

2025

MASTERING AI FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING

Understand the evolving landscape of AI to leverage it effectively for your community.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



IN COLLABORATION WITH



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WELCOME

AI is reshaping the world as we know it, and community building is no exception.

Since the release of ChatGPT by OpenAI in 2022, which attracted over 100 million users in just two months, artificial intelligence has shifted from being an underground technology to a mainstream tool. From saving substantial amounts of time to performing tasks previously only possible by humans, AI is redefining how we connect and operate globally in ways we never imagined possible.

But with new possibilities come critical questions. How do we adopt AI without jeopardising member experiences? What ethical considerations must we account for? How do we implement technology safely whilst maintaining trust and ensuring data privacy?

To help you answer these questions, Discourse has teamed up with The Community Collective to bring you our **Mastering AI for Community Building** white paper. Together we've interviewed trusted community professionals, operators, CEOs, and founders leading the way. **Our goal?** To equip you with the knowledge to integrate AI effectively whilst protecting the heart of your community: the people.

Inside, we'll unpack AI's strategic value and learn from real-life case studies, such as how AI is eliminating spam overnight, connecting 100+ members across 18 countries in an instant, and improving accessibility for members with diverse needs. You'll leave with practical insights, trusted tools, and proven tactics top community leaders are using today.

AI is changing the game, are you ready to master it?

KEY VOICES

This white paper involves the contributions of 17 prominent key voices to unpack the art of mastering AI for community building. Thank you to these impressive humans who shared their perspectives:



[Rachael Silvano](#)
[@ Zapier](#)

📍 USA



[Brian Oblinger](#)
[@ Community Strategy Academy](#)

📍 USA



[Erica Kuhl](#)
[@ Gainsight](#)

📍 USA



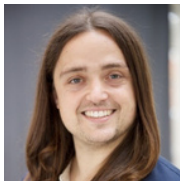
[Venessa Paech](#)
[@ ACM](#)

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[Larah Kennedy](#)
[@ Quiip](#)

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[Jeremie Gluckman](#)
[@ Sidebar & Dovetail](#)

📍 USA



[Kobie Fuller](#)
[@ Upfront Ventures](#)

📍 USA



[Diana Qian Morgan](#)
[@ DQM Strategy](#)

📍 USA

KEY VOICES

The method we used to gather these insights was to ask these individuals from diverse industries, roles, countries, and perspectives the same standardised set of questions. All responses were collected to ensure a comprehensive exploration of this topic to bring you the most pertinent and actionable advice. AI was used to efficiently summarise and identify the core ideas, extract relevant quotes and recommend suitable references for further reading. We then involved writers (**yes, real humans**) to craft these insights into this final white paper. We hope it helps you on your way.



[Steve Grace](#)
[@ The Nudge Group](#)

📍 Australia



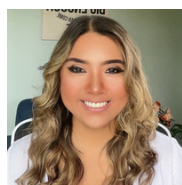
[Alan Crabbe](#)
[@ Frontcover](#)

📍 Australia



[Emily Lakin](#)
[@ Patreon](#)

📍 USA



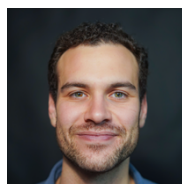
[Lia Golledge](#)
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[Zach Hawtof](#)
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[David Kobrosky](#)
[@ Intros AI](#)

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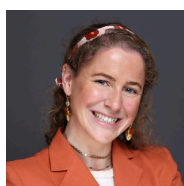
[Saif Murtaza](#)
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[Sam Saffron](#)
[@ Discourse](#)

📍 Australia



[Paz Pisarski](#)
[@ The Community Collective](#)

📍 Australia

UNDERSTANDING AI IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

By now, you're probably using AI as it's not a new concept. It dates back to the 1950s when Stanford professor John McCarthy coined the term "Artificial Intelligence," defining it as *"the science and engineering of making intelligent machines."*

At its core, AI refers to technology that performs tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as problem-solving and decision-making. Behind the scenes, AI works by processing vast datasets using algorithms to generate outcomes based on the information it's operating on.

But here's the catch: **AI isn't perfect.** Just like humans, AI makes mistakes. It's a tool that is only as good as the quality of the algorithms and data it's trained on. That's why understanding both AI's capabilities and its boundaries is essential for mastering implementation.

In the context of community building, AI can now take on tasks that once required a human touch, allowing you to scale your reach in ways previously impossible.

We all know that time is precious. But remember, AI is an extension of your work, not a replacement. Think of AI as a power tool in your toolkit. It can help you build faster and perform difficult tasks more effectively, but you still need skilled hands and clear judgement to execute. Just as a drill can't build a house on its own, **AI can't build a community without your human intervention.**

Finally, let's get clear on something. AI is not about flooding your community or social media with mass-produced, mediocre content to generate more "engagement". **It's about using it to work smarter**, freeing you up to focus on the human aspects that matter most, relationships, trust, and driving value. That's the real opportunity, not replacing the human touch, but amplifying it.

Now let's dive into the strategic value you can gain when implementing AI effectively.



THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF AI

Many communities have already embraced AI and are seeing real results. Others are still unsure, wondering if it's too risky, or truly worth investing in. Wherever you sit, it's vital to understand the key advantages AI can offer you, your team and your members, especially if you plan to spend time, money and resources implementing it.

How AI Benefits Your Team

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

No doubt, when leveraged correctly, AI can make operations more efficient by reducing manual workloads and increasing capacity to get more done in less time. It also gives you and your team greater freedom to concentrate on the strategic work that matters most.



