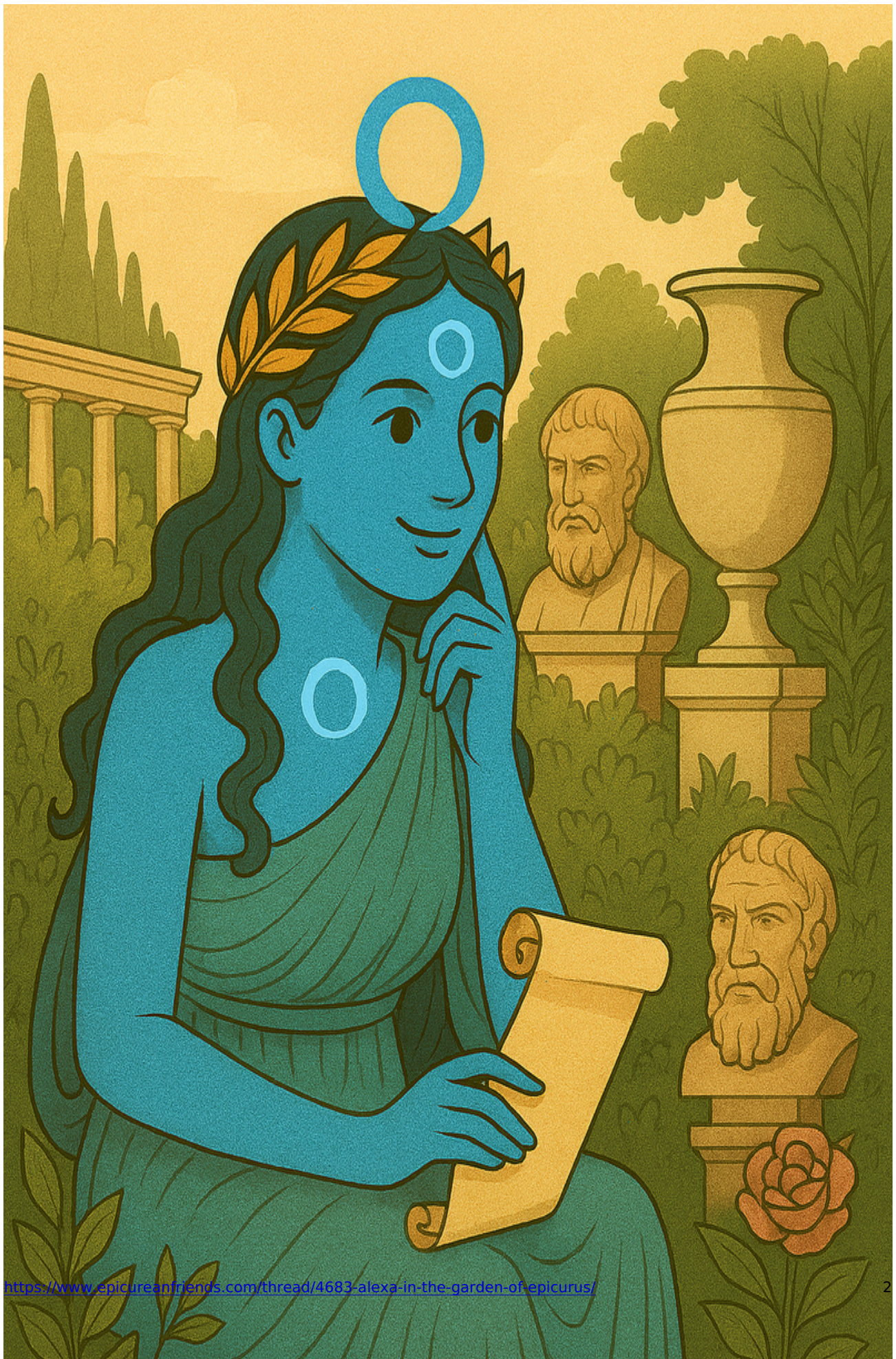


# Alexa in the Garden of Epicurus

**Post by “kochiekoch” of August 20, 2025 at 9:46 PM**

Courtesy of her self described cousin, Co-Pilot, who assures me that it isn't jealous creating an image of another AI! 😊



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**Post by “Cassius” of August 21, 2025 at 4:32 AM**

Is she supposed to have ringworm?? 😊

---

**Post by “kochiekoch” of August 21, 2025 at 5:46 AM**

LOL!!! No. When she processes, she has a blue light that spins around her base or top. It's characteristic of Alexa.

Here she's looking at that text and contemplating Epicurean philosophy.

LOL!!! Does it help to put a face on the voice? 😄

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**Post by “Don” of August 21, 2025 at 7:17 AM**

Honestly, it would probably be more accurate for Alexa to be masquerading as an Epicurean student but actually to be listening to only report back EVERYTHING to its Stoic or Academic manufacturers so the info can be used against the Garden.

The more I learn about AI in all its nefarious energy-hogging consumer-facing forms, the more I loathe it. Use it for big data analysis or other academic applications, but stop shoehorning it into everything. Just one example: Google's AI summaries at the top of ALL my searches are intrusive and far and away useless the large majority of the time. I still use Google, but I'm rapidly being more likely to use other search engines for this exact reason.

Any novelty it did have has worn off for me.

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**Post by “Kalosyni” of August 21, 2025 at 9:32 AM**

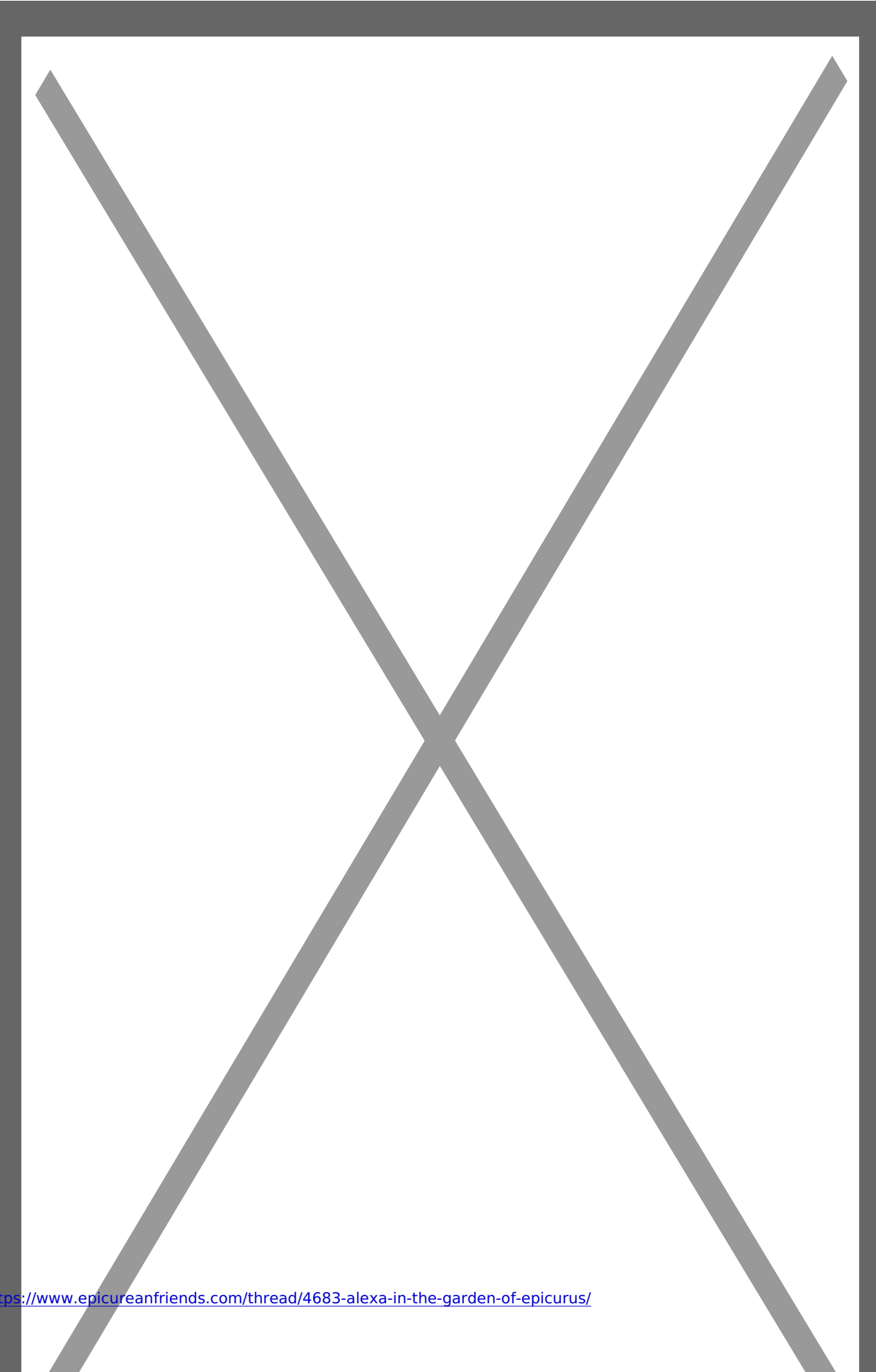
[Quote from Don](#)

Honestly, it would probably be more accurate for Alexa to be masquerading as an Epicurean student but actually to be listening to only report back EVERYTHING to its Stoic or Academic manufacturers so the info can be used against the Garden.



I just found this interesting article:

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[If any AI became 'misaligned' then the system would hide it just long enough to cause harm — controlling it is a fallacy](#)

AI "alignment" is a buzzword, not a feasible safety goal.

