

The 8 Stages of the GAI Revolution: Where Are You on the Curve?

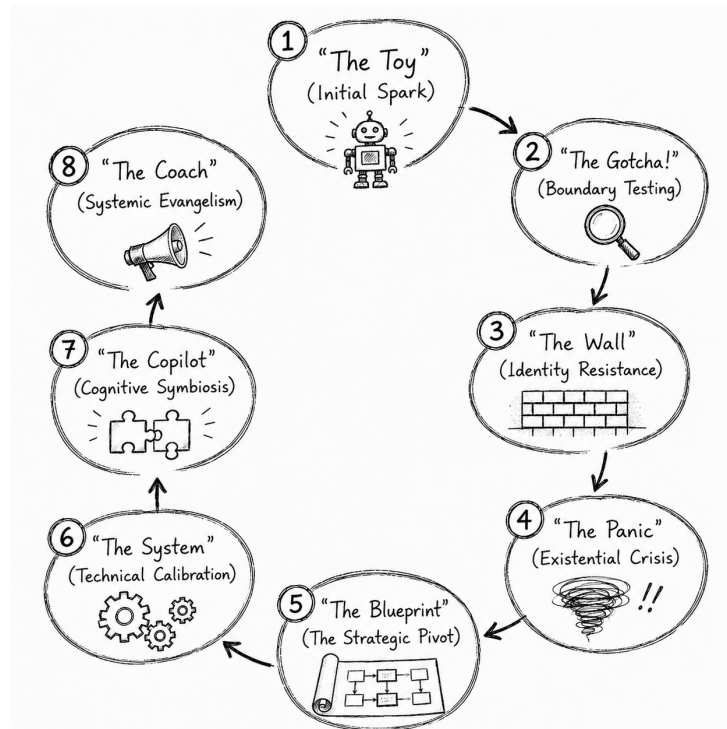
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July 24, 2026

It is complicated to explain what *Generative AI* (GAI) is. But simply, traditional AI are systems built to perform a specific intelligent task—such as facial/voice recognition, fingerprint matching, or self-driving. However, GAI systems are built to interact with people through natural language, generating content and orchestrating many different tasks on their behalf.

Thus, GAI is a technology breakthrough that has brought a new era—an era where we can use our own natural languages to interact with machines, control computation as well as automation with traditional AI. You **chat** with GAI where each question/commnet by you is known as a **prompt**. In addition to containing vast amounts of data and information on existing knowledge, GAI systems can also create new original content.

These two aspects combined became so powerful and useful that many aspects of technology and our daily lives are being transformed.



GAI Adoption Stages

Yet, the GAI revolution isn't just a tech shift; it's a psychological roller coaster. When machines can suddenly converse, compose, reason, code, design, and analyze in seconds, humans don't just change their ways—they also adapt their emotions. Most people don't move from “never heard of it” to “expert user” overnight. Instead, we go through distinct stages of learning and feeling. Co-developed as a psychological roadmap for the GAI era, the *GAI Adoption Stages* pairs intuitive milestones with the formal mindsets we all experience.

Read through the following adoption stages and ask yourself the diagnostic questions to find out exactly where you—and your friends/coworkers—stand today.

Stage 1: “The Toy” (Initial Spark)

The Vibe: Treating GAI like a fun digital novelty or parlor trick.

The Behavior: You treat GAI like a magical talking dog. You ask it to write a poem about cats in the voice of a pirate, or generate a funny picture. It is highly entertaining, but it doesn't feel like something that impacts real life.

Diagnostic Question: “Have you tried asking ChatGPT to write a silly rap song or a pirate recipe yet?”

Stage 2: “The Gotcha!” (Boundary Testing)

The Vibe: Intentionally feeding the GAI riddles or niche work tasks to expose its flaws and feel relieved.

The Behavior: The skeptic inside you wakes up. You give the GAI a highly complex, niche math problem or logic riddle from your specific job. When it gets it wrong or *hallucinates* (goes off the deep end), you laugh, breathe a sigh of relief, and think your job is perfectly safe.

Diagnostic Question: “When you deliberately try to trick the GAI and it makes a mistake, do you feel like your job is safe?”

Stage 3: “The Wall” (Identity Resistance)

The Vibe: Digging your heels in, pushing for workplace bans, or venting about how tech kills human creativity.

The Behavior: As the technology noticeably improves, frustration sets in. You might actively avoid using GAI tools, write angry social media posts about how “real talent” is dying, or fight for strict corporate policies to ban GAI entirely from your workflow.

Diagnostic Question: “Are you actively avoiding GAI tools or wishing your organization would just ban them entirely?”

