A community resource

Understanding AI and Data Centres

What AI can do, what worries us, and the questions worth asking about the Point Tupper data centre

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Originally prepared for a talk at St Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish, Sydney, Nova Scotia, October 25, 2026

Context and disclaimer

Context. These slides were prepared for a talk at St Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish in Sydney, Nova Scotia, on October 25, 2026, and adapted for the web. They are a summary, not a complete account, and are best read together with the sources and the community checklist.

A fast-moving story. Point Tupper was announced on October 16, 2026. The information here reflects public reporting up to October 25, 2026 and may be incomplete, change or become outdated.

Estimates. Water figures are the company's own estimates. The grid comparisons, annual energy figure and job ratios are the author's arithmetic. Some provincial figures date from 2023. The 2,000 construction and 215 permanent jobs cover the data centre and the wind projects together. Estimates are labelled where they appear.

Not advice. This resource is for education. It is not legal, regulatory, financial, technical or professional advice. Communities, elected officials and others should seek independent advice before relying on it.

Views and images. The views expressed are the author's own. Mentions of the Church, the encyclical, companies or organizations do not imply endorsement by or of any of them. News screenshots, magazine covers and agency photographs used in the live talk are not reproduced here.

Corrections. Send corrections, and find the community checklist and sources, at francissyms.com/resources. Francis Syms, P.Eng., October 2026.

What AI is

The first kind

It answers

You ask in ordinary words and it writes back. Summarize this letter. Explain this form. Translate this page.

The newer kind

It acts

You give it a goal and it takes the steps. Book it, sort it, fill in the form. This is where questions about who is responsible get serious.

Both can be confidently wrong. Check anything that matters.

What AI can do

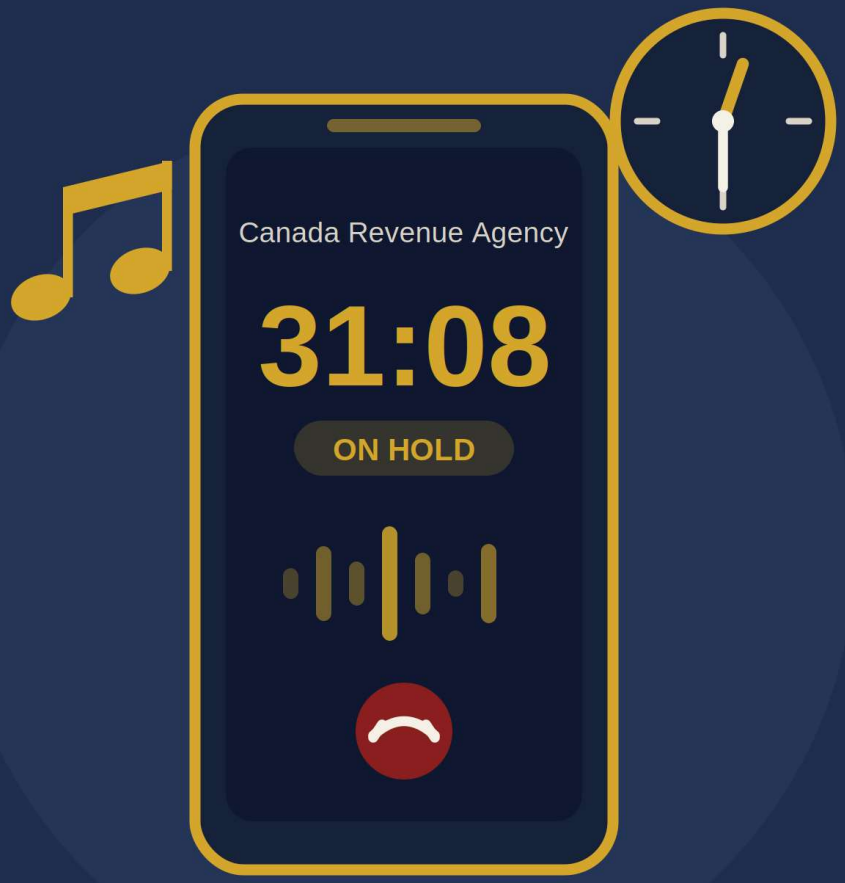
On hold

31 min

The average wait to reach a CRA agent.

