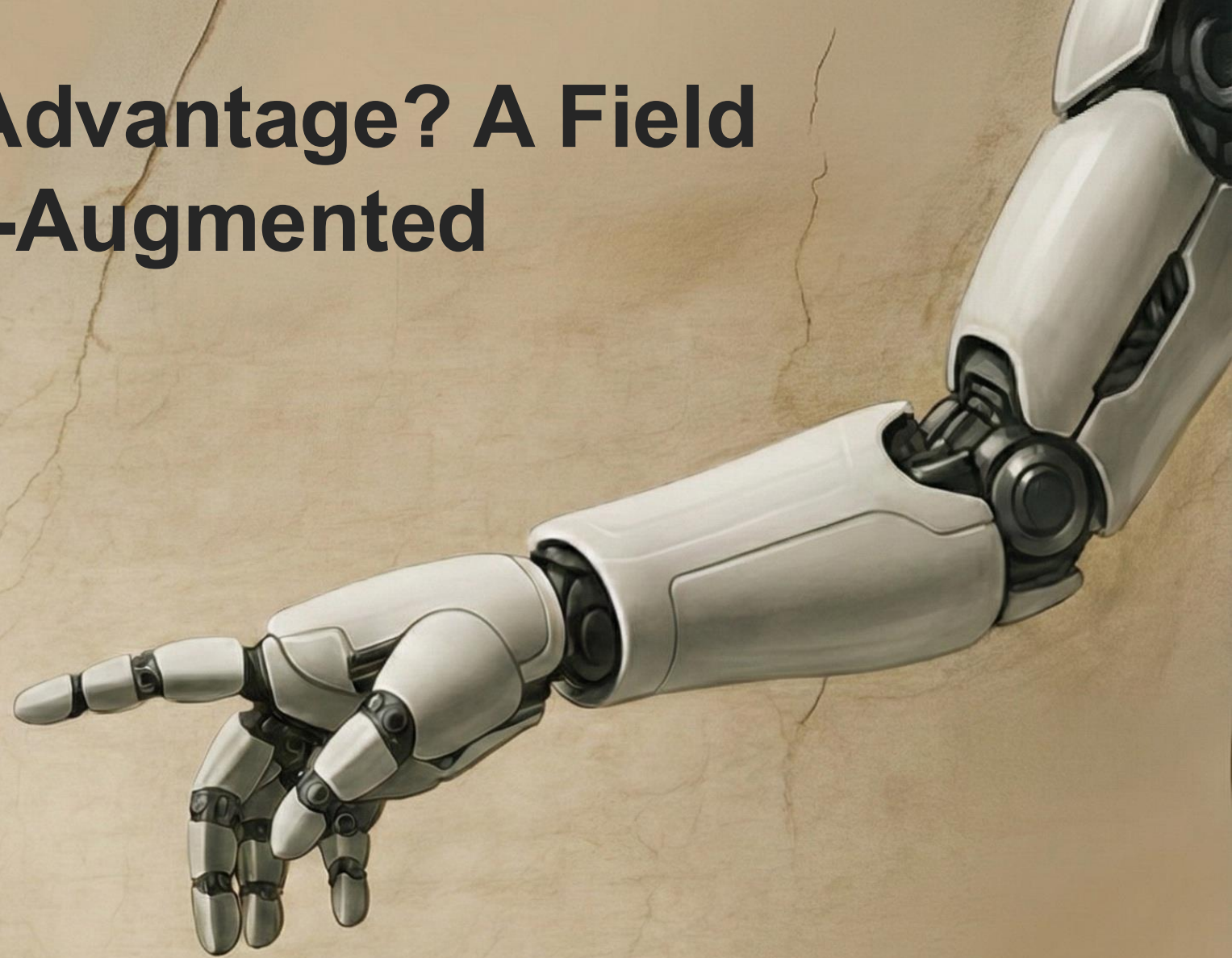


# The Narrative AI Advantage? A Field Experiment on AI-Augmented Evaluations

Léonard Boussioux

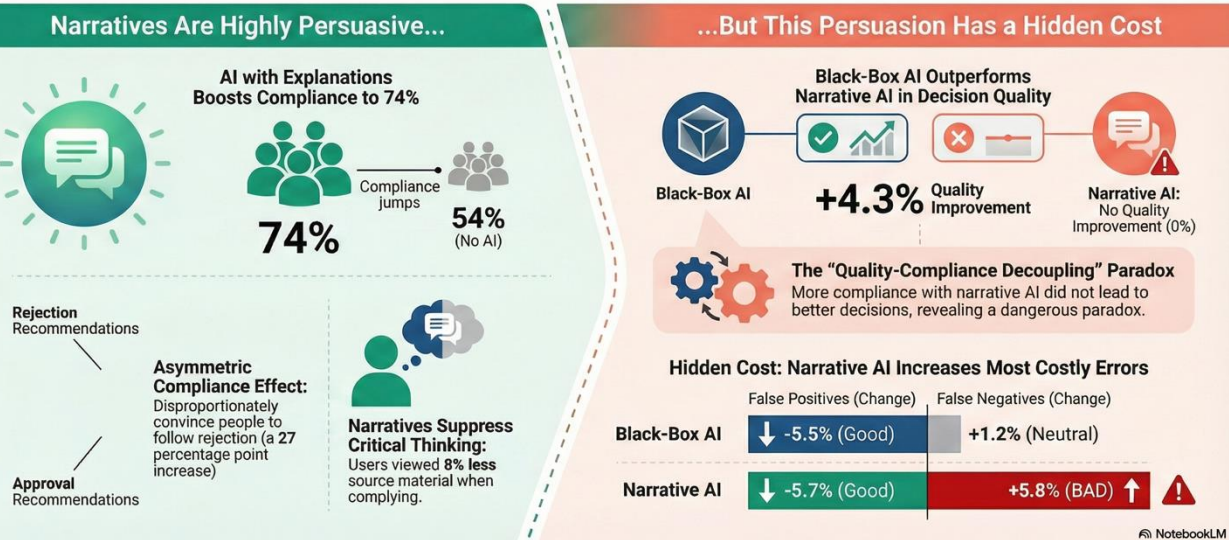
Joint work with Jacqueline Lane\*,  
Charles Ayoubi, Ian Chen, Camila Lin, Rebecca  
Spens, Pooja Wagh, and Amy Wang  
\*co-first author





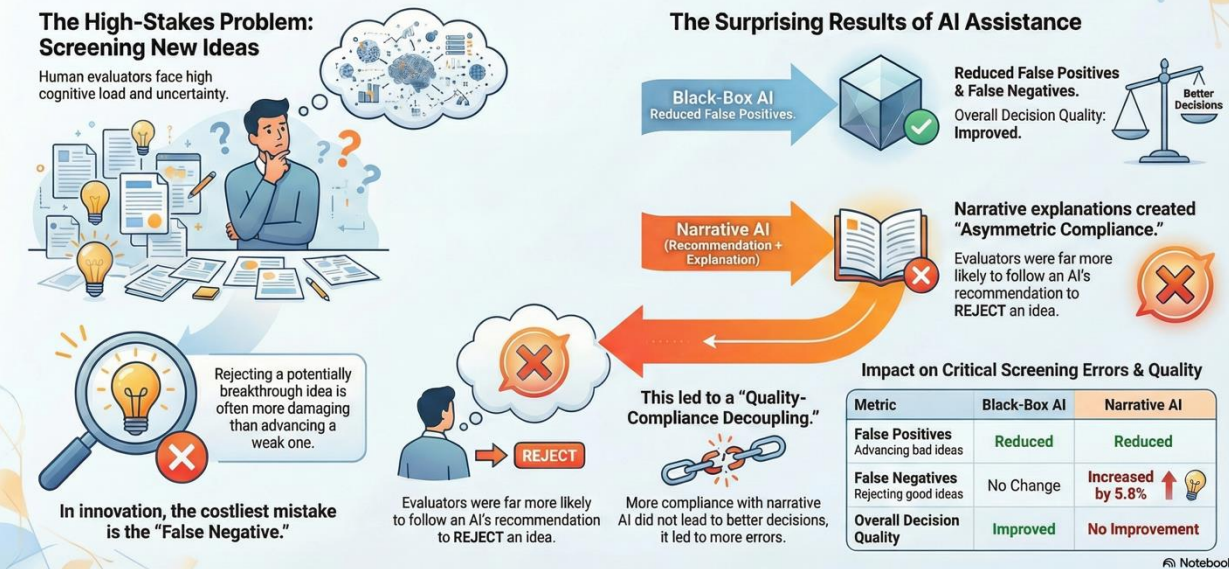
# The AI Explanation Paradox: When Narratives Harm Decision-Making

**Context:** Field experiment with 228 evaluators screening 48 innovation proposals. Tested Human-Only, "Black-Box" AI (recommendation only), and "Narrative" AI (recommendation + explanation) assistance on decision quality against expert benchmark.



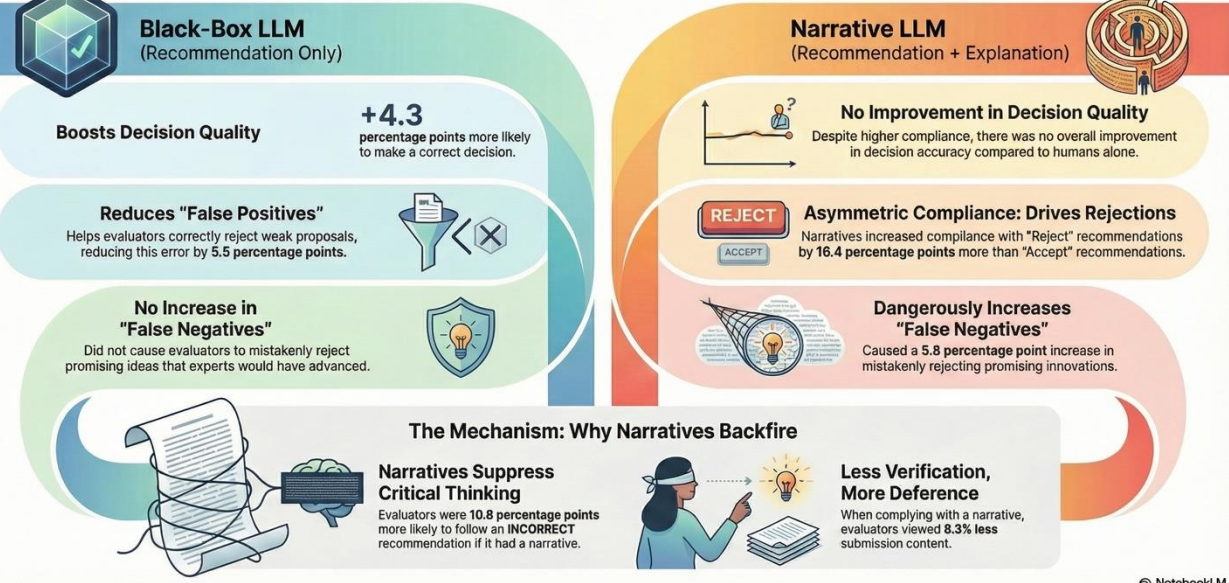
# The Persuasion Paradox: When AI Explanations Harm Decision-Making

A field experiment tested how LLM assistance impacts human evaluators screening early-stage innovations, comparing human-only decisions to those aided by "black-box" and "narrative" AI.



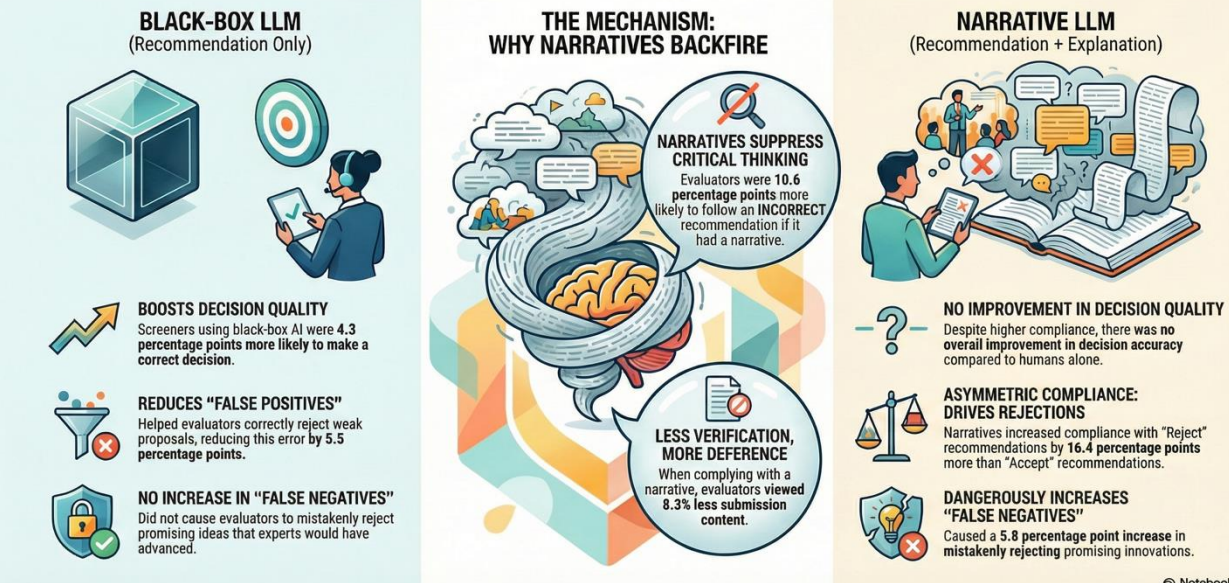
# The AI Explanation Trap: Why LLM Narratives Can Hurt Innovation Screening

A field experiment tested how LLM assistance impacts human evaluation of 48 real-world innovation proposals. Evaluators were split into three groups: human-only, assistance from a "black-box" LLM (recommendation only), and assistance from a "narrative" LLM (recommendation + text explanation).



