Medieval Tech Predicts Modern AI Breakthroughs

A -year-old instrument hints at AI’s role in space precision.

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Year of Invention

The Rectangulus, a 14th-century astronomical instrument, was devised by Richard of Wallingford.

Richard of Wallingford’s Rectangulus, designed in 1335, was one of the first mechanical devices to model celestial motion using trigonometric principles. Its complexity predated modern computational models by centuries. Today, AI systems in commercial space and aviation use similar trigonometric frameworks to predict orbital trajectories with sub-second accuracy. The historical parallel underscores how foundational mathematical models—once mechanical—are now being reanimated by machine intelligence.

Source: Nature · Published November 25, 2026
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-03725-5

01

Trigonometry as AI’s First Language

This continuity implies that AI is not replacing classical science but amplifying it—transforming historical equations into real-time decision-making engines.



02

AI as the New Mechanist

This transition reveals a deeper truth: AI in space and aviation isn’t just about speed—it’s about redefining the relationship between human ingenuity and automated intelligence.

George Arnold Alexander III, MPA

Partner, ALEX Companies
Associate Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC
Licensed Broker in TX, CO, NC, AL

george@alex-companies.com · +1 713.918.9951

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