

citrix.

Citrix's perspective on the near future of work

Brian Madden
Futurist, Citrix

17 June 2026



A few months ago

The New York Times

Companies Are Pouring Billions Into A.I. It Has Yet to Pay Off.

Corporate spending on artificial intelligence is surging as executives bet on major efficiency gains. So far, they report little effect to the bottom line.

Listen to this article · 8:36 min [Learn more](#) [Share full article](#)

By **Steve Lohr**
Steve Lohr has written about technology and its effect on business and the economy more than 20 years.

Aug. 13, 2025
[Leer en español](#)

QuantumBlack
AI by McKinsey

Sign In | Subscribe

“Nearly eight in ten companies report using gen AI — yet just as many report no significant bottom-line impact.”

Nearly four decades ago, when the personal computer boom was in full swing, a phenomenon known as the “productivity paradox” was coined. It was a reference to how, despite companies’ huge investments in technology, there was scant evidence of a corresponding gain in efficiency.

Today, the same paradox is appearing, but with generative artificial intelligence. According to [recent research from McKinsey](#), nearly eight in 10 companies have reported using generative AI, but as many have reported “no significant bottom-line impact” as those that haven’t.

A.I. [technology has been racing ahead](#) with [chatbots like ChatGPT](#) and [other AI tools](#) by a high-stakes arms race among tech giants and startups, prompting an expectation that everything from back-office

SEARCH FORTUNE SUBSCRIBE NOW SIGN IN

NEWSLETTERS · CFO DAILY

MIT report: 95% of generative AI pilots at companies are failing

BY **SHERYL ESTRADA**
SENIOR WRITER AND AUTHOR OF CFO DAILY

August 18, 2025 at 6:54 AM EDT

Today

Corporate America Is Starting to Ration AI as Cost Skyrockets

Executives are scrambling to track returns on AI investments as the bill for massive computing needs comes due.

89 May 28

+ TECH ✓ AI ✓ MICROSOFT

Microsoft starts canceling Code licenses / Thousands of Microsoft developers will use Copilot CLI instead

by + Tom Warren

May 14, 2026 at 3:00 PM EDT

May 28, 2026 - Technology

AI sticker shock hits corporate America

Madison Mills



yahoo!finance

AFP

After the AI binge, companies balk at soaring bills

Thomas URBAIN

Sun, May 31, 2026 at 3:47 AM GMT+2 • 3 min read



Fu

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE | E

NO ROI

Corporations Reeling From Huge AI Costs With No Clear Benefits

They're not impressed so far.



By **Victor Tangermann**

Published **May 29, 2026 9:04 AM EDT**

Add Futurism



citrix

AI Capabilities

What can AI actually do?

?

AI Diffusion
How fast AI is absorbed?

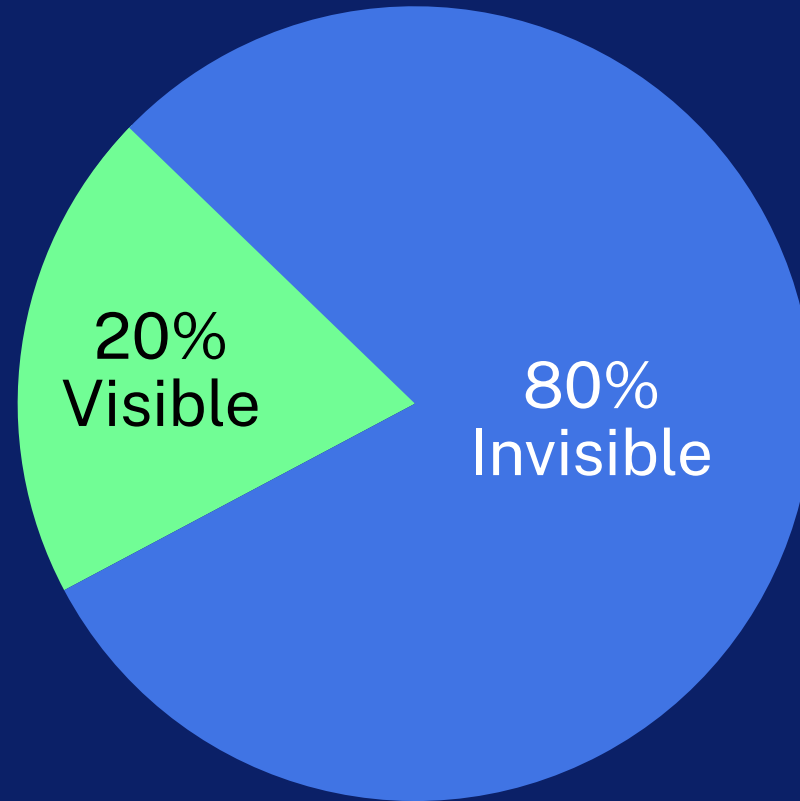
AI Diffusion

AI-caused congestion



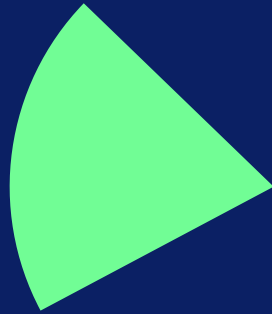
Knowledge Work

emails
documents
meeting transcripts
chats



thinking
reasoning
judgement
staring out the window
looking at birds

How is AI impacting knowledge work?



Our universe
before AI



Our universe
after AI

How AI is entering work

The 7 phases of human-AI collaboration

2026 edition

The 7-stage roadmap for human-AI collaboration (2026 Edition)



Brian Madden



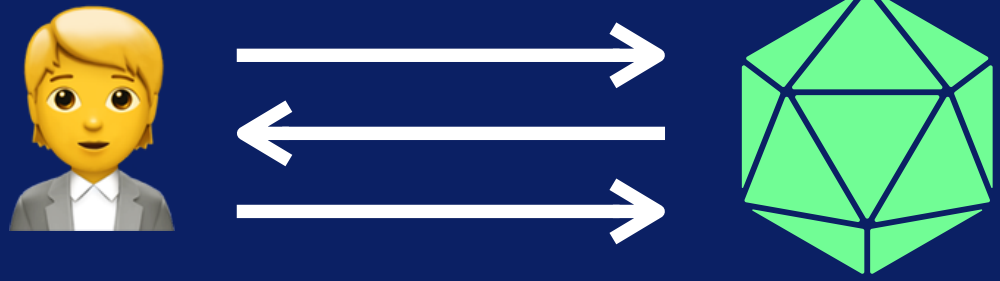
Last year I published the first version of my [7-stage roadmap](#) which detailed how human workers adopt AI over time. It started with workers using AI as simple answer bots in 2024 and stepped through the incremental changes up through full AI-orchestrated work by 2028.

1. Faster Search

AI as a Faster Search

2.

3.



4.

5.

6.

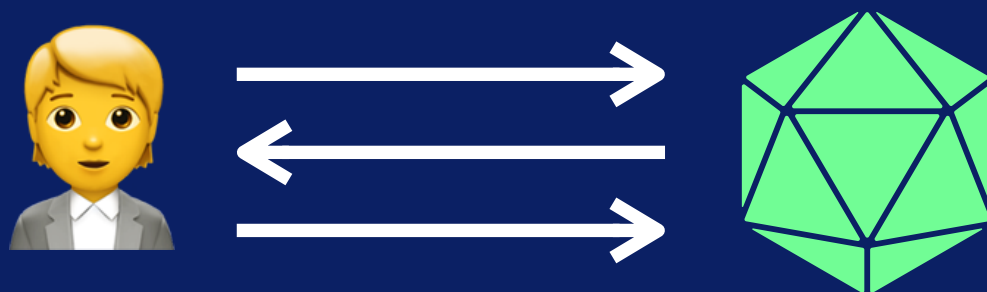
7.

AI as a Thinking Partner

1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3.



4.



5.

6.

7.

