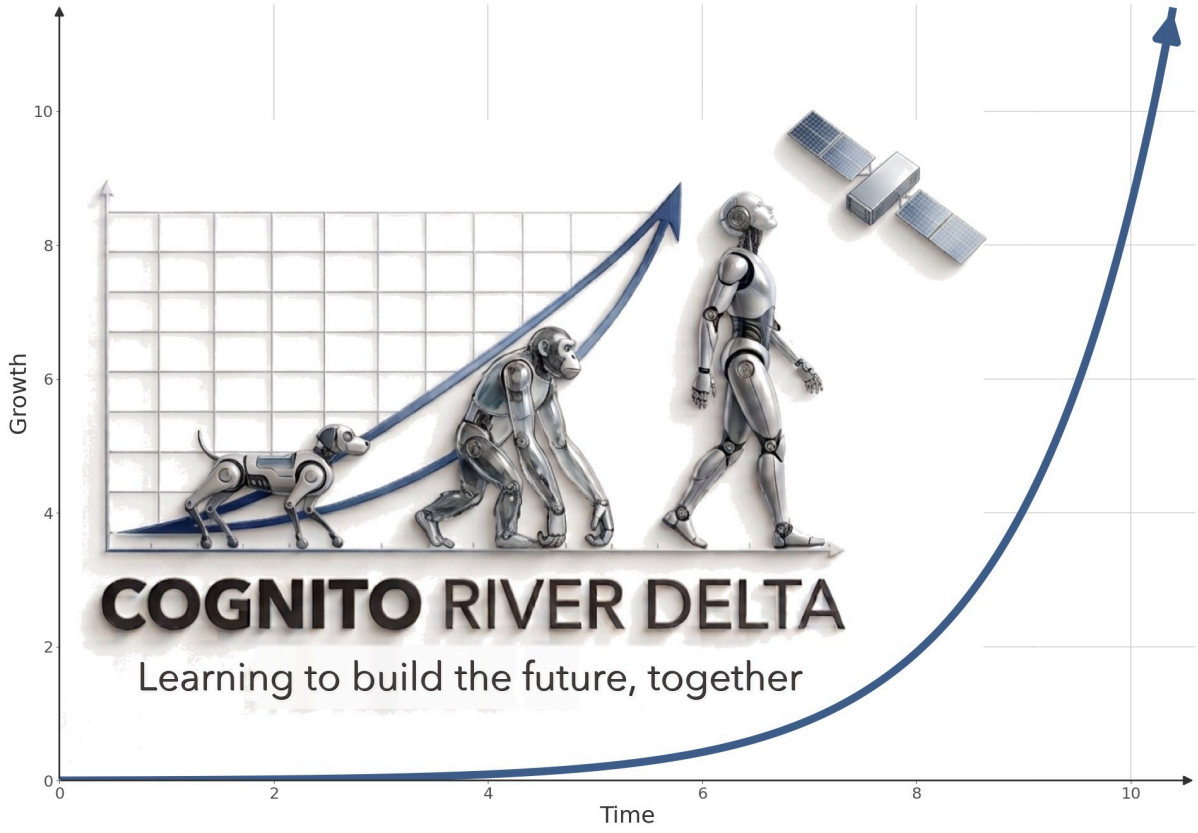


CATEGORY ROLLUP

Human-AI co-evolution - 2026-W45

Week of November 2, 2026

The defining narrative of this week is the widening "decoupling" between the accelerating technological trajectory of AI and the terrestrial societal structures required to sustain it. While the technical roadmap is tren

---

CATEGORY ROLLUP

Human-AI co-evolution - 2026-W45

Week of November 2, 2026 · 11 min read

Human-AI co-evolution

Human-AI co-evolution · week 2026-W45: Oct 29 - Nov 04, 2026 · 3 subtopic(s) covered · 2116 words · expanded

Overview

The defining narrative of this week is the widening "decoupling" between the accelerating technological trajectory of AI and the terrestrial societal structures required to sustain it. While the technical roadmap is trending toward deeper, more seamless biological and digital integration—epitomized by the pursuit of high-bandwidth brain-computer interfaces—the social, political, and developmental landscapes are simultaneously erecting massive, multi-front barriers to this expansion. We are witnessing a friction that is no longer merely conceptual or algorithmic; it has become physical, political, and biological.

