

From AI to ZI



A Semi-Serious Alphabet Book for Techies

By Gary M. Dietz

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Please see www.garydietz.com or email gdietz@garydietz.com with comments or questions.

**From AI to ZI:
A Semi-Serious Alphabet for
Techies™**

Published by:
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Other works by Gary Dietz:

- *Don't Drive Like This* at www.dontdrivelikthis.com
- *Dads of Disability: Stories for, by, and about fathers of children who experience disability (and the women who love them)* at www.dadsofdisability.com
- Product Marketing, Entrepreneurial work on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/garymdietz/> and www.garydietz.com

AI Disclaimers

1) *The illustrations in this book were created with a paid version of Envato (envato.com) and, as of the creation and publication of this book, according to Envato, and I quote:*

- “You can use your AI-generated illustrations commercially, including in a **book you intend to sell**.
- There is **no extra step** to link or assign those images to your business.
- You only need to make sure you had an active Elements subscription when the images were generated.”

2) *The ideation, the writing, and the content of the AI prompts for the artwork were created and written by Gary Dietz, a human.*

If you are curious, the artwork in my other current project www.dontdrivelikethis.com was created by a human working with me in a pay-for-hire arrangement.

Edition:

- Nov 2025, version 1.00

gd-insights, LLC 001.3 - Watermarked

Dedicated to the seriously talented people in my network who astound me with their technical and creative chops.

These folks have taught me over the years and teach me every day. Even the ones who haven't hired me (yet)!

With a special shoutout to the New England, U.S., creative community and my friends in the northeast of England.

November 2025



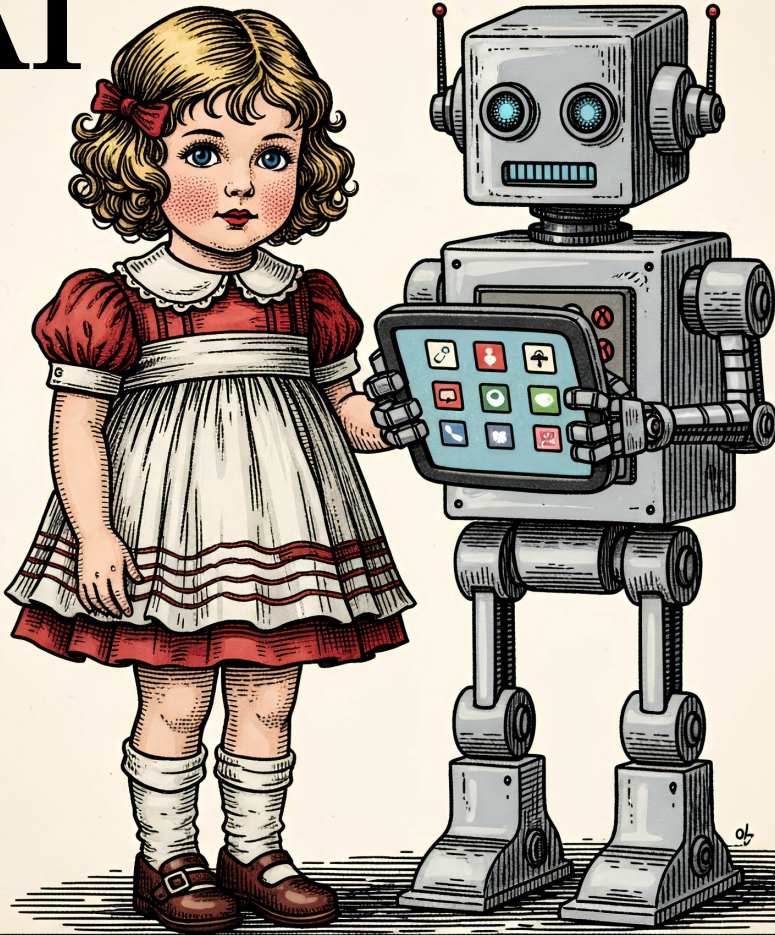
AI

AI is for Artificial Intelligence.

Artificial Intelligence may or may not be intelligent. It may make titans of industry wealthy beyond their wildest dreams! It may change the work and lives of creators, forever.

Most importantly, it has reinvigorated the use of the em dash (—).

AI



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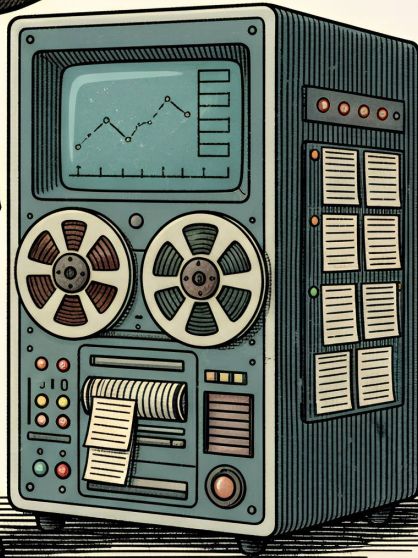
BI

BI is for Business Intelligence.

Business Intelligence turns your company's data into clear answers to help teams make sound business decisions.

These decisions are often overridden by the “gut” of a senior executive who will likely remain employed even after the BI team's advice was ignored and then laid off “for business reasons.”

BI



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CI

CI is for Competitive Intelligence.

Competitive Intelligence helps you understand what others in your industry are up to.

This is almost always so that a sales executive can say, “If you had only given us this feature like we asked, we would have hit our number this quarter.” And then use the findings to blame engineering and marketing.

CI



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DI

DI is for Data Integration.

Data Integration brings data from systems scattered across your company together so you can see a complete picture. The process is complex, time-consuming, and expensive.

Many companies believe their data is highly accurate and act on it because someone created beautiful slides that *seemed* correct.



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EI

EI is for Enterprise Integration.

Enterprise Integration is the strategic use of technology to connect an organization's systems and processes.

People who do this work need strong Emotional Intelligence to succeed. Yet some only have technical skills. And organizations wonder why all the time and money spent on the integration failed!