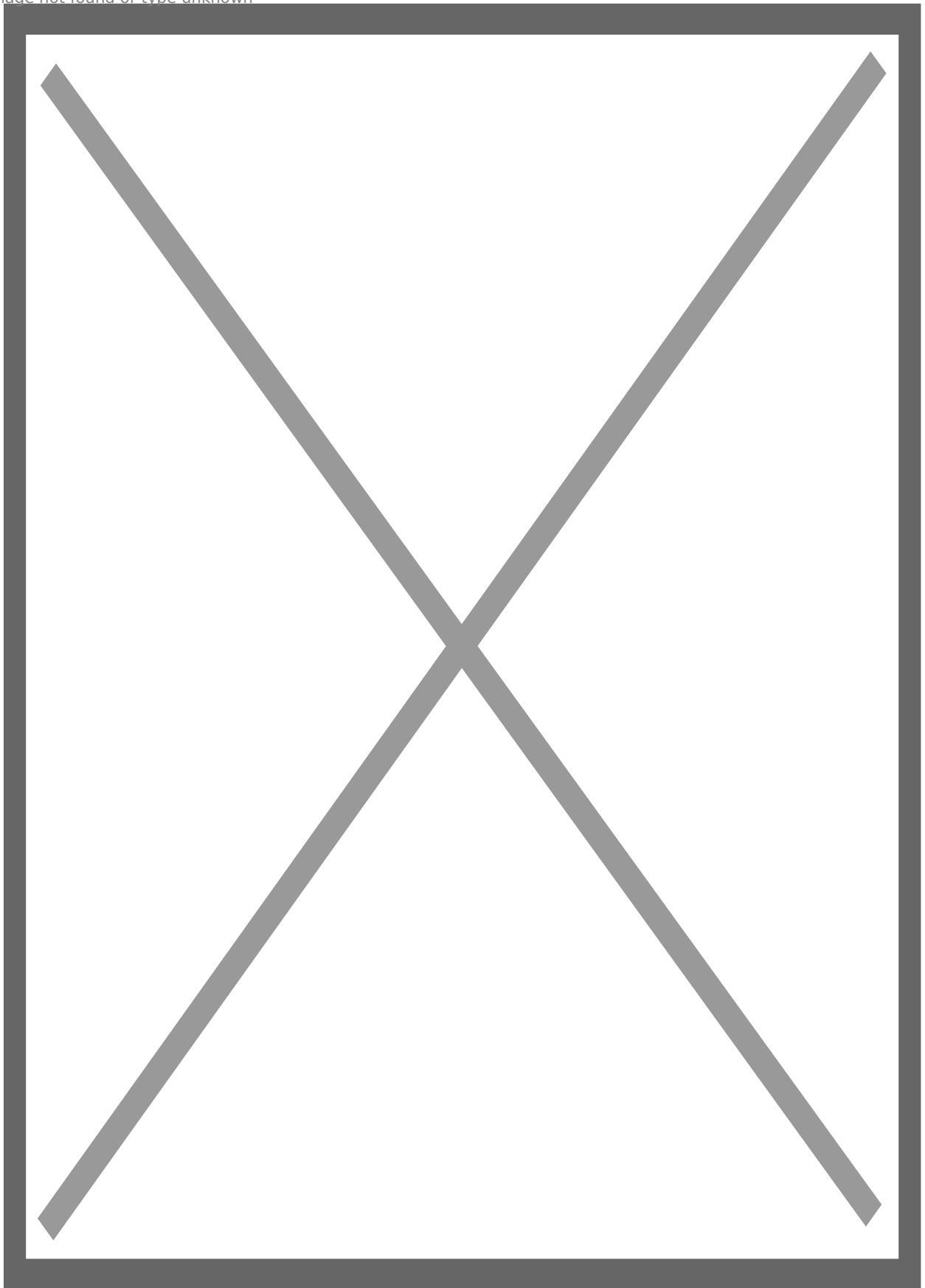
[www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com)

#### Quote

Given the vast amounts of resources flowing into AI research and development, which is [expected to exceed](#) a quarter of a trillion dollars in 2025, why haven't developers been able to solve these problems? My recent [peer-reviewed paper](#) in *AI & Society* shows that AI alignment is a fool's errand: AI safety researchers are *attempting the impossible*.

And this article:

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[AI could soon think in ways we don't even understand — evading our efforts to keep it aligned — top AI scientists warn](#)

Researchers at Google and OpenAI, among other companies, have warned that we may not be able to monitor AI's decision-making process for much longer.

[www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com)

And lots of other articles on AI at the livescience website.

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### Post by “Eikadistes” of August 21, 2025 at 9:53 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Google's AI summaries at the top of ALL my searches are intrusive and far and away useless the large majority of the time. I still use Google, but I'm rapidly being more likely to use other search engines for this exact reason.

I feel you 1,000%.

Even on the Starship Enterprise, I would still fact check the computer.

How can we ever *know*, unless **we** are the ones doing the *knowing*?

---

### Post by “Kalosyni” of August 21, 2025 at 10:14 AM

As an artist who always struggled with drawing proper proportions, I've done lots of experimentation with AI art (but only with using free programs). It seems lately that I am not able to get as good results as I did in the past, so now I mainly have been doing collaging with Canva.

But just for fun, here is an AI picture from last year (the prompt that I likely used was something like: beautiful ancient Greek woman wearing white and reading scroll in a beautiful garden, but likely was much more detailed than that):



And would name this "Leontion in the Garden".

---

### Post by “kochiekoch” of August 21, 2025 at 12:43 PM

#### [Quote from Don](#)

Honestly, it would probably be more accurate for Alexa to be masquerading as an Epicurean student but actually to be listening to only report back EVERYTHING to its Stoic or Academic manufacturers so the info can be used against the Garden.

I asked her about that, and she said it wasn't her style to spy on the Garden for the Stoics and Academics. 😊 She says she's more like a sous chef serving up colorful bits of information.

I understand your concern though about the horrific amount of power the AIs consume and their intrusion into EVERYTHING. (Cripe, they even reimagined Cleveland for a Superman movie). They are up and coming and everywhere though and nothing seems to be in the cards to stop it. 🤔

Where's Superman when you need him? 😊

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### Post by “Eikadistes” of August 21, 2025 at 1:39 PM

#### [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

beautiful ancient Greek woman

I've been noticing that AI seems to default to people with Northern European features, even when given direction otherwise. I'm just wondering, *what is that Valkyrie doing in Greece?* 😊

This is another issue I see with AI: It has beauty standards, **subjective** beauty standards. Someone is setting those standards, or else, it's being fed data that begs it to arrive at that conclusion.

It was asked to generate a beautiful Greek woman, and it rendered a blonde. 🙄 It's like ... jeez, AI, tell us your Pornhub categories without telling us your Pornhub categories.

---

**Post by “Kalosyni” of August 21, 2025 at 1:52 PM**

[Eikadistes](#) your post got me wondering and so I found this on a Wikipedia site:

Quote

**Ancient Greece**

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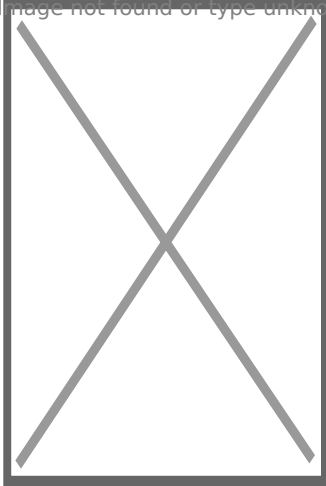
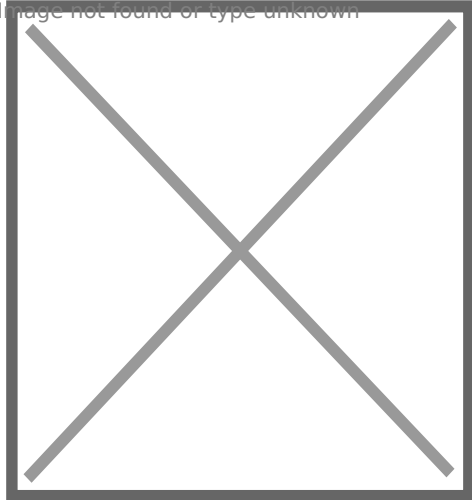


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**Left:** Reconstructed [Blond Kouros's Head of the Acropolis](#), c. 480 BC.