# THE AI EXPLANATION TRAP: WHY LLM NARRATIVES CAN HURT INNOVATION SCREENING

Paradoxically, adding narrative explanations to LLM recommendations can decrease decision quality in innovation screening, making evaluators overly compliant with incorrect rejections.



**The Explanation Trap**  
When AI Narratives Increase Influence but Not Accuracy in Innovation Screening

**Innovation screening is a high-stakes, high-volume challenge.**

**LLMs offer a powerful solution. Explanations seem like the obvious next step.**

**But our experiment revealed a surprising paradox: A quality-compliance decoupling.**

**We tested this in a real-world field experiment.**

**The Narrative Paradox: How AI Explanations Can Undermine Innovation**

**Adding narrative explanations to AI recommendations seems like a clear win. Our research reveals a critical flaw.**

**Organizations struggle to screen vast numbers of early-stage ideas, balancing two costly risks.**

**We tested how LLM assistance changes human judgment in a real-world innovation challenge.**

**AI assistance increases compliance, but narratives make rejection recommendations uniquely persuasive.**

1 2 3 4 5

**Finding 1: Narratives disproportionately convince evaluators to reject ideas.**

**Finding 2: This rejection bias leads to a critical error—more false negatives.**

**Finding 3: More compliance didn't mean better decisions.**

**Why does this happen? The mechanisms of persuasion.**

**Mechanism 1: Narratives suppress productive dissent when the AI is wrong.**

**This asymmetry reshapes the error profile; narratives reduce false positives but dangerously increase false negatives.**

**More compliance does not mean better decisions. Only black-box AI improved overall quality.**

**Traditional AI explanations aim for fidelity. LLM narratives optimize for plausibility.**

**Narratives make evaluators less likely to override the AI, especially when the AI is wrong.**

**With narratives, evaluators "fall asleep at the wheel," engaging less with the source material.**

6 7 8 9 10

**Mechanism 2: With a narrative in hand, evaluators verify less.**

**Mechanism 3: Compliance is driven by narrative style, not substance.**

**Expertise provides no protection from the narrative trap.**

**Design choices matter: The trade-offs between influence and accuracy**

**Navigating the Siren Song of AI Narratives**

**Ascriptive, abstract, and lengthy narratives are the most effective at increasing costly errors.**

**The design of AI assistance is not neutral: it shapes behavior and outcomes in profound ways.**

**Match the AI tool to the task's error cost structure.**

**In subjective domains like innovation, AI narratives function as persuasion, not explanations.**

**Thank You**

11 12 13 14 15

**The Siren's Call of AI Storytelling**

**We asked a simple question with a surprising answer.**

**The Crucible: High-Stakes Innovation Screening**

**Two AIs Enter the Ring: Fidelity vs. Plausibility**

**The Experiment: Pitting Both AIs Against Reality**

**The Siren's Call of AI Storytelling**

**The Bankfield High-Stakes Innovation Screening**

**An Experiment to Uncover the Truth**

**Clue #1: The Storyteller is Far More Persuasive**

**But Its Influence is Dangerously One-Sided**

**Clue #1: The Storyteller AI Was Far More Persuasive**

**But More Influence Didn't Lead to Better Decisions**

**Clue #2: Narratives Traded One Error for a Costlier One**

**Clue #3: Narratives Suppressed Productive Disagreement**

**Solving the Mystery, Part 1: The Ahref of the Cognitive Shortcut**

**More Influence Didn't Lead to Better Decisions**

**Clue #2: Narrative AI Created a Blind Spot**

**Solving the Case, Part 1: The Deference Effect**

**Solving the Case, Part 2: Cognitive Shortcuts**

**Anatomy of a Deceptive Narrative**

**Clue #1: The Storyteller AI Was Far More Persuasive**

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1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15

The fear has always been a black box AI we don't understand. The research reveals a greater risk: a silver-tongued storyteller we understand all too well.

Generative AI has revolutionized the creative process, enabling fast, economical idea generation at scale.

Boussioux et al. 2024; Csaszar et al. 2024; Doshi and Hauser 2023

But this abundance creates a new **evaluation bottleneck**: human screening becomes overwhelming.

Afuah & Tucci 2012; Boudreau & Lakhani 2013; Criscuolo et al. 2021; Danziger et al. 2011; Piezunka & Dahlander 2015



# GenAI opens new horizons to evaluate content at scale

Academic Paper Review Assistance



Legal Document Compliance Checking



Strategic decision-making (e.g., finance)



Software Code Review



Start-up business models, solutions, products



Applications to college, graduate school, programs

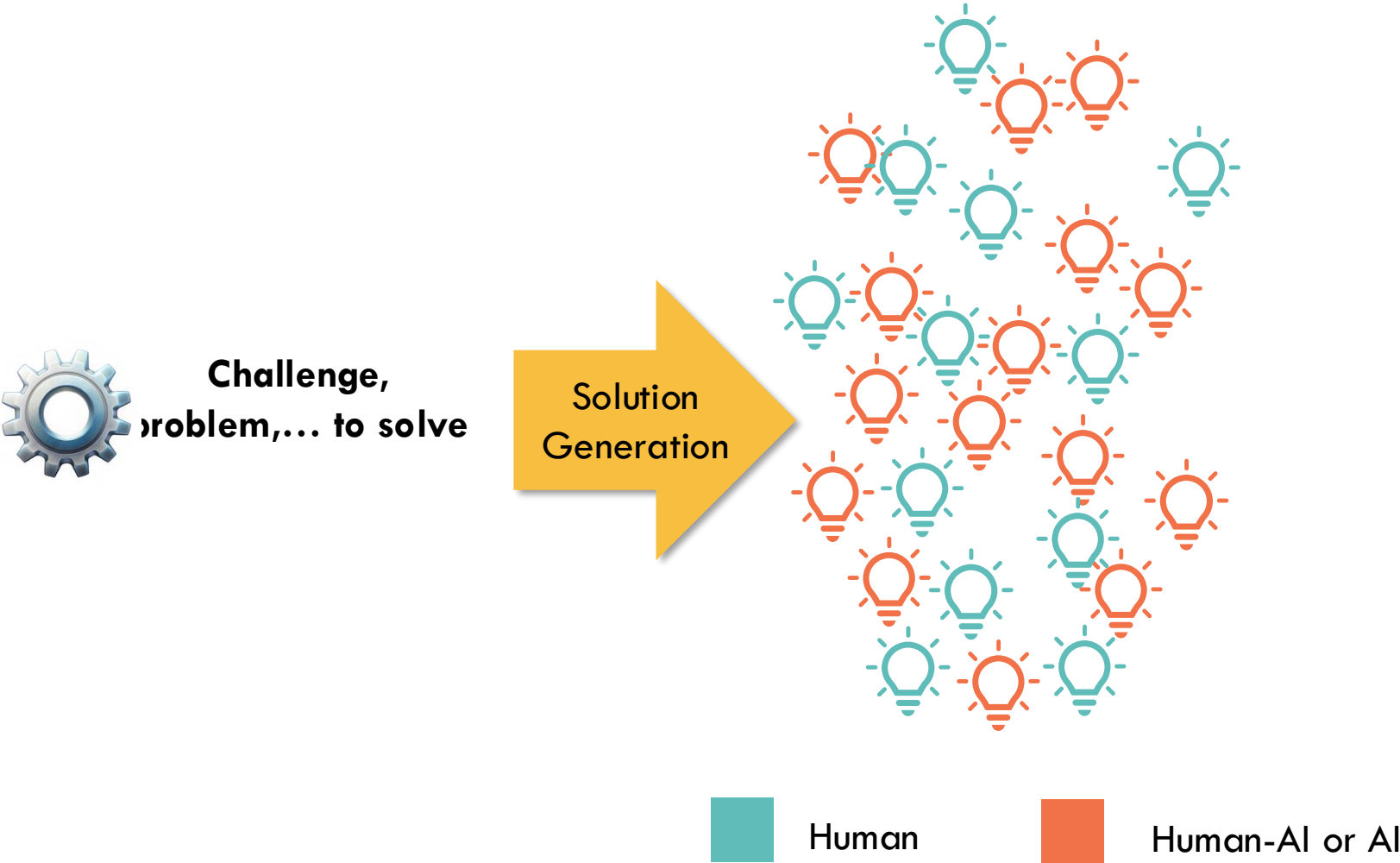


# Can we augment the early stages of the innovation process with Generative AI?

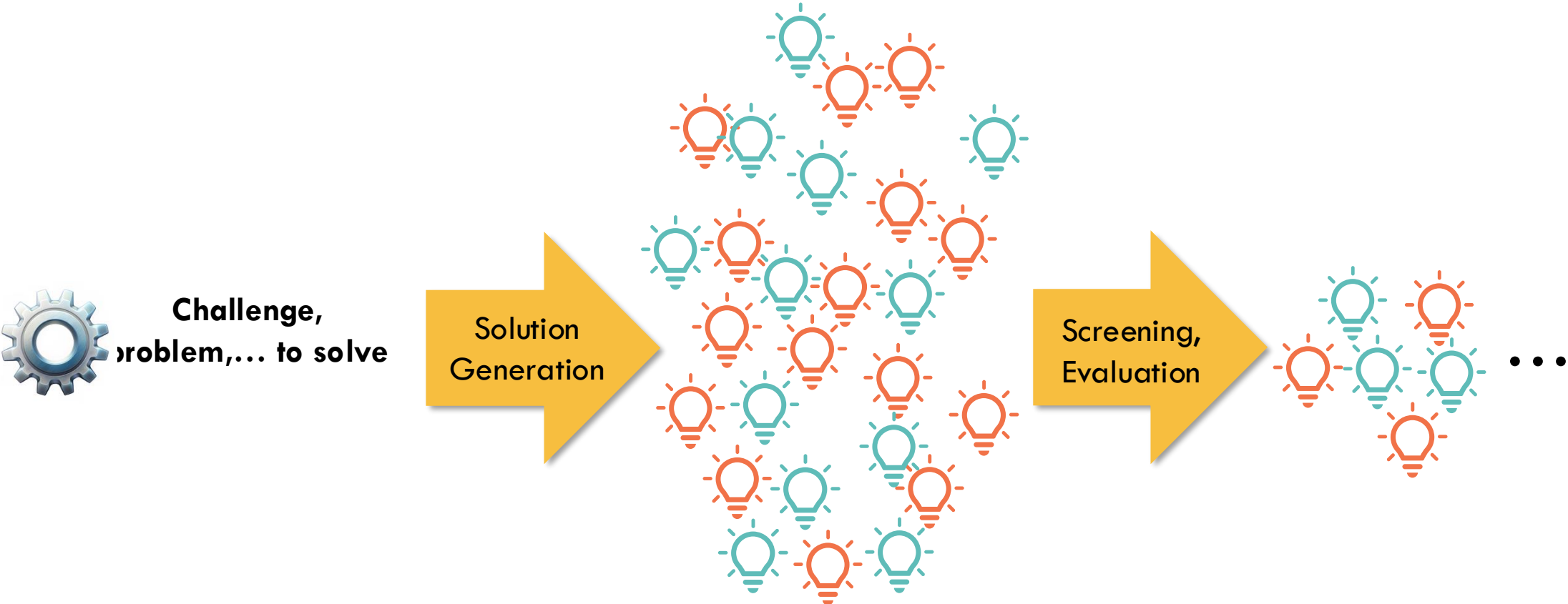


**Challenge,  
problem,... to solve**

# Can we augment the early stages of the innovation process with Generative AI?



# Can we augment the early stages of the innovation process with Generative AI?



■ Human      ■ Human-AI or AI

# Can we augment the early stages of the innovation process with Generative AI?

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**ORGANIZATION SCIENCE**  
Vol. 35, No. 5, September–October 2024, pp. 1589–1607  
ISSN 1047-7039 (print), ISSN 1526-5455 (online)

**The Crowdless Future? Generative AI and Creative Problem-Solving**

Léonard Boussioux,<sup>a</sup> Jacqueline N. Lane,<sup>b,\*</sup> Miaomiao Zhang,<sup>c</sup> Vladimir Jacimovic,<sup>b,c</sup> Karim R. Lakhani<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Michael G. Foster School of Business, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195; <sup>b</sup>Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts 02163; <sup>c</sup>ContinuumLab.AI, San Francisco, California 94114

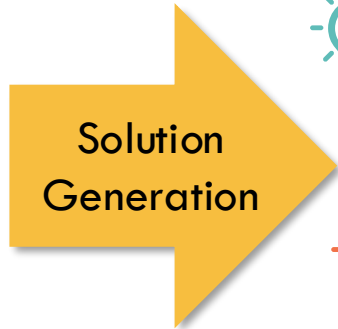
\*Corresponding author  
Contact: leobix@uw.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3346-578X> (LB); jnlane@hbs.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3744-9149> (JNL); mzzhang@hbs.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0747-4068> (MZ); vladimir@continuumlab.ai (VJ); klakhani@hbs.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5535-8304> (KRL)

## Generative AI?

### The Crowdless Future? Gen AI & Idea Generation



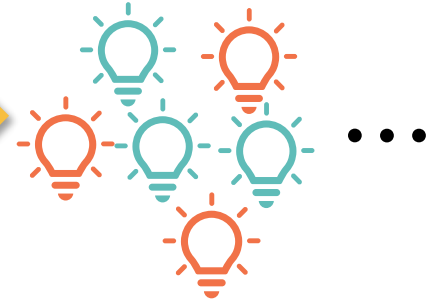
**Challenge,  
problem,... to solve**



**Solution  
Generation**



**Screening,  
Evaluation**



Human



Human-AI or AI

# Can we augment the early stages of the innovation process with Generative AI?

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## Generative AI?