1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

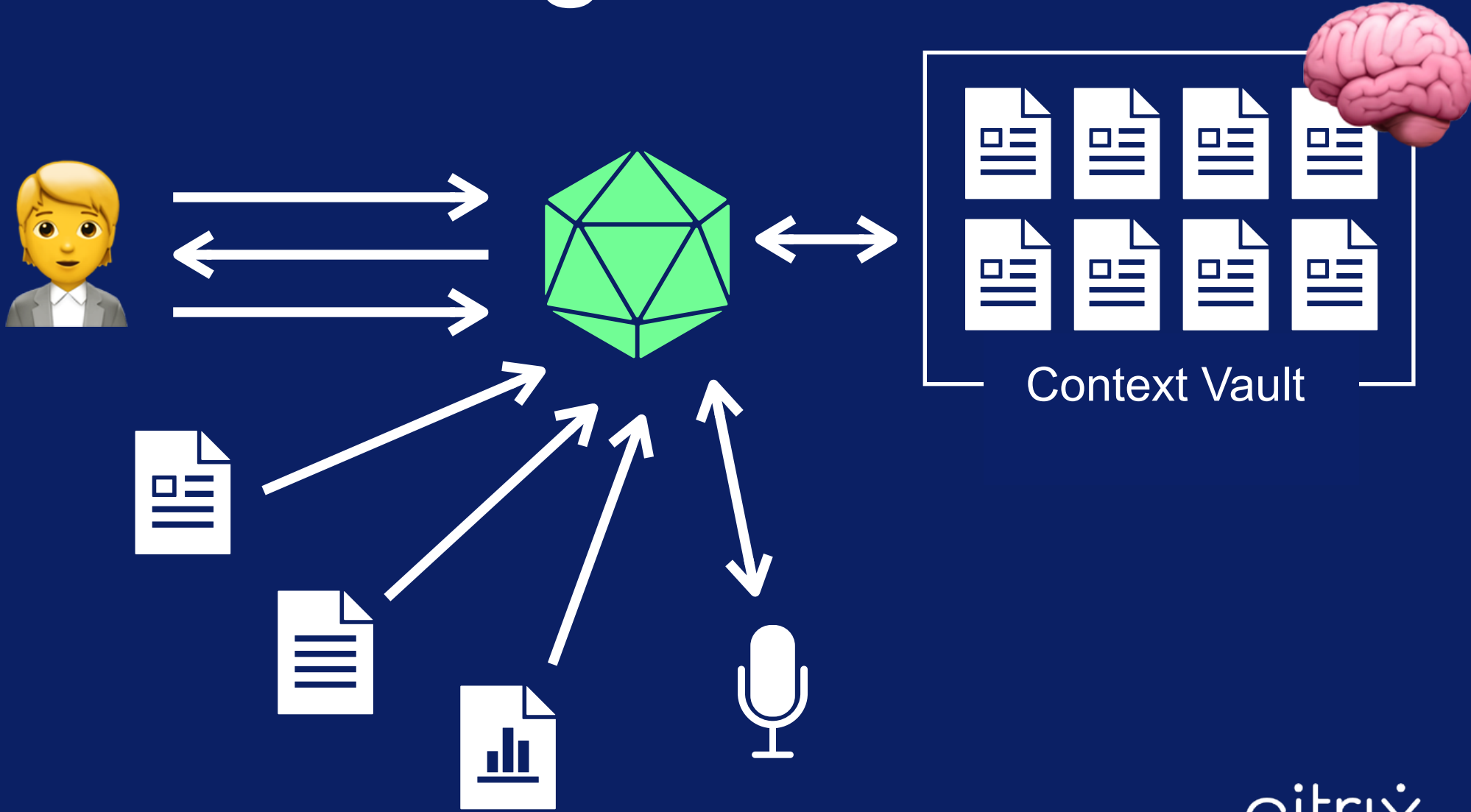
4.

5.

6.

7.

AI as a Cognitive Extension



The cognitive stack

Worker
The human

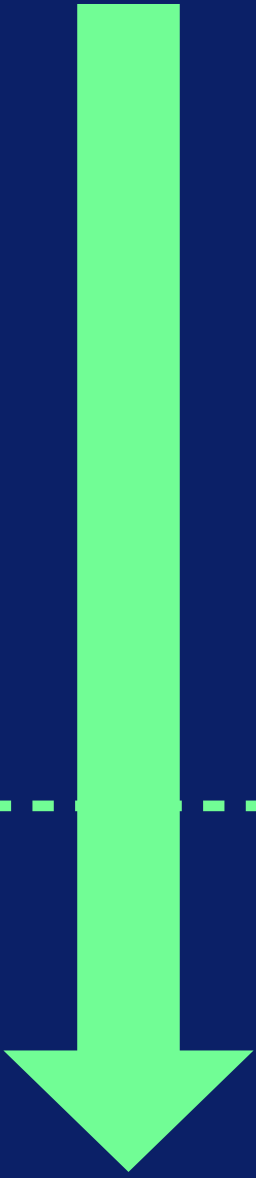
Cognitive Extension (“Second Brain”)
persistent, compounding, superhuman context

3. Cognitive Extension

Skills & Frameworks
Text files in plain English, shareable, stackable, subscribable

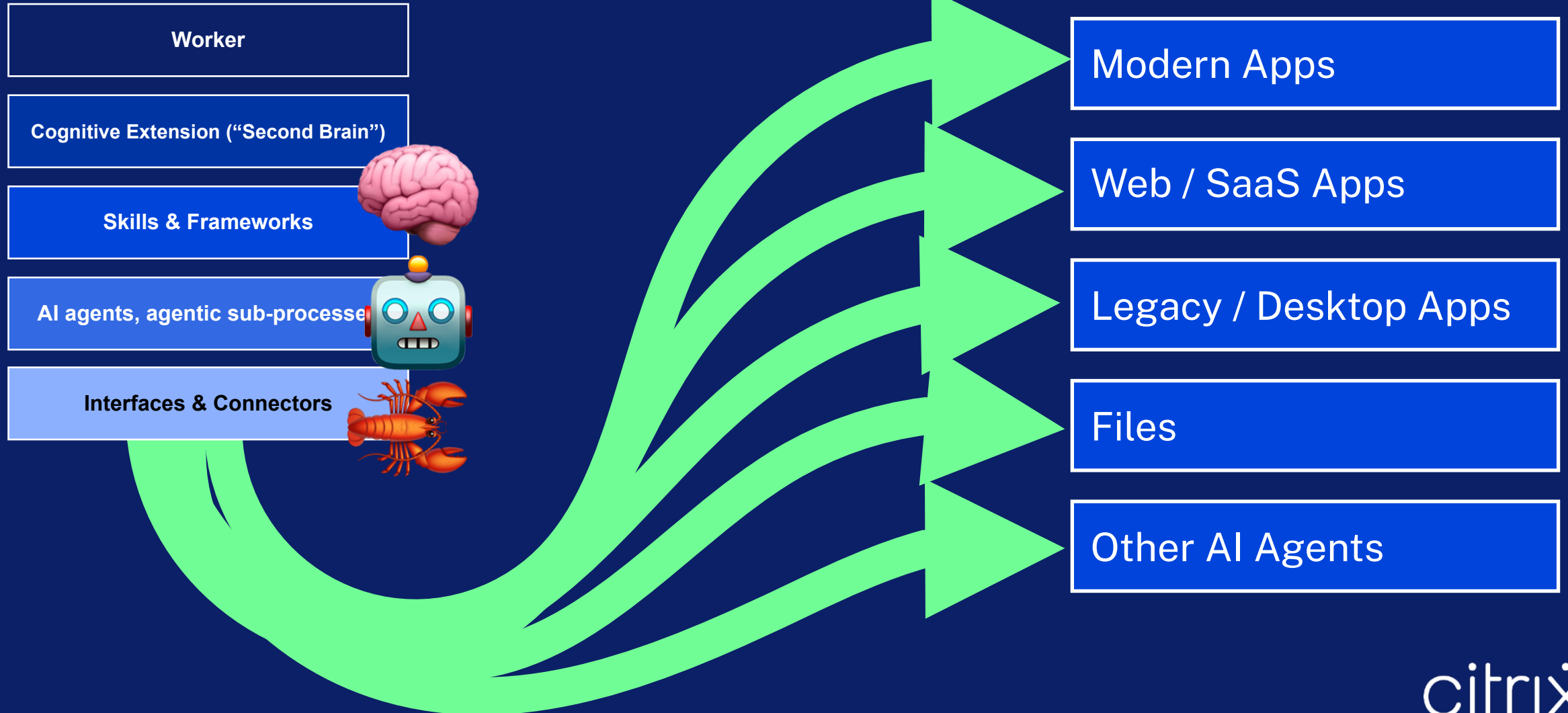
AI agents, agentic sub-processes
How AI acts in the world

Interfaces & Connectors
APIs, MCP, CUA, RPA, A2A, files, legacy apps, etc.



