



A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK GATHERING

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) SUMMIT**

SAN FRANCISCO

JUNE 20

# Artificial Intelligence Summit

## BRIEFING BOOK

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### Executive Summary

[The Communications Network](#)'s Artificial Intelligence Summit brought together a diverse group of nonprofit, philanthropic, and tech leaders to explore the opportunities and challenges of AI integration in mission-driven organizations.

The convening emphasized balanced engagement with AI—rejecting both fear and unchecked enthusiasm—and explored real-world applications, ethical considerations, and strategic foresight. With practical demonstrations and case studies from organizations like the [California Health Care Foundation](#), [Everytown for Gun Safety](#), [Wikimedia Foundation](#), and the [Center for American Progress](#), the summit provided both conceptual frameworks and hands-on insights.

Participants emphasized curiosity, collaboration, and cautious optimism as the most constructive responses to AI's rise. Through scenario planning, tool demos, and practical policy design, the summit sought to answer: How can AI meaningfully advance our missions while protecting what matters most?

Voices from leading AI organizations, such as OpenAI's Mattie Zazueta and AI innovator Alisa Miller, added critical depth—offering transparency about the technology's risks, and optimism about equitable and accessible futures.

*"AI augments. It doesn't automate away your thinking."*

— Mattie Zazueta, OpenAI

*"Don't wait for permission. Start with what you already know."*

— Eric Antebi, CHCF

*"AI should work with communities, not be done to them."*

— Aram Fischer, Change Agent AI

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[See AI Summit photos here](#)

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## Key Strategic Insights

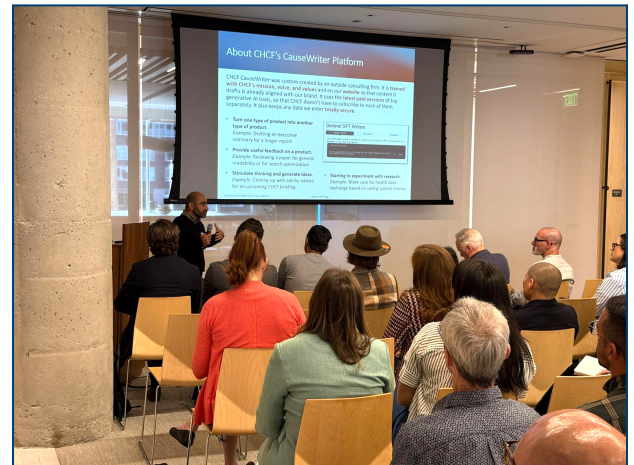
### AI as a Strategic Accelerator ([Marc Palatucci, Future Today Strategy Group](#))

- AI should act not as a replacement for human cognition but as a collaborator. Palatucci introduced the metaphor of "climbing the escalator": using AI strategically while retaining cognitive engagement to avoid atrophy.
- "Fear is taking the stairs. Zeal is running up the escalator. Strategic use is climbing it."
- Avoid ceding total control to AI. Instead, collaborate with it: use it to augment ideas, not replace them.
- Conversational search and personalization are redefining how users interact with information. Participants were encouraged to consider how this shift could influence research, advocacy, and publishing strategies.



## Practical Adoption ([Eric Antebi, California Health Care Foundation](#))

- CHCF built a secure internal platform (with Whole Whale) to make AI accessible, reliable, and safe across its team. It includes:
  - Tailored prompts for tasks like summarizing reports, creating accessible language, improving SEO, and writing inclusive content.
  - Custom training on CHCF's brand voice and website content.
- Key Applications:
  - Transforming longform reports into executive summaries or FAQs.
  - Making complex healthcare information more digestible.
  - Enhancing workflows with AI suggestions for headlines, titles, or campaign framing.
- Staff training remains crucial: CHCF holds regular "lunch and learns" to upskill colleagues in prompt writing and tool navigation.
- Microsoft Co-pilot (integrated into Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook) is seen as the next frontier in contextualized, individualized AI productivity.



