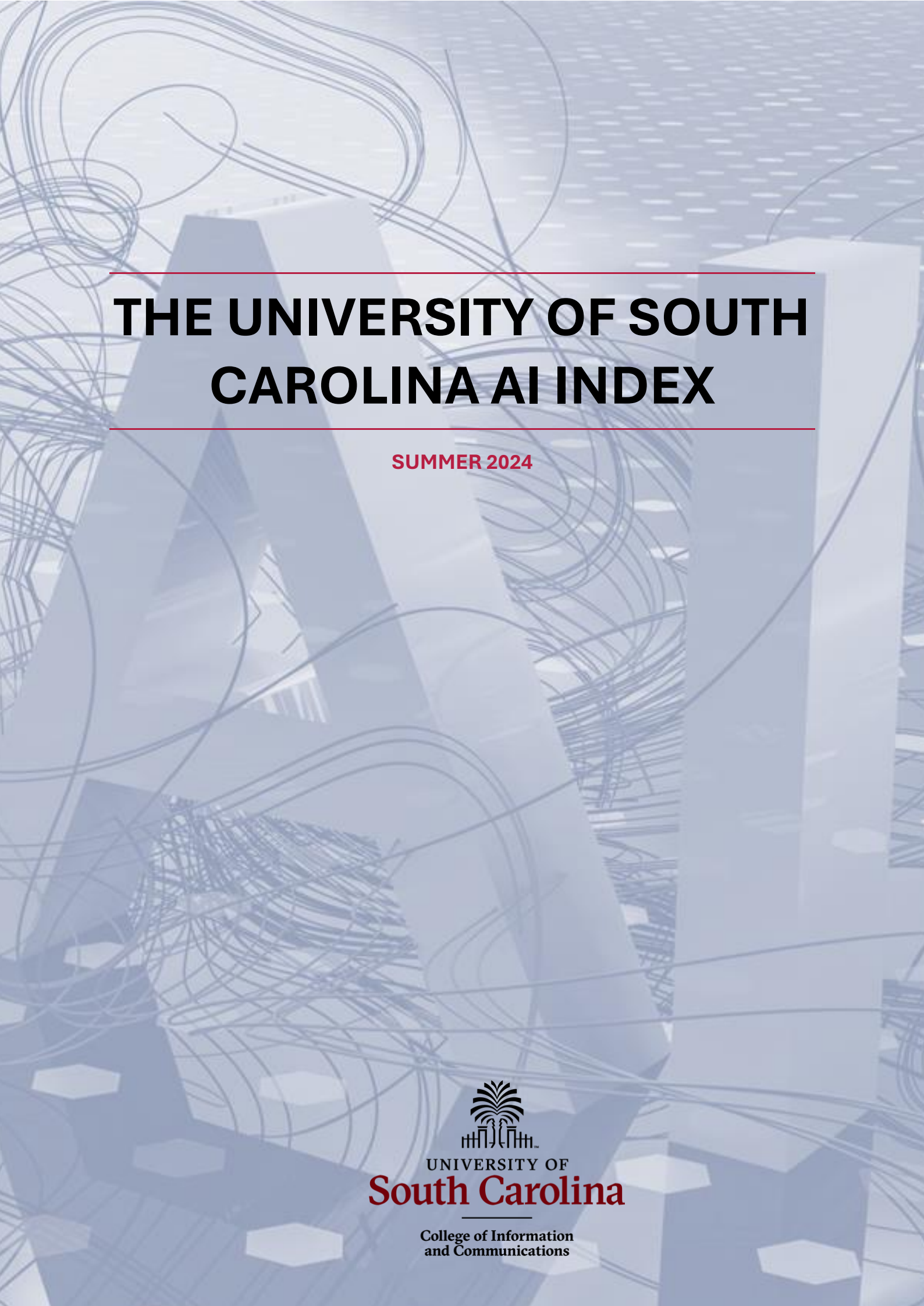

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AI INDEX

SUMMER 2024

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

College of Information
and Communications

College of Information and Communications
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AI INDEX

SUMMER 2024 / JULY 2024

This is a survey focused on measuring the use and perception of artificial intelligence (AI) in communication within the United States. The survey explores various aspects of AI, including its impact on news consumption, social media engagement, and professional tasks related to communication.

College of Information and Communications
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of South Carolina AI Index 2024, conducted by the College of Information and Communications provides a new perspective and new analysis of the use and perception of artificial intelligence (AI) in communication within the United States. The survey, which gathered responses from 1061 U.S. residents, highlights insights into AI's impact on news consumption, social media engagement and professional communication tasks.

Key Findings

1. Awareness and Perception of AI

Despite the increased media coverage, 31% of respondents have limited awareness of AI, with 6% having no knowledge and 25% only a little. Conversely, only 36% report significant familiarity with AI technologies.
There is a generational divide in AI awareness: younger individuals (18-24) are more knowledgeable about AI tools like ChatGPT compared to older age groups.

2. AI in Professional and Academic Settings

38% of respondents have utilized AI tools for work or study, with higher usage reported among younger individuals, those from the Western U.S., and those with medium to high income levels. The primary barriers to AI adoption include a lack of trust (46%) and skills (24%), overshadowing financial concerns. Among the predictors, social media engagement shows a strong positive association with AI assistant usage. Individuals who are more engaged on social media are significantly more likely to use AI assistants. Age has a notable negative effect on the likelihood of using AI assistants: older people are less likely to use AI assistants than younger people. Education level is positively correlated with usage: higher education levels increase the probability of using AI assistants. Income similarly shows a positive and significant correlation. Political engagement, irrespective of the specific orientation, is associated with increased AI assistant usage. Trust in universities also has a positive impact on the likelihood of using AI assistants.

3. Impact on Productivity and Challenges

The survey reveals that ChatGPT is by far the most well-known and widely used AI tool. Its usage is double that of Google Gemini and nearly triple that of Microsoft Copilot.
AI tools are perceived to enhance productivity, with Microsoft Copilot users reporting the highest improvement rates (76%), followed by Google Gemini users (75%), and ChatGPT users (68%).

Key challenges in using AI include handling complex requests and ensuring accuracy, with 13% of users noting frequent corrections needed.

