



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE: ChatGPT – how to protect children

The Australian Tutoring Association and Dymocks Tutoring warn parents to be aware of the risks of their child using ChatGPT and similar systems to complete homework

Machine learning systems have been around in science and technology for decades. However, the recent public release of GPT3 in ChatGPT has significantly increased awareness of machine learning in the broader community.

One area that is significantly impacted by solutions such as ChatGPT is the completion of school work by students. Again, the use of technology by students to complete homework is not new. "Students have had access to resources like Google Socratic, Microsoft Math and Photomath to assist them in completion of homework like maths for a long while," says Mark Buckland, the Dymocks Tutoring Managing Director. "What is different is that solutions like ChatGPT can provide what appear to be fully formed responses to questions."

It is the ready availability of systems to generate complete responses to homework questions and essay topics that is a game-changer for parents, students and educators. "In recent weeks there's been a lot written about the impact of ChatGPT on educators, but nothing focussed on what parents should know," says Buckland.

There are a few key things that parents should be aware of when their child uses a system like ChatGPT:

- The system is great at returning a summary of a topic. Where a student wants to understand a topic better to guide their research, a tool such as ChatGPT is a perfect starting point. However, ATA CEO Mohan Dhall says, "Parents should use ChatGPT and understand the limitations of the inquiry function in order to assist their children to refine their questioning techniques."
- It is a poor resource for writing a response that would generate high marks because the response tends to be overly simplistic and not deeply analytical. Students - particularly those in senior years like Year 11 and 12 - need to be aware that the system is unlikely to help them score the highest marks.
- Parents need to help their children understand that the purpose of an assessment is to help the child develop their skills. This might be in written expression, mathematical reasoning or critical thinking. Using a service that provides a response ticks the box of completing the assessment but doesn't help the child develop the skills necessary to excel in academic endeavours. "Even if the use of the tool is not detected, the student is still shortchanging themselves because they fail to develop the skills they will need to succeed in exams," says Buckland.
- "Parents can expect their children to experiment with ChatGPT and possibly push boundaries. Being aware of this fact, parents can assist in managing how the function is used. This is an important aspect for the psychological wellbeing of their children," said Dhall.
- Finally, parents need to remind their children that when submitting work for assessment a student declares that the work is theirs. Where the work is generated by a machine learning system, it will not satisfy the NESA requirements of being the student's own work. "Students should know that there are already tools like AIcheatCheck that enable a school to check whether a response is written by AI. The chance of getting caught and failing an assessment is high and parents need to be aware of this and have an open discussion with their child ahead of the start of the school year," says Buckland.

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