**No Hype, Just Facts: How Harvard Argues for AI'**

Brian Stever

Department of English, University of Arizona

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Issam Rian

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Alvin Powell's "Machine healing" stands apart from the typical flood of AI articles. In a world saturated with headlines trying to scare you about robots taking over or selling you a fantasy about a perfect future, this article offers a different experience. It projects calmness. And most importantly, it establishes trust. The question for this essay is: how does it do that?

The article, published in *The Harvard Gazette* on March 20, 2025, steps into the chaotic public debate with a clear purpose: to give educated readers a "no-hype" look at how AI is actually being used in medicine right now. Powell isn't trying to sell a product or write a sci-fi story. Instead, he has created a piece of science journalism that is highly effective at building trust. He persuasively argues for the responsible integration of AI in medicine not by using emotional manipulation, but by masterfully leveraging the institutional credibility of Harvard (ethos), grounding his claims in hard data and real-life examples (logos), and employing a balanced structure that anticipates skepticism.

**The Power of Harvard's Name (Ethos)**

The article's primary strategy—and honestly its strongest one—is leveraging authority. The author, Alvin Powell, is listed as a "Harvard Staff Writer" and has spent decades covering science and medicine for the university. He doesn't try to present himself as the medical expert. Instead, he acts as a facilitator, gathering a team of top-tier experts to make his points for him.

From the very beginning, the article builds an unassailable wall of authority. We aren't just hearing from random doctors; we are hearing from "Isaac Kohane, chair of the Medical School's Department of Biomedical Informatics" and "Bernard Chang, dean for medical education." The article stacks these titles one after another, transferring the massive weight of

these institutions onto the text itself. The audience isn't asked to trust a journalist; they are asked to trust the Dean of Harvard Medical School. This use of ethos is overwhelming in the best way—it signals to the reader that this isn't just an opinion piece, but an official, researched perspective from the top of the field.

## Backing It Up with Facts (Logos)

To appeal to its educated audience, the article doesn't just rest on its reputation. It reinforces that ethos with strong, specific logos. Powell avoids vague promises about the "future of AI" and instead hits the reader with concrete data and verifiable examples.

For instance, rather than just saying "AI helps doctors," he cites a specific study published in *JAMA Network Open* that compared diagnoses from doctors using AI versus AI alone. This use of a specific, named study adds significant weight for a skeptical reader. He also includes the widely publicized real-world case of a mother who used ChatGPT to diagnose her son's "tethered cord syndrome" after 17 human doctors missed it. This example functions as a powerful hybrid of logic and storytelling—it proves the technology works while grounding it in a human reality. By naming specific tools like "OpenEvidence," the article makes the AI revolution feel tangible and real, rather than theoretical.

## The "Balanced" Slant

Perhaps the smartest rhetorical move in the text is its structure. Powell seems to know that his audience is wary of "hype," so he uses a careful, balanced structure to disarm them. This is a deliberate form of what we might call "slanting by selection"—choosing to present both sides to create a tone of "cautious optimism."

The article moves in a constant rhythm of pro and con. For every benefit statement, like how AI can "increase efficiency" and "reduce mistakes," there is an immediate counterpoint acknowledging that "there are serious concerns, too." Powell even dedicates an entire section to "The bias threat," openly discussing how AI can hallucinate or perpetuate racial bias in healthcare. Acknowledging the "bad" makes the "good" significantly more credible. It doesn't feel like he is hiding anything. This balance positions the article as a neutral, responsible authority rather than a promotional piece, which paradoxically makes the reader more willing to accept the positive arguments for AI.

**Conclusion**

"Machine healing" works so well because it doesn't try to trick the reader. It perfectly combines the massive expert authority of Harvard (ethos), the hard proof of medical data (logos), and a smart, balanced structure that respects the reader's intelligence.

Ultimately, the article succeeds not by "selling" AI, but by demonstrating its value through authority and evidence. This matters because in a time of information overload, it shows how a major institution uses its power—its experts, its data, and its reputation—to shape the public conversation on one of the most important technologies of our time.