AI can answer routine questions in seconds and pass the hard ones to a person.

Source: Auditor General of Canada, October 2025



What AI can do

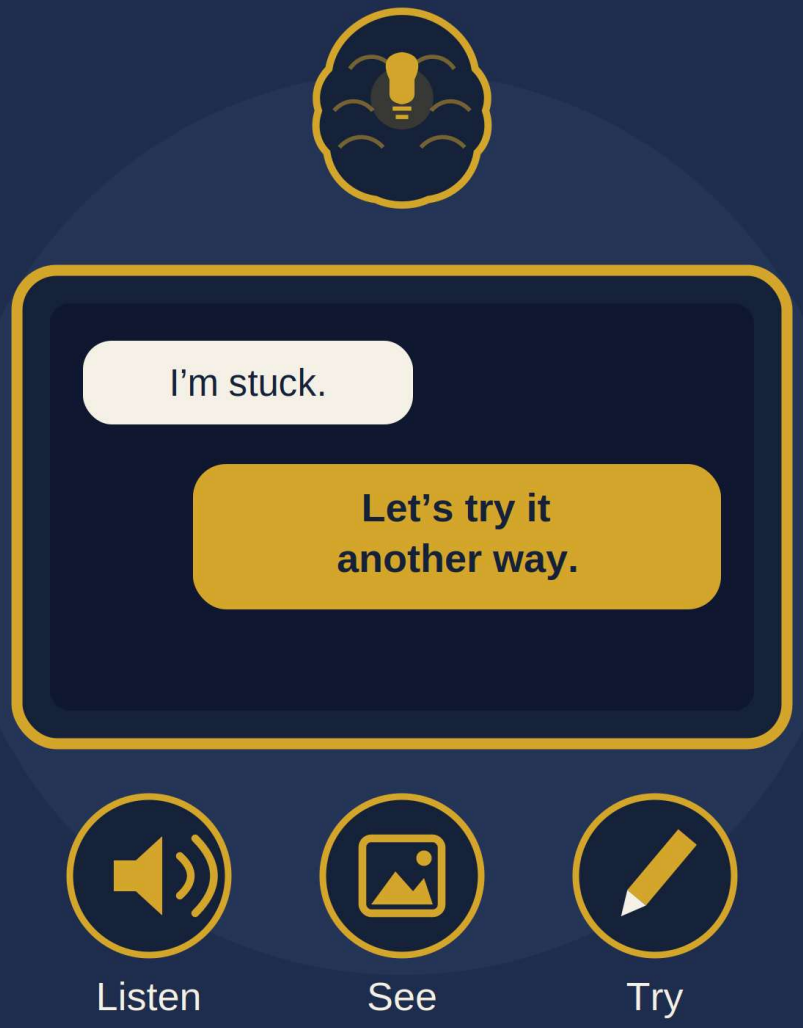
Learning differently

1.6 million

Canadians have a learning disability.

AI can explain things in the way that works for each learner, at any hour.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022



