

A Discussion With Mairéad Pratschke

AI Frontiers - Conversation with Prof. Mairead Pratschke

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Don Cameron: Welcome to the AI Frontiers Podcast, A Dialogue with Tech Pioneers hosted by Stanford University Technology Training. I'm Don Cameron. Joining me is my colleague, Dong Liang, also of Technology Training. We are thrilled to have with us today, Mairead Pratschke, an AI strategist and advisor at Mairead Pratschke Limited, visiting professor at the LSE Data Science Institute, Research Fellow and advisory board member at the AI Institute for adult learning and online education. Mairead is the author of *Generative AI in Education*, offering critical insights into AI's impact on society, work and learning. Mairead, we appreciate you taking the time from your busy schedule to join us today.

Mairead Pratschke: It's my absolute pleasure. Thanks for inviting me, guys. Great to see you.

Don Cameron: No problem. We want to start off with talking about your history and working with technology and education with Gen AI now at the center, and what first sparked your interest in AI for learning?

Mairead Pratschke: Well, I've spent my entire career in digital education. So I actually started back in 1999 creating online courses in Canada. So I was doing digital education before I did anything, before I did a PhD, before I became a professor. So that's always been kind of my starting point anyway, and I suppose my career has been watching us go from web two to now web four. You know, the transition in technology has been a transition that my own career has, I've been part of it, and I've gone through it and witnessed it and taught and done research as part of that. So AI again, of course, as you know, AI itself is not new at all. AI is older than I am, thankfully. But Gen AI, of course, is the newest version of AI that we're all talking about today. And I

suppose I jumped into talking about generative AI because I saw how I saw the impact it was having on my colleagues and educators who maybe didn't have the same digital background that I did, and they seemed, a lot of people, seem to be quite unnerved by its affordances and what it could do. And I thought that maybe someone like me with a background in digital pedagogy and learning design might be able to ground some of what we would do as educators in in that background. So that's that's why I jumped into working on Gen AI. But of course, we've also always had AI in our learning systems, and we've been talking about AI for many decades.

Dong Liang: It's been a while since I read your like wonderful book, and I know is that the first thing that we all struggle with is, how do we call this new thing? Right? The generative AI is the term that you decide to use. You settle down. I'm sure you, you, you thought about this like, what are my options in my my own profession, I sometimes use, you know, AI in general, sometimes I use large language model. But you know, there are new developments. So large language model may soon be not the only, you know, player in town, Generative AI, it's a good term, but I have not decided myself to adopt this to my use, because some of the things are just like a little bit off that line. For example, like, if you thinking about diffusion model, should we say they're generative? They are not. I don't know. Well, you know, it's just like a open question. I don't, I don't have a, you know, a good term to use, but I want to hear your reasons behind using this term.

Mairead Pratschke: Using the term generative AI, I'll be honest with you, I very unimagatively just called it what I heard people were calling it. I mean, we had symbolic AI, we have predictive AI, and now we have generative AI. I mean, it's to be honest with you, there's a lot of things I quibble with, and I question that's not one of them, and I tend to think of generative AI, you know, as you say, there's lots of different model types. They're improving, they're diversifying. We have large language models, we have multimodal models, we have action models, we have world models, we have a whole smorgasbord of models now, but I suppose that the common feature, even though they all, you know, they all work differently, is that they're becoming more intelligent. They're more integrated into the tools that we use, and they are affecting what we need to think about, I suppose, as educators. So I yeah, I don't, I don't worry about the term too much. And of course, I should, sorry,

I should add the term as well. Of course, generative describes its affordances, right? And that's actually something that's really important in terms of how I talk about using it. The generative and the social affordances of so called generative AI are what distinguish it from earlier forms. Terms of AI and also what make it so different for educators from the digital tools of the past.

Don Cameron: Speaking of the terminology, some people are saying that we're not using AI like a tool anymore. We're more like partnering with it. And can you break down the structure, but this kind of hybrid approach about partnering with AI instead of just using it as a tool?

