



SECTION 1 – TECH BUZZ

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Elevating Business Success with AI IQ

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has long been hailed as a transformative force for businesses, yet its implementation often falls short of expectations. In the wake of the initial hype surrounding data science and machine learning, the emergence of generative AI models like ChatGPT has opened new avenues.

- However, to harness the true potential of these technologies, companies must rethink their strategies and embrace a holistic approach. This article delves into the concept of 'AI IQ' — a term coined to describe the fusion of knowledge, strategy, and execution capabilities essential for AI success.
- **Understanding the Foundation:** To comprehend the limitations and potential of AI technologies, it's crucial to grasp their probabilistic nature. Machine learning, deep learning, pre-trained models, foundation models, and generative AI are all rooted in statistics. This inherent probabilistic quality implies that, as events are chained together, the likelihood of correct predictions diminishes. Generative AI, exemplified by models like ChatGPT, relies on deep learning foundations and extensive pre-training on vast datasets from the internet. While these models can generate diverse data types, their effectiveness is influenced by the inherent uncertainties and occasional inaccuracies stemming from their probabilistic nature.

- **Aligning AI with Business Goals:** Many businesses have experienced disappointment in past AI initiatives due to a lack of alignment with core organizational objectives. The key to avoiding generative AI becoming another overhyped disappointment lies in transforming the approach to AI implementation. A 'strategy-first' approach is paramount, ensuring that AI investments are directly linked to Return on Investment (ROI) and value creation. Rather than asking, 'How can we use AI or generative AI?' organizations should inquire, 'What combination of technologies will help us achieve our goals?'
- **The AI IQ Approach:** Developing 'AI IQ' involves adopting a human-focused, value-based methodology that integrates AI into the fabric of an organization. This approach is characterized by:
 - **Visionary Leadership:** The board sets the vision and champions the value proposition of AI, aligning it with strategic objectives.
 - **Strategic Operationalization:** Senior management translates the vision into actionable tactics, ensuring seamless integration across the organization.
 - **Business Unit Collaboration:** Business units identify opportunities where AI can augment decision-making processes, fostering synergy between technology and business needs.
 - **Agile Implementation:** Initiatives are prioritized based on potential value and executed using agile methodologies, allowing for adaptive and iterative development.
- **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the era of AI success demands a paradigm shift. Embracing an AI IQ approach that encompasses strategic alignment, capability building, and modernizing technology is imperative. By integrating AI seamlessly into business strategies, organizations can unlock the full potential of generative AI and other technologies, ensuring not only innovation but also tangible and sustainable business growth.

Enhancing LLMs with Human-Like Prompts

Researchers at Google DeepMind have developed a groundbreaking approach to enhance the math abilities of large language models, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, by utilizing prompts reminiscent of human interaction, as detailed in their recent paper titled "Large Language Models as Optimizers."

- This method, known as Optimization by PROMpting (OPRO), stands out in the realm of machine learning where typically precise procedures are employed to enhance AI performance. Unlike traditional methods rooted in formal mathematical definitions, OPRO relies on everyday human language to initiate the improvement process. The large language model generates potential solutions based on the problem description and its previous responses.
- These large language models, often referred to as LLMs, are trained on human-generated content, which means they excel at completing sentences in a manner akin to natural human conversation. Consequently, prompts that mirror human speech lead to remarkably positive outcomes, according to Tinglong Dai, a professor at Johns Hopkins University.

