

[RE]IMAGINE EDUCATION

A weekly Design·AI newsletter

ALL ABOUT DAI 2.0

HASS Special Issue

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For close to 16 months, [Re]Imagine Education has brought together stories, reflections, experiments, and conversations on Design AI at SUTD. What began as a weekly newsletter has grown into a shared space for the SUTD community.

We are **now expanding the newsletter into a series of pillar and cluster special issues**. Through these issues, we invite each pillar and cluster to surface the topics they see as important, urgent, and meaningful for the SUTD community and beyond.

Importantly, these special issues are shaped by the authors themselves. Each pillar or cluster may choose the format that best represents its voice and priorities — whether as essays, interviews, reflections, project showcases, dialogues, visual stories, or other forms of expression. The aim is not to impose a single template, but to create space for authentic perspectives across SUTD.

We begin this series with the June issue by HASS faculty. Opening the issue, Dr. Grace Dixon shares an update on DAI 2.0 — what it means, why it matters, and how it reflects SUTD's broader Design·AI vision: bringing together domain knowledge, design methodologies, and critical AI literacy to shape education for an AI-enabled world.

This newsletter is produced with ChatGPT and other AI tools as super-collaborators. The authors contribute the core ideas, drafts, strategic framing, pedagogical insights, and design direction, while AI supports by refining, formatting, and creative articulation. (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

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Contact us at nachamma@sutd.edu.sg to share your Design·AI stories

Hi Grace! Could you share with us the latest on DAI 2.0?

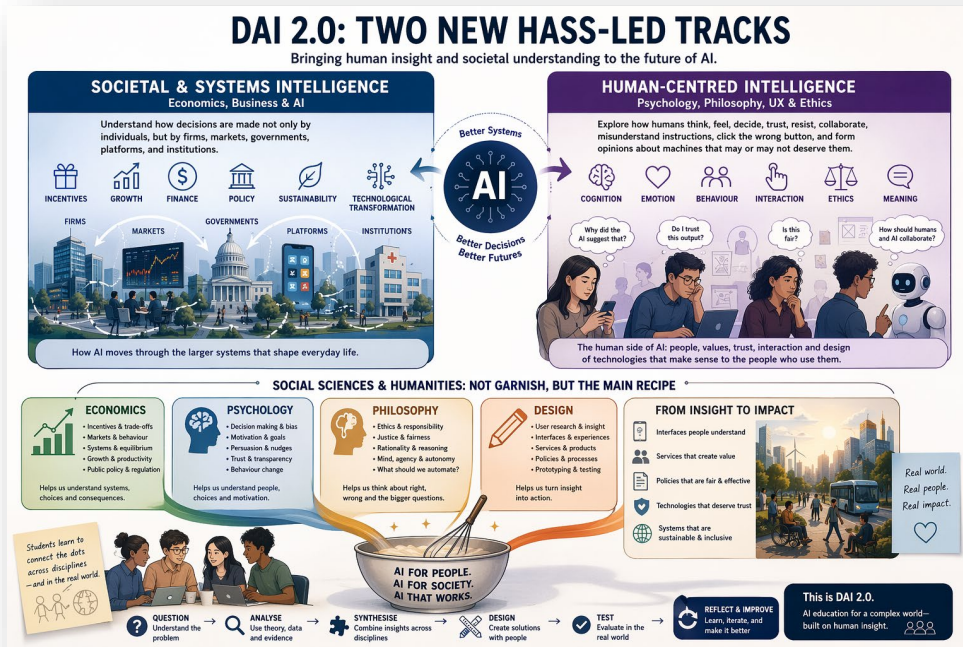
The on-going DAI programme, launched in 2020, is now expanded with two new tracks. Allow me to emphasize that the original DAI programme is not *replaced* but the aim of including new tracks is to increase the options available to students in this Bachelor of Science degree. We crafted 2.0 in response to a changing world, to prepare graduates for emerging roles across industries where complex challenges demand both technical expertise and human-centred thinking.

DAI 2.0 is now moving from “approved” to “actually happening,” which means the programme has entered that exciting phase where curriculum design, admissions, outreach, industry engagement, course mapping, and approximately 473 other moving parts come together (maybe not exactly 473 but you get the drift) in anticipation of the new intake in September 2026.

At its core, the inclusion of HASS in DAI 2.0 is built around a simple idea: the future of AI will not be decided by technical capability alone. It will also depend on whether people can understand human behavior, social systems, institutions, incentives, values, ethics, communication, and the messy reality of how technologies operate in the world. In other words, it is not enough for students to ask, “Can we build this?” They also need to ask, “Should we build this?”, “Who is this for?”, “What could go wrong?”, “Why are users behaving like that?”, and occasionally, “Why did everyone ignore the dashboard we spent three months designing?!”



What are the new tracks about?



A key development in DAI 2.0 is the introduction of two new HASS-led tracks: **Societal & Systems Intelligence** and **Human-Centred Intelligence**. The Societal & Systems Intelligence track brings together economics, business, and AI. It is for students who want to understand how decisions are made not only by individuals, but by firms, markets, governments, platforms, and institutions. Students will examine questions around incentives, growth, finance, policy, sustainability, and technological transformation — essentially, how AI moves through the larger systems that shape everyday life.