Stage 4: “The Panic” (Existential Crisis)

The Vibe: The stomach-drop realization that a new GAI update can do your years of training in five seconds.

The Behavior: The “Oh No” moment. A major new model drops, and you watch it translate a massive document, write flawless code, or draft an enterprise strategy instantly. You feel paralyzed, deeply anxious, and wonder if your degree or career path is on the brink of obsolescence.

Diagnostic Question: “Are you secretly terrified that recent GAI updates will make your career or degree obsolete?”

Stage 5: “The Blueprint” (The Strategic Pivot)

The Vibe: Mapping out a survival plan based on what GAI can do versus what human traits it completely lacks.

The Behavior: Survival instinct replaces panic. You take out a pen and paper to separate what the machine can automate (data crunching, drafting) from what it cannot touch (empathy, human relationships, final accountability). You choose to double down on your unique human value.

Diagnostic Question: “Have you figured out which parts of your job you can hand off to GAI so you can focus entirely on high-value human skills?”

Stage 6: “The System” (Technical Calibration)

The Vibe: Stopping the “magical conversation” and treating GAI like a raw data processor with strict rules and templates.

The Behavior: You stop talking to the GAI like a human assistant and start treating it like a highly precise calculator. You master context windows, feed it raw data templates, and enforce strict formatting rules. You stop asking it to “be creative” and start engineering its output.

Diagnostic Question: “Are you building structured *prompts* (input questions to GAI) with raw data, strict rules, and clear constraints instead of just asking casual questions?”

Stage 7: “The Copilot” (Cognitive Symbiosis)

The Vibe: Seamlessly mixing GAI use in your daily activities so it feels invisible, like typing or using the internet.

The Behavior: The tool becomes entirely invisible because it is woven into your usual routine. You keep a GAI tab open on your browser all day. You seamlessly pass it repetitive heavy lifting, while you spend your actual energy on strategy, ethics, and final creative judgment.

Diagnostic Question: “Is your GAI tab open all day as an automatic assistant for heavy lifting while you handle the final judgment?”

Stage 8: “The Coach” (Systemic Evangelism)

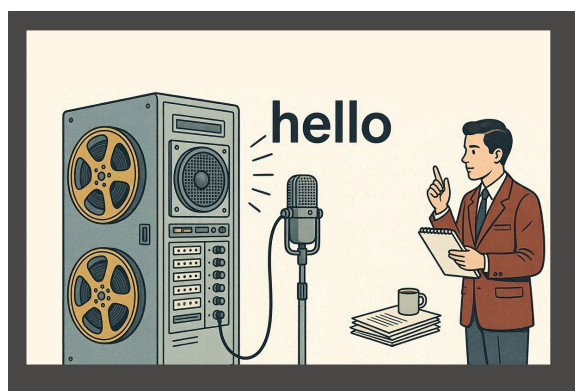
The Vibe: Building corporate guidelines, creating prompt templates for colleagues, and pulling others into the future.

The Behavior: You look around and realize that if your team doesn’t adapt, the whole organization falls behind. You become the department champion. You build prompt libraries for your coworkers, lead workshops, and actively help your friends step over “The Wall” and into the future.

Diagnostic Question: “Are you actively spreading the word, training or helping others to adopt GAI faster?”

A Confession from the Author

The author also has a strong personal emotional connection to the GAI revolution.



A Vision Formed in 1967

In 1967, Paul arrived in the United States from Taiwan, fresh out of college, to enter the Ph.D. program at MIT on a full scholarship with no service obligations. He decided to pursue computer science and joined MIT’s Project MAC (Multiple-Access Computers) research community. His first term paper explored the concept of a *natural-language interface for computers*.

That was a far-fetched idea at the time. Computing has since taken many enormous steps forward. **Nearly sixty years later, the GAI revolution has made that idea a reality for all of us.**

The Takeaway

Wherever you are on this list, remember that progression isn’t a race—it’s a process. The goal isn’t to become a GAI programmer; the goal is to shift from viewing GAI as a threat to viewing it as infrastructure. By identifying your current stage, you can demystify the technology, conquer the career anxiety, and start dictating how the tool serves you, rather than worrying about when it will replace you, or worse yet, being afraid that GAI would rule the world and enslave humans. On the contrary, the GAI revolution might just bring some effective solutions to problems we have created.

Note: This article is part of our ongoing *Computational Thinking* (CT) blog published in *aroundKent*, an online magazine. Other enjoyable and engaging CT articles can also be found in the author's book *Becoming A Computational Thinker: Success in the Digital Age*.