

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CATHY So if you're in school and you've got a pile of assignments to get through, you might be tempted to try an AI app
WURZER: to help you out, artificial intelligence. A free online tool called ChatGPT can write an essay in just seconds, which is creating some concern, as you might imagine, among teachers and professors. Our reporter Abbey Machtig has more details. Well, this is your first time with us, Abbey. Welcome.

ABBEY It is. Thanks for having me.
MACHTIG:

CATHY Now, you are a good person to talk about this because you are a college student right now, right?
WURZER:

ABBEY Yes, I'm finishing up my senior year at the University of Minnesota. And I just want to put it out there that I
MACHTIG: haven't personally used ChatGPT for any assignments, but it's definitely creating some buzz around campus and around high school since it came out last November.

CATHY Good that your professors know that you've not used it. That's good. So let's say, you get an assignment to write
WURZER: an essay, which I'm sure you have a number of those kinds of assignments. If you were to use ChatGPT, how would you use it?

ABBEY So ChatGPT is free to access online. So you can just search for it in any browser, and you'll be taken to the
MACHTIG: website. You do need to make an account with your email, but then you're good to go.

So if I wanted to write something on abortion law in the US, for example, I could just type in the chat box, "Write me a five paragraph essay on the *Roe V Wade* case." And in less than a minute, I'd have a complete essay there for me.

CATHY Wow! And just in a few seconds?
WURZER:

ABBEY Yeah. I've played around with it myself. I've asked it to summarize a TV show, and it's pretty impressive.
MACHTIG:

CATHY Is it pretty accurate?
WURZER:

ABBEY Yeah. That particular-- I asked it to summarize *Game of Thrones*, and which I just finished watching. And it was
MACHTIG: pretty impressive and accurate.

CATHY How does it work?
WURZER:

ABBEY ChatGPT has access to millions of pages of texts and data that help generate responses. Things like news reports
MACHTIG: and academic articles. It was built upon previous models of AI, but humans also helped train it and help to refine the responses.

So when you ask ChatGPT a question or ask it to produce an essay, it sorts through all of this information and pulls in the relevant stuff and produces something that sounds like a human wrote it.

CATHY
WURZER: Well, it's a problem obviously for, as I say, teachers and professors because they're trying to assess a student's writing ability and research skills. And I'm curious what they're saying about this.

ABBEY
MACHTIG: I talked with Professor Timothy R Johnson from the University of Minnesota. And he said, ChatGPT writing is still relatively easy to spot because it tends to be wordy, and makes lots of generalizations, and uses some cliches. The writing itself also probably isn't up to the college level professors are expecting, but it is a concern.

I also talked with a teacher at Shakopee High School who had her students ask ChatGPT to write a literary analysis essay on the novel *The Great Gatsby*. And again, same thing. The students realized pretty quickly that the writing wasn't great and there were actually a few factual inaccuracies. The teacher said the ChatGPT essay talked about a romance between Jay Gatsby and Jordan Baker, which if you've read the book, you'll know that doesn't happen.

CATHY
WURZER: No, it doesn't. So if a teacher or a professor cannot tell it's AI, what can they do?

ABBEY
MACHTIG: There are counter softwares out there that can help identify when writing might have been generated by AI or ChatGPT.

CATHY
WURZER: Are teacher's finding any positive uses for this tech?

ABBEY
MACHTIG: Yes. Some teachers and professors are aiming to use AI and ChatGPT for good or as a tool. Some educators say the technology isn't going to go away and education needs to evolve.

So some teachers are having students, for example, try to improve writing from ChatGPT in class. And educators are also realizing that students might end up using AI in their future jobs. So this is a good time to introduce them to the idea of it and to identify some of its potential pitfalls.

CATHY
WURZER: I can hear some of our listeners, though, Abbey, saying, Wait a minute! This is like you're cheating. I'm thinking schools have to issue some campus-wide policy around using the software. What are you hearing?

ABBEY
MACHTIG: So some schools across the country have already banned it or tried to block it. At the University of Minnesota, I talked with the chair of the student academic integrity committee and he told me ChatGPT could end up in policy about academic dishonesty. But there's also a discussion about whether using ChatGPT would even constitute this because depending on how you use it, it can be viewed as a tool or a learning resource.

CATHY
WURZER: Interesting to be determined. Good reporting. Thank you, Abbey.

ABBEY
MACHTIG: Thanks for having me.

CATHY
WURZER: Abbey Machtig.