

# ChatGPT 'AI'ds education

## Staff Editorial

Sophomore Lucy Brown\* recalls her initial experience with ChatGPT, which she tried at the suggestion of her English teacher. Intrigued, she logged onto the ChatGPT website and started posing questions: What is the capital of France? What is blockchain? What is the difference between affect and effect? And, can you suggest a story prompt?

To her amazement, ChatGPT was able to provide quick and accurate answers that seemed almost human-like. Brown became an instant fan and began utilizing ChatGPT for various purposes, such as improving her writing skills by checking for grammatical errors and getting feedback from it to strengthen her writing style.

"ChatGPT is like having a writing partner who's always by my side, helping me find inspiration, sharpen my skills and bring my ideas to life," Brown said.

On Nov. 30, 2022, the beta version of ChatGPT — an Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) system that uses natural language processing to simulate conversations and produce answers — was made accessible to the masses. According to Forbes, this program has already attracted over a million users in mere days of its release and is based on GPT-3.5, which is a language model trained to produce text. In contrast to a canned Google Search result, this technology is capable of explaining and elaborating on earlier points and telling stories.

Stories, that is, like Brown's. That's right, ChatGPT's text regurgitation is so similar to a real human's writing that most readers of the first three paragraphs of this editorial probably didn't realize that this fictitious story — character\*, writing, quotes and all — was crafted entirely by ChatGPT.

If you didn't catch the A.I.-laden text at the beginning of this story, don't worry: most people don't. In fact, the impressive skill at replicating human-produced writing ChatGPT possesses is concerning to educational and writing professionals alike.

Cheating, obviously, is a primary concern when it comes to programs like ChatGPT. The issue

with academic integrity reaches worldwide; in the UK, for example, there was a 26 percent rise in cases of cheating using a smartphone in 2018, according to the Guardian. Furthermore, universities across the United States have probed into online resources and their correlation with cheating. In 2020, Boston University launched an investigation into students' use of Chegg, which is a California-based company that aims to assist students with homework.



Voting results of the KnightMedia staff in regards to this editorial.

"People, students have always cheated; that's never going to change," English teacher Elizabeth Joiner said. "It's human nature to sometimes look for the easy way out, and this obviously makes it easier ... But I feel like if people are going to blatantly cheat on stuff, they are going to have to be a little more creative."

Some schools, including New York City public schools, recently blocked ChatGPT access on school computers and networks, according to the New York Times. However, with the wide reach of technology within the school system, it seems impossible to block the use of this technology completely. According to Associate Principal for Instruction Joyce Kim, Prospect's administration does not currently have any policies regarding A.I. She said, in an email to the Prospector, that there hasn't been much discussion about it but recognizes it can be a powerful tool if students use it well.

Junior Colin Ryan agrees that A.I. can be an advantageous tool and has found merits when working with it for many subjects, including coding. He doesn't believe it could ever replace the personified edge of human-produced writing or the value of learning critical thinking; however, he does see value in using ChatGPT as support to broaden student's ideas.

"Although it can hurt and stunt the process of growing and learning in everyday life, [A.I.] can definitely expand on the things that we didn't know were possible," Ryan said.

One such possibility includes combating unethical uses of A.I. in academia with, well, more A.I. In fact, Princeton University senior Edward Tian developed an app, GPTZero, that detects whether a text is generated by ChatGPT. While GPTZero is hardly foolproof, Joiner says it was overwhelmingly accurate in detecting ChatGPT-pro-

duced text. This technology, combined with a balance of in-class essays and a variety of assessments of students' writing skills, would nullify many concerns that come with ChatGPT.

We, KnightMedia, believe the education system should be embracing technology like ChatGPT rather than shying away from it. While there are legitimate concerns about academic integrity, the outright banning of A.I. would only serve as a motivator for students to use it more or attempt to bypass regulations. With the wide reach of technology already prevalent in our school systems, it seems impossible to block the use of this technology completely.

Instead, we believe that teachers should utilize this technology to facilitate education, treating the technology in the way we would approach calculators or iPads: a tool for learning. Whether it be providing essay examples in English courses, maximizing the technology for coding endeavors or enriching foreign language learning through simulated conversations, it is clear that there are a host of possibilities to explore.

As an avid listener of NPR on the way to work, Joiner first heard about ChatGPT when an MIT professor spoke about its advantages and disadvantages, as well as his own utilization of the technology.

