

2026 RVAtech Data + AI Summit

Date: March 26, 2026

Location: Science Museum of Richmond, Richmond, VA

Website: <https://rvatech.com/rvatech-events/2026-rvatech-data-summit/>

TRACKS

Track	Description
VIRGINIA AI IN ACTION	Keynotes and applied talks on AI in the Commonwealth
APPLIED BRILLIANCE	Hands-on workshops and advanced practitioner sessions
FRONTIERS	Emerging research and technical deep-dives
FOUNDATIONS	Practical strategy, data management, and ROI
ALL AUDIENCE	Opening/closing remarks, lightning talks, networking

AGENDA

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM | Welcoming Remarks

Location: Main Hall | All Audience

8:45 AM – 9:30 AM | KEYNOTE: Why Not Us? Virginia is Already the Hub for AI

*Location: Main Hall | All Audience | *Virginia AI in Action**

Virginia doesn't need to "become an AI hub"; we already are the hub. This talk explores the Commonwealth's quiet leadership across defense, logistics, finance, healthcare and energy and

more. It explains how our investments in trusted systems and infrastructure have laid the groundwork for AI leadership.

Speaker: Odean Maye | Venture Investor & Technology Executive, Spectus Inc.

9:40 AM – 10:25 AM | Concurrent Sessions

[APPLIED BRILLIANCE] The Doctor Strange Approach to Parallel Agent Orchestration

Location: Discovery Room | Time: 9:40 AM - 10:25 AM

We've progressed from prompt engineering to context engineering, but what comes next? This talk introduces environment engineering: designing isolated, observable environments where AI agents can safely tackle complex development work autonomously. These agents can run a full application stack and have access to browser control, logs, and verification tools.

I'll demonstrate a "Doctor Strange" approach where multiple AI developer agents simultaneously explore different implementation paths in sandboxed Docker containers. Imagine spawning three agents that each implement a different UI design approach, reviewing all three working implementations side by side, then choosing which reality to merge.

You'll see live demos of parallel agents at work, learn the architecture that makes this possible, and explore patterns like architect agents that design tasks for other agents.

Speaker: Alden Geipel | Full Stack Developer, Allianz Partners

[FRONTIERS] Hands-On with Graph Neural Networks: Exploring Fake News on Reddit

Location: Forum | Time: 9:40 AM - 10:25 AM

In this talk we will learn how to leverage the PyTorch Geometric (PyG) library and API to learn useful representations (embeddings) of graph objects. To do this, we will first describe the fundamentals of graph neural networks, and the various graph-schema considerations therein. I will convey some common pitfalls with the PyG library before walking you through a live demonstration. The demonstration will leverage a dataset of Reddit conversation threads to model how false narratives spread. A github repository with the code from the talk will be shared with attendees.

Speaker: Ugo Etudo | Assistant Professor of Information Systems, Virginia Commonwealth University

[FOUNDATIONS] From Raw to Ready: Prepping Enterprise Data for AI

*Location: Main Hall | Time: 9:40 AM - 10:25 AM | *Virginia AI in Action**

In today's AI-driven world, the biggest barrier to success isn't the algorithm—it's the data. Join us on the journey from messy, siloed, and legacy-bound data into a trusted foundation for AI and advanced analytics. Discover a practical way to move from chaos to clarity: starting with a business-based use case, understanding the data through the business lens, and architecting solutions that deliver immediate value while enabling long-term scalability. We'll share candid lessons from the life insurance domain—where accuracy, compliance, and traceability are non-negotiable—and reveal how these principles apply across industries.

Speakers: Brett Burnam | Lead Data Architect, Merakata & Karen Akens | Director of Enterprise Data Services, Navy Mutual Aid Association

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM | AI Hot Takes (Lightning Talks)

Location: Outdoor Pavilion

Speaker	Title
Alina Enikeeva — AI Solutions Engineer, RTS Labs	AI Won't Take Your Job - But Delegating Your Thinking Might
Lauren Downey — Principal Data Scientist, Blackbaud	Mentorship Has an API Now. When Shouldn't You Call It?
Divya Balaji — Data Systems Analyst, Henrico County	Data Governance Doesn't Fail Because of Policy — It Fails Because No One Names the Decision
Calli Rogers — Data Sourceress, UZURV	Cloud, Meet Gravity

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM | Concurrent Sessions

[APPLIED BRILLIANCE] Stop Typing, Start Orchestrating: An Agentic Coding Workshop with Claude Code

Location: Discovery Room | Time: 10:45 AM - 11:55 AM (long session)

Software engineering in 2026 increasingly looks like directing AI agents rather than writing every line yourself. In this workshop, we'll roll up our sleeves with Claude Code, Anthropic's terminal-native agentic coding tool. You'll work through hands-on exercises covering codebase

navigation, task orchestration, prompt structuring, and debugging agent output. For those ready to go deeper, we'll explore multi-agent patterns: running parallel Claude sessions, coordinating agent teams that research, build, and verify concurrently, and building subagent pipelines for code review and testing. No Claude Code experience needed, just bring a laptop with a terminal.

