# Getting Real on Artificial Intelligence

November 2025

vapdc
virginia association of planning district commissions

SURAVA

# Overview

- What Do We Mean When We Say ‘AI’?
- A New Alphabet Soup
- Where AI Works Well – and Where It Falls Short
- Practical Uses in Local Government

# What Do We Mean When We Say AI

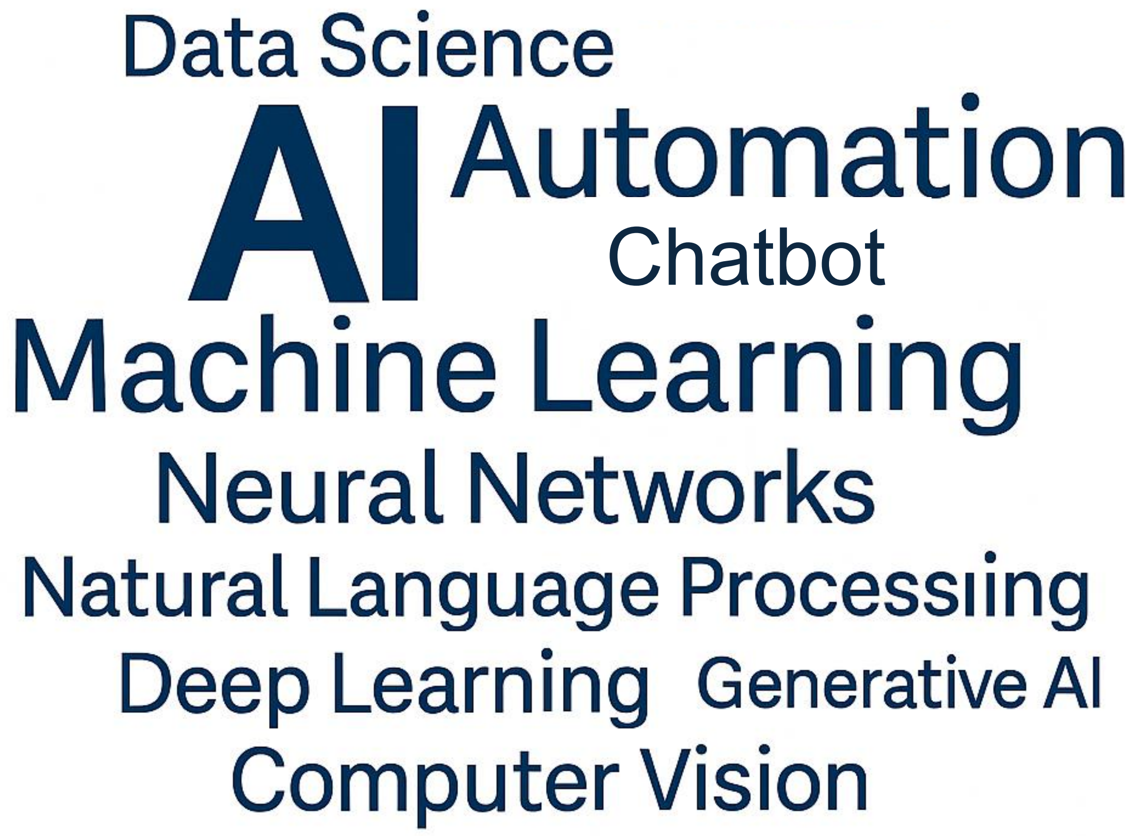
THE BUZZWORD PROBLEM

THE AUTOMATION SPECTRUM

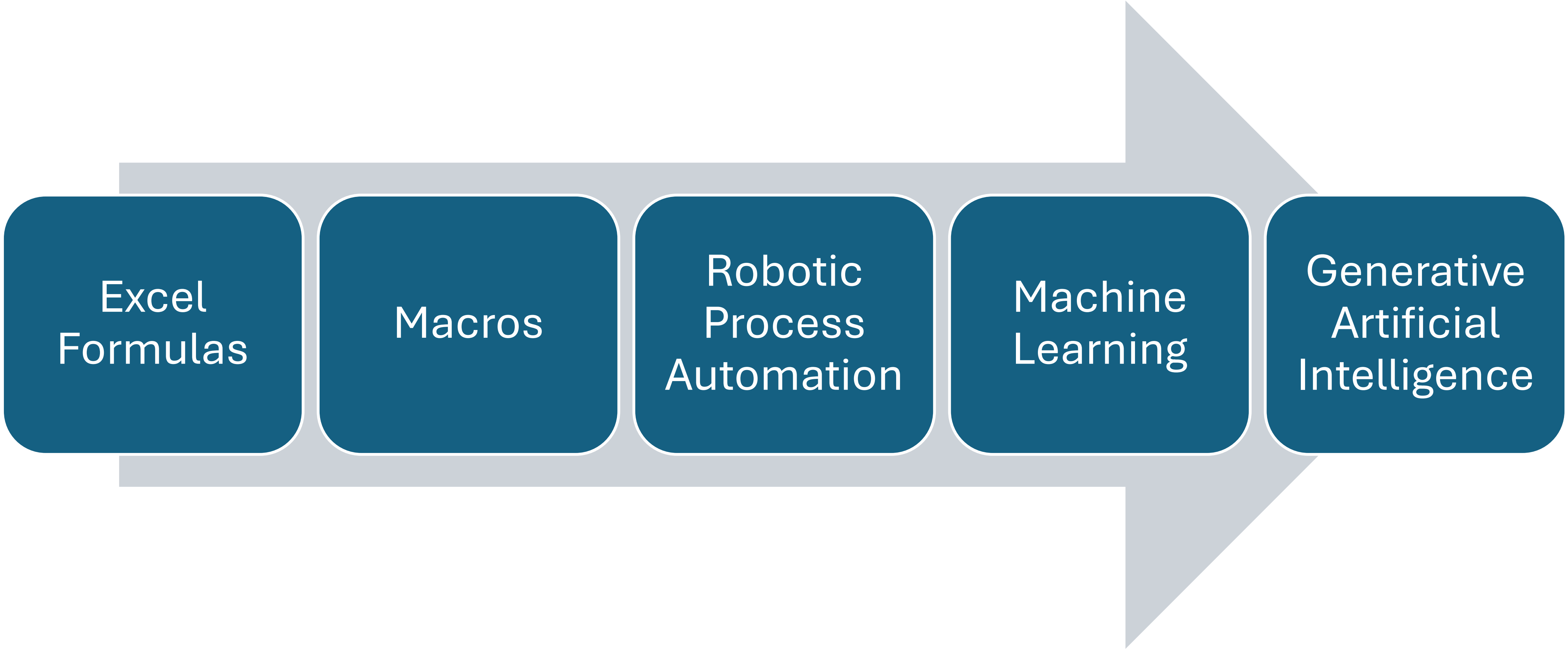
AUTOMATION VS INTELLIGENCE

WHY WE NOW SAY AI

# The Buzzword Problem



# The Automation Spectrum



# Automation vs Intelligence

| **Macros/Robotic Process Automation** | **Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence** |
|---|---|
| Follows rules | Learns from data |
| Perfect for repeatable tasks | Handles nuance & variation |
| Cannot make predictions | Predicts based on patterns |

# Why We Now Say AI

LANGUAGE, NOT JUST DATA

MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF AI

THE GOAL: PREDICT BASED ON PATTERNS

# A New Alphabet Soup

# Today’s Acronyms

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AI | ML | LLM | GPT |
| NLP | RAG | RPA | API |