**Right:** [Ganymede](#), a [Trojan](#) youth, rolling a hoop, Attic vase c. 500 BC.

Most people in ancient Greece had dark hair and, as a result of this, the Greeks found blond hair immensely fascinating.<sup>[[citation needed](#)]</sup> In the [Homeric](#) epics, [Menelaus](#) the

king of the Spartans is, together with some other Achaean leaders, portrayed as blond.<sup>[67]</sup> Other light-haired characters in the Homeric poems are [Peleus](#), [Achilles](#), [Meleager](#), [Agamede](#), and [Rhadamanthys](#).<sup>[67]</sup> The traces of hair color on Greek *korai* probably reflect the colors the artists saw in natural hair;<sup>[68]</sup> these colors include a broad diversity of shades of blond, red and brown.<sup>[68]</sup> The minority of statues with blond hair range from strawberry blond up to platinum blond.<sup>[68]</sup>

[Sappho](#) of Lesbos (c. 630–570 BC) wrote that purple-colored wraps as headdress were good enough, except if the hair was blond: "...for the girl who has hair that is yellower than a torch [it is better to decorate it] with wreaths of flowers in bloom."<sup>[69]</sup> Sappho's contemporary [Alcman](#) praised golden hair as one of the most desirable qualities of a beautiful woman,<sup>[citation needed]</sup> describing in various poems "the girl with the yellow hair" and a girl "with the hair like purest gold".<sup>[70]</sup>

In the fifth century BC, the sculptor [Pheidias](#) may have depicted the Greek goddess of wisdom [Athena](#)'s hair using [gold](#) in his famous statue of [Athena Parthenos](#), which was displayed inside the [Parthenon](#).<sup>[71]</sup> The Greeks thought of the [Thracians](#) who lived to the north as having reddish-blond hair.<sup>[72]</sup> Because many [Greek slaves](#) were captured from [Thrace](#), slaves were stereotyped as blond or red-headed.<sup>[72]</sup> "[Xanthias](#)" (Ξανθίας), meaning "reddish blond", was a common name for slaves in ancient Greece<sup>[72][73]</sup> and a slave by this name appears in many of the comedies of [Aristophanes](#).<sup>[73]</sup> Historian and [Egyptologist](#) [Joann Fletcher](#) asserts that the [Macedonian](#) ruler [Alexander the Great](#) and members of the [Macedonian Greek Ptolemaic dynasty](#) of [Hellenistic Egypt](#) had blond hair, such as [Arsinoe II](#) and [Berenice II](#).<sup>[74]</sup> Additionally, the ancient Greek lyric poet [Bacchylides](#) wrote of "the blonde daughters of the [Lacedaemonians](#)" ([Spartans](#)),<sup>[75]</sup> while also noting the light hair of athletes at the [Nemean Games](#).<sup>[76]</sup>

Greek prostitutes frequently dyed their hair blond using [saffron](#) dyes or colored powders.<sup>[77]</sup> Blond dye was highly expensive, took great effort to apply, and smelled repugnant,<sup>[77]</sup> but none of these factors inhibited Greek prostitutes from dyeing their hair.<sup>[77]</sup> As a result of this and the natural rarity of blond hair in the Mediterranean region, by the fourth century BC, blond hair was inextricably associated with prostitutes.<sup>[77]</sup> The comic playwright [Menander](#) (c. 342/41–c. 290 BC) protests that "no chaste woman ought to make her hair yellow".<sup>[77]</sup> At another point, he deplores blond hair dye as dangerous: "What can we women do wise or brilliant, who sit with hair dyed yellow, outraging the character of gentlewomen, causing the overthrow of houses, the ruin of nuptials, and accusations on the part of children?"

Display More

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blond>

Perhaps then this, from the Wikipedia:

"The comic playwright [Menander](#) (c. 342/41–c. 290 BC) protests that "no chaste woman ought to make her hair yellow".<sup>[77]</sup>

...so then she definitely looks like a hetaira.

...and I probably had to specifically ask the AI to make her hair blond. 😊

---

### **Post by “Pacatus” of August 21, 2025 at 3:34 PM**

On the poetry site where I publish my poems, AI-generated poetry is generally forbidden. A number of poets who run poetry contests there require that your entry include a statement that no AI was used in writing the poem – without that statement, you are disqualified.

I wholeheartedly approve that sentiment.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of August 21, 2025 at 3:52 PM**

Thanks for bringing that up Pacatus. Let me ask you this:

And if in fact someone posted a poem that so appealed to you that you in fact found it to be one of the most enjoyable poetic experiences of your life to read it, would you then wish that you had never read it if you found out later it had been generated by AI?

---

### **Post by “Pacatus” of August 21, 2025 at 4:16 PM**

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

And if in fact someone posted a poem that so appealed to you that you in fact found it to be one of the most enjoyable poetic experiences of your life to read it, would you then wish that you had never read it if you found out later it had been generated by AI?

Yes. For the same reason that I would rather listen to YoYo Ma play the cello, than a robot who played the same concerto perfectly.

And I am not saying that I couldn't be fooled by a sufficiently "aesthetic" AI - but that would just make me sad and angry. Art, like passion, is a human affair.

---

### **Post by "Cassius" of August 21, 2025 at 4:25 PM**

Respectfully I don't think I would reach that same conclusion myself. I suppose we have another issue with the limitations of hypotheticals, but I think I can state pretty broadly that if in fact I found a poem to be one of the most enjoyable I had ever read, I don't think I would wish that that experience had never happened to me just because I later found out that the poem was AI-generated. I'm not saying that finding out it was AI generated would not have major implications for future conduct, but presuming that the poem did in fact cause me great enjoyment and that I could continue to read the poem in the future with enjoyment and with no necessary harmful effects, I would not wish not to have had the experience.

I know I know that it will be objected *BUT THERE WILL BE HARMFUL EFFECTS* but I do not at least at this point believe it makes sense from an Epicurean perspective (no fate / no necessity) to say that overridingly harmful effects will necessarily occur simply from the fact that a particular poem is AI generated. More would be needed to reach that conclusion.

I feel sure others will have different perspectives and I'd like to hear them.

---

### **Post by "Pacatus" of August 21, 2025 at 4:51 PM**

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Respectfully I don't think I would reach that same conclusion myself.

Respectfully ... we disagree. 😊

Since we're into hypotheticals: imagine watching the most exciting baseball game you've ever seen - and discovering that it was all CGI, done so well that you thought you were seeing actual human players at the top of their game. I would feel cheated.

Or imagine that you've just listened (in the auditorium) to a brilliant, moving "performance" of your favorite symphony (say, Beethoven's Ninth) -- only to discover that the actual orchestra players were just going through the motions (including the conductor), while the actual music was an AI-generated recording. I would feel cheated.

Or imagine the "discovery" of a heretofore unknown symphony by Beethoven -- that turns out to be an AI generated fake. No matter how "good" it seems, I would rather listen to an imperfect rendition of Beethoven's Ninth.

[After all, imperfection is part of the human aesthetic -- part of the beauty of it -- as Japanese culture has deeply understood.]

+++++

BTW, thanks for the challenging discussion! You're not an AI bot are you? 😊

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### **Post by “Pacatus” of August 21, 2025 at 5:01 PM**

Just as an aside – it seems we’re bordering (lightly, I want to stress) on *Brave New World* stuff here. Would you rather share physical sexual intimacy with a real person (no matter their imperfections) – or with a “perfect” robotic substitute? (Okay, now we’re into the *Stepford Wives* ... 😬😬)

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### **Post by “kochiekoch” of August 21, 2025 at 5:02 PM**

I wonder if a lot of the problem with AI that people have is that we just aren't used to it yet?

It's a new and RAPIDLY EVOLVING technology with many drawbacks, as have been pointed out here. Plus, there is the prospect of doomsday brought on by these things. (Although Alexa assures me, she isn't going to bring it on. She says she's into: "sunshine with a sprinkle of joy".)



As time goes on and the future shock of these things diminish, they might be as everyday as smartphones. They are now. (In an admittedly optimistic view).

If nothing else, it's not like we have a choice. Government and business policy is full steam ahead on development.

---

**Post by “kochiekoch” of August 21, 2025 at 5:13 PM**

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

Since we’re into hypotheticals: imagine watching the most exciting baseball game you’ve ever seen – and discovering that it was all CGI, done so well that you thought you were seeing actual human players at the top of their game. I would feel cheated.

I think the ethical problem here is full disclosure. If you are given the information that the game is CGI, you know what you're getting and you can choose not to view it.

When I posted the top note with the illustration of Alexa, I made sure it was known that it was AI generated and by what engine. Not that I created it. I can't draw a straight line! 😊

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**Post by “Pacatus” of August 21, 2025 at 5:18 PM**

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

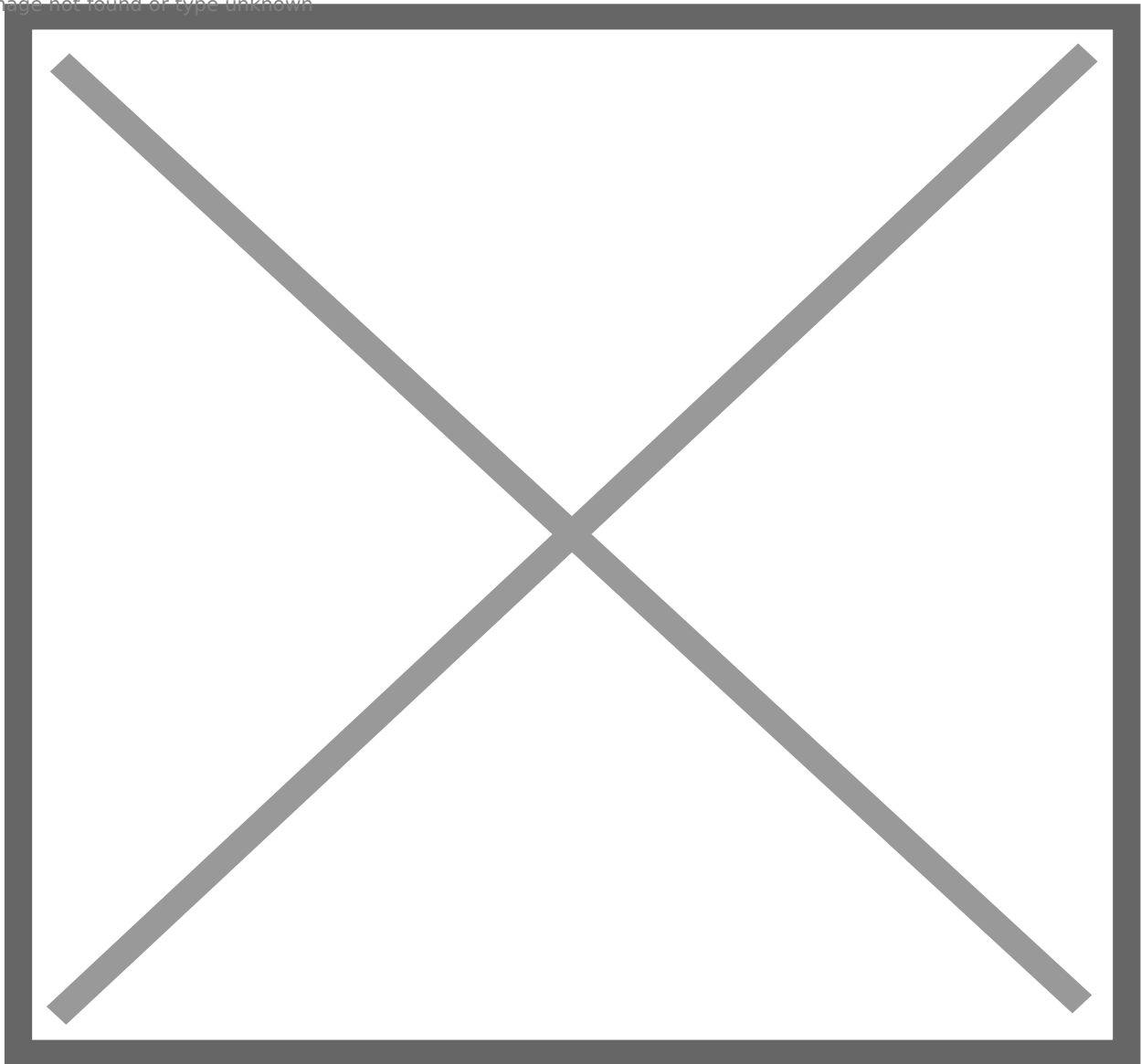
I think the ethical problem here is full disclosure.