Speaker: Chris Busse | Chief Client Officer, Enterprise | Head of AI, SingleStone

[FRONTIERS] Open-Source AI and the New Data Control Plane

Location: Forum | Time: 10:45 AM - 11:15 AM

Agentic AI isn't just suggesting queries or code anymore. It's executing real data work. As agents write, refactor, and generate analyses, data teams face a new trust problem: not whether AI is powerful, but whether its outputs can be understood, reviewed, and relied on. This talk explores how open-source agents make execution transparent and inspectable, and tackles what transparency alone can't solve: the missing control plane where human and AI-generated insights get captured, versioned, reviewed, and reused as organizational knowledge.

Speakers: Mari Soonsoo Bae | Co-Founder & CEO, Ara Platforms & Michael Pfaffenberger | AI Engineer, Walmart

[FOUNDATIONS] Virginia AI in the Trenches: How Non-Technical Teams Are Actually Putting AI to Work

*Location: Main Hall | Time: 10:45 AM - 11:15 AM | *Virginia AI in Action**

Most AI talks focus on what the technology can do. This one focuses on what teams are actually doing (right now) when they don't have engineers on staff, don't have perfect data, and can't afford multi-year transformation programs. You'll get a field-tested playbook for how non-technical teams are putting AI to work across core functions like communications, customer support, HR, research, operations, and strategic planning.

Speaker: Chris Davidson | President & Lead Strategist, Orca Strategies/LOGENTIQ

11:25 AM – 11:55 AM | Concurrent Sessions

[FRONTIERS] When Predictions Aren't Enough: Building Decision Engines Under Uncertainty

Location: Forum | Time: 11:25 AM - 11:55 AM

Predictions alone don't tell you what to do, especially when impact is delayed, signals are noisy, and decisions are costly to reverse. This talk shows how organizations build decision engines

that operate under real uncertainty, using "what-if" modeling to move beyond forecasts and dashboards.

Speaker: Annie George | Senior Data Scientist, McKesson

[FOUNDATIONS] If AI Is So Smart, Why Are We Still Struggling for ROI?

Location: Main Hall | Time: 11:25 AM - 11:55 AM

You've invested in AI, but the impact is missing. Explore the 8 overlooked gaps sabotaging ROI and get the practical model and questions you need to shift from stalled pilots to meaningful, measurable results.

Speaker: Jennifer Schaff | Executive Director, Data and AI Commercial Services, Elder Research

11:55 AM – 1:00 PM | Lunch & Networking

Location: Main Hall | All Audience

1:00 PM – 1:45 PM | KEYNOTE: The Convergence: How Strategy, Silicon, and the Grid are Building Data Center Alley

*Location: Main Hall | All Audience | *Virginia AI in Action**

Panelists:

- JP Buzzell | VP, Data Center Architect, Eaton
- Jason Williams | VP, Strategic Partnerships, Dominion Energy
- Jason Knapp | Engineering Leader, Amazon Web Services
- Brian Bassett | Director, Simple Thread

1:55 PM – 2:40 PM | AI Hot Takes (Lightning Talks)

Location: Outdoor Pavilion

Speaker	Title
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Ford Prior — Senior Staff Engineer & Tech Evangelist, GEICO	Let AI Hallucinate
Ravi Kokku — Co-founder and CTO, Emergence AI	Natural Language Interface to Data Is Not Text-to-SQL
Russ Clay — Principal Data Scientist, Commonwealth Data Solutions	Let Value Be Your Guide: Connecting Model Metrics to Business Impact
Kaelyn Haynie — SWE & Data Science Student, Liberty University	The Texture of a Threat: Visual Malware Analysis Methods
Srdjan Lesaja — Manager, AI and Data Science, UNOS	You've Never Thrown a Ball

1:55 PM – 2:40 PM | Concurrent Sessions

[APPLIED BRILLIANCE] The Practical Path to Custom LLMs: Fine-Tuning on Your Own Data

Location: Discovery Room | Time: 1:55 PM - 2:40 PM

What happens when you give a local LLM 3,000 of your personal journal entries and ask it to write like you? This session walks through the exact process of fine-tuning a model on personal data—hardware, pipelines, training setup, evaluation, and guardrails. The second half explores a future where businesses move away from generic foundation models and toward smaller, private, domain-specific LLMs.