ET



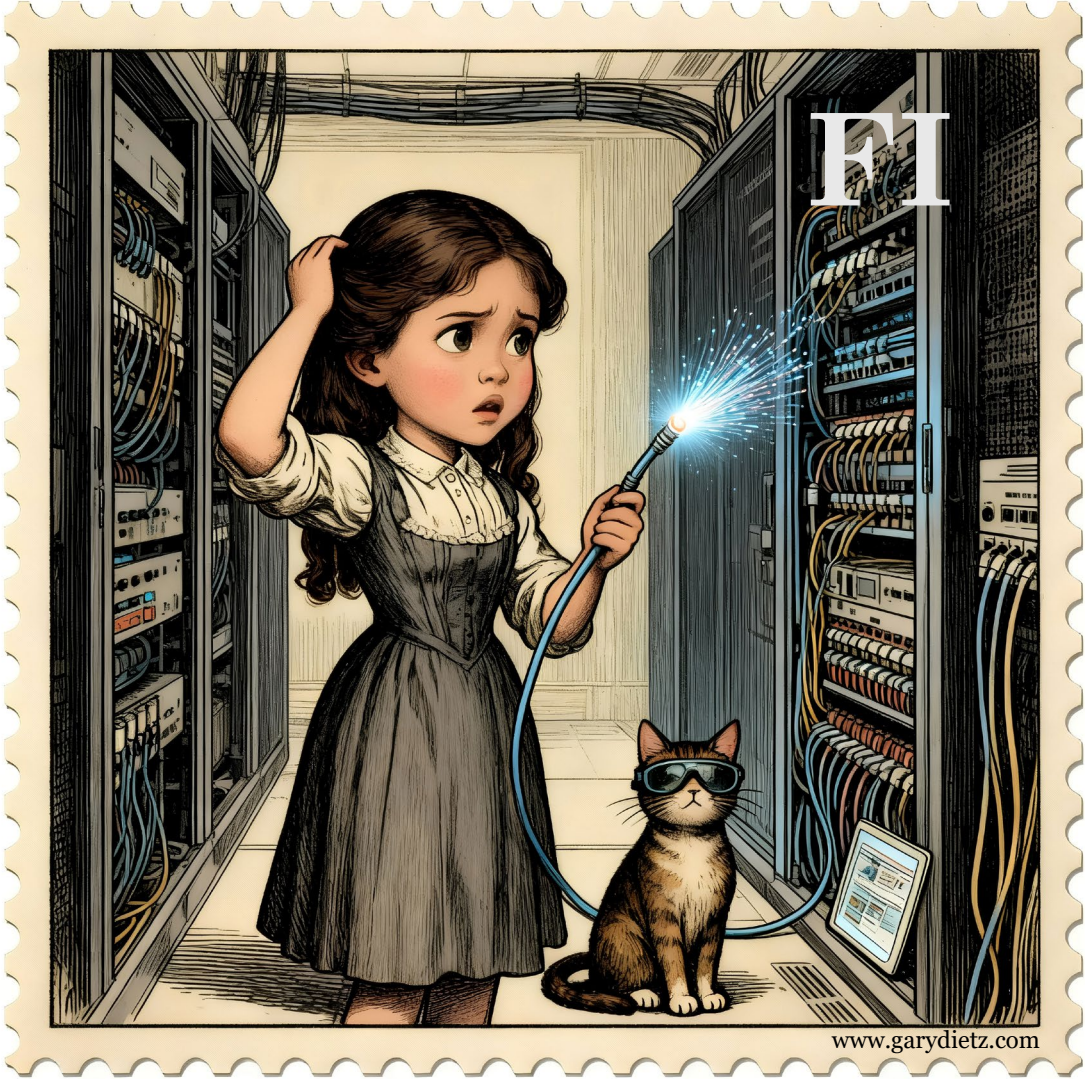
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FI

FI is for Fiber Internet.

Fiber internet is supposed to be very fast. And it usually is.

Sometimes it crawls or doesn't work at all. If you've laid off the wrong people in IT, it may take a while to fix it. Oh well, we can always tether our mobiles to our computers today!



GI

GI is for General Intelligence.

General Intelligence is another term for AGI, or Artificial General Intelligence. This is the ability for machines to be as versatile in thinking and problem-solving skills as a real human being.

This is an incredible goal that some believe may be the end of humanity. Or not. Who knows!?! Let's just move ahead with no guardrails and see what happens.

GI



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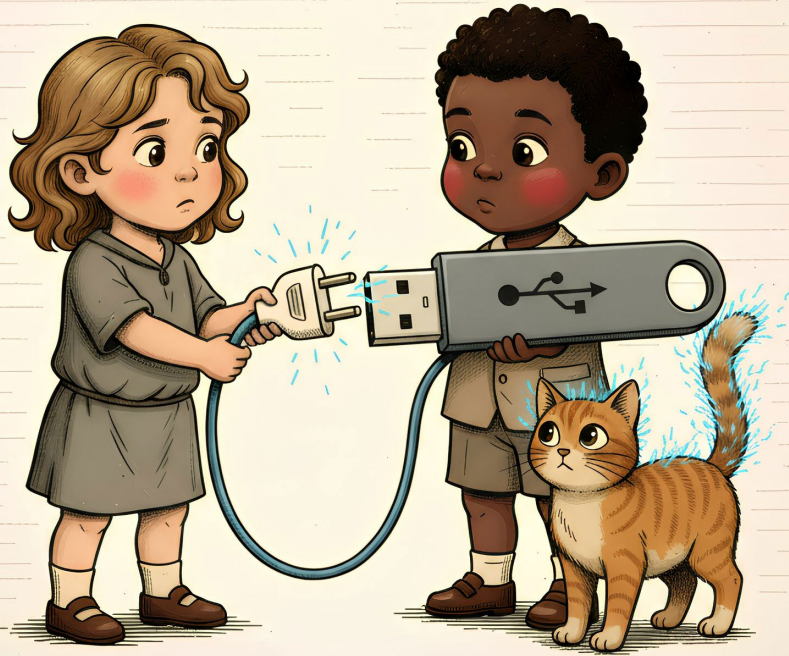
HI

HI is for Host Interface.

A Host Interface is the connection point between a host computer and peripheral systems that allows them to communicate, such as a USB port.

Make sure you choose the correct standards and that connections are compatible. Or things could go awry.

HI



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II

II is for Institutional Investor.

An institutional investor is a financial entity, such as a mutual fund or insurance company, that pools large amounts of capital and invests it. They are considered “sophisticated” investors and have access to more financial and research resources than an individual investor.

Sophisticated on the way up, but foolish on the way down. Either way, retail investors lose. And the taxpayers will bail them out!