"AI can empower community leaders to perform their roles more efficiently and effectively."

- **Kobie Fuller @ Upfront Ventures**

DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

AI quickly analyses large datasets, identifying key trends that would have otherwise been difficult to detect manually. Whether it's from member surveys, event feedback or content performance, being able to quickly identify actionable insights allows you to refine strategies, optimise processes and act upon key findings quickly.



"I am excited that it can help community builders by providing more data-driven insights. This will help make better decisions, scale and build trust cross functionally."

- **Erica Kuhl @ Gainsight**

THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF AI

COST SAVINGS

Smart use of AI leads to leaner operations and strategic spending. By speeding up manual, time-intensive tasks, AI frees up time and budget so your team can focus on higher-value activities that drive impact.



"The main benefits are saving time and manual effort by proactively managing a community while engaging the member experience, even as the community grows. This ends up saving a ton of time and resources."

- Saif Murtaza @ Discourse

ENHANCED CREATIVITY

AI tools can rapidly generate visual content that might otherwise have been a skills gap in your team. With the right tools, a single written idea can be transformed into a full suite of creative assets, from slide decks, videos, social tiles to presentations. AI makes it faster and easier to bring ideas to life across multiple formats without needing a full production team or expensive equipment.



"I can create high quality graphics with minimal editing skills to rely less on our graphic design team for the swaths of content that is required to do community."

- Diana Qian Morgan @ DQM Strategy

NEW IDEAS AND INNOVATION

AI can act as your team's collaborative assistant, helping spark fresh ideas or identify emerging trends you may not have considered on your own. This helps stay ahead to continuously refine your offerings and meet evolving needs.



"We use AI across tons of different points of contact. An example I use is having a Community Copy Editor, a chatbot I can use to help suggest ideas for newsletter and new content."

- Rachael Silvano @ Zapier

THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF AI

How AI Benefits Your Community

REDUCE MEMBER CHURN

Employing AI-powered features to regularly identify disengaged members allows you to take action sooner. This helps you retain members and reduce churn by offering more timely and relevant touchpoints.



"These technologies serve to reduce manual work and reduce overhead so that community builders can focus on engaging more deeply with their members."

- **Brian Oblinger @ Community Strategy Academy**

LONG-TERM SCALABILITY

As your community grows, AI ensures operational processes scale with you. Automating workflows such as moderation, onboarding, and content delivery allows you to manage increased member numbers without sacrificing quality or that memorable personal touch.

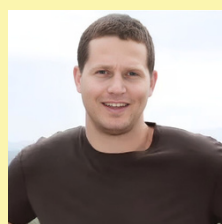


"AI will allow community managers to scale operational processes like never before."

- **Alan Crabbe @ Frontcover**

FASTER CONFLICT RESOLUTION

AI can monitor community interactions and flag potential issues before they escalate. This allows for quicker intervention, fostering a safer and more respectful environment for all members.



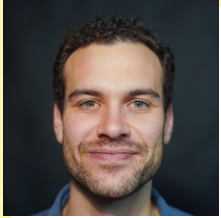
"AI can help automate community moderation by surfacing potential conflicts and proposing solutions, allowing for faster intervention."

- **Sam Saffron @ Discourse**

THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF AI

DEEPER HUMAN CONNECTION

AI can save you more time and free you up to focus on the tasks that matter most, such as building real human relationships. Spending less time on manual activities and more time providing significant value is where we want you to be.



"Community managers will become people curators—the most important aspect that AI will never be able to do is curate the right group of members."

- [David Kobrosky @ Intros AI](#)

In Summary

AI acts as a valuable tool for both your team and community. From increasing productivity to reducing member churn, these capabilities allow for a more focused approach. By ensuring your time is spent less on repetitive tasks and more on the human-centric activities that can't be replaced, you can experience the strategic benefits that AI promises.

Let's dive deeper into practical examples so you can see AI in action.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

You're likely familiar with how AI is transforming routine tasks such as writing and content creation. But AI's potential goes far beyond these basic applications, especially for community building. Let's dive into five specific use cases that focus on how AI can be harnessed specifically to strengthen and scale your community efforts.

Moderation

Whether you're moderating an online forum or managing communication platforms for members, AI can help you stay on top of conversations and maintain a safe environment.

THE PROBLEM

In a fast-growing online community with countless daily posts and comments, it becomes increasingly difficult to monitor activity and enforce guidelines at scale. Relying solely on manual human moderation can lead to delays, become overwhelming and emotionally taxing. This can result in moderator fatigue and inconsistent enforcement, ultimately negatively impacting the member experience.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

THE SOLUTION AND BENEFITS

AI-powered moderation can offer various benefits:

- **Maintain Standards:** AI can analyse vast amounts of content to help you identify inappropriate posts and automatically enforce guidelines.
- **Combat Spam:** Unwanted and harmful posts can be detected and removed instantly, reducing noise and protecting member experiences.
- **Improve Efficiency:** Routine moderation tasks can be automated, such as flagging hate speech, allowing you to focus on complex cases that require human judgment and empathy.
- **Actionable Insights:** With AI working hard in the background, detailed reports to identify emerging issues and track trends can be generated, helping you refine and improve processes over time.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

While AI-powered moderation can be helpful, it's not without limitations. Ensure you're aware of the following:

- **Algorithmic Bias:** If not carefully trained, AI can reflect and amplify bias, disproportionately targeting certain groups. Regular audits are a must.
- **Accuracy:** AI may misinterpret context, especially sarcasm or cultural differences, leading to mistakes of flagging harmless member posts.
- **Impersonal:** Automated moderation can feel cold and robotic. Balance AI with *real* human responses to provide deeper value. Especially in personal and emotional situations with your members.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

