

• PRACTICAL AI · COMMERCIAL MARINE · SEAWORK 2026

AI at Sea. Drive it, not build the engine.

The companion workbook to the talk. A plain-English reference you can keep: what AI is, what it can and cannot do, and a sensible first step for a marine business of any size.

PREPARED FOR

Seawork visitors

Commercial marine operators

PREPARED BY

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COMPANION TO

The session

AI at Sea · slide PDF

FORMAT

Reference

Read, keep, return to

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Read it alongside the slides, or dip into the **section** you need. No robots. No coding. No hype. Just clarity.

6 PARTS · GLOSSARY + VERIFIED LINKS · A TWO-WEEK FIRST STEP

This workbook accompanies the **AI at Sea** session at Seawork 2026. The slide deck is available as a separate PDF download. Together they are a starting point, not a course; the aim is enough understanding to take one confident step.

BEFORE YOU START

How to use this workbook

The talk was a relaxed tour of a fast-moving subject. This is the durable version: the same ideas, written down, so you can read them in your own time and come back to them.

00

ORIENTATION

What this is

A reference companion to the **AI at Sea** session. It explains, in plain terms, the ideas covered on the day, gives you a short glossary, a verified list of tools and resources, and one sensible first step. It is written for busy people who run vessels, services and marine businesses, not for software engineers.

What this is not

It is not a technical manual, and it is not a sales document. It will not turn you into an AI specialist, and it does not need to. The point of the session, and of this workbook, is the title: you do not need to build the engine, you only need to learn to drive it.

The promise, restated

No robots. No coding. No hype. The technology moves quickly and the headlines are loud. What follows is the steady, commercially sensible version: what is genuinely useful now, where the limits are, and how to take a first step that is low risk and quick to judge.

A NOTE ON NUMBERS

AI changes weekly. To keep this workbook useful for longer, it deliberately avoids "this week" figures and model names that will date. The live numbers belong in the talk; the durable principles belong here.

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PART I · 01

A simple way in

You do not need the engine room. You need the bridge. The job is to command the instruments, not build the machinery.

01

MINDSET

This breakthrough is less about technology and more about process, procedure and operational improvement. The right starting point is a frame of mind, not a piece of software.

Four habits to navigate by

A useful way to box a wild subject into manageable pieces is to borrow from Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Four of the habits apply neatly to adopting AI:

- **Be proactive.** Start now, in a small way. The technology will not wait, and the cost of standing still is rising.
- **Begin with the end in mind.** Decide the outcome you want first; choose the tool second. The result matters, not the gadget.
- **Seek first to understand, then to be understood.** Learn what the tools genuinely do before forming a verdict on them.
- **Synergise.** Pair the view from the top, which sets the vision, with the view from the floor, where people know the day-to-day reality.

The bridge, not the engine room

Most marine businesses are not trying to become software houses or AI labs. You run vessels, services and operations. The skill to learn is driving these tools well, not building them. That is a far smaller, far more achievable thing, and it is surprisingly easy to get started.

It enhances people; it does not replace them

Used well, AI takes friction and delay out of work so that people can spend their time on judgement, relationships and the parts of the job only they can do. It is a team effort: top-down for direction, bottom-up for the detail. Mastering that balance is the beginning of understanding the **art of the possible**, which is the aim of the whole session.

REMEMBER

THE ONE LINE TO KEEP

AI is **built by humans, for humans**. The purpose is to make your people more effective, not to remove them. If a use of AI does not ultimately serve a person, it is probably the wrong use.

Foundations: what AI is

In plain terms, today's AI predicts the next small piece of text. Understand that one idea and most of the rest follows.

02

FOUNDATIONS

It predicts the next token

A Large Language Model is trained on vast amounts of text and learns, one small piece at a time, the most sensible thing to say next. Those pieces are called **tokens**, each roughly a syllable: one in, one out. Everything you type in and everything you get back is measured in tokens.

Tokens are the currency of AI

Tokens are how the work is priced. Everyday use costs fractions of a penny, even though the figures at the cutting edge can look large. The practical takeaway is simply this: tokens are the meter, and being concise and clear is both better writing and lower cost.