II



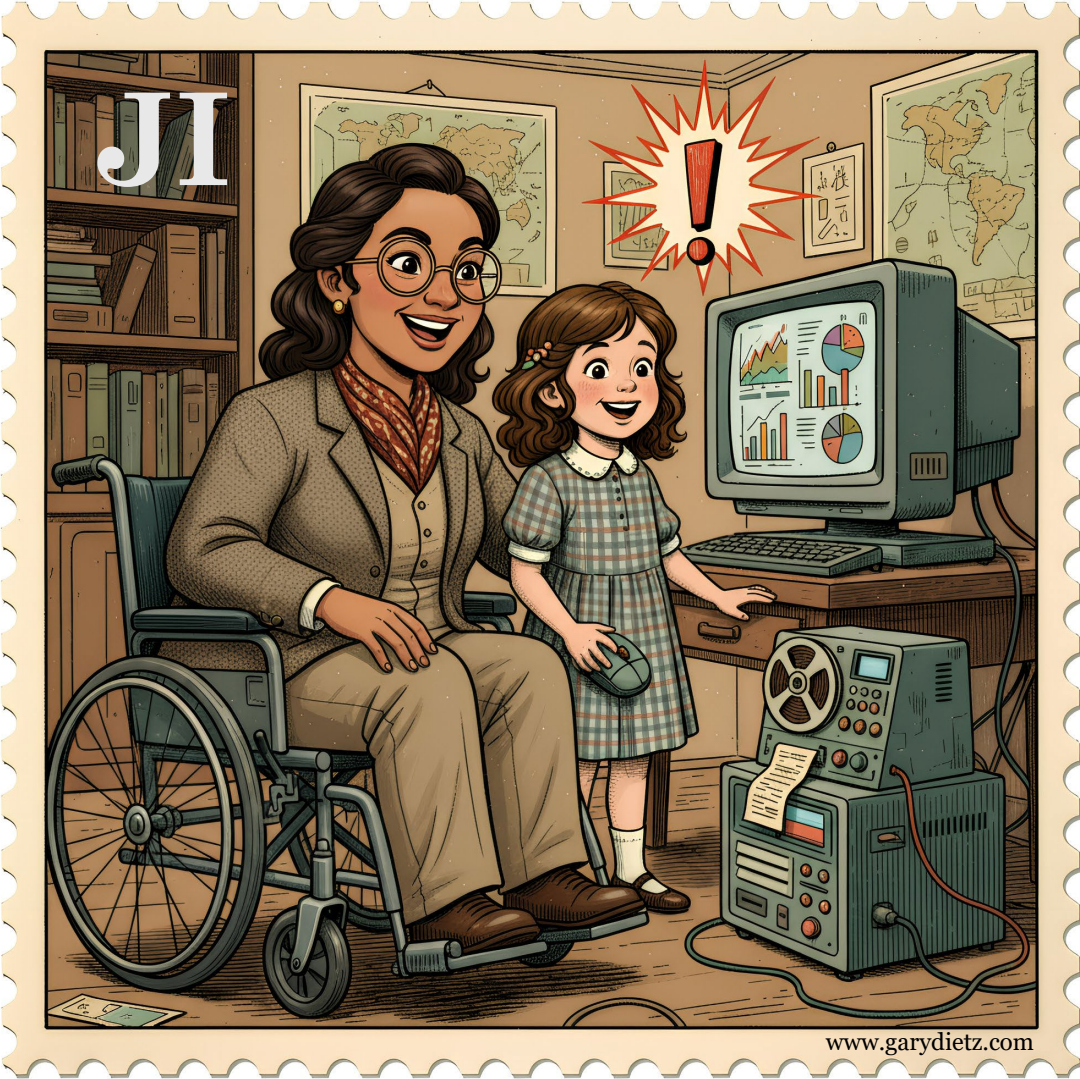
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JI

JI is for Job Instruction.

A job instruction is a step-by-step breakdown of a task in which a more experienced person teaches a less experienced person to perform it. But just because someone does something well doesn't mean that they can teach.

There is nothing like having an experienced instructional designer on hand to work with subject matter experts to build excellent training. Or not! Your choice.



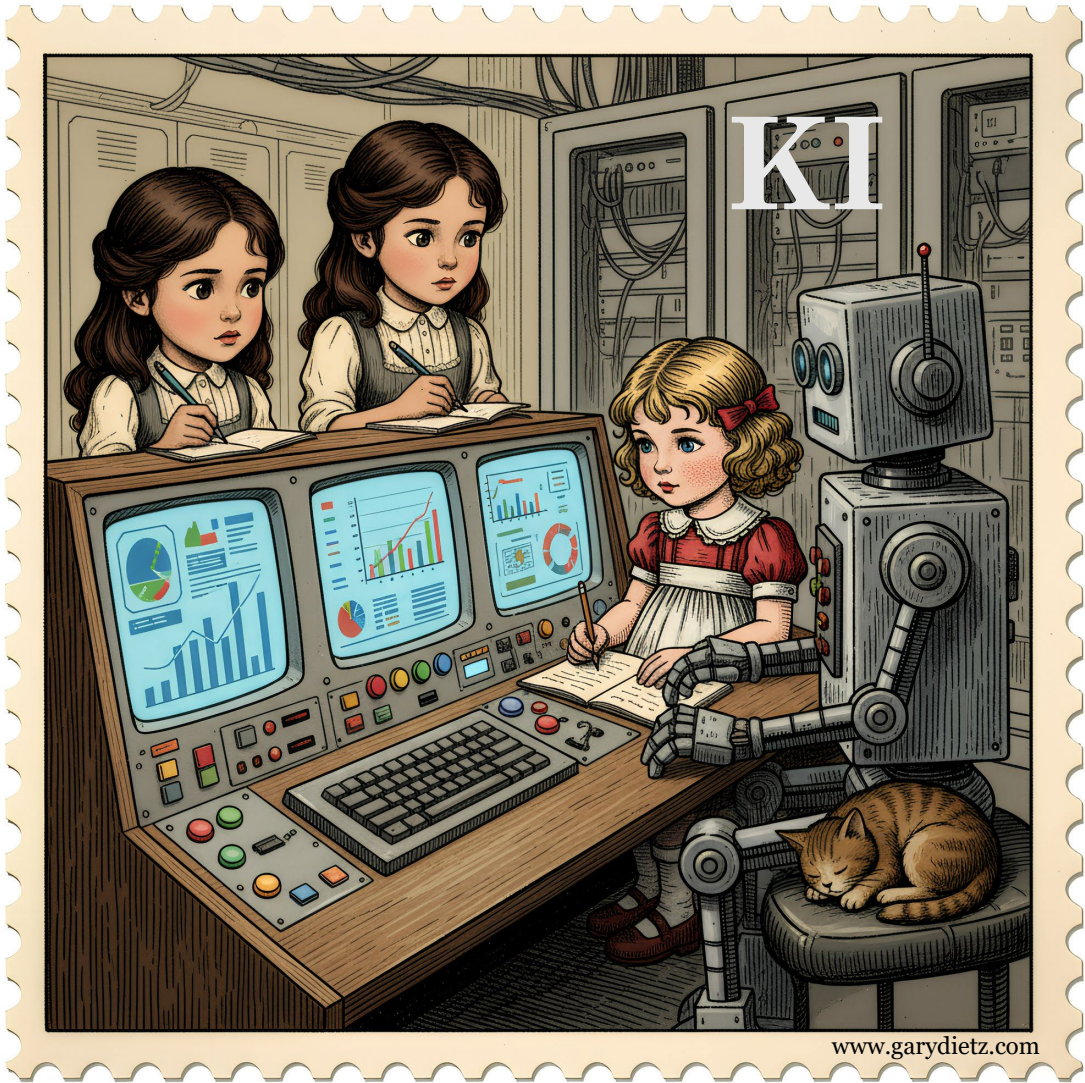
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KI

KI is for Key Indicator.

