

TRAIN THE TRAINER

What's all this AI fuss about?

Tuesday 28 April, 2pm • Brian McColm



Four things, one hour

1 · What it is

pages 3–6

In plain English, and why it isn't the same as Googling.

2 · What it's doing

pages 7–12

To your family, your grandchildren's school, your doctor, and jobs.

3 · Having a go

pages 13–19

On a computer, on a phone, and how to ask so you get a good answer.

4 · Staying safe

pages 20–26

What not to type in, what it gets wrong, and the scams built with it.

Stop me whenever. Ask the same question twice — the second answer is usually better than the first.

Everything on this list gets answered today

About AI itself

What is it, really?
Is it just Googling?
Does it cost money?
Will it get things wrong?

About being safe

Can it spy on me?
What if I do it wrong?
Is it taking over?
Will it replace my doctor?

About using it

Can it explain a letter from the hospital?
Help with recipes?
Teach me something?
Write my emails?

These are your students' questions, in their words. Not one of them is silly.

So what is it?

A very well-read assistant who has read almost everything, and will talk to you about any of it.

You type a question in ordinary words. It answers in ordinary words. That is the whole interface.

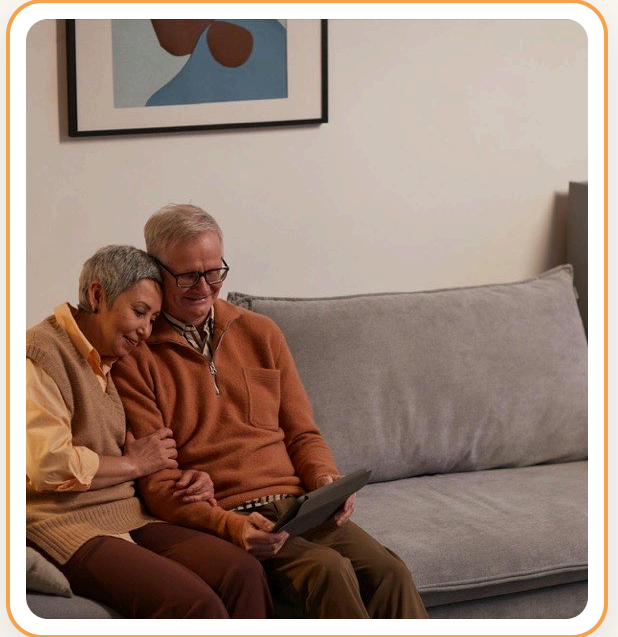
You don't need to know how it works to use it – any more than you need to understand electricity to turn on a light.

A knowledgeable friend

One who happens to have studied medicine, law, cooking and gardening – and is never busy.

A library that answers back

Ask a question, get a plain answer. No shelves, no catalogue.



WHY NOW

This is one of the big ones

Every few generations something arrives that changes everything after it. We are standing in one.

1440 · Printing

Knowledge stopped belonging only to the people who could afford a scribe.

1880s · Electricity

Light, refrigeration, hospitals. Everything downstream of a switch.

1990s · The internet

Everyone, everywhere, connected at once.

And now this one — which is happening in your lifetime, not your grandchildren's.

It is not the same as Googling

Google

Finds pages. Hands you a list of blue links. You go and read them and work the answer out yourself. Everybody gets the same list.

AI

Has a conversation. Writes an answer for your situation. You can say “simpler” and it tries again. Nobody else gets your answer.

Google is the library catalogue. This is the friend sitting next to you.

That is the single most useful sentence you can give a student. It resets what they expect before they type anything.

PART TWO

It is already in your family

This is not a technology story. It is a story about the people you talk to on Sundays.

You

Shopping, banking, health, keeping in touch. Quietly, already, in things you use.

Your children

In their thirties and forties. It is changing what their job is and what is expected of them this year, not one day.



Your grandchildren

In the classroom now. It is shaping how they study, write and think.

Understanding it is how you stay in the conversation with all three.

