2026 CORNCON CYBERSECURITY CONFERENCE



THE ABACUS OF AI

Thinking with machines without outsourcing your brain

Aaileen Sarwar Syed • Hafsa Amjad • Rakshan Urooj Syed

Staying secure in an increasingly complex and chaotic world

The Abacus of AI

Not anti-AI. Pro-human.



AI should make your thinking stronger, not make thinking optional.

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Fluent ≠ factual

A clean answer can hide a bad assumption.

Treat it as output, not proof. What did it know, infer, and miss?

Who went first?

The messy first attempt builds the skill.

Write
the ugly draft

Read
the error once

Guess
what might be wrong



THE FIRST REP RULE

Do one human rep before asking AI to solve the whole problem.

Make a first guess. Then let AI challenge it.

The human firewall has changed

Confident authority	Polished language makes impersonation easier.
The prompt box	Ask first: should AI have this?
Finished-looking output	Working code or a neat summary still needs review.

Four questions before you trust it



01 Based on what?

02 What could be missing?

03 Which assumptions?

04 How would I verify it?

Your direction makes AI useful

Bring your goal and your first attempt.

“Here’s my goal and first attempt. What tradeoffs am I missing?”

What did we actually tell it?

YOU

Write my incident report.

AI

On September 12, an unauthorized user accessed company systems through a compromised employee account. The security team immediately contained the incident, confirmed that no customer data was exposed, and restored normal operations within two hours.

Illustrative example

What did we actually tell it?

YOU

Write my incident report.

We gave it no facts.



AI

On September 12, an unauthorized user accessed company systems through a compromised employee account. The security team immediately contained the incident, confirmed that no customer data was exposed, and restored normal operations within two hours.

Illustrative example

A better prompt starts with your notes

“I’m preparing an incident report for [audience]. Here are my approved, sanitized notes. First, separate observed facts from assumptions. Ask for missing timeline details and flag claims that need verification. Once I answer, help me draft. Don’t invent details.”

FIRST REP **AI HELPS** **VERIFY** **HUMAN DECIDES**



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Make your second rep stronger.

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