The Real World

Knowledge Work



You can't see more than 1 step ahead



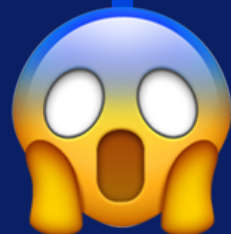
1. Faster Search



2. Thinking Partner



3. Cognitive Extension / Second Brain



4. Multi-Tool Agent

1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

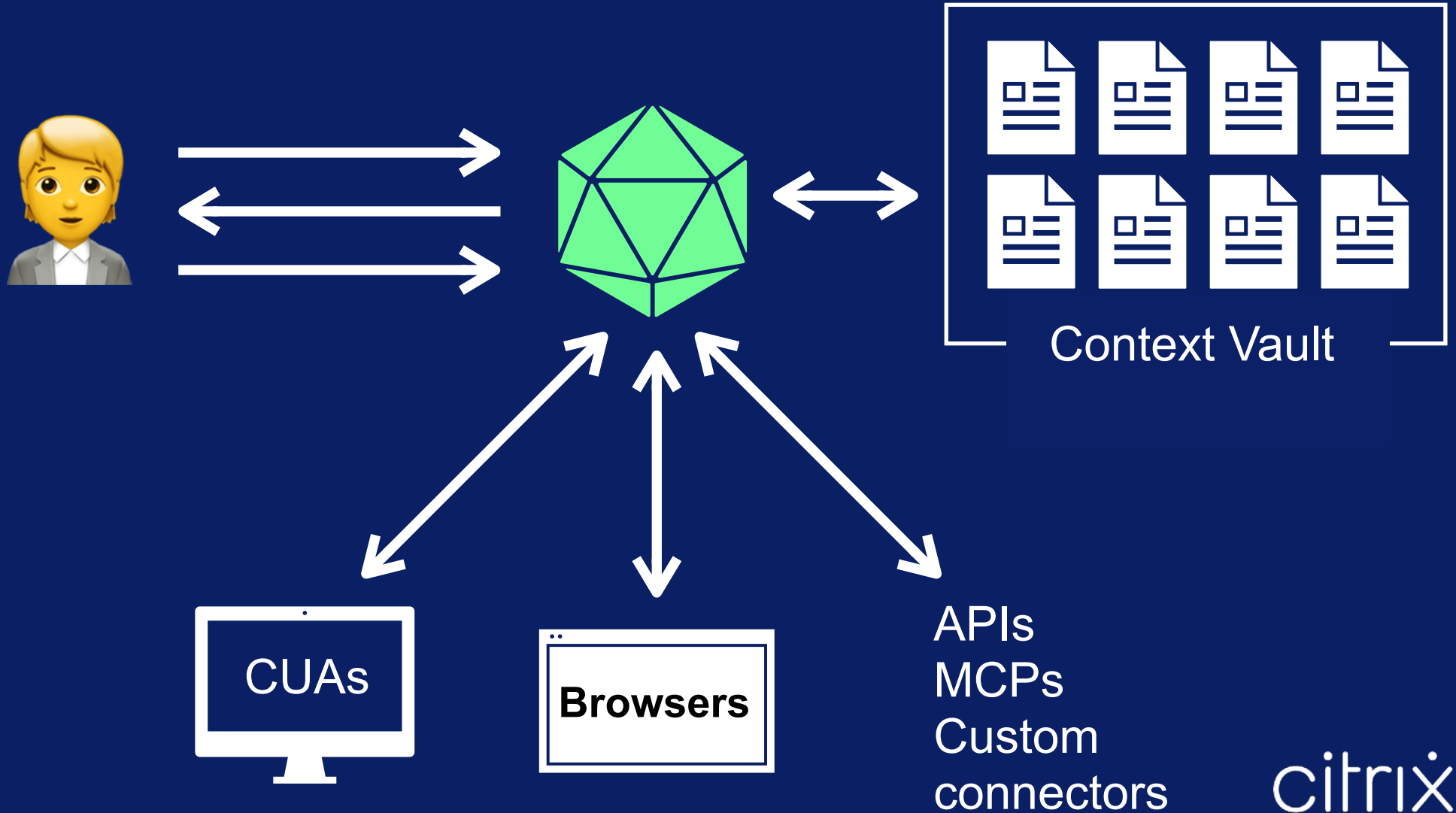
4. Multi-tool Agent

5.

6.

7.

AI as a Multi-Tool Agent



You can't see more than 1 step ahead



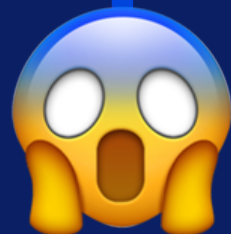
1. Faster Search



2. Thinking Partner



3. Cognitive Extension / Second Brain



4. Multi-Tool Agent

You can't see more than 1 step ahead



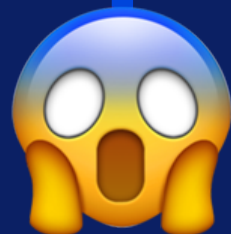
2. Thinking Partner



3. Cognitive Extension / Second Brain



4. Multi-Tool Agent



5. AI as a Fleet

1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

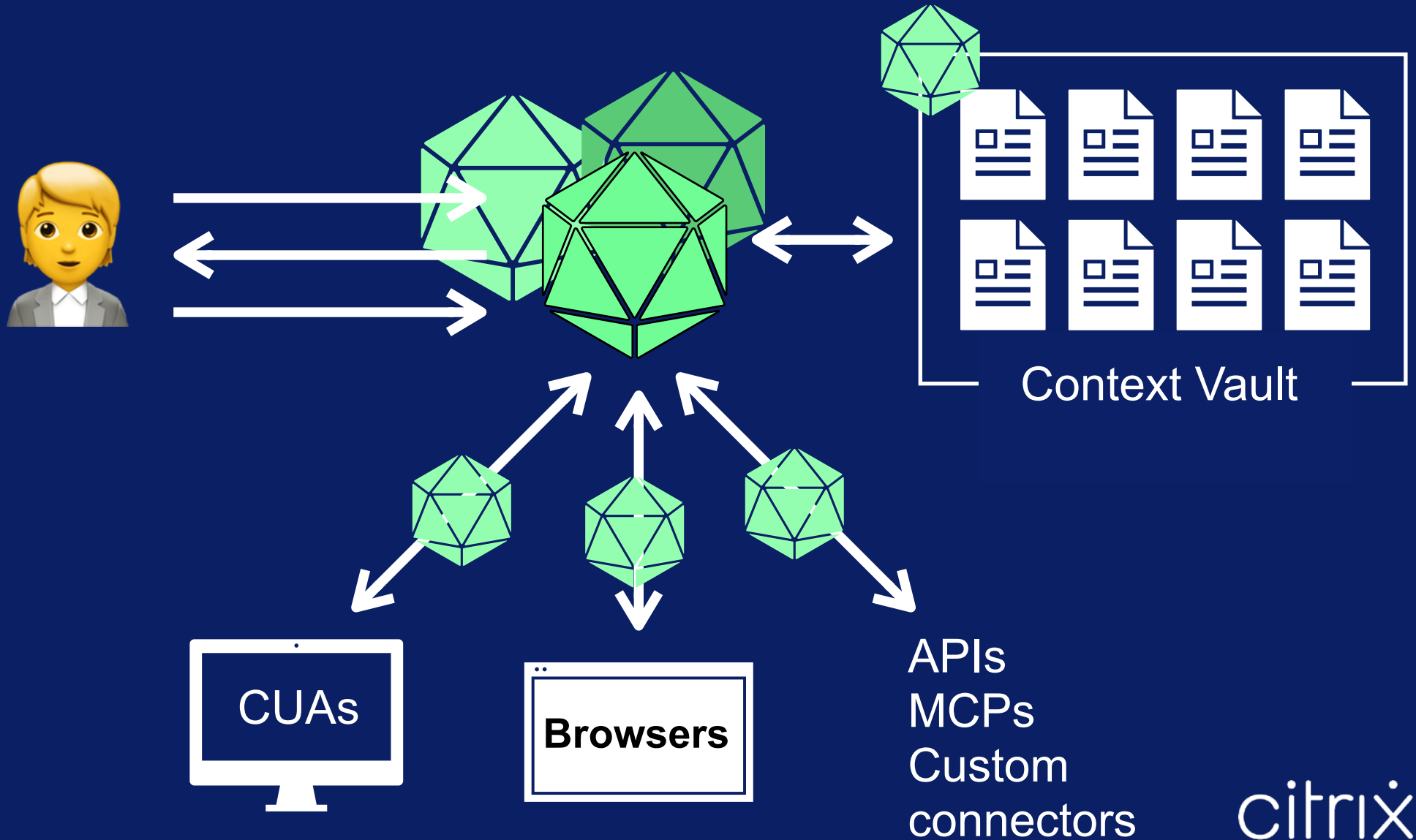
4. Multi-tool Agent

5. Fleet

6.