Speaker: Andrew Novokhatny | Director, Data & Analytics, CapTech Consulting

[FRONTIERS] Accelerating OpenSearch Relevance: Lessons Learned Building a Practical Multi-Agent Optimization System

Location: Forum | Time: 1:55 PM - 2:40 PM

Search relevance tuning is often slow and manual, measured in weeks or months. This talk details Agentic Relevance Tuning (ART), a multi-agent system built using the "Agents as Tools" pattern, designed to systematically automate and accelerate this process for OpenSearch. We cover the architecture, where an Orchestrator manages specialized agents for hypothesis generation and offline evaluation, and share critical lessons applicable to any complex optimization problem.

Speaker: Eric Pugh | Founder, OpenSource Connections

[FRONTIERS] GenAI and Knowledge Summary

*Location: Main Hall | Time: 1:55 PM - 2:40 PM | *Virginia AI in Action**

A single process can require dozens of steps to locate, review, and synthesize hundreds of data points and documents. Leveraging open source LLMs, we can search millions of documents and bring back the right information when and where a user needs it. These early successes are pointing to how core processes can be reinvented in the future.

Speakers: Dan Raper | Vice President, Data Analysis, Capital One & Christopher Wilcoxon | Lead Software Engineer, Capital One

2:50 PM – 3:20 PM | Concurrent Sessions

[APPLIED BRILLIANCE] Modernizing Data Management in Public Safety: Insights from the Virginia State Police

*Location: Discovery Room | Time: 2:50 PM - 3:20 PM | *Virginia AI in Action**

Public safety organizations sit at the intersection of rising data complexity, aging technology, and growing expectations for accountability. This session takes a candid look at what it really means to modernize data management inside a law enforcement agency—overhauling legacy systems, introducing AI capabilities, and building a sustainable data culture across a diverse workforce while maintaining security, compliance, and operational continuity.

Speaker: Steven MacLauchlan | Chief Data Officer, Virginia State Police

[FOUNDATIONS] Raising the Floor Without Lowering the Ceiling: Building Critical Thinkers in the Age of AI-Assisted Coding

Location: Forum | Time: 2:50 PM - 3:20 PM

AI coding assistants can now suggest snippets, fix bugs, and even generate entire functions in seconds. Yet they can also encourage "get something working" shortcuts that bypass deep understanding, creating developers who can prompt but can't architect. This session examines how AI tools are reshaping the way novices learn to program and shares concrete practices that keep AI as a helpful partner while cultivating rigorous, resilient problem-solvers.

Speaker: Malar Mangai Kondappan | System Architect III, GM Financial

[FOUNDATIONS] The Crisis in Science and How to Defeat It

Location: Main Hall | Time: 2:50 PM - 3:20 PM

The key goal in scientific work is to discover the truth. This talk explains the multiple-comparison weakness—amplified by automated search—that causes many published findings to be irreproducible, and introduces Target Shuffling, a technique that corrects for this problem and more accurately measures significance.

Speaker: John Elder | Vice President and Technical Fellow, Data Science – Data and AI Practice, Elder Research

3:25 PM – 4:15 PM | KEYNOTE: The Future Frontiers of Data & AI: Leadership Imperatives in a Tech-Driven, Globally Shifting World

Location: Main Hall | All Audience

Speaker: Dr. David Bray, Ph.D. | Distinguished Fellow & Chair of the Accelerator, Alfred Lee Loomis Innovation Council, Henry L. Stimson Center | Principal, LeadDoAdapt Ventures

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM | Closing Remarks

Location: Main Hall | All Audience

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Happy Hour & Networking

Location: Main Hall | All Audience

BOOTHS & EXPERIENCES

Check out these additional experiences during breaks, lunch and happy hour:

Booth / Location	Description
Hiring & Open to Work Stickers Welcome Badge Pick Up	If you are looking for your next job or recruiting for an open role, grab a badge sticker at the welcome table to indicate to other attendees that you are hiring or open to work.
Sponsor Booths Main Hall	Learn more about our sponsors by visiting their tables between speaker sessions in the main hall.