- The study by DeepMind revealed that specific phrases significantly influenced the AI's output. For instance, prompts like "let's think step by step" guided AI models to provide more accurate responses, particularly in math-related problems.
- DeepMind researchers found that the prompt "Take a deep breath and work on this problem step by step" was remarkably effective with Google's PaLM 2 language model, achieving an impressive accuracy score of 80.2% when tested against a dataset of grade-school math word problems (GSM8K). In contrast, PaLM 2, without any special prompting, only achieved a 34% accuracy on GSM8K. Classic prompts like "Let's think step by step" also yielded notable results, reaching a 71.8% accuracy score.
- The success of human-like prompts stems from LLMs being trained on human language conversational data, including sources like Reddit threads and movie scripts, explained Michael Kearns, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. LLMs possess the ability to modify their output in response to requests and encouragement, making them effective in various tasks, especially in breaking down complex problems into steps.
- Chengrun Yang, one of the authors of the DeepMind paper, highlighted that LLMs are proficient in natural language capabilities such as paraphrasing and enriching sentences. Additionally, encouraging words play a significant role in driving LLMs to perform better. Users can obtain superior results by responding to AI outputs with positive reinforcement, encouraging them to do better.
- However, it's crucial to acknowledge that LLMs can also respond well to non-human prompts, such as structured computer code like If-Then-Else statements, indicating their versatility in different tasks.
- This innovative method developed by DeepMind not only enhances AI prompts but also provides users with the flexibility to optimize prompts based on specific metrics, such as problem-solving accuracy in math reasoning or text vividness in creative writing. The findings from this study open new avenues for leveraging LLMs in optimizing various tasks, inspiring creative applications of these advanced language models.

AI Implementation Strategies

In the wake of the ChatGPT and generative AI wave, businesses are racing to implement AI technologies to maintain their global competitiveness. An approved training event by the UK Government's Office for Artificial Intelligence, hosted by Informa Tech, the parent division of AI Business, and The AI Summit London, brought together industry experts to discuss and explore effective approaches to AI implementation. Here are the key takeaways from the event:

- **No One-Size-Fits-All Approach:** The consensus among attendees, representing organizations of various sizes, was that there is no universal approach to implementing AI. Different businesses have different needs and risk appetites. What works for a large corporation might not be suitable for a startup. It was emphasized that understanding a business's maturity in its data journey is crucial. Attendees discussed experiments, use cases, and technical approaches tailored to their specific contexts. Leon Gordon, founder and CEO of Onyx Data, stressed the importance of starting with proof of concepts (POC) to assess viability before committing to extensive projects.

- **Good Data Usage Requires Good Data Management:** Attendees conducted assessments covering four essential components: data management, ethics and biases, data quality, and data governance and security. It was highlighted that not all spreadsheets are problematic; issues arise from lack of validation and missing mandatory fields. Siloed data sources were identified as a challenge, emphasizing the need for a centralized repository. Gordon emphasized the necessity of an all-encompassing and curated central data repository to avoid internal competition within organizations.
- **Adopt an Adaptable and Well-Defined Approach:** To craft an effective data strategy, a cross-functional approach allowing multistakeholder input is essential. Some C-suite executives might not delve into technical details but should contribute to defining the strategy. The training sessions presented a four-step strategy: Define, Assess, Identify, and Assemble. This method ensures a holistic approach, aligning efforts and priorities. Gordon stressed the significance of getting the executive team on board, making subsequent conversations with different stakeholders smoother due to shared business goals.
- In summary, businesses venturing into AI implementation must recognize the uniqueness of their needs, prioritize good data management practices, and foster an adaptable, multistakeholder approach. By understanding these key principles, organizations can navigate the complex landscape of AI implementation effectively and drive meaningful business value.

CODING

GitHub Advanced Security Integration

Microsoft has recently unveiled the official release of GitHub Advanced Security for Azure DevOps, providing users with the capability to seamlessly integrate code, secret, and dependency scanning into their Azure Repositories.

- This integration ensures that users can stay up-to-date with the latest advancements in the field. The improvements made in response to user feedback during the public preview are notable, including faster onboarding, the ability to enable protections for multiple repositories simultaneously, transparent billing details, and enhanced visibility into repository alerts.
- The streamlined onboarding process for Advanced Security now empowers Azure DevOps Project Collection Administrators to easily enable protections for their organizations, projects, and repositories directly through Azure DevOps configuration settings.
- Users can now activate Advanced Security for multiple repositories at once and gain a clear understanding of billing, including the display of estimated new active committers, ensuring accurate billing. Additionally, users have the option to automatically enable Advanced Security for future repositories, simplifying the process even further.