A Key Indicator, or Key Performance Indicator, is a metric that shows whether something is going well. And if you need to make changes.

Or you could choose to measure or change the wrong thing, fooling yourself if only for a while.



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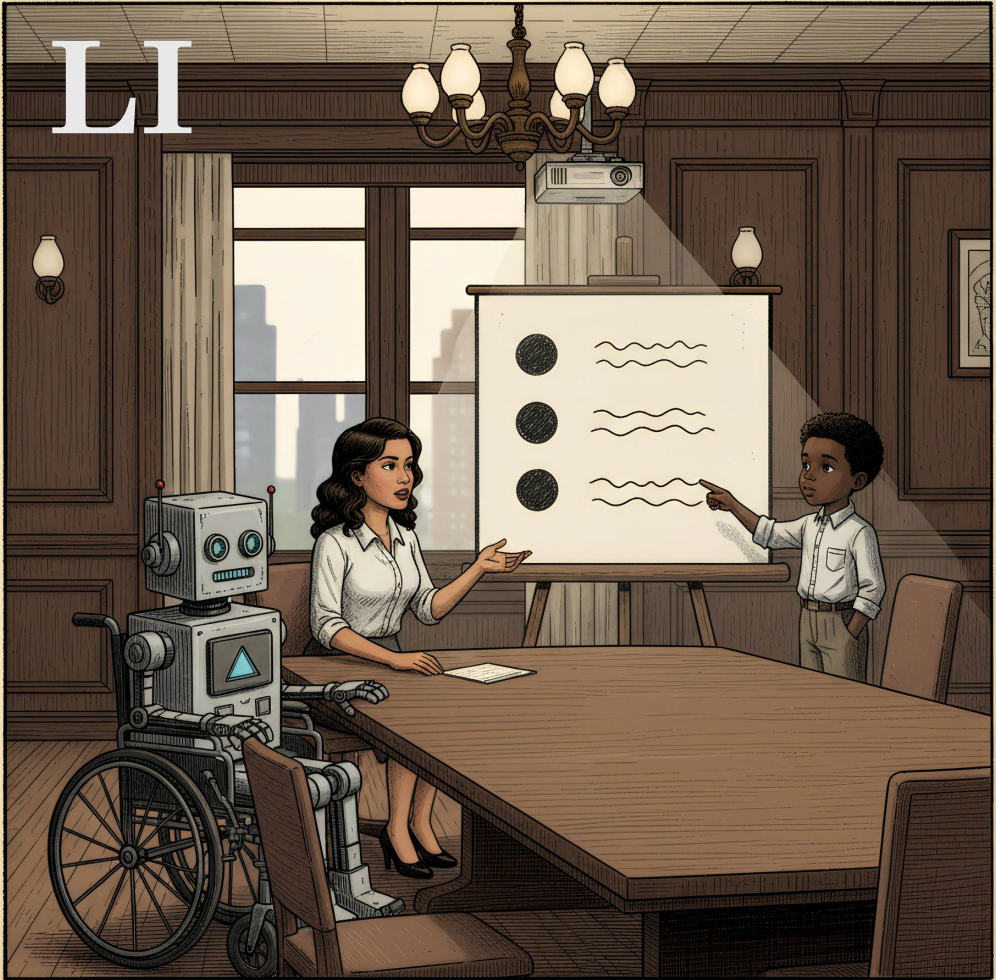
LI

LI is for List Item.

In HTML, LI is a tag to indicate that text is part of a bulleted list.

On LinkedIn and, of course, PowerPoint, bulleted lists have all too frequently replaced clear, precise prose, illustrations, or conversations that can provide deeper context and more information. But hey, they are shorter!

LI



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MI

MI is for Machine Intelligence.

Machine Intelligence is a synonym for Artificial Intelligence. Machine Learning is a subset of MI/AI. Deep Learning is a subset of ML. And Large Language Models (LLMs) are a specific type of deep learning.

AI|MI \supset ML \supset Deep Learning \supset LLMs.

A potter must know the tools, terms, and materials to be great. So it goes with great users of Machine Intelligence.