4. AI in Content Creation

71% of professionals in Communication and Media use AI for content creation. Daily usage is high among these professionals. AI tools are also widely used in Science and Engineering (47%), Services (50%), and Finance (36%).

5. Ethical and Privacy Concerns

Only 27% of respondents are aware of ethical guidelines for AI use in their field. Ethical concerns are more prevalent among women and those with higher education levels. Privacy issues have been encountered by 12% of users, highlighting the need for robust ethical frameworks and user education.

6. The influence over Journalism

Public opinion on AI's role in journalism is divided: 46% see a positive influence, 36% see a negative impact. 46% fear AI increases misinformation, though 33% believe AI could help reduce it. Higher trust in the press and universities is associated with a more positive perception of AI's impact on journalism.

Belief that AI influences political views correlates with a more negative perception of its impact on journalism.

The perception that AI increases the spread of misinformation has a strongly negative correlation, suggesting that concerns about misinformation are associated with a more negative view of AI's impact on journalism.

7. Future of Jobs in Communication

52% fear job reductions due to automation, while 29% expect job transformation requiring new skills. Older respondents are more skeptical about AI's impact on job markets compared to younger individuals. Higher trust in science, government, and universities corresponds to a lower likelihood of believing AI will reduce jobs. Social media engagement correlates with fewer concerns about job reductions. There are gender differences. Males are less likely than women to believe that AI will reduce jobs. Higher income individuals are slightly less likely to believe that AI will lead to job reductions.

Implications

Our findings underscore the need for increased AI literacy and trust-building measures. The survey highlights the necessity for ethical standards and regulatory frameworks to manage the integration of AI into communication. Understanding public perceptions can guide policymakers and developers in creating balanced, inclusive AI strategies that address societal concerns while maximizing technological benefits. The findings from this survey can inform future developments in AI technology and its application in the communication industry. In summary, this survey offers a comprehensive analysis of AI's role in communication within the United States, providing critical insights that can guide future advancements in this rapidly evolving field.

ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

This research initiative is aimed at understanding the utilization and impact of some specific form of AI - large language models (LLMs), such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini (former Bard), and other AI specialized in generative AI for communication, on content creation and communication practices in the United States. Through a biannual national survey, supplemented by social media listening in a later phase, this project examines the ways in which individuals and organizations leverage AI technologies for various communication purposes.

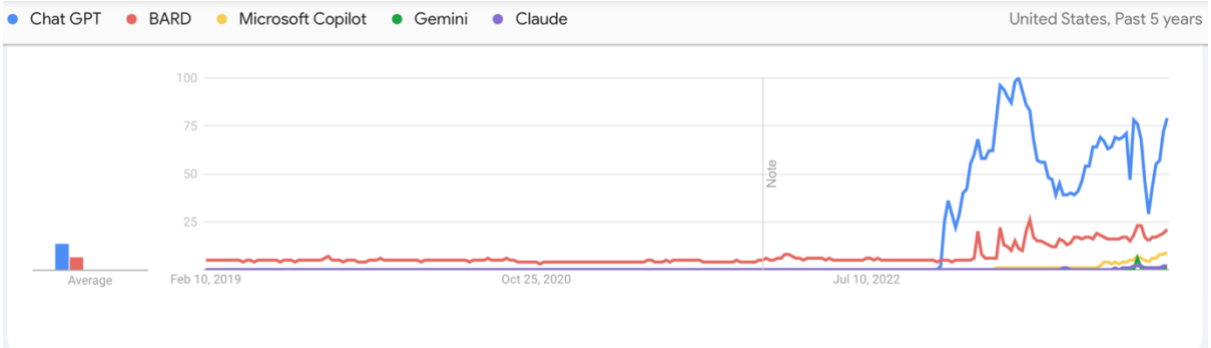


Figure 1 Interest in different forms of Generative AI in the US, in the last years. Google Trends data

The College of Information and Communications at the University of South Carolina intends to repeat this survey periodically to monitor the evolution of AI perceptions and usage patterns over time. Future research will focus on tracking changes in public sentiment, identifying emerging trends in AI adoption across different sectors, and examining the long-term impacts of AI on communication practices. By continuously gathering data, the college aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and technological advancements, ensuring that AI developments align with societal needs and ethical considerations.

HOW WE DID THIS

The AI Index explores various aspects of AI, including its impact on news consumption, social media engagement, and professional tasks related to communication. It aims to gather data on the frequency of AI tool usage, the types of tasks AI assists with, and the overall sentiment towards AI's role in communication.

Survey Design and Coordination

This survey was designed by a team of experts led by Dr. Dan Sultanescu and Dr. Linwan Wu, from the College of Information and Communications, University of South Carolina. The primary objective was to measure the use and perception of artificial intelligence (AI) in communication within the United States. We appreciate the support of Prof. Randy Covington and the expertise of the statistics and communication specialists from the Social Monitor team in Romania, Dr. Dana Sultanescu and Dr. Andreea Stancea, for their contributions. Additionally, we are grateful for the support and encouragement from Dean Tom Reichert, whose assistance was instrumental in moving this project forward and keeping us on track.

Methodology

The survey was conducted in the last week of June, 2024 using the Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) method via the Qualtrics platform. A total of 1,061 complete responses were collected. It is important to note that online samples tend to under-represent the opinions and behaviors of people who are not online (typically those who are older, less affluent, and have limited formal education). Moreover, because people usually opt in to online survey panels, they tend to over-represent people who are well educated and socially and politically active.

Sampling and Data Collection

The survey sampled respondents across different age groups, genders, and regions in the United States. It included individuals from various educational backgrounds and professional fields, ensuring a comprehensive overview of AI usage and perceptions.