The **Human-Centered Intelligence** track turns the lens toward people. Drawing on psychology, philosophy, user experience, ethics, and human–AI interaction, it asks how humans think, feel, decide, trust, resist, collaborate, misunderstand instructions, click the wrong button, and form opinions about machines that may or may not deserve them. This track is concerned with the human side of AI: cognition, emotion, behaviour, meaning, ethics, interaction, and the design of technologies that actually make sense to the people expected to use them.

This is where the social sciences and humanities come in — not as decorative garnish sprinkled over a technical degree, but as part of the main recipe. Economics helps students understand incentives, trade-offs, markets, and systems. Psychology helps them understand users, decisions, motivation, persuasion, and behavior change. Philosophy helps them think through ethics, rationality, justice, mind, agency, and what it means to delegate decisions to machines. Design ties these strands together by asking students to turn insight into action: interfaces, services, products, policies, experiences, prototypes, and systems that can be tested in the real world.

Tell us more about the new courses in these two tracks.

DAI 2.0 will also introduce new core courses such as **Principles of Economics in the Age of AI**, **Mind, Machines, and Design**, and **Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods**.

These courses are intended to help students move confidently between data and lived experience, models and meanings, technical systems and social contexts. A student will learn to work with AI tools, and also to conduct interviews, interpret behaviour, analyse markets, critique assumptions, evaluate evidence, and explain why a technically elegant solution may still fail once actual humans are involved.

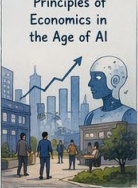
Another important piece is **EDGE**, a developmental pathway for communication and thinking skills. EDGE takes students from **Empathy** in Year 1, through **Development** and **Growth**, towards **Expression** by Year 4. Put less formally: students should become better not only at building things, but at explaining what they built, why it matters, who it affects, and what trade-offs they had to navigate. By the end, the hope is that a DAI graduate can present more than a polished slide deck and a confident “our AI solution will revolutionise everything” spiel. They should be able to make a careful, grounded, persuasive case for their work.

DAI 2.0: NEW COURSES. DEEPER UNDERSTANDING. STRONGER VOICE.

We combine data and lived experience, models and meanings, technical systems and social contexts.

NEW & REVISED COURSES

Principles of Economics in the Age of AI



Incentives. Markets. Growth. Policy. Technology. Better decisions for better systems.

Mind, Machines, and Design



Cognition. Interaction. Ethics. Meaning. Design for human-AI collaboration that makes sense.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods



Ask better questions. Gather better evidence. Integrate numbers that narratives.

Students learn to:

- Work with AI tools and data
- Conduct interviews and field research
- Interpret behaviour and human context
- Analyse markets and institutions
- Critique assumptions and models
- Evaluate evidence and uncertainty
- Explain why solutions succeed—or fail—with real humans

Technically strong. Humanly aware. Contextually grounded.



EDGE: A DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAY FOR COMMUNICATION & THINKING SKILLS



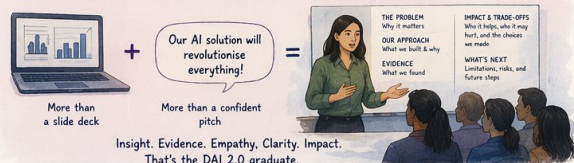
From understanding people, to growing ideas, to expressing impact.

In practice, this means students:

- ✓ Explain what they built, and why it matters
- ✓ Make the case for who it helps — and who it might harm
- ✓ Navigate trade-offs and ethical tensions
- ✓ Present beyond slides: stories, evidence, and clarity
- ✓ Have conversations, not just presentations

Not just builders.
Thoughtful communicators.
Responsible innovators.

BY THE END, A DAI GRADUATE CAN MAKE A CAREFUL, GROUNDED, PERSUASIVE CASE FOR THEIR WORK.



Any feedback from industry partners on DAI 2.0?

Industry partners have reinforced our direction. Recent conversations with companies and AI practitioners suggest that what organisations need is not simply more people who can use AI, but people who can connect AI capability with human needs, organisational realities, governance, risk, policy, communication, and implementation. This aligns closely with DAI 2.0's broader direction: producing graduates who can bridge technical, social, and design domains rather than sit neatly inside one box.

What is one takeaway on DAI 2.0?

In short, DAI 2.0 is an attempt to educate students for a world where AI is everywhere, but wisdom, judgment, empathy, and good design remain stubbornly non-automated. It aims to develop graduates who are technically literate, socially aware, ethically reflective, design-capable, and comfortable working in the complicated space where machine intelligence meets human life.

SUTD recognizes that AI literacy is not just prompt engineering, but the ability to understand how technology interacts with people, systems, and society. DAI 2.0 brings together new tracks, new courses, and developmental pathways into a coherent whole. It integrates systems thinking with human understanding, ensuring students engage both the technical and the social dimensions of AI. Students move fluidly between data and lived experience, models and meaning, building not just solutions but insight. Through EDGE, they also learn to communicate, justify, and take responsibility for what they create. **This is the ambition of DAI 2.0 — to graduate not just capable builders, but responsible shapers of an AI-driven world.**