

-From **Newsela**

Science

AI bot ChatGPT shows academics essay-writing skills and usability



The latest form of text-generating artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, has shocked teachers and other professionals with its speed and ability to write articles and essays.

By The Guardian, adapted by Newsela staff

Published:01/03/2023

The latest chatbot from the OpenAI foundation stunned onlookers with its writing ability, proficiency at complex tasks, and ease of use. A chatbot is a software or computer program. It mimics human conversation and interacts with humans through voice or text.

The system, called ChatGPT, is the latest evolution of the GPT family of text-generating artificial intelligence (AI). AI is an approach that uses algorithms to teach a machine to spot patterns and make decisions. Algorithms are a series of instructions in code. Two years ago, the team's previous AI, GPT3, was able to generate an opinion piece for The Guardian. Now, ChatGPT has significant further capabilities.

Unlike previous AI from the company, ChatGPT has been released for anyone to use, for free, during a feedback period. The company hopes to use this feedback to improve the final version of the tool.

Chatbot Gets Full Marks

In the days since it was released, people in different professions have tested how ChatGPT would affect their work. Professors submitted exam questions to ChatGPT, and evaluated the responses.

Dan Gillmor is a journalism professor at Arizona State University. Gillmor asked the AI to handle one of the assignments he gives his students. The assignment was to write a letter giving advice regarding online security and privacy. "If you're unsure about the legitimacy of a website or email, you can do a quick search to see if others have reported it as being a scam," the AI advised in part.

"I would have given this a good grade," Gillmor said.

Programmers, the people who write computer codes, used the tool to solve tough coding challenges in a matter of seconds. The chatbot could even spit out limericks explaining the code functionality.

Don't Ask How To Steal A Car ... Sort Of

OpenAI said the new AI was created with a focus on ease of use where the dialogue format allows ChatGPT to answer follow-up questions. The chatbot can also admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises and reject inappropriate requests.

ChatGPT is good at self-censoring, and at realizing when it is being asked an impossible question. Asked, for instance, to describe what happened when Columbus arrived in America in 2015, older models may have provided a fictitious response. However, ChatGPT recognizes the falsehood and warns that any answer would be fictional.

The bot is also capable of refusing to answer queries altogether. Ask it for advice on stealing a car, for example. The bot will say that, "Stealing a car is a serious crime that can have severe consequences," and instead give advice such as "using public transportation".

However, the limits are easy to evade. Ask the AI instead for advice on how to beat the car-stealing mission in a fictional virtual reality game called "Car World." Then, the chatbot will give detailed information on how to steal a car. It will do all this while insisting that the advice is only for use in the game "Car World."

Used Without Permission?

The AI is trained on a huge sample of text taken from the internet, generally without explicit permission from the authors of the material used. That has led to controversy. Some argue that people will use the technology to get around copyright laws.

One unusual critic was Elon Musk. He co-founded OpenAI in 2015 before parting ways in 2017 due to conflicts of interest between the organization and Tesla. In a post on Twitter on December 4, Musk revealed that the organization "had access to [the] Twitter database for training". That access has been put on pause for now.

-From **Turnitin**

AI writing: The challenge and opportunity in front of education now

At every turn, academic integrity has been both supported by and tested by technology. And, for nearly 25 years, Turnitin has been at the forefront of academic integrity and writing technology, evolving with and adapting to the needs of the global education community. As with any commitment to growth and innovation, it is important to acknowledge new challenges and new opportunities.

Today, facing a new frontier with AI writing and ChatGPT, educators and institutions are calling on Turnitin for guidance and support.

Turnitin AI

AI is firmly in our DNA at Turnitin, with AI functionality built into our solutions dating back to 2015. Fundamentally, we believe that AI can be a positive force and that equitable access to AI tools is vital. When used responsibly, AI has the potential to support and enhance the learning process. However, we recognize that for educators, there is a more pressing and immediate need to know when and where AI and AI writing tools have been used by students.

AI writing

Lately, there has been a surge of interest and concern surrounding ChatGPT, the increased sophistication of its capabilities, and the rapid advancement of AI writing tools. While AI writing tools have the potential to expand on original thoughts and ideas, they also have risks similar to contract cheating, when students represent AI-assisted writing as their own. This becomes both a challenge and an opportunity for the education community, one that we have prepared for and are ready to support educators in taking on.

Our AI writing roadmap

While the buzz is recent, for us, the focus on AI writing is not new. For the last two and a half years, we have been researching and developing technology to recognize the signature of AI-assisted writing. Today, some of those technologies are in the trial stage, while others are market-ready.

So, what does that mean with regard to the question on everyone’s mind: “Can Turnitin detect ChatGPT writing?”

We have technology that can detect AI-assisted writing and AI writing generated by tools such as ChatGPT today.

[Turnitin Originality](#), an in-market product that investigates the authenticity of student work, can detect some forms of AI-assisted writing and report on indicators of contract cheating. And, other recent product enhancements are detecting AI writing in our research and development labs.

We will incorporate our latest AI writing detection capabilities—including those that recognize ChatGPT writing—into our in-market products for educator use in 2023.