<p>Career Development Table Outdoor Patio (rain location: Main Hall)</p>	<p>Meet with a career coach, data leader, or practitioner working here in Central Virginia. Bring your questions about developing a career in data and AI.</p>
<p>Conversation Tables Outdoor Patio (weather permitting)</p>	<p>Browse the conversation topic tables at lunch; sit down to network with other attendees who want to discuss that table's topic.</p>

SPEAKER BIOS

JP Buzzell — VP, Data Center Architect, Eaton

JP (Joshua) Buzzell is the data center chief architect at Eaton, overseeing the development of next generation reference designs and assisting customers with full data center design and deployment across all physical layer dimensions: power, cooling, network and software. JP is one of the foremost thought leaders in the data center industry, especially on the topic of liquid cooling. His data center experience began at Facebook (now Meta), then Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) as regional director of operations, where he led whitespace design globally and developed air-cooled and liquid-cooled standard designs. JP spent the first part of his career in nuclear power.

Odean Maye — Venture Investor & Technology Executive, Spectus Inc.

Dean is a venture capitalist and technology executive with extensive experience in building and investing in technology companies. As a computer science student at Old Dominion University, he founded his first startup in Virginia. He now advises and invests in AI-driven enterprises.

Karen Akens — Director of Enterprise Data Services, Navy Mutual Aid Association

Karen leads the Enterprise Data Services team at Navy Mutual, driving the organization's business analytics transformation into a truly data-driven enterprise. She oversees strategy and execution for data governance, quality, and architecture. With a career spanning both consulting and industry, Karen has delivered tailored, data-centric solutions for commercial, non-profit, and government entities. At Navy Mutual, she has built and led a high-performing team focused on enabling analytics and AI readiness in a highly regulated environment. When Karen isn't wrangling data, she's spinning stories in yarn as a dedicated knitter and fiber artist.

Divya Balaji — Data Systems Analyst, Henrico County

Divya Balaji is an Enterprise Data and Data Governance Analyst with Henrico County, where she works across departments to understand how organizations structure decisions, data, and

reporting. Previously a software engineer at Capital One, she now focuses on the early stages of data governance—helping teams clarify what decisions they want to make with data before policies and tools are introduced. Her work spans cross-departmental analytics, Power BI reporting, and research collaborations exploring common governance challenges in organizations.

Mari Soonsoo Bae — Co-Founder & CEO, Ara Platforms

Mari Soonsoo Bae is the founder and CEO of Ara Platforms, an AI-powered insight workspace for modern data teams. Before founding Ara, Mari led global product planning for four Google Pixel launches representing over \$10B in combined programs. She brings 14 years of experience building enterprise systems and product workflows that translate complex data into operational decisions. Mari serves on the board of AI Ready RVA and speaks internationally on practical AI adoption, including at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Brett Burnam — Lead Data Architect, Merakata

Brett brings over 25 years of expertise in transforming complex data challenges into business-driven solutions. As a seasoned data architect, he combines strategic vision with hands-on engineering to deliver architectures that are both elegant and actionable. Brett's career spans the full lifecycle of data—movement, modeling, and delivery. His approach is rooted in a "data-first" mindset, ensuring governance, quality, and scalability are built in from the start. Long before becoming a data architect Brett played collegiate water polo at James Madison University.

Chris Busse — Chief Client Officer, Enterprise | Head of AI, SingleStone

Chris Busse is the Chief Client Officer, Enterprise and Head of AI at SingleStone, a Richmond-based data and technology consulting firm. He brings nearly 30 years of experience building and scaling technology ventures. He co-founded Terazoo, which grew into the largest Twilio SI partner globally and secured a \$10.5M Series A before its acquisition in 2024. Earlier, he served as Capital One's first developer evangelist, helping grow the team from three to over 250 and launching DevExchange at SXSW in 2016. Chris has taught at the VCU Brandcenter and remains active in Richmond's tech community.

Russ Clay — Principal Data Scientist, Commonwealth Data Solutions

Russ is a Social Psychologist by training. After earning his PhD from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2012, he spent years conducting original research structured to measure and predict human behavior. About 10 years ago, he pivoted into Data Science, initially working in healthcare building models to predict clinical deterioration in hospitalized patients. In 2023, he founded his own data science consulting business, advising clients across many industries. He is based in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Chris Davidson — President & Lead Strategist, Orca Strategies/LOGENTIQ

Chris Davidson is a Virginia entrepreneur and public affairs strategist with 20+ years across business, government, and civic leadership. He is Founder of Orca Strategies and Co-Founder & Senior Advisor of LOGENTIQ, an AI orchestration and integration company. Chris also leads government relations for the Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and serves on the Board of JMU's Gilliam Center for Entrepreneurship. He was appointed by Governor Glenn Youngkin to a four-year term as a Trustee of the Fort Monroe Authority.

