

Jurgen Schwanitz - AI Q&A 01.22.2026 VRCC Thursday Meeting

1. What exactly *is* AI?

AI is a computer system that can understand language, answer questions, and recognize patterns. It doesn't "think" like a person, but it can process information very quickly and give helpful responses.

2. Am I already using AI without knowing it?

Yes. If you use:

- An iPhone
- Siri
- Google Maps
- Voice-to-text
- Online shopping suggestions

...you're already using AI every day.

3. Is AI safe to use?

Generally yes, as long as you use it the same way you use the internet:

- Don't share personal information.
- Don't upload sensitive documents.
- Stick to well-known companies and official websites.

4. Does AI read my private information?

No. AI systems learn from publicly available information, not from your private files. Still, it's wise to avoid uploading anything sensitive.

5. Can AI help me learn something new?

Absolutely. AI can act like a patient tutor for:

- Languages
- Technology
- Cooking
- Travel planning
- Hobbies

You can ask it to explain things slowly, simply, or step-by-step.

6. Can AI replace people's jobs?

AI is already changing some office and computer-based jobs.

Hands-on jobs — like plumbing, nursing, caregiving, and home repair — are much harder to replace.

7. Why do companies build huge data centers?

AI needs powerful computers to run.

These buildings:

- Use a lot of electricity
- Use water for cooling
- Can be noisy
- Are sometimes controversial in local communities

8. Why do some people worry about AI?

Common concerns include:

- Job changes
- Privacy
- Misinformation
- Rapid growth without clear rules

Most experts agree that AI is useful, but society needs to set smart boundaries.

9. Can AI make mistakes?

Yes. AI can sometimes:

- Misunderstand a question
- Make up information
- Give an answer that sounds confident but is wrong

It's always good to double-check important information.

10. Can AI help with everyday tasks?

Yes. AI can:

- Write emails
- Summarize long documents
- Create recipes
- Help plan trips
- Explain medical terms (but not replace a doctor)
- Organize information
- Draft letters or responses

11. Is AI expensive?

There are free versions that work well for everyday use.

Paid versions offer more features, but most people don't need them.

12. Can AI talk out loud or understand my voice?

Yes. Many AI tools have a microphone mode.

You can speak to it like you would speak to a person, and it will respond

13. Can AI create images or videos?

Yes. AI can create:

- Pictures
- Diagrams
- Room layouts
- Short videos

These images are computer-generated and not real photographs.

14. Will AI take over everything?

No. AI is powerful, but it has limits.

It doesn't have emotions, common sense, or lived experience.

It's a tool — and like any tool, it works best when people use it wisely.