



WORTH A REED

First Quarter 2025

Thank You

Amanda Lisachenko, COO

1998 was a memorable and busy year for me. I graduated from The Ohio State University, planned a wedding and was married, and bought my first house. To top it off, I had a job interview at Reed Financial Services. Little did I know how this moment would change my life. I remember sitting across the table and listening to Jim Reed proudly tell me about the firm he had built. He was so excited for the potential future that he saw for the firm and displayed so much conviction and energy. Jim has always had a talent for seeing the potential in things whether that be in staff, technology, the markets, or client's dreams. Fortunately, on that day, he also saw potential in my professional skill-set and hired me.

In college you are encouraged to find a mentor but that is easier said than done. I have been fortunate to have someone that embodies that title since the first day I joined the firm. Jim has never been too busy to take time out of his day to review, teach, train, or discuss a subject. Sometimes this training could become quite dangerous, such as the

time he took me out after work to help my golf game. I overshot the green and my ball bounced onto the patio right next to the golf pro. Jim just laughed and amazingly continued to take me back out for more practice. He has always challenged me to grow and do things that I did not think I could do. Some of my favorite moments are from sitting with him in meetings and observing how he explains concepts, calms fears, and mostly listens to what a client's needs are. He has always had a way of putting clients at ease and helping them see the possibilities of their future.

I am extremely thankful for the opportunities Jim provided when I joined Reed Financial Services almost 27 years ago. Now the team and I get to continue and build upon the fundamentals of the firm that Jim established. I am forever grateful for the mentorship and guidance Jim has provided and look forward to continuing that relationship with him in his retirement. Thank you, Jim, and I hope you enjoy your well-deserved retirement. But I am also hoping to get a little more help with my golf game this summer, so you still have some mentoring left to do. I promise to be more careful. ■

Everyday Use Cases of AI - Evan Watson

While many are talking about Artificial Intelligence and the groundbreaking productivity gains it will provide for things like drug development and other tools, there are some useful cases that could be helpful today. It is important to remember that while these AI models are exciting and new, they still have a lot of bugs, so we want to stick to tasks that have low downsides of misinformation.



Creating a Budget – One of the best financial capabilities for this tool is allowing it to help create a budget. To do this, you can export your spending data from your checking account or your credit card. Be sure to wipe any sensitive information like account numbers or personal information and just keep the description, category, and amount. If you want to change any of the categories at this point, now is a suitable time to do so. You can then paste the generalized information into the chatbot and allow it to break down the information in several ways and give you some better understanding of what you spend in a normal month.

Once it has this data, if you give it some parameters, such as a monthly income level or a cap on how much you want to spend on eating out, it can help you create a budget. Now AI cannot make you follow the budget, but you can continue to keep up with this monthly and make any necessary adjustments.

Help in the Kitchen – Have you ever wanted to feel like one of those chefs on TV who can take a random basket of items and turn it into a gourmet meal? Well AI can help with that. You can either use the tool to help you generate meal ideas for those who like to meal prep or use it to produce a recipe with the few ingredients you have that you have no idea what to do with. The meal preparation aspect is helpful because you can be as specific as you want and the more parameters you provide to the chatbot, the better off your outcomes. You can even be as specific as asking to use a specific grocery store so most of the items needed do not require you to drive to three separate places. You can also ask it to generate excel files that include the instructions for meal ideas, or you can do some of your own research to find recipes yourself.

Building a workout schedule – Most of us want to work out but do not necessarily know where to start. Chatbots can help you create a workout schedule that you can refine depending on your goals and needs. For example, let us say you have the urge to run a 5K and want a program to follow. You can ask the chatbot to build you a plan and adjust that to include things like how many days you want to run versus being off and stretching routines. All of this simplifies exercise away from thinking about what to do and freeing you up to just do.