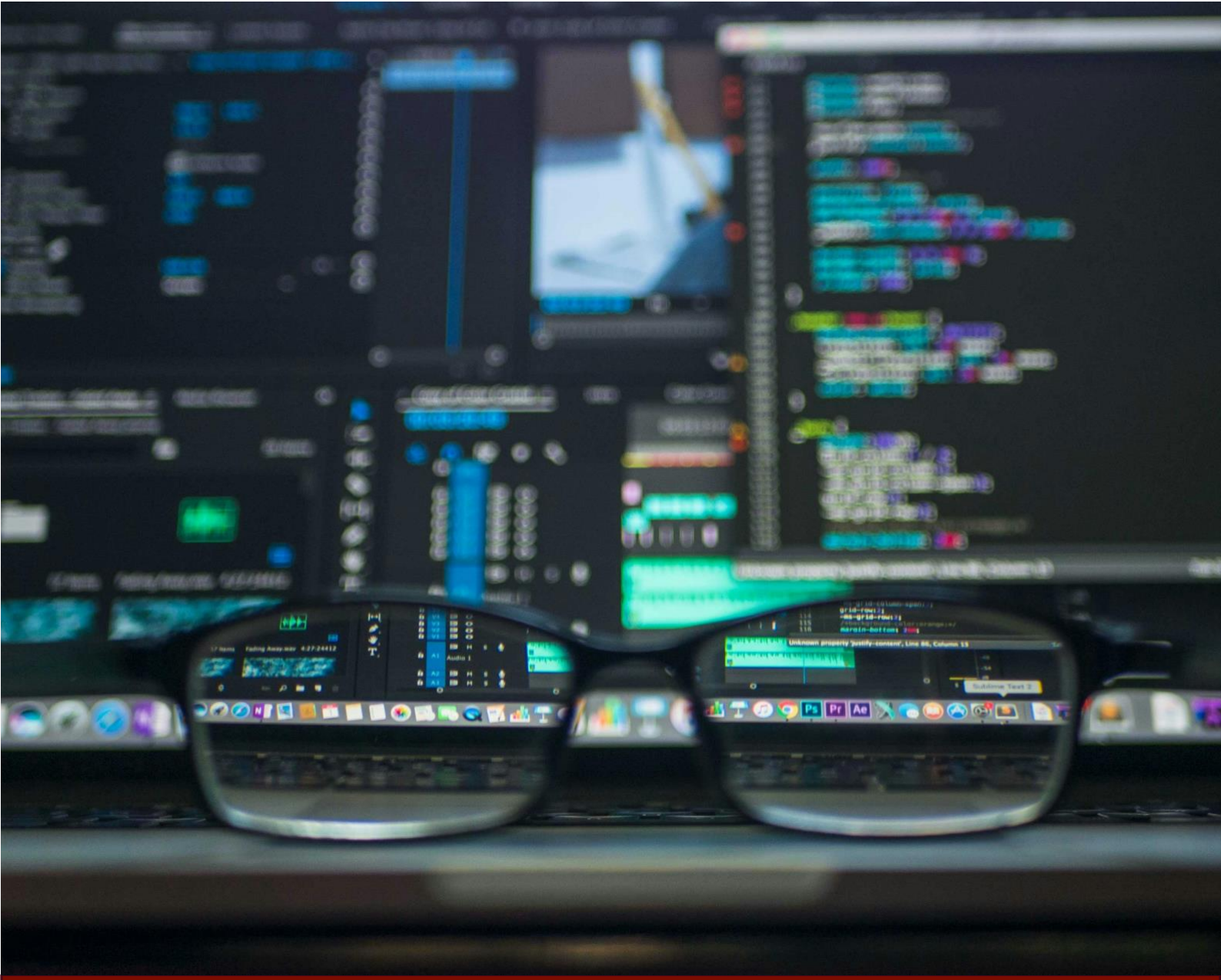
Weighting and Representativeness

The database was weighted to be representative of the U.S. voting population based on the most recent U.S. Census data. Adjustments were made for age, gender, education, ethnicity/race, location, income, and occupation type. These adjustments were relatively small, ensuring that the results accurately reflect the population.

Data Analysis

For our data analysis, we started by weighting the database for representativeness. We then generated descriptive statistics for all variables to understand the dataset better. Using crosstabulation, we examined relationships between variables and identified significant patterns. We conducted exploratory factor analysis to uncover underlying structures and tested these connections with correlation analyses.

We also built logistic regression models to identify significant influences on the use of AI tools, perceptions of AI's impact on journalism, and concerns about AI's influence on journalism. This approach allowed us to derive valuable insights into the factors shaping these opinions.



MEDIA USE PATTERNS

The survey results reveal insights into the online behaviors of the U.S. population. Notably, the number of individuals who actively create content online—those who write comments, post on social media, or share links daily or multiple times a day—stands consistently at around 26-27%. This suggests a segment of the audience that engages in proactive participatory behavior, contributing content regularly.