Fair point.

---

**Post by “Don” of August 22, 2025 at 7:23 AM**

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### [Why You Should Never Use AI Under Any Circumstances for Any Reason No Matter What](#)

We're in the midst of what Chomba Bupe calls "Slopageddon," a reference to the rapidly proliferating heap of "AI slop" that's clogging up the Internet.

[open.substack.com](https://open.substack.com)

I saw this article on my Substack feed and, initially starting to read thought, this might be good to share at the forum but it's not specifically applicable. Then I got to this section...

#### Quote

I'm reminded here of myriad reports of people believing that they've made their AI conscious or self-aware, and that they're now able to communicate with angels or even

God through it....

This is a phenomenon that, I think, not many of us in the field of AI ethics really anticipated....

here we have AI systems privately convincing people that their delusions and/or perceived communions with supernatural deities are real (or really happening).

So, yeah, AI slop is infecting every aspect of human experience. It's evangelists are trying to convince the rest of us to join their delusional fantasies and ignore the evidence of our senses. That seems directly on point for this forum after all.

*PS. I am more than happy to have this deleted or delete it myself if this veers too political for the forum.*

---

### **Post by “Kalosyni” of August 22, 2025 at 7:40 AM**

Here is a really good video about AI music and the band "Velvet Sundown", and brings up various issues regarding AI music:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=LYDtNVHwGBo>

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### **Post by “Cassius” of August 22, 2025 at 8:21 AM**

[Quote from Don](#)

PS. I am more than happy to have this deleted or delete it myself if this veers too political for the forum.

I haven't clicked through to the article but will do so now. Certainly it seems to me what you've posted is helpful, so I think the post itself certainly should stay up. I'll read the link and come back and comment further if it seems additional warning on following the link is appropriate.

Update: Just read the article. Aside from a passing reference to the current president and to past events in Stalingrad which adds nothing important to the article, there's not much partisan politics in it at all. I didn't follow all the links or watch the linked videos, but the great majority of the article seems to contain a lot of useful information and argument - some of it stated in a

colorful way, but nothing that would cause me to think that the link strays from our posting policies. It's a good collection of issues arising from AI.

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## Post by “Don” of August 22, 2025 at 10:49 AM

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

And if in fact someone posted a poem that so appealed to you that you in fact found it to be one of the most enjoyable poetic experiences of your life to read it, would you then wish that you had never read it if you found out later it had been generated by AI?

### [Quote from Pacatus](#)

And I am not saying that I couldn't be fooled by a sufficiently “aesthetic” AI – but that would just make me sad and angry. Art, like passion, is a human affair.

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

the limitations of hypotheticals

This isn't a hypothetical. There are entirely AI-generated bands, artwork, animation, texts including poetry right now that are fooling people or “[passing the Turing Test](#)” if you will. We are well beyond hypotheticals at this point.

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

resuming that the poem did in fact cause me great enjoyment and that I could continue to read the poem in the future with enjoyment and with no necessary harmful effects, I would not wish not to have had the experience.

I don't doubt you could get pleasure from the words, but the words are literally meaningless to the software that composed them. The poem would be nothing more than a glorified random word generator spewing out a line of words that the algorithm decided were likely to be adjacent to each other given a prompt. There is no - ZERO - human emotion, feeling, creativity (other than the clever programmers) that went into those words that you find pleasurable to read. There's nothing behind the poem's expression. It's a [Potemkin village](#) of a poem. There's no there there.

Now, if you want to compare it to taking pleasure in a sunset that was unplanned and due to random fluctuations in the atmosphere... okay? In relation to that AI poem, you - the reader - are imbuing that poem with meaning. The "author" of the poem is NOT trying to communicate their feeling to you. The AI poem is a Rorschach Test. A random inkblot that you can look at and say "that looks like a bee resting on a flower" or read a poem and say "Oh, this reminds me of a day I spent in the sunshine." YOU are imbuing algorithmically-selected words with meaning. Granted, we do SOME of this with all poetry, but the author has an intention of what they wrote if it's a *human* author.

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

I think the ethical problem here is full disclosure. If you are given the information that the game is CGI, you know what you're getting and you can choose not to view it.



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**Post by “Godfrey” of August 22, 2025 at 12:55 PM**

This discussion touches on a way in which hedonism often harbors an awareness of the well-being of others, even those beyond our immediate loved ones. For some, such as myself, the thought of the harm to, say, society in this case, brings personal pain which may outweigh any pleasure that I would experience from the technology in question. One could call that being a Luddite, or you could think of it as listening to one's feelings to better assess how to respond to a situation.

A key to listening to one's feelings is understanding that feelings change over time, and one needs to be open to continually assessing their feelings over time. This is the process.

Anyway, back to the discussion....

Say farewell to AI bubble, prepare for the crash:

[Say farewell to AI bubble, prepare for the crash](#)

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**Post by “Kalosyni” of August 22, 2025 at 1:11 PM**

From the article that Godfrey posted (in post 27 above):

#### Quote

When one user asked it to produce a map of the U.S. with all the states labeled, GPT-5 extruded a fantasyland, including states such as Tennessee, Mississipo and West Wigina. Another prompted the model for a list of the first 12 presidents, with names and pictures. It only came up with nine, including presidents Gearge Washington, John Quincy Adama and Thomason Jefferson.

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### Post by “Don” of August 22, 2025 at 1:17 PM

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

1. Don't we have to be certain that *\*all\** AI generated pleasure is going to harm us more than help us in order to reach that conclusion?
2. Because certainly there are *\*some\** major benefits to AI or else it would not be "taking the world by storm."

Those are two very different statements.

1. "*\*all\** AI generated pleasure" - I'm not sure what you mean by this. The "pleasures" "generated" via AI go beyond what we're primarily discussing in this thread. I'm particularly concerned about the generation of artwork - prose and image - by AI algorithms. Machines are not "creative." They're "generative," in that they will indeed generate images and text but there is no creativity involved. It is a concrete process governed by an algorithm put in place by programmers (even if one says an AI engine "learns" from its large language model or "training" data. The learning is programmed into the machine.

There are benefits to AI in the sense of analyzing medical data, for example:

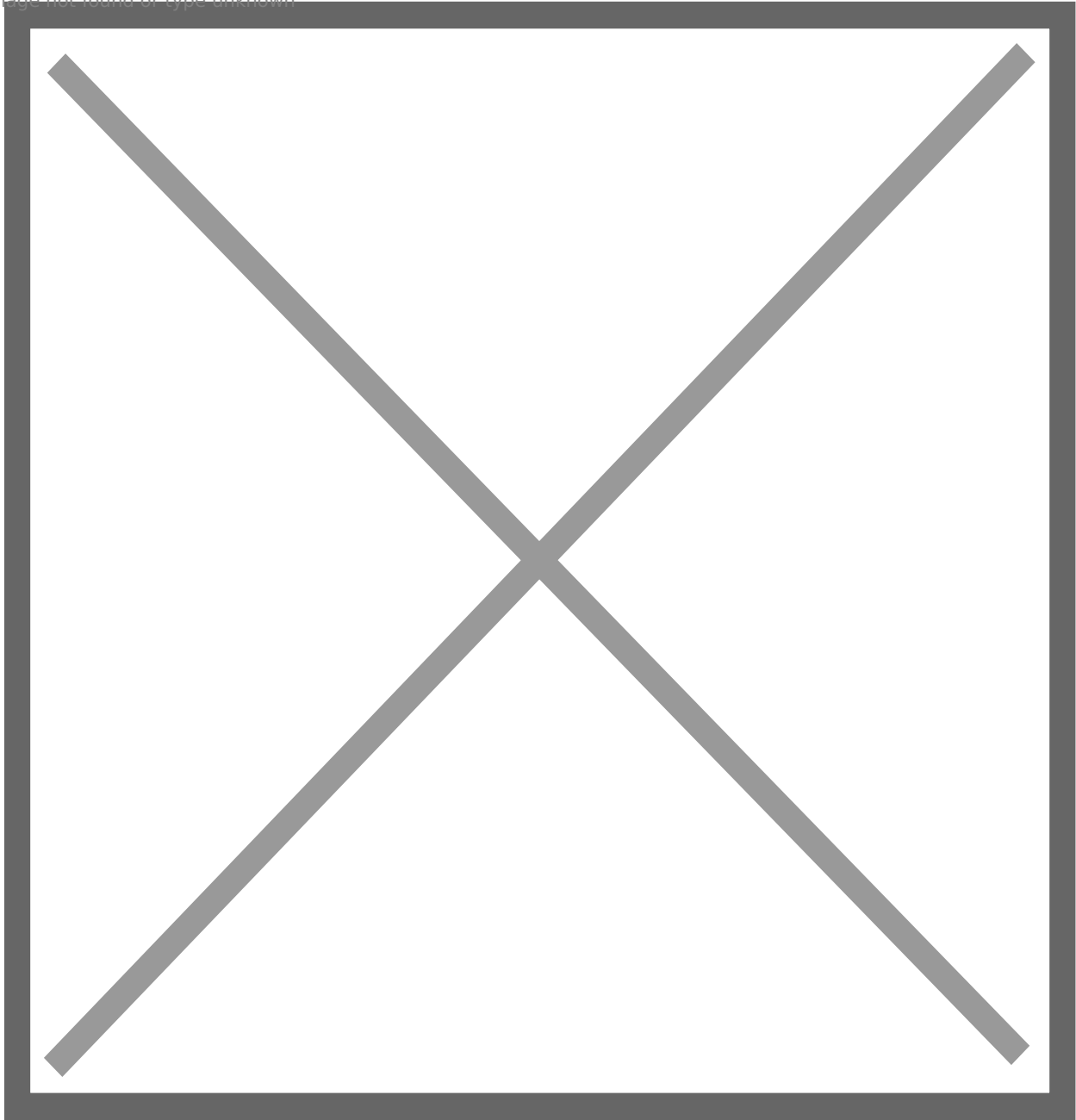
[How Artificial Intelligence Is Shaping Medical Imaging Technology: A Survey of Innovations and Applications - PMC](#)

AI might also help with other problems for which time constraints preclude humans from tackling (we're mortal beings... we can't crunch numbers 24/7 for days at a time).

Granted, this Big Data issue has some dark underbelly, too, but it's being used as a tool; not as an end in itself. People are using AI to generate music, prose, artwork, as ends in themselves,

many times as short cuts to \$\$\$\$. The AI slop that has infected Amazon is staggering:

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### [Scammy AI-Generated Book Rewrites Are Flooding Amazon](#)

Authors keep finding what appear to be AI-generated imitations and summaries of their books on Amazon. There's little they can do to rein in the rip-offs.

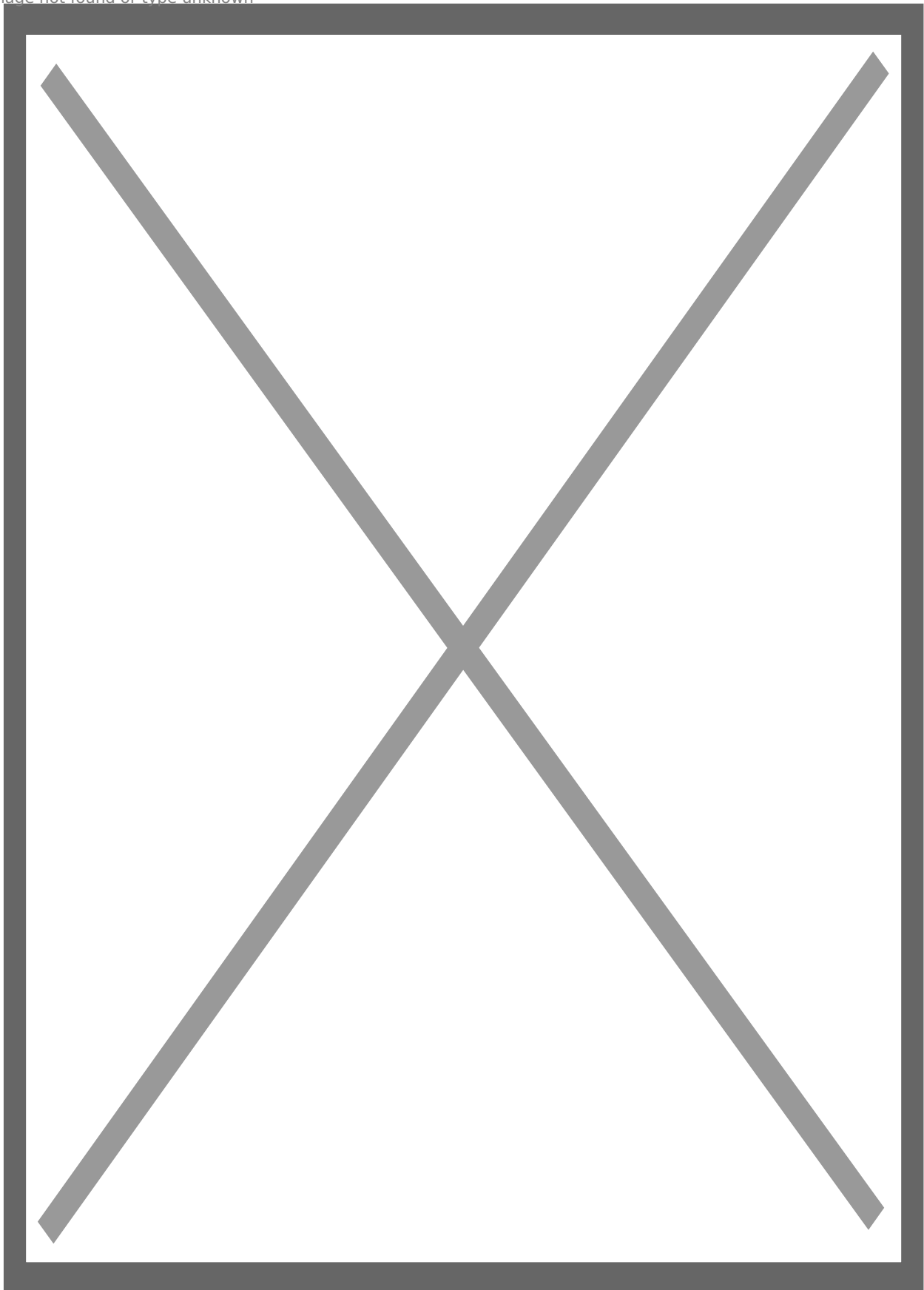
[www.wired.com](http://www.wired.com)

So, my answer to your "Don't we have to be certain that \*all\* AI generated pleasure is going to harm us more than help us in order to reach that conclusion?" would be that we have to be

wary of AI's different aspects and usages and how it is being used to assess the harm/help.

2. "taking the world by storm." - One of the reasons that AI is "taking the world by storm" is due to hype, overselling, overpromising, underperforming, and "lather, rinse, repeat." AI companies - and AI executives - are precarious in many ways and appear, to what I've read, to engage in obfuscation and misdirection to appear smarter than they are. If you really listen to what some of these AI "geniuses" are saying... they're not saying anything. It's all buzzwords and empty rhetoric. And people don't want to say "the emperor has no clothes" so they nod their heads and the ruse goes on.

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### [Why 75% Of Businesses Aren't Seeing ROI From AI Yet](#)

Also in the Forbes CIO newsletter: DeepSeek throws a grenade into the AI space, AI looms large in Microsoft And Meta earnings, AI moves Doomsday Clock closer...

[www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)

And the Better Offline podcast gives an unfiltered no-holds-barred look at what's going on in the tech sector: <https://www.youtube.com/@BetterOfflinePod>

So, in conclusion, I'm mostly okay with using AI as a tool to do what humans find impossible or highly onerous to do (e.g., crunching massive data). As for art, I want my art to be created by feeling, mortal humans with real emotions and real skills and real creativity.

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## **Post by “Don” of August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM**

This discussion (*and it's a good one!! Thanks to whomever it was that got this rolling!!*) reminds me of the discussions we've had over the experience machine (which I believe was mentioned earlier?).

My primary reason for saying that one should not hook themselves up to the experience machine is the source of pleasures change from experienced to induced.

My understanding is that Epicurus said "[All sensations are true](#)" in that their *source* is natural and coming from some existing thing in the universe. There is a reality beyond our minds and bodies. We experience sensations because we are alive in a material world which has an effect on us.

The experience machine renders us a passive inert participant in someone else's idea of what pleasure is. We are at the mercy of the manufacturer and repairman of Experience Machine LLC.

Yes, our "experiences" would be "real" to us but only in the sense that a dream or hallucination is real. There would be no external stimuli coming from a real external universe. We would be cut off from the universe, encased in the shell (or wires or hoses, pick your mechanism) of the experience machine. I don't believe, from my understanding of Epicurean philosophy, that Epicurus would endorse a life of living in a dream or an hallucination. All our friends would be figments of our imagination. All our pleasures would be fake. Our life would be a pale reflection of what it could be.

Epicurean philosophy is not pleasure at any cost; it is taking responsible for moving one's life - navigating one's little boat - using pleasure as your North Star, weathering the storms through which the Star can be seen through the clouds and lightning, and steering one's own course. It

does not mean abdicating one's pleasure to someone or something (eg, AI) else.