Three terms that often get muddled

LLM

The model itself

A Large Language Model: the trained system that produces language. Claude, Gemini and Llama are all LLMs.

GPT

One recipe for one

Generative Pre-trained Transformer: a particular design for building a model. A type, not the whole field.

GENERATIVE AI

The wider family

Any AI that **creates** new content, text, images, audio or code, rather than only sorting or scoring what already exists.

WHY IT MATTERS

Language is the work

Contracts, emails, reports, quotes and code are all language. A model fluent in language is, in effect, fluent in most of the work a business does.

The same mechanism is the weakness

Because a model produces the most plausible next piece, it can be **confidently wrong**. This is called **hallucination**. It is not a fault to be patched out; it is how the technology works. So treat AI as extraordinarily capable, occasionally mistaken, and always worth checking on anything that matters.

PLAINLY PUT

Think of it as the world's fastest, best-read assistant who never tires, will draft anything in seconds, and occasionally states something plausible that is simply not true. Brilliant for first drafts and thinking; never the final word on facts that carry risk.

PART I · 02

Why now, and how fast

The modern era of AI is only a few years old, and it has reached the mainstream faster than any technology before it.

02

FOUNDATIONS

A short history

The research is decades old, but the useful, everyday version is recent. OpenAI was founded in 2015; the first GPT appeared in 2018 and was not especially good; and in November 2022 the public release of ChatGPT began the modern era. We are only a few years into that era, which is why it can feel disorienting: the capability is new, and it is still improving month by month.

<p>2015</p> <p>OpenAI founded</p> <p>The starting gun for the current wave of commercial AI research.</p>	<p>2018</p> <p>The first GPT</p> <p>Early and limited; the models were still learning and evolving.</p>
<p>NOV 2022</p> <p>ChatGPT</p> <p>The modern era begins; AI becomes something anyone can simply use.</p>	<p>NOW</p> <p>Monthly change</p> <p>The leading tools jostle for position and improve continually.</p>

Faster to the mainstream than anything before

Each major technology takes time to become ordinary. On the usual reckoning, the web took roughly ten to twenty years; smartphones eight to twelve; social media five to ten. Generative AI is on a much shorter curve, and still accelerating.

TECHNOLOGY	TIME TO THE MAINSTREAM
Web	Roughly 10 to 20 years
Mobile	Roughly 8 to 12 years
Social media	Roughly 5 to 10 years
Generative AI	Roughly 2 to 5 years, and accelerating

People still have their preferences

As with any technology, people tend to recommend what they know best, much as an Apple user or a Windows user will. That is natural, but worth noticing: the "best" AI is often just the one the person advising you happens to be most familiar with.

PART II · 03

Chatbots, then agents

The capability has moved in three steps: from asking, to building, to acting on your behalf.

03

THE SHIFT

Each step adds something the last could not do. You can stand at any of the three; most businesses gain a great deal simply from the first.

<p>01 / ASK</p> <p>Chatbots</p> <p>You ask, it answers. Research, drafting and replies, but you still do the doing. This alone is a large step up for most teams.</p>	<p>02 / BUILD</p> <p>Vibe coding</p> <p>You describe a need in plain words and the tool builds a working solution. Creating software, once specialist, becomes open to ordinary people.</p>	<p>03 / ACT</p> <p>Agents</p> <p>It acts for you. Connected to your tools and increasingly voice-led, an agent does not just answer, it gets on and does the task.</p>
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Vibe coding, briefly

The term was coined in early 2025 to describe building software just by describing what you want, with no specialist to translate it. Tools in this space let people create their own simple applications. The major AI providers responded by building the surrounding environment so anyone can use them while still serving developers. In practice the novelty is wearing off and it is becoming, simply, modern software development, with security and guardrails handled for you.

Agentic AI is the phrase to take away

An **agent** is AI that acts on its own to complete a task, rather than only responding. This is the direction of travel, and parts of it are already here. It is also the newest and least predictable part, which leads directly to the single most important rule of safe use.