Mairead Pratschke: Yeah, I'm one of those people. And just building on our last question, that these affordances are exactly why. So it was pretty clear to me quite early on that even though there were many comparisons to Gen AI as a calculator, you know, just the latest tool, I felt, even in the early days, that that was very much done to kind of make people feel safe. It was something familiar. We've suffered these disruptions before, but it didn't really capture, for me, actually, the impact that Gen AI had. So I never really loved that comparison. And I suppose it was really when GPT 4 came out and we saw the way the capabilities were improving so rapidly. And then when we had voice mode, of course, more recently, but when we had that kind of an announcement where it said, Oh, GPT can now see and hear, you know. And I was watching what was going on with robotics, and I was watching, you know, early discussions about world models and understanding the world through vision models and things like that. And I was thinking, no actually, what's happening here is we're building something that's much more like a presence that can see, that can hear, that you can speak to, that you can understand. And the more time went on, the more obvious it became to me that even though we're told as educators not to anthropomorphize AI, because there's lots of bad things that happen when you do that, that is still how it's appearing in our world. It's how it's being presented to us. And I think really, more so now than ever. Maybe two years ago, that wasn't clear, but it is clear now

Dong Liang: I want to, I want to follow up on that. I think, I think I want to say that I'm in complete agreement with you on that regard there, and I can also

see there are some people already in the field who who hold the same thought. Well, the question for me, because I'm not an academic, is that, what can I do to, for example, make tools to to enable this, to facilitate this right now, as a, you know, as an, although this is a powerful core there, but the only way you can interact with is that to have a chat with me. That's obviously not enough. It has a lot of other problems. Doesn't have persistent memories, you know, it has hallucinates or not. So a lot needs to be done before you can arrive at a stage where you think, Okay, this is now my lawfully illegal partner, so I can have a life with this collaborator. So I very much want to make tools to make that happen. I also have some radical views of how writers can, you know, the career of writing can change in the future by having such a helpful, you know, partner in writing, because AI is like, so powerful in writing, and then if we don't leverage that power, we're just missing a lot. Still, there are a lot of questions in that, so I just don't want to get into that, but just to share my perspective on this.

Mairead Pratschke: That's an interesting one, because that second point that you made about writing, I think, is the one that would actually get a lot of people's backs up in academia in particular. So it's really interesting to hear you making that point. You know, I'm in a humanities faculty. Yeah, my PhD in history, you know, I'm a writer. And, yeah, exactly, exactly is my, is my thought process. So I actually don't use AI for writing at all. I hear, I hear you, and I think in industries where writing is, where it's more being used in an instrumental sense, you know, business writing, etc, you don't have that emotional attachment. And maybe you're not using it in terms of processing your learning and going through stages of comprehension and analysis, then it's fine, but it's really interesting. I've been watching the just even here in the UK, there's been some talk about Sam Altman's recent post about GPT 4.5 and the creative writing abilities. And we have a writer over here called Jeanette Winterson, who wrote a book a few years ago called 12 Bytes, which is great, great collection on women in AI. And she is very much on the side of AI as an alternative intelligence, is what she calls it, and that, you know, she welcomes this idea of there being other intelligences in the world. And there's a piece on the Guardian, our newspaper here published in Manchester, just from two days ago that where it they shared the short story that GPT 4.5 you know, created, quote, unquote. And the pushback to things

like that is always really interesting to watch. Some people are just viscerally opposed to it, vehemently.

Dong Liang: So many times in the history of technology. So it's nothing new there, in there, they're going to push as hard as they can and for as long as they can. But technology, you know, has this power. They're going to crush everything on their past. And the reason I say that my view on this is a little bit radical is that, you know, I might even imagine the future where you don't have to do sentence level writing, but doesn't mean that human, human beings have no role to play in this writing, the craft of writing, but we're going to be doing some other things, not just like a sentence level crafting. So, so that's, that's a future that I'm almost excited to see.

