



The Two Faces of AI Anxiety

March 17, 2026

The investment markets have been jittery of late, and the headlines have blamed something called ‘AI anxiety.’ But what, exactly, does that mean, and is it a legitimate worry?

There are two elements to the single term, which seem to be mixed together in peoples’ minds, though they come from very different directions. The first is straightforward: many people have a vague sense that artificial intelligence is coming for their jobs.

This fear was put into a tangible form by a report from Citrini Research, which envisioned a near future where autonomous AI agents upend the entire U.S. economy. Software developers are laid off by the thousands, soon followed by white collar employees in all sectors of the economy. This eliminates income on a broad scale, leading to less demand for goods and services, which, in turn, lowers sales volume at the very companies that rely on AI to become more efficient.

This is scary stuff, and anything that threatens our future—even if it’s not happening yet—makes people less likely to take risks with their money.

The second element is, oddly, somewhat the opposite of the first. A small number of giant technology firms dominate the most popular U.S. market indices, and they are spending (some would say ‘investing’) fantastic amounts of borrowed capital on data center construction, increasingly expensive computer chips, electricity and staffers who cost up to \$400,000 a year—not to mention Meta’s (Facebook’s) reported \$200 million signing bonuses. By one estimate, labeled conservative, these firms will have spent more than \$3.7 trillion on AI infrastructure by 2030. A more realistic estimate puts that expenditure at \$6.7 trillion.

The anxiety comes from the possibility that the firms that underpin stock market growth won’t be able to recover those costs—that demand for artificial intelligence will never become as strong as they’re hoping. An article in the Harvard Gazette notes that Microsoft’s OpenAI has promised to pay \$100 billion contracts to several of its vendors—even though it doesn’t generate nearly that amount of revenue. OpenAI’s own projections anticipate \$14 billion in losses this year, and \$115 billion cumulative through 2029.

And meanwhile, the cost of providing services greatly exceeds the subscription fees (sometimes free) that the more popular AI applications charge. One writer asked Claude AI to think about a problem, and the AI agent took ten minutes to draw up enough power to make connections and provide an answer. That one answer might have cost Anthropic thousands of dollars, while the user pays an annual \$100 subscription fee. The article suggests that marketing is having a negative effect: companies are losing money on every new user, and they keep spending more to bring in more customers.

Is all this anxiety justified? The Citrini report is probably an exaggeration of possible consequences—a ‘worst case scenario,’ if you will. As for the giant tech firms—Microsoft, Google, Facebook etc.—the question is whether they know what they’re doing, or not. It’s probably okay to be anxious about that, but that doesn’t mean people should bet against them either.

Source:

<https://www.reuters.com/business/us-stock-futures-falter-ai-jitters-nasdaq-braces-steep-monthly-fall-2026-02-27/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2026/feb/24/feedback-loop-no-brake-how-ai-doomsday-report-rattled-markets>

<https://www.axios.com/2026/02/27/big-tech-data-centers-power-costs-ai>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-cost-of-compute-a-7-trillion-dollar-race-to-scale-data-centers>

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2025/12/should-u-s-be-worried-about-ai-bubble/>

<https://www.advisorperspectives.com/articles/2026/02/27/ai-ripe-disruption-gautam-mukunda>

If you have any questions about this article or want to discuss your family finances, investment portfolio, or financial planning advice, please call on me anytime at my number [\(215\) 325-1595](tel:2153251595) or you can [click here to schedule a meeting](#).

Please feel free to forward this article and offer it to anyone you know who might have financial questions or need some unbiased advice. Most financial advice is sales advice. In stark contrast, we are fee-only (non-commissioned) fiduciary advisors. We just provide truthful, unbiased advice to our clients.



Jeffrey Broadhurst
MBA, CFA, CFP
Broadhurst Financial Advisors, Inc.



****PRIVACY NOTICE****

This message is intended only for the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, or exempt from disclosure under applicable federal or state law. You are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication, except in accordance with its intended purpose, is strictly prohibited.

Our physical and mail address:

1911 West Point Pike
P.O. Box 301
West Point, PA 19486-0301

Contact us:

Phone: (215) 325-1595
Email: jeff@broadhurstfinancial.com