

SMART, SAFE, AND SECURE: THRIVING IN THE AGE OF AI



Contributed by the Fairview Technology Advisory Committee

The age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has truly arrived. Once the stuff of science fiction, AI now powers many of the tools that make life more efficient, from smart assistants and recommendation systems to facial recognition and automated fraud alerts. Simply put, AI is the branch of computer science focused on creating machines that are able to think like humans. It relies on vast amounts of data and powerful algorithms to “train” itself to detect patterns, predict outcomes, and improve performance over time.

As AI becomes part of everyday life, it brings enormous benefits along with new digital risks. Used wisely, AI can make homes safer, businesses smarter, and communities more connected. The following best practices and starter tips will help you stay confident, secure, and informed while navigating the expanding world of AI.

C **yper-Smart Practices for Using AI**
Rather than replacing people, AI is reshaping how we work, communicate, and protect our digital lives. The key is learning to combine human judgement with machine efficiency to enhance both productivity and safety.

1. Recognize AI’s Dual Nature: Tool and Threat.

AI enhances speed and insight but can also be used for deepfakes, automated phishing, or identity spoofing. Treat AI tools as you would any online platform, valuable but requiring vigilance. Before using an

unfamiliar app or website that relies on AI, confirm its legitimacy, review its privacy policy, and verify that your data remains protected.

2. **Keep Humans in the Loop.**

AI systems can make convincing but inaccurate predictions or outputs. Always double-check facts, confirm sources, and apply human judgment before acting on AI-generated content. Whether it is an email written by a chatbot or a financial summary created by a virtual assistant, human review is essential to prevent mistakes and misinformation.

3. **Use Generative AI Responsibly.**

When using AI for creative or work tasks, avoid sharing confidential or proprietary data. Once entered into many AI platforms, information may be stored, analyzed, or reused. Treat every AI prompt like a public post and never include personal identifiers, passwords, or client details. Whenever possible, use enterprise-secured or offline AI tools.

S **arter Tips for Safe and Responsible AI Use**

As AI becomes woven into daily technology, cybersecurity awareness should guide every interaction.

1. **Build Cyber Awareness and Digital Literacy.**

AI is only as trustworthy as the data behind it. Learn to question what you see and read online. Misinformation, voice clones, and fake imagery can all appear real. A cautious and informed mindset is your best defense.

2. **Protect Personal Information.**

Adjust privacy settings, use strong passwords, and enable multifactor authentication on any AI-connected account. Avoid linking unnecessary personal data or financial information to AI services unless absolutely necessary.

3. **Watch for AI-Driven Scams.**

Cybercriminals now use AI to create realistic phishing emails, fake voices, and imitation websites. If you receive suspicious messages,

even if they sound like someone you know, pause before replying. Verify through a trusted contact and report potential scams.

4. **Stay Current and Engaged.**

AI and cybersecurity evolve rapidly. Participate in community workshops, online safety sessions, or senior-center programs that teach practical security skills. Staying informed about AI's capabilities, risks, and protective measures helps you safeguard yourself and your community.

By combining curiosity with caution, you can make the most of AI while minimizing digital threats. In the AI age, being smart, safe, and secure allows everyone in our community to thrive.

Sources:

[University of Cincinnati](#)

[Temple University](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[KPMG](#)

[National Center for Biotechnology Information](#)

[Harvard Graduate School](#)