

Generative AI is here. What is it, who's using it, and what's next?

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Generative AI is here, free to use, and widely available. While generative AI is in its early stage of development, it is rapidly developing and has the potential to revolutionize and transform industries. This article gives a brief overview of AI and popular generative AI chatbots, explores who is using this technology and why, and forecasts potential issues businesses may encounter.

What is it?

From a bird's eye perspective, AI systems can perform some of the cognitive tasks that humans perform.¹ For example, AI can analyze data and identify patterns, interpret speech, recommend search terms, or play games. Because the tasks AI can perform vary, AI is sometimes described as either weak or strong.² Weak AI may be a misnomer, however, because weak AI can still perform a variety of functions that have become a part of our everyday lives. For example, chatbots, spam filters, streaming recommendations, and self-driving cars all use weak AI. Weak AI may be better referred to as narrow or specialized AI. Strong AI is AI that can mimic human behavior and intelligence by solving problems it has not been trained for. True strong AI doesn't exist as we know of, yet. The evolving development of generative AI, however, is working in that direction. The current state of generative AI relies on complex algorithms that generate new content based on the data it has been trained on. Generative AI can turn text into an image or generate essays from a question. It can "learn" from and interact with its developers and users.

¹ Alyssa Schroer, [What is Artificial Intelligence](#), BuiltIn (updated May 19, 2023).

² Ellen Glover, [Strong AI vs Weak AI: What's the Difference](#), BuiltIn (published Sept. 29, 2022).

Generative AI became well known when the first such chatbot launched on November 30, 2022. The early conversational AI chatbot system uses reinforcement learning from human feedback to create new content that can mimic human-like answers and conversations. For example, you can ask it to make a meal plan, write an email, create a travel plan, or write an article about AI and it will generate and modify its responses based on its interactions with you.

Since then, other developers have released their own versions of conversational AI chatbot systems with similar functionality. Each of these AI chatbot systems has been trained by engineers to “learn” natural language. Thus, the answers these AI chatbots generate are natural and conversational language. The original model used information based on data up to 2021 but newer AI chatbots have access to the internet and, in theory, can reference recent events.

Generative AI has its limitations. Generative AI has also been reported to “hallucinate” and make information up that appears seemingly true.

For example, earlier this year, it was widely publicized that attorneys in New York used an AI chatbot to research case law and in response, the chatbot created quotations and citations to cases that do not exist. After involvement from the judge and opposing counsel, counsel asked the chatbot if a case was real. It doubled-down on its hallucination and said yes and stated the case could be found on LexisNexis and Westlaw. The New York Times asked three different chatbots the same question about when it first reported on AI. All were wrong and all cited articles that did not exist.³

Now, plaintiff’s class action lawyers have started filing suits in California against generative AI developers alleging, among other things, invasion of privacy, copyright infringement, larceny, and more. A radio host in Georgia is suing for defamation because an AI chatbot produced a summary of a lawsuit claiming that he was accused of embezzling money from a gun rights group.⁴ After the production of a fictitious summary, it produced an entirely fictitious complaint which stemmed from an actual complaint available online. Artists and novelists are suing for copyright infringement. On July 13, 2023, the Federal Trade Commission opened an investigation into one of the major developers.⁵

Generative AI is admittedly unreliable and arguably under attack. But people are still using it.

Who’s using it?

The answer is millions of people. One AI chatbot is reported to have over 100 million monthly users, reaching the 100 million user mark in 2 months.⁶ Another is reported to have 30 million monthly users. And yet another AI chatbot tied to an internet search engine, is also reported to have 100 million daily users with 1/3 of them interacting with AI chatbot on a daily basis.

According to one AI chatbot, writers, marketers, and other creative professionals are using it to brainstorm and outline, such as generating ideas for blog posts or outline a novel; students, professionals, and other writers are using it to write essays, articles, and other types of creative content; programmers and other developers are using it to write and debug code; business, individuals, and other organizations are using it

³ Karen Weise and Cade Metz, [When AI Chatbots Hallucinate](#), The New York Times (updated May 9, 2023).

⁴ See *Walters v. OpenAI, LLC*, Case No. 23-A-04860-2 (Gwinnett Cty., Ga June 6, 2023)

⁵ Curiously, CM/ECF users have also been receiving public notices about the potential to inadvertently share restricted documents when using third-party software providers or services.

⁶ Krystal Hu, [ChatGPT sets record for fastest-growing user base](#) (updated Feb. 2, 2023)

to translate between languages; students and professionals are using it to research on the web. Users also are using this chatbot for more general purposes such as answering questions, generating creative text formats, and collaborating. How does it know who is using it? According to it, it has access to publicly available data such as the types of prompts people are using, the length of responses it is generating, and the feedback it is receiving. It also uses the conversations it has with the users to give it a “more personal understanding of how people are using it and what they are finding helpful and challenging.” In short, as expected, the AI chatbot learns from its users.

What’s next?

According to a Forbes Advisor survey of 600 business owners conducted earlier this year, 73% of businesses use or are planning to use AI chatbots for instant messaging, 61% use AI to optimize emails, and 55% use AI for personalized services.⁷ Remarkably, 97% believe that an AI chatbot will help their business while at the same time over 40% are concerned about an over-dependence on technology due to AI use and 30% are concerned about AI-generated misinformation. According to a research report, 98% of global executives agree that AI foundation models will play an important role in their organizations’ strategies in the next 3 to 5 years and 40% of working hours can be impacted by the language models AI chatbots use.⁸

With millions of users and business owners reporting a belief that generative AI will help their business, the time for businesses to understand this technology and the benefits, risks, and ethical questions that come with it is now. Generative AI has the power to automate tasks, streamline production, provide customer service, draft website content, prepare employee policies and handbooks, analyze and summarize vast amounts of information, and otherwise disrupt the working environment as we know it. With its use, comes questions about intellectual property, data privacy, discrimination, litigation, transparency, ethics, and regulations.

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⁷ Kathy Haan, [How Businesses Are Using Artificial Intelligence In 2023](#), Forbes Advisor (updated Apr. 24, 2023)

⁸ Paul Daugherty, Bhaskar Ghosh, Lan Guan, Karthik Narain, and Jim Wilson, [A new era of generative AI for everyone](#), Accenture (Mar. 23, 2023)