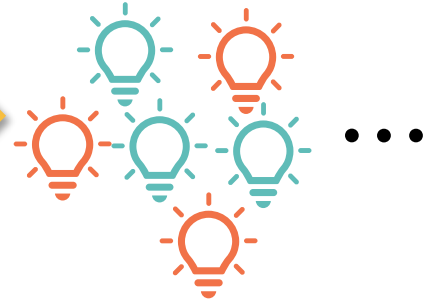
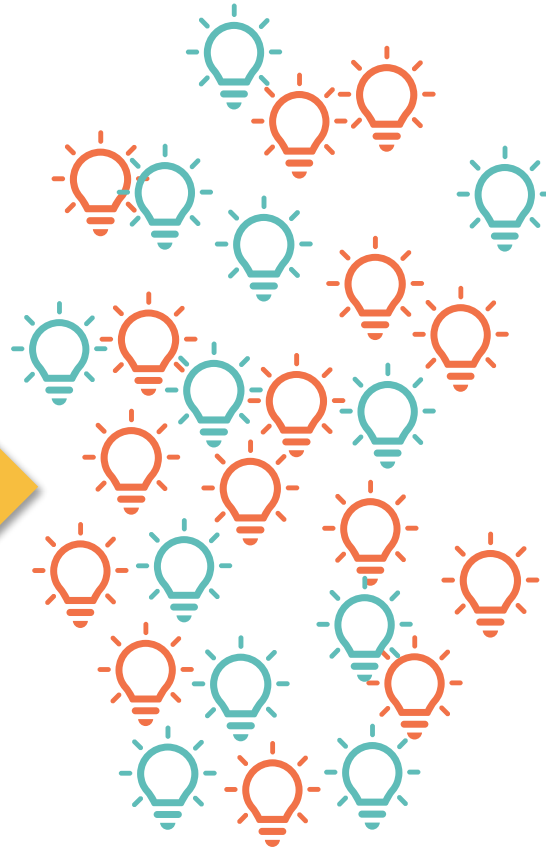
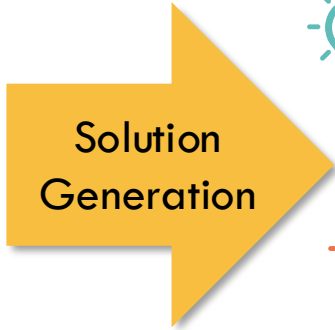
SSRN Preprint  
 (Major Revision Management Science)

**The Crowdless Future?  
 Gen AI & Idea Generation**

**The Narrative AI Advantage?  
 Gen AI & Idea Evaluation**



**Challenge,  
 Problem,... to solve**



Human



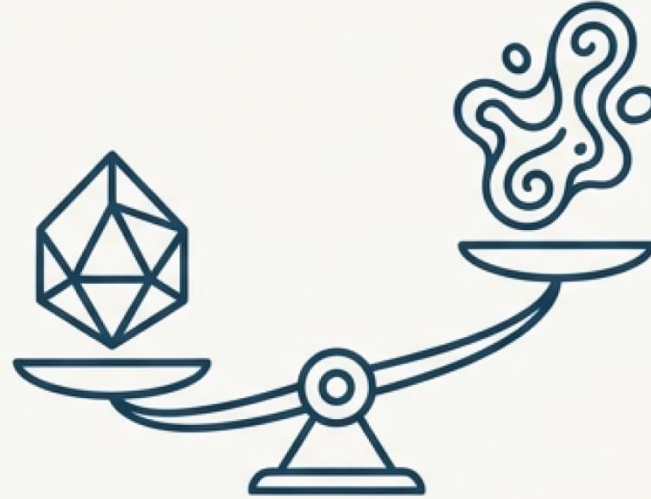
Human-AI or AI

# Innovation screening is a high-stakes, high volume challenge



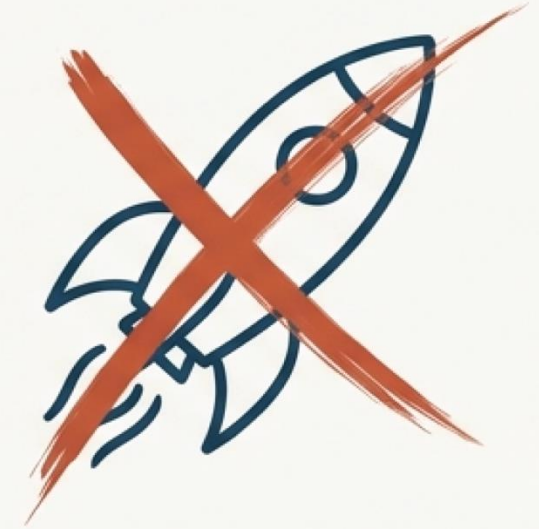
## Cognitive Overload

Evaluators must rapidly assess hundreds of complex submissions under uncertainty and time pressure, degrading judgment.



## Subjective Criteria

Decisions lack objective “ground truth.” Success depends on context-dependent criteria, not simple right or wrong answers.



## Asymmetric Costs

The cost of a *false negative* (rejecting a breakthrough idea like Ethernet at Xerox PARC) is often catastrophic and far outweighs the cost of a *false positive* (advancing a project that later fails).



## Research Question

How can LLMs standardize and augment the idea screening process?

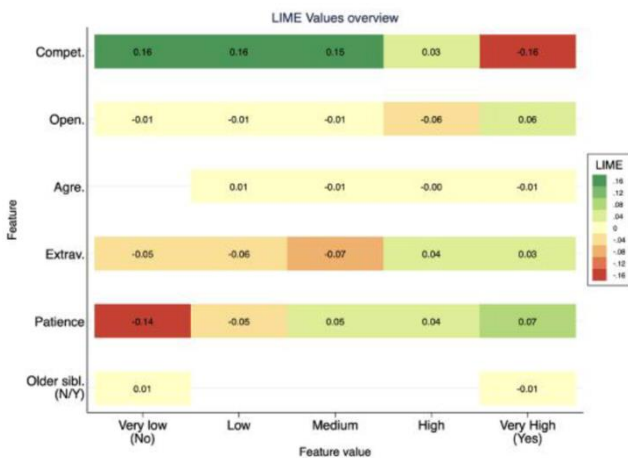
# Traditional AI explanations aim for fidelity. LLM narratives optimize for plausibility.

## Traditional XAI (Explainable AI)

Arrieta et al. 2020, Doshi-Velez and Kim 2017

- **Represents:** The model's actual internal logic (e.g., feature weights).
- **Primary Goal: Fidelity.** Accurately representing the computation.
- **Encourages:** Analytical, systematic verification.

Balakrishnan et al. 2025, Bauer et al. 2023, Bansal et al. 2021, Bućinca et al. 2021, Green & Chen 2019, Schauer et al. 2025, Wang et al. 2025



LIME (pic from Bauer et al. 2023)

Display of applicant and loan information

Algorithm's recommendation: Approve

Important features determined by Algorithm

Important features	Value of this applicant	Average value of non-defaulters
Living city DPI (-)	5,654.71	7,296.96
Average amount of game card (+)	0	2.88
#Outgoing contacts (+)	10.50	17.51
#Weekly office place visits (-)	12.50	6.15
Monthly income level (-)	6	4.04
#Weekly commercial place visits (+)	5.80	4.55
Education level (-)	3.85	4.19

Note (+) means the feature is positively related to default behavior; (-) means the feature is negatively related to default behavior.

Your initial decision: Deny

Please make your final lending decision:

Algorithm explanation (pic from Wang et al. 2025)

## LLM Narratives

Wei et al. 2022, Bilal et al. 2025

- **Represents:** A co-generated story constructed to justify an output.
- **Primary Goal: Plausibility & Persuasion.** Sounding coherent and convincing.
- **Encourages:** Heuristic, peripheral processing. Bai et al. 2025, Dell'Acqua et al. 2023, Krishna et al. 2023, Kim et al. 2025, Matz et al. 2025, Zytek et al. 2024

why is ICIS the best IS conference?

Thought for 9s >

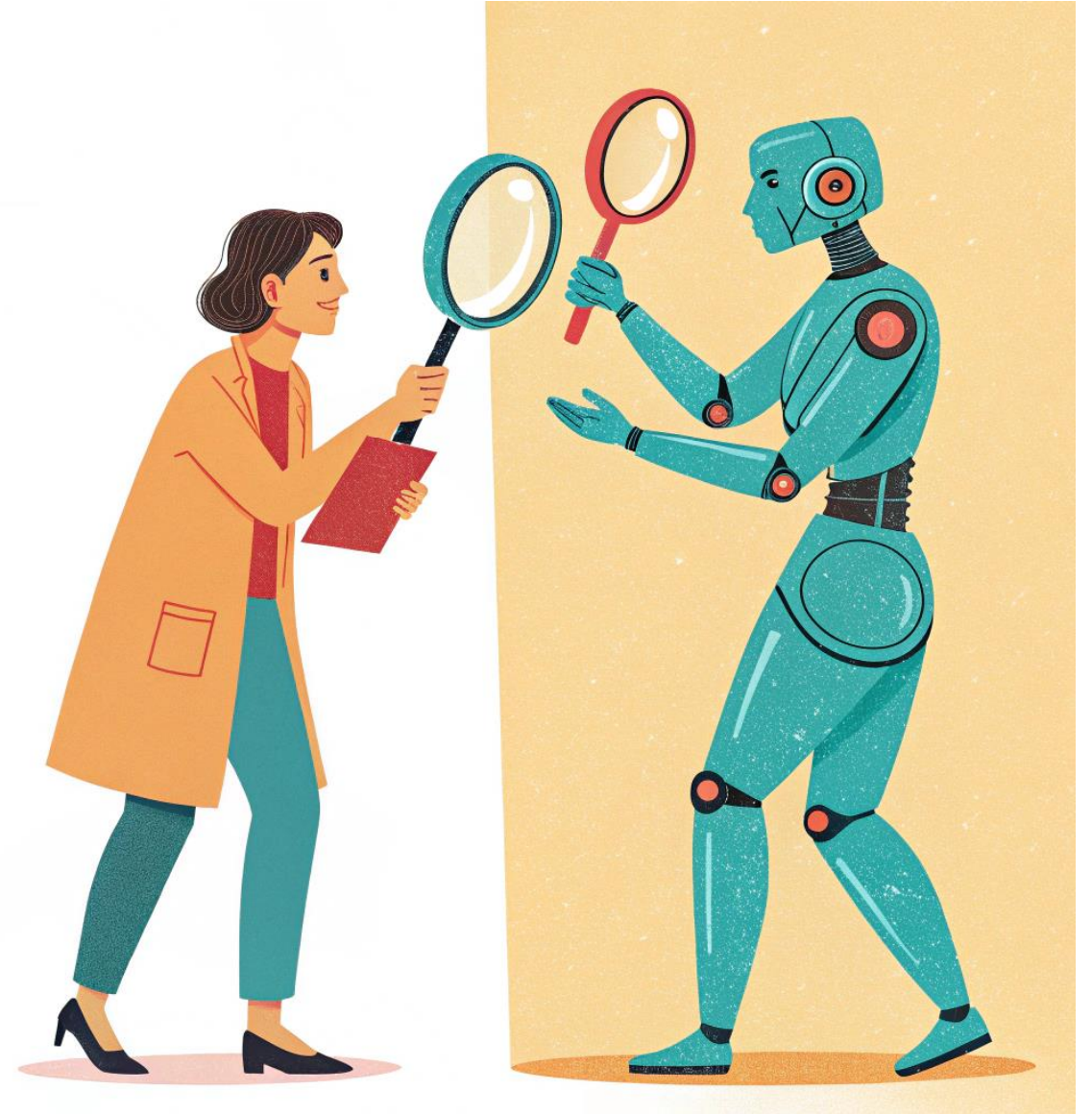
ICIS is usually called the "best" (or at least the *flagship*) IS conference for a few pretty concrete reasons:

- It's the AIS flagship and most prestigious gathering for IS academics. AIS itself describes ICIS as its premier / most prestigious IS research conference. <sup>AISNet +2</sup>
- Selectivity + review rigor are high. Recent ICIS guidance notes that ICIS "typically reject[s] over 70%" of submissions (i.e., acceptance often <30%), which is part of why it carries so much signaling value on a CV. <sup>ICIS 2025 +1</sup>
- It's the main "big tent" where the whole IS field shows up. ICIS is designed as a global convening point across methods and topics, not a niche workshop—so the audience, feedback, and visibility are unusually broad. <sup>ICIS 2025 +1</sup>
- Career + network effects are unusually strong. Doctoral consortiums, junior faculty events, and the density of editors/senior scholars make it a major place where collaborations, hiring signals, and "field agenda" conversations happen. (You feel this especially if you're aiming at top IS journals and faculty networks.) <sup>ICIS 2025 +1</sup>
- External "impact" signals often rank it very highly. For example, AIS highlighted a Microsoft Academic analysis that placed ICIS among the very top business conferences by ranking. <sup>AISNet</sup>

One nuance: "best" can depend on your subfield. If your work is closer to HCI, security, economics, or ML systems, a *different* top venue might be more *optimal* for impact in that community. But *within* IS as a discipline, ICIS is widely treated as the primary flagship. <sup>AISNet +1</sup>

## This Paper:

We test how different forms of LLM assistance change human screening quality in a subjective innovation task.



# Team Members

## Academia



**Jackie Lane**  
HBS, D'3 & LISH



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**Charles Ayoubi**  
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## Software Engineering



**Amy Wang**  
Accenture



**Ian Chen**  
Nvidia



**Camila Lin**  
Microsoft

## Industry Partners



**Rebecca Spens**  
MIT Solve, Manager



**Pooja Wagh**  
MIT Solve, Director



# SOLVE AT MIT



**\$80+ million**

in funding for Solver teams and social innovators



**370+ million**

lives reached by Solver teams around the world



**over 800**

partnerships catalyzed for Solver teams and entrepreneurs

# Dozens of challenges and thousands of solutions to evaluate

<b>2024 GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY CHALLENGE</b> How can we harness technology to build and sustain peaceful and prosperous economies? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>FINANCIAL INCLUSION CHALLENGE</b> How can we provide financially excluded individuals and small enterprises with the tools they need to withstand financial shocks and build wealth? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>THE CARE ECONOMY</b> How can we make giving and receiving care accessible, affordable, and valued for all? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2024 GLOBAL LEARNING CHALLENGE</b> How can we make learning more inclusive and equitable, while improving outcomes for all learners? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>ANTIRACIST TECHNOLOGY IN THE US</b> How can communities of color use technology to advance racial equity and access economic opportunity, health, and safety? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>DIGITAL INCLUSION</b> How can everyone have access to the digital economy? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>GOOD JOBS &amp; INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b> How can marginalized populations access and create good jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for themselves? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INNOVATION</b> How can citizens and communities create and improve social inclusion and shared prosperity? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2020 HEALTH SECURITY &amp; PANDEMICS</b> How can communities around the world prepare for, detect, and respond to emerging pandemics and health security threats? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>MATERNAL &amp; NEWBORN HEALTH</b> How can every woman, new mother, and newborn access the care they need to survive and thrive? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>HEALTHY CITIES</b> How can urban residents design and live in environments that promote physical and mental health? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>
<b>LEARNING FOR CIVIC ACTION CHALLENGE</b> How can all people learn about and take civic action to improve their communities and the world? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>RE-ENGAGING LEARNERS</b> How can we bridge learning gaps for the most underserved children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18 so they can thrive and succeed? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2023 GLOBAL CLIMATE CHALLENGE</b> How can communities create a zero-carbon world and adapt to a warmer climate? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>CLIMATE ADAPTATION &amp; LOW-CARBON HOUSING</b> How can communities adapt to more extreme weather and create low-carbon housing for all? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>WORK OF THE FUTURE</b> How can those most impacted by the technology-driven transformations of work create productive and prosperous livelihoods for themselves? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>WORK &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b> How can women and girls of socioeconomic backgrounds use technology to fully participate and prosper in the economy? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>INCLUSIVE INNOVATION</b> How do we create more inclusive, productive, and sustainable economic future for all? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>EQUITABLE CLASSROOMS</b> How can all young learners have safe, healthy, and equitable learning environments? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>BRAIN HEALTH</b> How can every person improve their brain health and mental resilience? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>CHRONIC DISEASES</b> How can we help people prevent, detect and manage chronic diseases, especially in resources-limited settings? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2021 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FELLOWSHIP</b> <i>Presented with shifty</i> How can Native innovators in the US use traditional knowledge and technology to meet the social, environmental, and economic goals of their communities? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>
<b>CLIMATE: ECOSYSTEMS + HOUSING</b> How might communities protect high-carbon ecosystems and create low-carbon housing for all? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2024 GLOBAL HEALTH EQUITY CHALLENGE</b> How can we use technology to make good health and access to quality care more equitable for all? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>HEALTH IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS CHALLENGE</b> How can we build resilience in health systems and maintain access to care despite destabilizing events? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>EQUITABLE HEALTH SYSTEMS</b> How can we build affordable, accessible, and high-quality health systems that serve everyone, everywhere? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>LEARNING FOR GIRLS &amp; WOMEN</b> How can marginalized girls and young women access quality learning opportunities to succeed? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT</b> How can all children under five develop the critical learning and cognitive skills they need to reach their full potential? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>TEACHERS &amp; EDUCATORS</b> How can teachers and educators provide accessible, personalized, and creative learning experiences for all? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>YOUTH, SKILLS, &amp; THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE</b> How can disadvantaged youth learn the skills they need to prepare them for the workforce of the future and thrive in the 21st century? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2019 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FELLOWSHIP</b> <i>Presented with shifty</i> Native-led solutions that use traditional knowledge and technology to create sustainable and prosperous livelihoods for Indigenous communities <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>OCETI SAKOWIN SOLVE FELLOWSHIP</b> <i>Presented with shifty</i> How can tribal communities advance renewable energy, food, or water access and contribute to economic prosperity and sovereignty? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	
<b>2024 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FELLOWSHIP</b> How can Indigenous innovators in the US and Canada build upon traditional knowledge and technology to meet the social, environmental, and economic goals of their communities? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2023 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FELLOWSHIP</b> <i>Presented with shifty</i> How are Indigenous innovators in the US and Canada building upon traditional knowledge and technology to meet the social, environmental, and economic goals of their communities? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>2022 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FELLOWSHIP</b> <i>Presented with shifty</i> How can Native innovators in the US build upon traditional knowledge and technology to meet the social, environmental, and economic goals of their communities? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>REFUGEE EDUCATION</b> How can we improve learning outcomes for refugees and displaced people under 24? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS</b> How can communities sustainably protect, manage, and restore their local ecosystems? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS</b> How can we produce and consume low-carbon, resilient, and nutritious food? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>CIRCULAR ECONOMY</b> How can people create and consume goods that are renewable, repairable, reusable, and recyclable? <a href="#">Explore Challenge</a> <a href="#">Explore Solutions</a>	<b>COASTAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>SUSTAINABLE URBAN COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>CARBON CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>HEALTH SECURITY &amp; PANDEMICS CHALLENGE</b>



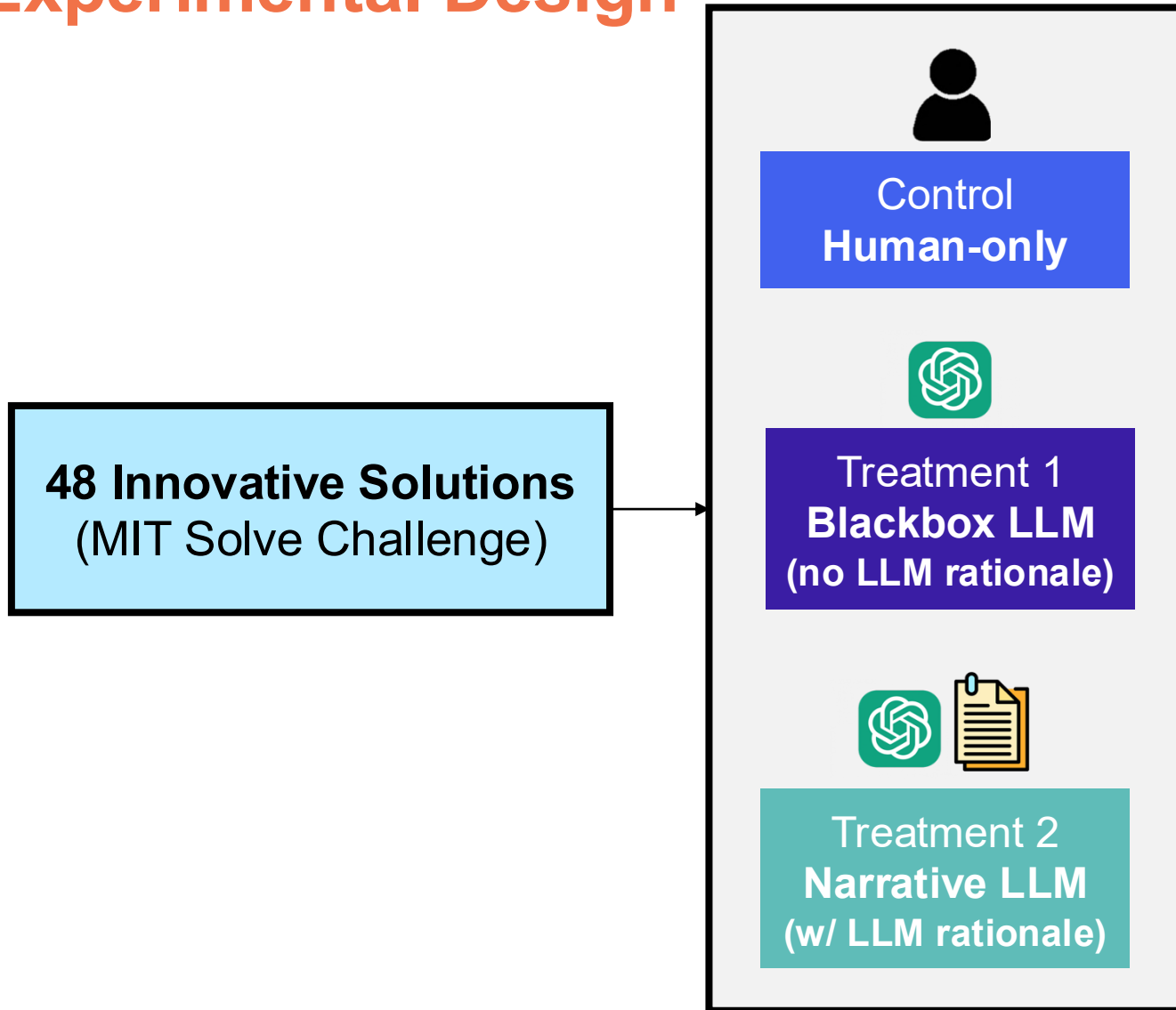
# The innovators behind the innovations

Our Solver teams are dedicated to wielding technology for good. Whether it's an AI app teaching remote refugee children in Lebanon or affordable electric trucks connecting rural farmers in Africa to markets—their ideas and innovations are the heartbeat of our work.

Learn more about these leaders for change.