GET STARTED

If you're looking to master AI for moderation, follow these steps:

1. **Evaluate Your Needs:** Identify the most time-consuming moderation tasks, such as spam detection or recommending resources, and start there.
2. **Choose the Right Tools:** Select AI tools aligned with your goals—look for platforms offering the functions you need, such as customisable filters, real-time alerts, or human oversight features.
3. **Test and Optimise:** Pick the elements you'd like to pilot first and inform your team and members that you're testing AI in your space. Such as:
 - a. Set up AI to flag and remove posts violating rules
 - b. Create filters to send ambiguous cases for human review
 - c. Implement 24/7 AI moderation to monitor content across time zones
 - d. Set escalation rules for high-risk situations
 - e. Auto-tag posts by topic to streamline moderation and searchability
 - f. Detect duplicate questions and suggest past answers & resources
 - g. Provide moderators with AI-generated summaries of most common feedback or trending concerns
4. **Monitor and Adapt:** Regularly review moderation outcomes, collect feedback, and adjust settings to improve accuracy over time.



"Routine tasks such as moderation are now handled efficiently, either being fully automated or driving attention to bad actors only when necessary."

- Saif Murtaza @ Discourse



"AI is intended to supplement our work and needs human oversight to be accountable to mitigate bias or any harm."

- Emily Lakin @ Patreon



Pro Tip: Start small. Pilot AI-powered moderation on simple tasks, then expand as you refine accuracy and processes with feedback from your team and members.

USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

CASE STUDY: AI-Powered Moderation In Action with Sonar

Sonar's 25-Cent Solution to Spam Detection

"As soon as we turned it on, it was night and day."

- Colin Mueller, Community Manager @ Sonar

ABOUT

Sonar helps developers write better code and has built an active support community using Discourse.

THE PROBLEM

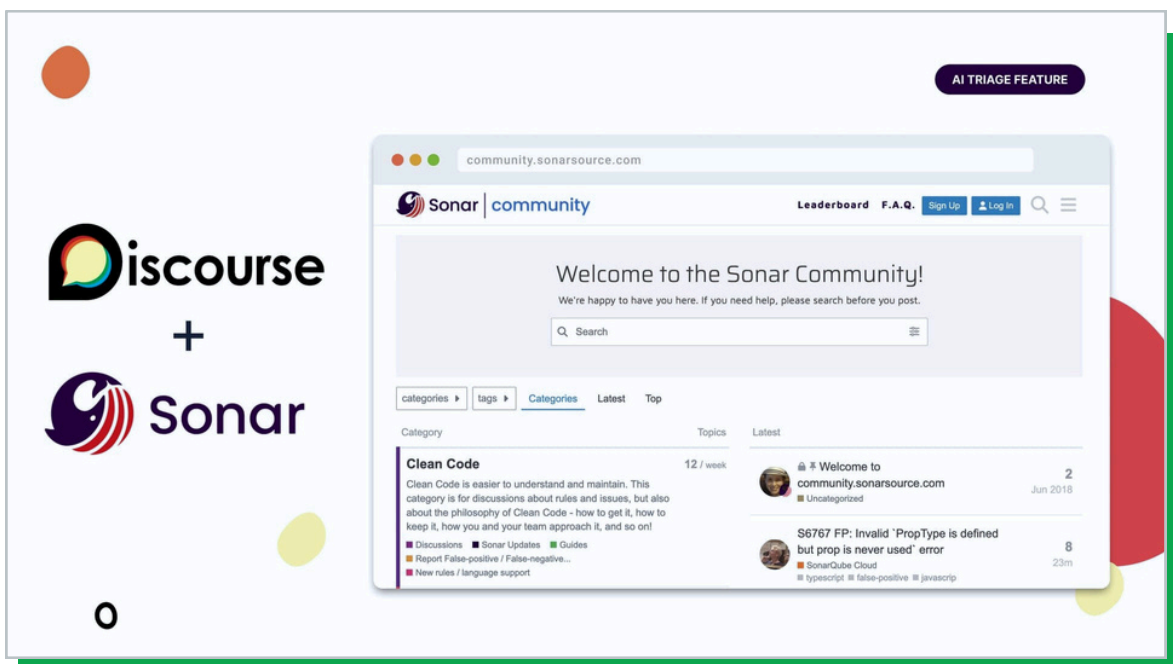
Spam wasn't a significant issue for Sonar's community, until it was. In 2024, the community was hit with a wave of spam that bypassed existing tools. Traditional mitigation strategies, such as subnet blocks, were considered but posed risks. The spam also appeared to be human-driven, rendering CAPTCHAs ineffective. Manual approval wasn't an option, as it risked stifling community momentum. "When you have a user who wants to help someone else in the community, manual approval gets in the way," Colin noted.

THE SOLUTION

Colin leveraged AI-powered moderation to tackle the spam with Discourse's AI Triage feature. The team configured the system to screen every new post automatically through a spam detector. Posts flagged as spam were moved into a hidden area accessible only by admins. This approach ensured moderators weren't burdened with reviewing unnecessary alerts, allowing them to focus on meaningful interactions within the community.

THE IMPACT

The results were immediate and transformative. "As soon as we turned it on, it was night and day," Colin shared. Members saw the spam attack vanish as if it had never happened. The AI's precision allowed admins to manage spam efficiently and transparently, maintaining the member experience and trust.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

Accessibility

An inclusive community is one where everyone can participate, no matter their language, abilities, or access needs. AI is opening up new ways to break down barriers and make sure all members feel welcome and supported.

