



Kerrin Mitchell: Welcome to the Untapped Philanthropy Podcast.

Tim Sarrantonio: We're your hosts, Fluxx's, co-founder Kerrin Mitchell, and Neon One's Tim Sarrantonio. We've spent our career learning how to leverage technology and data in the social sector to better connect and serve our collective causes, constituents, and communities.

Kerrin Mitchell: In this podcast series, we profile leaders, public figures, philanthropists, and industry experts to explore the fascinating intersection of funding, technology, and policy. We're here to analyze the most formative topics and trends that shape the present and future of philanthropy.

Tim Sarrantonio: Hello everyone. Today we are chatting through the idea of impact through the lens of inclusivity and innovation. Now we want to talk about it from two different perspectives. One that addresses the privilege of getting to do the work that improves the world. And two is from the perspective of where the technology is actually going and how do we pull our values through for the future of technology, artificial intelligence, machine learning. So many different things. And we're so excited to have Brandolon Barnett join us. And thank you so much for joining us today.

Brandolon Barnett: Oh, it's my pleasure. Excited for the conversation.

Kerrin Mitchell: Brandolon, I know you and I have had a chance to talk a couple times, and I have absolutely loved every moment of that. We would love to introduce you to the broader audience now, and maybe you can tell us a little bit about yourself. What brought you to a career in the social sector?

Brandolon Barnett: Yeah, so I'm based in Washington, DC although I grew up originally in Dallas and Texas. Shout out to everyone who's dealing with incredible heat there. But basically at a very young age, I decided that I was committed to this idea of not just doing work that made money, but work that made an impact. And I didn't know at the time that the definition of that was philanthropy or social impact, but what really spurred me to that was just being a giant nerd. So I always loved science fiction. My mother would always get incredibly angry at me. I was that kid who was staying up till 3:00 AM in the morning to watch episodes of Star Trek, the original series. Picard was and remains my hero. And for me, what really was striking was just seeing and imagining those different worlds and contrasting them was what I was seeing around me growing up, you know, without a lot of resources, watching my mother struggle just to have a roof over our head.

And that, that contrast made me really want to change the world for the better. And as I learned more about what that could look like which was quite a journey I arrived at the kind of social impact and philanthropy work that I'm fortunate to engage in today. So today I'm Chief Product Officer for Humanitas.ai. We're building nonprofits technology including AI for nonprofits and AI assistant and other tools. I run several social impact startups based here in DC. I was an elected official until a few months ago when I resigned so I could focus more on all of this exciting and fast moving stuff happening around AI. And I spent a number of years at salesforce.org and a few other places, but it's all for me about, you know, building tools, products, initiatives that move us closer to those worlds that inspired me as a kid.



Tim Sarrantonio: I'm so excited about that. My father actually is a science fiction author and there's kind of this story that he loves telling about how he was touring the offices at Double Day and came across Isaac Asimov and like bowed down in front of him during the job interview. Like angering the person who is doing the hiring. And I think it's so fascinating to draw a direct line, especially given your work between the vision of a future, especially Star Trek, right? Like Star Trek is such a utopian vision of the future in many ways. It's like the best of humanity is what's on par there. And, so I think that's so lovely to see that and resonates with me. You're honestly, you're the first Trekker that I think that we've had on the show.

Brandolon Barnett: Hopefully not the last.

Kerrin Mitchell: My dad is visiting right now and we could definitely go get him to come on in if we want to have two Trekkies on the show with us right now. So I'll hold him off because he doesn't know really anything about philanthropy, but I will just mention that there are others.

Tim Sarrantonio: Well, and just like, it's probably impossible to bring down, you know, what's your favorite episode of Next Generation, right? But there are feelings and moments that resonate. Same with generosity, Brandolon. So I'd love to kind of hear from you, what's something that stands out to you that you've experienced or even designed yourself around the concept of generosity that maybe even, let's tie it back to even that original vision. What's the closest you've seen kind of that utopian vision of the science fiction that we grew up like listening to? What's gotten close to you for that?