What is actually happening in schools

What it gives them. A patient tutor at any hour. Help with writing at ten at night. Real support for a child with dyslexia. Less paperwork for a teacher.

What worries people. Is it cheating? Is it doing the thinking? Teachers were handed it without training. And not every family has the same access.

A Year 10 in Sydney can type “explain photosynthesis like I’m twelve” at eleven at night before an exam, and get a lesson. Free.



A second pair of eyes that never gets tired

Finding things earlier

Australian radiology is trialling tools that read a chest X-ray before the specialist does, and flag what to look at.

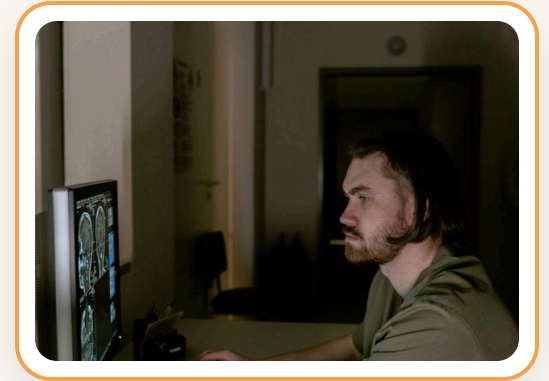
Giving time back

Writing up consultation notes, so the doctor is looking at you rather than a screen.

Alongside your doctor. Never instead of them – and the doctor always makes the call.

Watching overnight

Noticing a patient's numbers drifting, and telling a nurse before anyone would have noticed.



And it is taking jobs. Say so plainly.

Your students' children are living this. Pretending otherwise costs you their trust.

Amazon

around
30,000

Microsoft

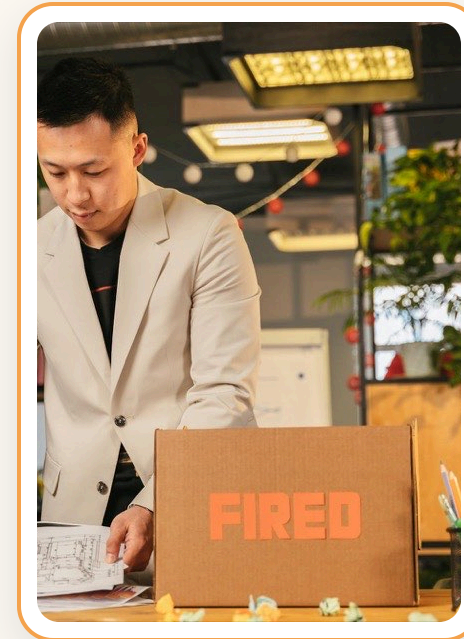
around
15,000

Meta

around
15,000

Salesforce

around
4,000



Cuts announced over the past two years, and still running. Not all of them are AI — but a great many are named as AI by the companies themselves. **Check any figure the morning you use it.**

What you can tell them to do about it

Use it, don't fear it

The people keeping their jobs are the ones who picked it up first.

Keep the human part sharp

Listening, judgement, leading a room, being kind. None of it can be automated.

Stay in touch with people

Most jobs still come through somebody who knows you.

And think three years ahead, not thirty. What am I learning this year, and what does it let me do next?

PART THREE

There are three, and they are all free to start

ChatGPT

The famous one. A good all-rounder, and the one your students will have heard of.

Gemini

Google's. Already sitting in Gmail and on Android phones.

Claude

What we are using today. Built to be careful and straight with you, and the easiest to talk to.



No card, no cost, no commitment. Any of the three will do everything in this hour.

Let's have a go, this minute

1 • Go to claude.ai. Type it in the address bar at the top — not into Google. Press Enter.

2 • Find the box at the bottom. It looks like the box you send a text message from, because that is exactly what it is.

3 • Type a sentence and press Enter. Ordinary words. No special phrasing.

4 • Read it, then ask another. That second question is where it stops being a search box.