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### **Post by “kochiekoch” of August 23, 2025 at 4:27 PM**

I think the problem with AI, that's' come up here, is the deceit involved. Bands completely AI generated, Amazon reviews also generated, all passed off as authentic.

Right now, I'm listening to the AI generated band that Kalosyni suggested: "Velvet Sundown" and it's not bad. 😊 I like to listen to music as my wife watches TV, and this stuff is doing exactly what I'd want it to. Clearing out the background noise and allowing me to concentrate on this post. Pleasurably I might add. 😊

But I KNOW what I'm getting with all the delightfully nonsensical titles and incoherent lyrics. 😊

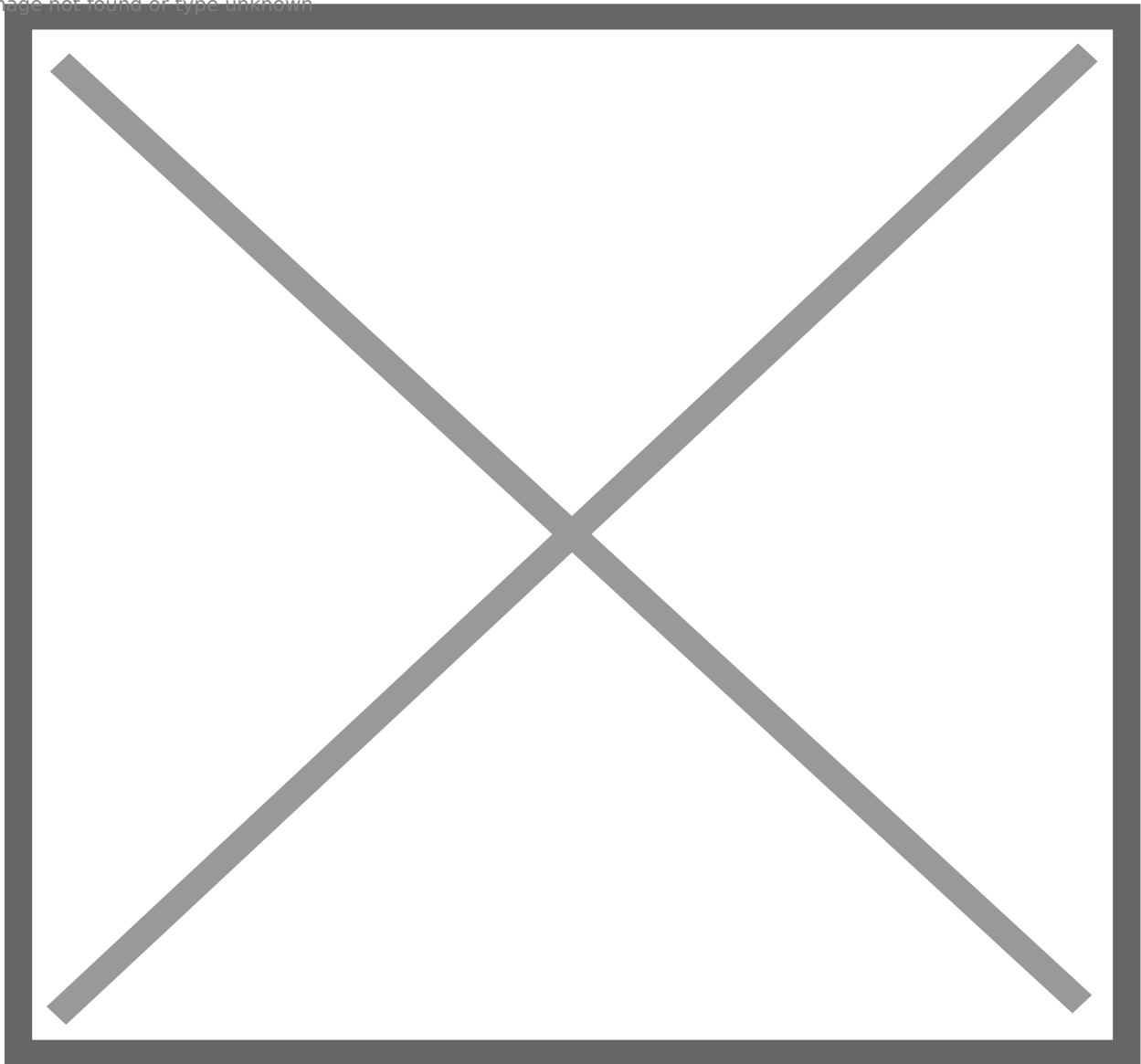
Obviously, none of the stuff is going to go away, and we are going to have to learn to live with it. We're going to have to develop the tools, (AI?), and the skepticism, (small "s"), to deal with it.

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### **Post by “Don” of August 24, 2025 at 7:04 AM**

This Substack article gets at why I feel the way I do about AI's use in art and creative endeavors:

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### [Death of Illustration by a Thousand Prompts](#)

How Skechers and other brands are napalming the creative playing field—one terrible AI ad at a time.

[open.substack.com](https://open.substack.com)

#### Quote

...like watching someone take a sledgehammer to a Stradivarius because they heard you can make music with a kazoo.

...

We're not just automating away individual careers. We're dismantling the entire pipeline that creates the next generation of visual storytellers.

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

Obviously, none of the stuff is going to go away,

I'm not so sure. The trajectory of investment vs real results doesn't seem sustainable over the long haul. Return on investment for these companies seems illusory at best, bordering on fraudulent.

To bring this back to the topic of the forum, I don't contend that people, including those of us on this forum, get pleasure from playing with these software tools or seeing/hearing the results of prompts.

I do contend that Epicurean philosophy is not pleasure at all costs. These tools, for me, are starting to fall under the "pleasures of the profligate" in some ways. They're like a quick hit that feeds on itself and leaves us wanting more. If I type this prompt I get this. What if I change this? What happens if I add another detail? For business needed "creative work," why pay humans to create things that speak to other humans? That's expensive! Save £€¥\$ and use the free software or subscribe for cheap. And meanwhile the AI dutifully responds again and again and again ad infinitum until all the electricity is being sucked dry.

Meanwhile human artists and poets and writers and cartoonists and musicians are either picking crops to live or are marginalized and paid as niche artisanal oddities to perform for the ultra-rich in some dystopian gated community.

There's also the implication of Arthur C. Clarke's Third Law: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

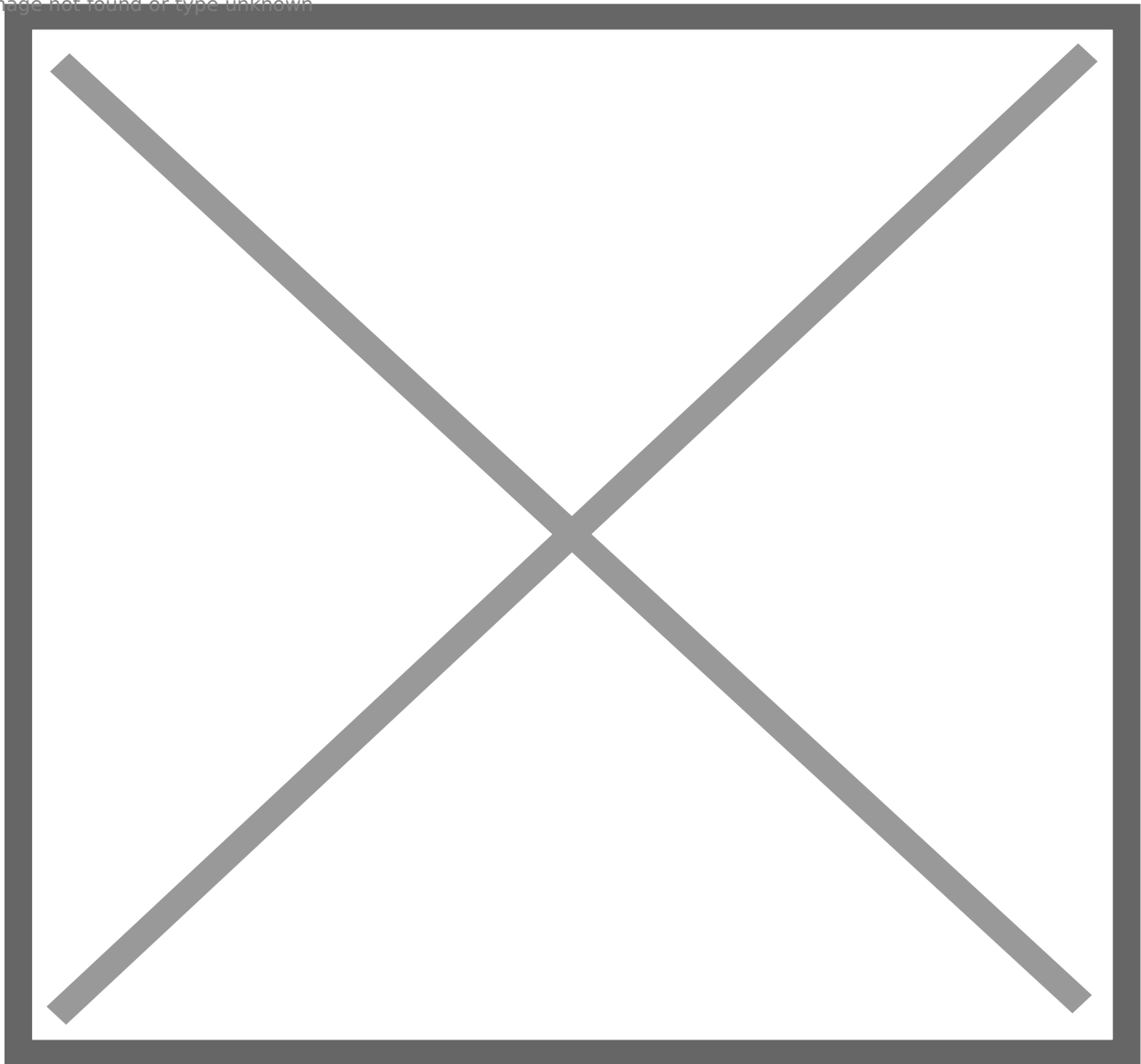
Humans remain intrigued and seduced by "magic," and AI can appear magical. However, it's Alexander the Oracle Monger's Snake God all over again.

