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From Help to Hindrance: The Rising Overuse of ChatGPT by Students

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From Chalkboards to Chatbots: The Evolution of Learning

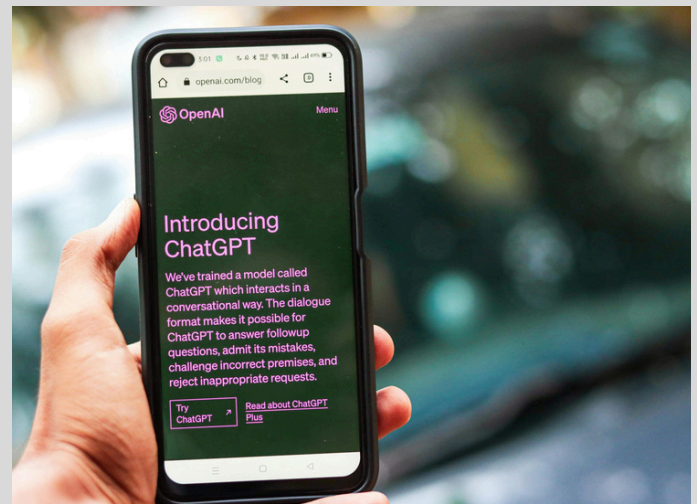
Digital learning has undergone a significant transformation of the educational landscape in recent years, particularly with the global shift to online and hybrid learning paradigms. One of the most revolutionary instruments to arise in this era is ChatGPT, a conversational AI model developed by OpenAI. As students globally adopt digital solutions to enhance their education, AI tools such as ChatGPT continue to grow, despite some negative consequences.

It is essential to examine the origins of ChatGPT to fully appreciate its present significance to digital learning fully. The quest commenced with GPT-1 in 2018, which was succeeded by GPT-2 in 2019, which garnered attention for its capacity to produce surprisingly sensible text. Nonetheless, it was GPT-3 in 2020 that completely embodied a turning point. GPT-3 has the capacity to generate essays, solve problems, summarise texts, and simulate human-like conversations on a scale that has never been observed before, with 175 billion parameters.

Then, ChatGPT emerged as a chatbot engineered explicitly for dialogue and refined from GPT-3.5 and GPT-4. Within months of its launch in late 2022, it drastically gained global recognition, reaching millions of users. It benefited students by providing prompt, articulate, and frequently precise responses to various subjects.

ChatGPT offers numerous benefits for students in colleges and universities. Hasanein and Sobaih (2023) highlighted that ChatGPT enhances accessibility and provides personalised support, promoting independent learning. Additionally, it improves language skills and supports academic writing (Sullivan et al., 2023). This

continuous availability facilitates immediate support for students, particularly during nocturnal study sessions or demanding assignments.



Secondly, ChatGPT aids students in mastering a second language with improved grammar, boosting vocabulary, and providing rephrasing support. It assists in brainstorming, generating essay outlines, elucidating complex subjects in simpler language, and aiding with coding and mathematical challenges. Thus, ChatGPT functions as an additional educational resource that stimulates productivity and promotes independence in learning.

The Misuse Spiral: When ChatGPT Replaces Real Thinking

ChatGPT's convenience could lead to complacency, despite its numerous benefits. Some learners have begun to abuse the tool by copying and pasting responses without sufficient understanding or validation, raising ethical concerns. Cotton et al. (2024) noted that such practices blur the line between legitimate academic assistance and academic dishonesty, thereby threatening the integrity of assessments. Furthermore, some students mistakenly assume that all ChatGPT outputs are accurate, although the model may

generate fabricated or misleading content (Sullivan et al., 2023). It promotes the avoidance of critical thinking and diminishes the motivation to interact with educational materials.

Some students incorrectly believe that all ChatGPT-generated content is precise, even though the model may sometimes generate factually inaccurate or misleading content. The distinction between academic dishonesty and academic assistance becomes increasingly ambiguous, and this misuse jeopardises the fundamental values of higher education.

Graduates Without Grit? The Long-Term Effects of AI Misuse

Significant repercussions are associated with this overreliance on ChatGPT. Research, critical thinking, and academic writing are just a few of the crucial academic skills that are being lost due to this. Students who rely heavily on AI tools risk graduating without the ability to construct arguments or solve problems independently. This over-reliance may weaken their critical thinking skills and academic resilience (Hasanein & Sobaih, 2023).

As a result, students are not adequately equipped to meet the workforce's requirements, which place a significant emphasis on analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the principle of integrity in academia, which is the foundation of a reliable educational system, is being eroded by this trend. Qualifications may lose credibility if examinations do not accurately reflect students' true effort and capability.

The Pedagogical Challenge of ChatGPT

The misuse of ChatGPT presents significant challenges for educators, particularly in assessing authentic student understanding and ensuring fairness (Cotton et al., 2024; Sullivan et al., 2023). When AI-generated responses are submitted as original work, teachers struggle to evaluate students' real understanding. This requires an overhaul of assessment methodologies. To overcome these difficulties, educational institutions must be proactive. Instead of restricting ChatGPT, schools could incorporate AI literacy into their curriculum. Students must be taught to critically analyse AI-generated content, use it with integrity, and incorporate it into their learning process without jeopardising personal effort.



Institutions should also establish criteria for the ethical use of AI tools. This involves discussions about authorship, originality, and the implications of academic dishonesty. Assessment formats may require modifications, prioritising open-ended questions, reflective essays, oral presentations, or problem-based learning that assess understanding rather than repetition. At the same time, lecturers must be trained to spot indicators of AI misuse and provide assignments that foster genuine participation.

Striking the Right Balance

ChatGPT is a powerful learning tool when used ethically and critically. However, as noted by Hasanein and Sobaih (2023), institutions must guide students on its responsible use to ensure that AI enhances rather than replaces academic growth. Failing to do so could result in graduates who are unprepared for the complex demands of the workforce (Sullivan et al., 2023). Misuse or over-reliance can hinder critical thinking, lead to a shallow understanding, and ultimately weaken educational outcomes. Submitting AI-generated work without reflection risks producing graduates who lack genuine competence. To prevent this, students and educators must strike a balance between embracing innovation and upholding academic integrity. Institutions must guide learners in using AI ethically to ensure future graduates are knowledgeable, capable, ethical, and prepared for a digital world.

References

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