THE RULE

KEEP A HUMAN IN THE LOOP

True agentic working is still young and can make mistakes. **Never let an agent run unsupervised,** especially while you are experimenting. Keep a person checking the work wherever it matters. The web itself is increasingly busy with automated agents, friendly and otherwise, which is another reason to stay watchful.

The players, and how to choose

The common question is "which AI is best?" There is no single right answer. There is, however, a sensible way to choose.

04

LANDSCAPE

<p>1 OpenAI CHATGPT</p> <p>The market leader by reach and a strong all-rounder. The natural fit if your world is largely Microsoft.</p>	<p>2 Google GEMINI</p> <p>A broad, well-integrated suite. The natural fit if your world is largely Google Workspace.</p>
<p>3 Anthropic CLAUDE</p> <p>Fast-growing, with tidy output. Known for careful, secure design and as a backbone of the vibe-coding wave.</p>	<p>4 Perplexity AGGREGATOR · COMET</p> <p>One subscription that picks the best model per task, plus Comet, an AI browser that can act in your browser.</p>

How to choose, in practice

Horses for courses. For everyday use, pick one platform and stick with it for a while. Be generous with detail in your requests, say please and thank you, and let it learn your style. The differences between the leaders matter less than the habit of using one of them well.

IF YOUR WORLD IS	A SENSIBLE STARTING POINT
Microsoft	ChatGPT, or Copilot where it is already in your apps
Google Workspace	Gemini, which is built into the suite
Writing and careful drafting	Claude, for tidy output and a measured tone
"Just give me the best, per task"	Perplexity, which routes the work for you

Where it is heading

Increasingly you will not pick the model by hand at all. Smart setups **route** the work: a cheaper, lighter model for the routine, a top-tier model only for the hard part. The phrase is **routing beats brute force**, the right model, at the right cost, for the right task. A version of this already happens for you with aggregators.

Two kinds of impact

From efficiency AI to opportunity AI. Start with the first; earn your way to the second.

05

DEPLOY

A simple sequence keeps adoption sane: improve what you already do, then change what you are able to do. The PerformOS phrasing for this is "efficiency AI, then opportunity AI".

A · START HERE

Efficiency AI

Takes friction, repetition and delay out of existing work. Saves hours, reduces errors, clears the backlog. Small, iterative changes; high reward; low risk; quick to judge.

B · THE UPSIDE

Opportunity AI

Changes what the business can offer and how it operates: new services, faster responses, smarter planning. When you are reaching new horizons, you know efficiency is under control.

Run short, sharp pilots

Avoid long six- to eight-month trials. AI moves weekly, so a long trial is often out of date before it ends. Instead, run brief pilots, build confidence, and keep moving. Small and frequent beats large and slow.

Consumer AI and enterprise AI

It helps to separate two ways of using AI. **Consumer AI** is the chat window you use yourself. **Enterprise AI** connects to your own data and systems, wrapped in your existing security. Most people start with the first; organisations grow into the second, ideally with a plan so that tools do not multiply without control.

CONSUMER AI

One person at a time

- Chatbots, research, reviews
- Vibe coding and assistants
- One-to-one, human-led interactions

ENTERPRISE AI

Machine to machine

- API calls and connectors
- Guardrails, security and controls
- Automation, at an industrial scale

WATCH FOR

AI sprawl. Without a simple strategy, different teams adopt different tools in different ways, and the result is cost, confusion and risk. A light touch of coordination early saves a great deal of untangling later.

PART IV · 05

Connecting it up, and the cost

How the tools talk to each other, how to protect your data, and why "what it costs to finish the job" is the figure that matters.

05

DEPLOY

Connectors and MCP

Connectors let one tool hand work to another. A widely used standard for this is the **Model Context Protocol**, or MCP, which lets machines talk to each other safely. In practice that means an assistant can draft a brochure and pass it to a design tool, or read from your spreadsheet and your accounts, without you copying and pasting between them. Open, connected data is increasingly where the value sits.

Mind the security

The same connectivity that creates value also creates risk. For sensitive commercial information, prefer enterprise-grade tools, ask where your data is stored, and favour UK or EU hosting where residency matters. Treat data as you would any other valuable asset: useful when it flows, dangerous when it leaks.

