

UPLIFT

University Personnel Leveraging
of Intelligent Flow Tools





Foundational quotes

*"When productivity gains originate closer to the work, workers gain tangible leverage over **decisions, processes, and outcomes.**"*

- Time Magazine, Kumar S.R., Roberts A., & Crymes S. (2026)



*"AI doesn't reduce work—**it intensifies it.**"*

- Ranganathan & Ye (2026, in progress)

About me

Studied Cognitive science, AI and learning tech

- 2006 “*BSc hons Psychology and AI*” Undergrad degree, UK.
- Worked in Mental health and system integration industries
- 2010 RGU Aberdeen University, elearning developer.
- 2014 “*Technology-enhanced learning*” PG diploma, UK.
- 2021 UIBK, Austria

Work in Video Media DevOps (Opencast Team lead)

- Since 2021, 4 days/wk; ZID DMLT.

Work in DevOps and Researcher Tech Facilitation

- Since 2021, 1 day/wk; Dep. Clinical Pharmacy, Fac. Chem&Pharm



The Team

With much advice
gratefully received from ...



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UIBK AI
landscape Group

In-house
Technology advisors,
(ZID)

Topics

Idea

Phases

Considerations

Outcomes & Legacy

The Idea

Administrative staff often face repetitive tasks

they wish could be automated but lack the resources to build new tools.

Most accessible optimisation tools exist only as external cloud services,

raising concerns about data privacy, autonomy and sovereignty.

We could facilitate the leveraging of local* intelligent workflow tooling

for UIBK admin staff

Core Principle: Facilitation – a human-first approach through experiential learning

Duration: 12 months (May 2026 – April 2027)

Goal: Empower staff with new tools and competencies

Method: Case-based. 2x 6-month phases, 2 client cases each; 4 in total.

* More local



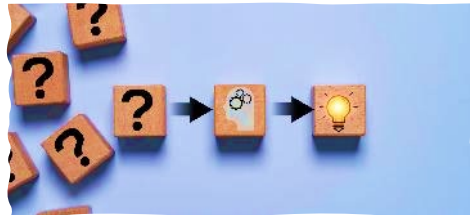
What are intelligent flow automation tools?



Intelligent, as in:

AI systems that are context-aware and locally deployed, not just rule-based execution.

Operable without external cloud reliance, designed to interpret nuanced human intent, adapt to evolving task requirements, and support decision-making through embedded reasoning.



Flow/Workflow, as in:

'Flowing' solutions designed to complement actual user processes, not just disembodied tasks.

Extending existing routines in a non-disruptive manner as extensions of human practice.

