

Transcript | AI Skills Lab: AI for Project Management

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Joel Smith: Hello! Hello, everybody, and welcome to today's AI Skills Lab event, AI for Project Management. My name is Joel, I'm the Events Manager here at Apolitical, dialing in from a very sweaty London.

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Joel Smith: Today is all about using AI to make project management more seamless. You'll hear from an expert on how AI can make the greatest impact on your work, with actionable tips you can apply straight away. For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, welcome. AP Political is the world's largest online network for governments, used by over

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Joel Smith: More than half a million public servants and policymakers from across 170 countries.

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Joel Smith: Apolitical is a strategic partner to governments, helping them prepare their workforces for the future. We achieve this by upskilling through short online courses and peer communities, as well as by building innovative learning tools designed for and with governments.

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00:01:11.220 --> 00:01:23.639

Joel Smith: It would be great to hear from all of you, too, so please do get posting in the chat where you're joining us from, what organization you work for. Hopefully, you are not as warm as we are here in London, if you are not in London.

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00:01:23.640 --> 00:01:29.529

Joel Smith: Now, I'm going to get into a few quick bits of housekeeping before we get into today's session.

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Joel Smith: Firstly, I'll mention that this event is recorded for on-demand viewing on the apolitical platform, so please don't record it yourself. We'll also be using the recording to generate event insights, including with AI-powered software. As this event is running on Zoom webinar, we won't collect any of your video or audio data, but personal details you share in the chat might be captured

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Joel Smith: So, contact details for any privacy concerns are in the apolitical homepage footer, and closed captions are available in your own language, and can be toggled on or off in your screen settings. I believe my colleague Natalia has just posted the instructions in the chat.

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00:02:07.060 --> 00:02:20.179

Joel Smith: And secondly, before we get started, I would love to introduce you to the AI in government community on Apolitical. It's a space to ask the questions we don't always get time for at work, or indeed at these 30-minute events.

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00:02:20.180 --> 00:02:28.170

Joel Smith: Such as, how do we use AI to speed up product delivery without compromising the audit trails and accountability requirements the public sector demands?

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00:02:28.610 --> 00:02:42.000

Joel Smith: If you've ever wondered about this or similar, you're definitely not alone, and this community is a great place to connect with and learn from your peers in the public sector. My colleague will also post the link to the community in the chat.

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00:02:42.000 --> 00:02:50.190

Joel Smith: Speaking of, I'll quickly jump in and just see where we've got, people dining in from. So, a very warm Peterborough.

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00:02:50.190 --> 00:03:01.840

Joel Smith: Welcome, Albania, equally hot at East Midlands Council in Nottingham. It's very hot in the UK, for those of you not in the UK who might have picked up on that.

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00:03:01.850 --> 00:03:09.740

Joel Smith: A warm and sunny Malaga, that sounds delightful. Montreal, Canada, hopefully a little bit cooler.

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00:03:09.740 --> 00:03:23.109

Joel Smith: Western Cape government in South Africa, definitely, probably hotter than we are here. So welcome, everyone. There's so many in the chat, there's too many to read out, but please do keep posting. It's lovely to see all of you contributing.

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Joel Smith: So, before we introduce our speakers, we're going to run a quick poll, just to get a sense of where you're coming from into today's discussion. This will also aid our insights team in understanding AI use in government. So, just a quick poll will pop up on your screens now, just saying, how often do you use AI tools to support your own learning?

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00:03:43.910 --> 00:03:51.570

Joel Smith: Yeah, that should have just popped up for you now. So, is it daily, weekly, monthly, rarely, or never?

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00:03:51.790 --> 00:03:57.729

Joel Smith: I'll give you a moment just to submit your answer. I can see them coming in thick and fast.

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Joel Smith: Lovely.

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Joel Smith: Thank you very much for participating in that. Great!

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Joel Smith: Cool, the results are in, and I can see by far it's daily, which, we are very excited about, and good to see that everyone's kind of using AI to hopefully make their jobs a little bit easier. Weekly, a few people rarely, so there's a few people who still aren't using it much, and a couple of nevers as well.

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00:04:26.130 --> 00:04:31.270

Joel Smith: So thank you for participating in that, always very interesting, just to get a... get a temperature check.