Brandolon Barnett: For me it's mentoring and you know, growing up as a, there are not a lot of Black men in tech, there are not a lot of Black men or people of color in philanthropy, especially at the kind of higher end of the leadership scale. And I would say the opportunity to mentor others and to be mentored, to just be able to ask questions and understand the different opportunities that are available is really what has stood out to me as both being the most impactful on my life, but also the way that I've been able to help others the most. And when I think back to that vision that spurred me to this work, it's not surprising because if you, and I'm going to nerd out a little. We've got to represent all the Trekkies that have never been on the show.

Kerrin Mitchell: Yes, I'm all for this. <laugh>

Brandolon Barnett: You think about those interactions of Captain Picard or Kirk with a younger crew member or Cisco on Star Trek Deep Space Nine or Janeway. I mean throughout all these depictions at the core of those stories is someone who's a figure who can come along and help people to understand how they can figure out their place in the world and what kind of value they can bring and how they can make the world better. And I think that that is something that just really has always resonated with me and a lot of my favorite episodes of those shows that inspire me to this day involve that kind of back and forth between Data for example, who's android character Star Trek: Next Generation, creates a child and rest of crew to figure out how to understand why he's taken the actions that he's taken and have that dialogue and that back and forth where they can all learn about who they're as people. I think that's



actually, you know, forget about the spaceship, send the lasers and all those things that a lot of folks don't like about science fiction. That's what has been really powerful and inspiring for me. And I try to model that in as much as I can, as a mentor and as someone who just tries to help other people understand how the world as I see it and to whatever extent that may be helpful to them, but sometimes it's just not, right?

Tim Sarrantonio: I think that's really fascinating too, and I'll nerd out a little bit here as well because there's a philosophical difference when you compare the storytelling of something like Star Trek to Star Wars, right? Like, we could be fans of both. But at the end of the day, something like Star Wars is more of a fairy tale with very distinct clear lines of good and evil. And where Star Trek is has always been more philosophical is that there's gray in many ways. It's that we have to confront what is good. It's not a universal known. It is something that we collectively have to decide upon. That's like the vision of the Federation is everybody coming together and going, no, this is how we, we are going to do things. Right? It's the social contract, it's not the Force, it's not something that's like outside of our control. It's very much in our control. It's whether we're following the prime directive or not.

Brandolon Barnett: That's exactly how I feel. And I think that's what social impacts and philanthropy as a field is when it's at its best. It really is people saying how could the world be? Not just how is it and how do we navigate it, but how could it be? And it's a field that has to ask those questions.

Tim Sarrantonio: And I think that some, and this can get into, because I'm excited to read your book by the way, but I know the core premise of it. And what's fascinating is I think that a lot of times we start getting into power dynamics and inequality. You know, donor primacy is something that we have to worry about on the individual giving side, right? It's like the big donor who's going to name the building and drive the programming and all those types of things. And the reality is, is that where we get off base is when we take a very distinct, like this is always good and this is always bad. And I think that the nuances of how socioeconomic realities play out is always lost when you go very black or white in terms of like your worldview. And I think what's going to be interesting is to kind of hear from your perspective, how did that come about? How did you start to explore that journey and come to the lens and the reality that you're kind of looking at the world today. And, and Kerrin maybe you could kind of drill down a little bit further here. Because cause I know you're more familiar with the work too.

Kerrin Mitchell: Yeah, I do think what I found striking and inspiring and it may me happy, is in a land and world of crises and chaos and AI and is Skynet's coming, Brandolon, you offer interesting facts inside of your book. So the, the book for everyone is called Dreams Deferred and he's addressing sort of central issues of race, income, inequality, technology, the role of philanthropy. All these things come together and it's an inspiring way for us to think about how to create the society and whether it be Star Trek or whatever, that concept of how do you bring forward a community, a group, and how do we, how do we take places where it's hard for people without means, especially people of color to be a part of a space, in our case social sector. I think you address a lot of this in your book. So I wanted you to kind of share the thesis with everyone. Tell us a little bit about it. Cause I know you're also on a book tour, so by all means use this platform to get that out there.



