
AI Patterns to Watch

↓ Insight



AI moved from novelty to necessity in 2025, and the rules changed with it. These four patterns define the new landscape:

1

AI Can Lead to Expanded Capability

AI delivers more than efficiency — it delivers agency. At a moment when people feel less capable and in control, AI restores a sense of personal control and potential.

2

From Tool to Collaborator

Conversation changes everything. AI is still seen by most as just a tool — but the more people talk to it, the more its role as a trusted partner will take shape. This will lead to unexpected use cases that go beyond functional utility.

3

The Familiarity Trap

Familiar interfaces lower barriers to adoption, but also create blind spots. For instance, when AI interfaces resemble familiar tools like search, people import old mental models — expecting predictive AI to work like an advanced search engine.

4

Extended Cognition

Life in the information age demands new cognitive skills that AI will massively deliver. AI expands our periphery and senses — externalizing memory, attention, and decision-making to fundamentally change what humans need to be good at.

Each shift represents an initial hypothesis on the impact of AI

SOCIO-CULTURAL INPUT

 **CONTEXT**

What is the socio-cultural context that sets the stage for big leaps in value creation?



INDUSTRY INPUT

 **SHIFT**

What is the new value that AI capabilities could enable for people?



INTERNAL SYNTHESIS

 **IMPACT**

What makes this shift transformative or disruptive in scale?

1

AI Can Lead to Expanded Capability

AI delivers more than efficiency — it delivers agency. At a moment when people feel less capable & in control, AI restores a sense of personal control and potential.

CONTEXT

Across markets, people are experiencing a crisis of agency: declining confidence in institutions, job insecurity, stalled personal progress, and a sense that systems of traditional expertise don't work in their favor.

SHIFT

AI is changing how people experience their own capability. AI systems are giving individuals new ways to clarify goals, explore options, and reduce friction between intent and action. Value emerges from the feeling that progress is suddenly more attainable and forward motion is possible again.

IMPACT

Systems that make people feel more capable and decisive in complex, high-stakes moments will earn sustained use. Systems optimized to build confidence and restore a sense of direction will become foundational — not as tools people occasionally rely on, but as infrastructure they orient around.

2

From Tool to Collaborator

Conversation changes everything. AI is still seen by most as just a tool — but the more people talk to it, the more its role as a trusted partner will take shape. This will lead to unexpected use cases that go beyond functional utility.

CONTEXT

Historically, human–computer interaction has framed technology as an instrument: something users operate, query, or command. Emerging research shows that conversational systems can elicit very different responses — encouraging turn-taking, attribution of intent, and emotional attunement.

SHIFT

As interaction becomes conversational, AI begins to function less like an interface and more like a thinking partner. People use these systems to explore ideas, negotiate uncertainty, and work through ambiguity — to shape reasoning (not just outputs) in real time. The value emerges from co-creation, rather than speed or accuracy alone.

IMPACT

Markets will move beyond utility-driven adoption toward products that support ongoing collaboration — systems designed to participate, adapt, and evolve alongside users over time. This opens space for entirely new categories of use, loyalty, and differentiation built around sustained interaction rather than discrete tasks.

3

The Familiarity Trap

Familiar interfaces lower barriers to adoption, but also create blind spots. For instance, when AI interfaces resemble familiar tools like search, people import old mental models — expecting predictive AI to work like an advanced search engine.

CONTEXT

Our research consistently shows that many people understand LLMs as “better search engines.” They approach AI expecting fast retrieval, correct answers, and citation-like certainty — assumptions shaped by years of interaction with search, feeds, and query-based systems. While these familiar frames make AI immediately usable, they also constrain how people explore its capabilities and interpret its limitations.

SHIFT

Value emerges when users move beyond retrieval-oriented expectations and begin engaging AI as a generative, probabilistic system — one that supports exploration, synthesis, and sensemaking rather than simply delivering answers. This requires a shift in how people ask questions, evaluate outputs, and understand what “good” performance looks like.

IMPACT

Markets will diverge between systems that reinforce legacy mental models — optimizing for speed and certainty — and those that help users form new ones. Products that successfully guide this transition will unlock deeper engagement and differentiated value, while those that remain trapped in familiar paradigms may see adoption plateau as expectations and capabilities fall out of sync.

4

Extended Cognition

Life in the information age demands new cognitive skills that AI will massively deliver. AI expands our periphery and senses — externalizing memory, attention, and decision-making to fundamentally change what humans need to be good at.

CONTEXT

Access to information has grown exponentially, but so has cognitive burden. People are left to hold the thread themselves, as what matters is scattered across surfaces that don't coordinate with each other. While connectivity has increased what's possible, it has also stretched human attention, memory, and judgment beyond what individuals can reliably manage on their own.

SHIFT

Rather than simply accelerating tasks, AI systems are beginning to offload core mental functions — holding context over time, surfacing relevant information, supporting judgment, and sustaining focus. The value is moving beyond faster answers toward expanding the cognitive load people can reasonably carry.

IMPACT

Extending cognition reorganizes where value sits in the market. As AI systems begin to carry context, prioritize information, and support judgment over time, advantage shifts from standalone features to platforms that people rely on continuously. Products that reduce cognitive load across journeys — not just within tasks — gain stickiness, shape decision-making, and become difficult to displace.



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