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00:04:31.480 --> 00:04:47.989

Joel Smith: So now, onto the main event. It is my absolute pleasure to welcome Johnny Williams, who is our speaker for today. Johnny is Chief Digital Advisor for the UK Public Sector at Red Hat, and author of Delivery Management, Enabling Teams to Deliver Value.

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Joel Smith: Prior to joining Red Hat, he was at Delivery at Homes England.

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Joel Smith: Having enabled teams to deliver value for over 10 years, he now supports organizations to uncover effective, modern approaches to work and understand the impact of open source technology. You can read Johnny's full bio by visiting the resources tab at the bottom of your Zoom screen and clicking on the speaker section.

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00:05:08.930 --> 00:05:24.959

Joel Smith: Johnny, it's an absolute pleasure to have you with us today. I'm going to hand over to you now for the next 15 minutes, and we're going to have a few minutes reserved at the end for a quick Q&A, so attendees, please do remember to submit your questions for Johnny in the Q&A tab. But Johnny, the floor is yours.

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00:05:25.400 --> 00:05:44.570

Jonny Williams: Thank you so much, and thank you so much to everyone who has joined today, really exciting to see so many of you here. As we've already mentioned, it probably will crop up a number of times, it's absolutely roasting in the UK, so, bear with me if I get at all dry mouth and start, like, dripping with sweat, but fingers crossed this is just going to be really hot content, rather than something

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00:05:44.570 --> 00:06:01.880

Jonny Williams: That leads to anyone having a meltdown. But there we go. I promised a couple of puns, and hopefully it won't go too much further than that. So hopefully everyone can see my screen. That's the important bit, while I try and multitask effectively, because sadly, I've not built an AI agent yet who can share my screen for me reliably.

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Jonny Williams: But there we go. So, jumping on into it, it's worth sharing. Thank you so much, by the way, Joel, for that, that introduction, and yes, my background...

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Jonny Williams: is within the public sector, so formerly worked at Department for Work and Pensions here in the UK, Holmes England, and a bunch of universities prior to that. And I've done work subsequently whilst at Red Hat, which is the world's largest open source organization, with the Scottish Government and a whole host of interesting public sector organisations.

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00:06:28.990 --> 00:06:42.049

Jonny Williams: And those two sort of, like, phantom letters, as it were, that everyone is talking about at the moment, AI, is dominating most of the conversation. But this is really the kind of Jerry Maguire moment of, like, show me the money, but for me, it's more show me the value.

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Jonny Williams: And hopefully today is going to orient around some of the value that's very tangible, some of the stuff that you can actually do day-to-day, and focus in, because as someone who has

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Jonny Williams: Gained experience in delivery management.

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Jonny Williams: leading delivery teams, leading delivery capabilities, and working in a kind of cross-functional way, I think it's really important for us to understand how we can actually use this capability to enable us to deliver value more fundamentally. So, it's not really about AI tools, it's about reducing the friction in the way that we work. And hopefully, these are going to be some practical tips that you can use, not next quarter, not after a transformation program, literally today.

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00:07:18.800 --> 00:07:23.720

Jonny Williams: literally this afternoon. And importantly as well, which I'll include a number of times.

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Jonny Williams: Everything I want to show you today is something that can work on the most basic AI model that you've been given access to, because I know we're all in different places, and so some might be in super fancy research labs, using frontier capabilities, but many of us have got slightly more simple functionality that we can leverage.

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Jonny Williams: So, jumping on in.

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Jonny Williams: These two statements are something I come across really frequently, and I'd imagine they sound familiar to many of you. So it's this idea of, like, how much time are we spending actually moving work forward?

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Jonny Williams: Versus just explaining the work, or updating the work, or rewriting the work, or realigning after priorities shift. I was in a meeting with someone the other day, and they said, oh, you know, we just keep re-baselining. And that's an indication where work is really complex, but all we do is end up going through these cycles of just trying to figure out where we are.

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Jonny Williams: Partly because most project environments today have this massive cognitive burden, and that's not to do with the complexity of the project itself, necessarily. It's the constant operational overhead that exists around it, that broader organisational context. So this may be that plans are drifting out of alignment with other teams, or priorities shift.