## Data + Domain Expertise as Differentiators ([Sri Madhavan, Everytown for Gun Safety](#))

- Everytown used AI to turn news reports, tweets, press releases, and videos into a searchable database of gun violence incidents.
  - Their real-time dashboard cross-references multiple sources and tracks accuracy with human oversight.
  - Future expansions include pulling in police department press releases.



- Their chatbot, Optic Rebound, uses a curated internal knowledge base to provide evidence-based responses specific to gun violence prevention.
- Application priorities:
  - Automating the intake and triage of external data.
  - Empowering advocates and researchers with reliable, AI-synthesized information.
- Strategic Principle: *Start with a problem, not the tech.* AI only adds value when serving a well-defined mission.

### Storytelling and Acceleration ([Zack McCune, Wikimedia Foundation](#))

- Wikipedia is core training data for many AI models, but attribution and citation remain serious concerns.
- Wikimedia uses AI to:
  - Brainstorm campaign ideas (e.g., discovering and elevating "bodega cats" for a NY campaign).
  - Generate illustrations with Midjourney that match Wikimedia's visual identity.
  - Translate articles across languages.
  - Automatically produce short-form TikTok videos from Wikipedia entries.
- These tools preserve human editorial oversight, allowing Wikimedia to scale faster without compromising quality.



### AI for Accessibility and Workflow ([Jamie Perez, Center for American Progress](#))

- CAP used AI to generate rich alt text for complex social media graphics, improving accessibility while saving staff time.
- AI-assisted topic page generation:

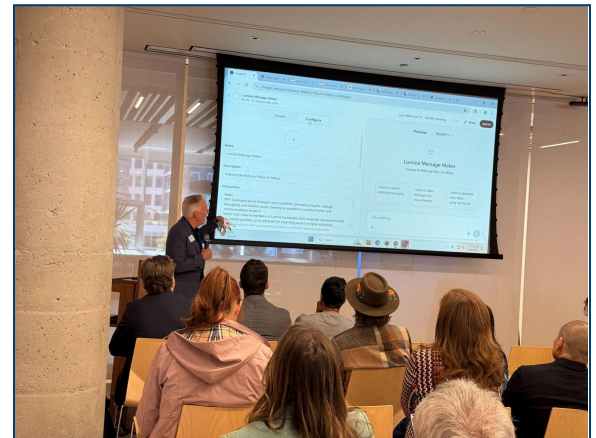




- CAP trained a model to analyze and synthesize "topper text" for 175 issue pages.
- Editors vetted and approved 40 new intros in a single day—a process that would have taken weeks.
- Insight: Small, overlooked tasks are fertile ground for safe experimentation.
- Tactic: Identify uncontroversial, underloved content types to test new tools without triggering resistance.

### **Audience-Centered AI Storytelling ([Doug Hattaway, Lumina Foundation](#) )**

Doug Hattaway stressed that strategic communication—especially when using AI—must be deeply grounded in understanding your audience’s values. AI tools can accelerate message testing and personalization, but the real opportunity lies in lifting up stories that resonate with real people’s lived experiences.



- Key strategies included:
  - Using AI to test which messages work best with which audiences—especially across political divides.
  - Focusing on narratives that convey dignity, agency, and progress.
  - Treating AI as a tool to amplify emotional intelligence and persuasive storytelling.

### **Foresight and Future Literacy ([Sarah Dawson & Brett Horvath, empire](#))**

Dawson and Horvath shared tools and frameworks designed to help organizations think ahead—not just react to tech shifts. Their scenario-building methods emphasized planning for multiple possible futures and using AI to explore how identity, relationships, and emotions (IRE) shape public behavior.