Lauren Downey — Principal Data Scientist, Blackbaud

Lauren is a data scientist with a decade of experience across analytics, machine learning, and strategy, with work spanning marketplace platforms, AI-driven personalization, and supply chain optimization. She has built predictive models, led large-scale A/B testing programs, and partnered cross-functionally to turn data into real business outcomes. She is deeply passionate about the human side of a data career and has navigated the pivots and plateaus that define the path for many data professionals, carrying those experiences into years of mentoring others through the same.

John Elder — VP and Technical Fellow, Data Science, Elder Research / MANTECH

30 years ago, Dr. John Elder founded Elder Research, the world's most experienced data science company, now part of MANTECH. He has led teams to detect fraud, find insider threats, discover drugs, time markets, predict needed maintenance, and analyze vast networks. John has co-authored three books on data mining, text mining, and ensembles—two of which won "book of the year." He is a popular keynote speaker and an occasional Adjunct Professor at UVA. He was named by President Bush to serve five years on a panel to guide technology for national security.

Alina Enikeeva — AI Solutions Engineer, RTS Labs

Alina Enikeeva is an AI Solutions Engineer and technology advocate focused on responsible AI adoption. Her work centers on designing systems that enhance human decision-making and long-term skill growth. She challenges the narrative of AI as a job-taker, presenting research-based insights on how professionals can leverage AI as a tool to sharpen thinking, expand capability, and build enduring expertise.

Ugochukwu Etudo — Assistant Professor of Information Systems, VCU

Ugo Etudo, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Information Systems at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Business. His research is focused on deep learning models and AI in the natural language domain, and on the applications of those models to understand maladaptive uses of online social platforms at scale. Ugo's work has appeared in Decision Support Systems,

Journal of Cybersecurity, Journal of the Association for Information Systems, and Information Systems Research. Dr. Etudo also works with industry and government partners to deliver state-of-the-art deep learning solutions.

Alden Geipel — Full Stack Developer, Allianz Partners

Alden Geipel is a Full Stack Developer at Allianz Partners, building enterprise applications across Angular, React Native, and .NET. As a member of his company's AI Committee, he helps shape AI adoption strategy and develops agentic applications for real business problems, including an AI-powered compliance analysis tool built with Claude and AWS Bedrock. He uses Claude Code extensively in his daily development workflow and has been exploring patterns for orchestrating multiple AI agents in isolated, observable environments. He holds a B.S. in Computer Science from James Madison University.

Annie George — Senior Data Scientist, McKesson

Annie George brings over a decade of experience across data science, forecasting, and applied machine learning in complex, decision-driven environments. She has owned high-impact analytical systems end to end—spanning development, validation, measurement, and deployment. Her experience includes roles at New Balance, Capital One, and EY, where she is known for navigating ambiguous, high-stakes problems and building analytical systems leadership teams can rely on.

Kaelyn Haynie — SWE & Data Science Student, Liberty University

Kaelyn is a Software Engineering & Data Science student at Liberty University. Since May of 2023, she has been a National Security intern at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Her passions for research have exposed her to design optimization, rocketry, automatic differentiation, and machine learning for cybersecurity. She is currently pursuing graduate school options to examine NLP and GNN-based approaches to malware analysis.

Ravi Kokku — Co-founder and CTO, Emergence AI

Ravi Kokku is Co-founder and CTO of Emergence AI, building agentic AI systems for enterprise data and decision making. Previously, Ravi co-founded Merlyn Mind, which built an AI voice assistant used by K-12 teachers. Earlier, at IBM Research, he led innovation initiatives with global telecom providers and collaborated with education partners such as Sesame Workshop. He has authored more than 60 peer-reviewed research papers and holds over 75 patents. Ravi earned his Ph.D. and M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Texas at Austin and a B.Tech. from IIT Kharagpur.

Srdjan Lesaja — Manager, AI and Data Science, UNOS

Researcher at the intersection of artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and biotechnology. Passionate about building cognitive systems that combine the best of biological and artificial intelligence, and leveraging these systems to support and advance long-term human and planetary health.