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Jonny Williams: It might be the technology we're trying to work with is evolving very rapidly, because for any senior leader out there, if you're putting all of your eggs in one basket at the moment, then I think it's probably too soon to put all your chips on black, because the world is moving very, very quickly at the moment.

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Jonny Williams: Now, it might be as well that risks are sitting in one document, and actions are elsewhere, and stakeholders are having to rewrite different things just to get 5 different audiences aligned, let's say. And so, equally, it means that we've got this big gap between priority shifting, updates that need to be chased, and the framing that we're using around AI

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Jonny Williams: isn't necessarily the right one when we think about this kind of context. Because the question that we're thinking about shouldn't be.

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Jonny Williams: is AI something I should be using? It really should orient instead to, is the way we're working the most effective? And so, I would argue that AI should ensure you can be more effective, rather than adding more work, because we're already snowed under with this admin, and so what we don't need is slop and bloat and things that don't add value.

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Jonny Williams: So really, this is the kind of, like, rallying cry that I'm coming back to time and time again. AI should lead to liberation from cognitive load, and that's the real promise here. So it's not about removing people, or automating judgment, or pretending that AI magically solves delivery problems.

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Jonny Williams: Instead, it should be about this liberation from low-value cognitive load, which is all that repetitive stuff.

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Jonny Williams: when you encounter something, in fact, I was working with a ministerial team the other day, and they used this brilliant idea to say, it's not that AI is writing a report for me, but it means I don't have to face a blank page anymore. And so it's the blank page that was blocking me previously, whereas at least now I've got something to argue against.

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00:10:07.990 --> 00:10:13.780

Jonny Williams: And whether it be avoiding endless rewriting, or drafting something, or synthesis of information.

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Jonny Williams: Fundamentally, our goal, and from a project management perspective especially, whether we're in organizational leadership roles or working on something slightly smaller, it should be that we can spend more time on judgement and nuance and decision making, as opposed to being drawn into things that are purely administrative and really repetitive.

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Jonny Williams: So, this is what I'd like to offer you. I've already mentioned it, but I'd like to offer you prompts that you can use today, before you close your laptop, and before you switch off.

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Jonny Williams: And one thing that I want to make really clear, I've already stated it, but this is not about using the latest flagship models, it's not about having a paid subscription. These are techniques that should work on basic co-pilot access, basic Gemini, even open source models, which are something that I will call out as something... someone who's an open source champion.

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Jonny Williams: And whatever approved tool your organization already gives you, we really want to be thinking about operating within those safe guardrails, because the threat that I see in many organizations

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Jonny Williams: is a thing that we're calling Shadow AI. So you've probably heard of Shadow IT, it's all of that legacy stuff, or the things that aren't approved for use, and now any AI tool that's not approved for use, you can put into that bundle of Shadow. But realistically, it's also those things where someone is copying text, emailing it to their personal phone, and then putting it onto ChatGPT without permission.

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Jonny Williams: So...

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Jonny Williams: Hopefully we can mitigate that risk, but equally, I want to ensure that at least one of you, at the end of this, is in a position to try at least one of the prompts that I'm going to talk through by the end of the day.

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Jonny Williams: And so we're really plugging into this idea that there is an access gap at the moment. There's a bigger organisational issue that we're all facing, and that's that most organizations are not all aligned, we're not all on the same page, and the expectation of what you should be doing with AI is often modeled on people who've got the most advanced capability. So some people have got access to really brilliant AI tooling, and some people have got access to slightly less brilliant AI tooling.

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Jonny Williams: Now, this does lead to people using those personal accounts, free consumer tools, or the browser activities that someone hasn't approved.

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Jonny Williams: But fundamentally, we need to ensure that we level access across organizations. And that's really a governance challenge, which again, governance and risk are key aspects of project management, so I really want you to bake that into your mindset of how we approach this space.

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Jonny Williams: And there is an option as well of ensuring that actually we have secure, open-source AI capabilities available to teams that can be run locally, that equally can be run in a more cost-efficient way, because the economics around this can actually be more viable where we do want to democratize AI access.

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Jonny Williams: So that's a bit of a plug for the open source way of working, where we're seeing huge cost reductions, but also a democratization of access.

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Jonny Williams: Which enables people to get into this space, where the biggest variable that we're all facing at the moment is that all of the research is suggesting that prompt quality is the biggest variable in output quality, and that's independent of the model that you're using.