Getting better at writing – We all, to some extent, are communicators. Whether that be at home or at work, we often must write to someone to help express ideas. With the English language being as complicated as it is, particularly with punctuation and grammar, having a tool that could help you review and improve your writing could be very productive. Chatbots are generally large language models, meaning they review and process thousands of words and data. This is where these chatbots can shine the most. After you have used the normal editor in your word processing program, you can paste the text into an AI model and ask it analyze things like your tone, strength of vocabulary, and clarity of the message.

In addition to analyzing your writing, these chatbots can provide you with writing prompts. If you are someone who likes to write a journal but may not always know what to write about or have a creative writing hobby, using these bots to provide you with a daily prompt could be something of interest to keep your writing interesting.

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More Than Money: Some Thoughts on Charitable Giving - Janet Edwards, Director of Client Relations

Last month, I had the pleasure of organizing a bicycle event in my hometown of Garrettsville. The energy of the cycling community coming together for a cause was truly inspiring. Through our collective efforts and those of our sponsors, we raised funds for various local charities. One contribution that resonated deeply with me was our donation to Garrettsville's People Tree Sharing program, a charity that has been supporting local families for over 30 years. I was fortunate enough to get to speak with one of the organizers who was profoundly grateful for the donation explaining they were significantly down on donations. Apparently, people don't carry cash as much to have it to donate and many people are reluctant to give out credit card numbers. Learning more about the organization and how much it will help the local community had a strong impact on me.

Engaging in charitable giving not only benefits the recipients but also enriches the giver's life. However, with countless organizations seeking support, choosing the right one can be daunting. Here's a guide to help you navigate this rewarding journey.

1. Reflect on your values and passions

Begin by identifying causes that resonate with your personal values. Whether it's education and healthcare, environmental conservation or social justice. Aligning your donations with your passions ensures a more meaningful giving experience.

For my bicycle event, I like to spread some goodwill in the local community such as park districts that build cycling paths and also support causes that are related to cycling such as youth development cycling teams. Everyone has very unique experiences and passions that make them excited.

2. Research potential charities

Once you've pinpointed your preferred cause, delve into researching organizations within that sector. You can utilize resources to evaluate charities based on their financial health, accountability, and transparency. There are various platforms that provide ratings and offer insights on how effectively a charity utilizes funds.

3. Assess the impact

Effective charities clearly articulate their mission and demonstrate measurable outcomes. Examine the organization's reports and case studies to understand the tangible impact of their work. Charities can significantly vary in their impact, so it's crucial to choose one that effectively addresses the issues you care about.

4. Consider the use of Qualified Charitable Distributions

- **Understanding Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)** For individuals aged 70.5 or older, a QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA to a qualified charitable organization. This strategy allows you to donate up to \$108,000 for 2025 tax free, satisfying Required Minimum Distributions for those aged 73 or older and potentially reducing taxable income.
- **Benefits of QCD's**
 - **Tax efficiency:** QCD's exclude the donated amount for taxable income, which can be advantageous even for those who do not itemize deductions.
 - **Satisfy RMDs:** For individuals subject to RMD's, QCD's can count towards fulfilling this requirement, thereby lowering taxable income.
 - **Support for charities:** QCD's provide a direct and immediate benefit to the charitable organization, allowing donors to see the impact of their contributions.
- **Steps to implement a QCD**

You can reach out to us and we can assist you in sending checks directly from your IRA to a charitable organization. For clients who would like to do numerous QCDs, we also have the option of sending you a checkbook to write these checks directly out of your IRA, so contact us if this is something that may be of interest to you.