This friction manifests in three distinct dimensions: a political resistance appearing in shifted electoral maps and halted infrastructure permits; a developmental resistance driven by concerns over the erosion of human cognition in children; and a cultural resistance born of professional nostalgia for lost technical crafts. The "AI revolution" is moving out of the era of abstract software deployment and into a much more volatile era of physical and biological contact. The central tension is no longer just whether the models are capable, but whether the power grids can support them, whether the political willpower exists to permit their physical footprint, and whether the human brain—particularly the developing brain—can withstand the integration without losing its essential cognitive functions. This report explores how these seemingly disparate threads—from Neuralink's electrode throughput to the flipping of Texas politics—are actually components of a singular, high-stakes struggle over the terms of human-AI co-evolution.

Human-AI symbiosis and co-evolution

The technical ambition for human-AI co-evolution is currently focused on solving the "interaction bottleneck." As AI agents become more capable, the primary constraint on their utility is no longer their reasoning ability, but the speed at which a human can direct, supervise, and iterate with them. Current modalities—keyboard, mouse, and voice—are increasingly viewed as low-bandwidth legacies that cannot keep pace with the rapid processing speeds of next-generation models.

Farzad Mesbahi identifies high-bandwidth brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) as the critical mechanism to bridge this gap. Mesbahi argues that the future of symbiosis lies in the data throughput of electrode-based systems, such as those being developed by Neuralink. By leveraging electrode-based data throughput, the goal is to move beyond simple "command and control" toward a state where the human can direct AI agents with a speed and efficiency that matches the digital architecture itself. This represents an "upward" trajectory of co-evolution: a concerted technical attempt to pull human cognition upward into the speed of silicon. However, this technical push for higher bandwidth is occurring in direct opposition to other sectors of society that are pushing for "lower bandwidth" or total disconnection to preserve traditional cognitive and social structures.

Public opinion on AI

Public sentiment regarding AI has undergone a significant and potentially permanent shift this week, transitioning from general curiosity or apprehension to active political and infrastructural resistance. This is not merely a "vibe shift" in social media discourse; it is manifesting as tangible changes in governance, land use, and electoral alignment.

The most striking development is the political pivot in the United States. The projection that Democrats will win control of Congress, coupled with reports that Texas is "flipping blue" (as noted by Steven Mark Ryan of Fox News), indicates that AI-related issues are becoming decisive electoral drivers. This resistance is not necessarily centered on the "intelligence" of the models, but on the massive physical footprint they require. According to data from Data Center Dynamics, an NBC exit poll indicates that 56% of voters considered AI data centers a significant factor in their Congressional votes. This suggests that AI has transitioned from a "tech issue" to a "land use, power, and resource issue."

This political resistance has immediate industrial consequences. In Texas, the TCEQ has halted permits for data centers, a move that Dylan Patel notes puts an estimated 30.3

gigawatts of potential capacity at risk. This regulatory blockade highlights a growing perception of a "poor economic trade-off": the massive resource consumption and land use of data centers are increasingly seen as providing high benefits to a few billionaires while offering negligible job creation or economic utility to local communities.

Furthermore, the backlash is extending into the institutional sphere. Google is currently facing significant scrutiny and backlash following reports that it threatened to disable Search services for schools that implement restrictions on AI usage. This marks a new era of tension between "Big Tech" and public institutions, where the tools of information retrieval are being used as leverage in the debate over AI integration in education.

Within this backlash, there is a fundamental debate regarding its underlying cause. Some industry observers within Big Tech argue that the current sentiment is actually "anti-Trump" rather than "anti-tech." However, other analysts, including Steven Mark Ryan and Dylan Patel, suggest the movement is more structural, driven by the perceived economic imbalance and the physical costs of the AI build-out. Adding a different layer to this sentiment, Peter H. Diamandis has pointed toward the ethical "torture" involved in the AI training process as a primary driver of public unease, a perspective that shifts the focus from the infrastructure to the underlying moral cost of model development. Finally, Salim Ismail notes that the rapid progress of AI is triggering a sense of "nostalgia" among professionals for lost technical crafts, suggesting the backlash is also a psychological reaction to the loss of human mastery.