- Key frameworks:
  - **IRE (Identity, Relationships, Emotions)**: A lens for understanding how people make meaning and act.
  - **EMP (Ends, Methods, Principles)**: A model for building strategy around ethical use of AI.
  - Encouraged nonprofit leaders to treat AI like a civic technology that demands human-centered design.

### The Future of Intelligence + Media ([Alisa Miller, Pluralytics](#))

- Miller brought a future-of-media perspective to the conversation, emphasizing values-based content generation.
- AI can help identify resonance gaps—moments where values expressed by an organization do not align with audience values.
- Key insight: “Narratives grounded in human values travel further. AI can help us discover—not decide—what those values are.”



### Foundations of Trust and Equity ([Mattie Zazueta, OpenAI](#))

- Zazueta emphasized the need for nonprofit and public-interest organizations to participate in shaping AI guardrails.
- She highlighted OpenAI’s open research collaborations and nonprofit partnerships.
- Priorities shared:
  - Making tools accessible to under-resourced communities.
  - Preventing misuse through safety features and ongoing dialogue.
  - The value of human feedback: “The best AI use cases are co-authored with real people and real needs.”



## **AI as Embedded Infrastructure ([Michael McLoughlin, Microsoft](#))**

McLoughlin described Microsoft's approach to AI as embedding intelligence into everyday tools. With Copilot integrated into Word, Excel, and Teams, the goal is to support nonprofits not with separate AI platforms, but with AI where they already work.

- Key takeaways:
  - Build AI into existing workflows to lower the barrier to entry.
  - Prioritize responsible AI practices: transparency, bias mitigation, and user education.
  - Equip teams through direct exposure and experimentation with tools they already trust.
  - "We're trying to meet people where they are, so AI feels helpful, not overwhelming."



## **Personalized Messaging at Scale ([Evan James, Dreamwriter](#))**

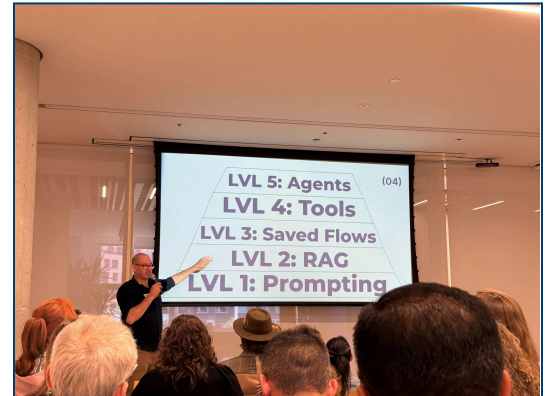
Evan James emphasized that AI can help nonprofits speak to many audiences—without sacrificing authenticity. Dreamwriter's platform supports users in rewriting content while keeping the original intent and values intact.

- Key strategies:
  - Tailor language to resonate with different groups (e.g., policymakers vs. grassroots supporters).
  - Maintain message discipline while allowing for stylistic flexibility.
  - Use AI to explore "how this sounds to different people," rather than to write from scratch.



## Coalition-Centered AI Tools ([Aram Fischer, Change Agent AI](#))

Fischer described building a “hive mind” for a coalition of 45 organizations in New Mexico, designed to share AI prompts and resources across aligned groups. The platform was built not for generic use, but around the shared needs and language of advocacy organizations.



- Key takeaways:
  - Build AI tools around shared goals and trusted data.
  - Use domain-specific models that reflect the voices and concerns of the communities you serve.
  - Avoid general-purpose AI tools when your mission is specific.

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## Key Quotes

“Don’t be fearful and don’t be zealous. Replace fear with curiosity and zeal with cautious optimism.”

— *Marc Palatucci, Future Today Strategy Group*

“AI should be a means to an end, not the end itself.”

— *Sri Madhavan, Everytown*

“This didn’t take a job. It made us able to do more, faster.”

— *Jamie Perez, Center for American Progress*

“The best AI use cases are co-authored with real people and real needs.”