Brandolon Barnett: Yeah, so the book is called *Dreams Deferred: Recession Struggle and The Quest for Better World*. And you know, in the book I recount just my struggles before, during, and particularly after the '08 recession. I took a job working in with a NGO that I, that believed in me and trusted me and they sent me all over the world. I don't why they trusted me right out of college to go to places like Laos, Thailand, Jamaica, and negotiate with different NGOs on the ground in those countries. But while I was doing work that did make me feel like I was helping to move the world closer to those worlds that I had imagined in those works of fiction that inspired me. I, the fact of the matter is I made a pittance. You know, I struggled to pay student loans and debt. Also, my mother was a single mom in Dallas, you know, she struggled just to stay in her home and I couldn't help her.

But despite all that, I, you know, there was something about these dreams that had inspired me that I just wasn't able to give up on this idea of doing work that made an impact, even if it didn't pay enough, even if I couldn't feed myself. And you know, when I think about some of the stories, it's really difficult now to go back into that part of my life, but at one point I started a spreadsheet. I had applied to hundreds of jobs, no response to roles at large and small foundations, nonprofits, federal agencies. You know, I even took and passed the Foreign Service Exams and they came back to me after a year of waiting and said I had too much student loan debt. I had actually missed a couple payments cause I had to help my mom pay rent. And so all of those things, especially when my mother ended up passing away and I was, you know, completely powerless to save her or to help her even though I felt I was doing this work that could help other people in the world, that really affected me.

And so the book is about that journey and I really wrote it for two reasons. You know, one, I wanted to give anyone else who was going through that, particularly people who were struggling. You know, I wrote the book at the height of Covid when there was a lot of the same feelings that I had of loneliness, isolation, hopelessness I saw swirling around. And I wanted to be one of the voices of many voices that was out there saying, hey, there is hope, there's light at the end of the tunnel. I'm one of the people that's here that to help, but there are also others. But the second reason I wrote it was just a very practical challenge to the social impact space of why the hell, pardon my French, is it so hard for someone who wants to make the world a better place, wants to work in social impact, wants to work in nonprofits or foundations to get that opportunity and be able to build a family, build a life.

Why is that so difficult? And shouldn't it be a priority for us to create clearer pathways for all kinds of diverse people to be involved in the work of creating a better world since we do all in fact live in this world and we should all have a seat at the table in determining what a better version of it looks like. And so that's why I wrote the book and that core kind argument is central to a lot of the work that I do. Whether it's at Humanitas, I know we'll get into AI, but I often think about when I'm building product for Humanitas, like that AI assistant that I referenced. I imagine if I as a 20 year old thinking about what I could do, have been able to talk to, I didn't have access to a mentor, to someone who can help. So if I've been able to talk to someone or something that could gimme some of those options, that, those are some of the kinds of things that excite me when I think about AI, it's an ongoing struggle to think about how we just make it easier for everyone to have a seat at the table.

Tim Sarrantonio: I think, I as well got my start in the sector in 2008 and one of the things that's really resonating with me is also like how hard it is to do good, and on the nonprofit individual nonprofit side,



you know, we work with a lot of small to mid-size organizations and some of the research that we found was that just to manage basic operations for something like a donation, they're using three to five different things. And that's not including the program side, not talking about the grant applications, we're not even getting into the donor experience or the foundation experience, you know, all the backlog of IRS 990 data that's going to make reporting harder for everybody, right? There's so many things that can grind us down when we confront it. So how did you start to kind of not compartmentalize and not like, be naive and go, oh, if only things were just, you know, a little bit better. Like how did you start to say, you, you know what, like this could be different and I'm going to make a change. So where did you start with that? How did you start to actually execute your vision for change?

