Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence at the 2025 Cambridge Festival

The 2025 Cambridge Festival, taking place from March 19 to April 4, is diving deep into the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) on both individuals and society.

As AI rapidly reshapes industries, economies, and everyday life, this year's festival provides an exciting opportunity to explore its vast potential and emerging challenges.

AI is already playing a crucial role in various fields, from improving business productivity and revolutionising healthcare to providing innovative solutions for pressing global challenges like climate change and disease management. However, as AI evolves, questions about privacy, ethics, the future of work, and equitable access to these technologies have become central topics of discussion.

The festival will explore AI's profound impact on our lives through a series of thought-provoking events designed to engage the public, researchers, and policymakers alike.

Key Highlights of the 2025 Cambridge Festival:

AI Supercomputer Tour (March 22): Visitors will have the opportunity to take a virtual reality tour of *Dawn*, the UK's fastest AI supercomputer. With over a thousand top-end Intel graphics processing units (GPUs), Dawn plays a pivotal role in advancing research in critical fields like clean energy, personalised medicine, and climate science. The tour, led by experts from the Cambridge Open Zettascale Lab at the University of Cambridge, will provide insights into how AI is accelerating scientific breakthroughs. This event is part of the Department of Computer Science and Technology **open day**.

Developing AI for Science, Citizens, and Society (March 22): The ai@cam team invites visitors to explore how AI is being developed for societal benefit. Participants will interact with researchers working on innovative AI projects, such as enhancing local government decision-making and developing AI tools to tackle climate change. This event is part of the Department of Computer Science and Technology **open day**.

Understanding Ourselves in the Age of AI (March 27): A must-attend session featuring Professor Neil Lawrence, DeepMind Professor of Machine Learning at the University of Cambridge, in conversation with Professor Diane Coyle, Co-Director of the Bennett Institute. This discussion will delve into the future of AI and its impact on human identity. The session will explore Professor Lawrence's book *The Atomic Human*, offering insights into how AI might reshape our sense of self and its role in society.

How can we harness the power of AI for public benefit? (April 2): A panel discussion featuring leading experts will explore how AI can be harnessed to transform public service delivery and solve real-world challenges in local government. This event will address how AI could support more efficient, equitable, and transparent public services. Speakers include Professor Neil Lawrence, Jess Montgomery (Director of ai@cam), and local council leaders, Liz Watts (Chief Executive of South Cambridgeshire District Council) and Robert Pollock (Chief Executive of Cambridge City Council).

Speaking ahead of the event on public benefit, Neil Lawrence, DeepMind Professor of Machine Learning and Chair of ai@cam, said: "Effective use of AI in public services could help bridge the growing gap between AI's rapidly progressing technical capabilities and our ability to generate widespread public benefit. We need to support local authorities in accessing specialised expertise from within academic institutions and other councils. Realising the potential of AI requires a thoughtful, user-centric, and values-driven approach that centres on the needs of residents. By continuing to share knowledge, collaborate across the sector, and engage the public, local authorities can build the foundations for an AI-powered future that transforms how people interact with essential public services."

The Hopes and Fears Lab: AI Edition (April 3): A unique pop-up event that encourages conversations about the potential and concerns surrounding AI. Visitors will have the chance to engage with researchers working on AI-driven solutions in fields like healthcare, creativity, and more. This interactive lab offers a platform for people to share their personal thoughts and emotions about AI, fostering a deeper understanding of its societal impact.

As AI continues to evolve, the Cambridge Festival will serve as a vital space for dialogue about its potential, its challenges, and its role in shaping both our collective future and individual lives.

For more details and to register for events, visit www.cam.ac.uk

Press images are available **here** | Festival images are available **here**.

About the Cambridge Festival
The Cambridge Festival is an annual, multidisciplinary event that brings together the University of Cambridge's cutting-edge research and creative thinking. Offering a diverse array of events across science, technology, health, arts, humanities, and social sciences, the festival invites people from all walks of life to engage with experts and explore ideas that shape our understanding of the world.

About the University of Cambridge
Founded in 1209, the University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most prestigious academic institutions. With a commitment to research excellence and global impact, the university continues to lead in education and innovation across a wide range of disciplines, fostering scientific discovery, social progress, and cultural understanding.

About ai@cam

ai@cam is the University of Cambridge's flagship mission on artificial intelligence. Leveraging the world-leading research pursued across the University, ai@cam creates connections between disciplines, sectors, and communities to unlock a new wave of progress in AI and its application to benefit science and society. ai@cam's mission is to drive a new wave of AI innovation that serves science, citizens, and society.

Press Contact
Becky Mann PR | Email: beckymannpr@gmail.com | Phone: 07739 131820

Social Media
Facebook: CambridgeFestival | Instagram: @Camunifestivals | LinkedIn: cambridge-festival
Blue Sky: @cambridgefestival.bsky.social | TikTok: @cambridgefestival

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