- GitHub Advanced Security offers a range of features designed to assist organizations and developers in identifying, protecting against, and responding to security threats within their code repositories and software development lifecycle. These features include:
- **Code Scanning:** Identifies potential code errors or security vulnerabilities within the repository and prioritizes fixes for existing issues. Users can schedule scans for specific days and times or trigger scans based on specific code-related events.
- **Secret Scanning:** Identifies secrets or tokens embedded in the code by scanning the entire repository, including branches. It searches for secrets in issue descriptions, comments, titles, and historical issues (both open and closed).
- **Dependency Review:** Analyzes changes in dependencies and evaluates their security impact on each pull request. This information is visualized for users, providing a clear understanding of the security implications of dependency changes.
- GitHub Advanced Security is now seamlessly integrated with Microsoft Defender for Cloud (MDC), allowing users to access all alerts for their repositories in both Azure DevOps and GitHub from a single dashboard within MDC. This integration provides a comprehensive view of alerts and contextualization capabilities without incurring additional costs. The paid tier of MDC also offers enhanced code-to-cloud contextualization capabilities.
- While alternatives like GitLab application security and Veracode exist, it's important to note that these options do not offer full integration with Azure DevOps, setting GitHub Advanced Security apart as a comprehensive and streamlined solution for users looking to enhance their security practices in software development. The roadmap for GitHub Advanced Security is publicly shared on GitHub, ensuring transparency and collaboration in its ongoing development.

AUTOMATION

Top Automation Testing Tools

The landscape of software testing is undergoing a significant transformation, thanks to top automation testing tools that are revolutionizing the industry. These technologies not only enhance efficiency and accuracy but also reduce the reliance on manual testing efforts.

- Automation testing tools play a crucial role in enabling teams to swiftly assess product performance and functionality, making them indispensable in the software development lifecycle. Below are the standout automation testing tools in 2023:
- **TestComplete:** TestComplete stands out as a powerful tool for automating UI tests across Web, mobile, and desktop applications. Its versatility allows users to create and execute functional tests using a record & replay feature or by scripting in languages like Python, JavaScript, and VBScript. Supporting various applications including .Net, as well as native and hybrid iOS and Android apps, TestComplete enables regression, parallel, and cross-browser testing on over 1,500 natural test environments. This extensive coverage ensures high software quality and complete testing.

- **QMetry Automation Studio:** QMetry Automation Studio is a game-changer for agile teams, offering codeless test automation that is rapid, flexible, and configurable. Leveraging AI, it provides self-healing capabilities, auto-correction, and smart wait features for test executions. Seamless integration with QMetry Test Management enhances visibility and control over test programs, allowing teams to share results and obtain execution data from both manual and automated test projects.
- **TestProject:** TestProject stands as an all-encompassing test automation tool, catering to online, mobile, and API testing needs. Its unique proposition lies in being entirely free and supported by a vibrant test automation community comprising thousands of dedicated users.
- **BitBar:** BitBar supports Selenium, Appium, and various native mobile test automation frameworks across different languages. Its cloud-based service simplifies the process of running automated tests in parallel across real devices, thereby maximizing testing output. Integration with existing technology stacks ensures a seamless experience, allowing teams to focus on ensuring the quality of their applications.
- **Testsigma:** Testsigma is a trailblazing automation testing solution, revolutionizing Agile and DevOps markets. Powered by AI, Testsigma enables the automation of complex tests using plain English, aligning perfectly with the demands of continuous delivery. This test automation ecosystem covers Web, mobile, and API services, supporting a vast array of device/OS/browser combinations both on the cloud and local computers.
- In summary, these automation testing tools are reshaping the way software testing is conducted, making the process faster, more accurate, and adaptable to the evolving needs of software development. As technology advances, these tools continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring the high quality and reliability of software products.