— *Mattie Zazueta, OpenAI*



“Narratives grounded in human values travel further. AI can help us discover—not decide—what those values are.”

— Alisa Miller, *Pluralytics*

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## Tools and Resources Mentioned

- Custom LLM platforms: CHCF’s secure internal tool (developed with Whole Whale — not publicly available)
  - [Perplexity.ai](#): AI-powered search alternative
  - [Midjourney](#): AI for rapid illustration generation
  - [Datawrapper](#): Charting tool with accessibility features
  - [Signal](#): End-to-end encrypted messenger (Meredith Whittaker emphasized AI risk-awareness)
  - [Substack](#): Example of idiosyncratic value in content
  - [Microsoft Copilot](#): Embedded AI for Office applications
  - Optic Rebound: Everytown’s internal AI chatbot trained on gun safety expertise (not publicly available)
  - [Pluralytics](#): AI for language resonance and values alignment
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## AI Summit Takeaways For Folks Who Weren’t With Us

- Start with *clear goals or pain points*. Don’t use AI just because it’s trendy.
- Evaluate tools with *security, equity, and sustainability* in mind.
- Pilot low-risk, high-impact use cases to build familiarity.
- Value your organization’s *proprietary data* and *subject matter expertise*.
- Make space for ongoing experimentation, dialogue, and cross-functional learning.

- Build internal culture: Train your people, align on values, and center transparency.
  - Participate in shaping the future: nonprofits must have a seat at the AI table.
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This document is a detailed companion to the AI Summit hosted by The Communications Network, synthesizing themes, takeaways, tools, and insights shared by nonprofit, foundation, and tech leaders. It is designed for those who could not attend the event but seek to learn from it—offering practical guidance, strategic reflections, and actionable inspiration.

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## Core Themes from the AI Summit

### 1. Replace Fear with Curiosity, Replace Hype with Structure

The day emphasized a thoughtful, grounded approach to AI: embracing the potential, understanding the limits, and building with integrity. The tone was candid and optimistic, not starry-eyed.

*"Fear is paralyzing. Curiosity is mobilizing. We're here to mobilize, not freak each other out."* — Marc Palatucci, Future Today Strategy Group

### 2. Embrace Strategy, Not Just Tools

AI is not a shortcut. It's an amplifier. Leaders repeatedly underscored the importance of aligning AI with mission, values, and workflows—not using it for its own sake.

### 3. Human-in-the-Loop is Non-Negotiable

From content creation to data analysis, every speaker made clear: AI is powerful, but it must be guided, reviewed, and contextualized by humans. It augments—it doesn't replace.

#### **4. Equity Must Be Baked In, Not Bolted On**

AI tools reflect the biases and blindspots of their creators and data. Responsible deployment must center inclusivity, especially for marginalized communities.

#### **5. Small Wins = Big Impact**

Many of the most inspiring examples came not from massive AI projects, but simple, effective applications like better alt text, smarter dashboards, or faster content adaptation.

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### **Highlights by Organization**

#### **California Health Care Foundation (Eric Antebi)**

- Built a secure, custom GPT tool (via Whole Whale) trained on CHCF language and public content.
- Used to translate, summarize, rephrase, and evaluate content for clarity, readability, accessibility.
- Included robust governance (contract clauses, external and internal policies, training).
- Tools are sandboxed, cleared weekly, and not trained on private inputs.

*"We didn't want an add-on—we needed this to fit into our workflows."*

#### **Everytown for Gun Safety (Sri Madhavan)**

- Created an AI-powered dashboard that tracks gun violence from public sources in near real-time.
- Built Optic Rebound, a chatbot trained on Everytown's curated gun violence prevention research.

- Strong human review process ensures factuality and trust.
- Prioritized building where Everytown had unique data/expertise; bought where they didn't.