Malar Mangai Kondappan — System Architect III, GM Financial

Malar Kondappan is a systems architect and technology leader with more than 20 years of experience building revenue critical platforms in insurance and financial services. She has led large scale modernization and integration initiatives at organizations including Compare.com, Insurify, and GM Financial's GM Insurance. Alongside her industry work, Malar has spent over a decade mentoring kids and early career developers at hackathons, robotics programs, and coding workshops, exploring how AI assisted coding tools can both accelerate learning and, if misused, short circuit deep understanding.

Steven MacLauchlan — Chief Data Officer, Virginia State Police

Steven MacLauchlan (AKA "Steve Mac") is the Chief Data Officer at the Virginia State Police, leading strategic data initiatives to modernize and secure the agency's information systems. With over 15 years of experience in data architecture, analytics, and digital transformation, Steve Mac is passionate about using data to drive meaningful change in organizations. Prior to joining VSP, Steve served as Head of Data at Ippon Technologies and has worked across industries and continents (from Richmond, Virginia to Auckland, New Zealand!).

Andrew Novokhatny — Director, Data & Analytics, CapTech Consulting

Andrew is presenting "The Practical Path to Custom LLMs: Fine-Tuning on Your Own Data." His session walks through the exact process of fine-tuning a model on personal data—hardware, pipelines, training setup, evaluation, and guardrails—and explores a future where businesses move toward smaller, private, domain-specific LLMs.

Michael Pfaffenberger — AI Engineer, Walmart

Michael Pfaffenberger is an AI engineer, open source creator, and Data Scientist with over a decade of experience spanning computer vision, NLP, and machine learning engineering. He studied Computer Science at VCU before launching his career in geospatial computer vision at Commonwealth Computer Research. He later held data science leadership roles at S&P Global Market Intelligence and Snag before joining Walmart Global Tech in 2021. A passionate open source advocate, he is the creator of Code Puppy — a popular agentic AI coding CLI with 170K+ downloads.

Eric Pugh — Founder, OpenSource Connections

Eric Pugh is the co-founder of OpenSource Connections. He serves on the OpenSearch Technical Steering Committee, is a maintainer on the Documentation subproject, and is focused on expanding the suite of Search Relevance features in the project. OSC's mission to empower search teams stems from his belief in open source and educating people to own their tech. Eric builds furniture—his next project is a Danish modern couch!

Dan Raper — Vice President, Data Analysis, Capital One

Dan leads the Business Banking Data Engineering, Data Risk, and Data Science Tech teams and serves as the Divisional Data Risk Officer for Commercial. He has spent 25 years at Capital One in data-related roles—from fighting external fraud in US Card to leading major data modernization initiatives in the Commercial Bank. His current focus is on AI use cases and Data Products. Dan is a UVA graduate with an MBA from Duke's Fuqua School of Business and lives in Richmond, VA.

Calli Rogers — Data Sourceress, UZURV

Calli has been writing code since she took an elective computer class in 2006, and she's been automating the menial stuff ever since. Her greatest passion has always been the engineering side of data. She loves building environments that enable telling stories and solving problems with whatever data may be available. Her pattern recognition super power helps her find correlations that may otherwise go unnoticed. When trying to mitigate Shadow IT or implement a governance practice, Calli will always advocate that the Right Way to do a task should also be the Easy Way.

Jennifer Schaff — Executive Director, Data and AI Commercial Services, Elder Research

Dr. Jennifer Schaff leads Elder Research's Commercial business unit, advising organizational leaders on how to maximize the value of their AI and analytics investments. With over 20 years of experience, Dr. Schaff has built a reputation as a "Barricade Buster" in the AI and data analytics industry. She began her analytics career while earning a doctorate in Plant Pathology, later led NC State University's genomics facility, and completed the Master's program at NCSU's Institute for Advanced Analytics. Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys running, cycling, photography, and spending time outdoors with family and her dog.

Christopher Wilcoxon — Lead Software Engineer, Capital One

Chris is a Lead Software Engineer at Capital One, where he leads the engineering team for DocAI, a generative AI tool that leverages LLMs to provide context-aware answers from the organization's vast internal knowledge base. With a career at Capital One starting in 2018, Chris has significant experience architecting high-availability systems and now applies that background to building and scaling production-ready Generative AI applications.

Speakers without bios in the official directory: Brian Bassett (Director, Simple Thread), Jason Williams (VP, Strategic Partnerships, Dominion Energy), Jason Knapp (Engineering Leader, Amazon Web Services), Dr. David Bray Ph.D. (Distinguished Fellow, Henry L. Stimson Center), Ford Prior (Senior Staff Engineer & Tech Evangelist, GEICO)

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Agenda is subject to change on the day of the event.