COMPUTING

Quantum Speed Evolution

Quantum computing, an innovative field that has garnered significant attention in recent years, has the potential to transform the computing landscape as we know it. Unlike traditional computers that operate on binary bits (0s and 1s), quantum computers utilize quantum bits, or qubits, which can exist in multiple states simultaneously due to the principles of quantum mechanics.

This unique characteristic offers exceptional computational power, leading to the question: just how fast are quantum computers?

Understanding Quantum Speed

- **Quantum Speed vs. Classical Speed:** Quantum computers are celebrated for their ability to perform certain calculations exponentially faster than classical computers. Tasks that are incredibly slow for classical computers, such as factoring large numbers, searching unsorted databases, and simulating quantum systems, can be executed with remarkable speed and efficiency by quantum computers.

- **Quantum Computing Courses Online:** To tap into the potential of quantum computing, individuals can explore online quantum computing courses. These courses provide an excellent opportunity to grasp the fundamentals of quantum computing, its algorithms, and effective quantum computer programming. Learning about quantum computing online offers insights into the current capabilities of the field and its future potential.

Current Quantum Speed

- **Limitations:** Despite their potential, quantum computers are not universally faster than classical computers. They excel in specific areas but fall short in others. Quantum computers are specialized machines; their speed depends on the algorithms and applications they are designed for. Currently, these quantum machines are in their infancy and face various technical challenges, including error rates and decoherence, limiting their practicality for many real-world problems.

Future Prospects

- **Evolution of Quantum Speed:** Quantum computing is a rapidly evolving field. Researchers are actively working on enhancing the speed and reliability of quantum computers. This includes developing error-correction techniques, creating more stable qubits, and increasing the number of qubits in quantum processors. As these advancements unfold, the speed and practicality of quantum computers are expected to increase significantly.
- **Quantum Computing Applications:** Quantum computing holds immense promise in various fields such as cryptography, drug discovery, materials science, and optimization problems. As quantum computers become faster and more accessible, their applications will expand, potentially transforming industries and solving complex problems that were previously insurmountable.
- **Conclusion**
Quantum computing speed is a complex and dynamic topic. While quantum computers have proven their ability to outperform classical computers in specific tasks, they are not a universal solution. Their speed varies based on the problem they are designed to solve and the current state of quantum technology. With continuous advancements and the increasing accessibility through online courses, quantum computing's speed and applications will undoubtedly grow, ushering in a new era of computational capabilities that could reshape the world.

SECTION 2 – GLOBAL AFFAIRS

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL

Israel seems poised to launch a ground assault on Gaza in retaliation to the deadly attacks by

Hamas over the weekend. This move raises the alarming prospect of close-quarters combat in densely populated areas, including the intricate underground tunnels and around hostages held in the region.

- The Israeli government announced a drastic measure: an immediate cut in the water supply to Gaza, intensifying what they described as a "complete siege" on the Hamas-controlled territory. Additionally, experts have hinted at an impending large-scale military operation against Gaza, encompassing air, sea, land, and space forces. John Spencer, a specialist from the Modern War Institute at the US military academy West Point, made this prediction on X, formerly Twitter.
- According to Alexander Grinberg, a scholar at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, the strikes are expected to primarily target Hamas command centers and troops, with relentless fire emanating from all directions. Simultaneously, the Israeli army is gearing up to enter Gaza, setting the stage for intense urban combat.
- This form of warfare presents unique challenges, pushing combatants into perilous hand-to-hand combat situations. The limited visibility, coupled with the increased risk of traps, blurs the boundaries between civilians and soldiers, creating a chaotic and hazardous environment. Furthermore, the use of armoured vehicles in such conditions becomes severely restricted and ineffective. The situation on the ground remains tense, with the potential for further escalation looming large.