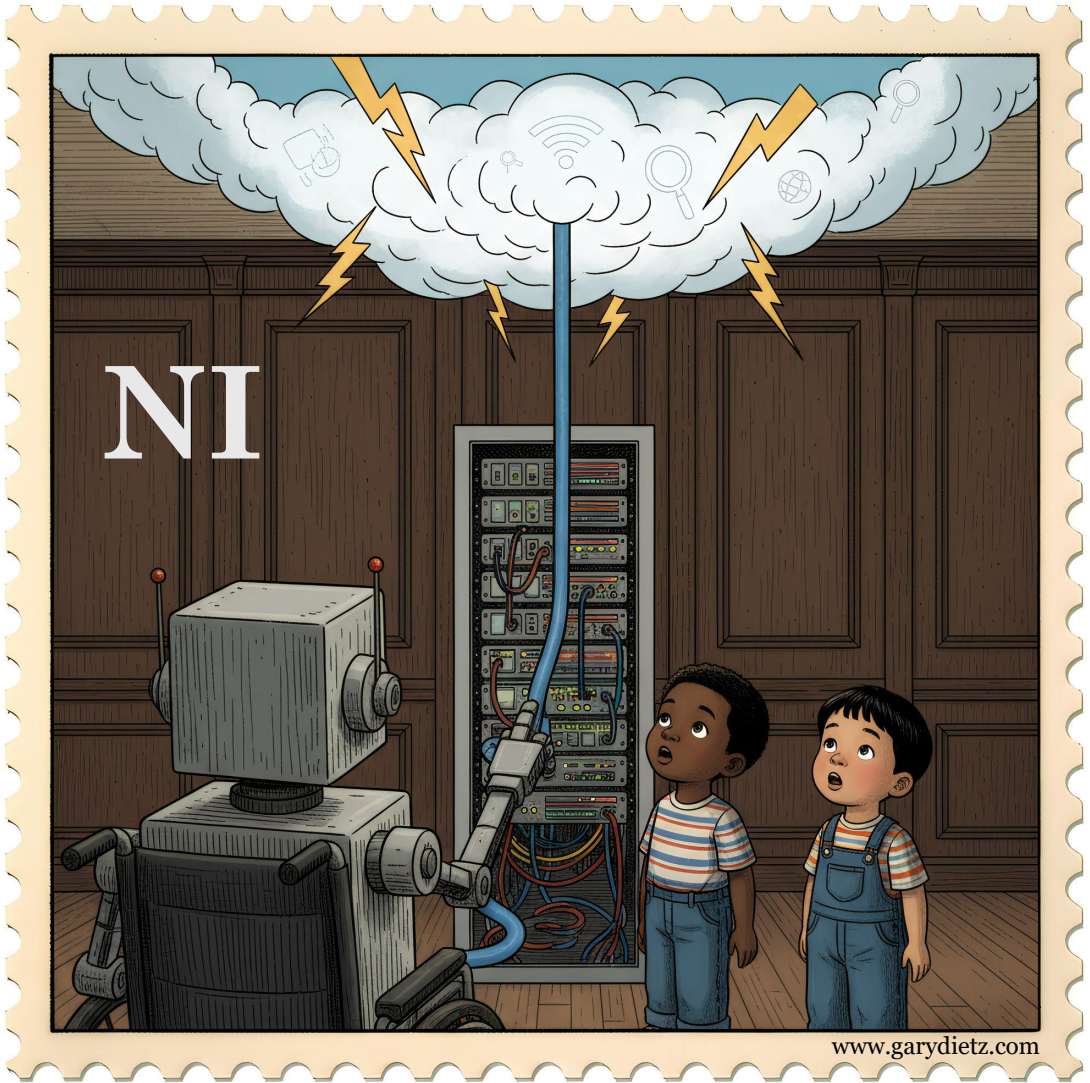


NI

NI is for Network Interface.

A Network Interface is the physical connection point to a computer or device that allows it to join a network and communicate with other computers. Most devices have them embedded to support wireless or wired connections.

Standards and security are constantly changing. Having IT people who know what they are doing is essential. Or not if you are OK with poor, insecure networks that lead to a lower Net Income.



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OI

OI is for Object Identifier.

An Object Identifier is a unique sequence of numbers that identifies an object in a computer system, ensuring its identity is unambiguous. Think of it like a Social Security number (U.S.) or a National Insurance Number (Great Britain), a unique identifier for a specific person.

To continue the Great Britain theme, it's also an exclamation to get someone's attention, like saying "Hey!"

OI



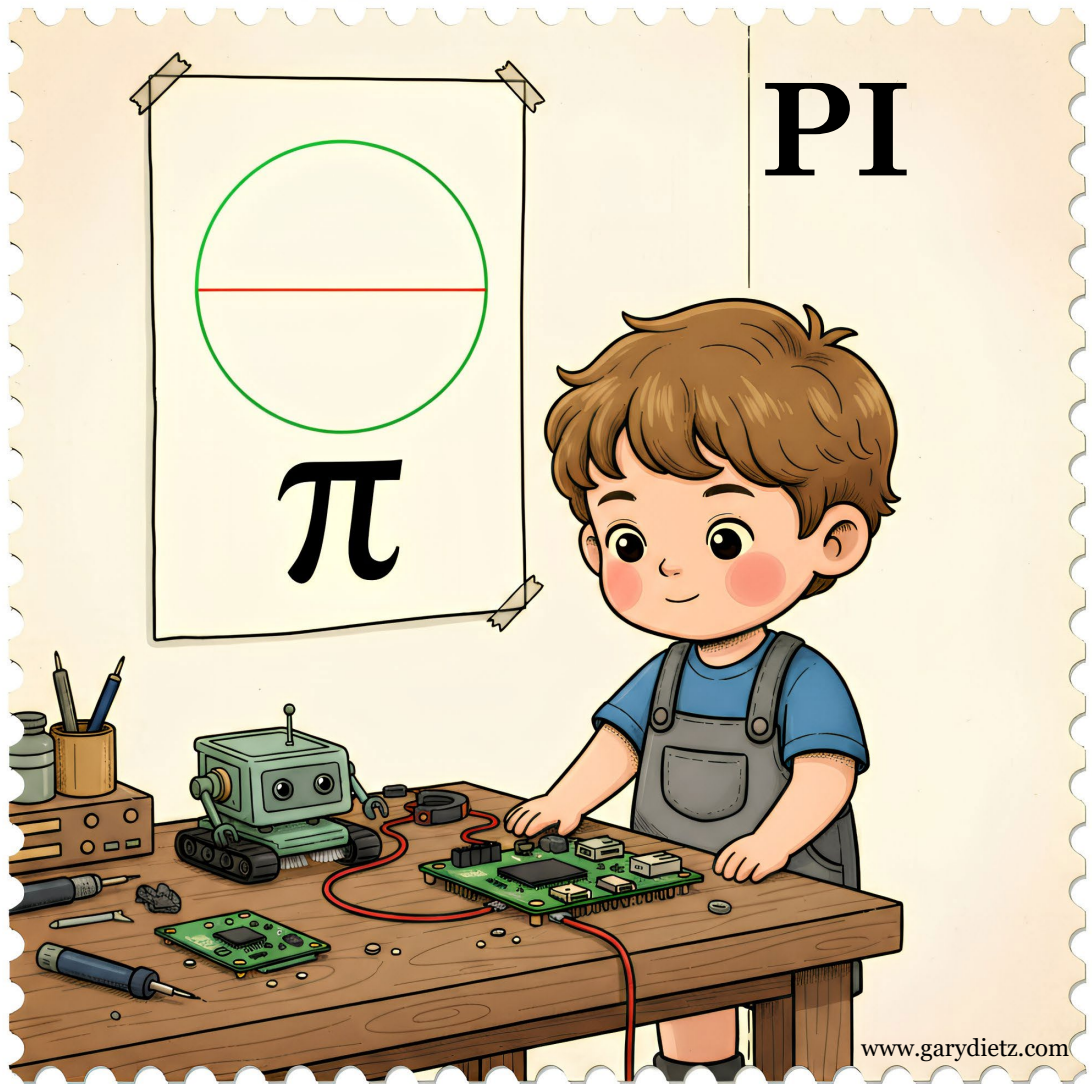
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PI

PI is a nickname for a computer.

Pi is the nickname for a Raspberry Pi, a small, relatively inexpensive single-board computer often used by students to learn, engineers to prototype projects, or for basic computing tasks.

It is impossible for a Raspberry Pi, or any computer, to provide anything other than an approximation of the number Pi. Or to make pies (at least so far).



QI

Qi® is a wireless charging standard.

Qi systems let you place a device close to a charging station without using any wires and charge it.