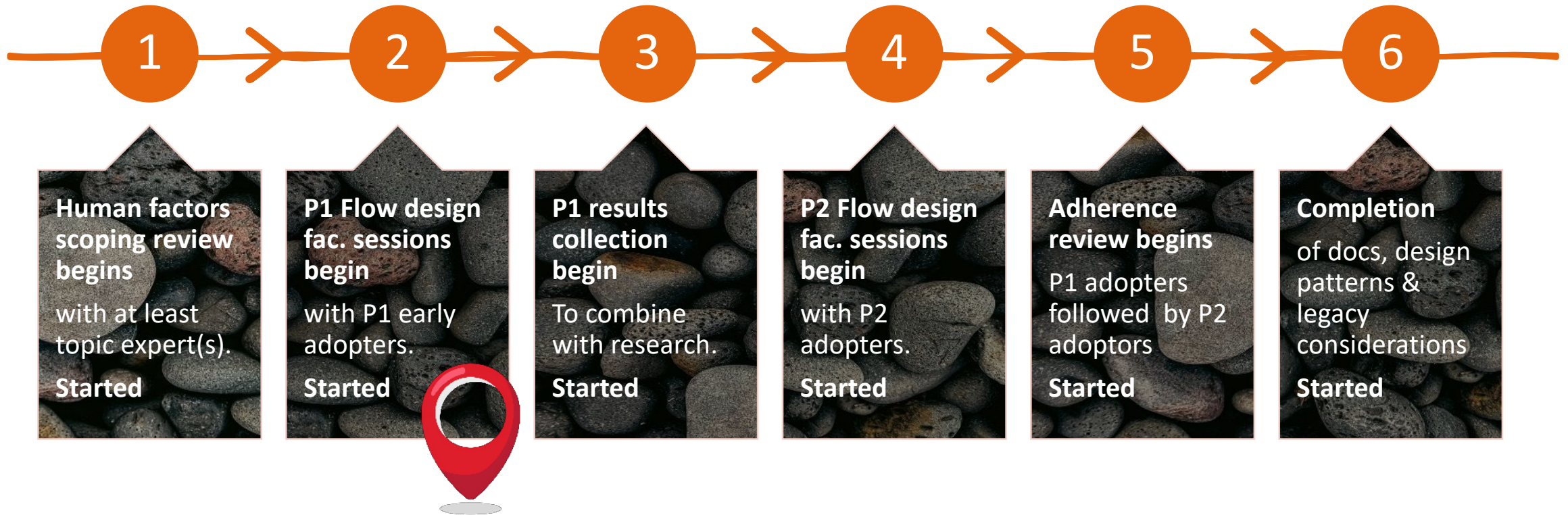


Automation, as in:

Repetitive, rule-bound tasks reimplemented into customised tooling, not just auto-completion.

Reducing manual input while maintaining human oversight at critical junctures, ensuring outcomes are generated reliably without introducing new cognitive load or operational fragility.

Milestones



Phase 1 Pt1 (Months 1–6)



A research project and two initial case studies are underway.

Research: A PRISMA-ScR scoping review

A guided 'checklist' methodology to learn a topic in detail and any uncover gaps

- **Focus:** Human-factors and Industry 4.0/5.0 concepts to ensure sustainable adoption and prevent work intensification.
- **Outcome:** To produce some evidenced guidelines for current and future cases.

Phase 1 Pt2 (Months 1–6)



Case 1:

Office administrative workflow automation in timetabling planning
(Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy)

- **Facilitation:** Co-developing a 'Slate' (the tool) and 'Lingua franca' (the data exchange format) for repetitive tasks and constrained requirement mapping
- **Focus:** Data management, scheduling, resource allocation.
- **Outcome:** To see the owner evolve the tools to fit the need

Phase 1 Pt3 (Months 1–6)



Case 2:

System Admin workflow for legacy code documentation & refactoring (DMLT, ZID)

- **Facilitation:** Co-develop a 'code-server' agentic harness with workflow to analyse, document, and modernise legacy software.
- **Focus:** Improve maintainability, reduce technical debt, enable in-house adoption.
- **Outcome:** To see the owner evolve the tools to fit the need

Phase 2 (Months 6–12)

- DiSC projects administration – in-discussion
- TBA - following leads

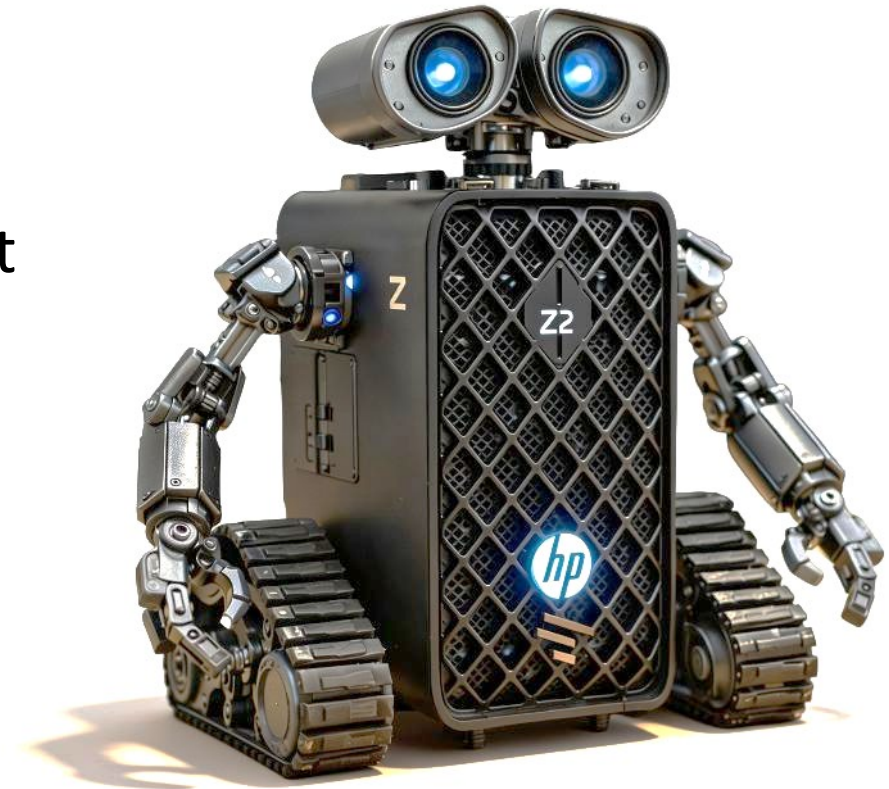
LOADING. . . .