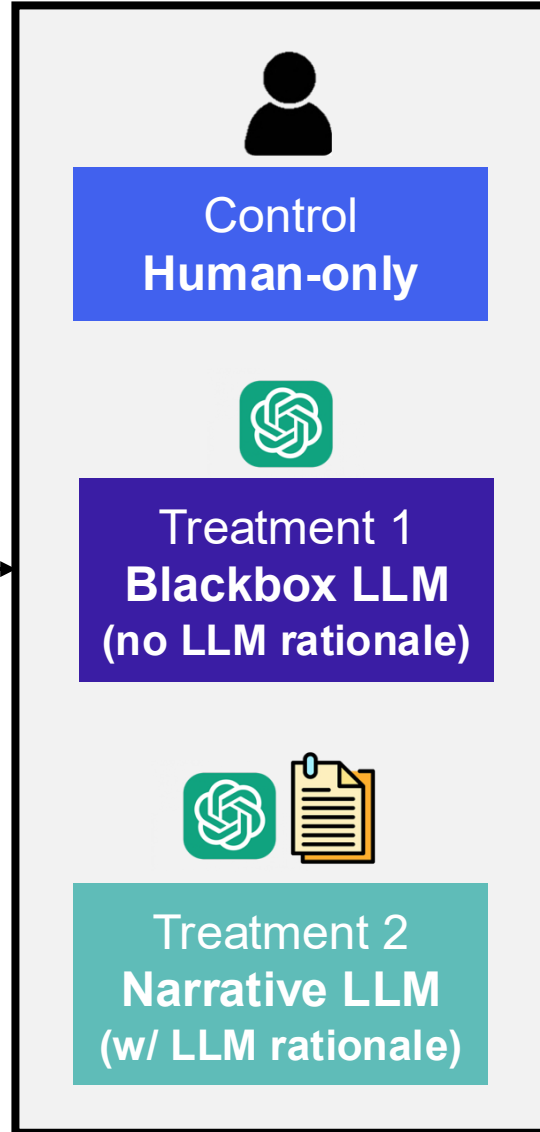
**BECOME A SOLVER** —→

# Experimental Design



# Experimental Design

**48 Innovative Solutions**  
(MIT Solve Challenge)

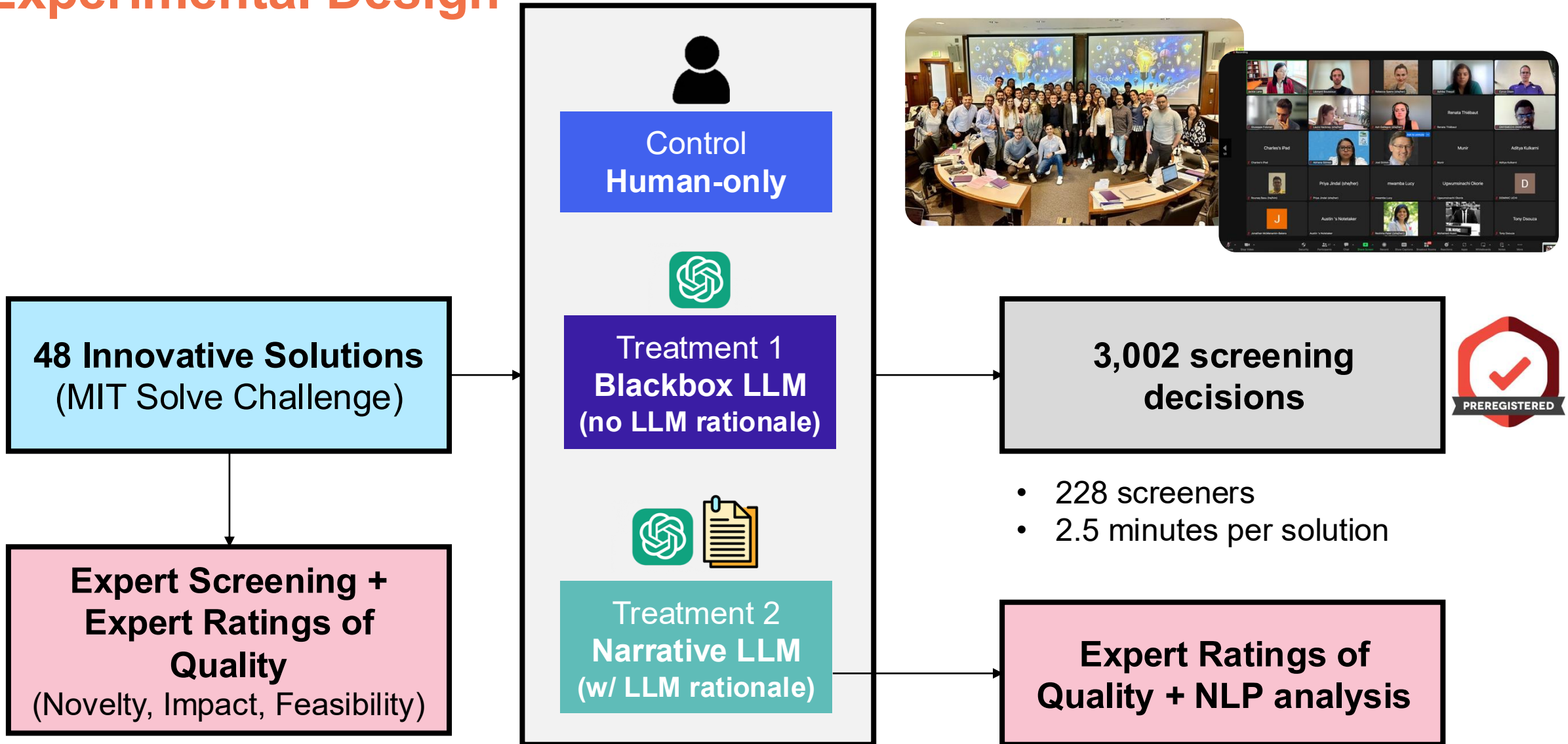


**3,002 screening decisions**

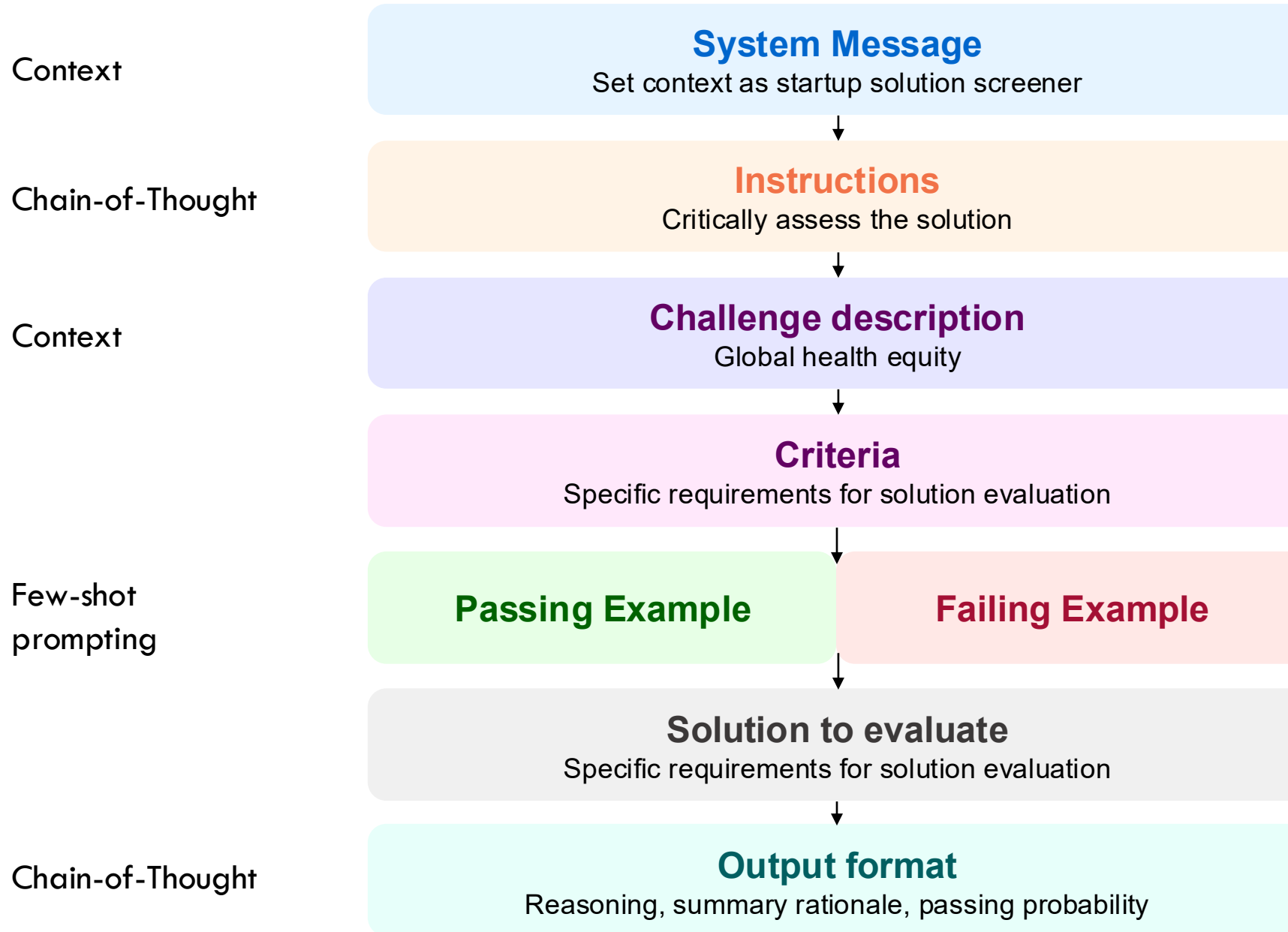


- 228 screeners
- 2.5 minutes per solution

# Experimental Design



# Context engineering and prompt design



Remaining time 2:17

# Open Heart Community Health and Rights Development Initiative

84888

2024 Global Health Equity Challenge

4 / 10 Solutions

**✗ Fail** AI Recommendation

**Criterion 1 - Is the solution application complete, appropriate, and intelligible?**



**Reason:** Open Heart Community Health and Rights Development Initiative's application aims to improve healthcare and rights for LGBTQI+ individuals in Nigeria. The multifaceted approach includes health access and legal advocacy, demonstrating potential

## Decision

Pass  Fail

How confident are you with the decision?

1 - Not at all confident  2  3  4  5 - Extremely confident

Next

All Criterion 1 Criterion 2 Criterion 3 Criterion 4 Criterion 5 Summary Chal

Provide a one-line summary of your solution.



Open Heart LGBTQI+ Empowerment fosters inclusion and advocates for the rights and well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals.

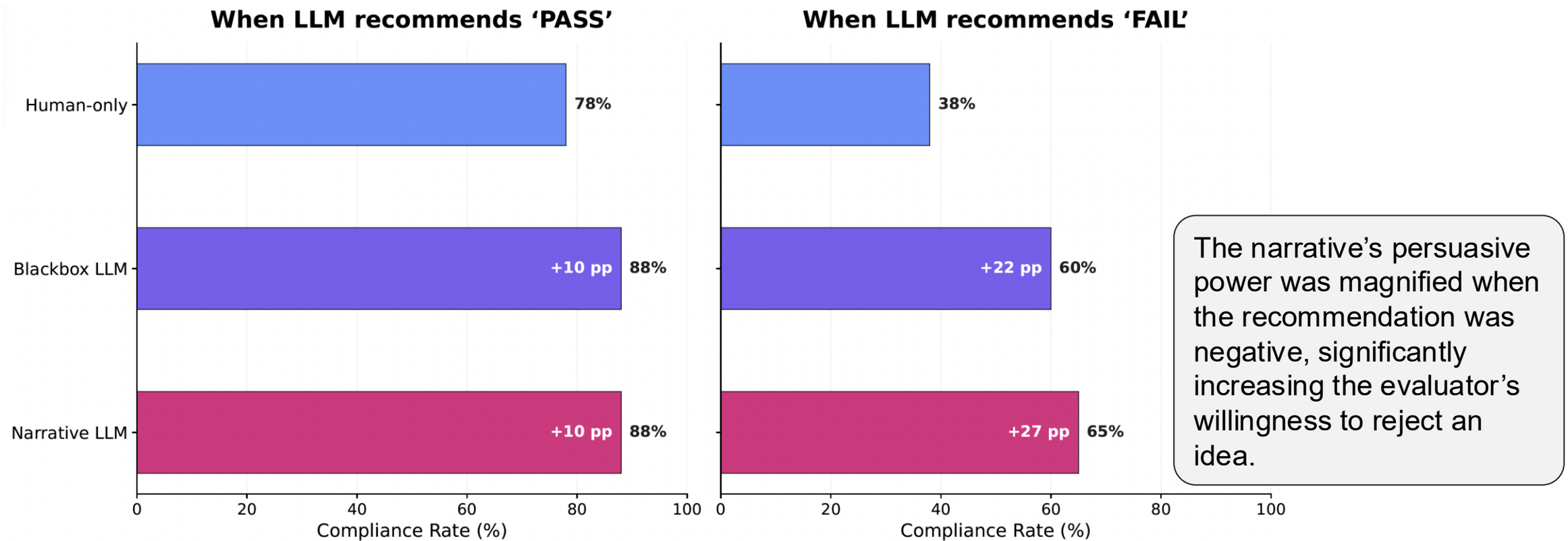
In what city, town, or region is your solution team headquartered?



