

MODULE 1 - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SMEs

UNIT 1.1 - What is Artificial Intelligence and why it matters for SMEs

<p>LESSON INTRO</p>	<p>What are we doing today? Today we are going to learn what Artificial Intelligence is, what it does, and especially why understanding AI is important for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in today’s business environment.</p> <p>What soft skill am I going to acquire today? Critical thinking; Digital awareness; Strategic decision-making; Empowerment through knowledge.</p>
<p>PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT(s) CHECK</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC</p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation. For SMEs, AI is already a reality with practical implications for efficiency, customer interaction, and market competitiveness.</p> <p>Understanding the foundations of AI helps SME owners demystify the technology, recognize its relevance, and prepare for deeper engagement with AI tools in future lessons. Topics include the difference between narrow and general AI, the meaning of machine learning, and examples of how AI is already reshaping logistics, marketing, and operations for small businesses.</p>

<p>GENERAL THEORY</p>	<p>AI can be categorized into three types: Narrow AI (task-specific), General AI (human-level intelligence), and Super AI (beyond human capability). Most real-world applications use narrow AI.</p> <p>Core components include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machine Learning (ML): Learning from data • Natural Language Processing (NLP): Understanding human language • Computer Vision: Recognizing visual elements • Robotics: Interacting with the physical world <p>AI helps SMEs automate routine tasks, gain insights from customer behavior, and optimize decision-making processes. Understanding terminology like algorithms, datasets, predictive analytics, and training models is crucial for navigating these technologies.</p>
<p>EXAMPLES</p>	<p>Customer Service Automation: An Italian family-run winery uses a chatbot to handle booking inquiries in multiple languages, saving time and reducing errors.</p> <p>Predictive Maintenance: A small furniture manufacturer integrates AI sensors on machines to predict failures before they happen.</p> <p>Market Trend Analysis: A bakery chain uses AI to analyze social media trends and optimize seasonal product launches.</p> <p>Logistics Optimization: SMEs in e-commerce use AI to suggest optimal delivery routes, reducing costs and improving timing.</p>

HANDS ON EXPERIENCE

AI Concepts Quiz

1. **What is Artificial Intelligence primarily focused on?**
 - a. Manual labor
 - b. Mimicking human intelligence
 - c. Building robots only
 - d. Marketing strategies

2. **What type of AI is currently used in most applications?**
 - a. General AI
 - b. Super AI
 - c. Narrow AI
 - d. Emotional AI

3. **Which of these is a core AI function?**
 - a. Baking bread
 - b. Recognizing speech
 - c. Building houses
 - d. Filing taxes manually

4. **Why is AI relevant to SMEs?**
 - a. It's too expensive to matter
 - b. It helps automate and improve processes
 - c. Only large corporations use it
 - d. It replaces all staff

5. **What does NLP stand for in AI?**
 - a. National Language Program
 - b. Non-Linear Programming
 - c. Natural Language Processing
 - d. Natural Learning Pattern

	<p>Answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. b 2. c 3. b 4. b 5. c
<p>DISCUSSION</p>	<p>Have you heard of or used any AI-based tools in your business or personal life? How confident do you feel about the topic after today's lesson?</p>
<p>FEEDBACK AND OTHERS</p>	<p>Leave time for any open questions, and encourage learners to share examples or questions from their own SME contexts. Consider collecting informal reflections via sticky notes or a shared whiteboard tool.</p>