Brandolon Barnett: So a lot of where I started, I later learned is how product management just works in general, which was, I just looked out and I saw so many problems and I see a problem and instead of just saying, oh, it's too big to fix, I start with what are all the elements of that problem? Can we start with just like, when I ran for office here in DC I was what I was what was called a, or what is called an advisory neighborhood commissioner. So you're an elected official, it's voluntary, but I represented about 2000 of my neighbors here in the Columbia Heights community in central DC and there are a lot of issues from crime to cleaning up the streets, literally trash on the streets to homelessness, people struggling with drug addiction who are on what's called the Columbia Heights Plaza, which is a central public space here in this part of DC.

And you know, I said, well the first problem is there's no way to communicate with people that live in the neighborhood. So just break it down to I'm going to go out and get the email addresses of everybody that I can in the community. And okay, there's another problem connected to that of I can only reach the people in homes. I can't easily reach people in apartment buildings and DC hasn't built the infrastructure to do that. So I need to figure out a system for reaching those people. And then beyond that, once I've got their contact information, I need to get their perspectives on how they would prioritize all the different problems just like I would when I'm building a product. So I think for me it's a matter of not necessarily getting overwhelmed when you see there are problems that need to be solved.

Because it's overwhelming when we think about all the problems we have to solve in this world. And there's a new one every year, right? Like we haven't even had sophisticated conversations around climate change really in the United States. And now we have to also talk about AI and how it could affect jobs and economies. I think it's because it can all seem so overwhelming. I just try to break things down into smaller pieces and do what I can at each moment and set major milestones. And you know, when I discovered the career of product management, I was like, oh this is like the inside of my brain. I never knew something like this existed and that's been pretty powerful for me.

Kerrin Mitchell: When you look at the experience that you've had and your, you know, the kind of key things maybe that you've learned, the lessons you've learned on how to chase through some of those dreams that did have initial challenges, issues, roadblocks, I mean, what would you sort of suggest to people as you know, a recommendation how to overcome those challenges and move through to your mission?



Brandolon Barnett: I always give three pieces of advice, whether it's an individual, a social enterprise startup that I'm advising or a nonprofit. And the first is you're not alone. You know, for me there were so many times where I actually just being frank, I almost ended my life because I was prideful and didn't ask people for help. And you know, the thing I tell people is whether you're trying to build a nonprofit that's going to help you in your mission or whether you want to go out and find organizations to support, there are people in the world who will help you in that mission. And I want to be one of them. That's something that I always say, but there are a lot of people out there and we can often underestimate how willing people are to help us. And the second is just to hold onto those dreams. And what I advise people to do is connect your dreams to your reality.

So for example, if you're working as a bartender, but your dream is to be a jewelry designer, why don't you talk with the owner of the bar or the GM to see if you can do a jewelry popup once or twice a month so you can begin to connect those two worlds together. And I think that's something that saved me. There were times where I was struggling but I was still trying to build this career in philanthropy and social impact and I was out delivering pizzas just to make ends meet and be able to survive. But the whole time I was doing that work, I was thinking about how delivering pizzas could be an act of charity or social impact because that's how I wanted to perceive the world. Just trying to connect dreams to reality I think is something that we don't teach people enough because it's a very strategic way of thinking.

And then my last piece of advice is that, you know, whenever you want to give up on going through with that mission or whenever things get hard, I always try to remind folks or organizations that it only takes one. One job opportunity or offer, one grant to get you going, one program within your company to change how your company might approach social impact, one email to start a business resource group or an employee resource group. It just takes one, one successful thing to change a life or an organization. And we can often focus on all the things that weren't successful, but at the end of the day, you get that one, all that other stuff will fade away. And you know, one of the things that excites me again about AI is that it makes a lot of those things I just said just a little bit easier.

Kerrin Mitchell: It's interesting because we talk about AI so often and people immediately think about the dehumanization of things and they're like, it's dehumanizing things. It's taking things that need to be emotional and placing them into a point of data structure calculation. But the reality is it's not just that there are pieces of that when done correctly or incorrectly will bring outcomes like that. But what I think is really interesting is how to tie the humanity of what dreams and what can be created from them tying that to AI. So actually one thing I want to kind of segue into is looking forward and saying, you know, as we hit the wave of all these emotions and how technology can augment certain opportunities, you know, you and I had talked about the fact that you have amazing optimism around what AI can do for the world and that humanity inside of us. Do you mind kind of playing that out for me again and just sharing a little bit of the discussion we just had a couple days ago? Because I thought it was super compelling.