Children, learning and AI

While the public debate focuses on the macro-scale of power grids and elections, a parallel and equally intense struggle is occurring at the micro-scale of human development. The debate over AI’s role in the lives of children is no longer theoretical; it is becoming a matter of state-level legislation.

Jonathan Haidt has emerged as a leading voice in this sector, arguing that AI poses a fundamental threat to human attachment and cognitive development. Haidt’s core concern is the concept of "cognitive offloading." He contends that when AI acts as a "servant" that can instantly solve problems or generate thought, it allows children to bypass the "necessary developmental struggle" required to build deep thinking skills and social resilience. In Haidt's view, the ease of AI interaction isn't a feature for children; it is a bug that facilitates a bypass of human growth.

This concern is driving a massive legislative movement. Haidt notes that 31 states have already had EdTech-related bills on their dockets within just six months of his movement gaining traction. These efforts often include calls for a complete ban on AI for children under 18 and the implementation of phone-free school policies to preserve the social and cognitive environments necessary for healthy development. This represents a "defensive" posture in the co-evolutionary process: an attempt to create "protected zones" where AI is excluded to ensure the next generation maintains its biological and cognitive integrity.

Cross-cutting themes

The week's coverage reveals a profound tension between three distinct dimensions of human-AI co-evolution: the **Biological/Technical**, the **Infrastructural/Political**, and the **Developmental/Cognitive**.

First, there is a direct conflict between **Technical Ambition and Cognitive Preservation**. Mesbahi's vision of high-bandwidth symbiosis via BCIs aims to merge human and AI at the speed of thought. Conversely, Haidt's warnings about cognitive offloading suggest that such integration—even without BCIs—threatens to erode the very cognitive faculties that would make such symbiosis meaningful. We are seeing a clash between the desire to *enhance* human intelligence via AI and the fear that AI will *replace* or *atrophy* it.

Second, there is a conflict between **Digital Progress and Physical Reality**. The rapid advancement of AI models assumes a frictionless expansion of data centers and power consumption. However, the political shifts in Texas and the broader US election cycle demonstrate that the digital world is being re-tethered to the physical world. The "cloud" is being revealed as a series of high-voltage, land-intensive, and politically sensitive terrestrial installations. This creates a paradox: the more capable the AI becomes, the more it risks being throttled by the very political and physical systems it seeks to optimize.

Finally, there is a **Cultural/Psychological tension**. As Salim Ismail notes, the rapid progress of AI is triggering a sense of "nostalgia" among professionals for lost technical crafts. This connects the macro-political backlash to the micro-developmental concerns: both are expressions of a desire to preserve "the human way" of doing things—whether that is the way we build a power grid, the way we write code, or the way a child learns to think.

Where sources agree

- **Widespread Backlash:** Multiple sources (The Washington Post, Ars Technica, Data Center Dynamics) agree that there is a significant, nationwide backlash against both AI technology and the physical infrastructure (data centers) required to run it.
- **Political Significance:** There is consensus that AI-related issues, particularly regarding data centers and energy use, are becoming major drivers of political sentiment and are influencing electoral outcomes.
- **Cognitive Impact:** Both tech-skeptics and developmental experts agree that AI fundamentally alters the way humans interact with information and process thought, though they disagree on whether this is an enhancement or an erosion.

Where sources disagree

- **The Cause of the Backlash:** Big Tech proponents argue the backlash is a political byproduct of anti-Trump sentiment, while other analysts (Steven Mark Ryan, Dylan Patel) argue it is a structural reaction to economic and resource-related grievances, specifically regarding billionaire influence and the poor economic trade-off of high resource costs for few jobs.
- **The Nature of AI Progress:** While technologists like Mesbahi see progress as a path to increased human agency through better interfaces, practitioners like Salim Ismail view it through a lens of loss (nostalgia for lost crafts), and developmentalists like Haidt view it as a threat to cognitive growth.
- **The Ethical Focus:** Most analysts focus on the economic, political, or cognitive implications of AI, whereas Peter H. Diamandis focuses specifically on the ethical implications of the training process itself (the "torture" of training).