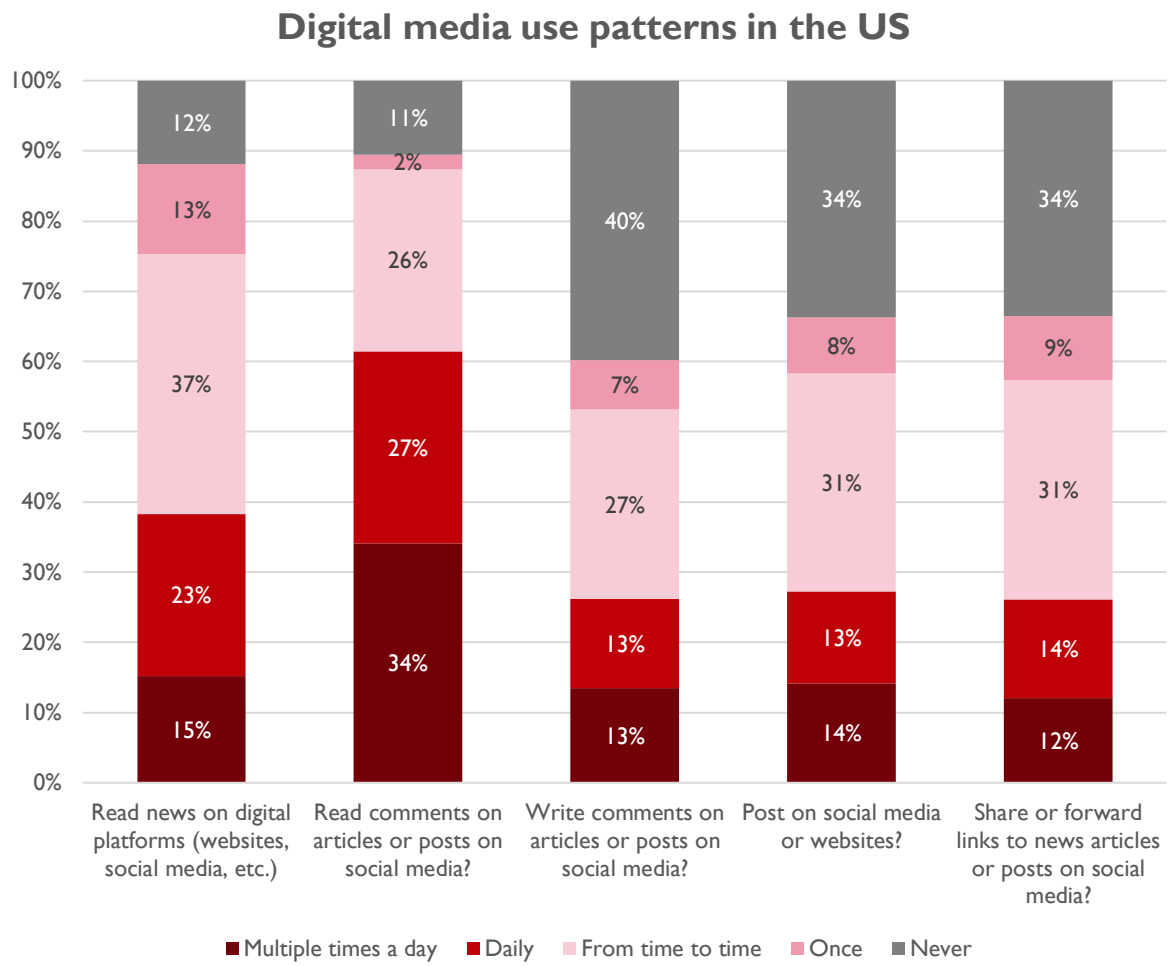


Figure 2 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - How often in the last week did you ... (read news, read comments, write comments, post on social media, share links)

In contrast, the audience that consumes information is significantly larger. Approximately 48-61% of respondents read news on digital platforms or read comments on social media daily or multiple times a day. This indicates a substantial portion of the population that engages primarily as consumers of content rather than creators.

This distinction between content creators and content consumers highlights different levels of engagement within the digital landscape. While a dedicated minority drives much of the user-generated content, a larger group consistently seeks out and consumes this information. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the broader patterns of online interaction and information dissemination. The audience that generates communication content consistently (daily or multiple times a day) tends to be younger, with lower educational attainment, and lower income levels compared to the average sample. Additionally, this group is more likely to self-identify with political affiliations as either Democrat or Republican. This demographic insight underscores the proactive engagement of younger, less affluent

individuals in creating online content, often aligning themselves more distinctly along political lines.

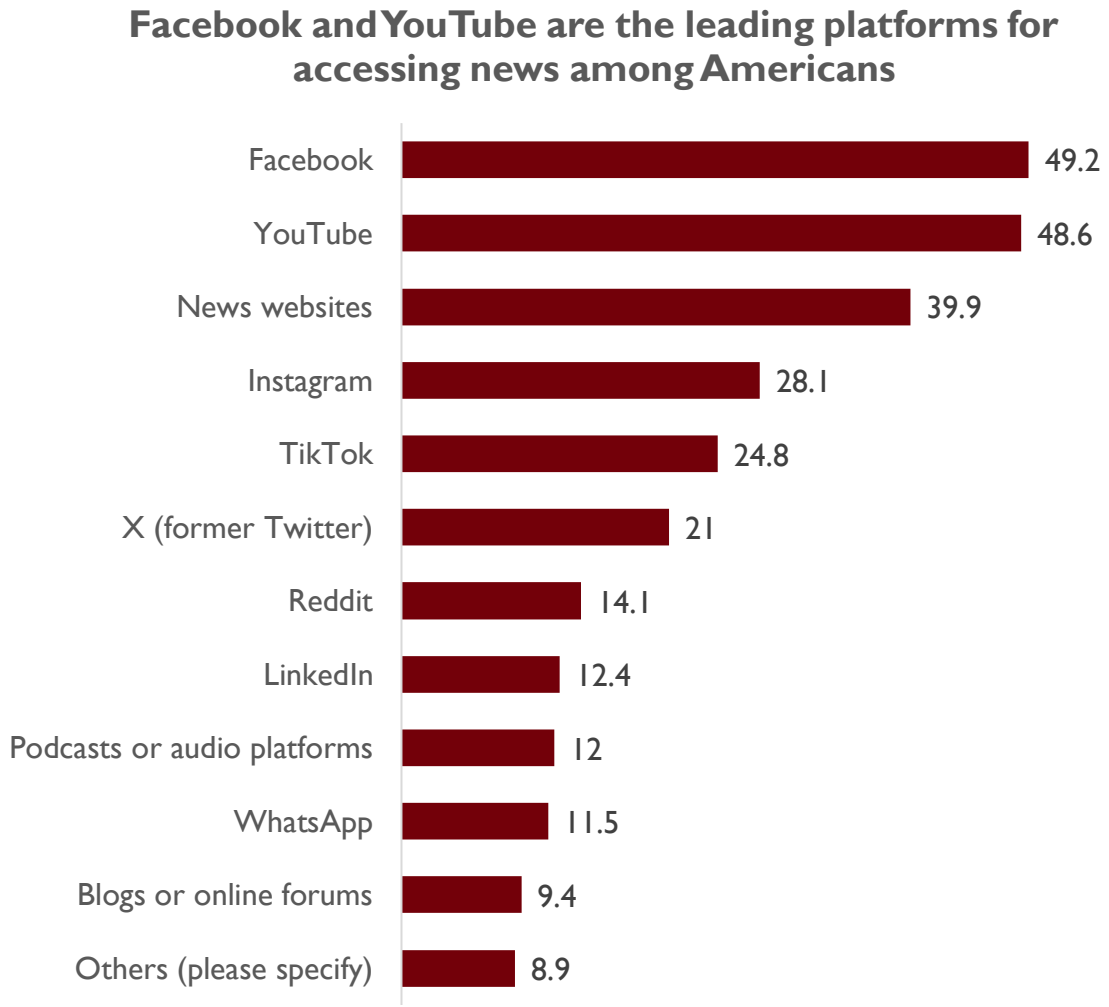


Figure 3 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Which of the following digital media platforms did you use to access news in the last week? (Select all that apply / multiple choice)

The survey results, consistent with the findings of the Reuters Digital News Report 2024, highlight that Facebook and YouTube are the leading platforms for accessing news among Americans, with nearly half of the sample using these platforms regularly. It is noteworthy that there is a higher-than-average proportion of younger audiences (under 35 years old) who rely on most social media platforms for news. Conversely, older adults tend to prefer traditional news websites.