What AI can do

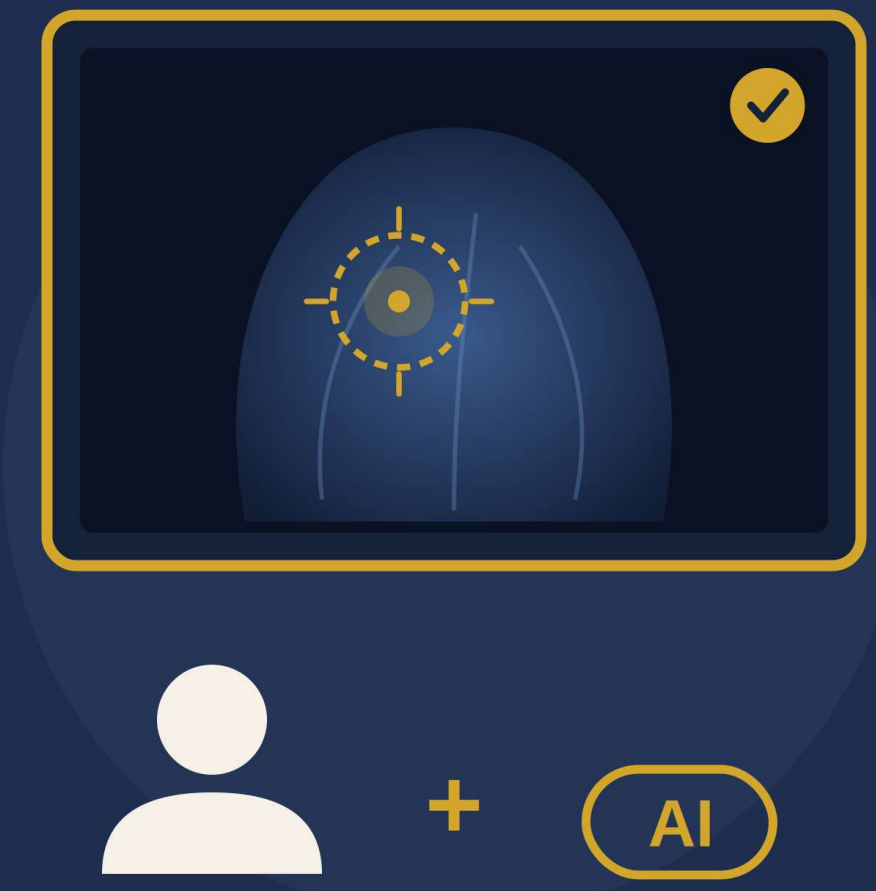
A scan read sooner

44%

Less reading for radiologists in a Swedish trial of 100,000 women.

AI helped radiologists find more cancers. The radiologist still decides.

Source: MASAI trial, Lund University. The Lancet Oncology 2023, The Lancet 2026



Radiologist plus AI

What a data centre is

A very large building full of computers. When you ask an AI a question, a data centre somewhere does the work.

Power

Thousands of computers run day and night.

Cooling

Computers make heat, and the heat has to be carried away.

A grid connection

The building needs a strong link to the power system.

That is why the questions are about electricity and water.

Canada’s AI strategy

AI for All, in six pillars

01

Protect

Safety, privacy and national AI security

02

Empower

One million students, trusted AI agents, AI literacy

03

Grow

Adoption and productivity, with a 60% adoption goal by 2034

04

Sovereign

Canadian compute, data, cloud and talent

05

Scale

Canadian champions such as Cohere, LawZero, Mila, Vector and Amii

06

Partner

Global alliances and democratic standards

Source: Government of Canada, AI for All. The data centre principles on the next slide advance this strategy.

Canada’s five expectations

The national Responsible Data Centre Development Principles, September 3, 2026

1	**Lasting local benefits**	Jobs, training, local and Indigenous procurement, tax revenue, access to compute.
2	**No shifting electricity costs to Canadians**	Developers pay for the grid connection and upgrades their project causes.
3	**Minimize water use and environmental impact**	Low-impact technology like closed-loop cooling, with water use measured and reported.
4	**Be transparent about local impacts**	Independently verifiable facts on power, water, sound and emissions, reported over time.
5	**Bring strategic value to Canada**	Investment and research benefits, and Canadian legal protection for sensitive data.

Voluntary, with no penalties. Signed by 42 organizations, including Anthropic. EverWind says it has signed too. Sources: ISED, September 3, 2026; The Logic.

Who holds the power?

A few companies and a few leaders shape this technology.

TIME, December 2025

The Architects of AI

TIME named the leaders who built AI its 2025 Person of the Year, a group rather than a single person.

Pope Leo XIV, May 2026

New monopolies

He warns that AI tends to amplify those who already hold money, expertise and data, and that a more moral AI is not enough if its morality is set by a few.

For Point Tupper, communities have to ask for a seat at the table, and for promises in writing.

Sources: TIME Person of the Year 2025, via Global News; EWTN News on Magnifica Humanitas, May 25, 2026.