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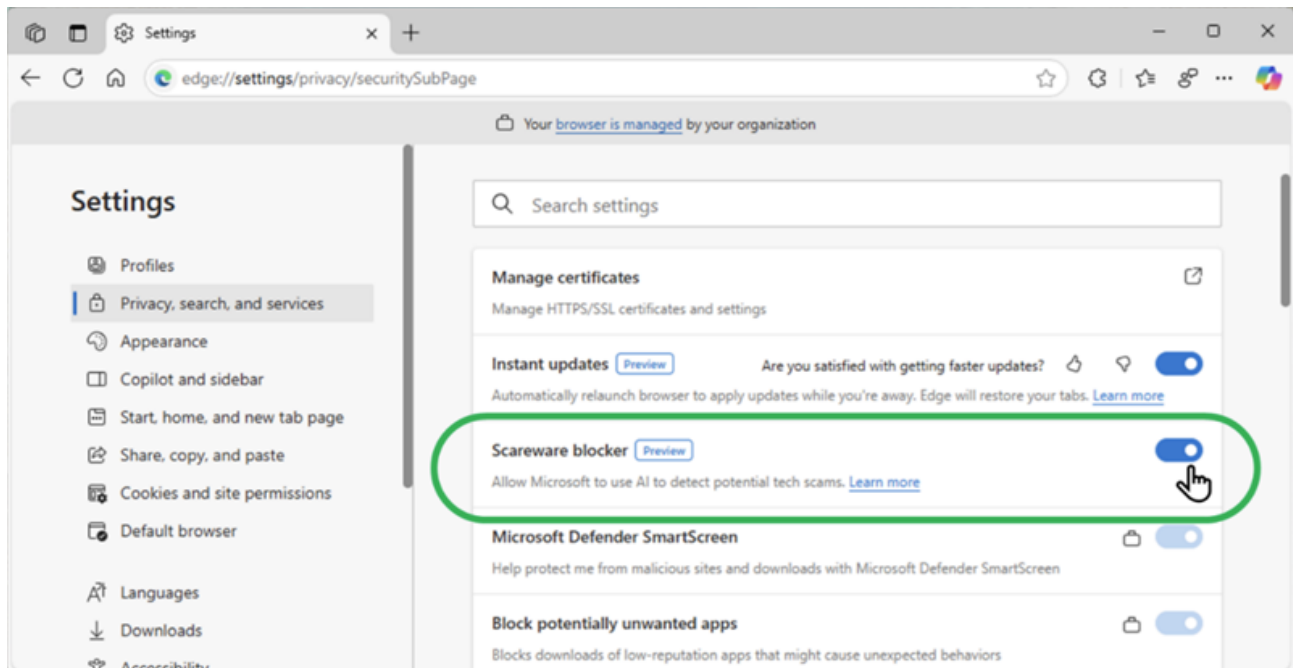
Staying Safe Online with Edge - Mark Lisachenko

Google Chrome is still the dominant browser for web surfing. What a lot of people don't realize is that the Microsoft Edge browser was changed in 2020 to be an implementation of Chrome. It's essentially the same thing now with just a different look and some added features. The Edge browser has some advantages from generally taking up less memory with sleeping tabs to having better performance on the Windows operating system. Edge also offers easier tracking prevention to give you better control of exposing your digital footprint. Edge still allows you to access the Chrome web store for extensions and has better integration for those of you that use the Microsoft ecosystem for email and applications. Edge also offers Microsoft Defender SmartScreen to protect against phishing and malware.

Edge also just released a nice new security feature in January of 2025. It's called 'scareware blocker'. Scareware is what happens when you are in your browser and then you suddenly get a full screen pop-up with a scary sounding message maybe even with audio and keyboard and mouse tricks. They will have an urgent message such as 'your computer has been infected by malware....' or 'Your identity has been compromised' along with 'call this number ...' or 'install our antivirus.' The list of scams is endless and has a bigger impact on newer computer users and seniors. Please note that even without scareware blocker in Edge activated you can simply hold down your keyboards 'Escape' key to close a full screen scareware page (assuming the page didn't have logic to hijack your keyboard).