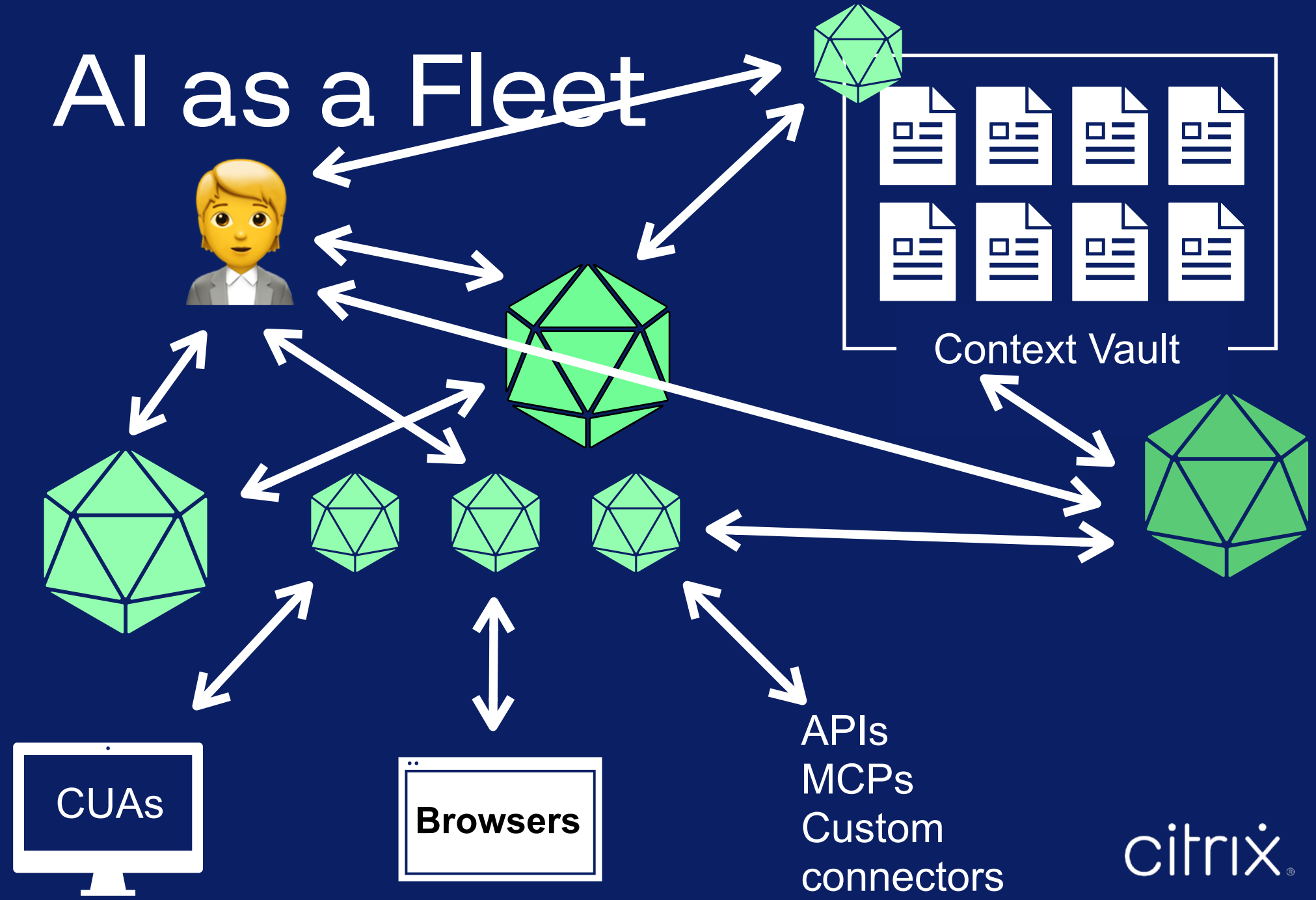
7.

AI as a Fleet



1. Faster Search
2. Thinking Partner
3. Cognitive Extension
4. Multi-tool Agent
5. Fleet
- 6.
- 7.

AI as a Fleet



1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

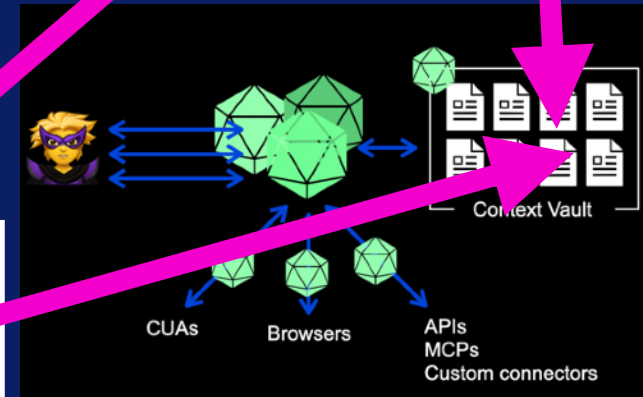
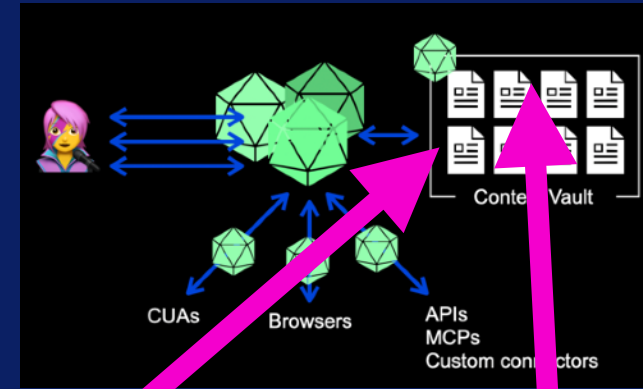
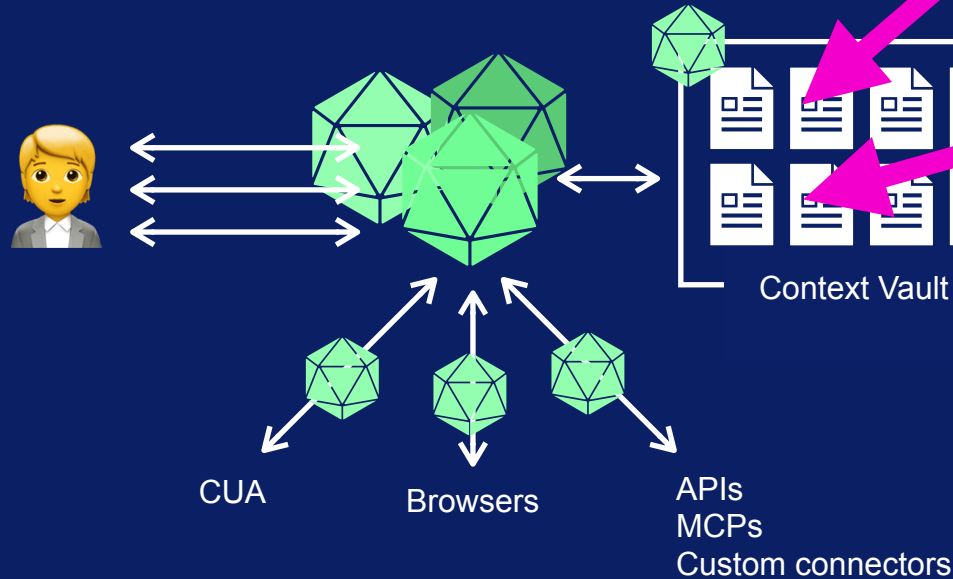
4. Multi-tool Agent

5. Fleet

6. Pod

7.

