Build the part of AI that nobody sees.

A screen and a prompt are easy to copy. The system underneath is what people trust, and what lasts.

90%

of what you do at work, nobody ever sees.

"The only thing that's going to make you have high standards on that piece of the work... is your own professional pride." Jeff Bezos, Air Force Association, September 2018.

Four attributes, used at Amazon, AWS and Blue Origin.

1 **Customer obsession**
instead of competitor obsession

2 **Long-term thinking**
a longer investment horizon than most peers

3 **Eagerness to invent**
which goes hand in hand with failure

4 **Pride in operational excellence**
the one he spent the most time on

A screen and a prompt on top of someone else's model.

What users see — screen, prompt

The model — run by a provider

Fine for testing an idea. A weak place to stop: it is easy to copy, it cannot account for its answers, and it does not improve.

5%

at most of a mature machine learning system is model code.

At least 95% is everything around it: data, configuration, verification, serving, monitoring. Sculley et al., Google, NeurIPS 2015.

C$812

Air Canada was ordered to pay after its chatbot promised a refund the policy did not allow.

"It should be obvious to Air Canada that it is responsible for all the information on its website." Moffatt v. Air Canada, February 2024.

Eight parts users never see.

Grounding in real data
answers tied to real records

Evaluation set
tests run after every change

Permissions
checked before the model acts

A record of every call
input, sources, versions, output

Fallback and hand-off
passes to a person when unsure

Monitoring
errors, cost and drift watched

Cost metering
spend per user and feature

Versioning and rollback
yesterday's version in minutes

"

If we build the 151st fulfillment center and screw it up, that's just a failure.

Jeff Bezos, 2018. A pilot is an experiment. Once people depend on the system, a failure is just a failure.

How to tell a system from a wrapper.

1. If the model provider changed tomorrow, what would break?
2. Can you show me what it did last Tuesday, and why?
3. How do you know the last change made it better?
4. What happens when it is wrong?
5. Who finds out first when it starts to fail?

"

People see the screen. The part nobody sees is the part that lasts.

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