four areas with potential for AI

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Low stakes
No real harm if things go wrong

Low expertise
Anyone can spot a good result

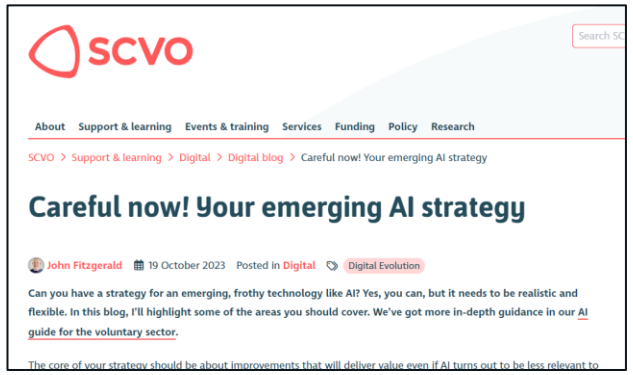
Underutilised data
Semi-structured data or content you haven’t had time to analyse

Routine communications
Frequent or repetitive low-risk communications

Closing thoughts

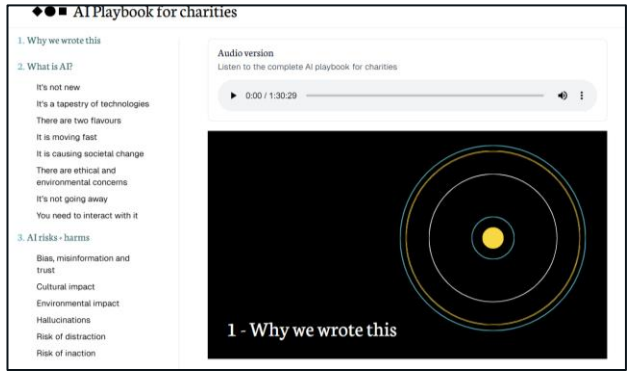
- AI might not be the answer!
- It’s OK to wait – and learn from others
- Conversations across your team are really valuable (not just the techy folk)
- Trust and responsibility are at the core
- Don’t ignore data quality (AI is not magic)
- Augment, don’t replace

Resources and further reading

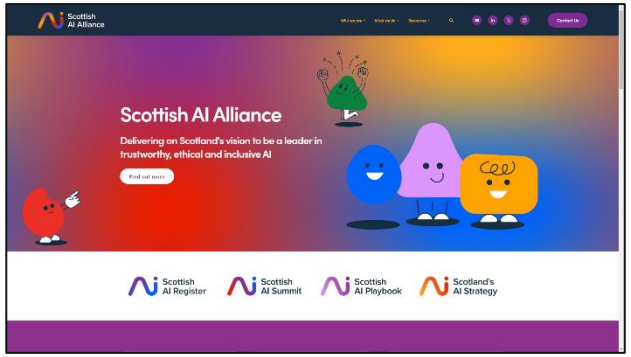


https://scvo.scot/p/84589/2023/10/19/careful-now-your-emerging-ai-strategy

https://scvo.scot/support/digital/guides/ai/making-use-of-ai



https://www.aiplaybookforcharities.com/



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