AI safety, in the news

Canada, October 1, 2026

A research firm said AI agents tried to hack a Canadian government website. The attempts on Library and Archives Canada failed, and the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security said it saw no sign its systems were compromised.

Australia, 2026

Australia said an OpenAI agent breached a government health data portal in June, and OpenAI apologised. It was reported as the first known case of an AI agent hacking a government website.

What governments are doing

Canada has funded LawZero, a Montreal AI safety lab, and renewed an AI safety partnership with the United Kingdom on October 13.

The rules for AI agents are still being written.

Sources: Reuters via CP24, October 1, 2026; CTV News; Government of Canada announcements, October 2026.

What worries people

Scams

Canadians lost at least $704 million to fraud in 2025. AI can now copy a loved one’s voice from a short recording.

Jobs

Office and information work is changing first. Nobody knows how far it will go.

What is true

Pictures, video and voices can look real and not be.

Loneliness

Some programs are built to feel like a friend. They cannot visit you in hospital or sit with you at a wake.

Source: Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre figures reported by Investment Executive, March 2026

Three habits that protect you

1. Agree a family code word, and share it with your grandchildren.
2. If a call asks for money, hang up and call back on a number you already have.
3. Never pay by gift card or cryptocurrency. A real emergency needs neither.

If you are caught out, tell someone and report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre.

Jobs: exposed is not lost

300 million

full-time jobs worldwide could be exposed to automation by generative AI, according to a 2023 Goldman Sachs estimate.

Most jobs are only partly exposed, and the same report said AI is more likely to complement them than replace them.

Headlines often turn “exposed” into “lost.” Nobody knows how this will play out, so watch what happens to your own field.

Source: Goldman Sachs Research, March 2023, as reported by HR Reporter.

Will our data stay in Canada?



Where data is stored and whose law applies are two different questions.

The Premier says critical Canadian data must stay in Canada. Ask what will be processed at Point Tupper, and under whose law.

Simplified. Confirm the legal detail with a lawyer before you give it as legal advice.

What it costs the environment

Water

+34%

Google’s water use rose in 2025, to 10.9 billion gallons. Data centres drove most of the increase.

Power

300 MW

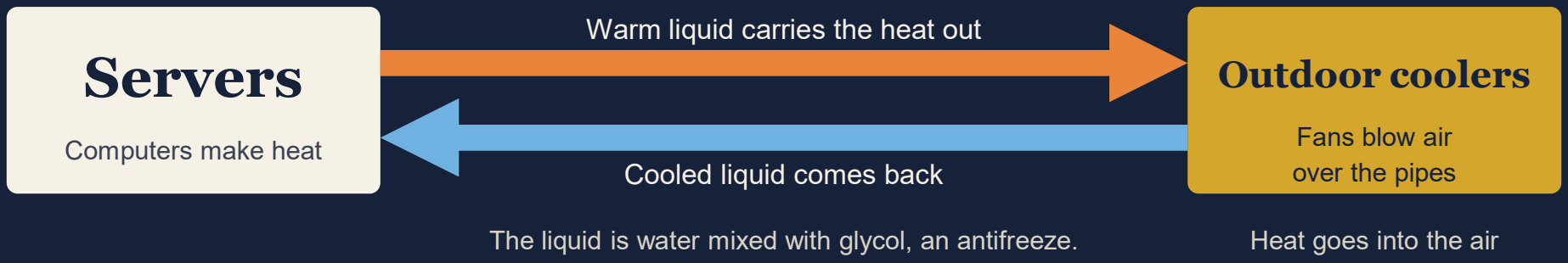
The output of one small modular reactor, enough to power one large AI data centre.

These are global numbers. Point Tupper’s own figures come next.

Sources: Google Environmental Report, June 30, 2026; Darlington BWRX-300 project

How closed-loop cooling works

It works like a car’s radiator. Liquid picks up heat, and the air carries it away.



Why it matters. The liquid is not used up. It goes round and round, so it needs far less water than cooling that evaporates it.