Brandolon Barnett: Yeah, I mean I'm incredibly optimistic about AI and I'll preface that by saying I recognize that there are a lot of very serious conversations that need to be had. But I'm optimistic



because even on a personal level, I think about a lot of my struggles for me, AI could have, as I mentioned, answered questions for me about the kinds of careers available in social impact. A lot of people growing up, particularly in communities of color or under-resourced communities, they don't even know what philanthropy is. Or that a program officer is a type of job that they could aspire to. AI can give that kind of direct access to almost like a person or mentor without having to get access to an elite school or go to college. Anyone can begin that journey. And I also think about the ability for it to help people who don't have expert advice with writing resumes.

Or if you're a small nonprofit getting advice or assistance from an AI on positioning your organization for grants or writing content because you afford content writer. So I guess for me, the optimism really comes from this space of thinking, wow, instead of worrying about the idea of all these people who could lose jobs and that is real, right? IBM came out and said they're not going to hire what I think it was several thousand people cause they believe AI can do those jobs. So there's some real risks and conversations that we need to have there, but I'm also always cognizant as an angel investor, particularly into businesses of color of the fact that say 1% of VC funding goes to entrepreneurs of color. And what do people need VC funding for to start there to pursue their dreams and start their businesses or their nonprofits?

What do they need grant funding or VC funding for? They need it to hire staff, they need it to get things done. And if we can empower those people in those organizations, maybe they need less funding to pursue their dreams. And if we can remove some of these structural obstacles through AI to just people getting things done that they envision, maybe we can actually have a world with more humanity because, and again, it's optimism, right? This is coming from the Star Trek nerd, but maybe we can get to a world where people, because is bureaucracy human? Is it actually very, is it a really human process to go and pitch a VC or write a grant fund? What if you could just start your nonprofit today, have your website up and be empowered to do a lot of those basic things that typically require thousands or tens of thousands or even millions of dollars to do for a fraction of that cost?

Then you're enabling, you're removing the barriers to someone having an impact, which is one of the most human things that we can do. And so that's the source of, of my optimism. And I think it's bearing out. I mean, if we think about, one of the most interesting things to me is I spent four years at Salesforce.org, built a few products there, philanthropy cloud, ended my tenure there on product strategy for net zero cloud or and you know, what I think about often is from the moment that technology of CRM and the cloud, the Salesforce pioneered became a thing, nine years later, salesforce.org was started and in earnest started to adapt those technologies for nonprofits. So a nine year gap. And I think that's pretty standard. But if we think about AI ChatGPT, just as one example rolled out around November - December of last year, large companies like HubSpot and Salesforce started rolling out AI and GPT built functionality for private sector companies. A few months later, February, March, April, take for example, what we're building at Humanitas, we're coming only a month later or two months later. So in a sense, I'm really optimistic because it lowers the gap of innovation between the profit seeking part of us, which can be very inhuman and the way that we can innovate for some of the most human things that we do, which is support each other in our communities.



Tim Sarrantonio: I think that's really fascinating and I also want to thank you for not only walking through that, but also in a very kind of vulnerable way too. Because I think that's one of the things that sometimes in these technical conversations, the humanity of people themselves, like the baggage, the trauma, the good as well all come along with that. And Fluxx actually put together a really great New York City event on AI. And you know, I've been part of a few conversations on artificial intelligence specific to the fundraisers out there. And a lot of, especially the sector, the nonprofit sector is the practitioners in particular, the people working at nonprofits, they understand that this is important, but they're either fearful of it or feel that it's not for them or it's too technical or it's not representing the types of things that they want to do.