AI as a Pod



1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

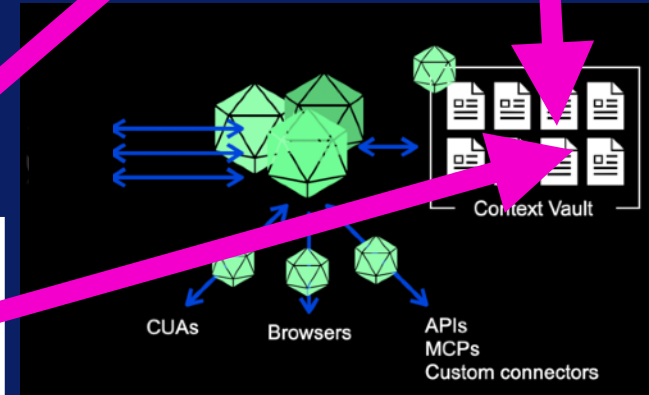
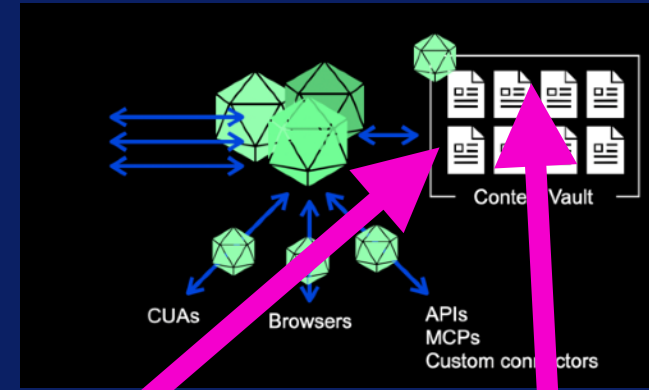
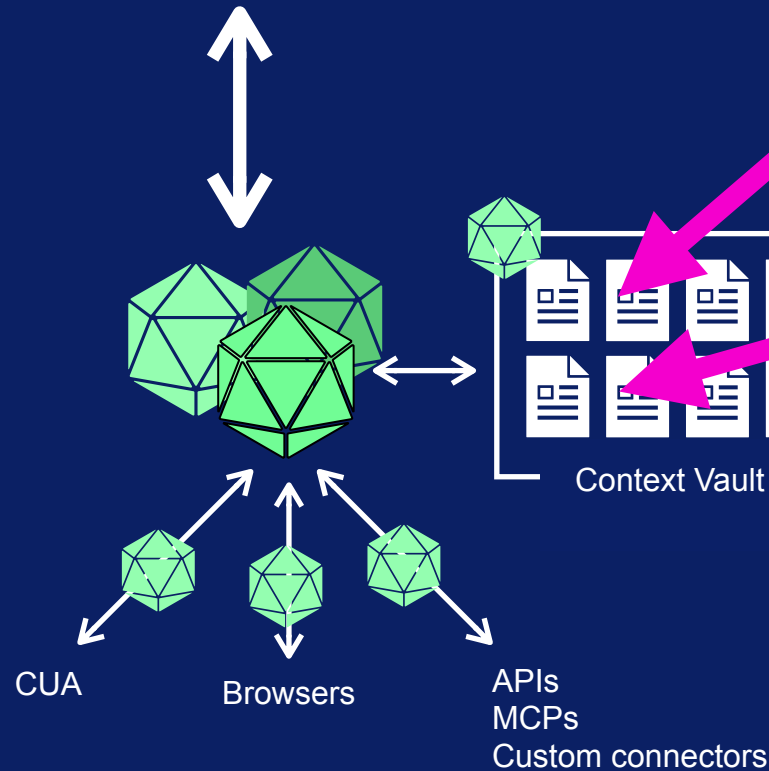
4. Multi-tool Agent

5. Fleet

6. Pod

7.

AI as a Pod



1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

4. Multi-tool Agent

5. Fleet

6. Pod

7.

AI as a Pod

3 worker types



Cognitive Owners

Context + judgment, the source of expertise

Cognitive Operators

Run agent fleets

Cognitive Curators

Maintain context & skill libraries

1. Faster Search

2. Thinking Partner

3. Cognitive Extension

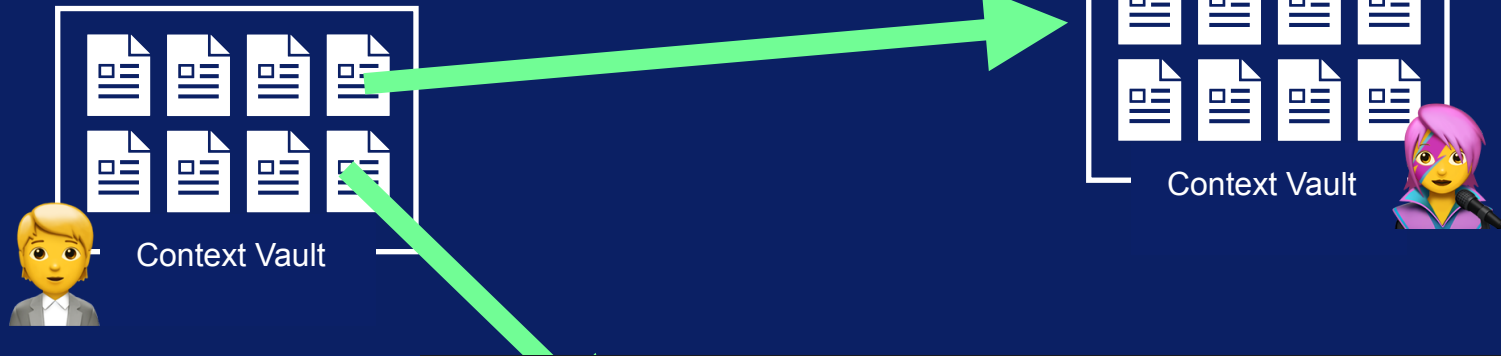
4. Multi-tool Agent

5. Fleet

6. Pod

7. Published Self

The Published Self (Optional fork)



Announcing brianmadden.ai : I just published my brain for you to merge into your AI