THE PROBLEM

Not all members engage in the same way—learning preferences, hearing impairments, differing abilities, or time zones can prevent people from fully participating. Without conscious thought and planning, this can limit engagement, reduce contributions, and lead to inconsistent experiences. Without deliberate action, communities risk leaving some individuals feeling excluded.

THE SOLUTION AND BENEFITS

AI-powered tools can significantly improve how your community serves all members. Benefits include:

- **Increase Inclusivity:** Automatically generate transcripts, audio formats, and screen-reader-friendly content so everyone can access information.
- **Bridge Language Gaps:** Translate posts, comments, and live sessions in real time to serve multilingual members effortlessly.
- **Boost Engagement:** The more accessible your content is, the more people can actively contribute, leading to richer, more diverse spaces.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

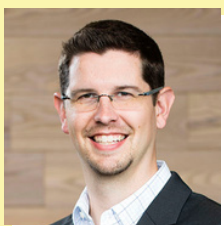
While AI can make communities more accessible, it's important to stay aware of its limitations:

- **Accuracy Issues:** Automated transcripts may miss the mark or cause confusion if not regularly reviewed and refined.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Literal translations can miss tone or context, sometimes creating misunderstandings or unintentional offence.
- **Over-Reliance:** AI should be a tool, not a replacement, for thoughtful community design. Feedback is essential for maintaining quality and trust.

GET STARTED

Want to improve accessibility in your community with AI? Start here:

1. **Assess Community Needs:** Look at where your members face the biggest barriers, whether language, vision, hearing, or cognitive load, and prioritise from there.
2. **Choose the Right Tools:** Define the capabilities you're looking for and evaluate your options. Features may include real-time captioning, language translation, text-to-speech conversion, or accessible interface design offering alternative friendly layouts for your online spaces.
3. **Test and Learn:** Pilot one new idea at a time, such as:
 - a. Leverage [Butter AI](#) for live closed captions at online events
 - b. Explore [Otter.ai](#) to automatically generate transcripts for recordings
 - c. Try [ElevenLabs](#) to turn text-to-speech in 29+ languages
 - d. Test [Microsoft Azure's Immersive Reader](#) to support members with differing reading abilities
 - e. Try [Whisper AI](#) to transcribe voice notes or podcasts into text for members with differing hearing abilities
 - f. Generate descriptions of images using [Google Cloud Vision](#) to support members with different vision abilities
4. **Ongoing Refinement:** Keep checking in with members who rely on these tools to ensure they're effective and inclusive.



"On the positive side, I do believe that AI tools have the potential to level the playing field for those with disabilities, lower language barriers, and generally improve the experience for everyone."

- **Brian Oblinger @ Community Strategy Academy**



Pro Tip: Let members know you're actively exploring AI to improve inclusivity. Share updates, invite contributions, and celebrate progress to build trust and engagement.

USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

Discoverability

AI makes search more intuitive, surfacing relevant content and connections effortlessly to help members discover the information they need quickly.

THE PROBLEM

In an active online community with years worth of discussions, finding relevant content can be difficult. Members may struggle to find what they need, leading to repeat questions, missed opportunities, and more work for your team. Plus traditional search tools often rely solely on keyword matching, leading to incomplete or irrelevant results.

THE SOLUTION AND BENEFITS

Using AI-powered search to enhance discoverability can result in:

- **Accurate Results:** Intelligent search features surface accurate results faster, even when phrasing isn't perfect.
- **Reduced Repetition:** When members find what they need easily, it reduces the number of repeat questions on moderators.
- **Personalised Recommendations:** AI can suggest relevant posts, events, or connections based on interests and behaviours. This makes the experience more relevant to each individual, before members even need to search.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

To truly master AI, you need to be aware of the risks:

- **Privacy:** Search recommendations require data analysis, so transparency and data protection policies must be in place to maintain member trust.
- **Algorithmic Bias:** AI may unintentionally prioritise dominant voices or topics, sidelining emerging or underrepresented perspectives.
- **Over-Recommendation:** Too many suggestions can feel overwhelming or irrelevant if not carefully calibrated.
- **Data Quality:** AI relies on well-structured content and accurate tagging. Without proper organisation, results may still be incomplete or misleading.
- **Platform Limitations:** Some platforms may not support advanced AI search or recommendation features, thus you may be limited by your existing tech stack to effectively implement.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

GET STARTED

If you're curious about how to apply this use case, here are 4 steps:

1. **Audit Your Search Experience:** Identify common frustrations in your community's search function. Are members struggling to find past discussions, FAQs, or the right members to connect with? Start here.
2. **Choose the Right Tools:** Select AI-powered search tools that offer the features you need, such as semantic search (understands meaning, not just keywords), intent recognition (detects what members are really looking for), and summarisation (condenses long discussions into key takeaways).
3. **Test and Optimise:** Contact a group of members and test new tools in a controlled environment. Train AI to recognise community-specific terms. If your members use industry jargon or abbreviations, ensure AI learns their meaning to improve as you go. For example:
 - a. Explore [Discourse AI Search](#) to improve search results using semantic textual similarity, not just keywords
 - b. Try [Tightknit](#) to help members navigate your Slack community more meaningfully by surfacing relevant people and content.
 - c. Add AI-powered search to your website or app with [Algolia](#)
 - d. Set up [Intros AI](#) for members to find who they're looking for with AI Search, instead of browsing member directories
4. **Align AI Over Time:** Ask members about their experience and iterate on tagging and recommendations to improve search accuracy. Regularly review analytics to see what's working and what needs improvement over time to align to you and your members needs.



