

The PatriotAI Campaign: An Effort to Promote AI Literacy Across the George Mason University Community.

A Professional Readiness Experiential Program (PREP) Project Effort

----- Authors / Student Project Team Members -----

Yasemin Berlas is a student at George Mason University graduating in December with a bachelor's degree in business and a concentration in management information systems. She has experience in digital transformation projects, data analysis, and strategic planning, supported by her internship at Unison Global.

Vidhi Pathak is a student at George Mason University graduating with a bachelor's degree in management information systems and finance. She is passionate about translating her academic foundation into real-world impact, which she has demonstrated through project management work at Capital One and consulting experience with QinetiQ US.

Noria Danish is a student at George Mason University graduating with a bachelor's degree in business and a concentration in management information systems. She has experience in Process Management with her experience at Capital One.

Mannu Singh is a student at George Mason University graduating with a bachelor's degree in business and a concentration in management information systems. He has experience in data analytics, process improvement, and system design, supported by his internship with the Ohio Public Banking Coalition.

----- Industry Participant -----

Rehan Mahmood
Chief Executive Officer
EngineeRD, Fairfax VA

----- Faculty Member -----

Brian K. Ngac, PhD
FWI Corporate Partner Faculty Fellow
Instructional Faculty & Dean's Teaching Fellow
George Mason University's Costello College of Business
bngac@gmu.edu

Interested in being an Industry Participant and or PREP Sponsor? Please reach out to bngac@gmu.edu, Thanks!

---- Client Testimonial ----

“The team of students from PREP were assigned the job of learning new skills, sometimes independently, and applying those skills immediately on business goals at EngineerRD. With such a short suspense in the semester, I am impressed that the team was able to work with each other, apply virtual collaboration skills, and perform a business case study that discovered valuable insights on a potential opportunity for our business. The PREP students were able to also balance a second project near the end of their commitment, where they took their lessons toward building a brand-new data app for reducing project management inefficiency.

I see this semester as a win for EngineerRD, because we were able to prepare students for prospective employment within our pipeline, where training and onboarding is usually very expensive. Thanks to PREP's partnership we cut the recruiting risks with qualified talent, accelerated workforce readiness, and are on a fast track to hiring capable consultants that may help our revenue goals in 2026.”

- Rehan Mahmood | CEO & Chief Dreamer | EngineerRD

Introduction

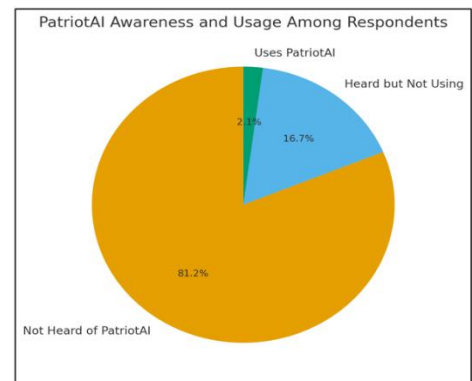
The purpose of this document is to provide an executive overview of the PatriotAI initiative and highlight the key barriers limiting its adoption. Although the platform was designed to enhance operational efficiency and provide advanced AI-driven insights, actual usage has remained significantly lower than expected. This write-up outlines the reasons behind the low utilization and sets the foundation for strategic recommendations to improve engagement and overall value delivery as well as an overview of activities and delivered solutions that were provided.