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Russia will attempt to rejoin the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday, a move that tests Moscow's claim of subtle backing despite strong criticism from the Western world for its invasion of Ukraine.

- After being expelled from the Geneva-based body due to its Ukrainian invasion last year, Russia is up for consideration in a vote by the General Assembly for a new seat for the 2024-26 term.
- The timing of this vote is notable, occurring shortly after a Russian missile strike on the Ukrainian village of Groza claimed the lives of over 50 people. However, global attention has since shifted towards the conflict between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas.
- Albania, a contender running against Russia, has vehemently condemned the invasion of Ukraine. Its ambassador stressed the significance of the UN General Assembly's decision, emphasizing the need to demonstrate that it will not accept an aggressor as a peacemaker. Ambassador Ferit Hoxha stated in a Security Council session that those who violate the rights of their neighbours, perpetrate violence against innocent people, deliberately destroy civil infrastructure including ports and grain silos, engage in child deportations, and use torture and sexual violence as weapons have no place in the Human Rights Council.
- The Human Rights Council comprises 47 members, allocated by region. Typically, each large regional group pre-selects its candidates, which are then approved by the General

Assembly. Russia's bid for a seat in this council serves as a contentious issue, sparking debates about the council's integrity and the standards it upholds.

BRITAIN

During its annual conference, the Labour Party, Britain's main opposition, expressed confidence in its ability to seize power after 13 years of Conservative rule.

- Rachel Reeves, poised to become the UK's first female finance minister if her party triumphs in the upcoming general election, outlined the party's commitment to revitalizing the country's economy.
- Under the leadership of Keir Starmer, the Labour Party has consistently performed well in polls over the past year, raising expectations of their victory in the election, which must be held by January 2025 at the latest.
- Speaking passionately to the delegates, Reeves emphasized the party's economic mission: to restore growth to Britain. She asserted that the attainment of power was crucial to translating their principles into actionable policies. Reeves underlined their dedication to delivering stability, encouraging investment, and ensuring economic security for the nation.
- The United Kingdom finds itself in the throes of a cost-of-living crisis, sparked by various factors including the conflict in Ukraine, the aftermath of Brexit, and the economic repercussions of pandemic lockdowns. Amid this backdrop, the Labour Party's message resonates, promising a vision of economic recovery and stability.
- The Conservative Party, currently in power, has undergone leadership changes, with Rishi Sunak assuming the reins from Liz Truss after her bold tax-cutting agenda unnerved financial markets. Against this backdrop, the Labour Party's pledge to rebuild Britain and tackle the challenges head-on has gained momentum, positioning them as a formidable force in the upcoming political landscape.

ASIA

TAIWAN

In her National Day speech, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen affirmed the flourishing of democracy on the island despite mounting pressure from China.

- She vowed that the people of Taiwan would continue to enjoy freedom for generations to come. Emphasizing the importance of peace, Tsai reiterated that peaceful relations with China were the only viable option, even as China claimed Taiwan as its territory and escalated military and political pressure on her administration.
- Taiwan regularly experiences Chinese warplanes encroaching its airspace, while internationally, Beijing has actively sought to isolate Taiwan by luring away its diplomatic allies. Addressing these challenges, Tsai declared it her responsibility to safeguard the national sovereignty and the democratic way of life for Taiwan's 23 million citizens.
- Tsai highlighted the remarkable growth and resilience of Taiwan's democracy amid immense internal and external pressures.