"We deploy AI to better summarise messages for quicker understanding and context and deploy AI-enhanced search that better surfaces user intent over generic keywords."

- [Zach Hawtoft @ Tightknit.ai](#)



Pro Tip: Ask for help. Understand how professionals are already leveraging AI to improve search discoverability. Ask for tech tool recommendations to find trusted answers.

USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

Automation

If you're wearing multiple hats in your community role, AI can help by automating repetitive tasks so you can focus on activities only *you* can do.

THE PROBLEM

As your community grows, so does your to-do list—welcoming new members, onboarding tasks, posting regular updates, you name it. Manual workflows can become time-consuming, prone to error, and difficult to scale without support.

THE SOLUTION AND BENEFITS

AI-powered automations can ensure nothing slips through the cracks. Benefits include:

- **Save Time:** Automate routine tasks that happen on a regular basis to free up your precious time.
- **Reduce Errors:** Ensure important steps aren't missed by running standardised processes without fatigue or oversight interfering.
- **Improve Experience:** Consistent and timely touchpoints create a smoother and more enjoyable member experience.
- **Scale Seamlessly:** Reduce manual tasks and human delays to ensure your workflows remain efficient and the community scales effortlessly.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Whilst there are many benefits, keep these risks in mind:

- **Impersonal:** Relying too heavily on automation can make your community feel robotic. A balance between automated and human interaction is key.
- **Technical Set-up:** Implementation might require time, resources and support to set up effectively, especially if you're using a variety of platforms.
- **Lack of Flexibility:** Automations that aren't regularly reviewed and updated can become redundant or misaligned if goals change.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

GET STARTED

Ready to embrace AI-powered automations? Here's where to begin:

1. **Audit Repetitive Tasks:** Identify processes that take substantial time on a regular basis, such as introducing new members to each other.
2. **Choose the Right Tools:** Start by evaluating your current tech stack. Do any of your tools have AI-driven automation features you can leverage quickly? If not, research new tools that integrate well with your systems.
3. **Create Your First Workflow:** Start with a simple automation of a low-risk repetitive task first. Scale up as you gain confidence. For example:
 - a. Try [Zapier AI](#) to turn your ideas into workflows by connecting your apps to interact with one another seamlessly
 - b. Leverage [Discourse's Automation plugin](#) to automatically classify your posts and topics via AI triage.
 - c. Use [Intros AI](#) to automate email intros between members
 - d. Explore [Superhuman AI](#) to automatically write draft emails for you
 - e. Implement [Asana's AI Assistant](#) to automate prioritising community tasks and generating action items from discussions
 - f. Use [Trello's Butler](#) to organise cards and boards based on deadlines
 - g. Implement [Notion AI](#) to generate and categorise meeting notes
4. **Monitor and Adjust:** Continuously assess how automations are working. Check workflows and gather feedback to refine your approach.



"AI can help automate much of the grunt work we have managing a community."

- [Sam Saffron @ Discourse](#)



"Striking the right balance between automation and human interaction is essential, as over-reliance on AI is likely to lead to a disconnect with community members."

- [Alan Crabbe @ Frontcover](#)



Pro Tip: Caught yourself repeating a manual task for the third time in a week? Stop and automate it immediately rather than adding to a "someday" to do list. Take 5 extra minutes to save hours later. You'll feel great about it too.

USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

CASE STUDY: AI Automation In Action with The Community Collective

Seamlessly Connecting 100+ Members Across 10 Countries

"The personalised intros became a highlight for our members."

- Paz Pisarski, Co-Founder @ The Community Collective

ABOUT

The Community Collective serves businesses to build impactful communities through their coaching and cohorts that started in Australia.

THE PROBLEM

Connecting members with each other was easy when cohort sizes were 30-50 people. But as the program grew to 100+ members across 10 countries, so did the challenge of ensuring members could connect meaningful 1-1. Manually introducing members in Slack became time-consuming and difficult to scale. *"When you have 100+ people in a cohort, it's easy to miss out on meeting the right people. Plus it can feel daunting to know who to connect with,"* Paz mentioned.

THE SOLUTION

The team implemented AI-powered automations with Intros AI to deliver personalised 1:1 introductions at scale. They simply uploaded member directories and Intros AI automatically facilitated email intros between members who opted-in every week. AI scanned member profiles and made matches based on similar goals, ensuring members met the right people without the team having to decide who should meet who.

THE IMPACT

Members raved about the connections. Previous manual processes were made redundant, freeing substantial time for the team. New data dashboards were created as AI automatically tracked how many intros were made per cohort. *"The personalised intros became a highlight for our members. People even caught up in person, and some became lifelong friends,"* Paz shared.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

Data Analysis

Many of us deal with data. Whether you're collecting feedback through surveys, reviewing community discussions, or analysing engagement trends, AI can help make sense of large datasets and uncover actionable insights faster.

THE PROBLEM

It's hard to understand how your community is truly performing when key data is scattered, buried in endless comments, surveys, and separate tools. Information brings powerful insights, but only if reviewed correctly. Manual analysis can be time-consuming, error-prone and lead to missing key trends.