Considerations #1: AI-in-a-box

The more local the Intelligence (context and placement), the better.

- Each participant receives a dedicated HP Z2 G1a Strix Halo workstation (128GB GPU VRAM).
- Fully offline, GDPR-compliant AI runner; Dual boot Linux and Win11
- Device remains with the team after project end as a legacy asset..
- *No cloud dependencies - full data sovereignty.*



Considerations #2: Adoption Principles

To prevent AI-induced work intensification:

During facilitation

- Protected focused ~2hr facilitation sessions (no interruptions).
- Walkthroughs and follow-me exercises.

During hardware rollout

- Limit AI prompting to designated times.
- Regular check-ins to detect role drift and boundary blurring.
- Maintain reflective human dialogue for grounding





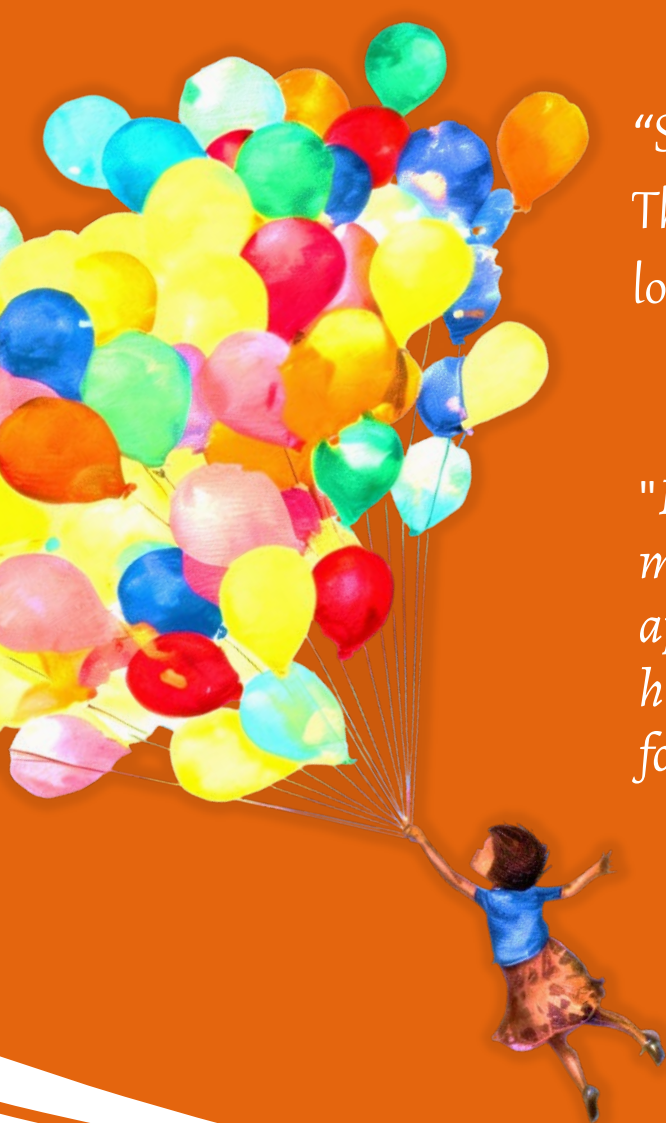
Outcomes & Legacy

- **Newly trained staff** capable of continuing development independently and teaching others.
- **Blueprint for scaled adoption** of sovereign AI tool adoption.
- **Demonstrated, safe use** of AI-augmented administrative workflows to leverage competencies.
- **Physical AI runner sustainably available** for departmental use, metered by administrators.

Thanks for your time

- **Acknowledgements:** Büro der Rektorin, Innovationsfonds 2026
- **Contact:** edward.watson@uibk.ac.at
- **Project website:**
<https://www.uibk.ac.at/en/pharmazie/klinische-pharmazie/research/uplift-project>





"So far I find the process well-structured, smoothly going and the meetings are very efficient. Thinking through the individual steps helps to reflect on my own working steps. I am looking forward to further steps and of course the end result."

- Case user 1, Faculty timetablling

"I have found the collaboration through pair programming with AI very helpful. It allowed me to identify mistakes that I probably would not have noticed on my own. [...] I especially appreciated the learning curve, because while I was still actively doing a lot myself, the AI helped me understand the steps better. Overall, I had the feeling that the project was moving forward in a clear, understandable, and relatively efficient way."

- Case user 2, System administration

Feedback from current phase 1 case users