So how do we address the equity and access of using these tools because not everybody can buy the Salesforce, the HubSpot install and do it properly for instance. But then even the foundational models behind it, there's questions about the data models, the diversity of that. How do we start to untangle that a lot of the sector is going to be relying on one foundational models, something like OpenAI that like is just driven by for-profit companies and who do not get the nuances of the nonprofit sector. And then there's companies like yours and ours collectively here that get it. Where do we kind of navigate that, especially for the vast majority of the market that is just kind of scared shitless in all honesty of this.

Brandolon Barnett: Yeah, and I don't want to downplay that fear, right? That's one thing I said repeatedly is I'm very optimistic, but there's a lot of things that we need to be talking about. And just as kind of an aside, I think, you know, part of navigating this is realizing that we can't necessarily address these questions as technology companies or as nonprofits or as foundations. There is a need for our elected officials and for our leaders to step up and lead some of these conversations. And honestly, when I think about what scares me about AI, it's the lack of our complete seeming lack of inability to have that kind of effective dialogue. But when I think about what we need to navigate, equity is central to that. And you're right, I think it's equity across two different dimensions. The first is definitely equity of the existing foundational models and the, just the data that powers a lot of these AI.

It's not diverse, it's not accurate picture of our society and of many people in it or the conditions that they face, they're simply not represented in the data that's used to train these models. And there are a million examples I encourage folks to look at. AI can be racist for example, it can be sexist and there are some pretty clear and kind of wild examples of it doing that. It obviously without malice, right? It's a machine. But that is a serious issue and it's one of the things we're seeking to address at Humanitas by helping nonprofits to have AI tools. We incentivize them to come online and to share their data so that they can get tools like an AI assistant that can understand their 990's, their annual reports and help them create content, help them apply to grants and do all of that work in a more streamlined fashion.

And by doing that, we can bring that data online and then surface that in large language models or other big algorithms to help drive more diversity in the data that's represented there. So that's actually core to our mission, but it's a massive, massive challenge that we need to think very deeply about and it's only going to get worse. There's already talk of the kind of doom loop of just AI talking to AI and when you think about world where some, the research that stood out, us saying for example, that 96% of all the content online could be generated by AI by 2026, you're then talking about AI which could have



foundational problems in terms of the equity of the people and the view of the world represented its data, creating content that other AI read and then used to create content. And it's this kind of recursive loop of meaningless content.

And so the problem is only going to get worse. And to me that's connected to the other dimension of the problem when we think about equity and AI, which is who is using these tools? Because we know that in technology using something is like, is almost like being a voter. So when we think about the role that the social impact space can play and how we need to navigate this, I almost view it as a responsibility. If you're a nonprofit, if you're a foundation, if you're a CSR team or social impact organization, you need to use and understand these tools because they're not going anywhere. They work even at the level they are at now and they're growing in capability at an exponential rate. And we need to have a voice in how these tools get built, how they're shaped to use, to be effective for their users.

And the clear example is what data sources can they process? You know, it's not going to be a priority for open AI or for some of the big language models to enable the tools that they're building to understand 990 to understand annual reports, to understand grant making history and all these things that we've spent as a sector decades building up an infrastructure for. But that is the priority for us. And if we bring our voices as users of these products, I think it's important because it's going to help shape their development. And the analogy that I often use, which should terrify people, is if we're truly saying that these tools are like fire or electricity or the internet in terms of how they're going to transform society, do you really want to imagine a world where things like fire, electricity or the internet are only in the hands of those seeking to make a profit for them. Like if Elon Musk, not to pick on one person, if Elon Musk is the only person in the world with fire, electricity, internet, we should be I think kind of terrified, right?

Tim Sarrantonio: Kind of? I think we should absolutely be terrified.

Brandolon Barnett: I agree. So we need to think about the diversity of who's using these tools and that's something that we can actively change as potential users of these of these platforms.