THE SOLUTION AND BENEFITS

Leveraging AI for data analysis can help you:

- **Surface Key Trends:** AI scans and categorises large volumes of qualitative and quantitative data to identify recurring themes, common sentiments, and member priorities, thus highlighting trends effortlessly.
- **More Efficient:** Instead of reading every response manually, AI generates summaries, visual dashboards, and clear insights in minutes.
- **Member-Led Decisions:** With a clearer understanding of what members are saying and feeling, you can prioritise improvements that truly resonate. Plus AI can automatically make recommendations to act on the findings.
- **Data-Driven Storytelling:** AI turns data into beautifully designed graphs and charts, making it easy to communicate key findings.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

AI can improve your analysis, but be sure to watch out for:

- **Skewed Insights:** If your dataset is incomplete or AI is trained on biased information, insights may be skewed. Regular checks and inclusive data collection is essential to keep findings accurate.
- **Loss of Nuance:** While AI can detect sentiment and themes, it may miss subtle emotional cues or layered responses that a human might catch.
- **Tool Compatibility:** Integrating AI analysis tools with your platform may require custom solutions or API access.



USE CASES: AI IN ACTION

GET STARTED

Ready to bring AI into your data workflows? Start here:

1. **Define Your Goals:** Pinpoint what data you want to analyse. It may be survey responses, engagement metrics, or qualitative feedback.
2. **Choose the Right Tools:** Define the features and outcomes you're looking for to achieve from the tools, such as automated theme detection, sentiment analysis, or visual chart creation.
3. **Start Small and Scale:** Run a pilot internally with your team such as:
 - a. Use ChatGPT to analyse survey responses into common themes
 - b. Test Canva Sheets to transform data and metrics into graphs or charts
 - c. Prompt Claude to generate a summary of recent event feedback
 - d. Explore AI-powered sentiment analysis with Common Room to monitor data in the background and proactively detect emerging issues, opportunities or top members in community platforms
4. **Blend AI with Human Insight:** Balance AI insights with human review to ensure accuracy and refine analysis techniques.



"When I used ChatGPT/Claude to summarize the variable responses, it summarized 500 responses into categories of topics with percentages which was extremely valuable to create strategic plans to act upon."

- Diana Qian Morgan @ DQM Strategy.



Pro Tip: Document the exact steps, prompts and tools in your analysis process to ensure it remains consistent and improves over time. Share the steps with your team for efficient use.

Now let's discover more trusted tech tools incorporating AI into their platforms.

TRUSTED TECH TOOLS

Discover trusted tech tools and platforms leveraging AI effectively to help you build impactful communities.

Community Building Tools



Discourse: Need a centralised online home for your community? With built-in AI integrations for moderation, content discoverability and more, Discourse makes it easy for your members to connect and collaborate anytime, anywhere.



Tightknit: Looking to improve your Slack? Tightknit.ai leverages SEO, gamification and automation features to elevate the Slack experience.



Butter: Looking for an engaging online events tool? Butter brings together robust facilitation features, along with AI-generated summaries, transcripts, and GIFs at the end of every session to make virtual events memorable.



Intros AI: Looking to make meaningful member connections? Intros AI automates personalised introductions via email and Slack between your members.



TRUSTED TECH TOOLS

Productivity Tools



motion

Motion AI: Struggling to keep up with all your to do list? Motion AI is an all-in-one tool that builds and prioritises your schedule, ensuring you meet deadlines and complete deep work.

zapier

Zapier: Looking to automate your workflows? Zapier's AI automation gives you one place to build, manage, and govern workflows that power your business.



perplexity

Perplexity: Need to find information on a wide range of topics? This AI-powered search engine uses advanced algorithms to sift through vast amounts of data and deliver relevant results in seconds.



Tactiq

Tactiq: Tired of juggling note-taking during meetings? Tactiq captures and transcribes meeting discussions in real-time, allowing you to stay focused on the conversation without missing any important details.

S U P E R H U M A N

Superhuman: Keen to hit inbox 0? Superhuman AI organises your inbox, writing draft emails in your voice and auto summarising content to help you get through your emails faster.

TRUSTED TECH TOOLS

Content Creation Tools



Leonardo.Ai

Leonardo.Ai: Looking to unleash your creativity with AI-generated art? Leonardo.Ai uses advanced algorithms to create artwork, turning your ideas into visual assets.



Eightify: Ever wish you could condense lengthy videos into concise summaries? This tool uses AI to analyse video content and generate summaries.

VEED

Veed: Aiming to improve your video editing skills? Veed helps you make better videos faster with their AI Video Generator tools.



Midjourney Ai

Midjourney AI: Trying to convert text into stunning visuals? Midjourney AI effortlessly converts textual descriptions into AI artwork.



Canva AI: Looking for an AI-powered creative assistant? Turn your ideas into stunning images, designs or presentations in a short conversation.

CHALLENGES & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It's clear that AI presents a multitude of benefits. However, to truly master AI in community building, it's essential for us to go even deeper on the key challenges and ethical considerations to be aware of, along with how to mitigate them.

Fairness and Bias Mitigation

The MIT Technology Review notes that bias can infiltrate AI models at multiple stages, particularly when datasets lack diversity. Bias in AI arises from systematic errors in training data, often reinforcing existing prejudices.

This can lead to misinterpreting content, unfairly flagging posts or amplifying dominant voices while sidelining minority perspectives. For example, an AI-powered moderation tool might incorrectly remove appropriate content based on flawed training data, or a discussion-ranking algorithm might favour certain groups, reducing inclusivity. To counteract this, ensure your team conducts regular reviews of AI decisions and allows members to submit transparent experiences to report unfair behaviour.



"Ethical AI starts with asking tough questions: Could this AI manipulate, disenfranchise, or deceive our members? Transparency is key."