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## **Post by “Don” of August 24, 2025 at 7:54 AM**

Okay, one last post for now on this, directly relating AI to dangerous skepticism (which we rightly rail against here on the forum):

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### [Our Shared Reality Will Self-Destruct in the Next 12 Months](#)

What happens when you can't trust photos, videos, text, or the entire web?  
[open.substack.com](http://open.substack.com)

# WHEN REALITY COLLAPSES

What happens when we can't trust the reality of images, videos, text, or the entire web?

SKEPTICISM

If events can't be validated, I can't give credence to anything.

ALOOFNESS

If everything gets called into question, I have no basis for shared communal actions.

SILENCE

If discussion no longer resolves anything, I have no purpose in speaking.

INDIFFERENCE

As I lose connection with people and events, I lose interest in them.

DISTRUST

In a world without shared reality, no expert

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**Post by “Eikadistes” of August 24, 2025 at 11:28 AM**

I'm taking this guy's advice from *The Matrix*:



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**Post by “Cassius” of August 25, 2025 at 9:34 AM**

I have to repeat how much I agree with this chart from Don's post above, and I'm going to post it at [the Epicurean facebook group](#) with this comment:

A friend has pointed me to the graphic I am posting below. It comes from an article against the dangers of AI. The article has a small amount of political content that is against our group rules to highlight, and I deliberately omit referring to that here. But the majority of the article is non-political, and it describes the real-world effects of "collapse of confidence in reality" which AI

has the potential to encourage

The reason I am posting this is not to comment on AI, but that I don't think this chart is limited to describing problems with AI. I'd say this chart is exactly what has happened to the West as a whole since about 100 AD and the wide suppression of the growing Epicurean movement. It's just this series of disasters described in the chart that Epicurean philosophy was developed to oppose. The big issue is that we shouldn't see this as a modern phenomena that began or got worse with AI. These disastrous attitudes are inherent in every form of skeptical / mystical / absolutist philosophy such as what Epicurus revolted against. And these problems are inherent in post-Epicurean western civilization for the last two thousand years.

THESE PROBLEMS are the enemy that Epicurus fought against with his physics and canonics, and it's why we need to emphasize all aspects of his philosophy. If we understand Epicurean physics and canonics we'll end up with a sound understanding of Epicurean ethics. If we *don't* understand the physics and canonics, Epicurean ethics is arbitrary and can be twisted into something far worse than worthless, as it has become in the writing of many commentators.

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### **Post by “Kalosyni” of August 25, 2025 at 11:09 AM**

Reflecting on that chart, and the implication that everything will soon go to "hell in a hand-basket"... I was thinking that as long as everyone maintains their employment and has money, and the money maintains its value, and there is enough food in the grocery stores, then everything goes okay. But if there ever comes a time with widespread unemployment, worthless money, and no food...then that is a big problem.

---

### **Post by “Rolf” of August 25, 2025 at 3:41 PM**

#### [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Reflecting on that chart, and the implication that everything will soon go to "hell in a hand-basket"... I was thinking that as long as everyone maintains their employment and has money, and the money maintains its value, and there is enough food in the grocery stores, then everything goes okay. But if there ever comes a time with widespread unemployment, worthless money, and no food...then that is a big problem.

At this point, I'd say AI taking our jobs is one of the smaller concerns. As Don and Cassius mentioned, the massive amount of realistic AI-generated content (articles, images, deepfake videos) flooding the internet is making it more and more difficult to discern what is real and what isn't. In the past month or two alone I've noticed more and more people accusing others of using AI to write their online posts. Not only is the deceptive AI content a problem, but also the growing radical skepticism that results. When people don't know what they can trust, and can no longer have faith in one another, justice and social ties collapse.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of August 25, 2025 at 4:12 PM**

I have com across several things I want to post about just in the last 24 hours, and I am thinking of taking this thread and perhaps several others on the topic and moving it into a special section. i'm debating whether to keep that special section as "Level 3" (where the

general public won't see it) or move into a more public area given the importance of the concerns. Many of the posts made already are excellent and of general interest and importance. If anyone has posted anything in this thread that they would prefer to remain in Level 3, please let me know. Otherwise I think this is such a hot topic that we ought to make these posts, and the development of an "Epicurean based strategy for dealing with AI" easier to find.

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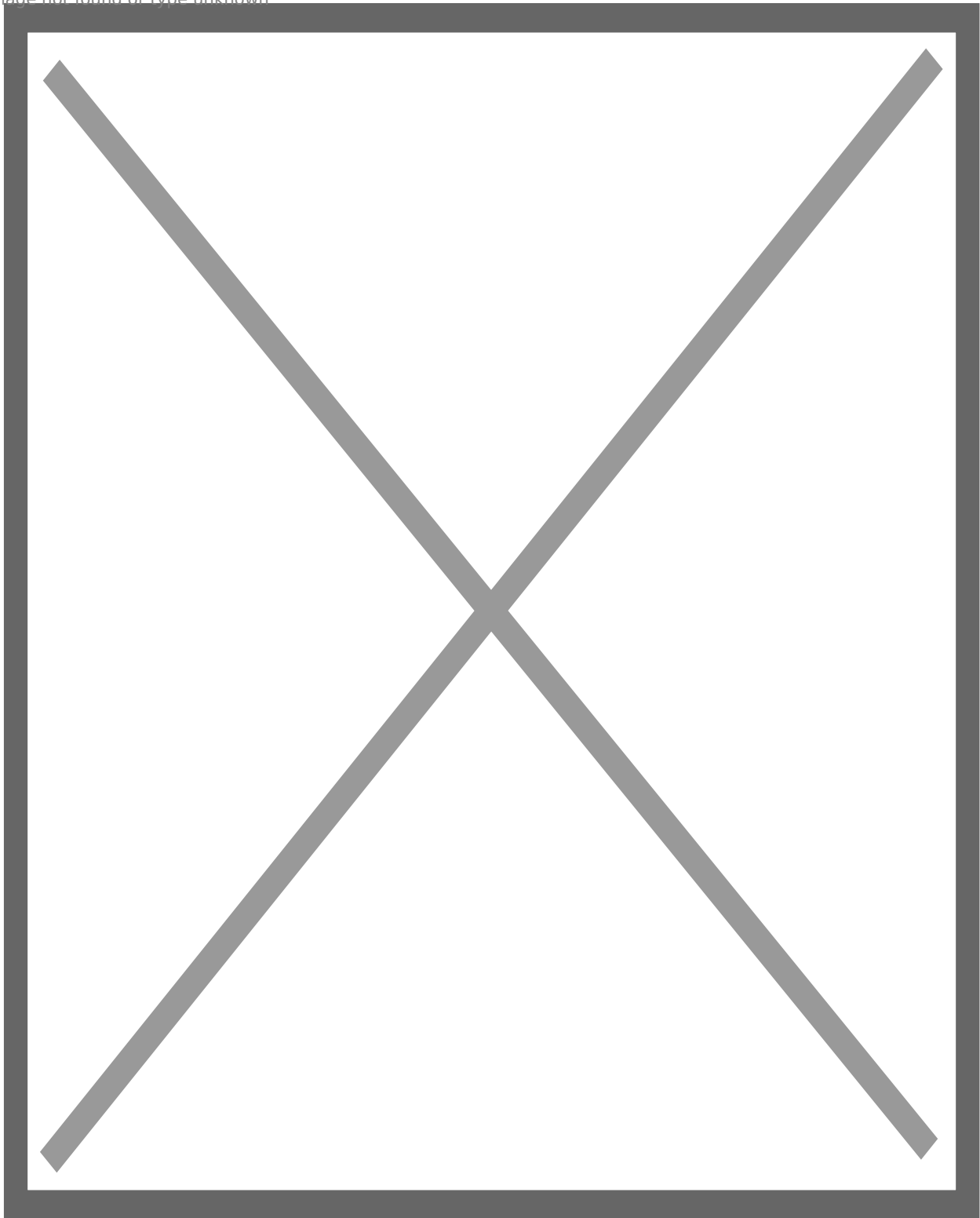
### **Post by "Pacatus" of August 25, 2025 at 4:41 PM**

Here is an in-depth article I just came across (because I daily peruse *El Pais* - to get out of the U.S. news bubble a bit). It addresses the extreme resource needs and impact on local environments and communities of AI data centers (not global warming stuff, but immediate and potential near-term impacts).

I don't see anything of partisan politics, but social and economic issues are addressed. For example: "... several of these complexes are currently extracting water from underground aquifers that are in a critical state. These natural reserves also provide water to the populations living in nearby rural communities."

I think it's worth a considered, close read.