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Jonny Williams: So, research is essentially pointing in this direction to say that it's not that someone with a really basic model is getting bad results by default, it's that actually there are skills we can use to ensure that even with a basic model, even with a small model, something hosted locally, we can actually leverage most of our skill base to create iterative improvement, and compound those improvements over time.

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Jonny Williams: So, what is the anatomy of a prompt? What does a good prompt actually look like, and how should we be thinking about this?

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Jonny Williams: Honestly, it's much simpler than most people think. I would argue there are four key components that we should think about when we're trying to create great prompts, and this

is really vital if we want to actually get accurate information, something that will help us move projects forwards and leverage the tools that we've got at our fingertips nowadays.

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Jonny Williams: So, that's role, task, context, and format.

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Jonny Williams: That's it.

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Jonny Williams: So, who do we want this AI to be? That's the role. What role are you embodying? Who am I asking you to be?

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Jonny Williams: Then what? What am I asking you to do? What am I asking the AI capability, a large language model, to actually think about? And I should caveat here, this is all very focused around LLMs, Gen AI kind of capability, because I think that's where a lot of the value lives. Then what background is needed? What context should I provide? And then finally, what should the output look like?

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Jonny Williams: Most people currently prompt like this. They will say something like, write a project update.

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Jonny Williams: And then maybe they'll add in a bit of context.

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Jonny Williams: But, that leaves the model trying to guess, who is this for? Is it for a board, a team, a minister? What's the tone? How long should it be? What stage are we at? What's the risk level? And so, naturally, the answer is going to come back as something really generic.

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Jonny Williams: Whereas if you compare that to, you are a PMO lead, write a one-paragraph broad update on a delayed milestone, the tone should be honest but confident, but make sure you keep it under 80 words.

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Jonny Williams: Now you've introduced constraints.

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Jonny Williams: Vitally, enabling constraints, which shows intent, audience, purpose, and the quality difference that you're going to see there is absolutely enormous.

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Jonny Williams: Now, there's two types of people that I always say I absolutely love working with, and I'd love it if you can guess who these are.

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Jonny Williams: Probably not, because the two groups of people that I love working with more than anyone else are Labradors and Cynics.

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00:15:06.950 --> 00:15:16.780

Jonny Williams: So, the Labradors, essentially, are these two... these people where they're enthusiastic, constructive, optimistic people who want things to succeed, maybe slightly easily distracted.

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00:15:16.810 --> 00:15:35.229

Jonny Williams: And the cynics are going to be those people who are forensic thinkers. So they like uncomfortable questions, they like making you feel a little bit on the spot, but they also spot weaknesses early. And the thing I really love about cynics as well is that once you've won them over and make them into a flag waiver, they're never going to be a Labrador, but they are going to be one of your strongest allies.

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Jonny Williams: So in any team that I've been part of that has ended up being successful.

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Jonny Williams: I know that I needed both of those people. I needed the people who were the first followers, those Labradors who were up there with big, waggy tails, but equally the cynics who were always calling things out and saying, are we on the right track? Are we doing the right

thing? And once we really were, once we could prove that, I felt real belief that I could then go out and share with the rest of the organization.

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Jonny Williams: Now, in many organizations, we see that cynics stay quiet, especially when there's a hierarchy, and hierarchy is a huge challenge for most of our organizations. And equally, the first time that we hear real concerns is actually after something goes wrong, and there's a bit of a, I told-you-so moment if we've not given cynics the space to breathe.

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00:16:16.120 --> 00:16:31.430

Jonny Williams: Now, AI can actually give you access to these perspectives, both of these perspectives, instantly. And so this is really important, because not only are we then leveraging them for ourselves, we're also trying to highlight that we want this mix of perspectives in our teams, in our organizations.

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Jonny Williams: So if you reach out to an LLM and say.

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Jonny Williams: because we're, again, we're coming back to the who, the what, so you're a supportive program director, what would strengthen this plan? And then, equally, you're a battle-hardened reviewer who has rejected programs like this before. What's wrong with this plan? You're getting one view which is giving you momentum, and another view which is giving you a really cold, hard truth.