Per the Microsoft Edge Team, "Scareware blocker adds a new, first line of defense to help protect the users exposed to a new scam if it attempts to open a full screen page." They go on to explain "Scareware blocker uses a machine learning model that runs on the local computer. The model uses computer vision to compare full screen pages to thousands of sample scams that the scam-fighting community shared with us. The model runs locally, without saving or sending images to the cloud." For more information on scareware see the following link [Stand up to scareware with scareware blocker, now available in preview in Microsoft Edge - Microsoft Edge Blog](#)

To activate scareware blocker first make sure your Edge browser is up to date (always good practice). Then go to the Ellipsis menu (...) and select 'Settings' and then the 'Privacy, search and services' tab and toggle on the 'Scareware blocker'. Please see the screenshot below as a reference:



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More Than Money: Some Thoughts on Charitable Giving *(Continued)*

5. Engage with the organization

Building a relationship with the charity can enrich your giving experience. We often encourage clients to give to organizations over time and see how it makes you feel. Sometimes these past interactions will shape your future donations.

6. Monitor and reassess your giving

Regularly review the effectiveness of the organizations you support. Stay informed about their progress, financial health, and any changes in leadership or mission. This ongoing assessment ensures that your donations continue to align with your values and achieve the desired impact.

Conclusion

Thoughtful and informed charitable giving, especially through strategies like Qualified Charitable Distributions, not only benefits the recipients, but also enriches your own life. By carefully selecting organizations that align with your values, understanding the benefits of QCD, and engaging meaningfully, you can make a lasting difference in the world while experiencing personal growth and satisfaction. ■

Everyday Use Cases of AI *(Continued)*

Be cautious on Research – While you may think that these would be useful for things like summarizing news or doing some basic research, be cautious. AI models are also known to ‘hallucinate’ (generate incorrect, misleading, or fabricated information). If you do use these for basic initial research, use other sources to double-check that the information you are receiving is accurate.

There are many more use cases that will gradually come to the forefront especially as the technology gets better. If you find a new or interesting use case, we would love to hear your ideas. ■



The IRS Tax Deadline is Tuesday, April 15th

As a general rule, you have until tax day to make IRA contributions for the prior year. In 2025, that means you can contribute toward your 2024 tax year limit of \$7,000 (or \$8,000 if you are age 50 or older) until April 15th.

We encourage you to not wait until the last minute to make sure everything gets completed timely as sometimes the mail takes time. We can also assist you with doing contributions via electronic funds transfer (ETF) or depositing checks using Pershing's mobile app. Please call us if you have any questions.

IMPORTING PERSHING ACCOUNTS INTO TURBO TAX

Please be aware that if you are importing tax information into TurboTax, when you are prompted to ‘Search For Your Financial Institution’ you will want to type ‘BNY’. Then you can pick the bottom choice highlighted below.

(BNY MELLON | PERSHING):

Search for Your Financial Institution

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Spring Cleaning Your Financial House - Troy Hammer

Recent bursts of warm weather has many of us anxious for spring to arrive. After a long winter, many are excited to open the windows, get outside and get some much-needed spring cleaning done. On the flip side, spring also brings the dreaded tax season, with its own stress, anxiety and the need to pull together statements and supporting documents. This year, consider tackling some “spring cleaning” of your finances and recordkeeping while you’re at it. Here are a few thoughts on areas you can address:

- Shred old financial documents once no longer needed. Look for community sponsored free shredding events to ensure they are disposed of securely. If you live in the area, call us to coordinate bringing paper documents to our office for secure shredding.
- For documents to be kept, ensure they are organized and maintained in a safe/secure manner yet accessible if needed.
- Review credit card and bank statements and take note of all streaming services, memberships, app subscriptions, etc. It can be surprising how many recurring charges accumulate and aren’t needed or used frequently.
- Look for discounts that have expired. As many promotional rates and discounts for things like internet, cable or cell phone service expire after a set time, it can be easy to overlook and find yourself paying much higher monthly rates without these promotions being applied.
- Review your credit report. You can request a free credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies once every 12 months. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com to obtain your free reports and look for errors, suspicious activity or accounts you don’t recognize. If you haven’t already, consider freezing your credit to help prevent identity theft. Contact us if you need assistance with this process.

Like spring cleaning your house, an annual project can seem burdensome and overwhelming to initiate. But a few hours in the spring can help reduce stress and save money in the long run. ■

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