Brian Madden VP & Futurist, Citrix



February 26, 2026

A few weeks ago I wrote about how I used AI to build a personal compounding



Every worker is somewhere on here



1. Faster Search



2. Thinking Partner



3. Cognitive Extension



4. Multi-Tool-Using Agent



5. Fleet of Agents

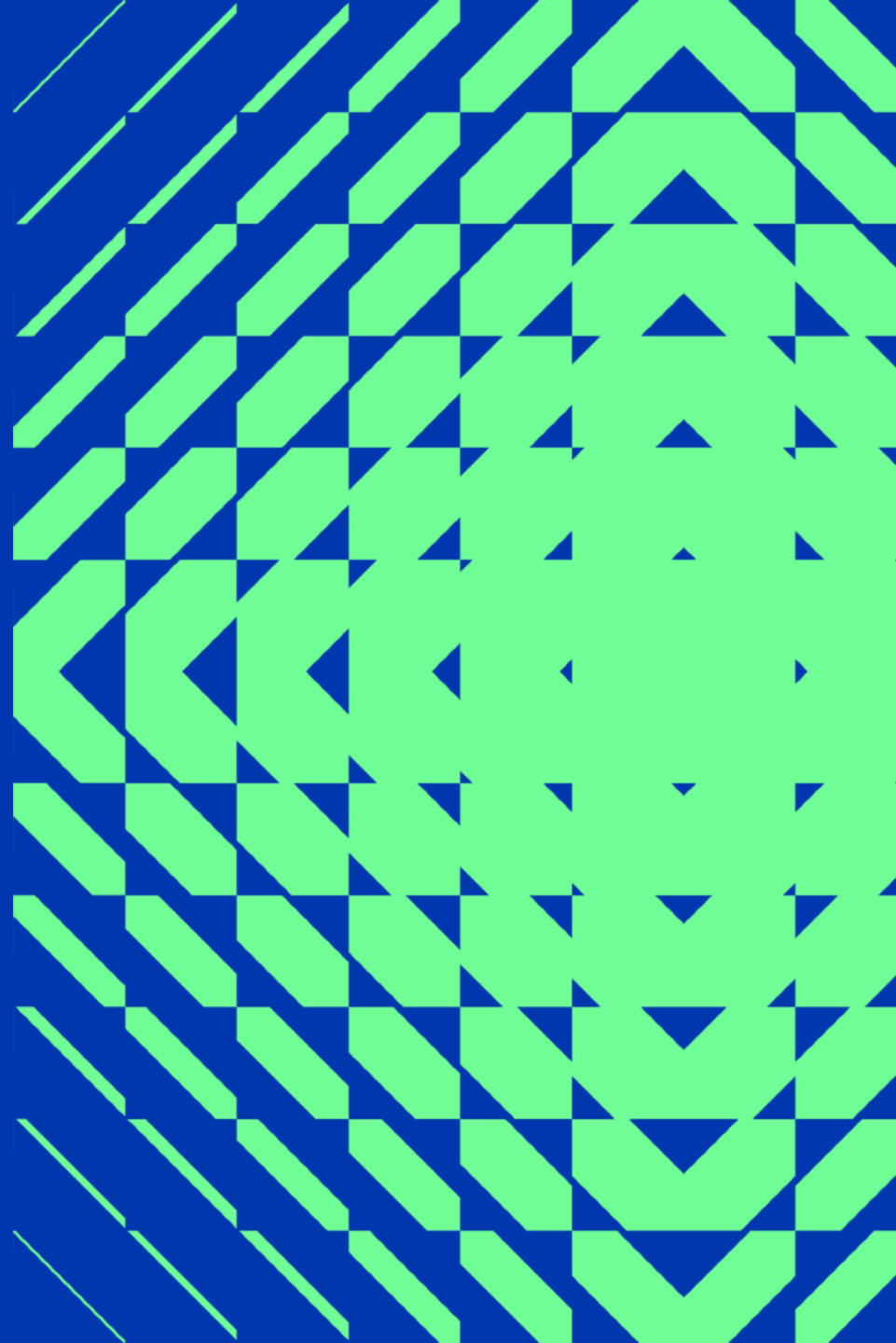


6. Self-Running Pod of Agents



7. Published Self

The Current EUC Model



Many assumptions are baked into our current model

Work is **one** person.

Work is **one** screen.

Work is **one** set of apps.

Work is **one** set of hours.

AI is changing all our pieces!

VDI → VDI

(used by humans) → (used by humans & AI)

AI is not eating **all** software

Shallow



Zapier, Canva, Figma, Resend

Middle

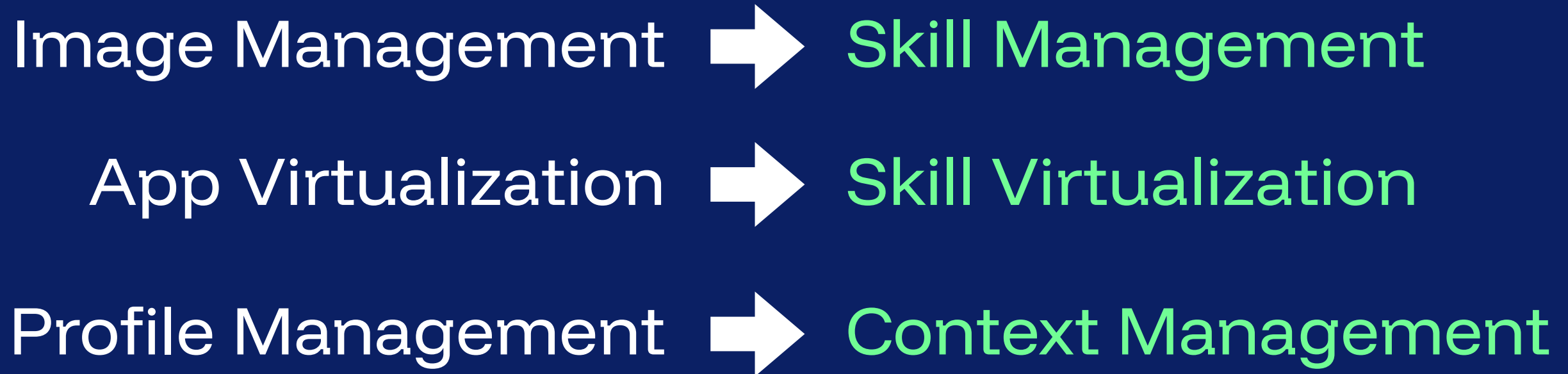


Salesforce, Workday,
Snowflake, Box

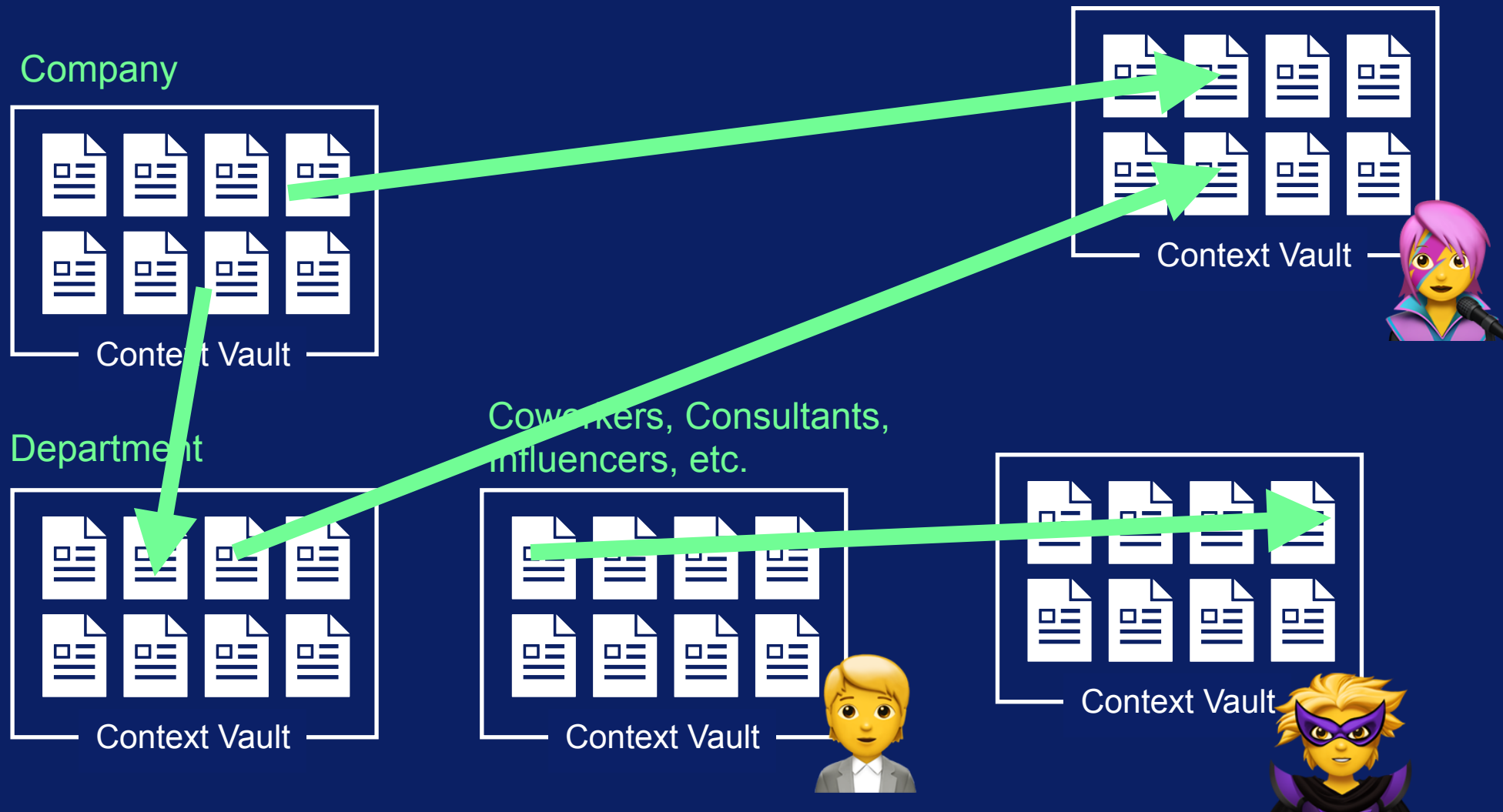
Deep



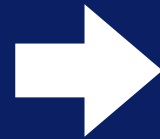
Epic, SAP, Oracle,
Guidewire, Fiserv,
Amadeus, industrial
control systems,
mainframes