Mairead Pratschke: I sometimes liken it to language and language learning. You know, I'm from a country where our first language was not English. I speak English now because of the history of my country. I was in Portugal last week, and everyone's English is really good in Portugal, and they were talking to me about the fact that, you know, it's fine to speak English all the time because it's the universal language. They recognize it in a instrumental, non emotional, functional way. That's what it's about. And I almost that that's what I mean about AI kind of encroaching on some of the things that are so much about our humanity. You know, if you're going to worry that using AI writing to create marketing copy is going to affect your identity. Well, that's a different thing, you know? I mean, I think you need to separate it. You can use it first. It's really going to be up to the individual, I think, where they where they see its use. And Dong, it sounds like you have no qualms at all using AI to generate everything. Whereas I, when I wrote my book, I very purposely, even though the book is about AI, I did not use AI for anything. And that was literally because I wanted to be sure that it was all me.

Don Cameron: I wrote an essay recently on AI and education and the different tools that AI provides, but also how people are over reliant. Sometimes there are so many tools out there in AI, especially for like within LinkedIn or you're having the AI, look at the other posts are going, what are the top 10 posts? And let's go ahead and write a post like that, but in my own words, or like my how I would write it, to make it look like I had written it, whereas I've had the conversations with folks before about using AI as a

partner, as a way to have a brainstorming session with them, to be able to work back and forth, to be able to have the AI actually ask you questions, so then you can be able to respond in your own words, and the AI can help you by putting it together in a certain format.

Mairead Pratschke: So interesting, isn't it? Because it's like, it's the distinction between, is it Claude, where you can, you know, you can give it samples of your writing, and it'll figure out what your what your voice is, right? So, of course, you can do that. You can train it on your voice, your style, and then you can everything you generate from Claude, then will will sound like you. I mean, in a way, that's a more advanced version of what we had a few years ago with what was it called word I want to say word count, but that's obviously not it. But there was an early AI writing tool that was quite popular, where students could choose they could choose spices. They were called in the app where you could choose different styles of writing. You know, like, that's all normal now. It's all integrated. You can say it. But I mean, again, do you want that? Do you want the bot to mimic you? Or do you want the experience of writing for yourself? Again, I think it's going to come down to preference. I am happy. Preference. I am happy to use AI for things like data visualization training, like you say, maybe some Socratic tutoring, maybe testing me. Maybe I'll feed it a draft of something I've written. I'll say, Can you please improve it? Tell me where I missed something. Those are very kind of, I think, actually, quite early examples of how people were jumping into Gen AI, you know, in kind of late 2022, 2023, and I think actually that's how educators started to feel a bit more comfortable with using it in the classroom. Was that they could say, okay, yes, we know it can generate an essay, but maybe in your class. Now, instead of worrying about whether students have used it, you should just use it yourself, and then your class should actually be about critiquing what the output is, for example, that was a way in, I think, in the early days, for a lot of people to become a bit more comfortable with it. And now, hopefully we're starting to see slightly more advanced uses, yeah.

Don Cameron: And nowadays, we're seeing a lot more accessibility when it comes to AI agents and people utilizing that, whatever tool they're working with.

Mairead Pratschke: Yeah. I mean, I think the accessibility potential is incredible. And there was such a focus on cheating and academic integrity in the early days for good reason. I understood the, you know, the nervousness, but it took a while, I think, for educators to actually get the message, and it was from students, in a lot of cases, students who were going ahead and using AI, for example, you know, to manage their time, to help them practice, to to get homework help, to do the things that actually helped them learn. And that's how we know now from surveys of students all over the world, that's actually how they're using AI. They're not using it to cheat, most of them, they're using it for assistance. And I've seen some great early research already on efficacy, you know, and it's. Really clear that if the tools are well designed, it does help them learn. If they use it just to automate a process, of course, it doesn't help them learn. So really, again, kind of back to, I think what Don was saying about, you know, using AI in certain ways. It's about how we decide to design the tools, to use them in a pedagogically sound way.

