How Garkane uses AI and how it won't

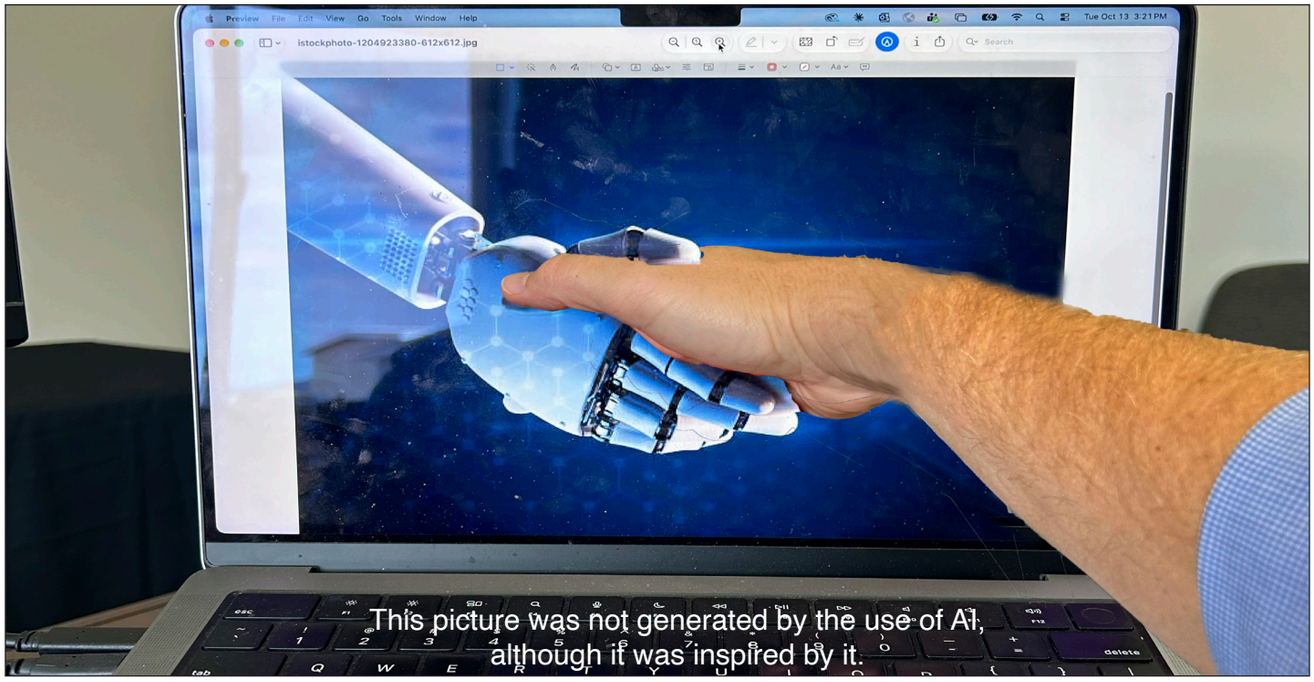
Garkane has had many discussions about the benefits and dangers of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. AI tools and resources offer Garkane many opportunities to improve service, operate more efficiently, strengthen reliability, and better serve our members. Like any tool, however, AI works best when it supports good judgment rather than replaces it. First and foremost, we want to preserve the cooperative values that have made Garkane what it is, by providing families and invididuals great jobs in small town communities, and providing electricity safely and affordably.

There are almost endless tools that provide endless resources to utilize AI, but we want our members to know that we are utilizing it responsibly.

One of the first questions we ask ourselves is how AI use will affect our members and our staff?

Many organizations have reduced customer service staff, while relying on chat bots for customer service, outage reponse, and communication by phone and text. At this time, we belive the best customer service, is human service, so we have no intentions in replacing customer service staff with AI bots.(1332301)

While we don't foresee reducing staff, we do see fantastic options for greater employee efficiency with the help of AI tools by summarizing reports, organizing information, utilizing tools for better planning and cost management, and making complex information easier to find and understand. Reducing time spent on routine tasks allows employees to focus more on members, fieldwork, safety, and other responsibilities that require human attention.



This picture was not generated by the use of AI, although it was inspired by it.

The second question we ask ourselves is what problem is it solving?

We see great breakthroughs and benefits helping our staff analyze electricity demand, wholesale power costs, vegetation management tracking, equipment maintenance and long-term load growth. These tools help tremendously in making budgeting decisions and infrastructure investments. AI can also provide tools that help in communicating complicated subjects, including rate structures, cost-of-service studies, power supply agreements, and electrical safety. AI can help translate technical information into plain language, making it easier for members to understand decisions affecting their bills and their cooperative.

The third question is more philosophical, but still important, and that is how it will affect humanity?

There is a lot of philosophical debate on the benefits or downsides of AI use. We never want to lose the ability to think for ourselves, to design, and create things of value that come from human ingenuity, rather than using AI to replace the heart and soul in our day-to-day work. There is happiness and progress that come from addressing a problem and solving it using our own minds. We have fears that AI could limit the progress and joy of humans doing their own problem solving. We look closely at what can be helpful and what could be hurtful. Human connection is another factor we consider. We never want to isolate ourselves so much by using AI, that we lose the ability or desire to connect with one another. We believe there is purpose and meaning in interacting with our employees, and our members.

There is also environmental and resource costs with the increase use of AI, comes the increase use of data and data centers that require huge amounts of electricity load to run the AI tools. We take that into major consideration as well.

Most importantly, we want our members to know that we will never utilize AI tools to make critical decisions involving electrical safety, system protection, switching operations, outage restoration, or other high-consequence activities without appropriate engineering controls and human oversight. We will never replace established safety procedures with AI Tools. We will never compromise our members data, we will never take critical decision making out of our employees hands, and we will never put our members or employees at safety risk because of the use of AI. The best use of AI is not to replace people, but to help them do their jobs better.