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	Facebook	31%	(+2)	61%
2	YouTube	29%	(+5)	60%
3	X (formerly Twitter)	15%	(+1)	25%
4	Instagram	14%	(+2)	36%
5	TikTok	9%	(+3)	23%
6	Facebook Messenger	9%	(+2)	38%

Figure 4 Source - Reuters Digital News Report 2024, details about the US media use, indicating that Facebook and YouTube are the platforms mostly used for news in the US (https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024)

Interestingly, the age distribution of those using Facebook for news mirrors the overall sample's age structure, indicating that Facebook's relevance is not diminished among younger users. This broad appeal underscores Facebook's continued significance as a news source across various age groups. Thus, while younger audiences dominate the user base for platforms like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Reddit, traditional news websites and Facebook maintain a balanced appeal across different age demographics, ensuring a diverse range of users access news through these channels.

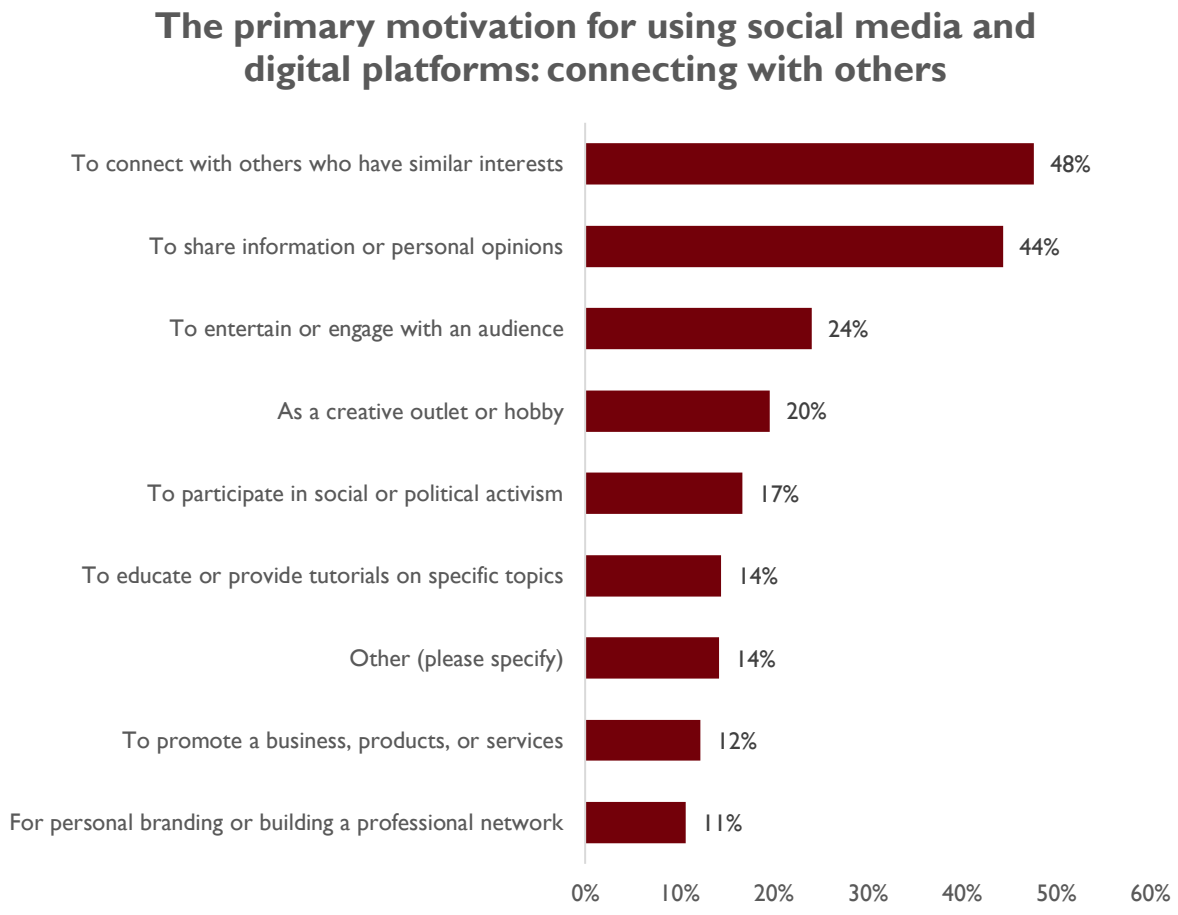


Figure 5 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - What is your main reason for posting on social media or websites? (Select all that apply)

The survey highlights that the primary motivation for using social media and digital platforms is driven by social objectives, such as connecting with others who share similar interests (48%) and sharing information or personal opinions (44%). Additionally, a significant portion of users (24%) engage with these platforms for entertainment purposes. These findings are neither new nor surprising, reinforcing the well-established understanding of social media's role in fostering connections, discussions, and entertainment.