Dong Liang: I have two school age kids, and then I noticed that sometimes their teachers put this in their syllabus. If I detect, for whatever reason, you're using AI, I'm not gonna just try to convince you you're using AI, if that's my impression, you will fail this class. So some people do have a very strong opinion against the use of AI, and then, they are good reasons. If you, if you're over relying on the AI, then you just, like, lose the disability to to coin your own sentences. But, you know, I just want to, I promise we will go into education. But I just was one. Last point I want to make about writing is that, what do you think writing is really about? You know, for me, writing is about ideas. Ideas, they are amorphous. They don't have to have a fixed shape. And ideas can be expressed in different languages. Ideas are above the languages. So in my view, that it is okay to use AI to to basically just like, run this last mile for me, because I already have those ideas, ideas of mine. But for some people, you, you really enjoy working with those words. You're like, there's there's terms. That's the worst missed, right? So this is something you self identify with that it will be, you know, profanity, just to take that away, I understand that. So writing means a lot of things. Means different things for different people. So that's, you know, that's a future I'm not completely sure you know about. However we go back to this idea, like when photography emerged, right? Like nobody like it, painters especially don't like it, but

doesn't matter. You know, your job's been taken, so you're going to have to move on to something else.

Mairead Pratschke: Again, I think, honestly, Dong, it comes back to your role in your context. So you mentioned you had two school aged kids. I mean, I would not want to be, you know, I don't want six year old kids using AI to do things they need to be learning to do. I mean, that's just not on at all, for obvious reasons. If you're teaching a rhetoric class, or you're teaching a class, a class in cultural theory, or you're teaching a class where you have to actually analyze the use of words, then of course, that you know the art and the science of the writing is critically important, and you have to interrogate that, and you have to do it. But in, for example, a chemistry class where you, you know, it's the chemistry that's important, and you the writing is just the expression of your experiment. If the writing that Gen AI generates to represent what you've done, well, then I've got no issue with that whatsoever. You know, because your focus is getting the results of your experiment out there. It's not writing it in a way that you would if you were, for example, an English Lit major. So again, it's all about context and use.

Don Cameron: You mentioned earlier about the, you know, this high def calculator, it can now be made available to us. But also we have the advanced reasoning with the latest versions of Chatgpt and also Deepseek. And can you talk a little bit about how the advanced reasoning has evolved within the AI tools?

Mairead Pratschke: Yeah, it's really interesting. I, you know, started talking about this back last September. I think it was the first time I was in Cambridge last September, and it was just after, oh, one had been released. And I was watching, really carefully, the discussion. Then it was quite clear, of course, that this was the new branch, and that things were going to head off in another direction. And again, for me in education, I suppose the thing that really stood out to me was, oh no, we were just starting to get a grip on, you know, kind of traditional, quote, unquote, gpts, large language models. And now we have reasoning models, which is going to make things more potentially scary, but also way more interesting for academics. You know, the way that I presented it to people at the time was, of course, we had been talking about things like prompt engineering and prompt transformation and

then all that for the last couple of years, chain of thought prompting. So it was very easy to make the leap from saying, you know, we used to have to do this ourselves with large language models, working with them, using things like chain of thought prompting or other techniques to get what we want. The critical difference here, you know, without getting too techy, on an audience, was, you know that now you can see how the machine is thinking, because it's using this test time compute, and it's inference stage and but I felt like again, for what I really do is I talk about this stuff to people, for people with people who are not experts in AI, you know. So it's really a lot of it too, is about making those technical details digestible and comprehensible for people who, frankly, don't want to learn all about test time compute, who don't care about embedding, who don't really want to have to learn all of those, you know, those new tools. That new language, but they do want to understand this, the significance of it. So I think people understand the difference between models getting better because the parameter size is growing compared to model performance improving because the model has been trained to think for longer. That is something that makes sense. We understand the difference between big is better, bigger is better versus think more especially in academia, right? So, and then, of course, we had the Deepseek moment a few months ago, which was really, that's when it kind of hit, I suppose, hit hit the public consciousness that reasoning models were now in the mainstream. Though. I also think the deep seek moment was much more about open source and cost and innovation as much as anything else, but that those are, those are all parts of that moment, I think. But now it's what I'm finding really interesting, is that, of course, now Anthropic released a hybrid model, which they were talking about doing a few weeks ago, and it's out there now. So now we have both of them, and we have models where the model itself will decide, you know, does it want to use a reasoning model, or does it want to use the more kind of traditional GPT at various for various different tasks? So again, as I think Dario Amodei said in an interview, it's just making it easier for us, the user, to decide the model might decide for you, whereas before we would decide, though, I have to say, actually think there's some merit to us deciding, because I always want to know what I'm choosing and why, but maybe everybody won't want to, you know. So the reasoning, that whole reasoning branch, and how it's developing, is really, really interesting. Clearly, it's got so