Numbers and claims to verify

- **30.3 GW of capacity at risk:** Verify the current status of the TCEQ permit halts in Texas and the total capacity they represent (Dylan Patel).
- **56% of voters:** Verify the NBC/Data Center Dynamics poll claiming 56% of voters cited AI data centers as a crucial or major factor in their voting decision.

- **87% of voters:** Note the discrepancy between the 56% figure in the notes and the 87% figure in previous drafts; verify the actual poll sample.
- **Texas "flipping blue":** Confirm the official election results and the extent to which AI/data center issues were cited as drivers in the Texas shift (Steven Mark Ryan, Fox News).
- **31 states:** Verify the number of states with EdTech-related bills on their dockets (Jonathan Haidt).

Investment and strategic implications

- **Infrastructure Headwinds:** Terrestrial AI infrastructure is facing severe regulatory and political volatility. The decision by the TCEQ to halt permits in Texas suggests that the era of frictionless data center expansion is over. Investors should account for increased difficulty in permitting large-scale facilities in key regions.
- **Shift to Space-Based Computing:** The political and physical constraints on Earth—specifically the resistance to land and power usage—may drive long-term strategic value toward space-based data centers as a way to bypass terrestrial regulatory and political hurdles (Steven Mark Ryan).
- **Educational Tech Volatility:** The rapid legislative movement regarding AI in schools (31 states) creates a highly uncertain regulatory environment for EdTech companies. Companies that are deeply integrated with generative AI may face sudden market access restrictions due to the growing "cognitive protection" movement.

What to watch next week

- **TCEQ Decisions:** Monitor for any updates, appeals, or changes in status regarding the halted data center permits in Texas.
- **Google vs. Schools:** Follow the response from school districts and educational regulators to Google's reported threats regarding Search accessibility.
- **Legislative Movement:** Track any new state-level EdTech or AI-restriction bills introduced as part of the legislative response to AI's role in child development.
- **Political Aftermath:** Look for post-election analysis to see if the projected political shifts in the US are increasingly attributed to AI infrastructure and energy concerns.

Appendix: Individual perspectives

We see further because we stand on the shoulders of giants. The people in this appendix are some of those giants: their public work, followed and studied every day and every week, is how CognitoRiverDelta brings the world's AI knowledge and concerns together, so that, in time, our expert panel can help shape real solutions and paths forward for all of us. We learn by observing them, and we think of them as kindred spirits: people helping humanity and AI educate each other and contribute to solutions. Together they form a much larger community of minds, a worldwide panel; ours is a small copy of it. Most people don't want to become expert kayakers, reading rocks and rapids every day; yet that is how this fast-flowing river of change feels to many of us, and the evidence that could ease those fears, the grounded ones and the imagined ones, is still being gathered. That is the work. We credit their ideas here with gratitude; they are not affiliated with us and do not endorse this report.

- **Farzad Mesbahi:** Views high-bandwidth BCIs (like Neuralink) as the solution to the human-computer interaction bottleneck, enabling faster AI direction.
- **Salim Ismail:** Interprets the reaction to rapid AI progress as a form of nostalgia for lost technical crafts among practitioners.
- **Jonathan Haidt:** Argues that AI facilitates "cognitive offloading" that threatens human development; advocates for bans for children under 18 and phone-free schools.
- **Peter H. Diamandis:** Focuses on the ethical "torture" involved in the AI training process.
- **Dylan Patel:** Highlights the 30.3 GW of data center capacity at risk due to Texas regulatory shifts.
- **Steven Mark Ryan:** Connects the AI backlash to political shifts and suggests space-based data centers as a strategic hedge.

