LE SALON NOIR

FROM MODELS TO METHODS

MYTHOS & ASTRA

MYTHOS · ANTHROPIC / ASTRA · OPENAI

Understanding the next wave of AI.
Learning to put it to work.

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12 CHAPTERS • WORKED EXERCISES

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Power is not enough. You need a method.

An AI system can suggest several answers to a question. Your problem remains unsolved if you cannot tell which one deserves to be used. This book begins in that gap: between an impressive capability and a result you can trust.

Anthropic's Mythos and OpenAI's Astra provide reference points for understanding a new generation of systems. We distinguish manufacturers' announcements, access conditions and our own analysis. This is neither a ranking nor a report of comparative testing. We have not conducted a hands-on test of Mythos.

The practical chapters use situations created for this book. They include starting documents, reusable requests, flawed responses to examine and worked answers. The people, businesses, results and amounts in these cases are fictional. You do not need access to Mythos or Astra to complete the exercises: adapt them to the assistant and features available to you.

Read the first three chapters to understand the stakes. Then choose a workshop close to your work. Attempt each exercise before reading the answer. The final thirty-day programme helps you decide what to keep, improve or abandon.

About this edition

What this book covers
This is an original, independent publication from Le Salon Noir. It is neither endorsed nor sponsored by OpenAI or Anthropic. Product names belong to their respective owners. Product information checked on 27 September 2026; availability, interfaces and terms may change. Your purchase includes this edition's files, without a subscription, credits or model access. The book can be read offline after download; the AI services discussed generally require a connection.

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How to use this book

Context ☐ method ☐ workshops ☐ decision. The boxes invite you to try; worked answers explain the reasoning. The final worksheets are also supplied as editable text.

01 / UNDERSTAND THE TASK BEFORE YOU DELEGATE

AI changes work. Your method makes the difference.

Start with a real difficulty

The first reason to use AI is not its ability to produce a spectacular answer. It is the help it may offer with a difficulty you already understand: scattered notes, an unclear explanation or a draft that is hard to begin. Choose what needs improving before choosing a tool. A specific task gives you something to compare; a vague ambition mostly leaves an impression.

Consider Mariam, a fictional coordinator at a small cultural centre. Each Monday, she combines six notes to prepare a team meeting. Ideas are not her problem. She sometimes misses a decision, mistakes a suggestion for a commitment and has to revise her document. Her objective becomes concrete: create a summary in which every decision can be traced to its original note.

Transformation is more than replacement

The ILO describes potential changes to tasks without equating exposure to AI with observed job losses. [Source M1] This is a reason to look closely at the work itself. For Mariam, arranging notes can be delegated; making a commitment on behalf of her team still requires the appropriate authority.

Possible benefits take several forms: a draft that is easier to discuss, useful alternatives or information presented more clearly. Yet a quick answer may simply move effort into checking. Time saved at the beginning has little value if an error later triggers several rounds of correction.

Turn an impression into a small experiment

In an OECD survey, SMEs using generative AI report performance benefits more often than increased revenue. [Source M2] That finding does not predict your results. It suggests a more useful question than a promise of wealth: which piece of work could I improve, and how would I know?

Mariam keeps an earlier summary and sets three criteria: no invented decisions, correctly assigned responsibilities and clearly identified open questions. She records preparation and review time. A colleague compares the versions without knowing which received AI assistance. This modest exercise is not a scientific study, but it gives Mariam a basis for her next decision.

You may decide that the tool is unsuitable

If the new method requires too much correction, Mariam can restrict AI assistance to sorting the notes. A limited use she can trust is worth more than extensive autonomy she cannot supervise. Working well with AI includes recognising the steps that should remain manual.

In this book, model names help explain a changing landscape. Your lasting skill will be defining the work, choosing evidence and judging the outcome. That method will remain useful when interfaces, prices and model versions change.

> **Your turn**
> Choose a recurring task. Describe its difficulty in one sentence, then name three observable acceptance criteria and the person authorised to approve the result.

Worked answer

Example: “I need to organise incoming requests without missing a deadline.” Criteria: every request is included, dates remain unchanged and missing information is flagged. Someone who knows the commitments approves the result before use.

The takeaway. Begin with a problem you can check. An impressive demonstration does not replace sound work.