Try one of these

“Write me a birthday message for my friend turning 80.”

“What does atrial fibrillation mean?”

“Three easy dinners using chicken.”

How you ask changes what you get

Be specific

Not “tell me about blood pressure” — but “explain what my blood pressure tablet actually does, simply”.

Say who you are

“I’m 72 and my doctor mentioned atrial fibrillation.”
The answer changes completely.

Push back

“Simpler.” “Shorter.” “Just the key points.” It redoes it instantly and never sighs.

You cannot break it, and you cannot embarrass yourself in front of it.

On the computer at home

- 1 • Open your browser.** Edge, Chrome or Safari — whichever one you already use.
- 2 • Type `claude.ai` in the address bar.** The long white strip at the very top.
- 3 • Sign up with your email.** It sends you a code. Type the code in.
- 4 • Bookmark it** so you never have to type it again.

Any computer

Windows, Mac or Chromebook. There is nothing to install and nothing to buy — it is a website, like the news.

And on the phone – where you can just talk to it

- 1 • Open Safari or Chrome** and go to claude.ai.
- 2 • Sign up with your email**, same as on the computer.
- 3 • Tap the little microphone** and say your question out loud. No typing at all.
- 4 • Share, then Add to Home Screen.** Now it sits on the home screen like any other app.

This is the one that lands

For a student whose typing is slow or whose hands are sore, speaking the question is the moment the whole thing suddenly makes sense.

What to actually use it for

Understanding a letter

The one from the hospital, the insurer, or the solicitor. Paste it in and ask what it means.

Writing something awkward

A complaint. A condolence card. A note to a neighbour about the fence.

Learning a thing

Anything at all, explained at whatever level you ask for, as many times as you like.

The rule of thumb: **if you would ask a well-read friend, you can ask this.** There is no question too small or too odd.

What never to type into it

Keep these to yourself

Bank or card numbers.

Tax File Number, Medicare number.

Passwords and PINs.

Think of a helpful stranger on the bus. You'd happily ask directions. You wouldn't hand over your PIN.

And it remembers now

New in 2026 — it carries things forward between conversations instead of starting fresh. Useful.

Also a reason to think before you type.

Not because it is a dodgy website — it is a real company with a real reputation. Because there is never a reason to.

The scammers have it too

This is the part your students most need from you, and the part they will repeat to their friends.

The voice on the phone

“Services Australia” saying your payment is on hold. The voice can now be made to order. Hang up. Ring 132 300 yourself.

The email that reads properly

Scam emails used to be full of mistakes. That tell has gone. Spelling is no longer evidence of anything.

Anyone urgent, asking for money: stop, hang up, and ring somebody you trust.

Video of a real person

A convincing fake of someone you recognise. If it is shocking, that is a reason to doubt it, not to believe it.



What it is bad at

It makes things up

Confidently, and in the same tone as when it is right. That is exactly what makes it dangerous. Check anything that matters.

It can be behind – so tell it to look

It learned up to a point in time, but it can now search the web, free accounts included. If it matters, say “check that”.

It cannot do anything

It will write the complaint. It cannot send it. You are always the one who acts.

Trust, but check. It is a very good first draft of an answer – never the last word.

“Will it replace my doctor?”

It can help you

Understand the words on the letter.
Write down what to ask before you go in.
Make sense of results afterwards.

It cannot

Examine you.
Diagnose you.
Prescribe anything.
Take responsibility.

It helps you walk in prepared. It does not replace the person who examines you.

PART FOUR

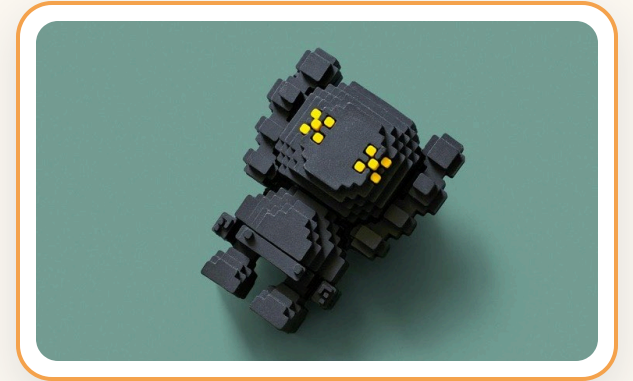
“Is it going to take over the world?”