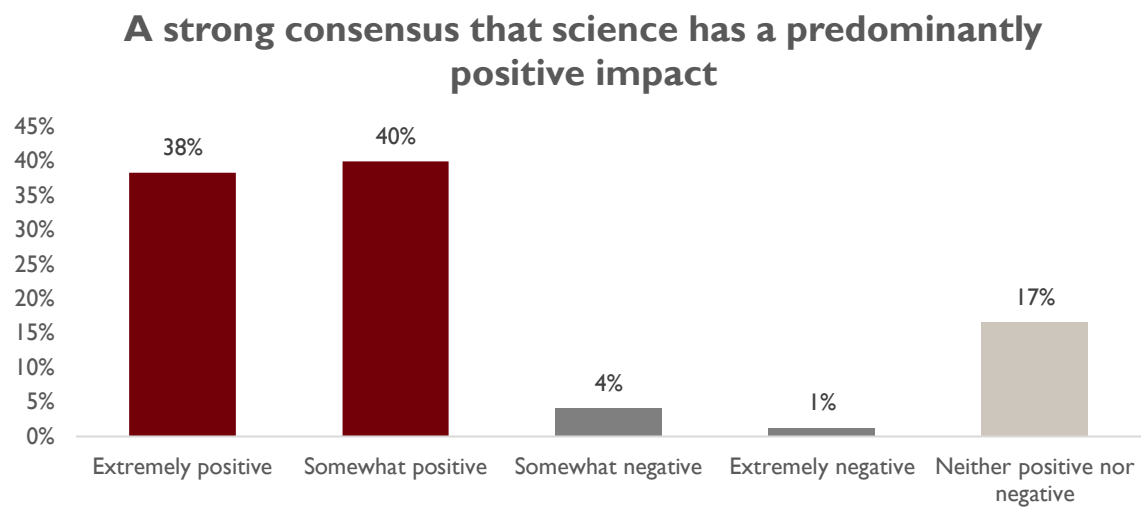


Figure 6 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Overall, would you say science has had a mostly positive effect on our society or a mostly negative effect on our society?

The survey results reveal a strong consensus that science has a predominantly positive impact on society. A significant 78% of respondents view science as having either an extremely positive (38%) or somewhat positive (40%) effect. In contrast, only a small fraction, 5%, perceive science as having a somewhat negative (4%) or extremely negative (1%) impact. Additionally, 17% of respondents believe that science has neither a positive nor negative effect on society. Notably, the level of education increases the likelihood of respondents considering science to have a positive effect.

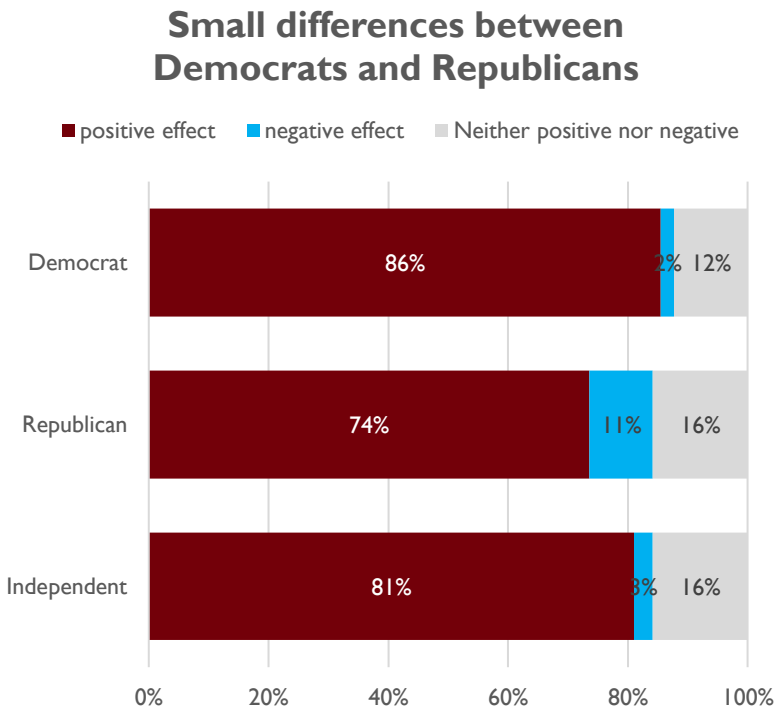


Figure 7 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Overall, would you say science has had a mostly positive effect on our society or a mostly negative effect on our society? Responses for each ideological group.

Interestingly, there are no significant differences in perception between those who identify as Democrats or Republicans. However, it is worth noting that the small number of Republicans who view science negatively is significant and higher than

the number of Democrats holding the same view.

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT AI

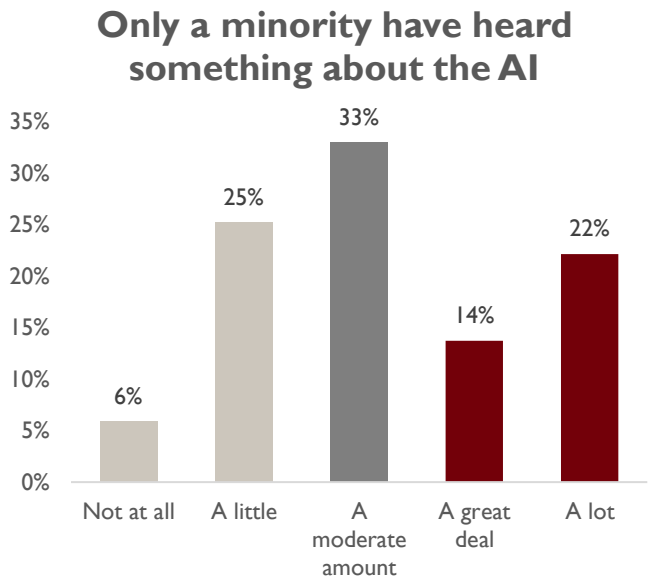


Figure 8 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - How much have you heard or read about AI?

Despite the topic's omnipresence in the media and the increased search activity surrounding it, 31% of respondents have either not heard at all (6%) or have heard only a little (25%) about AI. The survey results indicate that only a minority of the population (36%) acknowledges having heard a significant amount about artificial intelligence (AI). In comparison, 33% report having heard a moderate amount. These findings suggest that, although AI is widely discussed, a substantial portion of the population remains relatively uninformed about it.