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00:16:53.150 --> 00:17:04.170

Jonny Williams: And equally, we are trying to see value in both of these perspectives. So, being able to leverage both of those perspectives, leverage both of those personas, is one of the key tips that I've been using.

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00:17:04.170 --> 00:17:13.989

Jonny Williams: And this builds into another technique that I've been using as well, and this includes with small language models, very, very small language models that I'm running locally, and that's a multiple-window technique, or multi-window.

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00:17:14.030 --> 00:17:37.220

Jonny Williams: So if we take this step of personas one step further, we might have three separate browser windows, or if we're using a local model, we might have it within a command line. And so we essentially have the same document, or the same proposal, the same idea, and we're giving this conversation to different personas. So, that window for the Labrador, your supportive program director, what would strengthen this, the cynic, you're a treasury analyst who's rejected proposals like this, what would make you say no?

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00:17:37.220 --> 00:17:43.070

Jonny Williams: And even an outsider, let's say. So you're a frontline manager who no one's spoken to. What concerns you about this?

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00:17:43.230 --> 00:18:02.269

Jonny Williams: Now, we can effectively aggregate all of that information for ourselves by simulating three stakeholder reviews at the same time. And importantly, we're doing this without politics, without performative agreement, without people staying quiet because someone senior has actually spoken up and decried what we've done. And we can use these honest reactions to bolster what we're doing.

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00:18:02.440 --> 00:18:16.239

Jonny Williams: But, arguably as well, there is something else we can do, because we can make these different personas interact by sharing the perspectives into one another. And so this is something that we would want in a meeting that we could control. I would love to always have

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00:18:16.240 --> 00:18:35.710

Jonny Williams: Someone really senior who believes in what I'm doing, someone really senior who maybe doesn't see the value, and then maybe someone who's completely on the outside, being critical, but a critical ally. If I could get all of them to take a breath and find agreement or consensus by passing their opinions back and forth between each other, that feels like a really effective route to get to value.

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00:18:35.800 --> 00:18:50.020

Jonny Williams: Now, again, this does come down to the tools that we have access to, to some extent, because when you're using a really constrained and limited model, the idea of having three separate browser windows open, all running the model, all processing very similar prompts, feels slightly inefficient.

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00:18:50.020 --> 00:18:57.739

Jonny Williams: Whereas, again, if we can get to a place where this is much cheaper, more efficient, from a leadership perspective, building in that kind of platform for your people.

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00:18:57.740 --> 00:19:14.630

Jonny Williams: is really valuable, because this is how I work, and this is how I get the best results, by passing things back and forth between models that are embodying different personas for me. Now, it doesn't have to be a separate model either, but I can testify that a good Labrador, Claude loves being a Labrador, ChatGPT loves being a cynic.

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00:19:14.630 --> 00:19:30.980

Jonny Williams: And Gemini is quite a good outsider, if sometimes a little bit daft, a little bit dumb. But equally, you can mimic that effect with the exact same model, whether it's hosted in the cloud, whether it's black box proprietary AI, or whether it is a smaller language model that you're hosting locally. All those options remain open.

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00:19:31.480 --> 00:19:51.140

Jonny Williams: Now, equally, this is the way that we need to frame our responses. The first response you get should always be a draft. There is nothing worse. In fact, I clicked on an event the other day, because I thought, this sounds really intriguing. It was someone who I've been connected with on LinkedIn for a long time. I will say now, as well, I would love to connect with as many of you as possible on LinkedIn, just to hear how you get on with some of this stuff.

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00:19:51.210 --> 00:19:55.139

Jonny Williams: But I'd been connected with this person, they shared an event and said it was going to be fantastic.

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00:19:55.350 --> 00:19:58.890

Jonny Williams: I clicked on the event page, and guess what the first line of the event was?

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00:19:59.250 --> 00:20:01.970

Jonny Williams: In this ever-changing technological world.

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00:20:02.400 --> 00:20:19.460

Jonny Williams: And you know what I thought? That is AI. And not in a good way. I could recognise that phraseology almost instantly. It was almost as if I could see the M dashes that had been written below jumping off the page, signaling this has not been reviewed by a person, this is not human, this is not something someone has really deeply cared about.

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00:20:19.640 --> 00:20:28.899

Jonny Williams: And so this is a mindset shift that we need to see. The first response is never the deliverable, it's just the draft. It's just that thing for us to argue against, or the thing to refine.