In the films

It wants things. It has plans. It resents us.

In front of you

It has no wants at all. It sits there doing nothing until somebody types something.



Closer to a very clever calculator than to anything with a plan. Which is not the same as saying there is nothing to think about — the jobs are real, the scams are real. Just not the film.

Six rules to hand a student

Never the private stuff

No passwords, PINs or bank details. Ever.

Check what matters

Health, money, legal. Verify with a person.

You decide

It suggests. You are the one who chooses.

Ask again

“Simpler.” It never gets impatient.

If it feels wrong, stop

Close the tab. Ring somebody.

Enjoy it

It is meant to make the day easier.

TAKE THIS HOME

Five to try tonight

“Write a thank-you note to my neighbour who watered the garden.”

“My doctor said type 2 diabetes. Explain it in plain English.”

“I have eggs, cheese and spinach. What can I make?”

“A relaxing three-day trip from Sydney for two people who like gardens.”

“Explain how solar panels work, as simply as you can.”

claude.ai

Free. Any browser. Any device. Nothing to install.

THIS IS THE PART THAT IS FOR US

Using it to be a better trainer

Before the lesson

“Explain [topic] for someone who has never used a smartphone.”

“What might a 75-year-old ask about this?”

After the lesson

“Turn these notes into a one-page handout.” Then send it. Ten minutes, and they have something to keep.

During the lesson

Don’t know the answer? Ask it **together, in front of them**. That teaches the skill better than knowing would have.

Your prep, your backup and your demonstration – all the same tool.

What we covered

A well-read friend

Not a search engine. A conversation.

Already in the family

Your children's work, your grandchildren's homework.

Free, and easy to start

claude.ai, an email address, done.

Ask better, get better

Say who you are. Then say "simpler".

Never the private things

And check anything that matters.

You are in charge

It suggests. You decide. Always.

EVERY SESSION, KEPT

CP Train the Trainer

This hour is recorded and sitting on the club's own site, with the slides, the notes, and a box to ask what it didn't answer.

train.computerpalshq.com

Missing the afternoon no longer means missing the hour.



What stumped you this week?

A member asked you something and you didn't quite have it. That is not a gap in you – it is the next session, and you are the only one who knows about it.

Put it in the box. It becomes training for all of us, and the answer goes up where everyone can find it.

The whole loop

A member asks you.

You flag what stumped you.

It becomes an hour like this one.

Some of it goes out to members.

We only get better as a club if we all pitch in and ask.

QUESTIONS

There are no silly ones. Ask away.

And if one comes to you on the drive home – the box on the site is open all week.

Computer Pals Northern Beaches • get started tonight at **claude.ai**

If somebody asks about the money

Use these only if the question comes up. They are here so you are not caught out.

Who is building it

Microsoft with OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, Meta, Amazon, and Musk's xAI.

The chips

NVIDIA makes almost all of them, and went from about \$300 billion to over \$4 trillion in three years.

The sheds

Microsoft, Google and Amazon are each committing tens of billions to data centres.

Figures move fast. If you are going to quote one, check it that morning.

It is already all around them

Banking

ANZ, CBA and NAB all use it to spot a fraudulent transaction in the moment it happens.

Shopping and telly

Every “you might also like” on Amazon and Netflix.

Farming

Australian farmers flying drones over crops to see which paddock needs attention.

Most of your students have been using it for years without being told.

THANK YOU

Go and have a play with it

Nothing in this hour needs remembering. The site has it all – the video, the slides, and the box for the question you think of tomorrow.

train.computerpalshq.com

