First Dibsies: The Trillion-Dollar Hole in AI

By George Ure Peoplenomics.com May 6, 2026

Introduction: The Hole That Shouldn't Exist

AI is not just replacing clerical work, summarizing meetings, or writing ad copy faster than the intern class. That is the cheap framing. The larger change is that AI has turned serious thinking into a higher-output activity. One person with a good question, decent discipline, and a late-night machine assistant can now do the first-pass work of what once required a small research team.

And that creates a problem almost nobody is pricing.

Ideas are no longer scarce in the old way. The bottleneck has moved. It is no longer mainly the generation of ideas. It is intake, triage, review, ownership, execution, and routing. In other words, civilization has built faster idea engines, but not the roads, toll booths, escrow offices, or evaluation markets needed to handle the traffic.

This piece came out of multi-domain patent thinking: electronics, agriculture, biology, RF systems, cognitive modeling, and a few other odd corners of the shop where sparks are allowed to fly. Threads that should not have overlapped began reinforcing one another. The more they aligned, the more one practical question kept coming back:

Where does this go?

Not philosophically. Practically.

If an idea matters - if it is economically, technically, or strategically meaningful - there ought to be a path forward. A way to elevate it, timestamp it, preserve ownership, expose it to qualified review, and if warranted, move it toward execution.

But there is no mature, trusted pipeline for that. And in a world where AI is dramatically accelerating idea generation, that absence becomes something larger than inconvenience. It becomes a structural failure in how civilization handles innovation.

AI as a Cognitive Multiplier

AI has been marketed as a productivity tool. Faster writing. Better coding. Smarter search. Better customer service. That framing is useful, but incomplete.

What AI actually does at the upper end is amplify cognition. It extends working memory. It enables cross-domain synthesis. It lowers the friction between curiosity and exploration. It allows an individual to test hypotheses, model interactions, outline systems, and iterate on concepts at a speed that compresses time itself.

This changes the economics of thinking.

When a core input becomes abundant, new markets usually form around its processing. Grain led to mills. Oil led to refineries. Data led to search engines. Capital led to exchanges and clearinghouses.

AI-driven ideas will lead to something else.

That something has not been built yet.

The Silent Flood

There is a phenomenon underway that is almost entirely unmeasured.

Every day, individuals using AI generate ideas that range from trivial to potentially transformative. Some are weak. Some are derivative. Some are nonsense. But some are real. In an earlier era, many of these would have required a university lab, a corporate R&D budget, or a government program just to reach first draft.

Now they are produced in home offices, shops, barns, spare bedrooms, and insomnia sessions.

But most are not captured.

They are not formalized. They are not cleanly timestamped. They are not reviewed. They are not matched to capital, talent, test equipment, or legal structure. They simply fade into chat histories, notebooks, draft folders, and memory holes.

This is not a failure of creativity. It is a failure of infrastructure.

We are watching a silent flood of intellectual property being created - and lost - on a daily basis. Not because people stopped thinking, but because the economic system has not yet built the equivalent of a receiving dock for AI-amplified invention.

First Dibsies Economics

In economic systems, control of intake determines control of outcome.

Whoever gets first visibility into opportunity holds leverage. They can evaluate, prioritize, fund, shelve, partner, or discard. That first look is often where the real value lives.

This is what 'first dibsies' really means.

In natural resources, it shows up as claims. In finance, it appears as order flow. In information systems, it manifests as data ownership and platform control. In media, it shows up as distribution. In venture capital, it appears as deal flow.

In AI-driven ideation, there is no widely trusted equivalent.

No one has clean first look.

No one holds structured intake.

And because of that, the entire upstream of innovation is still largely unclaimed territory.

Why the Big Players Missed It

The obvious question is why the major AI platforms have not built this already.

The answer is trust.

The moment a platform appears to harvest user ideas - even indirectly - it creates legal risk, reputational risk, and user trust erosion. Nobody wants to pour a half-formed invention into a machine and later discover that the machine's owner, a platform partner, or a downstream customer somehow ended up sitting on the economic upside.

So the large platforms remain careful. They provide tools, not pipelines. They help generate, organize, and refine ideas, but they do not openly operate the marketplace where those ideas become claimable, reviewable, fundable assets.

That caution is understandable.

But it leaves the most valuable layer of the ecosystem untouched.

The Idea Escrow Layer

What is needed is a voluntary system of idea escrow.

Users choose to submit. Ownership is preserved. Access is controlled. Review is structured. The system does not scrape private conversations or steal raw thought. It receives deliberate submissions, records them, routes them, and applies process.

This is not about extraction. It is about participation.

Such a system would act as a bridge between ideation and execution. It would allow ideas to move from private thought into structured evaluation without sacrificing ownership. It would create a new class of marketplace - one centered not on finished products, but on raw innovation potential.

Done properly, the escrow layer would include timestamping, ownership assertions, controlled disclosure, reviewer credentials, conflict checks, routing by domain, and a path toward development, licensing, financing, or abandonment.

