

The Spreadsheet Slayer vs. The Digital Einstein: Are We Witnessing AI's Gut-Wrenching Sprint to Supremacy?

November 4, 2025



Insight from James Garner

While 70% of project teams are still wrestling with spreadsheets, two AI giants just lit a fire under the future of work, and it's about to get uncomfortably hot.

For years, we've been told that artificial intelligence would change everything. It would automate the mundane, accelerate discovery, and unlock human potential. But for many project delivery professionals, that promise has felt distant, an abstract concept disconnected from the daily grind of Gantt charts and budget forecasts. The reality has been clunky, unreliable tools that often create more problems than they solve. But in the last week of October 2025, two seismic announcements from AI's leading titans, Anthropic and OpenAI, have shattered that illusion. The abstract has become terrifyingly concrete. The future isn't coming; it's here, and it's demanding we adapt or be rendered obsolete.

The Achilles' Heel is Healed: Anthropic's Claude Steps into the Spreadsheet Arena

Let's be honest, for all their linguistic prowess, Large Language Models (LLMs) have been notoriously bad with numbers. Numbers have been the Achilles' heel of LLMs up until now. Copilot in Excel to my experience has been awful. This sentiment is not an isolated one. Microsoft itself has issued warnings about its own Excel Copilot, [advising users not to use it for "\[any task requiring accuracy or](#)

[reproducibility](#),” including “numerical calculations” and “financial reporting.” It was a damning admission that validated the frustrations of countless analysts, cost managers, and engineers who found the tool to be more of a hindrance than a help.

But on October 27th, Anthropic, a key rival to OpenAI, announced a development that could finally remedy this long-standing weakness. They are [advancing Claude for Financial Services](#) with a powerful new Excel add-in. This isn't just another chatbot bolted onto a spreadsheet. Anthropic claims Claude for Excel can discuss how a spreadsheet works, modify it while preserving its structure and formula dependencies, debug and fix cell formulas, and even build new spreadsheets from scratch. It's a quantum leap in capability, one that promises to transform the most ubiquitous tool in business into a dynamic, intelligent partner.

“Numbers have been the Achilles’ heel of LLMs up until now. Copilot in Excel to my experience has been awful.” – Project Flux

This development is particularly significant given Claude’s proven excellence in coding. The same precision and logical reasoning that made it a favourite among developers is now being aimed squarely at the world of finance and project controls. The implications are staggering. A recent study highlighted that [70% of teams still rely on spreadsheets](#) for project tracking, and these teams are three times more likely to experience project delays due to human error. With a tool like the new Claude, the potential to eliminate these errors and bring a new level of analytical power to project data is immense. The days of wrestling with broken formulas and manually consolidating data from disparate sources may be numbered.

The Race to Digital Superintelligence: OpenAI’s 2028 Gambit

Just as the dust was settling from Anthropic’s announcement, OpenAI’s CEO, Sam Altman, dropped a bombshell of his own. During a livestream, he laid out an audacious timeline for the creation of a “legitimate AI researcher” by 2028. This isn't just an incremental improvement; it's a declaration of intent to create a form of artificial general intelligence (AGI) within the next three years. Altman clarified that this would be a “system capable of autonomously delivering on larger research projects,” a digital mind that could independently design experiments, analyse data, and present novel findings.

To put this in perspective, Altman also announced a target of an “intern-level research assistant” by September 2026. That’s less than a year away. The pace is breathtaking, and it signals a dramatic acceleration in the AI arms race. This means we are getting closer and closer to AGI. And if AGI means replicating human abilities, then a legitimate AI research by 2028 means it would effectively be AGI for research.

This isn't just about scientific curiosity. It's about a fundamental shift in the nature of knowledge work. An AI that can conduct independent research has the potential to solve some of humanity’s most complex challenges, from curing diseases to developing new materials. But it also raises profound questions about the future of human expertise. If an AI can do the work of a researcher, what does that mean for the millions of people whose jobs are based on knowledge and analysis?

“We believe that it is possible that deep learning systems are less than a decade away from superintelligence.” – Jakub Pachocki, OpenAI’s Chief Scientist

OpenAI’s Chief Scientist, Jakub Pachocki, went even further, stating, “We believe that it is possible that deep learning systems are less than a decade away from superintelligence.” This is no longer the stuff of science fiction. It’s a tangible goal being pursued by one of the world’s most powerful and well-funded research organisations. The company has committed to a staggering 30 gigawatts of infrastructure, a \$1.4 trillion financial obligation, to make this vision a reality. The race is on, and the finish line is moving closer at an alarming rate.

The Uncomfortable Truth for Project Professionals

So, what does all this mean for the project delivery professional? It means that the ground is shifting beneath our feet. The tools we rely on, the skills we’ve honed, and the value we provide are all about to be fundamentally challenged. The spreadsheet, that trusty workhorse of project management, is on the verge of a radical transformation. An AI that can not only manage data but also provide strategic insights will be an indispensable tool for any project manager who wants to stay ahead of the curve.

At the same time, the very nature of our projects is likely to change. With AI-powered research accelerating the pace of innovation, we can expect to see more complex, ambitious, and technologically advanced projects being undertaken. The ability to manage these projects effectively will require a new set of skills, a deep understanding of AI’s capabilities and limitations, and a willingness to embrace a new way of working.

This isn’t a time for complacency. It’s a time for urgent, proactive adaptation. We need to be experimenting with these new tools, understanding their potential, and thinking critically about how they can be integrated into our workflows. We need to be investing in our own skills, developing a deeper understanding of data science and AI, and preparing ourselves for a future where our primary role may be to manage and collaborate with intelligent machines.

Your Project Delivery Career is on the Clock. Don’t Get Left Behind.

The announcements from Anthropic and OpenAI are a wake-up call. The AI revolution is no longer a distant threat; it’s a clear and present reality. The choice is simple: we can either ignore the writing on the wall and risk being left behind, or we can embrace the change, adapt our skills, and position ourselves at the forefront of this new era of project delivery. The clock is ticking. What will you do?