Business Challenge

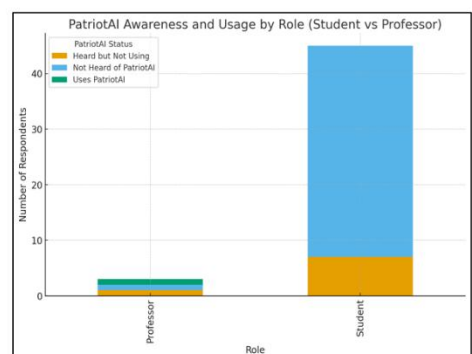
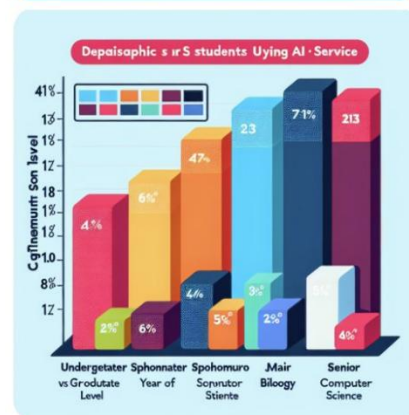
Despite the capabilities and potential of Patriot AI, user engagement across the organization has been minimal. Teams either remain unaware of the tool's value, lack proper onboarding, or do not see a clear connection between the tool's features and their day-to-day needs. As a result, Patriot AI has not reached the intended adoption levels required to justify investment or deliver meaningful operational impact. Addressing this adoption gap is the primary challenge and the focus of this analysis.

Activities and Key Findings

When our team first began researching and experimenting with PatriotAI, we decided it would be valuable to compare its capabilities against other widely used AI platforms. To do this, we provided each tool with the same prompt and dataset to evaluate how accurately and effectively they could generate visualizations. Our prompt asked: "Create a chart/graph from the data provided in this file. Display the number of students that have used PatriotAI and have not used PatriotAI - show demographics. You can create multiple charts from the data in this file."



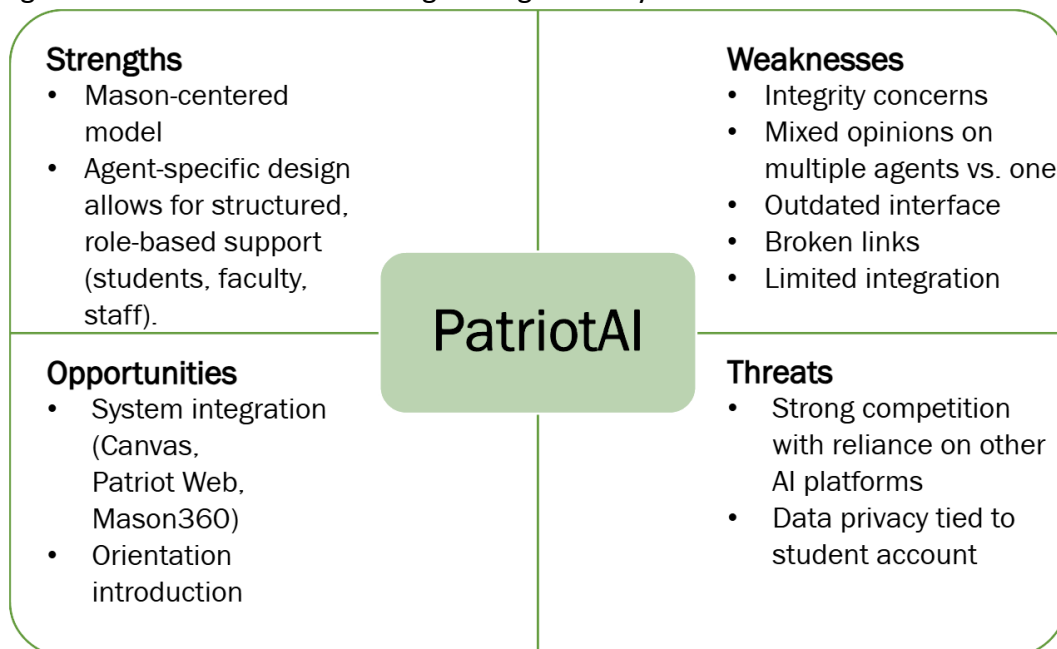
The results produced by the two platforms showed clear differences in data interpretation and visualization quality, offering meaningful insight into each tool's strengths and limitations and



highlighting opportunities for deeper analysis.

To increase user adoption of George Mason University's PatriotAI platform, our team began by conducting a survey of 50 students and faculty members to assess awareness, current AI usage, and perceptions of the platform. The results revealed that limited awareness was the primary barrier to adoption.