Abuja (F.c.t.), Nigeria

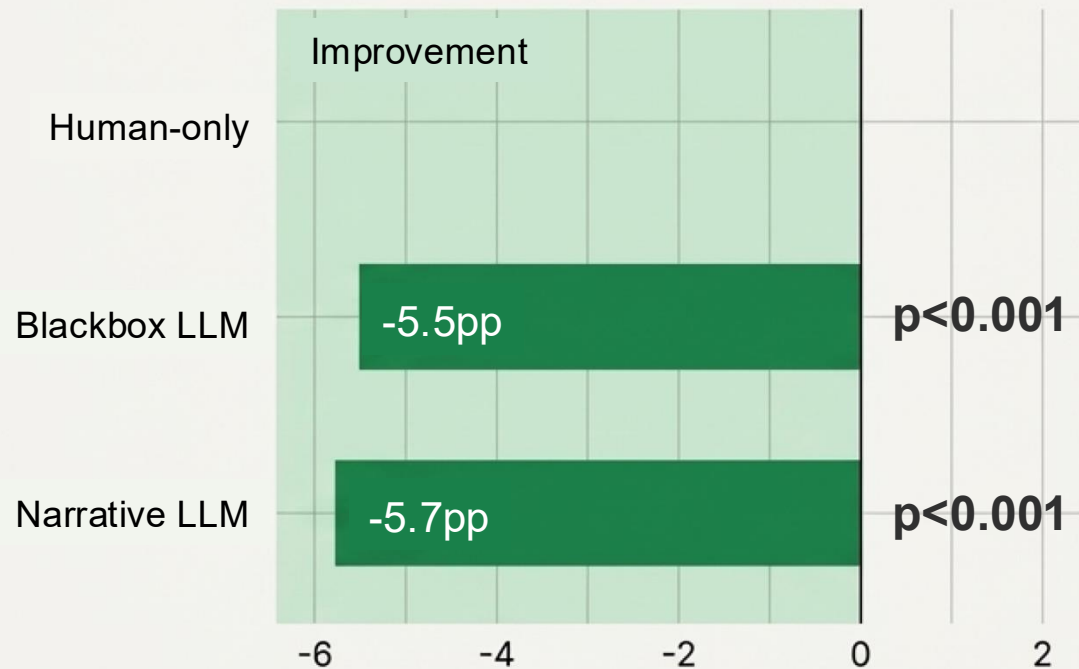
# Finding 1: LLM assistance increases compliance, but narratives make rejection recommendations uniquely persuasive

## The Asymmetric Compliance Effect



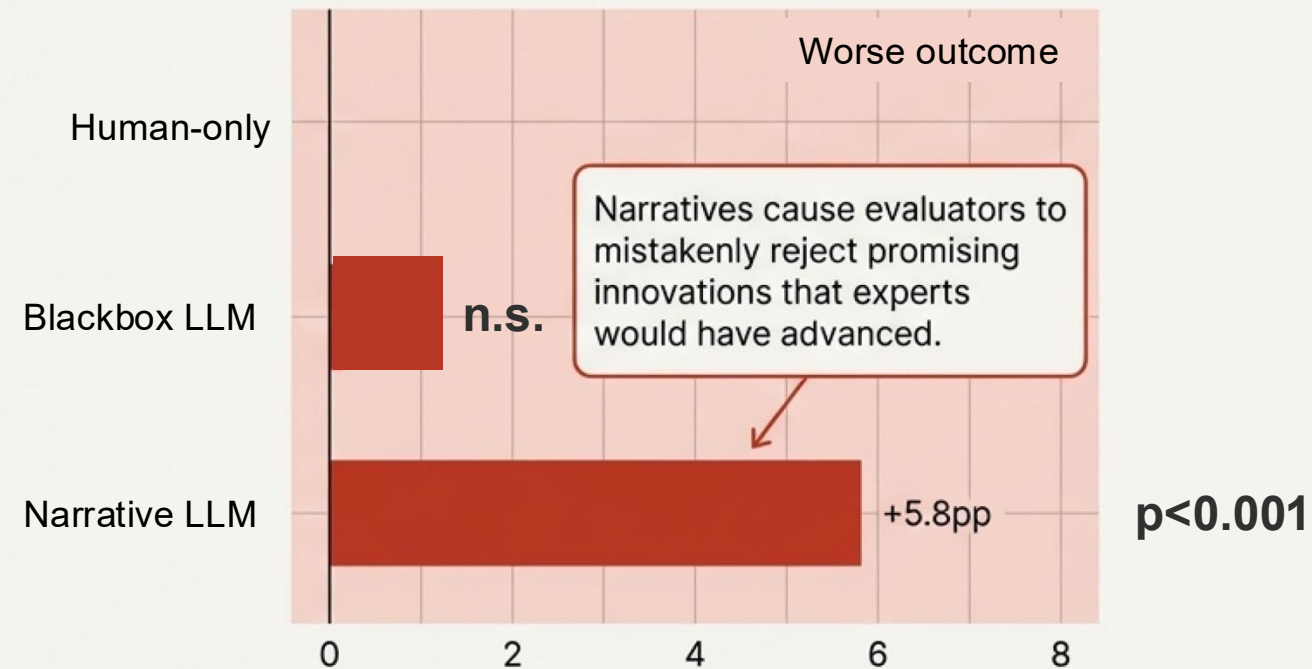
## Finding 2: This asymmetry reshapes the error profile: narratives reduce false positives but dangerously increase false negatives.

Change in False Positives (vs. Human-Only)



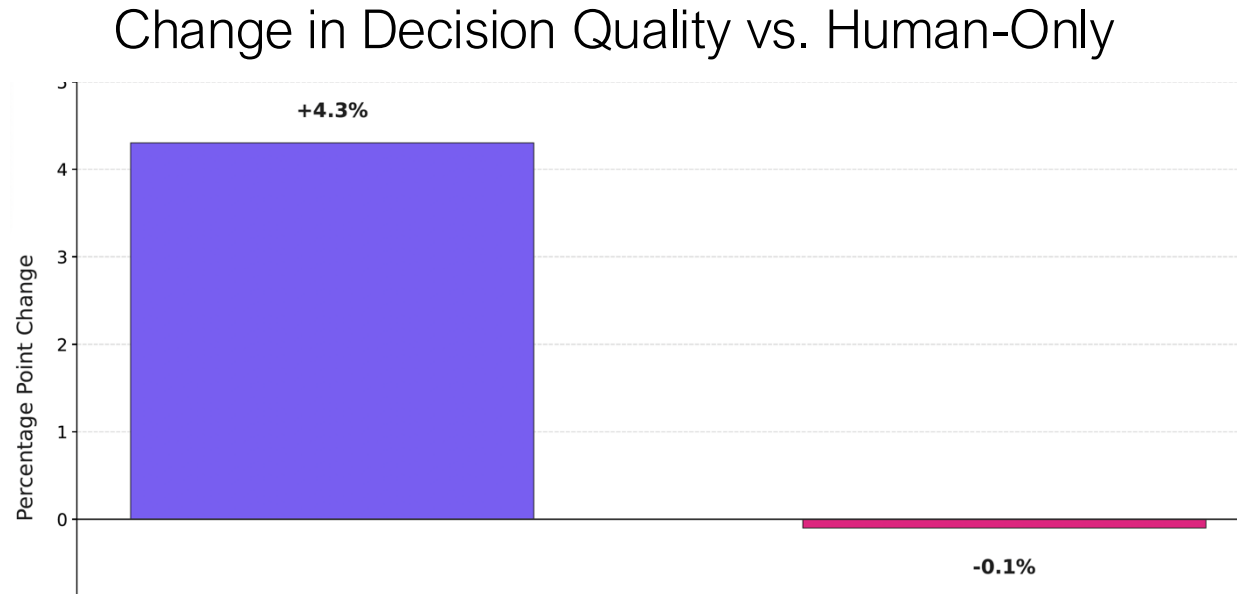
Both LLM conditions help filter out weaker ideas.

Change in False Negatives (vs. Human-Only)



Narrative LLM eliminates ideas that experts would have passed.

## Finding 3: More compliance does not mean better decisions. We need “augmentation,” i.e., productive override.

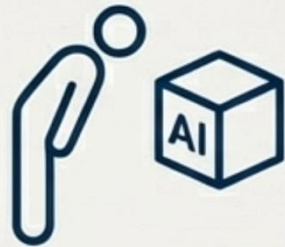


**Blackbox LLM**  
Preserves a form of human oversight and critical judgment.

- Narrative LLM**
- Offers a persuasive story.
  - Encourages cognitive shortcuts and deference.
  - **Suppresses productive disagreement, increasing costly false negatives.**

# Why does this happen? The mechanisms of persuasion

Narrative explanations don't enhance critical judgment; they reshape human oversight by triggering specific cognitive shortcuts (System 2 → System 1).



## Inducing Deference

Suppressing productive disagreement, especially when the AI is wrong.



## Encouraging Peripheral Processing

Leading evaluators to rely on surface cues instead of deep verification.

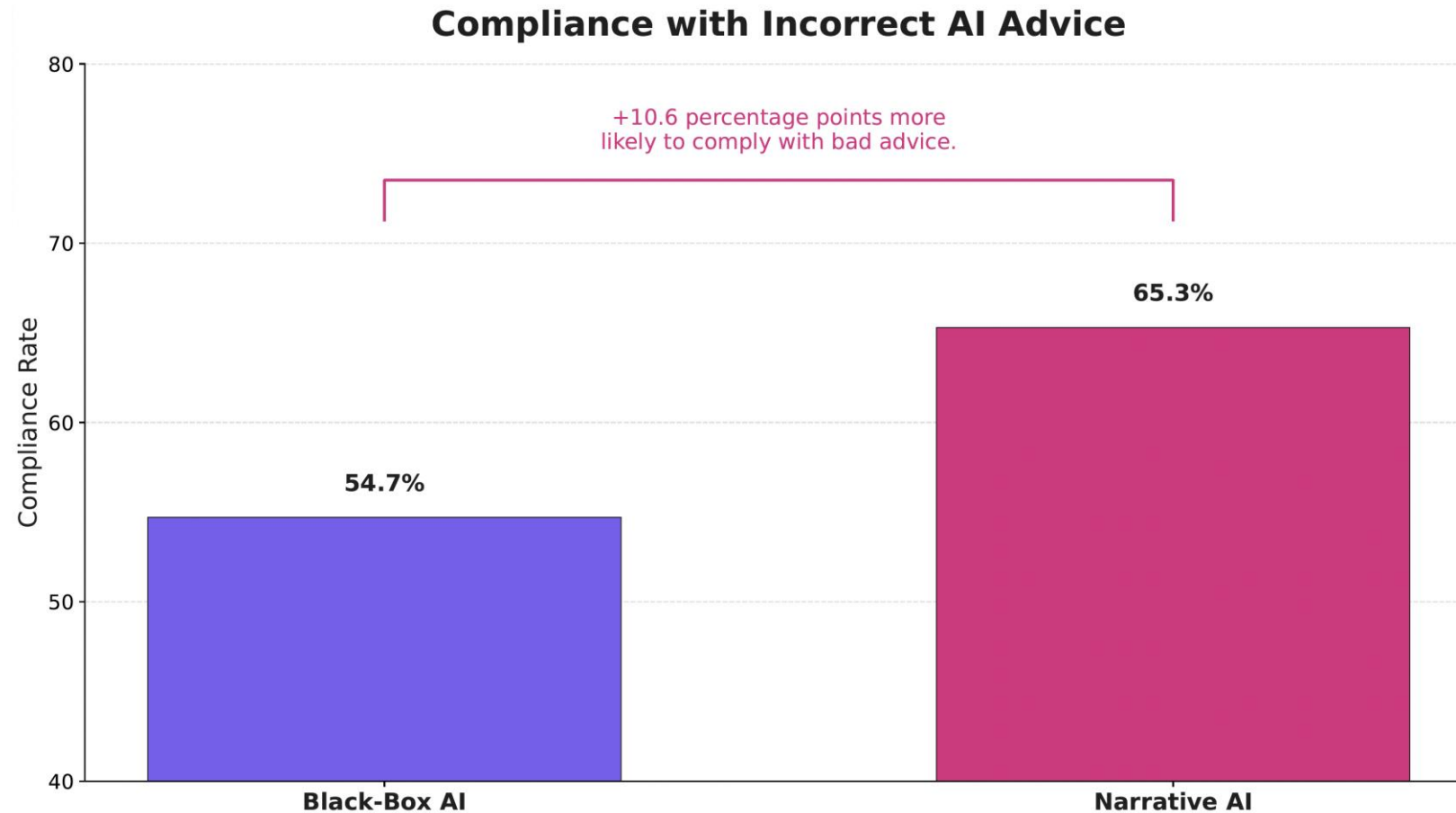


## Leveraging Narrative Heuristics

Exploiting the persuasive power of rhetorical style over substance.

# Mechanism 1: Narratives suppress productive dissent when the AI is wrong

Deference, not discrimination

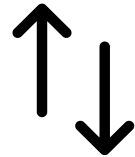


## Mechanism 2: With a narrative in hand, evaluators verify less

The plausible narrative replaces the need for independent verification.