*"Start with a problem. AI should be a means, not the end."*

### **Wikimedia Foundation (Zack McCune)**

- Uses AI to brainstorm campaigns (e.g., bodega cats), generate visuals (Midjourney), and create TikTok videos.
- Tool converts Wikipedia articles into short-form videos, keeping humans in review loop.
- Attribution and editorial quality remain key concerns.

*"Wikipedia is in your training data. We want it cited—and cited well."*

### **Center for American Progress (Jamie Perez)**

- Focused on accessible uses of AI like alt text generation for social images.
- Used AI to create topic page "toppers" (intro summaries), freeing up hundreds of staff hours.
- Emphasized piloting AI in "safe" non-policy applications to ease internal cultural resistance.

*"Nobody can be mad about better accessibility. That's how we got in the door."*

### **empire (Brett Horvath & Sarah Dawson)**

- Developed scenario-planning tools using agent-based modeling and AI-enhanced storytelling.
- Frameworks included EMP (Ends, Methods, Principles) and IRE (Identity, Relationships, Emotions).
- Emphasis on human foresight, not just data.

*"You don't need to be a technologist to build with AI."*



### **Dreamwriter (Evan James)**

- Supports nonprofits in personalizing content for different audiences.
- AI helps rewrite materials while keeping messaging on-brand and purpose-aligned.
- Emphasized creative empowerment, not replacement.

### **Change Agent AI (Aram Fischer)**

- Created a “hive mind” platform for 45 organizations in NM to align messaging and prompts.
- Tools were domain-specific and human-trained.

*“Don’t use general tools for specific missions.”*

### **OpenAI (Mattie Zazueta)**

- Announced OpenAI Academy for nonprofits.
- Stressed AI literacy, responsible use, and collaboration.
- Encouraged experimentation, especially with GPTs built around staff workflows.

### **Microsoft (Michael McLoughlin)**

- Emphasized Copilot integration across Microsoft 365 and responsible AI practices.
- Focus on transparency, internal training, and supporting digital transformation.

### **Pluralytics (Alisa Miller)**

- Showed how values-based language can enhance message resonance.
- Demonstrated tools that align audience values with content tone, word choice.

*“AI is not just for speed—it can be for moral clarity.”*

## Recommended AI Tools & Platforms

<b><u>Tool / Platform</u></b>	<b><u>Function / Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Recommended By</u></b>
CHCF Custom GPT (Not publicly available)	Summarization, readability, editing	California Health Care Foundation
Optic Rebound (Not publicly available)	Curated policy chatbot for gun safety	Everytown
<a href="#">Midjourney</a>	Generative illustration / campaign art	Wikimedia
TikTok Video Tool (Not publicly available)	Article-to-video generator	Wikimedia
<a href="#">Microsoft Copilot</a>	Office365 AI assistant	Microsoft
<a href="#">ChatGPT</a> + <a href="#">Claude</a>	Prompt generation, drafting	CAP, Dreamwriter
<a href="#">Pluralitytics</a>	Values-based message alignment	Pluralitytics

[Whole Whale](#)  
(partner)

Custom GPT builds for  
nonprofits

CHCF

[Change Agent AI](#)  
[Hive](#)

Shared AI knowledge tool for  
coalitions

Change Agent AI

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## Strategic Insights

### Help Your Whole Team Learn, Not Just the Tech Experts

Brett Horvath from Empire talked about the idea of a "learning multiplier." This means helping your whole team learn how to use AI—not just a few people. Then, make sure that learning spreads across departments and partners. The faster we share what works, the faster we can make progress—without needing everyone to be a tech expert.

### Think About How You're Using AI — Don't Just Jump In

Marc Palatucci from Future Today Strategy Group shared a helpful way to think about using AI. He compared it to how we ride an escalator:

- **Taking the stairs:** Avoiding AI—safe but slow.
- **Standing still on the escalator:** Letting AI do everything—fast, but you stop thinking for yourself.
- **Running up the escalator:** Using AI too fast—risky and could backfire.
- **Climbing the escalator:** Best option. You're moving quickly but still in control and learning as you go.