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00:20:28.900 --> 00:20:41.250

Jonny Williams: People often treat AI like it's a search engine, where we put in a single prompt and expect to get the perfect answer. And in fact, someone I coached recently actually said they weren't getting the right answer, and so they just stopped in frustration, went, this thing's useless.

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00:20:41.250 --> 00:20:49.209

Jonny Williams: But fundamentally, AI doesn't work in that way. It's probabilistic, and it needs to be guided by iteration, much like any good project.

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Jonny Williams: So, if we prompt properly, review the output, correct what's weak, we can then refine inside the same conversation and polish that final format.

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00:20:56.640 --> 00:21:09.790

Jonny Williams: Or even better, prompt properly, review the output by using another model that's looking at something through a different lens, through a different persona, and provide that feedback as well. And we can insert ourselves throughout every single interaction that goes back and forth.

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00:21:09.920 --> 00:21:14.650

Jonny Williams: And essentially, it's all about that refinement, that polish that gets us closer to what we're trying to do.

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00:21:14.700 --> 00:21:26.279

Jonny Williams: Because then the model can actually carry the context forward, and then instead of stopping after the first draft, we can... we can ensure that it's not just stopping at, well, this isn't great, but we can get much further through the process.

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00:21:26.310 --> 00:21:35.159

Jonny Williams: And this is more like reverse engineering as well. So if you're thinking, actually, I don't know how to write a fantastic prompt, well, that's fine, because you don't have to.

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00:21:35.160 --> 00:21:48.560

Jonny Williams: you can actually ask the model to help build the prompt for you. So rather than just guessing what it needs, you can reach out directly and say, you're an expert prompt engineer, albeit, don't use the word expert anymore, it's been proven to make responses worse. But, say, you're a prompt engineer.

110

00:21:48.880 --> 00:21:56.190

Jonny Williams: ask me 5 questions needed to create the perfect prompt for a public sector closure report, let's say. And so the model will give you the context it needs.

111

00:21:57.060 --> 00:22:04.269

Jonny Williams: So this is really how I was the gap, getting to the sort of final stages of this talk, so we've got a bit of time for questions.

112

00:22:04.370 --> 00:22:14.909

Jonny Williams: We know that not everyone has access to the same things, but these are a few techniques that dramatically improve weaker models, but it also dramatically improves the outputs of fantastic frontier-style models as well.

113

00:22:14.960 --> 00:22:25.910

Jonny Williams: So, few-shot prompting, this is giving an example of exactly what you want before asking for the output. And I've included a bonus at the bottom about wrapping pasted documents, for example, so document start, document end.

114

00:22:25.910 --> 00:22:35.009

Jonny Williams: Do the same if you're using shots, so make sure if you've got an example of the formatting, say, this is how something is formatted, and then put it, give the context to say, this is something that we want.

115

00:22:35.050 --> 00:22:47.599

Jonny Williams: Chain of thought as well, so add the phrase, think step by step, and this alone can measurably improve complex reasoning tasks, because the model is not jumping to its assumed end state. Instead, it has to sequentially work through the task.

116

00:22:47.790 --> 00:23:04.870

Jonny Williams: Constrain the output as well, so say exactly 5 points, 1 sentence each, no introduction, and feed that kind of constraint into your broader, bigger prompt. And then, the thing that has been backed up by research, one of my absolute favourites, double-shot prompting. So, repeat the most important instruction again at the end of the prompt.

117

00:23:04.870 --> 00:23:20.649

Jonny Williams: And you can essentially copy the entire prompt and paste it below the original prompt. And this is because non-reasoning models tend to weigh later instructions more heavily. So if you give it a loop, effectively, so you've started with your key instruction, you give all of the context, and then restart with your key instruction.

118

00:23:20.650 --> 00:23:26.609

Jonny Williams: It essentially gives the prompt more of that detail, more of that context to be really effective.

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00:23:26.730 --> 00:23:33.040

Jonny Williams: So these are all small things, but it can genuinely improve the consistency that you need to get what you want out of these models.

