

ChatGPT can be useful for secondary school kids

FROM C1

“Early access to ChatGPT could lead to an over-reliance on the AI tool in writing and maths tasks as it can generate compositions on a par with middle- to high-performing secondary school students,” he said. Furthermore, ChatGPT could be a hindrance to learning as its responses may not be up-to-date, unless an adult sits next to the child to provide clarifications, he said.

While the tool is not meant for younger children, students in secondary school and above could find it useful for collating notes or data tracking, so they can concentrate on tasks that the tools cannot do, said Dr Wong.

Parents who have used ChatGPT with their children said they have learnt useful tips.

Mr Patrick Sim and his wife Michelle Koh, co-founders of a software development firm, said they introduced their children Sophie, 14, and Ethan, 11, to ChatGPT at the end of 2022.

They played around with it as a family, using it to create poems. The kids were impressed with what the tool could produce and were excited to explore it. But upon further use, they realised it was not always logical and they needed to be discerning if they were to use it.

Madam Koh, 46, said: “We learnt that we can’t take all the answers at face value.”

Mr Sim, 47, added that ChatGPT is an efficient way to do research as it pulls information together, unlike Google which lists sources one by one.

“It helps to gather information quickly, but it may not be complete information. The user still has to figure out whether it makes sense,” he said.

HOW TO USE CHATGPT FOR LEARNING

ChatGPT can give children instant access to “vast knowledge, instant answers and guidance, opportunities for self-learning and practice, 24/7”, said Dr Wong.

With proper guidance, he believes ChatGPT may become a more useful and fun alternative to an Internet search to support kids’ learning in languages like English.

One way is for ChatGPT to be a conversation partner, giving users the opportunity to practise reading and writing.

For subjects such as science, maths, geography and history, ChatGPT can provide basic explanations for students’ doubts, he added.

ChatGPT is useful in motivating kids to learn as it is interactive and engaging, said Dr Wong.

“If the kids figure out the ‘right’ questions to ask, it could enhance their critical thinking and creativity,” he added. “Students could develop information literacy by fact-checking or judging the appropriateness, relevance and value of the content.”

However, he cautioned that the limitations of ChatGPT include the lack of understanding of context and human touch, as well as limited ability in providing feedback on students’ work. There are also security and privacy concerns, as any information entered can appear in future searches on the same topic.

Still, he feels there is a need to learn to use AI in this information age.

“Ultimately, it is probably not AI, but people who know how to use AI, that can replace certain jobs,” he said.

janeng@sph.com.sg



Tips for parents

- Familiarise yourself with ChatGPT before guiding your children to use it.

- Younger children should not be encouraged to use ChatGPT as it may affect the development of skills for learning. If they do access it, do not use it as a babysitter. Instead, use the tool with them.

- Use ChatGPT to support family bonding or creative tasks for kids. For example, children can prompt ChatGPT for ideas on arts and crafts or outdoor activities.

- Explain to your children the risks of using ChatGPT. For instance, they need to be aware about what constitutes academic cheating. Older children will also need to be guided in developing their information literacy skills, such as in critiquing and fact-checking the content generated.

Mr Patrick Sim and Madam Michelle Koh introduced ChatGPT to their children Ethan and Sophie at the end of 2022. The kids were initially impressed with what it could do and were excited to explore it. But after using it for a while, they realised it was not always logical and they needed to be discerning if they were to use it. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

An explainer for kids: What is ChatGPT?

Nur Syahiidah Zainal

If you spend any time online, you have probably encountered a chatbot at some point. These are the automated programs that can help you with almost everything, from ordering a pizza to booking a hotel room.

But what if the chatbot you were talking to were so advanced that it could understand your every word and respond with human-like accuracy?

That is where ChatGPT comes in. This explainer is aimed at young readers aged 10 and up, and their parents. It is produced by the team behind Little Red Dot, The Straits Times’ publication for primary schools

WHAT IS CHATGPT?

Since its release last November, ChatGPT has taken the world by storm.

The chatbot is a form of generative artificial intelligence (AI). Such tools allow users to enter prompts into a chat interface and receive results in the form of text or images created by AI.

ChatGPT has the ability to understand natural human language and respond in an impressively detailed human-like manner.

It can be used for a wide range of tasks, such as answering questions, generating code or composing essays.

WHO IS BEHIND IT?

ChatGPT was created by OpenAI, an artificial intelligence company based in San Francisco in the United States.

The company is known for cre-

ating Dall-E, a programme that generates AI images from text prompts.

HOW DOES CHATGPT WORK?

ChatGPT uses a technique called “natural language processing” to understand and respond to text-based conversations. It analyses the words and phrases that a user inputs, and then uses algorithms to generate a relevant and coherent response.

To allow it to understand and respond to a wide range of topics and questions, the program is trained using large amounts of text data, in a way that mimics how the human brain absorbs information. In this model, the network is trained with data drawn from sources such as books, articles and websites.

When a user enters a question or statement, ChatGPT will break it down into individual words and analyse the relationships among them. It then uses this information to generate a response that is as relevant and informative as possible.

Like other similar models, ChatGPT may sometimes produce responses that have errors or are inappropriate.

However, the program is designed to learn from its interactions with users. This means that it can understand and use the relationship between words to improve the quality and accuracy of its responses over time.

WHAT SETS IT APART?

Because it was trained on an enormous amount of text data, ChatGPT’s size and complexity means that it can understand and

respond to a wider variety of topics and contexts.

It is also able to generate responses that are more comprehensive and refined compared with many other models, and adapt to new contexts and topics over time as it continues to learn from new input.

ChatGPT is also capable of processing and generating text in multiple languages.

WHAT HAVE REACTIONS BEEN LIKE?

Companies have quickly adapted the tool into their products to automate mundane tasks or enhance communications.

For example, Microsoft has integrated the chatbot’s technology into two of its products.

Its updated Edge web browser has two new capabilities – chat and compose – to ask follow-up questions and create content based on prompts.

Meanwhile, software company Salesforce has introduced ChatGPT into its office messaging software Slack. The company says the chatbot will be able to “deliver instant conversation summaries, research tools and writing assistance” directly within the Slack without users leaving the platform.

At the same time, other more wary parties are taking steps to mitigate their concerns.

Stack Overflow, a question-and-answer website for programmers, banned content generated by ChatGPT because it often produced incorrect answers to technical questions.

The academic world, too, is exploring how it could be used.

For example, the International



Baccalaureate will allow students to quote content that is created by ChatGPT in their essays. However, the chatbot would be treated like any other source and students must be clear that they are quoting its responses in their work.

However, there are also concerns that students could use the tool to produce their school assignments in their entirety.

In New York, concerns over the tool enabling plagiarism and generating falsehoods have led officials to block access to ChatGPT in the city’s 1,851 public schools.

Separately, in March, Italy became the first Western country to block ChatGPT due to privacy concerns.

Garante, the Italian data-pro-

tection authority, has temporarily banned the chatbot and is investigating the programme’s suspected breach of privacy rules.

WHAT IS SINGAPORE’S TAKE ON IT?

In February, Education Minister Chan Chun Sing told Parliament that the Ministry of Education was guiding teachers in schools and institutes of higher learning on how to use AI tools such as ChatGPT to enhance learning.

Educators are also exploring the use of such tools.

• Sources: BBC, The Guardian, Reuters, CNET, TechCrunch, Science Focus, Forbes, CNBC.

ChatGPT can understand natural human language and respond in an impressively detailed human-like manner. ST PHOTO: RYAN CHIONG