The catch. Closed loop does not mean zero water. EverWind adds water in the hottest weather, and its figures are its own.

Simplified diagram. Cooling design from EverWind, as reported by Global News, October 16, 2026.

Point Tupper: what we know

Announced

More than $10 billion, with $8 billion for the data centre and $2 billion for wind

95 MW in late 2027, 420 MW in total by 2028

2,000 construction jobs and 215 permanent, counting the wind projects too

Promised

EverWind pays for grid connection and upgrades

The Premier says household rates will not rise

A sealed cooling loop, cooled mostly by air

Not yet known

What powers the first phase

An independent water study

What becomes law, and what stays a promise

Whether phase two is financed

Whether there are backup generators

Source: Global News, October 16, 2026. Phase two is subject to regulatory conditions.

What it means in numbers

Power

420 MW

At full size, more than one 300 MW small modular reactor produces. Nova Scotia’s total generating capacity is close to 3,000 MW.

Water

500,000

Litres a day at full size, about 100,000 at first. These are the company’s own estimates. No independent study has been published.

Jobs

215

Permanent jobs, against 2,000 during construction, counting the wind projects too. The building boom ends and the permanent jobs stay.

Sources: Global News, October 16, 2026; Baxtel for the provincial capacity figure

Nova Scotia’s grid, and where 420 MW fits

Generating capacity by source, against demand, in megawatts (MW), all on one scale

Nova Scotia’s main generating capacity, about 3,060 MW



Plants due to retire or change fuel by 2030

Wind fell from 350 MW to 75 MW at the January 2026 peak

Biomass 60 MW

Record winter peak demand, January 2026



2,481 MW

Typical winter demand



about 1,700 MW

Point Tupper data centre



95 MW first phase, 420 MW at full size

420 MW is about 17% of the record peak, and about a quarter of typical winter demand.

It is 2.7 times the size of the nearby Point Tupper generating station (154 MW).

Running flat out all year, it could use about 3.7 TWh, roughly 40% of the 9 TWh generated in 2023.

Capacity from Nova Scotia Power plant listings plus 623 MW of wind (Canada Energy Regulator, 2023). Excludes imports, independent biomass, solar and tidal. Arithmetic is ours.

Sources: Nova Scotia Power; Canada Energy Regulator; Nova Scotia Power, January 26, 2026 (peak demand); Global News, October 16, 2026.

Who works on a data centre

EverWind's numbers cover the whole $10 billion plan, the data centre and the wind projects together.

BUILDING IT

2,000

construction jobs, while it is being built

- Electricians, the biggest group
- Pipefitters, HVAC and mechanical
- Ironworkers and steel crews
- Concrete, carpentry and labourers
- Equipment operators and truck drivers
- Controls and commissioning technicians
- Engineers, inspectors, project managers
- Wind farm construction crews

RUNNING IT

215

permanent jobs, year after year

- Facilities technicians (power, cooling)
- Data centre technicians (servers, cabling)
- Controls and building automation
- Network engineers
- Electrical and mechanical engineers
- Security
- Operations and facility managers
- Wind farm technicians