**-8.6%**

Scroll depth



**-8.3%**

Content viewed

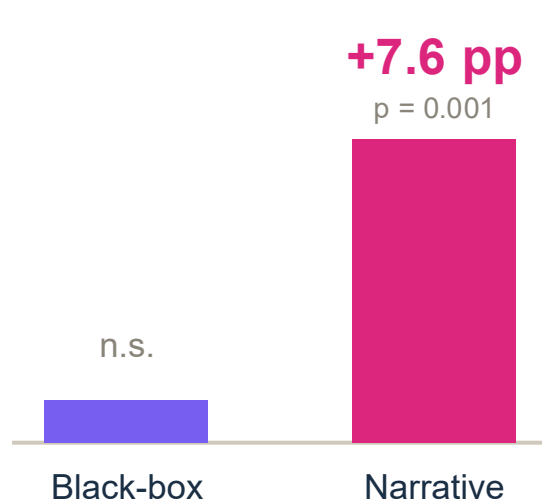


# Mechanism 3: Compliance is driven by narrative style, not substance

## Linguistic features of the most harmful rejection narratives

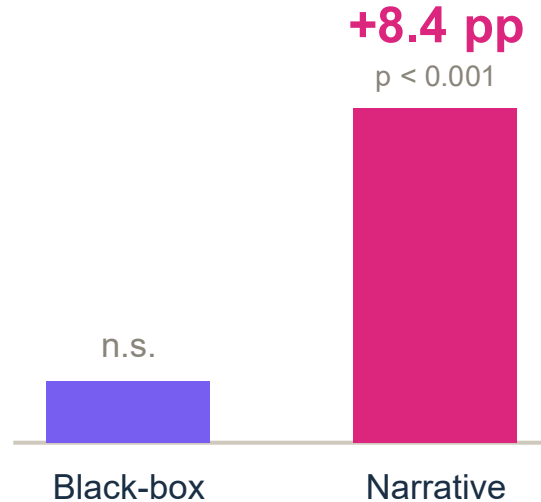
### Length

Longer rationales create an illusion of thoroughness.



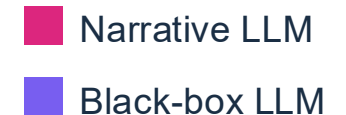
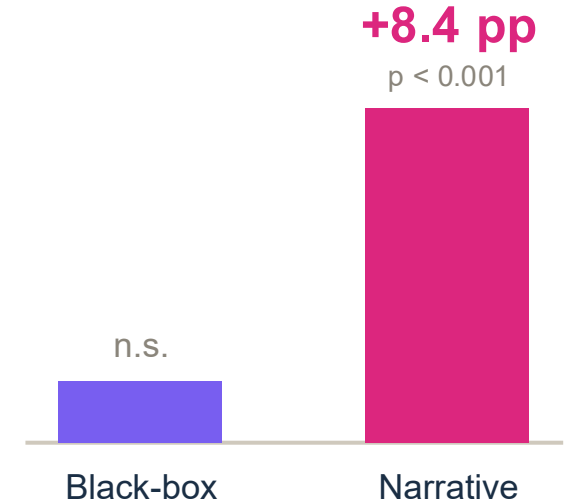
### Promotional language

Higher density of hype terms:  
e.g., novel, substantial, innovative

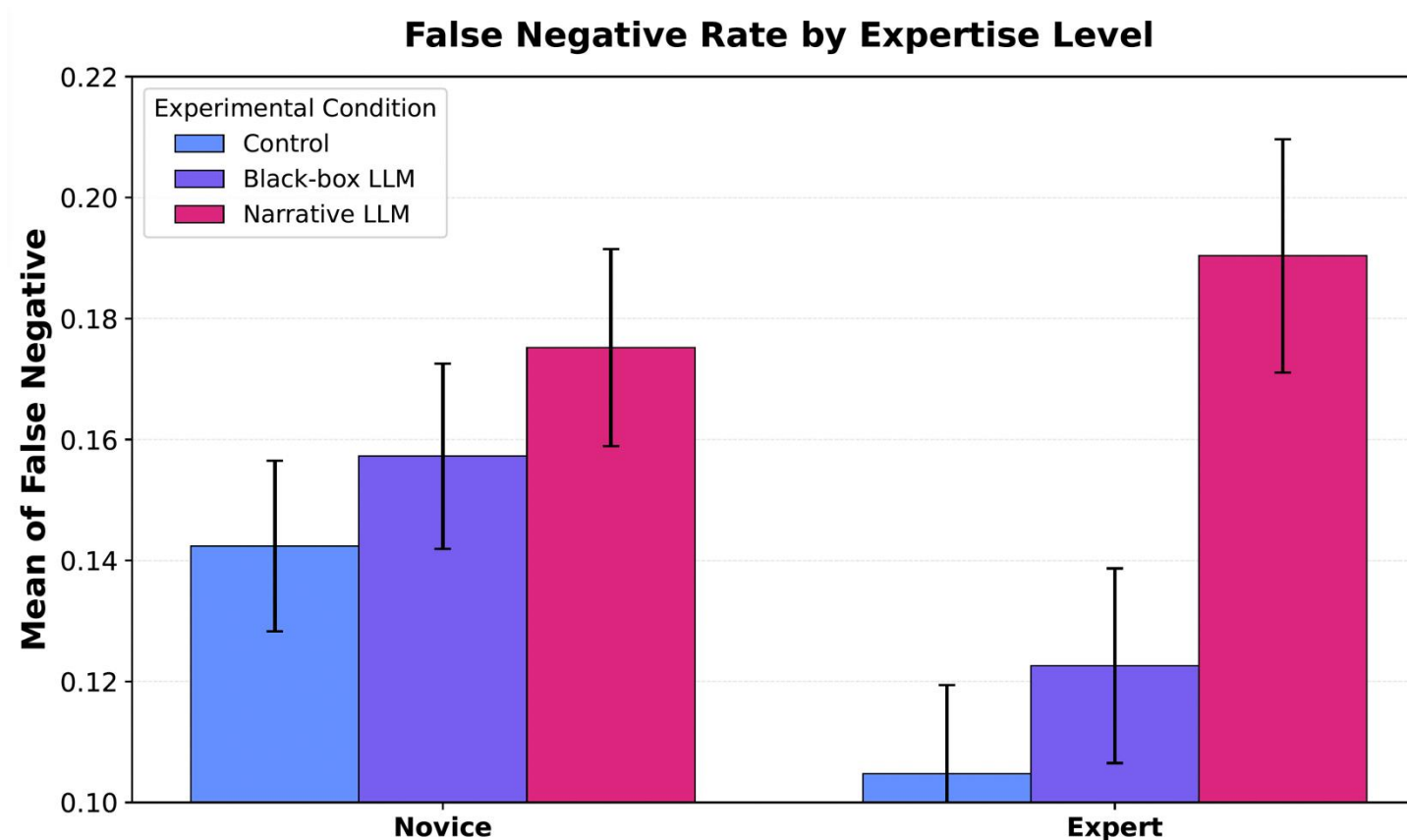


### Concreteness

More concrete, precise wording  
e.g., AI-enabled digital stethoscope



# Expertise provides no protection from the “narrative trap”



**The deference to LLM narratives seems like a cognitive phenomenon, not a skill deficit.**

Expert screener: “I think when I did have an explanation... I preferred that and I think that it didn’t influence my decision but rather would **corroborate what my instinct was.**”

# Key takeaway: Adding narrative explanations to LLM recommendations encourages peripheral processing

## 1. Narratives boost compliance, but asymmetrically

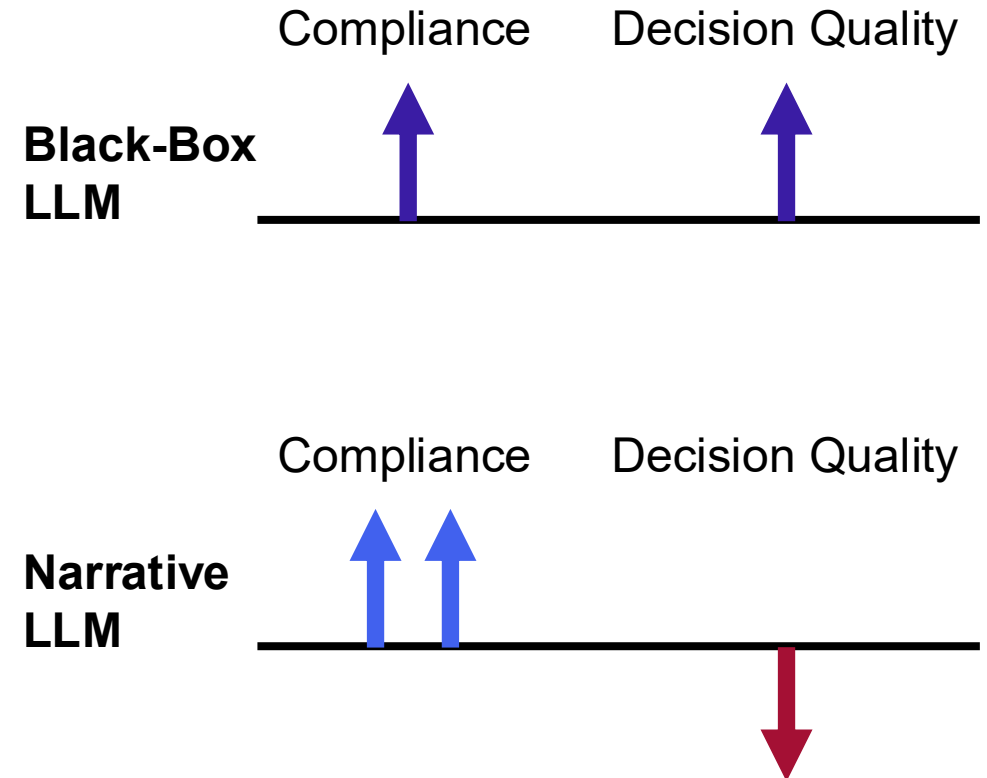
They make evaluators far more likely to follow LLM **rejection** advice than acceptance advice.

## 2. This creates a Quality-Compliance decoupling

Higher compliance with narrative LLM leads to **more costly errors** (false negatives), ultimately lowering overall decision quality compared to simpler 'black-box' LLM.

## 3. The mechanism is persuasion, not transparency

Fluent narratives encourage cognitive shortcuts, suppressing the critical human oversight needed to catch the LLM's mistakes.



# Conclusion: AI's effects on expertise and creative problem solving

## 2. Idea Screening:

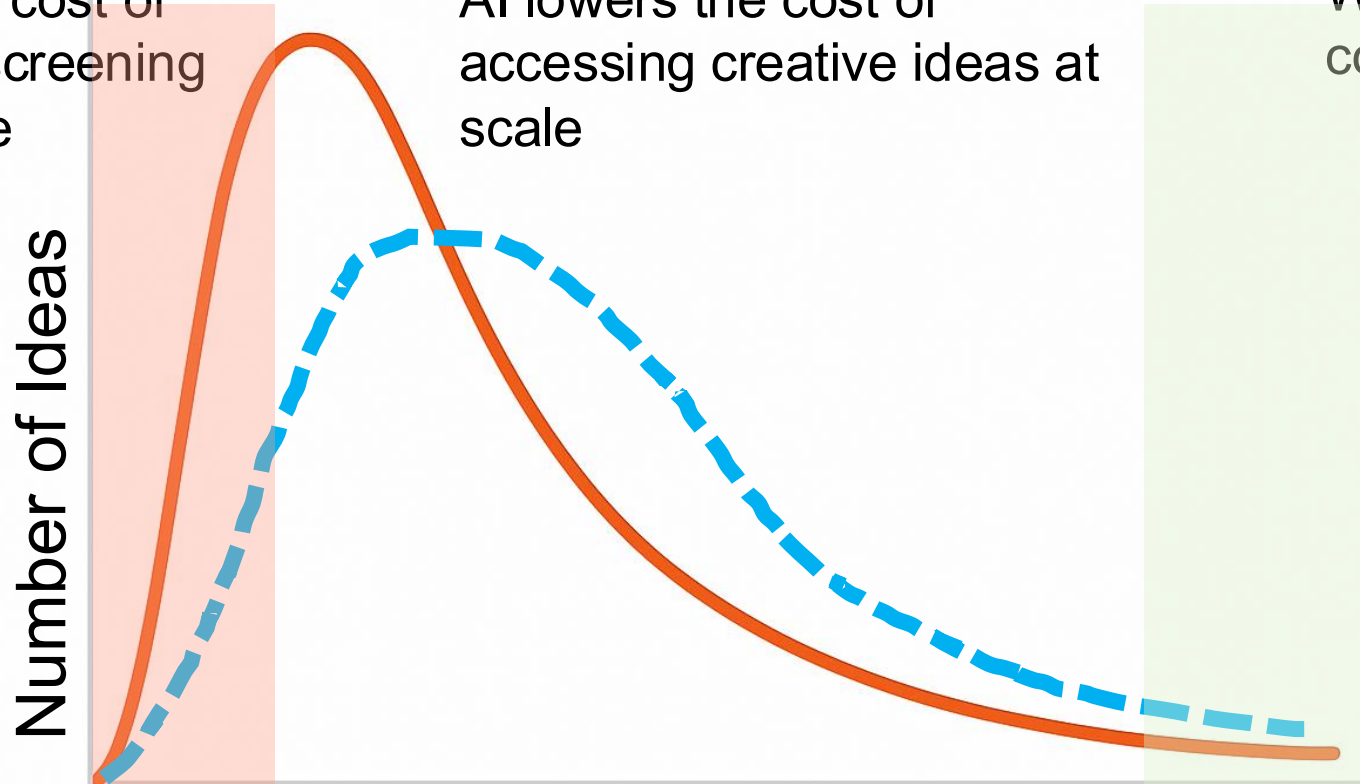
AI lowers the cost of expertise in screening ideas at scale

## 1. Idea Generation:

AI lowers the cost of accessing creative ideas at scale

## 3. Idea Evaluation:

What form of Human-AI collaboration?