ASK THE SUPPLIER

Three plain questions cover most of it: **Where is my data stored? Is it used to train the model? Can we turn that off?** Good enterprise tools answer all three clearly.

The cost has changed

The early period of near-free access is ending; increasingly you pay for what you use. A useful way to think about it: every AI company is becoming a **token-efficiency** company, and so is every business that relies on them. Larger organisations are already metering internal use and setting budgets.

Tokens to completion, not price per token

The number that matters is not the headline price of a token, it is the **tokens to completion**: what it costs to finish the job. A cheaper-per-token tool that needs many attempts can cost more than a dearer one that gets it right first time. This is simply efficiency AI by another name: the right result, for less.

IN SHORT

CONNECT WITH CARE

Connectivity multiplies value and risk in equal measure. Link tools deliberately, protect sensitive data, and judge cost by the job finished, not the sticker price. Efficiency is the through-line from start to finish.

PART V · 06

Quick wins to start with

You are not as different as you think. Around the show floor, most are ordinary businesses that happen to serve things that float. Start simple.

06

MAKE IT
REAL

Four low-risk starting points, in roughly the order most people find easiest. None of them needs new software bought or code written.

01 Inbox triage

Ask AI to sort your inbox by what genuinely matters and what is still unanswered. It will not replace your judgement, but it will save the daily scan and stop things slipping through.

02 Correct, do not write

Use AI to **polish** your emails, not to write them from scratch. A message generated wholesale loses your voice and tends to read as generic. Write in your own words, then ask AI to tidy spelling, grammar and tone. You stay you, only sharper.

03 A reconciliation agent

A common, valuable early agent reconciles transactions into your accounting tools, such as Xero or Sage, and your expenses, customised to how you actually work. It removes a repetitive, error-prone chore, with a person reviewing the result.

04 From "tell" to "ask" on your website

Most websites only tell. An AI assistant lets a visitor **ask** and get a real, conversational answer. PerformOS runs one called SmartSam. For a marine business, an assistant like this can field questions on vessel and port documentation, crew and compliance paperwork, or supplier enquiries.

THE SHOTGUN RULE

POWERFUL TOOLS REWARD A LITTLE INSTRUCTION

A capable AI is like a shotgun: dangerous without instruction, safe and effective with ten minutes of guidance. If you will not invest those ten minutes, stick to the "air rifle", a simpler, safer, more limited assistant. Either is fine; the mistake is using the powerful one with no guidance at all.

The marine angle

The same ideas, pointed at the work you actually do. None of this is exotic; it is the quick wins, applied.

06

MARINE

Documents and paperwork

- **Vessel and port documentation.** Draft, summarise and check long documents quickly, then have a person confirm the detail.
- **Crew and compliance paperwork.** Turn repetitive form-filling and record-keeping into a guided, faster task.
- **Supplier RFQs.** Generate or answer requests for quotation in a fraction of the time, in a consistent house style.

From a flat document to a tool

Picture a vessel proposal not as a static PDF but as a small web page where the buyer can toggle an engine option and watch the price, the fuel and the range update in front of them. The proposal becomes a **tool** rather than a document, and it answers questions before the buyer has to ask.

Design for agents, as well as people

A growing share of web traffic is automated agents reading pages on a person's behalf. If your website and documents are built so that an agent can read and act on them cleanly, you are ready for how buyers increasingly research and purchase. Design for agents now, and human visitors benefit too.

TODAY

Tell, tell, tell

A brochure site and PDF specs that a visitor must read, interpret and follow up on by email or phone.

NEXT

Ask, ask, ask

An assistant that answers in conversation, and proposals that respond to the buyer's choices in real time.

Revisit what you dismissed

If you tried an AI tool six or nine months ago and were unimpressed, try again. In this field, that is a long time, and the difference in capability since can be substantial.

PART V · 06

Keeping your voice

The giveaway that something was machine-written is usually tone. A little setup keeps the output sounding like you.

06

YOUR VOICE

The tells to avoid

Two small things mark text as generated more than anything else: the long dash, and creeping Americanisms in spelling and phrasing. Strip both, and your writing reads as yours again. Write in British English, and keep the punctuation simple.