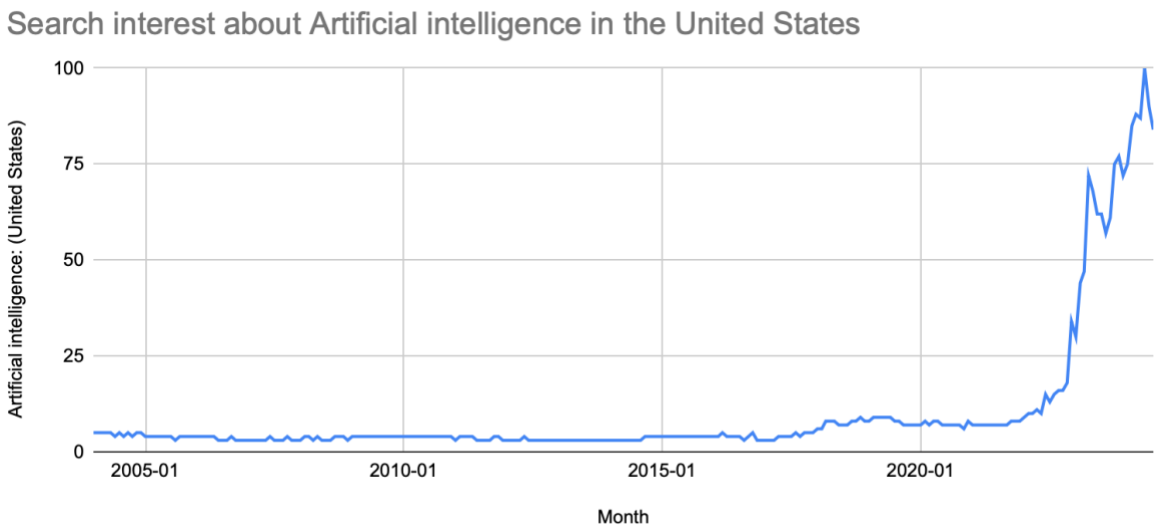


Figure 9 The intensity of searches related to artificial intelligence (AI) has increased dramatically and exponentially in the United States since November 2022, coinciding with the public launch of ChatGPT. Data provided by Google Trends clearly illustrates this surge, reflecting a growing interest and curiosity about AI technologies among the American public.

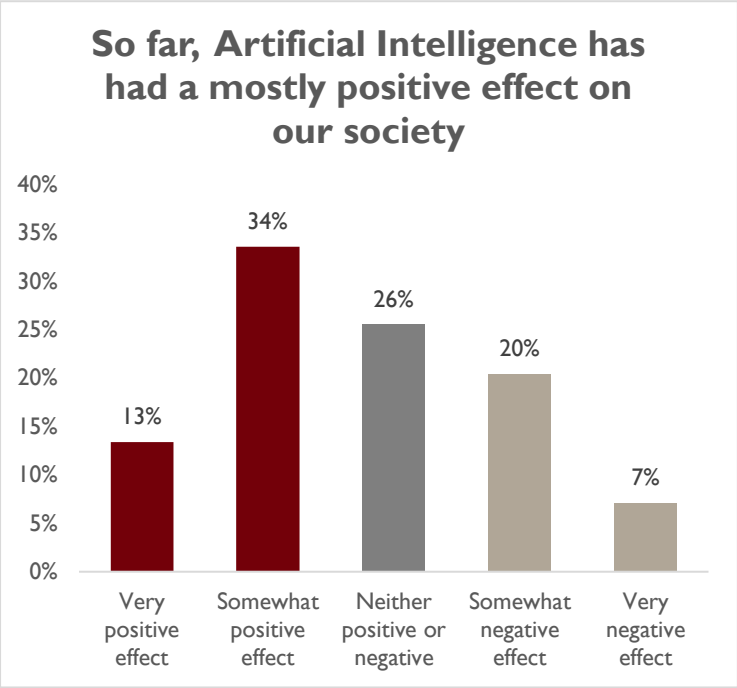


Figure 10 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Overall, would you say technology like Artificial Intelligence has had a mostly positive effect on our society or a mostly negative effect on our society?

The survey results regarding the societal impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technology present a nuanced perspective. A majority of respondents, 47%, believe that AI has had a positive effect on society, with 13% considering it very positive and 34% somewhat positive. However, 26% of respondents are neutral, seeing AI's impact as neither positive nor negative. On the other hand, 27% of respondents view AI's impact negatively, with 20% identifying it as somewhat negative and 7% as very negative. These results reflect a divided opinion on AI, and the age difference is essential in this division. Younger respondents are more likely to view artificial intelligence (AI) as having a positive effect on society compared to older age groups. Among the 18-24-year-olds, 57% believe AI has a positive impact. In contrast, only 35% of respondents aged 65 and older share this positive view.

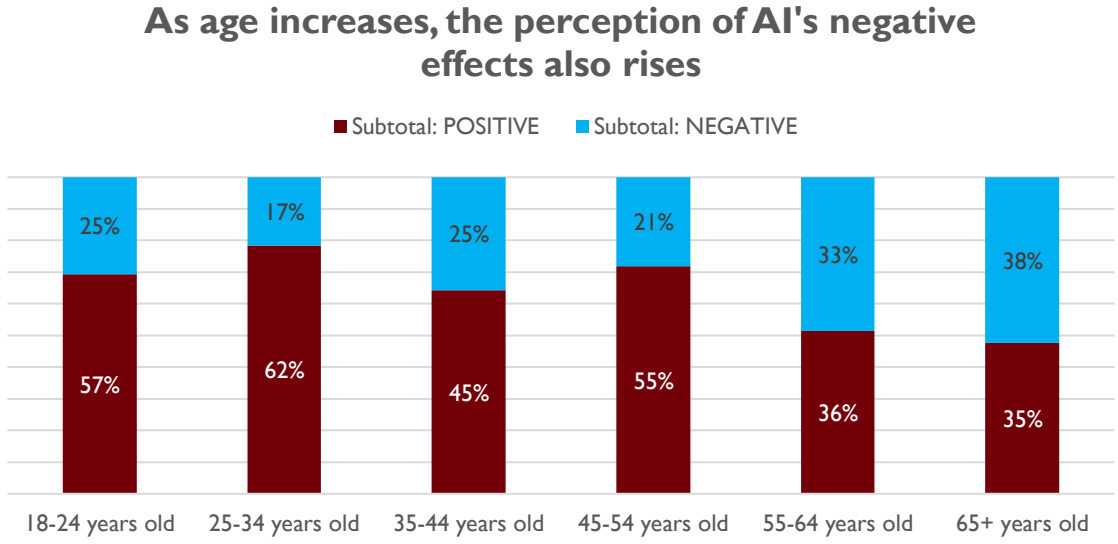


Figure 11 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Overall, would you say technology like Artificial Intelligence has had a mostly positive effect on our society or a mostly negative effect on our society?

