AI: What It Is (And Isn't)

What is AI?

AI is software that learns patterns from lots of examples, then uses those patterns to make predictions or produce content. It isn't a thinking robot; it's more like very advanced autocomplete like you'd find on your phone while writing a text message.

How does AI work?

1 Learn

The system is trained on huge amounts of text, images, or data.

2 Find patterns

It picks up how words, images, or facts tend to relate to each other.

3 Predict

When you ask a question, it generates a likely response one piece at a time.

What AI is good at

- Drafting and summarizing text
- Brainstorming ideas
- Explaining things in plain language
- Sorting and finding patterns in large amounts of information

What AI gets wrong

- It can state false things confidently
- It can reflect biases in the data it learned from
- It doesn't truly understand or know things the way people do

Tips for smart use

- Check important facts against a trusted source.
- Don't share private or sensitive information with AI tools.
- Treat AI answers as a first draft, not a final answer.
- Ask clear, specific questions to get better results.

Want to learn more? Ask library staff, email digitalservices@wblib.org, attend a tech workshop, or schedule a tech tutoring session.

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