That sounds boring.

So does a clearinghouse.

Until you realize the clearinghouse sits in the money flow.

Historical Context

Closed systems like Bell Labs, DARPA, corporate R&D labs, and national laboratories demonstrated what happens when idea pipelines are structured. Talent, funding, management, testing, and mission all move through an institutional channel.

But those systems were limited by access.

AI removes part of that limitation. It gives more people the ability to generate first-pass concepts, model alternatives, and connect domains that used to sit in separate silos. What it does not provide is a trusted path from 'interesting' to 'evaluated' to 'owned' to 'executed.'

The challenge now is to build an open, scalable equivalent that maintains trust while enabling participation.

This is not trivial.

But it is probably inevitable.

Compression of Time

Efficient idea routing compresses innovation cycles.

What once took years can take months. What once required institutional discovery can begin with an individual and an AI session. Competitive advantage decays faster. Execution becomes the dominant variable.

This changes how individuals and organizations must operate.

Speed is no longer optional. It is foundational. But speed without ownership structure becomes chaos. And ownership structure without speed becomes bureaucracy.

The winning system will need both.

Peoplenomics Action

For readers, the implications are immediate.

First, treat ideas as assets. Document them. Structure them. Preserve them. Do not leave the best ones scattered across chat logs and yellow pads.

Second, build a personal pipeline. Capture, refine, revisit. A weak idea today may become strong when another domain supplies the missing part six months from now.

Third, understand that execution now matters more than mere ideation. In a compressed cycle environment, the prize goes to whoever can move from insight to testable action fastest.

Fourth, monitor emerging platforms. The first credible idea escrow, invention routing, or AI-assisted innovation marketplace could become important very quickly.

Finally, understand the macro shift: cognition itself is becoming an economic input class.

Those who adapt early will operate in a different league entirely.

Conclusion: Nobody Owns the Front Door

This is a structural gap in the emerging AI economy.

Not a feature omission. Not a roadmap delay.

A missing layer.

Someone will build it. When they do, they will not simply create a company. They will occupy a position in the flow of innovation itself. The first trusted party to receive, protect, sort, and route AI-amplified ideas gets leverage over the upstream of invention.

Same technology. Different game.

And right now, nobody owns the front door.

AI Customer Service Problems Remain

One *other* trillion dollar hole in AI continues unfilled.

That's in the office backend of many systems.

My story – sadly, based on information user complaints around the web – is far from unique.

As you may recall, in February of this year, I subscribed to the first paid tier of Grok AI. And I was charged $300.

The problem? Well, a few days later I was dinged $30 for a month of first tier use. I know "What about the $300?"

Yeah – seems that with accounting changes (Grok is a fast-mover on the growth side) my payment just went, well *who knows where.* But the $300 *was* taken from my credit card account.

No, it's not a bad card. I pay off *all* my cards weekly. But here's the key thing to remember: We don't give *anyone* access via "debit cards" to the real money accounts. We use credit cards as a "buffer zone." Our thinking is that with a debit card, once the money is *gone*, the bank doesn't have a financial incentive to "watch your back." Besides, debit cards sometimes lack the higher cash-back of credit cards…

Back to point: Our Big National Bank has initiated a chargeback against Grok AI and so far, no resolution. I've been very clear – just activate the full year of paid tier access and cranky old Mr. Ure will be happy. So far? Not even the courtesy of a replay despite half a dozen emails with screenshots and all.

A Fun Coincidence

I almost laughed this morning when I turned on the office computer this morning: There was a press release from Grok-AI:

"As we continue advancing Grok, we're retiring several earlier models to focus fully on our newest generation.

Effective May 15, 2026 at 12:00pm PT, the following models will be retired from the xAI API:

- grok-4-1-fast-reasoning
- grok-4-1-fast-non-reasoning
- grok-4-fast-reasoning
- grok-4-fast-non-reasoning
- grok-4-0709
- grok-code-fast-1
- grok-3
- grok-imagine-image-pro

After May 15, 2026, requests to these models will no longer work.

We know transitions like this can be disruptive, and we truly appreciate your understanding as we make this shift. We have some exciting model releases planned in the coming weeks, and we're making this change so we can invest fully in building the next generation of models!

To help with the transition:

- For reasoning workloads, we recommend migrating to grok-4.3.
- For non-reasoning workloads, we recommend grok-4.20-non-reasoning.
- For image generation, we recommend migrating to grok-imagine-image.

We're here to support you through this migration, and please don't hesitate to reach out to support@x.ai anytime for assistance.

Thank you for building with xAI. We can't wait to see what you build with our latest models.

To sum up: I still like Grok-AI in terms of it being a first-rate AI model. It's very good at certain kinds of tasking such as ham radio engineering-level missions and creativity.

But the human-dominated back-end?

If you were to ask me right now – having lost $300 and STILL a month and a half later not even a single reply?

Yeah – good tech, poor business practices.

Which we'd judge to be a second "trillion dollar hole" that AI is digging. With a lot of human back-end processing issues.

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