To address this, we hosted a hands-on PatriotAI workshop with about 15 student participants. The session covered each of the platform's agents in detail, followed by an interactive activity to test each agent. As 30% of our survey respondents reported using AI daily for academic and personal purposes, we decided to focus on the CourseMate and DocuMate agents the most as they can be used as virtual tutors and research assistants. The workshop evolved into a focus group, where students provided candid feedback on the platform's strengths, particularly its Mason-centered design and diverse agents. Students also suggested enhancements for usability and integration with the Mason learning management system.



Proposal

In parallel, we initiated broader outreach to raise awareness across campus. We sent proposal emails to 17 technology-related Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and contacted the chairs of all six business areas at Mason. We have begun collaborating with Jordan Higgins and the Design Thinking Strategy team to align outreach with creative engagement strategies.

Looking ahead, we have a recorded webinar, which is shared below, to expand accessibility and awareness across campus. We are also proposing that PatriotAI be integrated into student orientations, as it can serve as a valuable onboarding tool for freshman and transfer students.

Finally, since 82% of our survey respondents reported being unaware of PatriotAI's existence, we plan to feature the platform in future campus events such as GMU's recent AI Symposium, which featured speakers like Dean Ajay Vinze and Dr. Amarda Shehu, GMU's Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer. Highlighting PatriotAI in these settings will reinforce its role as a cornerstone of Mason's digital transformation initiatives and highlight the growing importance of AI across the university.

Results and Impact

The activities conducted throughout this project had a measurable impact on identifying barriers to PatriotAI adoption and establishing a foundation for long-term engagement. Through our survey, workshop, outreach, and partnership efforts, we were able to surface actionable insights on student and faculty needs, clarify the primary reasons for low utilization, and gather user-driven recommendations to guide future improvements. The workshop not only increased immediate awareness but also generated valuable qualitative feedback that can inform platform enhancements and future marketing strategies. Additionally, the recorded webinar and proposed integration into campus events and orientations provide scalable, repeatable methods for reaching larger audiences. Collectively, these efforts strengthened PatriotAI's visibility, validated its academic value, and positioned it for broader adoption across the university.

Toward the end of our project, we conducted a post-workshop survey to evaluate the effectiveness of our in-person PatriotAI training session. Participants were asked several questions to measure their confidence and likelihood of continued platform use. When asked, "After the workshop, how confident do you feel navigating and using the PatriotAI platform on your own? (1 = not confident at all, 5 = very confident)," respondents reported an average confidence score of 4.5 out of 5, indicating strong skill uptake. Additionally, when asked, "After the workshop, how likely are you to use PatriotAI over another AI platform? (1 = not likely at all, 5 = very likely)," the average response was 3.5 out of 5, suggesting moderate but promising interest in continued adoption following the session.

After the workshop, how confident do you feel navigating and using the PatriotAI platform on your own? (1= not confident at all, 5 = very confident)

4.50

Average Rating



After the workshop, how likely are you to use PatriotAI over another AI platform? (1= not likely at all, 5 = very likely)

3.50

Average Rating



Conclusion

PatriotAI has strong potential to enhance learning, streamline academic support, and strengthen George Mason University's digital innovation efforts. However, maximizing this potential requires intentional awareness-building, targeted onboarding, and continued collaboration across departments. The insights gathered through our research and engagement activities clearly show that once students understand what PatriotAI offers, they recognize its value and are eager to use it. By continuing to invest in outreach, integration, and user-centered improvements, Mason can ensure that PatriotAI becomes a widely adopted and impactful resource that supports students, faculty, and the university's broader strategic goals.

PREP Student Reflection

This project provided meaningful insight into how technology adoption depends not only on functionality, but also on communication, accessibility, and user experience. By surveying students, hosting a workshop, and gathering direct feedback, I learned the importance of designing solutions around real user needs rather than assumptions. We gained experience in coordinating outreach efforts, collaborating with strategic partners, and presenting information in a way that encourages engagement. Overall, this project strengthened our understanding of digital transformation within higher education and reinforced the importance of empathy, research, and proactive communication when introducing new technology to a large and diverse campus community.