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AI Buzzwords: From 'Vibe Coding' to 'Shadow AI'

An article in *INTHEBLACK*, written by Megan Breen, says that “artificial intelligence tools are rapidly evolving and so are the words used to describe them. Understanding what these buzzwords mean can help maximize their capabilities and push businesses forward.” She then describes 11 AI buzzwords and their meanings.

1. Vibe coding: Breen explains that, according to Ben Scown, digital delivery director at Integral, this term refers to using AI chatbots or language models to help write code, rather than manually coding it. “The idea is that you can just ‘vibe’ with the chatbot and describe what you want to build, then have the AI write the code for you,” he says, adding that “it’s very quick and easy for anybody to come up with an application and build it.”

2. Multimodal: Scown also explains that, until recently, many large language models could only operate with one type of input and output, for example, chat using text or the generation of images but not videos. “Multimodal describes models that can take input from different types of data, such as voice, text and camera at the same time and output multiple modes — as in generate text as well as video and audio,” he says.

3. Zero-copy architecture: Previously, there was a focus on centralizing information in large structures or data lakes, says Michael Kollo, director of AI for Adapt and CEO of Evolve.AI. “AI has changed that approach. There is now a shift to gather and analyze data where it already lives, across multiple sources, without making duplicates. “It is called zero-copy architecture, and it means businesses may no longer need to consolidate everything in one place — which could save enormous resources and unlock greater flexibility.”

4. Diffusion models: Scown says that these comprise a new class of generative models that learn to generate data by “diffusing” multiple samples sourced online then reversing the process to create a unique piece of data. “We’ve seen this in the image and video generation space for quite some time, and researchers are now exploring diffusion models for text generation.”

5. Reinforcement learning: This term describes AI’s ability to learn by trial and error, without any guidance from a human user. “The newer large language models are using reinforcement learning to learn and provide more helpful, accurate and safe results, rapidly improving the overall quality of the output,” Scown says.

6. Mixture of experts: Scown notes that this term is becoming more visible due to DeepSeek’s use of it. “This model routes tasks to specialized sub-models rather than trying to do everything itself. Dubbed a mixture of experts (MoE), or committee machines, it relates to scalable architecture whereby multiple small sub-models are trained. It’s called a mixture of experts because just as you would direct certain tasks to the experts in that area in any other setting, the model sends the task to the relevant small model expert,” he says.

7. Neuro-symbolic AI: Tracy Sheen, AI strategist and author of *AI & U*, points out that this is “an approach that combines deep learning, which is excellent at recognizing patterns in data, with symbolic reasoning or logic-based AI that applies rule-based knowledge (like tax laws, legal

regulations or formal logic) is known as neuro-symbolic AI. A neuro-symbolic system might use deep learning to extract and interpret financial data from documents and then apply rule-based logic to check tax compliance.”

8. Ethical AI: Ethical AI refers to the practice of designing and using AI in a way that is fair, transparent and accountable, Scown says.

9. Responsible AI: Responsible AI is about how you use it, Sheen explains. “For example, quality control measures such as questioning the outputs and risk mitigation techniques like not providing personal information when inputting data. It’s risky, at the moment, to assume that AI is giving the correct answer.”

10. Explainable AI: Explainable AI (XAI) refers to the set of methods designed to enable humans to understand, interpret and trust the processes and outputs generated by machine learning algorithms, deep learning and neural networks, Sheen goes on to say. “Sometimes described as a ‘glass box’ approach, XAI contrasts with the ‘black box’ nature of many AI systems by making decision-making processes visible and comprehensible.”

11. Shadow AI: Shadow AI is a concept related to the unsupervised use of artificial intelligence tools within an organization, Sheen says. “It occurs particularly in smaller organizations that may not have a specific policy in place regarding AI use. “It raises compliance and governance issues, and it is hard to monitor.”

For more, see [AI buzzwords: From ‘vibe coding’ to ‘shadow AI’ | INTHEBLACK](#).