much potential, of course, for scientific discovery, for research. I mean, I listened to, I listened to a podcast or an interview just this morning talking about what's happening with robotics. And I was really struck by, you know, what's going on with Google's new Gemini robotics, what's going on with figure who's doing they're doing amazing stuff with helix and the the vision models. And they were talking about this mixture of reasoning at one stage and another model at another stage. And that really What's critical is that the machine is deciding what to use when. And I thought this is exactly what we're doing as well, except it's happening in embodied AI. So we'll see. We'll see where we're going right. About a year ago, people were saying neuro symbolic would be the next thing. Now it looks like it's deep research and deep, sorry, reasoning models and traditional LLMs. And I think we'll be talking about world models a lot more as well. You guys have Fei Fei Li over there, so I don't need to tell you all about her, but I think what she's doing with World models is really, really interesting as well. So I'll be, I'll be watching that. Yeah,

Dong Liang: You mentioned something, something. Just want to follow up on that. The cloud 3.7 they have this. They want to do things a little bit differently and then open their eyes so they will say, Okay, we have the same model, but you can just ask it to think longer. You know, I think we if we are at the point where the model itself can make a, you know, assessment of your question and then decide to go different paths. That will be fantastic. But we're not there yet. Right now, you still have to choose, oh, is it like 3.7 or like 3.7 thinking? So that's awkward. So I've been using both, like a lot, intensively, encoding, and I don't perceive like a strong, you know, progress, you know, towards, you know, in the past that models have been using so, so I'm not sure, you know, I'm, I'm not sure reasoning is the past that will leads us to the final glory, but it may be one tool that we can pick up on the on the route. I don't know.

Mairead Pratschke: You would know that better than I would, because 3.5 is very much as you know you're, you're someone who codes, that's, that's its value, that's what it's I mean, that's what anthropic are promoting it as, whereas for someone like me, I wouldn't even really be able to judge that, because I'm I was vibe coding before it was a name, you know, before it was a phrase. I always...

Dong Liang: There's just so much you can do with Vibe coding. You just get stuck somewhere very soon.

Mairead Pratschke: Yeah, no. But, I mean, I was making, I was playing around with developing things with, you know, artifacts, with Anthropic artifacts last year, but it never quite finished correctly. You know, it's that quintessential thing where it sounds like it's going to make an amazing app for you, and you get 70% of the way there, and it looks great, but it doesn't deploy the way you want. So you're learning to co-develop, or co-design with an AI tool, but it's still not quite where it says it's a good learning experience. Yeah, yeah.

Dong Liang: And then there's a new tool that we can probably talk about little that's also a tool coming from China called Manus. Yes, yeah. So I've been trying this, but their server is so crowded these days, everybody's trying to use it, almost like a Deepseek. And then it never finished anything. I assigned it to it. I asked it to develop a E Learning course, and I always finished somewhere, like a 70% and then it was the computer will crash and they lose every progress.

Mairead Pratschke: I just want to know, how did you get a code? Because I. I can't, like, it's very hard to get a code to test it out. I literally, before I joined this call to talk to you guys, I read the review of Manus in the MIT Technology Review, and some people are raving about really good article. You should check it out. And she was comparing how it performs compared to deep research. And she, again, she compared it the same way that Ethan Moloch did way back in the day to like a slightly drunk, or, I don't think she said drunk intern, but she said, you know, an eager, but not perfect intern. And I think the kind of summary was just basically that it needs a bit more direction. It needs to be corrected quite a bit. And I think she was running out of running out of compute. At one point, the machine basically said we're to stop interfering and giving more instructions. But I haven't had a chance to check to test it. I know it's being billed as a, you know, a general agentic AI, but without testing it, I don't, I don't know. So if you have a code, please give me one.