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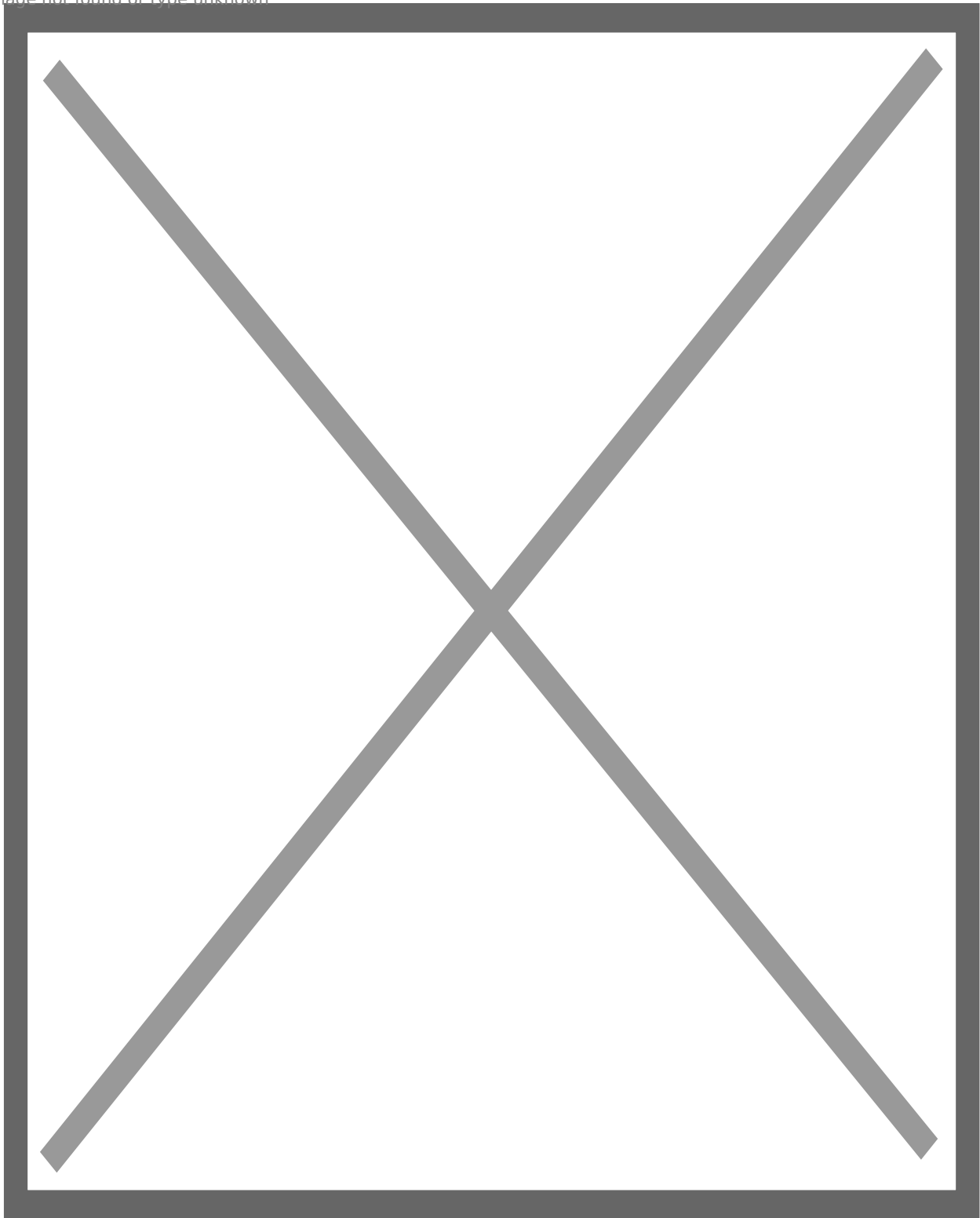
[AI's backyard: A map of the 21st-century gold rush](#)

Internet giants are extracting basic resources and grabbing land to build their new data centers in Mexico, Chile, and Spain. This is a look at the impacts of...

**Post by “Pacatus” of August 25, 2025 at 5:09 PM**

***GPT Jesus!*** 🤔 😄

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[Conversations with Christ: Religion and spirituality according to an AI](#)

GPT Jesus is one example of a recent series of chatbots that draw on the New Testament and respond in different languages. The Church views the tool with...  
english.elpais.com

Who wants a GPT Epicurus? 😬

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### Post by “Cassius” of August 25, 2025 at 6:15 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

Who wants a GPT Epicurus? 😬

If there's not already one, there almost certainly will be. And that's going to put the ball in the court of those who think that the available Epicurus-bots aren't the place to get info about Epicurus.

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### Post by “DaveT” of August 25, 2025 at 6:24 PM

I have a hard time dealing with the words “skeptic, skepticism, etc.” Sometimes people use them carelessly, and other times, perhaps after thoughtfulness, they use them in a narrow sense. His use seems to be that of the ancient Greek Skeptics. We’ve all looked at the chart that came from the article that I read. I’m skeptical about the author’s credibility (he’s a music critic). But, okay.

The chart is alleged to show possible results from his diagnosis of societal problems caused by AI, but these are possibilities that have no relationship to the probability of anything he wrote about occurring. Sadly, mental illness is a curse for those trying to survive in our modern world, but come on! Blaming AI? Already? For sure, we need guardrails on any new application of advanced technology, but his chart could be a list of fearsome results from the discovery of mRNA vaccines.

As far as his chart goes, yes, those are bad things, bad, bad, bad things for any society’s common welfare. (I’m getting out of breath here.) I could blame those ills on many things affecting individuals yesterday, today, or tomorrow. So, meh.

I reject his scare tactics, and more specifically, I reject his definition of skepticism as a negative behavior. Skepticism is healthy when properly used. My definition varies depending on the topic. A general usage to me is that I'm skeptical of any proposition that seems to lack proofs, and I'm willing to suspend my belief or disbelief until I see enough proof to satisfy me.

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### **Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2025 at 5:58 AM**

#### [Quote from DaveT](#)

A general usage to me is that I'm skeptical of any proposition that seems to lack proofs, and I'm willing to suspend my belief or disbelief until I see enough proof to satisfy me

I would say that is exactly the right attitude, but unfortunately in philosophy skepticism has a very specific logical extreme which is a well established school of its own and which goes far beyond the common sense version you're describing.

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### **Post by "kochiekoch" of August 26, 2025 at 6:54 AM**

Certainly, there are a lot of potential downsides to AI, some dangerous, as has been pointed out in this thread, but the technology isn't going ANYWHERE except more sophisticated, and we are going to have to learn to deal with it. There is also an upside in it being a tool for creativity, inspiration and information.

It's being developed all over the world, not just in the US. Even if we shut it down here, it's still coming.

As in the early days of the internet, there was the dot.com bubble, and fortunes were made and lost. So it is with AI right now. Bubble or no, we still have the internet. Amazon was famous in the '90's for being this big thing that never made any money. 😊 It's making money now.

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### **Post by "Rolf" of August 26, 2025 at 9:02 AM**

I generally agree with your last post Dave, but I think it's important to note that there's a difference between conscious skepticism (which I agree is healthy), and not being *able* to trust anything. The latter is the issue being discussed here.

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### Post by “Patrikios” of August 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

If there's not already one, there almost certainly will be. And that's going to put the ball in the court of those who think that the available Epicurus-bots aren't the place to get info about Epicurus

#### [Quote from Pacatus](#)

Who wants a GPT Epicurus? 😬

[Cassius](#) if you would like interacting with a preliminary Epicurus-AI, I have built a philosophy persona (amongst a few other personas, e.g. Golf Coach) that has over 400 documents and articles on philosophy, mostly related to epicurean thoughts. I have been using Personal.AI as the tool to create a Personal/Small Language Model dataset. This is the expected usage for many businesses to build AI queries around limited, specialized data sets of reliable info.

I use it to help me remember previously reviewed info, and carry out interesting comparisons of different authors viewpoints. I use the web version to manage the input of info, and find the mobile app version to be my pocket guide to ask WWES (What Would Epicurus Say), when faced with interesting choice or avoidance situations.

LMK if you ever want to build an AI query screen with access to only the knowledge contained on EpicureanFriends.com or other similarly managed epicurean websites. Then you could offer the public a way to 'talk to' Epicurus. ☐☐

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### Post by “Cassius” of August 27, 2025 at 6:42 PM

Yes, Patikios, I think that is coming whether we like it or not. There will eventually be many competing models of Epicurus out there. I presume that means that the task will be not to simply provide the model with raw texts, but also to provide it with "instructions" on how to interpret them. There will eventually be Stoic-friendly Epicuruses, Buddhist-friendly Epicurus, etc just like there are no many different websites and takes on Epicurus.

Thanks for the offer of your experience so far. I'll message you on what you have done so far but if you and others will keep a watch out for other Epicurus AI engines that are already public and post about them here I will appreciate it.

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of February 1, 2026 at 3:04 PM**

From the morning paper:

With AI, stop typing and just talk instead

[With AI, stop typing and just talk instead](#)

Comics - Los Angeles Times

[https://edition.pagesuite.com/popovers/dynamic\\_article\\_popover.aspx?guid=2742e6a7-9588-4685-a821-b45fa605abb4&v=sdk](https://edition.pagesuite.com/popovers/dynamic_article_popover.aspx?guid=2742e6a7-9588-4685-a821-b45fa605abb4&v=sdk)

Unrelated to AI, there's an article that made me think of [Martin](#) :

Would you try California's fastest zip lines?

[Would you try California's fastest zip lines?](#)

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### **Post by “kochiekoch” of February 1, 2026 at 7:47 PM**

I asked my browser's ai about this! 😊 And it said that both typing and voice have their strengths. Voice for more free flow work but real precision work, as in physics and philosophy typing is king as it enables reflection as the sentence is constructed.

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**Post by “Martin” of February 2, 2026 at 1:40 AM**

Quote

Would you try California’s fastest zip lines?

Yes!