

**SPECIAL REPORT**

# Rising to the AI challenge

Many Thais have adopted it, but few have devised innovative solutions to meet local needs, writes **Mongkol Bangprapa**

**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping nearly every sector of society — from state agencies and private businesses to independent organisations, education and the media. Yet despite AI's growing presence, Thailand remains largely a technology taker rather than a technology maker, relying heavily on foreign platforms and expertise.

As the country faces both opportunities and risks from the accelerating adoption of AI, questions are emerging over readiness, regulation and long-term strategy.

The *Bangkok Post* spoke to politicians, regulators and academics to explore how Thailand is responding to the AI wave, the challenges it faces and how the technology could transform governance, communications and mass media.

Prime Minister's Office Minister Paradorn Prissanantakul, overseeing the Digital Government Development Agency (DGA), said the private sector has adapted quickly, with AI widely deployed to boost efficiency and competitiveness.

"In the private sector, AI is already being used extensively, and that is a positive development," Mr Paradorn said. "Of course, every technology has both benefits and drawbacks, but overall, AI has the potential to create significant value for the country."

However, he admitted the public sector has lagged behind, struggling to integrate AI into routine operations and public service delivery.

"The problem is not really about budgets or technology," he said. "It is more about understanding and mindset. Many civil servants are still hesitant and not sufficiently alert to how AI can be applied to their work."

Mr Paradorn said the government is ready to support AI adoption, but implementation remains slow at the operational level. Clear political direction, he argued, is critical.

"If the government makes AI a real priority, I believe we can integrate it into national development much more effectively," he said.

Looking ahead, Mr Paradorn said AI policy must cut across all sectors rather than focus on a single area such as education. The Bhumjaithai Party, he said, plans to propose an "AI-first policy" that embeds AI across all state agencies.

"Each ministry and department must ask itself how AI can improve internal efficiency and make public services more accessible," he said.

He cited the Land Department as a clear example, noting that citizens are still required to submit extensive paper documentation.

"In today's world, public services should not rely on hard-copy documents," he said. "Identity verification and service access can be done digitally. The government must clearly define timelines for transitioning to AI- and digital-driven services."

Mr Paradorn also dismissed fears that AI would replace civil servants, saying the technology should be viewed as a tool that enhances human capability.

"For example, the Office of the Council of State is reviewing thousands of laws as part of Thailand's push to meet OECD standards," he said. "AI is already being used to analyse legal texts, significantly reducing workload and processing time."

At the same time, he acknowledged growing concerns about AI misuse, particularly in disinformation and fraud.

"AI-generated voice and image manipulation is becoming convincing,"

he said. "People must learn to verify information from multiple credible sources, while the state must ensure AI use remains within a regulatory framework."

**RISKS AND LIMITS**

Turning to regulation, Pirongrong Ramasoota, a commissioner of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), said AI has become a general-purpose technology embedded throughout modern life — from planning and data processing to content recommendation systems on streaming platforms.

"AI now shapes user experience, education, entertainment and even human interaction," she said.

However, she warned that AI benefits are unevenly distributed, reflecting existing social and economic inequalities.

"People with better skills — for example, English proficiency or technical literacy — gain more advantages," she said.

"This raises a fundamental question: are humans controlling AI, or are we increasingly being shaped by it?"

Ms Pirongrong highlighted the emergence of "agentic AI" — systems capable of autonomous decision-making and planning.

"This is no longer a future concept. It is already happening," she said. "AI is increasingly operating independently of human oversight, influencing systems that affect everyday life."

She said this development raises urgent regulatory and ethical questions, including whether AI could become a powerful influencer or opinion leader.

"The global debate now focuses on ensuring AI



**Paradorn: Pitches 'AI-first policy'**

**Pirongrong: Ethical, legal limits needed****Ekapon: Strengthen verification system**

does not go beyond ethical and legal boundaries," she said.

"Transparency, fairness, privacy protection and accountability are essential."

One of the biggest challenges, she said, is accountability when AI systems act autonomously.

"When humans violate the law, we examine intent," she said. "But with autonomous AI, there may be no intent at all. This is why governance must shift towards risk-based frameworks."

Ms Pirongrong pointed to the European Union's AI governance model, which categorises AI systems by risk level. High-risk applications such as social scoring systems that rate citizens' behaviour are banned outright.

"Such systems would deepen inequality far beyond traditional class divisions," she said.

Closer to home, she warned that AI-enhanced scams, including call-centre fraud, pose an immediate threat in Thailand.

"Many victims are young people who spend extensive time on social media but lack media literacy," she said. "They do not recognise how scams operate."

She said platforms must share responsibility for protecting users.

"Under EU rules, platforms are accountable because they use and benefit from AI," she said. "They must screen content and educate users."

However, she admitted that even developed countries struggle to regulate powerful technology companies.

"These corporations often wield more influence than governments," she said. "Efforts to make AI algorithms transparent face strong resistance because companies claim commercial secrecy."

**AI AND MEDIA**

From the media perspective, Asst Prof

Ekapon Thienthaworn of Thammasat University's Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication said Thailand remains far behind global AI leaders.

"Advanced countries are becoming innovators — creating tools and setting standards," he said. "Thailand is still largely a user, relying on off-the-shelf tools to solve immediate problems."

Thai media organisations, he said, mostly embed AI into workflows such as transcription, data management and content processing, rather than developing original AI solutions.

While adaptation is improving, creative AI use remains limited, he said.

"To move beyond basic application, we need greater understanding and institutional readiness," he said.

He proposed a risk-based framework for AI use in journalism, categorising content by sensitivity and tool risk.

Low-risk uses such as transcribing sports or entertainment news are generally acceptable with basic human oversight, he said, adding more sensitive topics require additional layers of review, while high-risk tools like image or video generation demand rigorous editorial scrutiny.

"For highly sensitive issues such as disasters or war, AI use should involve journalists, editors and experts," he said.

On AI-generated fake media, he stressed that traditional journalistic principles remain essential. "Media organisations must improve AI literacy, strengthen verification processes and uphold ethical standards," he said.

Finally, addressing geopolitical divisions in AI development between China and the West, Asst Prof Ekapon said Thailand should remain technologically pragmatic.

"I tell my students to use tools from both sides," he said. "All AI systems filter information in some way. The key is to use them critically and wisely."

As AI becomes more deeply embedded in society, the challenge will be balancing innovation with regulation, efficiency with ethics, and technological progress with social trust — in a country still learning how to govern a technology it does not yet fully control.