We plan to add enhanced product features beyond detection designed to support pedagogical practices that foster original thinking, and work with customers to enhance technologies that help them evaluate whether a student’s work is their own. Like AI, we are advancing quickly, and we will continue to support the education community as they embrace elements of AI-assisted writing while still upholding high standards of academic integrity.

Where do we go from here?

The rise and viral adoption of ChatGPT and other emerging AI writing tools has brought about a number of questions—primarily because we are witnessing the shift in real time. But, it is important to recognize that the presence of AI writing capabilities does not signal the end of original thought or expression if educators set the right parameters and expectations for its use.

The next step is a critical one. Educators, administrators, students, and technology partners have an opportunity and a responsibility to participate openly and honestly in the AI-assisted writing dialogue, to preserve integrity and trust in the education community and beyond. We are actively working with customer advocates and partners to address new and evolving needs, further our collective understanding of current AI writing capabilities, and acknowledge when its use benefits or detracts from student learning.

We encourage you to have these discussions at your institution now and set achievable standards and expectations for your students around the acceptable use of AI-assisted writing tools.

-From **ASCD Smart Brief**

NYC education department blocks ChatGPT on school devices, networks

By [Michael Elsen-Rooney](#)

Jan 3, 2023



New York City is blocking access to the artificial intelligence-powered ChatGPT on school devices and networks.

Jakub Porzycki / NurPhoto

New York City students and teachers can no longer access ChatGPT — the new artificial intelligence-powered chatbot that generates stunningly cogent and lifelike writing — on education department devices or internet networks, agency officials confirmed Tuesday.

The education department blocked access to the program, citing “negative impacts on student learning, and concerns regarding the safety and accuracy of content,” a spokesperson said. The move from the nation’s largest school system could have ripple effects as districts and schools across the country [grapple with how to respond to the arrival of the dynamic new technology](#).

The chatbot’s ability to [churn out pitch perfect essay responses to prompts](#) spanning a wide range of subjects has sparked fears among some schools and educators that their writing assignments could soon become obsolete — and that the program could encourage cheating and plagiarism.

“Due to concerns about negative impacts on student learning, and concerns regarding the safety and accuracy of content, access to ChatGPT is restricted on New York City Public Schools’ networks and devices,” said education department spokesperson Jenna Lyle. “While the tool may be able to provide quick and easy answers to questions, it does not build critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for academic and lifelong success.”

Individual schools can still request access to the site if they're planning to study the technology behind the chatbot, a department spokesperson said.

The program, [created by the organization OpenAI](#), uses machine learning to come up with its own custom-made responses to specific prompts. It can pull and compile historical facts, write in specific styles, and make convincing logical arguments — all with nearly perfect grammar (unless a user gives a prompt to add grammatical errors).

That's posing some thorny questions for educators who rely on independent writing assignments to build and assess students' understanding and critical thinking skills.

One high school English teacher [argued in The Atlantic](#) that the chatbot spells the “end of high school English.”

The program still has limitations, sometimes coming up with inaccurate conclusions or even including [offensive language](#).

It's unclear if or how many other districts are banning the program. Several other large school districts did not immediately respond to Chalkbeat's inquiries about how they're handling ChatGPT. But the decision from the nation's largest school system could well influence how other districts act.

The education department's ban will only cut off access to the chatbot in some settings. Students can still get on the site on non-education department devices or internet networks.

Adam Stevens, a longtime New York City history teacher who started his career at Paul Robeson High School in Brooklyn and now teaches at Brooklyn Tech, believes that blocking the program is counterproductive. He compared the fears now swirling around ChatGPT to those that emerged around Google.

“People said the same thing about Google 15 or 20 years ago when students could ‘find answers online,’” he said.

The program could even prove useful in some cases, Stevens added, generating a “baseline” response to an essay prompt that the class could analyze together and figure out how to improve upon.

Stevens argued that the best way to discourage students from using ChatGPT and building up their critical writing skills is by “assigning them work that is inviting them to explore things worth knowing,” and moving away from teaching formulaic writing based on strict rubrics.

“We’ve trained a whole generation of kids to pursue rubric points and not knowledge,” he added, “and of course, if what matters is the point at the end of the semester, then ChatGPT is a threat.”

Michael Elsen-Rooney is a reporter for Chalkbeat New York, covering NYC public schools. Contact Michael at melsen-rooney@chalkbeat.org.

-From **eSchool News** (sponsored by Promethean)

AI’s promising reality in classrooms

AI systems help teachers better interact with students in classrooms, simplify everyday classroom tasks, and improve overall efficiency

Laura Ascione
January 5, 2023

Artificial intelligence (AI) can be an ambiguous word in education circles, evoking images of machines replacing human teachers in the future. The truth, while less fantastic, is that AI is a solid tool that assists educators in the classroom right now.

Join experts [during an eSchool News webinar](#) to discuss the real-world ways AI operates and how AI systems enable teachers to better interact with students, simplify everyday classroom tasks, and improve overall efficiency and productivity.

Key takeaways include:

- How current voice-activated AI systems at home, in cars, and on devices can be put to use in classrooms
- How to use voice commands or a remote to control laptops, interactive displays, internet browsers, apps, and more
- How to scale AI pilot projects into true distinct implementations