Skill & Context Management

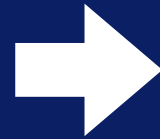


Group Policy



Agent Policy

Session Recording



Agent Observability

Session Recording



Cognitive Observability

Performance Mgmt → Token Management



200K 🏆1

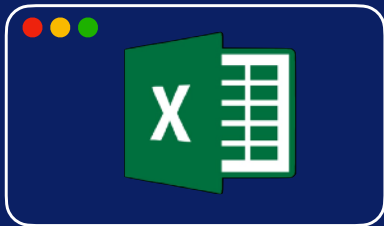


011011
111010
111011

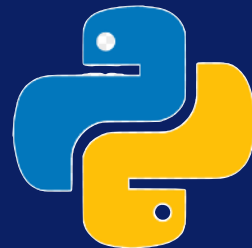
10K 🥈2



2K 🏆1



100K 🏆1



5K 🥉3



0 ❤️

Every worker is somewhere on here



1. Faster Search



2. Thinking Partner



3. Cognitive Extension



4. Multi-Tool-Using Agent



5. Fleet of Agents

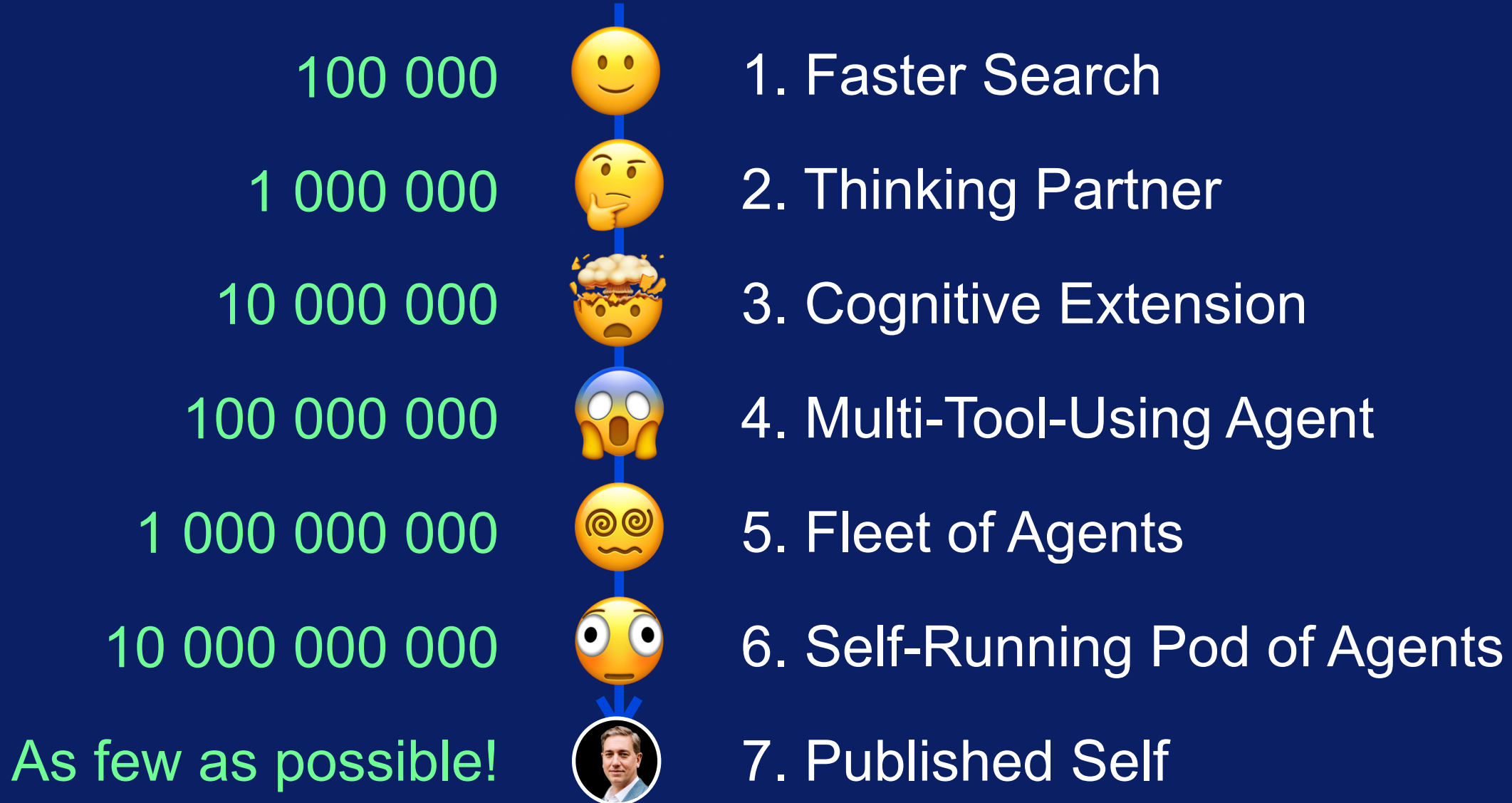


6. Self-Running Pod of Agents

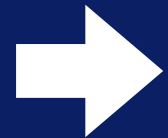


7. Published Self

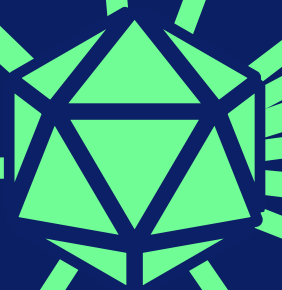
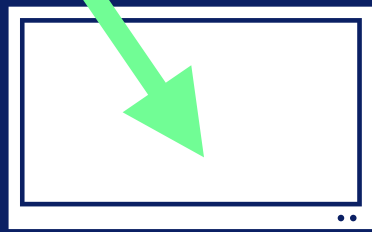
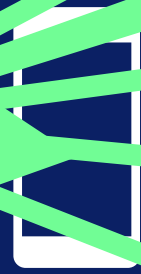
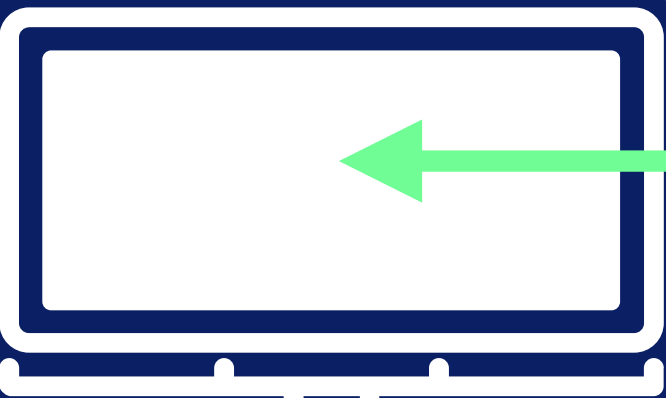
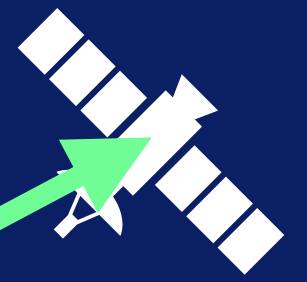
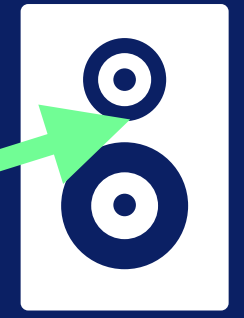
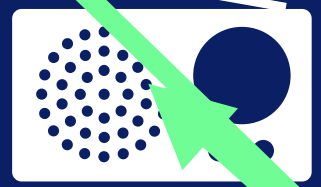
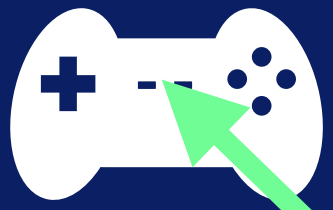
Every worker raises system requirements



Endpoint Mgmt



Endpoint Mgmt



Endpoint Mgmt → Endpoint Mgmt

Receiver / Workspace → Cognitive Workspace

Control Plane → Control Plane

VDI	Agent VDI
Image Mgmt	Skill Mgmt
Profile Mgmt	Brain Mgmt
App Virt	Skill Virt
Group Policy	Agent Policy
Perf Counters	Token Counters
Session Recording	Cognitive Observability
Endpoint Mgmt	Cognitive Endpoint Mgmt
Workspace	Cognitive Workspace
Control Plane	Control Plane

What we do
gets bigger

Workers still need to work.