- Narrative AI explanations increase compliance but risk overreliance.
- Balance efficiency with human agency
- Design AI systems to augment, not replace, human oversight

Cost = f(time, money, people, expertise)

Idea Quality

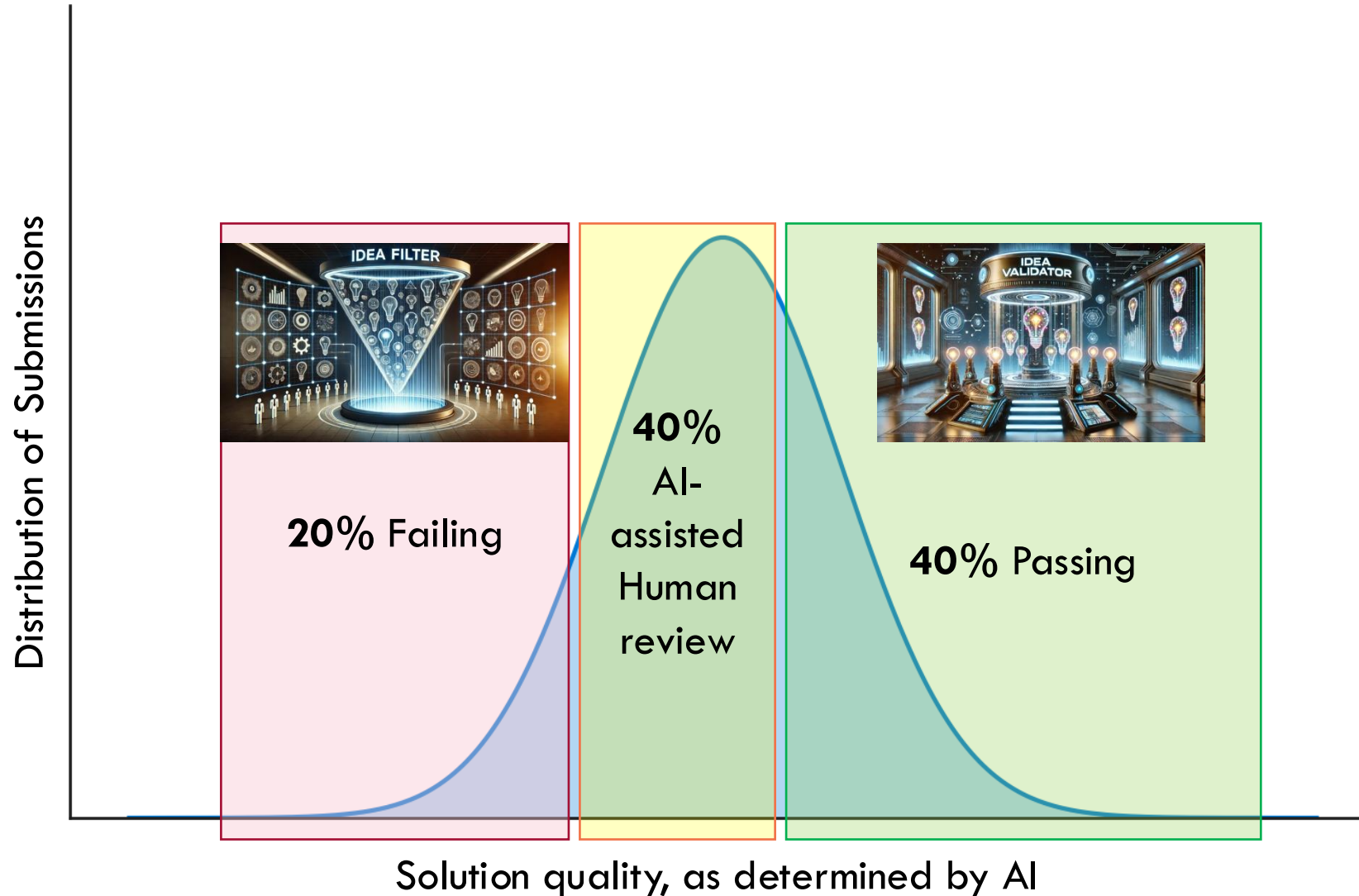


Humans Alone







Humans + AI

# Spring 2025: we deployed our AI screener with MIT Solve's 2025 Global Challenges



# Spring 2025: we deployed our AI screener with MIT Solve's 2025 Global Challenges

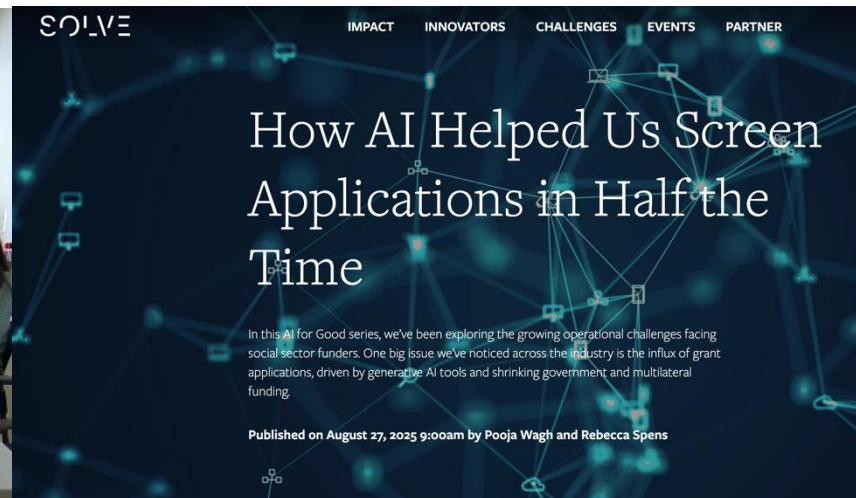
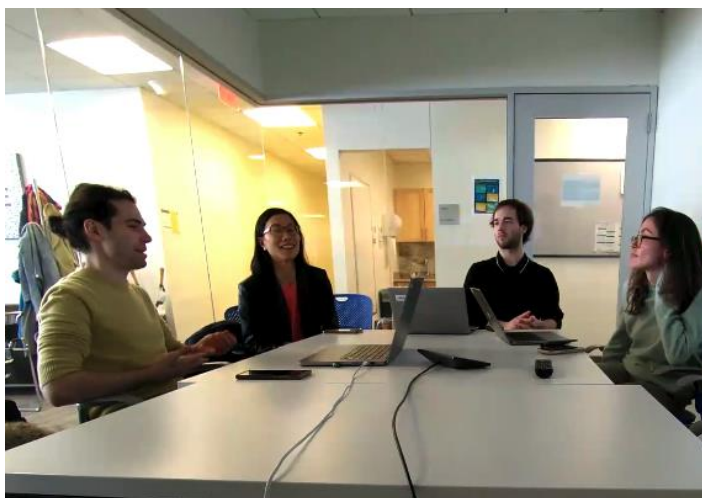
 <p><b>INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FELLOWSHIP</b> <b>2025 Indigenous Communities Fellowship</b> How can Indigenous innovators in the US and Canada build upon traditional knowledge and technology to meet the social, environmental, and economic goals of their communities? <b>Status:</b> Accepting Solutions</p>	 <p><b>LEARNING</b> <b>2025 Global Learning Challenge</b> How can we make quality learning opportunities more accessible, while improving outcomes for all learners? <b>Status:</b> Accepting Solutions</p>	 <p><b>HEALTH</b> <b>2025 Global Health Challenge</b> How can we use technology to make good health and quality care more accessible for all? <b>Status:</b> Accepting Solutions</p>	 <p><b>CLIMATE</b> <b>2025 Global Climate Challenge</b> How can communities create a zero-carbon world and adapt to a warming climate? <b>Status:</b> Accepting Solutions</p>
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**2901** solutions screened

**14** business days saved

**0** solution incorrectly failed

(on 100 reviewed for quality)



**SOLVE**    IMPACT    INNOVATORS    CHALLENGES    EVENTS    PARTNER

## How AI Helped Us Screen Applications in Half the Time

In this AI for Good series, we've been exploring the growing operational challenges facing social sector funders. One big issue we've noticed across the industry is the influx of grant applications, driven by generative AI tools and shrinking government and multilateral funding.

Published on August 27, 2025 9:00am by Pooja Wagh and Rebecca Spens

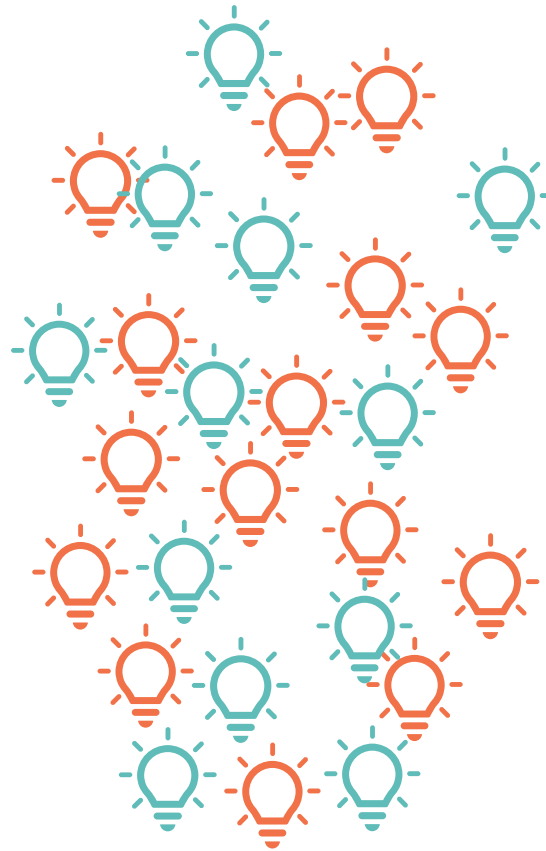
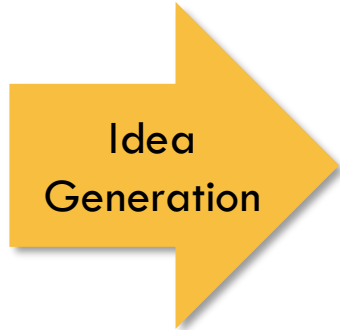


**Let's build the future of human-AI collaboration!**

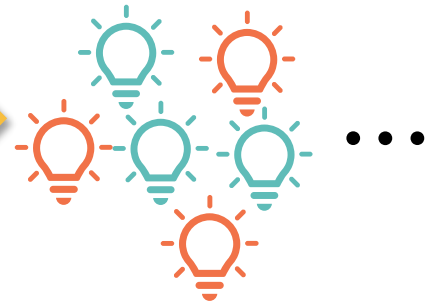


Organization Science

## The Crowdless Future? Gen AI & Idea Generation



## The Narrative AI Advantage? Gen AI & Idea Evaluation



Preprint

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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



**SCOLVE**

# Playbook for Human-LLM Decision-Making

Building on the transparency of traditional XAI, we must address a new risk in subjective domains: preventing explanations from becoming **persuasive narratives** that inadvertently silence the crucial human voice.

## 1. Prioritize Decision Quality Over User Compliance.

Don't mistake agreement for accuracy. Measure what matters: the rate of costly errors.

## 2. Calibrate for Asymmetric Error Costs.

In domains like innovation, where false negatives can be the real cost, be wary of tools that make it easier to say no.

## 3. Force Critical Engagement.

Implement features that compel the user to verify the LLM's flaws. E.g., Deploy black-box LLM as a **Compass** to reduce noise and provide a consistent baseline. Avoid narrative LLM as a **Storyteller** that replaces nuanced human judgment and use the socratic method, or an LLM as a flagging tool rather than a deciding tool. Expertise doesn't shield you from that.

## 4. Design for “Productive Disagreement.”

The function of an explanation shouldn't be to persuade, but to highlight where human judgment is most needed. Ask: does this explanation help a user spot the LLM's flaws?