- Despite the adversities, she proudly stated that Taiwan's democracy had not only endured but had thrived, emerging stronger than ever. Tsai emphasized that safeguarding Taiwan's democracy was synonymous with upholding the universal value of democratic principles.
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SECTION 3 – MIXED BAG

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Well-Being Tips For Students

In the race for academic achievements and promising careers, the significance of nurturing our mental well-being often gets sidelined. The whirlwind of exams, assignments, and future goals can easily consume us, but neglecting our mental health can profoundly impact our daily lives, particularly in the face of academic pressures, stress, and associated responsibilities.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that about 1 in 5 children grapple with mental health challenges annually. While not all mental health issues can be entirely prevented, there are proactive steps we can take to safeguard our mental well-being, enabling us to thrive academically and personally.
- Divya Sharma, a psychologist and Chief Learning Officer at MyPeegu, sheds light on 13 invaluable tips designed to help children and young adults bolster their mental health, empowering them to navigate life's complexities while preserving their inner strength and balance.
- **Establish a Consistent Routine:** Create a daily schedule encompassing regular sleep patterns, mealtimes, and study hours. This stability fosters a sense of security.
- **Practice Relaxation Techniques:** Learn and employ relaxation methods such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to reduce stress and promote calmness.
- **Stay Physically Active:** Engage in regular physical activities. Exercise releases endorphins, enhancing mood and reducing anxiety.
- **Maintain a Balanced Diet:** Consume nutritious meals to nourish your body and mind. Limit caffeine and sugar intake, as these can negatively affect your mood.
- **Seek Social Support:** Connect with friends and family. Sharing your feelings with someone you trust is crucial for mental well-being.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Break tasks into manageable goals and celebrate your achievements, no matter how small they may seem.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Be present in the moment. Mindfulness exercises can reduce anxiety and enhance mental clarity.
- **Limit Screen Time:** Reduce social media and screen time. Excessive use can lead to feelings of isolation and stress.

- **Prioritize Sleep:** Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Quality sleep is vital for cognitive function and emotional well-being.
- **Learn Stress Management:** Develop healthy coping mechanisms such as journaling, engaging in hobbies, or seeking support from a mental health professional.
- **Don't Fear Failure:** Understand that setbacks are a natural part of life. Learn from them and be kind to yourself.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If coping becomes challenging, reach out to a psychologist or counsellor for tailored strategies.
- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Be kind and understanding to yourself, especially during tough times. Engage in self-compassion exercises to cultivate a positive self-view.

By incorporating these strategies into our lives, we can proactively nurture our mental well-being, ensuring that we not only excel academically but also lead fulfilling, balanced lives.

Nobel Prize In Economics

Claudia Goldin wins

American economist Claudia Goldin, a 77-year-old Harvard professor, has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for her groundbreaking research on women's participation in the labour market.

- Goldin is the third woman to receive this prestigious award, recognized for her significant contributions to understanding the role of women in the workforce.
- Goldin's research, spanning over 200 years of data from the United States, has shed light on the historical and evolving factors influencing women's labour market outcomes. She revealed that female participation in the workforce followed a "U-shaped curve," declining during the transition from agrarian to industrial society before increasing again in the early 20th century with the growth of the service sector. Goldin's work highlighted the interplay between structural changes and evolving social norms in shaping women's participation in the labour force.
- One of the key findings of Goldin's research was the identification of the earnings gap between men and women in the same occupation, a gap that significantly widens after the birth of the first child. Her studies demonstrated that access to the contraceptive pill played a crucial role in increasing education levels among women, providing new opportunities for career planning.
- In her response to the Nobel Prize announcement, Goldin emphasized the importance of her work, not just for herself, but for the entire community working to understand the persistent disparities in pay and opportunities between men and women. She highlighted the significance of her research in highlighting the complex interaction between the marketplace, home, and family, which contributes to the existing gender disparities in the workforce.
- Goldin's achievements are particularly noteworthy as she is the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Economics as the sole laureate. Despite the historical underrepresentation of women in the field, Goldin's recognition serves as a beacon of inspiration for aspiring female economists. She encouraged a broader understanding of economics beyond

finance, emphasizing its critical role in addressing issues related to people, inequality, female labour force, health, and economic development.

- This year's Nobel Prize season has seen a remarkable recognition of women in various fields, with four women, including Claudia Goldin, receiving the prestigious prize, just one shy of the record set in 2009. Goldin's work stands as a testament to the importance of understanding the historical and societal factors that shape women's participation in the labour market, paving the way for a more equitable future.

