



Event Summary: 'ChatGPT: To ban or not to ban?'

In the first of three QAA webinars on generative artificial tools (AI) like ChatGPT, five speakers discussed the feasibility and desirability of banning and detecting such tools. The rapidly evolving debate led panellists to agree that attempting to ban these tools is impractical and less desirable than integrating them into teaching and learning. Key points covered detection possibilities, concerns versus benefits, student engagement, institutional actions, and AI's ubiquity in daily life.

Panel contributions

Michael Webb, Director of Technology and Analytics at Jisc

Michael explained that detecting generative AI tools is challenging, with no foolproof methods available. Three potential detection mechanisms exist, but all have flaws:

- Detecting the bland and authoritative writing style of generative AI: but detection via this method is difficult even for AI experts, and also because it is possible to modify tone of outputs through prompts. Software using this detection method like GPTZero produce lots of false positives.
- Classifier tools that compare human and AI produced content to identify differentiation: these have limited success (27% for OpenAI's own classifier software) and are easily fooled.
- Watermarking: though not yet used, could potentially identify AI-generated text by highlighting specific word group usage.

AI is already integrated into everyday tools such as word prediction and spell check, making banning these new versions equally unfeasible.

Dr Phil Anthony, University of Kent

Phil recognised a number of issues surrounding the greater prevalence of generative AI:

- **Academic integrity:** It is possible that students are less likely to cheat if they do not need to hide use of these tools and are instead taught how to use them. Academic integrity should be preserved by instructing students on proper AI tool usage, evaluating assessment methods, and fostering authentic assessment styles.
- **Illusion of competence:** there is a risk that students do not build the critical thinking and problem-solving skills they need. Therefore, we should teach both

critical thinking and real-world tool usage, encouraging students to use AI critically with examples of its capabilities and limitations.

- **Bias and hallucinations** may reinforce or amplify stereotypes and AI tools are not always factually accurate or relevant to the question asked. We should highlight AI biases, inaccuracies and irrelevance to emphasise that students cannot solely depend on these tools for reliable information.
- **AI will put us out of jobs** is a common concern, but AI lacks emotional intelligence and humans have a basic need for social connection and interaction - belongingness is linked to motivation, engagement and achievement.

There are also a wide variety of benefits and ways that AI can be used constructively, including basic writing feedback, generating debate, brainstorming ideas and reviewing large documents. More insights, including from students, can be found through the [Digitally Enhanced Education Webinars](#).

Stella Maris, University of St Andrews and QAA's Student Strategic Advisory Committee member

Stella emphasised the need for higher education to keep pace with AI advancements and create pedagogy that pushes student learning forward. Responses should be co-designed and co-implemented with students to more efficiently adapt the tool to meet student needs - after all, they will be the ones using it and know what is most beneficial. This approach will also help students engage with the tool and opens up the dialogue on ethical use and what constitutes academic dishonesty when using these tools. The panic about students cheating reflects fundamental distrust in students.

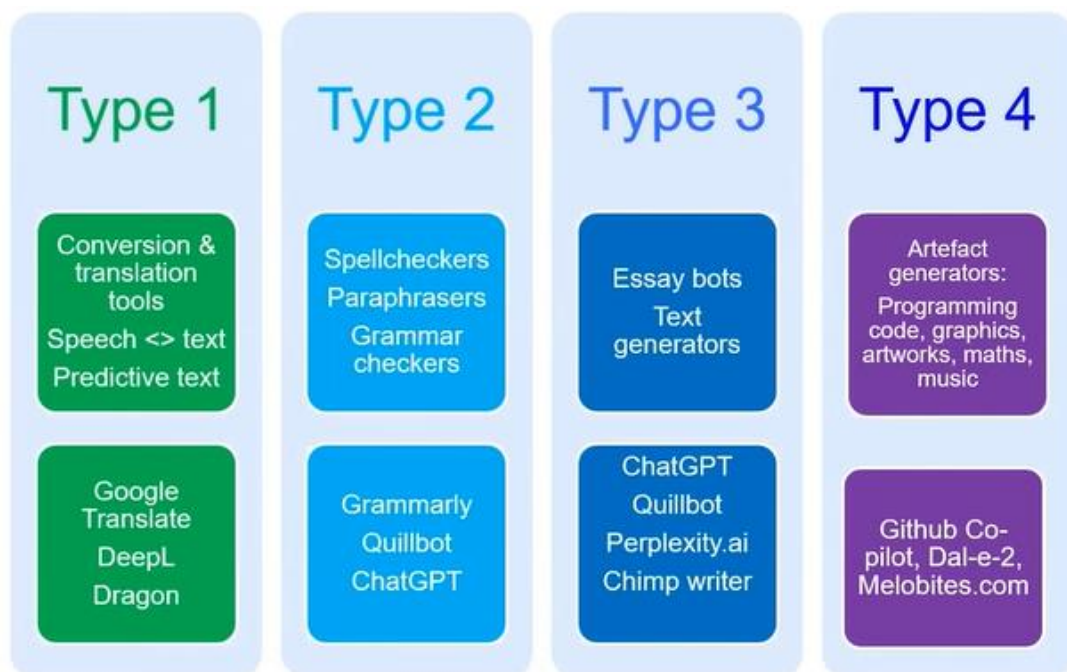
While use of AI does not reflect students' intelligence or capability, they are valuable tools to increase access to education, especially neurodiverse students who may struggle with traditional teaching methods. 24/7 availability also provides support for those facing additional barriers to the traditional timetable due to work or caring responsibilities. Embracing technology can create a more inclusive educational environment, prioritising learning as a societal good.