THE LONG-DASH GIVEAWAY

That long horizontal dash is a common signature of generated text. If you ever need to type one deliberately on Windows, hold **Alt** and type **0151** on the numeric keypad with Num Lock on, then release Alt. More often, the better move is simply to use a comma or a full stop instead.

Build a personality that reflects you

Most tools let you set a persona or profile. Use it. Tell the tool to write in UK British English, describe how you like to sound, what you care about, and the words and habits that are yours. The more of yourself you put in, the more the output comes back sounding like you wrote it.

Turn memory on

In whichever tools you use, switch memory on where it is offered. With memory, the assistant learns your style over time and you stop having to set the scene from scratch each session. Be generous with detail, and remember the pleases and thank-yous; a verbose, courteous user gets a noticeably better result.

The second brain

The newer way of working is to personalise AI around you: the way you work, the way you speak, your tone and your style. This is sometimes called an AI operating system or a "second brain". It is where heavier users are heading, and it starts with the simple steps above.

HABIT

BE VERBOSE, BE COURTEOUS, BE YOURSELF

Pick one platform, set it to UK British English, give it a personality that sounds like you, turn memory on, and write to it generously. These five small habits do more for output quality than switching tools ever will.

Drive it. Move now.

Start small, stay in command, and start this week. You do not need to build the engine; you only need to learn to drive it.

08

DRIVE IT

In decades of technology change, little compares to this speed of adoption. Unlike past waves, you cannot fully delegate this one: you do need the basics, and they are surprisingly easy to acquire.

The capability overhang

There is a phrase for where we are: the **capability overhang**. The tools can already do far more than almost anyone is actually using. The gap is not the technology; the gap is us. Most of the value on offer is simply waiting to be picked up.

The new skill is deciding

As the machines get better at doing, the valuable human skill becomes **deciding**: not finding good ideas, but choosing which one to do first. The most advanced users build routines that let their AI improve its own work over time, with less ongoing input. You do not need to be there to begin; you only need to start.

The cost of standing still

The blunt version: the cost of doing nothing has never been higher. If you have no company-wide approach to learning these tools, no one tasked with watching the space, and no agreed way of experimenting safely, you are already behind. The good news is that catching up no longer takes years.

FIRST STEP

IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS

Pick **one** mundane, low-risk, high-reward task and run a **two-week pilot**. Do not wait for the perfect moment or the perfect tool. Give it a go, and judge it quickly. The next page is a simple framework for exactly that.

A note on the train, and the bus

Change is arriving daily. The light at the end of the tunnel is sometimes a train coming the other way, fine if you are on board, less so if you are standing on the track. So get on board, take the right seat, face the right way, and start. Waiting for the next service usually means arriving too late.

Your first two-week pilot

A simple, low-commitment framework. Choose one task, give it a fortnight, and decide on the evidence.

08

FRAMEWORK

Choosing a good first task

The best first task is **mundane, frequent, low-risk and clearly bounded**. It should be something you do often enough to feel the saving, and harmless enough that a mistake costs nothing serious. Inbox triage, tidying routine emails, or drafting standard replies are all good candidates.

- Mundane and repetitive**, so the time saved is real and noticeable.

- Low risk**, so an error is easy to catch and cheap to fix.

- Clearly bounded**, so you can tell whether it worked.

- Yours to change**, so you are not waiting on anyone else.

A fortnight, week by week

Week 1

Set up and try

Pick one platform and one task. Set the tool to UK British English, give it a personality and turn memory on. Use it daily on the chosen task. Keep a quick note of what worked and what did not.

Week 2

Refine and judge

Adjust how you ask, based on week one. Compare the time and effort against your old way of doing it. Decide plainly: keep it, drop it, or widen it to a second task. Tell one colleague what you found.

How to judge it

Two questions settle it. **Did it save time or reduce errors?** And **did the output still sound like you, or read correctly?** If yes to both, keep going and add a second task. If not, change the task or the tool and try once more. The aim is momentum, not perfection.

KEEP IN COMMAND

Throughout the pilot, a person checks anything that matters before it goes out. The pilot is about building confidence and a habit, not about handing over judgement.

