

How to Adopt Artificial Intelligence Ways to Alleviate Concerns about Information Systems

Those responsible for information systems in many enterprises are currently concerned about integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into their businesses. They lack sufficient knowledge to even consider the potential of AI when requested to do so by management, and they are not always sure of the logical starting point to apply the technology. Often no progress is made even when enlisting the support of frontline divisions. AI is not well understood in the workplace and people have trouble setting aside time to consider it during their busy daily schedules. This article looks at how information systems professionals can best overcome the barriers to AI adoption.



Interest is increasing in AI as a core technology for driving digital business. With elevated expectations for AI as a way to transform their businesses, those in enterprise management positions are instructing their information systems divisions to explore methods for adopting AI.

However, staff in these divisions do not always have sufficient AI knowledge or insights, and many struggle when confronted with a sudden request to consider the use of AI in their business. When AI adoption is attempted, barriers are often encountered that bring progress to a standstill. This can leave people wondering which fields and business tasks are actually suited to AI use, how it can be applied, and even whether it can really achieve anything at all.

These people might search through media articles in their attempt to learn from other companies' initiatives, but fail to identify the essential points. The problem is that even though there are many articles titled Deploying AI in the media, few include the background to decisions regarding where and how it is used. Tadashi Sugai, Senior Manager of Fujitsu's AI & Data Analytics Offering Department has considerable experience in AI projects. He explains the reasons for the shortage of information that could be used when deploying AI: "In addition to the fact that results always take time to appear, companies that are actually starting to see results do not want to divulge their secrets to competitors."

Many of the information systems divisions that develop systems, in response to requests from frontline divisions, do not know where to look to find the path to successful use of AI. This is why cooperation is essential when trying to put AI into practice, but it is not always easy to gain the cooperation of frontline divisions. Those divisions also expect to use AI to help evolve the organization's business, but even with financial and HR support, success is limited if it is unclear exactly where the technology is to be implemented and even whether AI will produce meaningful results at all.

Leveraging vision co-creation workshops

Long-suffering information systems division staff are frequently caught between management and frontline divisions. To help resolve their dilemma, Fujitsu runs a vision co-creation workshop



Co-creation workshop



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called "Examining AI Usage from Scratch." Members of these divisions are able to bring their concerns about AI – its use and where to start – to the FUJITSU Digital Transformation Center (DTC) located in Tokyo's Hamamatsucho district. There they can use the dedicated studio space to workshop and discuss the potential for AI in their own business tasks.

The first step of the workshop is to gather in groups to explore existing situations and issues and to develop a vision for the future. Within small groups of around five people, each participant can review their own situation, highlight any issues and think about their ideal vision (see the figure below).

"The point is to start the process by not focusing on AI technologies," explains Izumi Kurosaka, a DTC facilitator with extensive experience in a wide variety of co-creation workshops. "We begin by putting AI aside for the moment. Through group discussion, participants can highlight the essential issues they currently face in their business and then search for ideas to create their ideal situation."

During the group sessions, participants use small photo cards produced by Fujitsu that are printed with photographs of various AI usage scenarios and other abstract images. Each group participant selects the cards that match their own ideas and then uses them to visually convey their thoughts to the other participants. Izumi Kurosaka explains: "The photo cards enable anyone to express their own opinions, even if they are unfamiliar with workshop environments."

The next step involves an explanation of the latest trends and initiatives in AI at Fujitsu. Tadashi Sugai says, "We provide participants with the latest information on AI technologies to help facilitate discussion, with the aim being for that sharing of information to serve as the foundation for subsequent conversations."

The third step involves each group examining AI usage ideas. This enables participants to discuss what is needed to achieve the ideal vision of AI that they formulated in the first step. Izumi Kurosaka says that to encourage lots of ideas during this stage, simple inspiration cards are used that contain titles, illustrations and basic descriptions of various AI usage scenarios. She says, "The action of choosing cards that closely match their ideas, and being inspired by

the scenes they depict, encourages participants to devise ideas they would otherwise have trouble imagining on their own." Feedback from participants includes comments such as "the environment facilitated the generation of ideas" and "the experience helped me to come up with new ideas."

In the final step, participants examine both short-term and medium-term ideas for AI initiatives. Each member uses a template to help summarize three or four ideas from the group session. Izumi Kurosaka says, "Because they have to fill in specific details, even inexperienced participants are able to summarize their own thoughts, and it makes comparison with other ideas much easier."

Each participant's ideas are classified as either short-term or medium-term and the group then focuses on these and discusses them collectively. By the end of the workshop, participants should have a good picture of where to start with AI and the direction to take their own initiatives.

First launched in June 2017, these co-creation workshops on AI usage are receiving positive reviews. Many participants have commented that the workshops "provided real opportunities to think about using AI and enabled an understanding of the elements needed to examine AI usage" and that they "shared information and raised the level of AI knowledge among the people involved."

Critical to boost the number of frontline division participants

So how does this help to overcome the barriers to AI adoption? Izumi Kurosaka explains: "The point is to get as many people as possible



Izumi Kurosaka
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involved from the frontline divisions." What drives AI use is staff from the frontline divisions identifying current issues, with those from both the information systems divisions and frontline divisions then actively exchanging ideas.

As mentioned at the outset of this article, consensus with the frontline divisions on where to start is essential when examining AI usage. It is also essential to dispel any myths and unfounded objections about the new AI technology. Fujitsu's workshops can help resolve issues, enabling information systems divisions to confidently take that next step forward.

The workshops also enable people to identify issues that are not usually considered and to brainstorm ideas for resolving those issues. In addition to AI, Fujitsu has conducted workshops for years to help formulate and share visions on a range of topics, such as workstyle transformation and big data usage, as well as various unconventional topics. Using Design Thinking techniques, inspiration cards and other tools, Fujitsu offers the mechanisms and knowledge that other companies lack to draw out ideas from participants.

Of course, workshops are only a starting point for adopting AI. After overcoming the initial adoption barriers by deciding where to actually use AI and building consensus within the company, enterprises must then create and operate the systems that will enable AI to be deployed. Fujitsu can also help in this area by providing strong support to customers throughout the entire process.

Step 1	Reviewing existing situation and issues and developing an ideal vision
Step 2	Input of AI-related information to help generate ideas
Step 3	Examining AI usage ideas
Step 4	Summarizing and presenting results in small groups

Figure : Vision co-creation workshop steps

This paper is a translation of an article published on ITpro Active in September 2017.

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