Deloitte AI360 Podcast

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Title: Reflecting on AI Advancements and the Future of Adoption at Enterprises

Description: Head of Applied AI at Deloitte, Jim Rowan, and Rohan Gupta discuss AI breakthroughs, and the groundwork companies need to scale real value.

Duration: 8:03

Jim Rowan: Rohan, welcome back to the AI360 podcast. Excited to have you back. This is your second time on the show. I think you're the first of our second-time appearances here, so really appreciate you taking the time to chat with us again. Maybe give everyone a quick intro if they didn't get a chance to listen to you before.

Rohan Gupta: Yeah, thanks so much, Jim. Good to be back. For our very long-time listeners, you might remember me as the person doing the interviewing before you came on and made it a lot better. So thank you for that, Jim. But when I'm not doing this, I spend a lot of my time with clients, particularly in the software sector, helping them build and launch products. And I've done that with a few companies that a lot of you may have known—and it's all public domain. So I worked with Google to launch Gemini Enterprise, with DocuSign to launch their Intelligent Agreement Management platform, and with a few startups that you and I have worked on together as well, Jim. So again, good to be back.

Jim Rowan: Yeah, it's great to be back. I love how you're so front line with a lot of the clients—of what's happening in the space from an AI perspective. Maybe you could talk to us a little bit. So we were starting the year when we chatted. We're ending the year now. What are some of the things that's really changed this year for you in terms of the space of AI and some of the developments you've seen?

Rohan Gupta: Yeah, it's really funny. You know, I was thinking about this the other day as I was using AI—as we all do in our lives. I think the image editing has probably gotten much, much further along than I'd anticipated. I think we're still in that text domain we'd been experiencing for a long time. But I had this weird image where my eyes were closed—and then I asked one of the AI models to just reset it with my eyes open. And it looked like my eyes were open the whole time. A small thing, you know, really shows how image models have come a very long way. And the other one is also voice. I can't remember the last time I've written an email now with my thumbs. I only talk to my phone or to my laptop even, most times. And so it's a really powerful way in which AI is making us a little bit more productive. What about you?

Jim Rowan: Yeah, I love that. The death of the QWERTY keyboard—could we finally see the end of it? I think that would be pretty awesome. Like don't let that hold you back for your efficiency. I think for me, one of the key things that I continue to see this year—and I remember a post you made about 2025 and you were saying this might be the year of some of the boring stuff—like we need to nail the boring foundation stuff. And I feel like this year more and more reinforced in my client conversations is the need to nail some of the boring things—like I've got to get my data house in order, I need to really think about how standardized my processes are and where I can reinvent them. And so those things—while not as exciting as image and voice—I feel have been grounding a lot of my conversations. I will agree with you, though, the image creation—specifically on how to build slides from some of the latest tools—super impressive, which I think just speeds up the time to take that interesting idea, visualize it, and get in front of people really fast.

Rohan Gupta: Totally agree. As we think about what 2026 is going to look like, are there any things kind of around the corner that you're excited about—or things that your clients are talking to you about?

Jim Rowan: Yeah, I mean, it continues to be a constant drumbeat of AI agents—so we couldn't avoid [it on] this call. We're three minutes in and we're talking about AI agents! But it's a question of what do they do? Where do we add value? Let's be practical about our approach to get them in. So again, I don't know if it's as exciting as sort of at-the-edge-of-the-frontier kind of conversation, but the technology's advanced so far, enterprises have not had enough time to adopt it. And so just this broader and gradual deployment of AI agents into the enterprise. And what I'm excited about—what that can do—is I think it really starts creating this builder ethos amongst people that are getting used to these AI tools. You can kind of build your own apps, create your own ideas, build your own agents, automate your own workflows. I think the direction of travel in that space will be really exciting for organizations. But love to hear from you—what are some of the things you're looking forward to?

Rohan Gupta: I love the one about agents. I guess this is probably the longest podcast we've ever had—three minutes before anyone said the word "agents." So, you know, I'll take it as a record for us. But outside of agents, I think personalization is something that's really important to me as well. I think over the last couple of years, we've now been talking to our favorite AIs so much they've started to build a memory bank about us. And I think we're beginning to see around the edges how that memory may be transferable. I know that some of the companies are working on bringing that memory to other places, or bringing apps to that single super app where it can learn about you and actually be like a true assistant. So, you know, that's something again a little bit around the corner that I'm quite excited about.

Jim Rowan: So maybe let's change gears for a second. These are things that all sound super exciting—what are some core enterprise capabilities or things you feel like need to get unlocked in '26 to really help enterprises get more value out of some of their AI investments?

Rohan Gupta: Yeah, I think—maybe I'll just frame a lesson and then kind of talk about the actual opportunity or the thing to do. One thing that I keep telling myself is that today is the worst AI will ever be, right? It's only getting better, and it's already so good. But in order to take advantage of everything that we've been talking about over the last few minutes, I think you'd agree that the data foundations are so, so critical. A lot of enterprises now have been through 20–30 years of digitization, but that whole digital infrastructure isn't optimized for AI use. And so we've got a wide range of databases, data in a bunch of different places, different people have different access rights to it. There's duplication of that data. If we can clean it up, it's really going to 10X the power of AI. So that's something I would advise enterprises today. How about you?

Jim Rowan: Yeah, for me, I think building on what you're saying—and one of the comments you just mentioned—like the security element of this. So, how are we securing AI? How are we using it responsibly within the organization? I think is really important. And we need to continue to kind of work within teams to define those boundaries of flexible risk management frameworks where I can use some data, not others. How do we deploy that broadly? And for me, the other piece is just the change management and adoption. Like you and I clearly are enjoying using these AI tools every day—we spend a lot of time with that. But I think there's pockets of the organizations that we work with that aren't on board with AI. And so figuring out how do we help them think about these as helpful assistants and tools to make them more productive—to feel better about the work that they're doing. Joining that change management journey will be really critical going into next year.

Rohan Gupta: Perfect, that makes sense.

Jim Rowan: Awesome. Well, Rohan, as we start to think broader, longer term about some of the things that we're seeing here as well, we've talked about the challenges, the advantages of what we're seeing from an AI perspective. One final piece of advice you want to leave for our listeners as they're thinking about AI scaling these solutions?

Rohan Gupta: I would say that AI is truly magical, and I believe that—but you have to experience the magic in order to believe it, right? So I would say pick your favorite AI application, whether it's embedded into things that you use every day, whether it's a new application you haven't tried before, whether it's something your friends or family sent you—but just try it out. Because once you understand how powerful it can be, only then will you start adopting it. So, you know, curiosity breeds adoption. So just be curious about AI.

Jim Rowan: I love it. That's great! We need that on a bumper sticker, and taped on every laptop we walk around with! That's the sticker: "Curiosity breeds adoption." Well, thank you so much for rejoining us here and being an amazing host for this program as well. It's been such an exciting run. We're going to be launching a new set of podcast series—Forward AI—that we're really excited about, focusing on a lot of different client conversations, conversations with our alliances, and different other parts of the firm. So hopefully folks will tune back in to those and that everyone enjoys these sessions going forward. And thanks for your leadership, Rohan, setting this all up and getting us started on the journey.

Rohan Gupta: Yeah, thanks for having me back, Jim. It's been a great two years.

Jim Rowan: Awesome. Well, thanks everyone. Take care.

Rohan Gupta: Bye.