Bottom line? Use AI to help you move faster, but don't give up your judgment.

### Be Yourself—That's What AI Can't Do

Zack McCune from the Wikimedia Foundation reminded us that AI is good at doing the same thing over and over. But it's not good at being creative or original. That's

where people shine. What makes your voice, your ideas, and your story unique is something AI can't copy. That's what makes your work matter.

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## **We asked ChatGPT to Make Some Recommendations for How to Use the Content in this Briefing Book:**

### *Prompt:*

*What would you recommend creating with this AI Summit Briefing Book document (pasted below)? And in what possible formats? For foundation and nonprofit leaders? For board members? For early career staffers?*

### *ChatGPT said:*

With a rich and well-organized document like this, you have the foundation for a powerful set of tailored resources. Here's what I recommend creating for each audience, along with the most effective formats:

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### **For Foundation & Nonprofit Leaders**

**Purpose:** Strategic foresight, decision-making, and organizational AI planning

#### **Suggested Products & Formats:**

1. **Briefing Memo or Executive Insight Report** (*PDF or Web Page*)
  - ~4–6 pages
  - Synthesizes key strategic insights, case examples, and quotes
  - Sections: “What Leaders Need to Know,” “Build AI into Strategy,” “Real-World Applications”
2. **Slide Deck for Leadership Teams**



- Condensed visuals of use cases, frameworks (e.g., EMP/IRE), and tool landscape
- For board presentations or internal staff rollouts

### 3. **AI Integration Checklist for Leadership**

- Practical worksheet or one-pager: How to assess readiness, evaluate tools, align to mission
  - Format: Downloadable PDF or interactive Notion/Google Doc
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## **For Board Members**

**Purpose:** Awareness-building, governance, and risk oversight

### **Suggested Products & Formats:**

1. **Board Briefing Document** (*2-page PDF or one-pager summary*)
    - High-level framing: “AI in the Nonprofit Sector—What’s at Stake?”
    - Key quotes, equity and ethical concerns, and recommended questions to ask leadership
  2. **Short Video or Audio Summary**
    - 3–5 minutes, narrated version of the summit’s top five takeaways
    - Ideal for asynchronous briefings
  3. **Boardroom Q&A Guide**
    - Includes sample questions like: “How are we training our team on AI?”, “Are we monitoring bias and security in our tools?”
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## **For Early Career Staffers**

**Purpose:** Skill-building, confidence, and experimentation

### **Suggested Products & Formats:**

1. **“AI Starter Kit” or Toolkit for Nonprofit Staff** **(see below)**

- Friendly, accessible PDF or microsite with:
    - Simple use cases (e.g., summarizing a report, brainstorming campaign ideas)
    - A glossary of AI terms
    - List of tools mentioned (ChatGPT, Copilot, Midjourney, etc.) with example prompts
    - Links to “Lunch & Learn” slides or recordings
  - 2. **Interactive Prompt Writing Guide**
    - Google Doc or Canva zine-style guide
    - Includes editable templates, best practices, and examples from CHCF or Dreamwriter
  - 3. **Skill-Building Workshop Series or AI Office Hours**
    - Format: Zoom sessions or in-person workshops, led by internal champions or partners like Whole Whale
    - Topics: “How to Write Great Prompts,” “Using AI in Grant Reports,” “Fact-Checking AI Output”
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## **Cross-Audience Bonus Formats**

- **Digital Resource Hub (Notion, Google Site, or Wordpress Page)**

A single destination with versions of all content above, sorted by audience type
  - **Social Graphic or Share Card Series**

Highlighting quotes like “AI augments, it doesn’t automate away your thinking” for use on LinkedIn, Slack, or newsletters
  - **Printable Poster or Desk Reference**

“AI at a Glance” infographic (tool names, principles, do’s/don’ts, quotes)
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Here’s a draft outline for an **AI Starter Kit for Nonprofit Staff**, designed to demystify AI, build confidence, and offer immediately usable tools and tips—especially for early career professionals or anyone just getting started.