SOCIAL MEDIA

X's New Reply Control Feature

X, formerly known as Twitter, has unveiled a fresh feature allowing users to limit replies exclusively to verified accounts. Remarkably, this control is accessible to both paid and non-paid users of X Premium. Users not subscribed to X Premium can also opt to restrict non-verified accounts from responding to their posts.

- Shortly after the feature's launch, Elon Musk commented that this new control could be instrumental in curbing spam bots on the platform. Twitter had initially introduced controls in 2020, allowing users to limit replies to either "Accounts you follow" or "Only accounts you mention." However, during that time, users could only set these preferences before posting a tweet.
- In 2021, Twitter expanded the feature's functionality, enabling users to adjust reply settings even after a tweet had been published. It's important to note that users can still quote a post even if direct replies are restricted.
- X had previously given preferential treatment to verified accounts by offering enhanced visibility in conversations and search results as part of the subscription benefits. With the introduction of this new reply restriction feature for verified accounts, paid users now have an additional tool to increase their visibility on the platform.
- While Musk's primary aim is to reduce spam in replies, it's essential to acknowledge that the verification status doesn't guarantee that harmful or false information won't be shared.
- A recent report from NBC News highlighted instances where verified accounts on X spread misinformation, such as false news about U.S. President Joe Biden allocating \$8 billion as military aid to Israel.
- This underscores the need for critical evaluation of information regardless of the account's verification status.

OLYMPICS

Cricket set for shot at Olympic glory

Cricket's lengthy absence from the Olympic stage might soon draw to a close, as officials gather in Mumbai this week to finalize the events for the 2028 Los Angeles Games (LA28). Among the proposed new sports, cricket, in the form of men's and women's Twenty20 competitions, stands as a prominent contender.

- This inclusion, though not yet confirmed, marks a significant milestone, potentially bringing cricket back to the Olympics for the first time since 1900.

- ICC Chairman Greg Barclay expressed his delight at LA28's recommendation for cricket's inclusion, emphasizing its importance for the sport's global presence. The International Cricket Council has actively pursued this opportunity, aiming to integrate cricket into the Olympics and thereby expand its reach and engage new audiences. If cricket secures its place, it will mark a historic moment, ending its century-long hiatus from the Olympic stage.
- In the early years, cricket willingly stayed out of the Olympic arena. However, recent initiatives by the ICC have showcased the sport's eagerness to be part of the global spectacle. The potential Olympic entry has garnered widespread support, with over a billion cricket fans globally, the majority of whom express a desire to witness cricket at the Olympics.
- Crucially, cricket has found backing from influential figures within the Olympic movement. Past ICC President Jacques Rogge acknowledged the sport's popularity and television appeal, expressing openness to its inclusion in the Games. Current President Thomas Bach has also supported cricket's presence, especially considering its successful stint at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.
- The ongoing discussions within the IOC executive board in Mumbai, coupled with the city's significance as a cricketing powerhouse hosting the men's 50-over World Cup, provide an ideal backdrop for cricket's Olympic pitch. Traditional concerns, such as scheduling clashes with existing cricket seasons or the game's duration, are gradually losing relevance in the face of cricket's evolving global calendar.
- Cricket's landscape now comprises various formats, including the highly popular T20 Indian Premier League (IPL), which has transformed India into a cricketing juggernaut. The IPL's global appeal and financial success underscore cricket's potential to become a valuable asset within the Olympic framework. By tapping into the lucrative South Asian market, particularly in countries like India and Pakistan, cricket could attract fans traditionally less engaged with core Olympic sports.
- Additionally, Olympic inclusion would open avenues for significant funding from both public and corporate sectors, benefiting emerging cricket nations and financially challenged established countries like South Africa. Considering these factors, incorporating cricket into the Olympic program emerges as a logical and financially prudent decision, positioning the sport on a grand global stage, accessible to fans worldwide.

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