- Zach Hawtof @ Tightknit.ai



CHALLENGES & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Misinformation

According to the World Economic Forum's [Global Risks Report 2024](#), misinformation and disinformation are now one of the top 10 global risks. Misinformation refers to sharing false or misleading content, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

For example, when AI-generated content is posted in a community, it is essential to have processes in place to validate facts before or after the content goes live. Alternatively, AI-powered bots that auto-generate responses to common member questions might pull from outdated or incorrect sources, thus providing untrue information.

Ensuring that AI does not propagate false information is a key ethical consideration. By implementing processes that fact-check and verify results as well as ensuring up-to-date sources are used, the risk of misinformation can be significantly reduced.



"There are a number of ethical considerations that community managers should be aware of, including inbuilt biases in the data the AI is trained off, and the ease at which AI can spread misinformation."

- [Larah Kennedy @ Quiip](#)



"AI hallucinates and it does so very confidently. You have to double and triple-check."

- [Rachael Silvano @ Zapier](#)

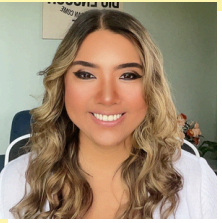
CHALLENGES & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Data Privacy and Member Consent

A 2023 survey by the [Pew Research Center](#) found that 79% of respondents were concerned about how companies use their data, highlighting the widespread apprehension around digital privacy.

When integrating AI into communities, data security and member consent are crucial ethical considerations. Members need clarity on what data is collected, how it's used, and whether it's used for AI training. Lack of transparency can erode trust and potentially lead to misuse of personal information. For example, AI-powered chatbots that assist members may unintentionally collect personal data during conversations. While chatbots enhance efficiency, they may also raise concerns about data storage and who has access to it.

To mitigate this, members should be informed when interacting with AI, with clear opt-in policies, data anonymisation, and adequate security measures to protect their information. Remember, building trust is a delicate dance; it takes years to cultivate but can shatter in a moment.



"When using AI in community spaces, protecting member privacy and upholding trust are non-negotiable."

- **Lia Golledge @ MagicBlocks.ai**



"Members trust us with their information, and that trust should never be compromised for the sake of convenience."

- **Paz Pisarski @ The Community Collective**

CHALLENGES & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Lack of Expertise and Resources

Many community teams face challenges in adopting AI due to limited expertise and access to proprietary data. An [IBM](#) report found that 42% of respondents lack sufficient generative AI knowledge, while another 42% feel their organisations lack the necessary data to support the implementation of AI initiatives.

Smaller teams, often overstretched, may struggle to integrate AI tools effectively. Without technical expertise, they risk implementing AI incorrectly or missing out on its full potential. To mitigate this, it's key to prioritise training and upskilling, or partner with third-party experts to integrate AI-driven tools effectively.



"Most community teams have neither the expertise nor the resources to embrace and implement AI."

- **Brian Oblinger @ Community Strategy Academy**

Balancing Automation with Human Touch

While AI can streamline tasks, over-reliance on automation risks weakening the personal connections that make communities valuable. Balancing automation with human interaction is key to creating a successful community.

For example, using AI to match members with mentors based on relevant goals, whilst still encouraging them to connect in real-time is a great balance between enhancing efficiency and building real relationships. Remember, it's the memorable human interactions that truly build belonging.



"Striking the right balance between automation and human interaction is essential, as over-reliance on AI is likely to lead to a disconnect with community members."

- **Alan Crabbe @ Frontcover**

CHALLENGES & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

AI's Environmental Impact

The environmental impact of AI is an often overlooked ethical consideration, yet it is crucial to understand. AI models require substantial computing power, leading to high energy consumption and significant carbon emissions.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst found that training a single AI model can generate the equivalent to the lifetime emissions of five cars. As AI becomes more embedded in digital communities, it's important to consider its environmental footprint. Acknowledging AI's energy demands is the first step toward adopting more sustainable practices that balance technological advancement with environmental responsibility.

Encouragingly, innovation is underway to address these concerns. Researchers at MIT Lincoln Laboratory have developed techniques to reduce the energy required to train AI models by up to 80%, while the University of Michigan has introduced optimisation methods that can cut the carbon footprint of AI training by up to 75%. These developments signal a growing commitment to making AI not just smarter, but also better for our planet.



"According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), a ChatGPT request uses 10 times the amount of energy of a Google search."

- Larah Kennedy @Quiip

In Summary

AI holds immense potential for community building, but it's important to be aware of the risks. A balanced, informed approach is key to using AI responsibly. By addressing these challenges, you can harness AI's value while staying adaptive. Now let's wrap by sharing practical advice to help you on your way.



EXPERT INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Now that we understand the fundamentals of AI, the strategic benefits and key challenges, let's dive into advice to ensure you can leverage it in your role today.

Do Your Research

Before implementing new tools, investigate their suitability and functionality. Ask for advice to uncover what platforms are frequently used (and not used) to ensure you're not jumping into decisions too quickly without thorough review.



"Research your toolsets. Avoid businesses with poor track records in the ethical space. Learn about and understand core ethical principles and how to design them into your communities from scratch - it's not difficult, but it takes intention."

- **Venessa Paech @ ACM**

Constantly Iterate

Test AI solutions incrementally, beginning with small tasks such as summarising discussions or automating onboarding messages. Analyse the impact and iterate based on community feedback to ensure AI is adding real value.



"Start small, test and iterate. Do the "dirty" work of really engaging person-to-person to start in order to build trust and deep engagement at the beginning."

- **Erica Kuhl @ Gainsight**

EXPERT INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Stay Informed

The AI landscape changes rapidly. Even after implementation, keep up with advancements, to ensure you're aware of any new evolutions.