QI also stands for Query Interface, a geeky term for the part of a system that accepts search requests, such as the “Search Box” in your search engine.

Don't use acronyms when simple words suffice. If simple words work and your audience knows them, use them!



QI

RI

RI means Reference Implementation.

A Reference Implementation is a working example that demonstrates the “correct” way to build something per an official technical standard. It serves as a benchmark for others to create their own similar implementations.

It’s also the official abbreviation for the smallest state in the U.S., where, coincidentally, many organizations use Reference Implementations.

RI



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SI

SI means System Integrator.

A Systems Integrator is a company, usually a tech company, that designs, builds, and implements end-to-end solutions using products and systems from various manufacturers. SI's work seamlessly to address a customer's needs. SI's usually provide training and support.

Si also means the element silicon. And Sports Illustrated.



SI

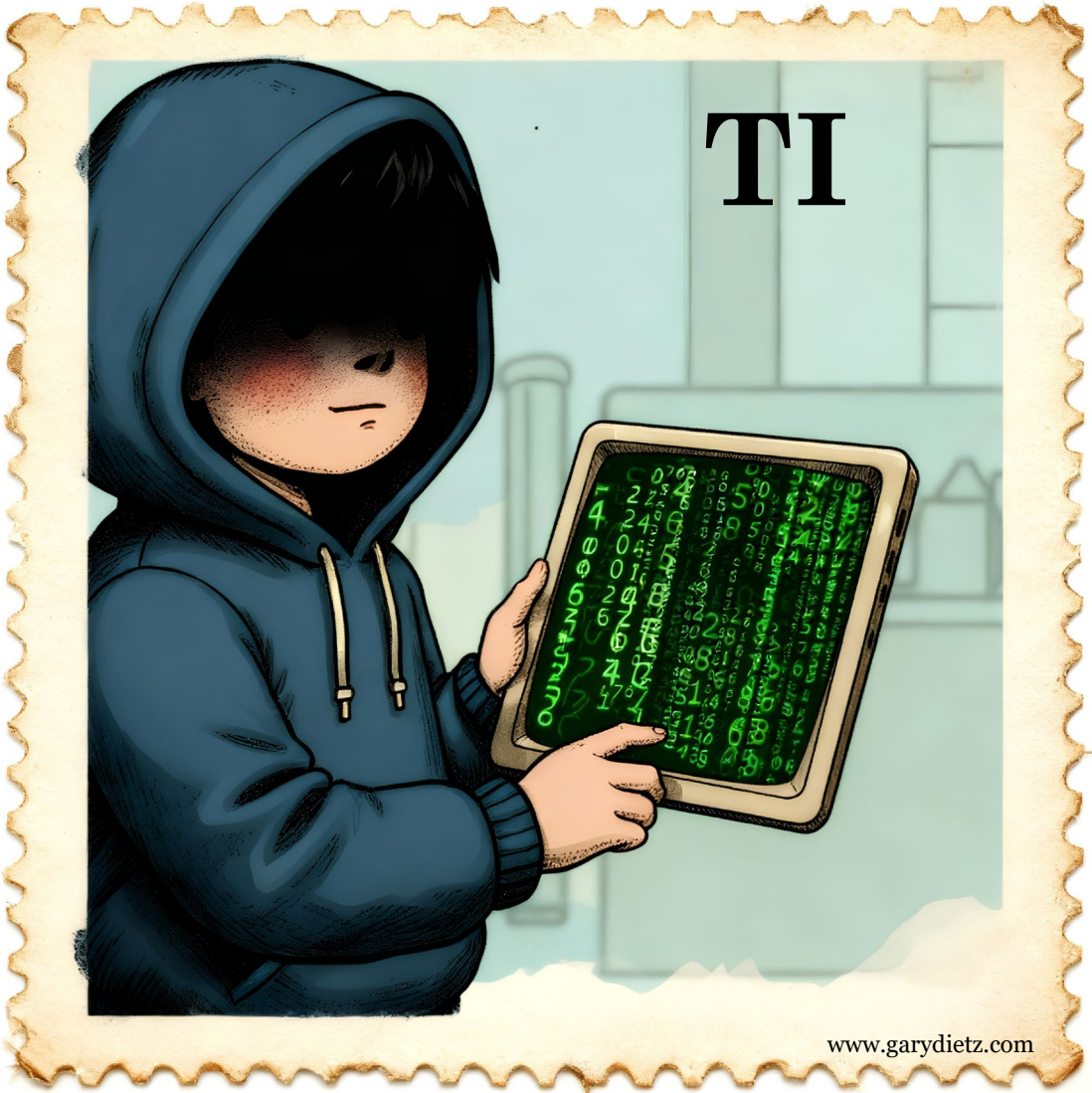
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TI

TI means Threat Intelligence.

Threat Intelligence is the collection, analysis, and sharing of information on cyber threats, system vulnerabilities, and the people, organizations, and systems that pose these threats.

Threat actors who pose threat intelligence are usually visualized using stock images of men wearing hoodies in front of a screen with photos that look like text from a 1999 sci-fi movie.