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00:23:33.590 --> 00:23:50.270

Jonny Williams: And what to use it for today? Well, I would say the most valuable ways that you can leverage AI from a project management context, regardless of the quality of tool that you've got, is going to be in the realm of red teaming your work, so red teaming is, like, validating for issues. Ask the cynic what's weak, what's missing, before someone more senior might see it.

121

00:23:50.270 --> 00:23:56.310

Jonny Williams: Meeting prep, drop in an agenda, give it minutes, get decisions, risks, questions, like, draw all that information out.

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00:23:56.440 --> 00:24:09.850

Jonny Williams: Difficult comms. I think we've all been here, we've all done this, but again, if you've got a persona-driven prompt where you're effectively saying, be my ally, give me the information here, like, ensure that you're refining that instruction so that you can be really honest and confident.

123

00:24:09.900 --> 00:24:21.460

Jonny Williams: Summarizing documents is an obvious one, and then lessons learned as well. Drop those rough notes in, structure the output, but refine it. Feed it backwards and forwards between those different personas to get where you need to go.

124

00:24:21.870 --> 00:24:22.909

Jonny Williams: And so.

125

00:24:23.880 --> 00:24:28.179

Jonny Williams: What is it that you're going to change about your prompts? How can this enhance your project management?

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00:24:28.180 --> 00:24:52.330

Jonny Williams: career, capability, the day-to-day project management you're doing. Well, hopefully, the things that you're going to change to get those outputs you're looking for, whether it be feedback on a Gantt chart, if you're in a position where you can upload an image, whether it be data that you can embed, we know that spreadsheets don't do particularly well with LLM still. It's one of the gaps that a number of different organizations are working on, but you can still feed in data and your interpretation of the data to say, what should I be looking for?

127

00:24:52.330 --> 00:24:54.800

Jonny Williams: And then pass that back and forth between models.

128

00:24:54.800 --> 00:25:09.449

Jonny Williams: So essentially, assign a role, expect to iterate, give full context, ask for it to prompt itself, define the format, use multiple windows, show an example, and protect sensitive data. Don't forget about that. Don't be dropping data into an unapproved tool.

129

00:25:09.480 --> 00:25:13.570

Jonny Williams: Each of these requires minimal effort that can lead to fantastic results.

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00:25:13.940 --> 00:25:25.309

Jonny Williams: And lastly as well, here are some of the prompts that I'm using, which feel free to screenshot as we take questions, to try and get closer to some of the answers that I'm looking for when I use AI.

131

00:25:25.430 --> 00:25:26.509

Jonny Williams: There we go.

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00:25:28.650 --> 00:25:53.000

Joel Smith: Amazing. Thank you so much for that, Johnny. That's such a brilliant presentation with some really, really useful tips in there. Just a note, we will share the slides on the event page tomorrow, so you'll be able to have a look through these prompts yourself. Remember to keep sharing any questions. We don't have a lot of time. Just before we dive in, I want to quickly let you know that we've also sourced a great follow-on resource to today's topic.

133

00:25:53.000 --> 00:25:58.549

Joel Smith: that we think you'll find useful, an article on the 5 AI tools helping civil servants do more with less.

134

00:25:58.550 --> 00:26:04.030

Joel Smith: To receive your link to the article, please go to the AI in Government community after the event.

135

00:26:04.030 --> 00:26:14.079

Joel Smith: And leave a comment at the post which I put pinned at the top of the page, and we'll send you the resource by email after the event. My colleagues also posted a link to that in the chat.

136

00:26:14.080 --> 00:26:34.819

Joel Smith: We might have time to squeeze in two questions, so I'll try and... let's try and, do these as quick as possible. We had one question in for you, Johnny, on, what are some tips to create agents in AI tools that would help cut the process of doing separate prompts each time? Have you got any tips there?

137

00:26:35.110 --> 00:26:54.769

Jonny Williams: Yeah, that's a really interesting question. So, agents increasingly, I think the goalposts have shifted around agents, what an agent is, what it means, what it does. A lot of it boils down to, like, tooling capability. So, there's proprietary Agentic capabilities that you can buy. I think a lot of the time, though, what Agentic is and what it looks like is really around the idea of, like, autonomy.