Glossary

The terms used in the session, in plain English. Enough to follow the conversation, nothing more.

09

TERMS

AI ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	Software that performs tasks we associate with human thinking, such as understanding language or recognising patterns.
LLM LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL	The kind of AI behind tools like ChatGPT and Claude. Trained on huge amounts of text, it predicts the next small piece of language.
GPT GEN. PRE-TRAINED TRANSFORMER	One particular design for building a language model. A type of model, not the whole field.
Generative AI	Any AI that creates new content, text, images, audio or code, rather than only sorting or scoring what exists.
Token	The small unit AI reads and writes, roughly a syllable. Usage and cost are measured in tokens.
Tokens to completion	The total tokens needed to finish a job. The real measure of cost, more telling than the price of a single token.
Hallucination	When AI states something plausible but untrue. A feature of how it works, not a fault, which is why checking matters.
Prompt	The instruction or question you give an AI tool. Clear, detailed prompts get better results.
Chatbot	An AI you converse with by typing or speaking. You ask, it answers; you still do the doing.
Vibe coding	Building simple software by describing what you want in plain words, with the AI writing the code.
Agent	AI that acts on your behalf to complete a task, not just answer. Best kept supervised.
Agentic AI	The broader idea of AI that gets on and does things itself. Powerful, new, and to be watched closely.
Connector / MCP MODEL CONTEXT PROTOCOL	A way for AI tools to link to your other tools and data so they can pass work between each other safely.
Enterprise AI	AI connected to an organisation's own data and systems, wrapped in its security and controls.
Routing	Sending each task to the most suitable model: a cheap one for the routine, a top-tier one for the hard part.
Capability overhang	The gap between what the tools can already do and what people are actually using them for.



REFERENCE · 10

Tools & further learning

A short, verified starting list. Every link below was checked at the time of writing. Pick one, not all.

10

RESOURCES

GENERAL-PURPOSE ASSISTANTS · PICK ONE TO START

ChatGPT

OpenAI · strong all-rounder, fits Microsoft worlds

chatgpt.com

Gemini

Google · built into Google Workspace

gemini.google.com

Claude

Anthropic · tidy output, careful tone

claude.ai

Microsoft Copilot

Already present in many Microsoft apps

copilot.microsoft.com

AGGREGATOR AND AI BROWSER

Perplexity

One subscription, best model per task

perplexity.ai

Comet

Perplexity's AI browser that can act for you

perplexity.ai/comet

BUILDING SIMPLE TOOLS, NO CODE REQUIRED

Lovable

Describe an app or website; it builds it

lovable.dev

Replit

Build and publish simple apps with AI

replit.com

LEARNING AND STUDY

NotebookLM

Google · ask questions of your own documents

notebooklm.google.com

PerformOS

The session, this workbook and follow-on support

performos.ai

HOW TO USE THIS LIST

Resist trying everything. Choose **one** assistant, use it daily for a fortnight, and only then look at a second. Depth with one tool beats a shallow tour of ten.

CLOSE

What next

Three sensible follow-on options, in increasing order of commitment. The first costs nothing but a fortnight of attention.



OPTIONS

STEP 1 · DO IT YOURSELF

Run the two-week pilot

Use the framework on page 14. One task, one tool, one fortnight. Judge it on time saved and on whether the output still sounds like you.

STEP 2 · GET ORIENTED

A short session with PerformOS

A one-to-one introduction tailored to your role, sector and objectives, with practical examples mapped to your own work.

STEP 3 · GO FURTHER

A guided first project

When you are ready, an efficiency-AI project with the right tools, guardrails and a clear measure of success, with a human in the loop throughout.

ABOUT PERFORMOS

Drive it, do not build it.

PerformOS helps organisations understand, adopt and actually use AI in ways that are useful, safe and commercially sensible, rather than fashionable. The approach is sequenced: efficiency AI first, to take friction out of existing work, then opportunity AI, to change what the business can offer.

The underlying belief is simple: AI is **built by humans, for humans**. The aim is to make your people more effective, never to replace them. This workbook, and the session it accompanies, are a low-commitment way to find which threads are worth following for your business.

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DOCUMENT

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EVENT

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