Kerrin Mitchell: So if we were to kind of summarize a little bit about what you're saying, I want to just kind of get some bullet points here. So it is of course the fact that this technology is growing you know, quite quickly, but it's actually the fact that it is freely available and the access to it and customer usage for the nonprofits, it is available to us now and it gives us the opportunity to really take advantage of it. So the practical next steps, you know, you're mentioning obviously embracing sort of this idea of a learning mindset, using your imagination for what you can do with it and just getting in there. Don't put your head in the sand so that, that's one big thing. What are some of the other big things that you would sort of put out there to say practical next steps on how to get started?

Brandolon Barnett: I actually have been, I've kind of zeroed in on one practical next step. Because I know AI can be intimidating for a lot of people. The one thing I would recommend anyone do if you're curious about how to dive deeper into these technologies and what they could do, is create an account



on ChatGPT, it's free and just tell it what problems you have or would like to solve and ask it what it can do for you. Which is crazy to think about. But what it also highlights what's really changed with these new technologies, which is for the first time in history, humanity has built a tool that you can ask it what it can do for you and it can respond. If you can't ask a hammer, Hey, what can you do for me? You can't ask an oven what it can do for you. But with AI I would recommend just going in and almost having a conversation and saying, here are some of the priorities I have in my job or in my daily life, what can you help me with? And it'll tell you the answer. And that can be, I think, that I've zeroed in on as a very effective start the journey even for folks who little bit more intimidated by technology while also demonstrating just how powerful and unique it is.

Kerrin Mitchell: And what's interesting about that is it, it informs you, it doesn't define the path you're taking, but it informs you. And I think that's the other piece that oftentimes people forget with AI is it is meant to inform not to say this is the correct and ultimate answer. And I think that's something that when we look at the way it's portraying data structured diversity, again, this is another way for us to help process things in a strong quick manner, but also give us the ability to catapult our own thinking, our humanity on top of that and apply our own lens. So I love that that's really a, I love that use case. Cause to be honest, like I think that reluctance that people are having with the technology is going to, like you said, limit our ability to make the technology as powerful and infuse good data and good information into the world instead of just letting the bad information and this sort of hacky, you know bad actor thing that, that I think people are really harnessing in on be the actual reality.

Brandolon Barnett: One last piece of advice just very quick is, these tools aren't perfect. So as you're interacting with them, if you're out there going on this journey, push back. These tools, everything, they're a tool, they're not perfect.

Kerrin Mitchell: Teach the tool! Help redefine it shoots like you were just saying we'll bring it back to Star Trek cause we we've done that very well. I mean there learning moments and you teach the tool and say, actually that's not, I mean I have not seen, actually no, let me rephrase. I've seen a lot of Star Trek, but I don't think I digested it as well as you guys did and don't tell Bruce Mitchell cause he's going to be so mad that I just said that. But yes, I think that's the thing is you can teach the tool.

Tim Sarrantonio: What's frustrating about this conversation? Because AI's been around for a while. So it's only just reentered the collective consciousness as a thing. And, and there's a lot of conversations where people are now equating generative language AI with all of AI.

Kerrin Mitchell: Well it's because language defined. I mean, it's the most human thing we can think of. So I I get why they did it, but you're right, it's been existing in technologies and tools all over the place. And by the way, for quite some time it just wasn't super accessible until now.

Tim Sarrantonio: Well this was the tipping point I think like that this.

Brandolon Barnett: It entered the mainstream.



Tim Sarrantonio: It entered the mainstream in a way that wasn't too science fiction. Like, it was very tangible. This is the big difference between when people were talking about Web 3.0 and, and the blockchain and all that. It's like, well, okay and? How am I supposed to do anything with that? I got crypto and I work for a tech company and I was like, what the hell am I doing here?

Brandolon Barnett: Yeah. What's the point of this? I actually worry sometimes that people will think, I think it's a mistake, that AI is just the next crypto. But you're right. The difference to me is that crypto, it was like, what is it? People have spent 10, 12 years trying to figure out what it's actually for. As soon as you start using these tools, you'll know exactly what you can use them for and you can begin to use them immediately.