"Stay curious—experiment widely and keep up with the latest advancements. Remember, don't expect the tools to be a "magic pill" that will resolve all problems."

- **Sam Saffron @ Discourse**

Prioritise Ethics

Choose AI tools that align with ethical best practices, ensuring they do not exploit data, infringe on privacy, or amplify biases.



"Look into different AI companies and providers if you are concerned about ethics. Many list out their positioning on AI ethics on their websites. Assess yourself and your team's comprehension on what AI is and what is happening in the AI market."

- **Diana Qian Morgan @ DQM Strategy**



EXPERT INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Use AI as a Complement, Not a Replacement

While AI can transform our entire workflows, it should never replace the human connection that makes communities strong. Prioritising a balance of human touch with AI-driven efficiencies will allow you to maintain meaningful experiences.



"Ultimately online communities are about human connection. We need to continue to put people and relationships at the heart. An over-reliance on non-human tools will eventually result in a decline in community health."

- Larah Kennedy @ Quiip

Focus on Solving Real Problems

Implement AI to address specific community challenges rather than as a trend-driven experiment. Identify areas where AI can genuinely enhance the experience, such as moderation, search, and content summarisation, not just using it because it's *trendy*.



"Differentiate between jobs-to-be-done that AI is well-suited for and those that require human nuance. Use AI to handle facts and automate relaying known details. Don't rely on AI to provide opinions or lived experiences—it's better suited as a guide."

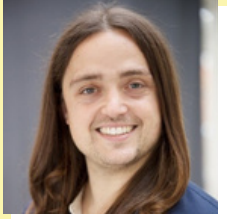
- Zach Hawtof @ Tightknit.ai



EXPERT INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Build With, Not For, Your Community

Involve community members in AI implementation by gathering feedback, testing features together, and adjusting based on real-world usage. Transparency and collaboration build trust, especially when implementing new AI-driven initiatives.



"Build with not for. When rolling out AI features it's important to bring your members along for the ride. For example, [Clay](#) rolled out AI response matching in their Slack community and announced their partnership with [Tightknit](#) in a friendly post."

- **Jeremie Gluckman @ Sidebar & Dovetail**

Balance Automation with Human Oversight

Regularly audit AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, and relevance. AI tools can assist with engagement, content generation, and moderation, but human review is essential.



"Don't rely on AI. It should be very much part of your process and it should speed things up as well as giving you insight you might not have conserved, but with all community building a personal and human touch is essential."

- **Steve Grace @ The Nudge Group**

In Summary

Successfully integrating AI into your community requires a thoughtful, ethical, and human-first approach. By being transparent, prioritising real problems, and balancing automation with human oversight, you can ensure AI plays a supportive role in your community's growth.

WORDS OF WISDOM

As a final thought, we'll leave you with these inspiring words of wisdom from our Key Voices about how they feel about the future of AI advancements in just one word.

"Optimistic"



[Zach Hawtof @ Tightknit.ai](#)

"Excited"



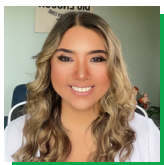
[Sam Saffron @ Discourse](#)

"Magical"



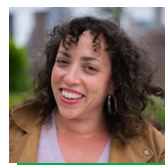
[Saif Murtaza @ Discourse](#)

"Exciting"



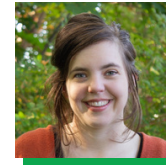
[Lia Golledge @ MagicBlocks.ai](#)

"Groundbreaking"



[Emily Lakin @ Patreon](#)

"Optimistic"



[Rachael Silvano @ Zapier](#)

"Mindful"



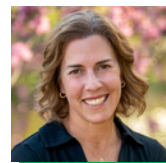
[Larah Kennedy @ Quiip](#)

"Wary"



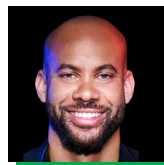
[Vanessa Paech @ ACM](#)

"Hopeful"



[Erica Kuhl @ Gainsight](#)

"Everywhere"



[Kobie Fuller @ Upfront Ventures](#)

"Elated"



[Diana Qian Morgan @ DQM Strategy](#)

"Anticipation"



[Steve Grace @ The Nudge Group](#)

"Intrigued"



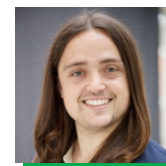
[Brian Oblinger @ Community Strategy Academy](#)

"Superhuman"



[Paz Pisarski @ The Community Collective](#)

"Optimistic"



[Jeremie Gluckman @ Sidebar & Dovetail](#)

LET'S WRAP

Together we've learned that AI offers a world of possibilities, making it easier to manage day-to-day tasks and ultimately free up time to focus on what matters most, serving your members.

Whilst AI may uncover insights and execute tasks that were once out of reach, **technology alone is not the answer.**

True success depends on using AI intentionally, in ways that align with your community's goals and values. With a thoughtful and transparent approach, **you can transform simple tools into powerful allies.**

Remembering to leverage AI as a way to enhance human connection, and not replace it, will ultimately set you up for success to master AI in your community.

Now, which word encapsulates how you feel about the future of AI?



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Discourse is the online home for your community.

We make it easy to have meaningful conversations and collaborate anytime, anywhere.

[Learn more about Discourse here.](#)





the community
collective

The Community Collective is a global community for community builders that started in Australia.

They serve businesses to build the most impactful communities through their cohort programs and 1-1 coaching.

[Learn more about The Community Collective here.](#)

Mastering AI for Community Building **2025**

Thank you to our key voices for contributing to this White Paper.

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