



Generative Artificial Intelligence

A message to students at SIHE (2024)

As you are likely already aware, the use of a chatbot called ChatGPT first dominated news headlines late 2022. Here at Sheridan we are building a culture of transparency around the use of generative artificial intelligence. This includes inviting input from students and staff as we continue to navigate our way forward. This journey involves defining the boundaries of the space within which we are moving. As time goes by we will need to revisit this space as the technology continues to advance and our knowledge continues to grow.

Let's start with some facts:

1. What is ChatGPT?

"GPT" stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer. ChatGPT is a large language model (LLM) developed and trained by Open AI, a San Francisco-based research lab and company. ChatGPT is a brand of Generative Artificial Intelligence (also known as GenAI).

2. Apart from ChatGPT are there other types of GenAI?

Yes! Some are text-based like ChatGPT. Other types can generate art, music, and video. GenAI is quickly becoming more commonplace, for example, we now have GenAI embedded within a number of search engines and it is not unusual to encounter a chatbot whether you are doing anything from online banking to searching for a new house or car.

3. What can Generative AI do?

GenAI is programmed to use a set of data to generate text in response to a given prompt. It has the capacity to produce definitions, provide answers to questions, and generate lists on a given topic. The text is generally well structured and easy to read. It is also quite formulaic and basic (at this stage). It is possible to use GenAI to draft an email, create a form, compose a speech or a policy, create code, translate language, provide feedback on a sample of writing, and much more.

4. Where does ChatGPT draw information from?

ChatGPT is programmed to extract information from a diverse range of sources, including, but not limited to, websites, textbooks, and research papers. It also accesses data from online forums, social media, news articles, and reports as well as GenAI user interactions and feedback.

5. What can't Generative AI do?

GenAI cannot think! It cannot reason, debate, analyse, or critique.

6. Are there privacy concerns? Is my data stored?

Yes, on both counts! For example, Open AI stores data that users input and receive from ChatGPT. This collection also includes email addresses, IP addresses, and information about when users use the system. OpenAI advises against inputting confidential matters into the chatbot.

Here's where we're heading at Sheridan:

1. Can I use Generative AI when completing assignments?

There is limited capacity for GenAI to be used with preparing your assignments. For some assignments you may be permitted to use GenAI for generating text and/or generating ideas. For some assignments this will strictly be a "no go zone". Always check with your lecturer.

2. Are there dangers of using Generative AI?

Yes. If the answers are not contained within the data set then GenAI has a tendency to invent "facts". This is known as a "hallucination". Also, GenAI does not have the capacity to filter bias and so material produced may not be accurate or even coherent. Another limitation is that current data sets do not necessarily include the most up-to-date information.

3. Do I have to say if I have used Gen AI in my assignment?

Students must declare any use of Gen AI on each assignment cover sheet. If GenAI was used and not declared, it is considered academic misconduct (aka cheating). Refer to the SIHE Academic Integrity Policy and SIHE Academic Integrity Procedure on our website for details.

4. What if I don't want to use Generative AI?

If the assessment requires use of GenAI and/or if a class activity requires use of GenAI but you have a personal stance not to use it then please speak with your lecturer. You may possibly be given an alternative task or be supported to participate with another student.

5. Can I have input to Sheridan's approach regarding Gen AI?

Yes! We have consultation opportunities so the Sheridan student voice can be heard. If you are willing to share your thoughts and ideas please email them to Dr Natalie Leitão (nleitao@sheridan.edu.au) and/or make a time to meet for a chat.

You are also welcome to make a time with Natalie for her to show you how ChatGPT works.

Further reading and exploration

Here are some links if you are interested in learning more about GenAI:

<https://blog.invgate.com/chatgpt-statistics>

<https://analyticsindiamag.com/category/ai-breakthroughs/>

The bottom line:

Students and staff in higher education across Australia and around the globe are currently coming to terms with the challenges and opportunities being presented by ongoing advances in GenAI. Large language models such as ChatGPT may provide a compelling appearance of understanding content (and even display what appears to be expressions of emotions) but we must remember the programmes are built to access data sets in order to predict what a human might say.

There is no law against using GenAI. However, as lovers of truth and seekers of wisdom who are innovative thinkers and effective communicators our desire is for Sheridan students and staff who choose to use GenAI that they do so wisely and ethically. Let's explore this space together and keep the conversation going.