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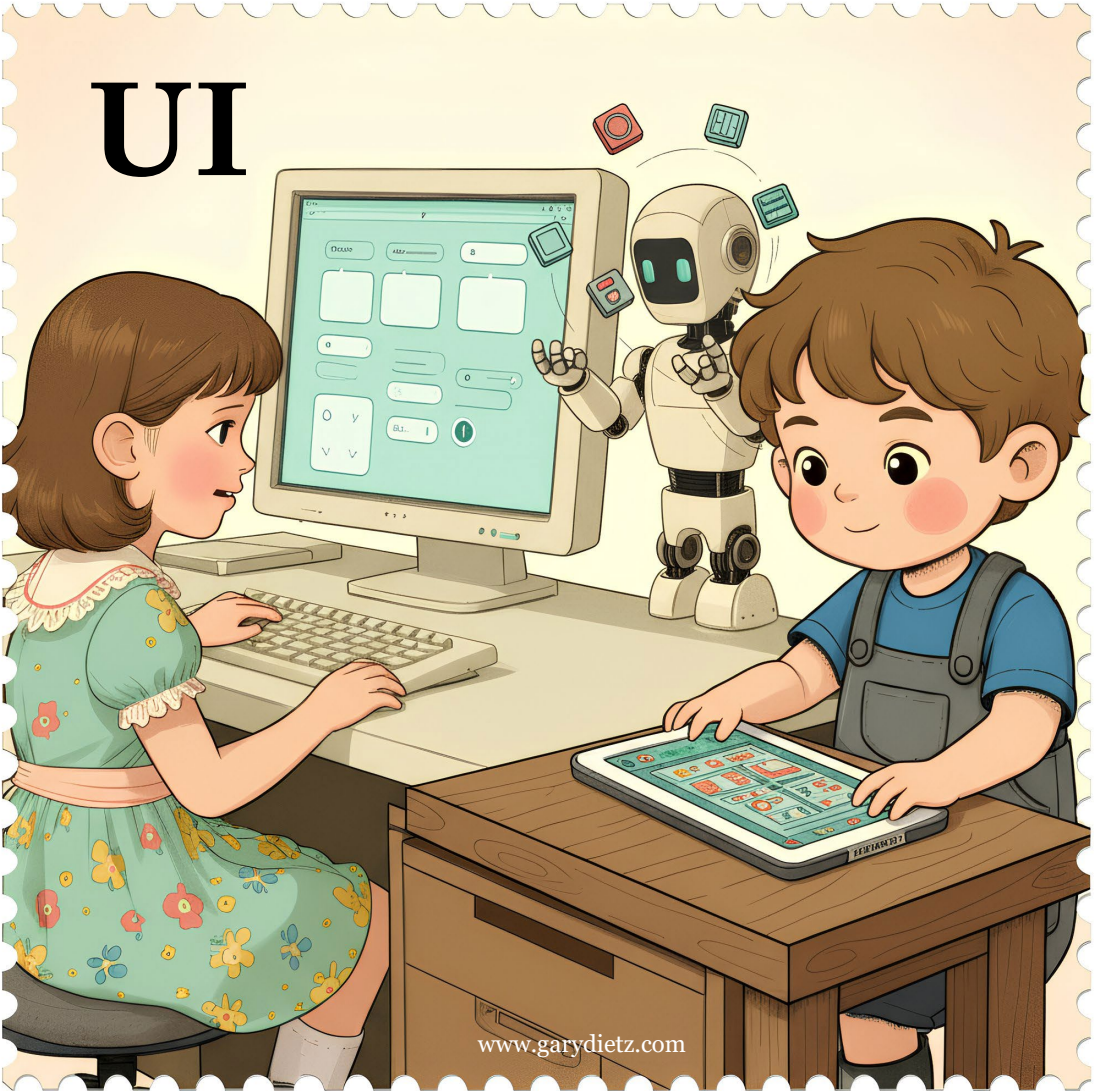
UI

UI means User Interface.

UI is everything a user sees and hears and touches that lets people use digital products of all kinds. UX stands for User Experience, and encompasses everything that defines a user's experience.

Generally, don't hire exclusively visual designers and artists as UI people. However, great UI people should have some of these design and art skills.

UI



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VI

VI means Visual Editor.

VI is one of the oldest text editors around and is included by default in pretty much every Linux or Unix system.

Other editors include VIM and Emacs. There are silly “fights” about which one is “better.” I’d include an eyeroll GIF here if this weren’t a printed book. It’s a text editor, for goodness sake!

VI



vi

emacs

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WI

WI is the first half of Wi-Fi®.

Wi-Fi is not an acronym and doesn't stand for anything. It was created as a play on the old term "Hi-Fi" (High Fidelity). The Wi-Fi Alliance owns the trademark.

You can add another "i" to "Wi" to get the name of an old Nintendo console. Wii was resoundingly ridiculed at first, which also shows that branding popularity using weird letters is unpredictable.

WI



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XI

Xi is the first name of Xi Jinping.

Xi Jinping is the President of the People's Republic of China. There are really not many good XI tech acronyms in use, so I chose a name.

I considered an illustration of children assembling electronics, but then thought better of it. Instead, here is a nice image of the Great Wall of China. If you must, think of it like “firewall” clip art from the 1990s, but prettier.

The Great Wall



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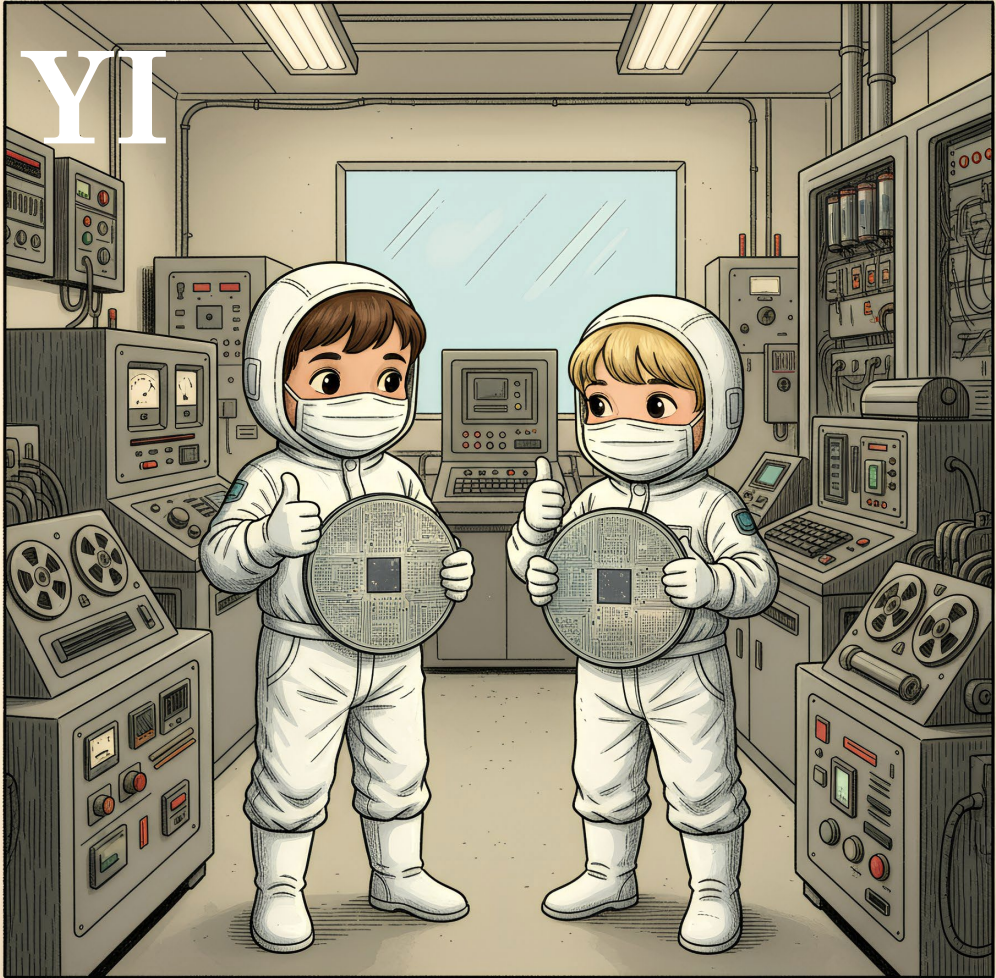
YI

YI means Yield Improvement.