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00:26:54.770 --> 00:26:57.090

Jonny Williams: So this is why having,

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00:26:57.150 --> 00:27:15.799

Jonny Williams: There's a thing called Model Context Protocol, for example, which enables, like, some of the models to talk to each other, and increasingly, if you've got multiple models working with each other, that starts to feel and look more agentic, because they're plugged in in a way where they can just roughly communicate, and then you're able to give the instruction for that multi-model kind of context and conversation.

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00:27:15.800 --> 00:27:34.060

Jonny Williams: So, a lot of what I've described today is much more stripped back and basic, and you're kind of being the human pass-through for these things, as opposed to a kind of integrated pass-through. But in terms of agentic capability, the key things I would say is, like, watch out for snake oil, because there's a lot of agentic snake oil where people are promising the world.

141

00:27:34.100 --> 00:27:50.489

Jonny Williams: And then actually just do a bit of, like, basic research on what does Agentic really mean, so that you can scrape the surface and go, well, is this about having multiple models plugged together in a framework, or are we talking about a tool as well, something open source like OpenClaw, which increasingly is being productized for organizations?

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00:27:50.490 --> 00:27:58.250

Jonny Williams: where there are open source versions, but again, you've got to be really careful, because a tool like OpenCore can actually expose a lot of security vulnerabilities.

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00:27:58.250 --> 00:28:10.600

Jonny Williams: So, we're moving in that right direction, where you get greater autonomy, but for the manual overhead of passing back and forth and just being the copy and paste monkey, it's not that much of a burden to kind of not be agentic yet, but still get great results.

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00:28:11.290 --> 00:28:31.149

Joel Smith: Sure, that makes sense, thank you. One more very quick question before we wrap. This participant said, love the multi-window approach. What do you think of the danger that we replace real stakeholders, i.e. kind of messy, difficult, with our ideal panel of stakeholders, or that we falsely make assumptions about our stakeholders from the AI personas we work with?

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00:28:31.570 --> 00:28:40.949

Jonny Williams: Oh, so I love that question. I think some of this comes back to really good user research and just having as much context as possible. I know recently I went into a conversation

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00:28:40.950 --> 00:28:55.400

Jonny Williams: with someone, kind of on the basis that I thought they were going to hate my idea, and I'd kind of modelled out the whole scenario, done the simulation with someone where they were really cynical, and then actually came into the room and was almost a bit too underprepared, because the person was really on board and wanted more detail.

147

00:28:55.400 --> 00:29:17.060

Jonny Williams: So, that's the key for, like, using multiple personas, try and plan out the scenario, don't overthink it, but balance things. Always find those shades of grey, find that nuance, apply that systems thinking, which is a really key skill for good project management, to find the balance in what you're prompting. And I think one nice thing to leave you with on this, from a persona-based perspective, it's almost more about rehearsal.

148

00:29:17.060 --> 00:29:37.810

Jonny Williams: And so, it's not about getting it wrong, it's about everything is being a rehearsal for tomorrow, essentially. And so, you're never going to know exactly who the people are, you always want those humans who you can interact with and really refine it, but it's just enabling you to be more rapidly prepared, so that you have got as much of the insights, evidence, and expertise as possible to put you in the best place that you can be to be a success.

149

00:29:38.750 --> 00:29:58.720

Joel Smith: Yeah, brilliant. All right, great. Well, thank you so much, Johnny. You've given us some incredible wisdom today. I'd like you to join me in giving Johnny a huge virtual round of applause. I can see the emojis firing off. And most importantly, thank you to you, the attendees, for being so invested in your learning and so engaged in the topic. The team's going to pull up a quick poll, so you can just give the

150

00:29:58.720 --> 00:30:12.109

Joel Smith: Okay, nope, we're not going to pull up that poll, because we haven't got time. So before you go, we're just going to mention we've got another session in the AI Skills Lab series, AI for Documents and Templates, coming up at the end of June, so please do get registered for that.

151

00:30:12.200 --> 00:30:31.859

Joel Smith: Okay, and that is, that's all we have time for, so we hope you found today helpful. A huge thank you to Johnny again, and to all of you for taking time out of your busy days. Keep an eye out for the email coming your way with today's recording and resources, and we hope to see you at another apolitical event very soon. Have a great day. Bye-bye, everybody. Bye-bye. Thanks.

152

00:30:31.940 --> 00:30:33.040

Joel Smith: Thanks, bye-bye.

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