Tim Sarrantonio: I was in a room of fundraisers and these are folks who, I had to sit there and explain what ChatGPT is like to go to the right website because there's a bunch of prompt like scam cottage things that are out there too that are like, oh, just come and sign up for your \$20 and you could start using ChatGPT, right? I had to actually tell some fundraisers, don't go to that website. That's not the thing, right? So there's a lot of misinformation, but it was fascinating when I showed them what it actually does. And all we did was change the prompts slightly too, and your tone is now sarcastic and they can see everything change automatically - gasps in the room. And that's what I think has been transformative about that. Now I know we could talk about this stuff all day, but what have we not asked you that you wish that we did?

Brandolon Barnett: So one of the things I've been wanting to talk more about as a conversation, not that I have a definitive point of view, but it's the broader economics of a world with ubiquitous large language models in the mainstream and AI. And if we think about that world, I mean content has been king, but in this world when it's easier to create the laws of economics will tell you that it's somewhat less valuable. So does that actually mean that we might value real live in-person experiences more than we, more than ever or more than we have over the past couple of decades? A world where specifically maybe a bartender gets paid as much as an engineer because we realize the value of some of these things that we've taken for granted. And maybe that brings us offline a little, actually maybe it lowers the temperature, creates some connections. Because that's, I think what we need. And I think there's some potential for that. But I think that's something that we should be talking about. You know, if content and online aren't as hard and creating products is easier than ever, maybe that karaoke event down the street means more to you and you're willing to do more to experience it or pay more to be part of it. I think that's a really interesting thing to think about.

Tim Sarrantonio: I'm obsessively thinking about that. That's kind of my job in terms of that very question because we think about things through the lens of generosity experiences too. There's a lot of correlation that the communication is directly leading to new donor retention only being 18%. Basically only 2 out of 10 donors who gave to an organization last year coming back. And what that does is it undercuts the entirety of the potential for recurring gifts, legacy pipeline, sustainable giving that you're going to go and report to a foundation to go look at my sustainability plan, all those types of stuff. And it's really funny. I am going to bring it back to sci-fi, it is Star Wars though. I went to Disney a few weeks



ago and I went to the Galaxies Edge thing that they have and they've created this whole completely immersive experience there.

And I talked with a father after going through one of these rides about that very same question. Are we going to prioritize in-person experiences and things like that more than all the digital, because I had some people complain, Disney's just trying to get me on my phone the whole time interact with the augmented reality things and people just want to talk to each other and enjoy each other's company. And I think that will become more of a priority. But at the same time, we have to think about when we're talking about the economics,

what about all the data that's being aggregated behind the scenes where that leads people to go. If my phone is listening to me. It's like, no, it's not. It's just large amounts of data being joined by geolocation. How can we kind of take the things that don't freak people out, prioritize and understand that privacy is going to become even more of a premium, but still be able to personalize stuff where people remember it and it stands out and it's something that, especially in social good, is even stronger because it's more connected to their identity as a person versus a thing that they bought.

Brandolon Barnett: Yeah, I think those are great questions that we need to explore, but we're just at the beginning so we'll see where we land.

Kerrin Mitchell: I know, I was actually just thinking, I was like, Brandon, we need to, we can have you come back maybe in six months and have a completely different discussion and see what's happening. But it's true. I want to, I mean it's a longitudinal study on how we evolve this. So I think it's going to be really compelling and one of the opportunities we have as to just make sure that we're bringing what we're seeing forward to people that maybe don't read all the blogs or maybe don't have as much Star Trek knowledge as the rest of you. I think this is an opportunity for us to make sure we're educating people on what to be thinking about. So I'm just so happy that today we got a chance to kind of put a bunch of stuff on the wall and, and, and have that discussion. Because I think that humanity side is something people are lacking in their ability to move forward. It's the rate limiting step for some. So really bringing that back to the work that you've done Brandolon and I couldn't be happier that we had you on to sort of help us to demystify some of this. So thank you for that.

Brandolon Barnett:

Oh, enjoyed the conversation.