Nobody really says that anymore; They probably say Yield. What that means in semiconductor manufacturing is the percentage of chips on a wafer that work and pass inspection.

Yield is used in many more industry contexts. Crop yield in farming. Bond yield in finance. Reaction yield in chemistry. This shows that, as big as “tech” is, other industries exist too.

YI



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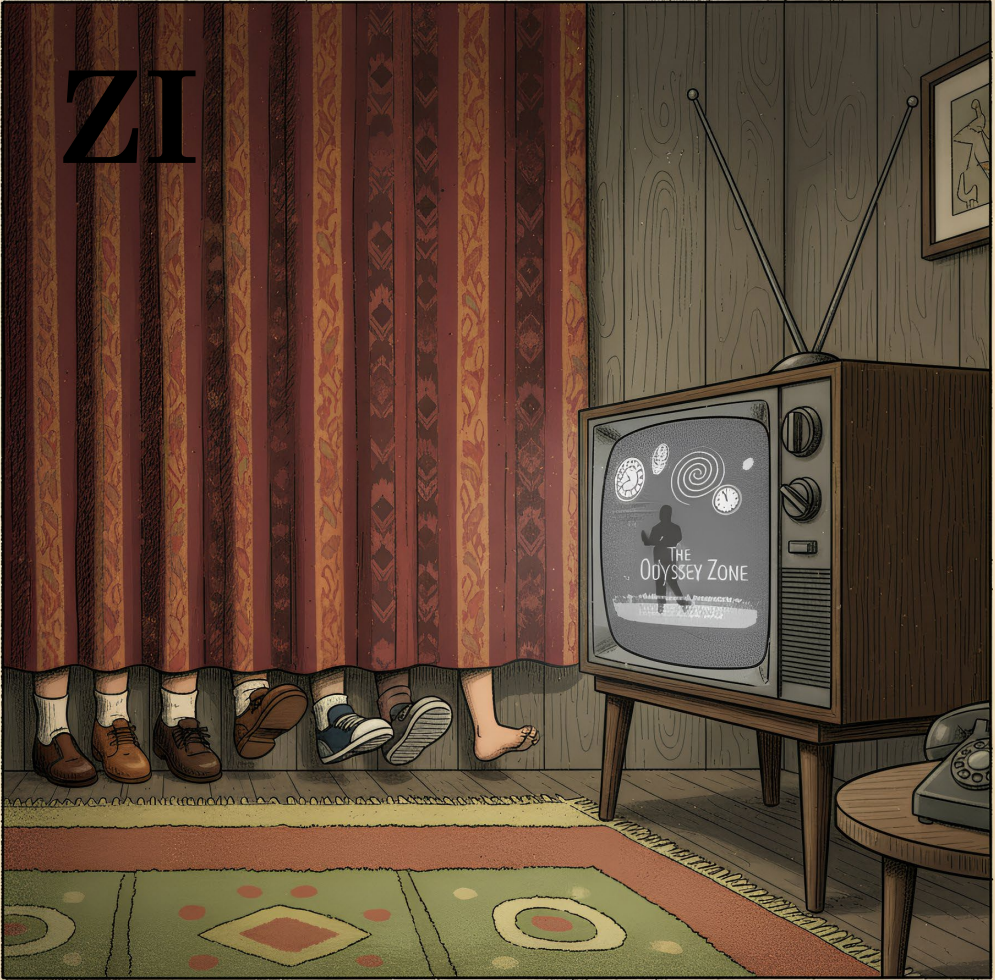
ZI

ZI has several obscure, odd, and mostly hidden meanings in English.

There are references in Latin, in Chinese, a term from warfare, and also in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. But not a whole lot of IT and tech common usage.

This one remains a mystery. Perhaps you can share a tech definition of ZI. Start a Slack discussion!

ZI



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Thanks!

And now, for some serious stuff

Thanks for joining this little diversion here. I hope you were introduced to some acronyms you didn't know and are inspired to learn about some tech you didn't know about. Or not. As long as your neurons have had a break, you can move on to do some real work.

If I may leave you with some serious advice:

- Don't always assume your audience knows what a shortening of a word or words means.
- Even if most do, there will be some that don't. So use the whole word or phrase at least once, and even define it if that makes sense for your audience.
- Remember, most people won't admit when they don't know something, especially if others around them seem to know it.

Shortenings in English: Acronym VS Initialism VS Abbreviation

- An **Acronym** is pronounced as an entire word. Like NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).
- An **Initialism** is formed by pronouncing the initial letters. Like AI (Artificial Intelligence). So, the examples in this book are initialisms! Gotcha!
- An **Abbreviation** means any shortened word, including Acronyms, Initialisms, and when you shorten a word with a period, such as St. for street, or clip a word, such as app, for application.
- A portmanteau or a blend is when you combine parts of two words to make one, such as Brunch (Breakfast + Lunch), Cosplay (Costume + Play), and Spork (Spoon + Fork).

Sometimes, taking a break with some “less-than-serious” content can help tech & marketing folks connect new neurons and jump-start work

What the heck is this book?

After a somewhat hectic week as a product marketing manager candidate, my brain was clogged. I was getting stuck in a soup of AI “news,” rejection letters, and new acronyms at each company.

I got away by time-boxing myself and ideated a short project to get my brain doing something else. And I also proved (once again) a point to myself:

Sometimes doing something different, something perhaps not so serious, something a little FUN can reinvigorate you and help you make progress on more serious projects. Personally, this works better than a 9-9-6 grind ever could. But, hey, maybe that’s just me.



From AI to ZI

Here are some “yeses.” (Always get them to “yes,” right?)

- **Yes, the illustrations were done with AI.** I spent a large amount of my time in my timebox updating prompts and correcting incorrect interpretations. If you are interested, I created them using a paid [Envato](#) subscription. It was a fun process that improved the clarity of my prompts — also known as “instructions” in the old days.
- **Yes, I researched and wrote the text.** It won’t win any awards, and the definitions aren’t comprehensive, but they give you a starting point for a quick overview you can research more.
- **Yes, the sarcastic remarks are said with love, and I hope they are at least a bit funny.** They may or may not be funny to you, though I hope they are. During the “beta” test of this book (in other words, reading it aloud to a few technical people at my makerspace), there were some laughs. But as they say, YMMV.
- **Yes, I stretched some of these acronyms.** I wanted to keep the two-letter format ending in “I.” It was a challenge. Forgive my transgressions as I tried to squish some of these into the format I chose.

All the best, Gary

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me via [www.garydietz.com](#)