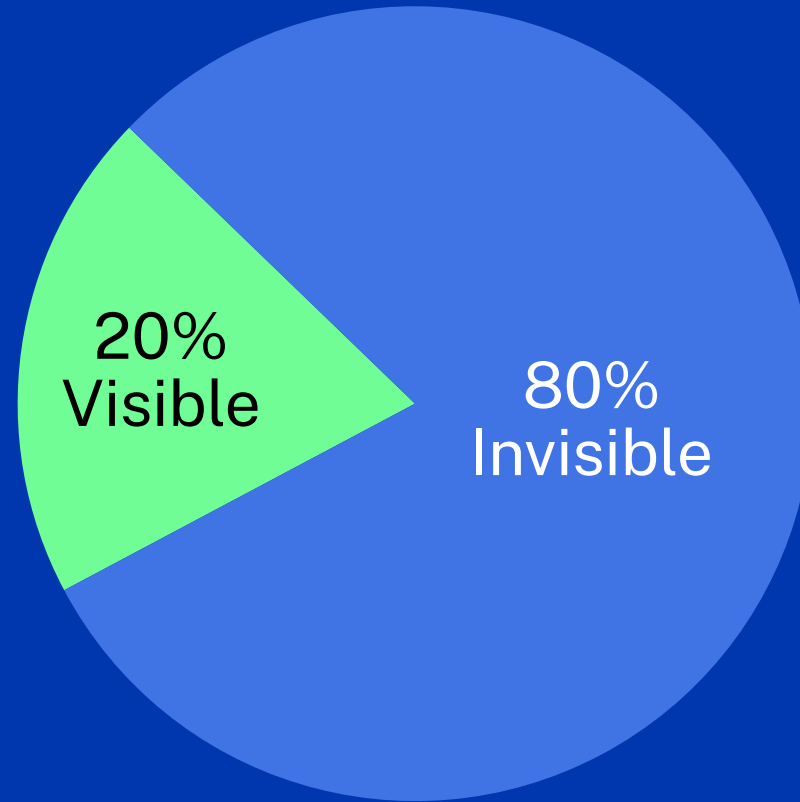
Work still needs to happen
somewhere.

Somebody has to make that
somewhere work.

Safely, observably,
cost-effectively.

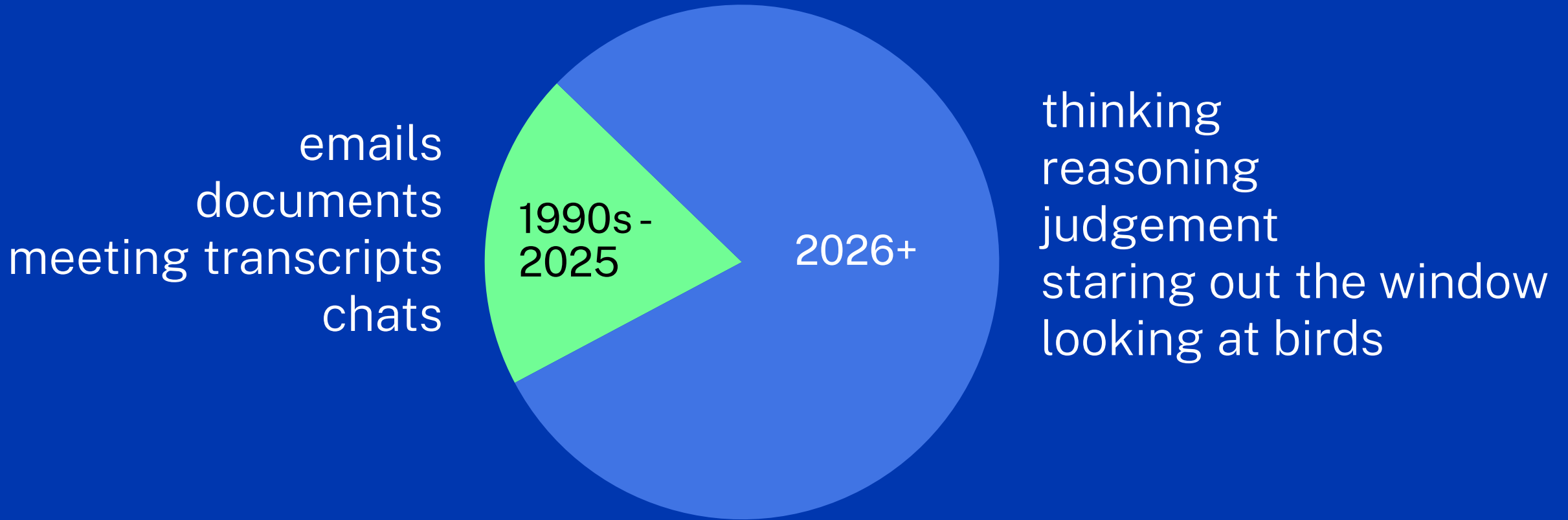
Knowledge Work

emails
documents
meeting transcripts
chats



thinking
reasoning
judgement
staring out the window
looking at birds

Knowledge Work



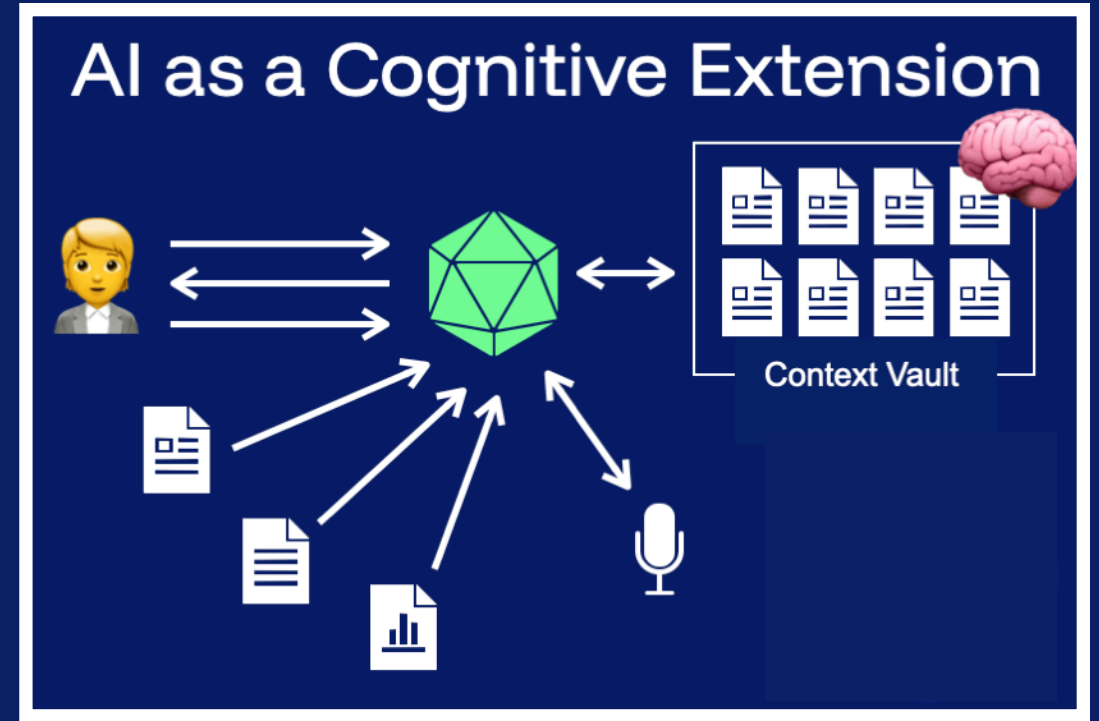
What next?

Make the jump to Stage 3.

Build your own brain.

You have to feel it before you can govern it.

You have to have one before you can manage thousands.



Resources



Citrix AI Hotsheet Podcast

citrix.com/blogs

A screenshot of the Citrix blog author page for Brian Madden. The page header shows "citrix | Blogs" and navigation links for "Topics", "Products", and "Authors". Below the header, there's a "← ALL AUTHORS" link and a profile for Brian Madden, a VP & futurist at Citrix. The main content area displays a list of 25 of 34 results, each with a thumbnail, title, and date. The results include: "Announcing our new podcast: the Citrix AI Hotsheet" (Yesterday), "Why enterprise AI agents disappoint (and why the fix is not 'better agents')", "The SaaSocalypse won't touch the enterprise software moat", "What's left for humans?", "Skills are all you need", "Understanding the cognitive stack: why your AI strategy is focused on the wrong layer", and "What will knowledge work be in 18 months? Look at what AI is doing to coding right now." Each result is categorized as "THOUGHT LEADERSHIP" and includes a date.

bmad.com

Brian Madden

Thinking Frameworks PO



I've spent 32 years in the knowledge work, with 6 globally. Now, as a techn between what AI can do enterprises. [More about](#)

I publish my intellectual work as a structured queryable by any AI via MCP. It's not a blog, [do this!](#)

My latest posts, videos, podcasts, &

● Blog Post ● LinkedIn ● Article ● Speech / Video



Second brain starter prompt

bmad.com