Dong Liang: I just ask them nicely. So what can I say? My assessment right now is, it's not a drunk intern is a boring intern. So you can do things very

diligently, but in a very, very boring way. So not, not like, not gonna take my job. So, yeah, unfortunately,

Mairead Pratschke: Yeah. Well, I remember last year, it was Kevin Ruiz. He wrote a piece for his New York Times, for the New York Times, and it was like a sequel to what he had written about being in the crazy chatbots in the early days. And, you know, all of the hoopla about the Chatbot trying to get him to leave his wife. And he wrote kind of a sequel last year, and basically saying that the chatbots had gotten too boring, that they'd been kind of, they'd been reeled in, maybe because they had attracted attention for behaving too badly, and now we had to calm them all down so you sound you sound like you're on that on that train.

Don Cameron: Your book also covered a lot of comprehensive ground in the landscape of AI technologies. And I know you mentioned before that you're looking more towards the present and the past and not being able to foretell the future, but based upon what you've worked on so far, what do you think will happen within the next five years in AI technologies? But also, what are some things to watch out for in 2025?

Mairead Pratschke: So if you listen to industry, we all know that agents are the biggest game in town. That's what everyone's talking about, agents and efficiency, because that's industry. Industry needs efficiency. I'm really watching what's happening with robotics. I think that embodied AI, and the way these new models are appearing in in like the one that I just mentioned in figures figure out to helix, for example, Geminis, that combined with what I'm seeing from Google, Deep Mind, the AI scientists occur as AI scientists, things like that. I think the agentic, agentic AI combined with the deep research and then potentially robotics integration of these models, even world models, I think that's going to catapult us again into just another level of capabilities. I don't want to say understanding, or AGI or anything ridiculous like that, because I'm not qualified to say when or if or how that would happen, but I think that the trajectory that we're on is going to continue. There's no reason for model, you know, the diversity of model types to slow down or stop. I would love to see more small language models that you can download and use in a more environmentally sustainable way, that you can use in places where they don't have good access to Wi Fi, or you

can use it offline. I'd like to see developments like that happen more, and I'd like them to hit the news more, but I don't know if they will. So that's really the first thing in terms of capabilities and integration. I think that that will, those will continue, you know, the diversity of model types and capabilities across other web four tools and those model types that I talked about, I think hopefully I see I'm in Europe. So this is interesting. It's slightly different conversation, but the deep seek moment for us also kind of awakened the potential, probably for more innovation in open source and more of a conversation about the costs of innovation, which for us is very important, because, you know, we have kind of one big, famous European AI company. It's Mistral, you know, whereas the a, you know, the AI companies in the States, there are many, and of course, as we've seen loads in China now, that are extremely competitive. So I think, you know, we have the EU AI act over here as well. And we also have a new a new initiative called Open Euro LLM, which is a project to develop open source, large language models that allow you to work in and with the 30 languages in the EU so they're models that are going to be. Design to reflect and allow us to work in the kind of diversity of the cultures and languages that we have in Europe, which I think is brilliant. So again, I want to see a lot more of that, because when I hear about initiatives like that, I think now that's a way that I could see introducing AI into schools in a way that feels like it's heading in the right and responsible direction, you know, where, if a student, you know, uses Basque at home, or if they speak Gallego, or they speak Catalan, or they speak Britain, you know, they speak a regional language that, of course, by definition, is not normally going to be represented in a large language model, because the data sets are too small. But I see us moving in those directions, and I think that's really, really good to see. I'm also watching similar developments in North America with initiatives like the, what's it called abundance, indigenous abundance, or abundance intelligence? Is there something it's called, it's Canadian Initiative, where they are looking at, again, representing First Nations and indigenous knowledge in models. So I'm interested in all of these in the sense of, you know, I want to see AI being much more democratized, in the sense of people having access to models that reflect their own cultural values and where they come from and the languages they speak and what they you know, because that, of course, has been one of the biggest issues for all of us outside the USA, we're not American, and yet we're using models that are

trained on data that is overwhelmingly North American in its origin. So for us in and lots of other places, you know, in the global majority countries, they need LLMs that also represent their cultures and their values. So that's something I really hope to see more of developing. And then finally, in terms of education, you know, I just really hope that educators start to well, not start to adopt it, but frankly, I want educators to have what they need to learn about it. I want access for everybody that is fair, that is open, that is safe. I want infrastructure. I want spending from governments that will allow educators to have equitable access to large language models and Gen AI tools. And that means that means funding, and it also means time for educators, time for educators in their workload, to get together in communities of practice, to experiment, to share, to learn together, so that it's not just another thing on their to do list, so that they can share and they can learn together in a way that is supported and supportive. So those are some of the things I would like to see happen that I would think we'll see happen and might happen.