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# Glossary Review

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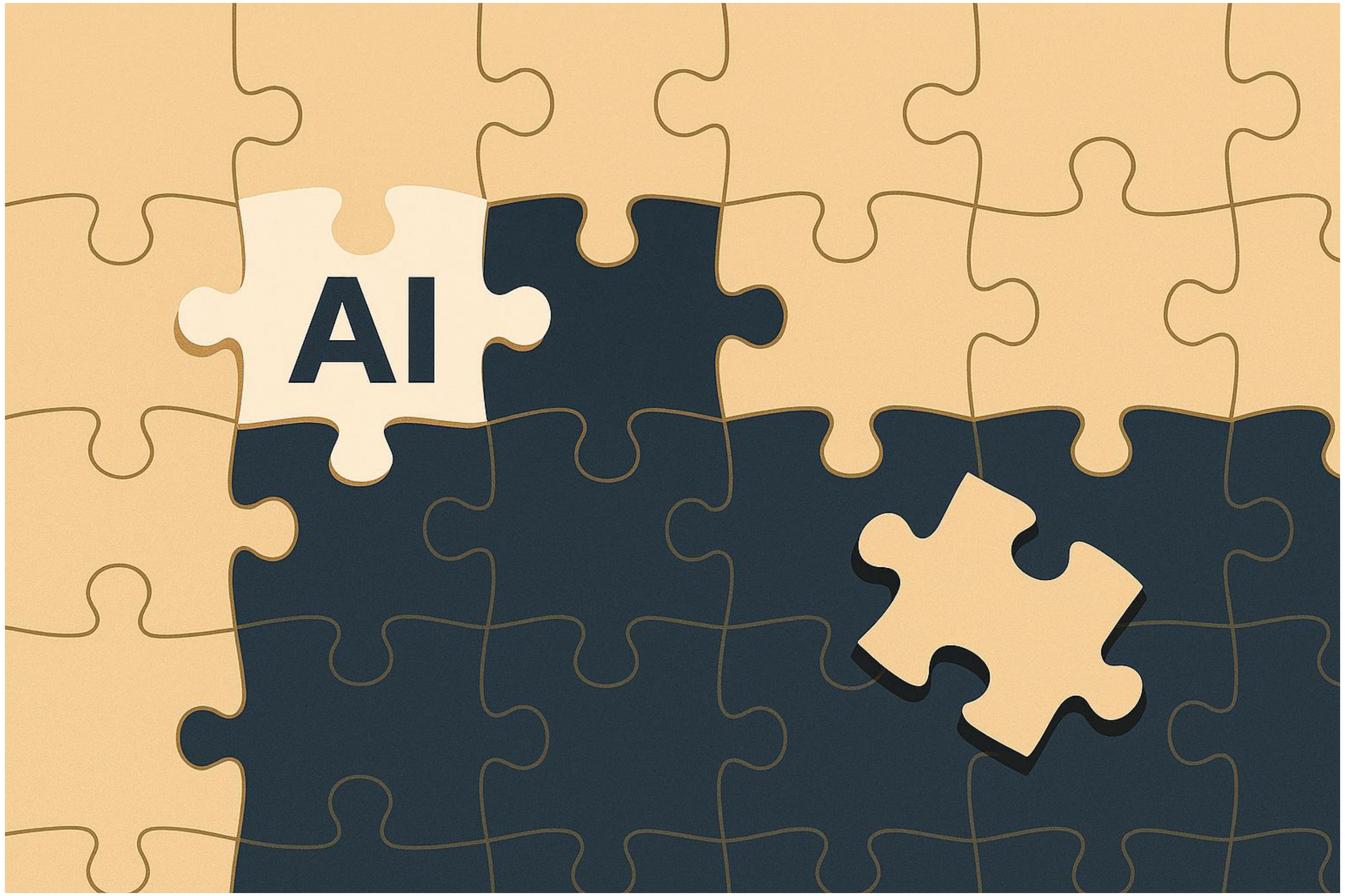
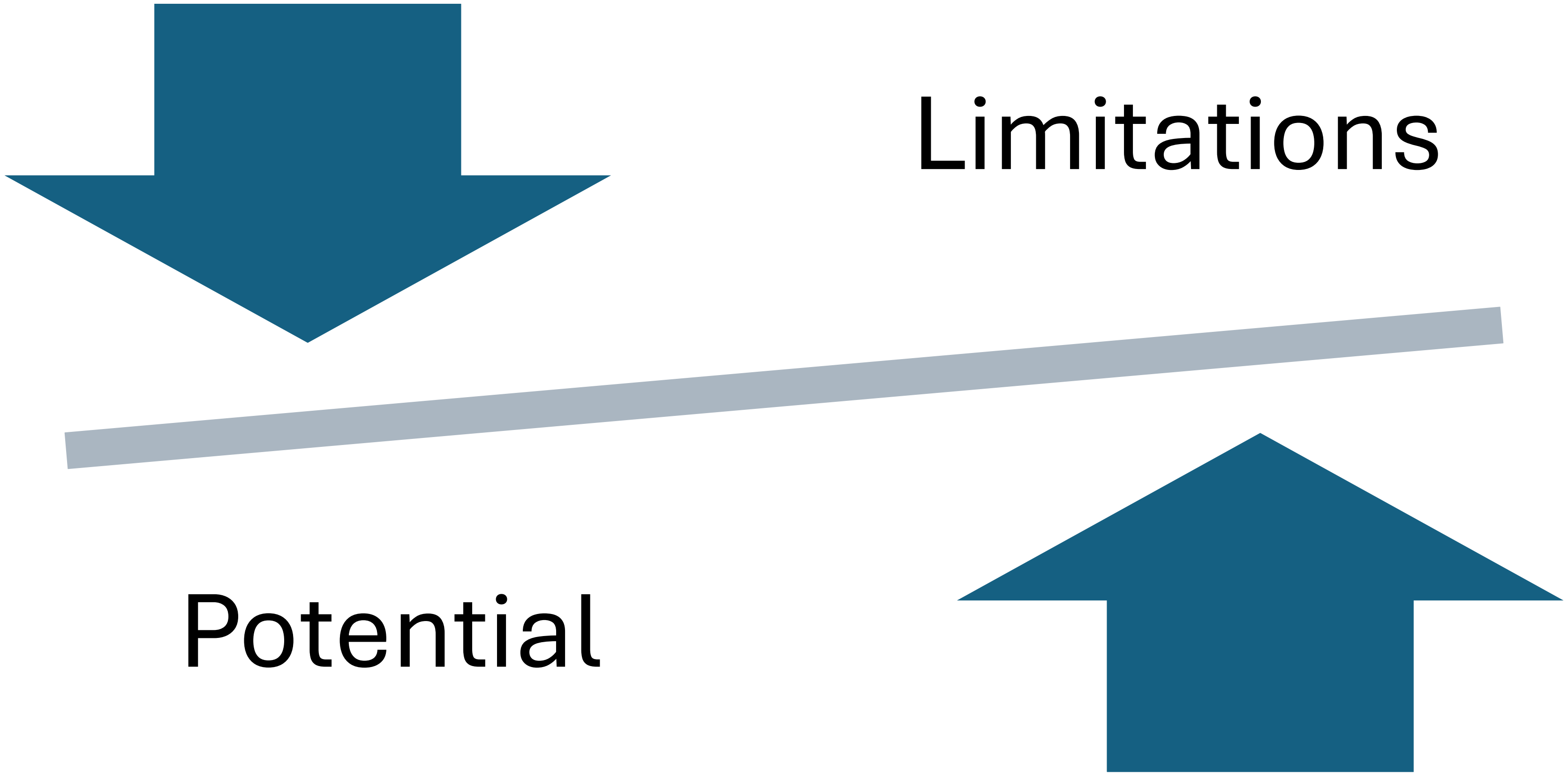