As soon as she situated herself at her desk, Joiner began to fiddle with ChatGPT for the first time. She asked it to generate recipes, new lesson plans and even grade an essay. While many of the ideas produced by ChatGPT were a skosh stale, or sometimes outright incorrect, Joiner was impressed by the nature of this new technology. Ironically, she even asked the bot to write an essay about the novel "1984" to test its capabilities.

"I can see it as, 'OK, it wrote a basic essay,'" Joiner said. "But if you're a good student, you know how to dress that baby up and make it better."

In addition to creating a skeleton rough draft or a helpful sample essay for students to learn structure from, ChatGPT can also be used as a stepping stone in the research process or widen the berth of ideas within an essay once students have a basic framework of their own thoughts.

For example, if a student's assignment was to craft, say, a persuasive essay about the merits of veganism, they could take their own ideas and engage in typing combat with ChatGPT to think deeper about the topic or produce a counterargument. Simply typing in, "convince me that veganism is better for the environment," wouldn't yield the best essay possible, but it can spit out four different reasons that could be researched further



**BOT BUDS:** Students, educators and A.I. work in tandem to enrich ideas within a student's assigned essay.

and expanded upon. Beyond English courses, ChatGPT can clarify problems that arise when working through a math problem, expedite the preliminary research process in social studies courses or even act as a conversationalist to build interpersonal communication skills within foreign languages.

Even small, positive interactions with the technology, through a variety of formats, can shift the villainized narrative of A.I. and its uses. Alexa, M3gan or ChatGPT are not going to rampage through the well-laid traditions of the educational system and replace its value or importance.

"It depends on how you use it," Ryan said. "If you are over-reliant on it, if you use it as a crutch, it's detrimental; you won't be able to develop the skills."

Still, this technology is part of our current and ever-changing reality and, eventually, the workforce that we, the students, will be entering. The adjustment won't be easy by any stretch of the imagination — it rarely is — but who is better to guide students through these unprecedented technological shifts than their teachers?

"It exists; it's there," Joiner said. "We're sometimes like, 'Oh we don't need iPads or cell phones,' but OK, they are here. You'd be fighting an uphill battle; it's not going to go away. I just think it's like leaning into it a little bit, knowing about it and understanding that it could be helpful ... [We have to] accept that things change. ➔"

**57%**

OF STUDENTS BELIEVE THAT A.I. IS A HELPFUL LEARNING TOOL IN THE CLASSROOM, ACCORDING TO A KNIGHTMEDIA SURVEY OF 126 STUDENTS

**20%**

OF STUDENTS SURVEYED HAVE USED CHATGPT

## CHATGPT USAGE

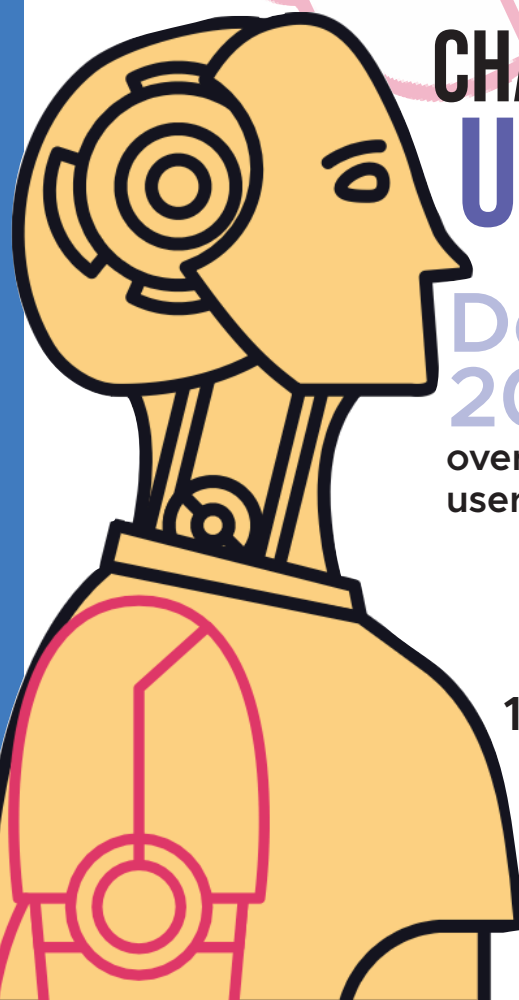
Dec. 4, 2022  
over 1 million users

Jan. 1, 2023  
100 million users

\*according to Forbes



TEST OUT CHATGPT'S CAPABILITIES



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