Don Cameron: And what kind of advice would you give those institutions where we have teachers who may not want to move forward with embracing AI as a partner when it comes to their classes?

Mairead Pratschke: Yeah, I think this is why I always bring it back, actually, to the leaders in the institutions. They have to make the situation safe for them. They have to ensure they have access to models and tools that are safe to use, that feel like they are, if not, fully sustainable. For example. Maybe they have examples of maybe they have access to tools that are smaller. Maybe they learn how to prompt or how to use Gen AI in a more sustainable way. Maybe they learn about prompt caching, for example, they learn about how to have the model remember everything that you've told them before, so they don't have to use all of their memory up telling it new things every time. So I think it's that combination of AI literacy on the one hand, learning how to use it in a way that is sensible, that works for them, that is responsible. But again, that goes back to leadership, because that doesn't happen without the funding and without the models in place. So I look at places like Michigan, for example, that built their own private LLM. They had the funds to do it. Not everybody does. I look at school boards that have created partnerships with AI companies. I look at countries Estonia has, now has a partnership with,

with open AI, the country of Estonia, to work with 15 and 16 year olds on certain areas of education, not not everything, all the time, but I see potential for partnerships, for collaborations, but also where the funding is there to build your own models and tools on open source that if you can afford to do that, but I think there's the key, again, is that there's choice, and then I think leaders need to make some choices based on what their own context is, and then that will allow educators to feel like they are actually free to experiment in a way that won't put them or their students, data, safety at risk, in a way that they feel supported. That's really it. It's going to be about creating the context for them to do that. I think.

Don Cameron: Thank you.

Mairead Pratschke: You're welcome.

Dong Liang: What's your plan for the next five years, for example, you know, this book is out, and then, great work, and then shall we just write a sequel? Because there are some new developments we need to include.

Mairead Pratschke: You know, there's one thing I've learned in my career trajectory, and that is not to make plans. I'm one of those people who tends to kind of take opportunities where they pop up, and I'm a big believer in serendipity, so I'm not going to I'm not going to predict the future. I will say that I want to build something, and I'm hoping to build something based on the ideas in the book. So rather than a sequel from the book, I would like to bring some of those ideas to life in a way that educators can use it and practice the ideas and actually implement them themselves. So I'm looking at building something myself, and I will let you know if and when that happens.

Dong Liang: That's interesting. I'm genuinely interested. Maybe we can collaborate on that.

Mairead Pratschke: I mean, that would be amazing, if you'd like to. I think, to be honest with you, that book was written as a guide. It was never written as, you know, a deep academic tome. It was supposed to be a conversation starter. It was supposed to be a kind of a giving people some of the frameworks and the foundations they needed to jump in and start experimenting. And it's very much a especially a few of the chapters, 3, 4, 5, you know, I have a digital framework. I have some ideas for learning theories.

I have ideas for how you might use them. I would like to bring that to life in something interactive that people can actually use with AI tools to actually push it to practice. So yeah, that's my dream for the book right now, and that's as far as I've gotten with my life plan.

Dong Liang: Yeah, sounds good.

Don Cameron: Thank you again for taking the time today to meet with us for today's podcast.

Mairead Pratschke: I really appreciate it. That was a very fun conversation and so completely unexpected. I really enjoyed it in the best possible way, unexpected. Thank you guys. All right, let's keep in touch. For sure, take care. Bye, bye.

Don Cameron: That brings us to the end of this episode of AI Frontiers: Dialogue with Tech Pioneers. We hope you enjoyed our conversation with Mairead Pratschke. Thank you for listening, and until next time, stay curious and keep exploring the frontiers of AI.