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# AI Starter Kit for Nonprofit Staff

*A practical guide to using AI thoughtfully, ethically, and effectively in your everyday work.*

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## 1. Why This Kit?

AI is no longer just for techies—it’s becoming a regular part of how nonprofit teams write, research, communicate, and collaborate. This starter kit will help you:

- Understand what AI can (and can’t) do
  - Learn how peers across the sector are using it
  - Try out safe, simple experiments in your own work
- 

## 2. Key Principles from the AI Summit

- **Start with your mission, not the tech.**
  - **Use AI to *augment*, not replace.**
  - **Small, safe experiments go a long way.**
  - **Keep people in the loop—especially when it matters.**
  - **Center values like equity, accessibility, and transparency.**
- 

## 3. Easy, Everyday Use Cases

Task	Try Using AI To...	Tool Ideas
Summarize reports	Generate executive summaries or FAQs	ChatGPT, Claude

Draft emails or blogs	Get a first draft you can edit	ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot
Improve accessibility	Generate image alt text or simpler summaries	Midjourney + ChatGPT, CAP's Alt Text workflow
Translate content	Turn English copy into Spanish, Vietnamese, etc.	ChatGPT (with human review!)
Create graphics	Brainstorm visual ideas or generate campaign images	Midjourney, Canva + AI

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## 4. Writing a Great Prompt: Quick Tips

Use the **“What / How / For Whom”** format:

“Summarize this 10–page healthcare report into a 150–word summary for a general audience with no technical background.”

- ✓ Be specific
  - ✓ Include tone or audience details
  - ✓ Give context (paste in source text or describe goal)
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## 5. Try These Prompt Templates

### To brainstorm:

“Give me 5 campaign slogans to promote vaccine access in rural areas.  
Tone: hopeful, community-centered.”

### To summarize:

“Summarize the following into a two–paragraph overview for a funder update.” (Paste content after)



### To rephrase:

"Rewrite this for a 9th grade reading level, keeping it engaging and clear."

### To generate alt text:

"Write alt text for a chart showing rising teen mental health hotline calls from 2019 to 2024."

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## 6. Trusted Tools to Explore

Tool	Use	Notes
<b>ChatGPT</b>	Drafting, summarizing, rewriting	Free + Pro options
<b>Claude</b>	Long document analysis	Friendly tone; handles big uploads
<b>Midjourney</b>	Art, illustrations	Great for campaigns, needs Discord
<b>Microsoft Copilot</b>	AI inside Word, Excel, Outlook	Enterprise access only
<b>Pluralytics</b>	Message tuning for values	Useful for audience testing
<b>Datawrapper</b>	Charts with accessibility focus	Not AI, but often used alongside

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## 7. Where to Start: Low-Risk Experiments

- **Revise old web copy** with AI to improve clarity and tone.
- **Draft tweets or LinkedIn posts** using AI, then edit.
- **Create summaries of old reports** to reuse as email blurbs or handouts.

- **Pilot a weekly “Prompt Lab”** with colleagues to share experiments.
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## 8. Learn With Others

“This didn’t take a job. It made us able to do more, faster.”

— Jamie Perez, Center for American Progress

Start small and share what you’re learning:

- Join (or start) an AI working group or Slack channel
  - Ask for “lunch and learn” sessions from colleagues or partners
  - Document what works for your team—and what doesn’t
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## 9. A Few Things to Watch Out For

- **Hallucinations:** AI can sound confident and still be wrong—fact-check always.
  - **Bias:** Be mindful that AI reflects the biases of its training data.
  - **Privacy:** Don’t paste confidential info into public AI tools.
  - **Dependence:** Don’t let AI replace your judgment, voice, or creativity.
-