# The Reality Check



# AI Strengths in Government

SUMMARIZING REPORTS

DRAFTING MEMOS

TRANSLATING AND CLASSIFYING DATA

SPOTTING ANOMALIES

# AI Limitations

HALLUCINATION

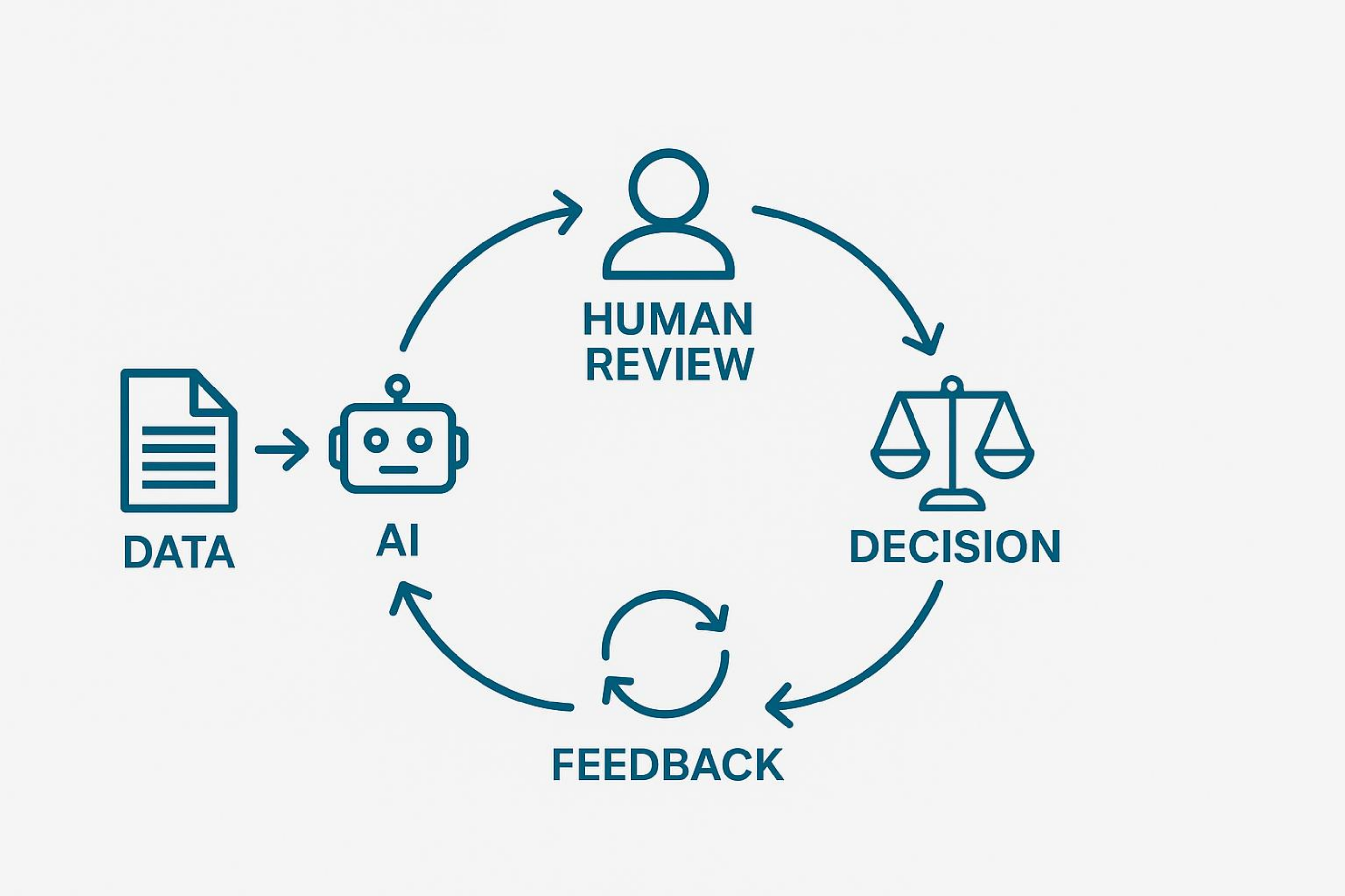
BIAS AMPLIFICATION

OUT-OF-DATE TRAINING DATA

NO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

SECURITY & PRIVACY RISKS

# Humans in the Loop



# Examples of AI in Local Government

# Pre-Audit Compliance Check

REVIEW ALL TRANSACTIONS AND CROSS-REFERENCE BUDGET

RECONCILE BALANCES

FLAG INCONSISTENCIES ACROSS SYSTEMS

# Grant Automation

AUTOFILL LOCALITY DATA

SEARCH EXISTING DOCUMENTS AND PULL RELATED INFORMATION

COMPLIANCE REVIEW PRE-SUBMISSION

# FOIA

SEARCH EMAILS AND SUGGEST RECORDS

AUTO-REDACT SENSITIVE INFORMATION

CHATBOT FOR CITIZENS

# Takeaways

Start with use cases, not technology

Keep humans in the loop

Governance before gadgets

# Thank You

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