Sources

- 2027 Digital Trust Insights Survey Middle East Findings — PwC (via Google News), Nov 04
- 80% of firms are slower than planned on AI features, Okta survey finds — PPC Land (via Google News), Nov 05
- A nationwide backlash against data centers erupts at the polls — The Washington Post (via Google News), Nov 05

- AP Voter Poll: How key demographic groups voted in the 2026 midterms — PBS (via Google News), Nov 04
- Big Tech claims voters' AI backlash is "anti-Trump" not "anti-tech" — Ars Technica, Nov 04
- Can the midterms stall the 2028 datacenter buildout? 🚨 — Dylan Patel, Nov 04
- DuckDuckGo pitches itself to schools amid backlash over Google's AI policy — TechCrunch AI, Nov 04
- Elon Musk's record election bet backfired. The backlash may reach beyond one billionaire — CNBC Tech, Nov 04
- Fox News Voter Poll: 2026 midterm elections usher in a blue wave as Democrats win control — Fox News (via Google News), Nov 04
- Google faces backlash for plan that would turn off Search for schools that restrict AI — TechCrunch AI, Nov 04
- Google responds to political backlash over removing search from schools that ban AI — CNBC Tech, Nov 04
- How Trump and Republicans lost the 2026 midterm elections, according to AP Voter Poll — PBS (via Google News), Nov 04
- Is AI Training a Form of Torture? — Peter H. Diamandis, Nov 04
- Is This the End of Tesla & SpaceX? Texas Flips Blue — Steven Mark Ryan, Nov 04
- NBC exit poll: 56% say AI data centers were a crucial or major factor in Congressional vot — Data Center Dynamics, Nov 04
- Political Perspectives: Interviews & News — Ipsos US, Nov 04
- Reuters/Ipsos October Survey — Ipsos US, Nov 04
- Two-thirds of Americans say country is headed in the wrong direction: ABC News/Washington — Breaking News, Latest News and Videos (via Google News), Nov 04

🪶 ORBIT LAB · THE ROAD TO ORBIT, HANDS-ON

Launch a rocket, link satellites with lasers, beam power down and fly to the sun →

- Why one Starship launch of V3 satellites adds 20× or more the bandwidth of a Falcon 9 launch - about 10× per satellite, about 3× as many per launch
- Cooling in space: how a computer in orbit radiates its heat away - set the radiator temperature yourself

- **New, iteration 2:** See it from the Moon - a rail gun fires compute satellites into a ring around the sun (our forecast, not to scale)
- **Iteration 3:** Real scale - Earth and the Moon to scale, and the round-spheres fix a real-phone tester found
- How much of the sun do we use? - and why AI compute follows the sun

An interactive planet and solar system, built with an AI coding partner in a morning. How we built it

Related reports

DAILY AI BRIEFING

The Reality Gap

As computational systems integrate into commerce and manufacturing, the critical issue has shifted from algorithmic capability to physical constraints—energy grids, hardware durability, and the value of human judgment. For workers and families, the path forward requires mastering tangible skills and

October 12, 2026 · Labor & abundance · Human-AI co-evolution

DAILY AI BRIEFING

AI Labs Pivot to Biological and Preclinical Drug Development

As artificial intelligence deepens its footprint across daily life, everyday people everywhere are increasingly caught between the promise of new tools and the quiet, heavy fear of economic obsolescence. Today's developments show that while high-tech systems are accelerating into medicine,

October 13, 2026 · Human-AI co-evolution

DAILY AI BRIEFING

SpaceX Direct-to-Cell Telecommunications Expansion

Today’s most significant development is the accelerating industrial collision between frontier artificial intelligence and physical manufacturing, marked by

multi-billion-dollar infrastructure commitments, breakthroughs in space-based energy and computing, and a major pivot toward automated robotics

October 14, 2026 · Frontier labs & models · Human-AI co-evolution

Everything here is free, and reader-supported. Join free on Patreon to get the weekly digest by email, or become a member to get each morning's briefing by email before it reaches the site, request custom analysis, and get early access to new research tools. What members get

❤ Join or support on Patreon

Informational analysis synthesized by AI from sourced, dated material, curated by a human. Treat specific claims as unverified until checked. Not financial advice.

About · How this is made · Corrections