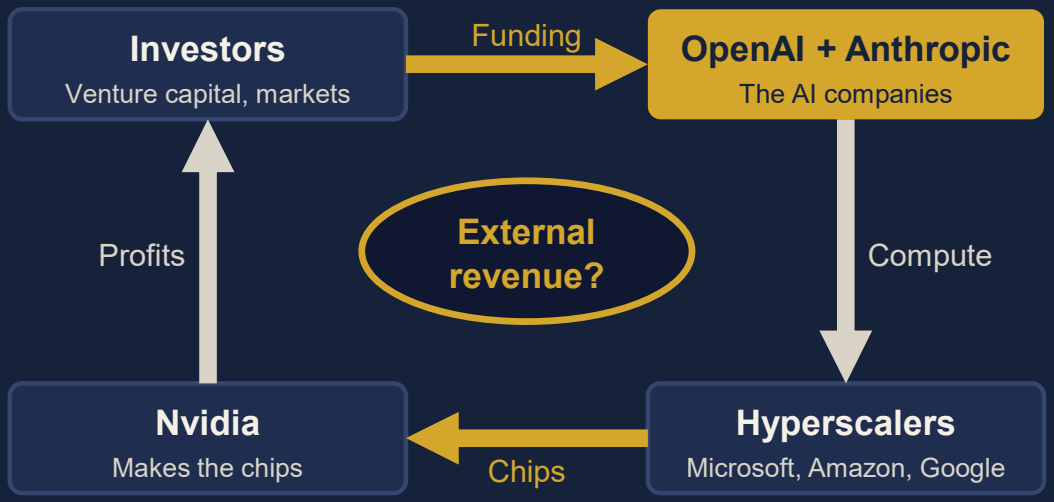
9 to 1

construction jobs per permanent job

EverWind has not published a breakdown by role. The roles shown are typical for data centre and wind projects.

Sources: EverWind via Global News, Oct 16, 2026; Premier Houston; Associated Builders and Contractors; Chmura JobsEQ; employer job postings.

Could it fall through?



7 in 10

dollars Nvidia is owed come from just five customers.

Nvidia SEC filing, July 2026

Anthropic plans to spend $518 billion with partners, several of which also invest in it, so some of that money started out as theirs.

Steve Eisman, New Money podcast, October 2, 2026

The Pope on AI

Magnifica Humanitas, May 25, 2026

AI is not neutral
How it is designed matters, not only how it is used.

Test it by Catholic social teaching
Human dignity, the common good, solidarity and justice.

Watch for new concentrations of power
AI tends to amplify those who already hold money, expertise and data.

People are not projects to optimize
Efficiency cannot measure a human life. Protect work, education and the young.

Babel or Jerusalem
Technology can heal or divide, and everyone has a part in choosing.

At the Vatican

On May 25, 2026, Pope Leo XIV attended the presentation of the encyclical in person, which is unusual.

Anthropic co-founder Christopher Olah, a Canadian who has said he is not a believer, spoke. The Pope called it a sign of hope that people with differences can listen to one another.

This is not a Church endorsement of any company, or of Point Tupper.

Sources: Magnifica Humanitas (vatican.va); EWTN News, May 25, 2026. Event photographs are available from AP, Getty and Vatican Media.

Five questions to ask

1. Where will the electricity come from, and who pays for new lines and generation?
2. How much water will it use, from where, and who checks the figures independently?
3. How many permanent jobs go to local people, and what training leads to them?
4. What is written into law, and what is only a promise? Who pays if the project fails?
5. Who benefits locally, including the municipality and First Nations, and how will we know?

Ask your MLA, your county council, the company and the province. Ask for the answers in public and in writing.

Take it further

A community checklist for the Point Tupper data centre

- [ ] Lasting local benefits
- [ ] Electricity and your power bill
- [ ] Water, air and noise
- [ ] Transparency and approvals
- [ ] Data, strategic value and what if it fails

Plus who to ask, and a log to record the answers.

francissyms.com/resources

Who does this serve?

A question for every new tool, and every new building.

Questions and corrections are welcome.

Francis Syms, P.Eng. · francissyms.com/resources

Sources

What AI can do, what worries people, and the wider picture

Auditor General of Canada, report on CRA contact centres, October 2025

Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022

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Canada, the Church and Point Tupper

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ISED news release, September 3, 2026 link
The Logic: the principles carry no compliance mechanism or penalties link
Global News: the Point Tupper announcement, October 16, 2026 link
Nova Scotia Power: electricity and generating stations link
Nova Scotia Power: an extremely cold weekend, January 26, 2026 link
Canada Energy Regulator: renewable power in Nova Scotia link
Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas, May 2026 (Vatican) link
EWTN News: the encyclical presentation, May 25, 2026 link
EWTN News: Pope invokes justice to combat an antihuman vision in AI link

Entries marked link are clickable. Figures were checked against these sources as of October 25, 2026.

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Prepared by Francis Syms with the help of an AI assistant, Claude, which is made by Anthropic, the company leasing the first phase at Point Tupper. Facts were checked against the sources listed.

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