Irene Glendinning, Academic Integrity Lead for the Coventry University Group

Irene shared the diagram on page 3 to illustrate the many different tools and forms of AI that currently exist. Coventry is already picking up examples of work generated by AI.

Coventry added emergency additions to their regulations in September 2022:

- 1.6.1 Academic misconduct includes ethical misconduct and is defined as: a) any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment (including examinations/tests). This includes (but is not confined to):
 - xii) using technological aids and artificial intelligence, including translation software, paraphrasing tools, text generation software (essay bots), and tools to generate graphics or artwork, without specific authorisation;
 - xiii) where an assignment is required to be written in English, writing it in a language other than English and then using translation software or assistance from a third party to convert into English.



They also ran a series of focus groups, with key findings that include:

- banning is not possible, universities must learn to live with these tools and provide guidance on ethical use of them, although there were some different viewpoints on allowing use
- use of these tools needs to be embraced as students will need these skills in the workplaces
- awareness among staff was mixed
- students and staff with special learning needs must be considered and given support to access the tools.

The following student guidance was published:

- If a student wishes to use any tool with artificial intelligence capabilities to help them complete their assessment, they must:
 - gain written permission from the module leader or supervisor for specific use of a certain tool
 - acknowledge the use of the tool in their work, as they would any other source, and make clear which contributions are from the AI and what parts of the work are their own
 - keep drafts to show how their work was developed and what content is original to them
 - the student should be advised that failure to follow this guidance may lead to allegations of academic misconduct.

Bronwyn Eager, Senior Lecturer at the University of Tasmania

Bronwyn cited David Foster Wallace's water analogy, of two fish unaware of the water surrounding them. AI has been all around us for years, and we have been going through the world without realising how embedded it was until ChatGPT.

Why have we not moved on from the question of banning these tools? It's easy to lose perception of the timeline - ChatGPT is the mass-market consumer version of AI because it is so easy to use and it feels like years since it dropped because of the journey we have been on. But it has only been a few months in a global higher education conversation - a huge percentage of students and educators have not yet logged onto ChatGPT. We must recognise the adoption curve and hold the responsibility to keep having these conversations and bringing people with us.

We must think of digital literacies - moving from the typewriter natives to electrical typewriter natives, to students who do not know the world without smartphones and children who will grow up as AI natives.

Should we ban has been overwhelmingly answered. We should think about educating so people have a choice - do they want to use AI and, if so, how?

Q&A

- **Is there a risk of AI damaging the learning experience? Outside of assessment validity, what about the process of researching, synthesising, writing?**
 - **Phil** - there is a concern that humans will become overreliant which can come back to bite later on. Typically, assignments are set up to be progressive, building on skills learnt in earlier ones - if AI is relied on too much in earlier assignments, it can create an illusion of competence.
 - **Stella** - it can be used to enhance the learning experience, particularly for students with processing issues. Seeing how quickly this technology is developing is jarring if you were not born into a time when technology was as rampant as it is now. There are concerns about how we balance the benefits with the potential for cheating in the context of younger generations holding the expertise on these as digital natives.
 - **Irene** - it is really important that educators set the rules in students having to learn the basics before using the tools to help them because they are not always accurate or reliable and you need the basics to be able to critically engage.
 - **Bronwyn** - I am not changing my assessments, I am changing my expectations about what is possible now that these tools are available.
- **If we ask students to declare use of AI, is this not counterintuitive given it will become as ubiquitous as spell check?**
 - **Michael** - it is not reasonable to get students to declare, and we should be framing this around behaviours of using AI instead. I think any rule that says that students have to declare all use of AI going forward is going to be problematic. If they have the predictive text setting turned on in Word, for example, should this be declared? It has been available for quite a while, and is text generated by AI. One approach is to give examples of the sort of use of AI that needs to be declared, rather than a blanket statement that all use needs to be declared. A focus on declaring how the AI was used rather than checking for its presence will likely be useful as an approach as well.

Some questions there was not time to answer in the webinar have been answered by one of our panellists below:

- **Beyond assessments, do you worry that the future landscape of jobs will be so engrained with these tools and therefore, would that raise a larger question on redesigning course delivery overall?**
 - **Michael** - I think that is definitely the case. OpenAI has done some [initial research](#) on this and has estimated that 'around 80% of the U.S. workforce could have at least 10% of their work tasks affected by the introduction of LLMs, while approximately 19% of workers may see at least 50% of their tasks impacted'. That is just looking at generative AI. A [2021 report](#) by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy looks more broadly at jobs affected by AI, both in terms of those likely to be automated and growth areas.

- **Some students ask people to write assignments for them - is this any different to using ChatGPT?**
 - **Michael** - This very much depends on how the student uses ChatGPT. Just asking it to write an assignment is perhaps very similar to just asking a person, but there are lots of ways of using ChatGPT that are quite different. For example, exploring possible structures or outlines for an assignment, using it as a research tool, or using it to get feedback on your writing or correcting your grammar and typos are a long way from just getting someone to write an assignment for you.

- **What about ChatGPT or other AI tools that can assist educators in marking/assessing a large number of scripts in a short period of time? We may consider this as a new opportunity to assist everyone - critically and transparently.**
 - **Michael** - At Jisc we think there is a lot of potential in the area of AI-assisted marking. As an example, we have just finished piloting a product called Graide, which assists in the marking of certain types of STEM assignments. The AI learns the feedback as the educator marks, so it is giving their authentic feedback, but just assisted by AI. Exactly what role ChatGPT and similar tools take in marking needs to be explored in more detail - we have seen some interesting early experiments, with both positive and negative results - for example, this [trial](#), looking more at school-level assignments.