Older individuals are more skeptical about the benefits of AI, highlighting a generational divide in attitudes towards this technology. Similarly, we observe differences in perception across other categories. Negative perceptions of AI are more prevalent among individuals with lower incomes and those without higher education. These groups are more likely to view AI's impact as somewhat or very negative, suggesting that socioeconomic factors play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards AI.

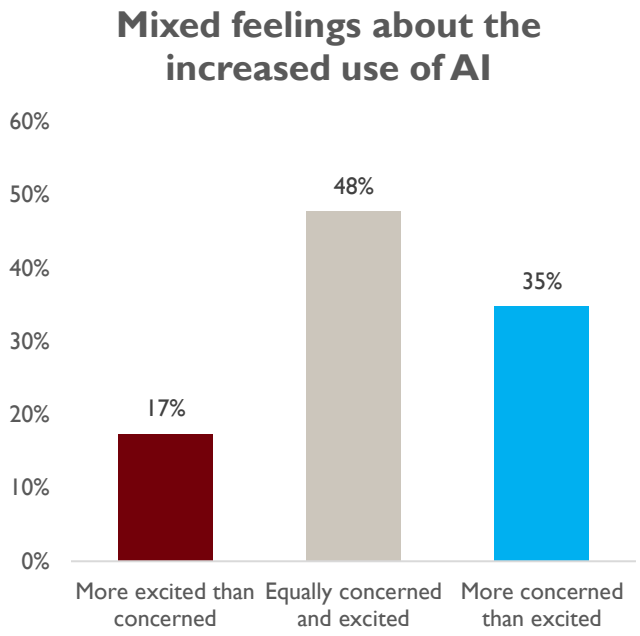
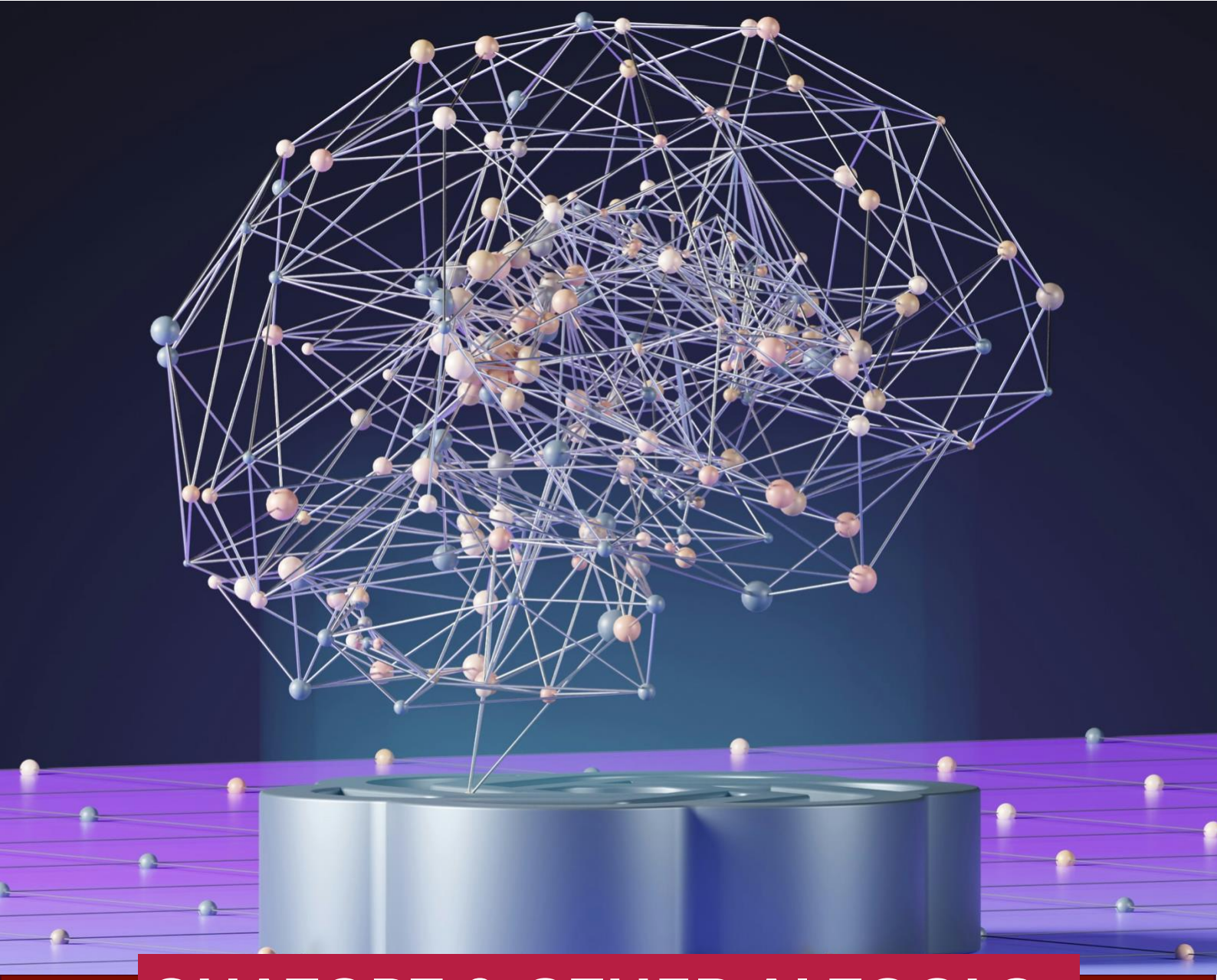


Figure 12 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Overall, would you say the increased use of artificial intelligence tools in daily life makes you feel...

The survey reveals mixed feelings about the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in daily life. While 48% of respondents feel equally concerned and excited, 35% are more concerned than excited. These concerns increase with age, lack of education, and economic disparities, highlighting the need to address these issues to foster a more balanced perspective on AI in the future. Only 17% of respondents feel more excited than concerned.



CHATGPT & OTHER AI TOOLS

The survey indicates that awareness of ChatGPT, a generative AI tool, varies significantly among respondents. While 25% of the public has heard a moderate amount about AI tools, half of the sample, 50%, has either heard only a little (33%) or nothing at all (17%).

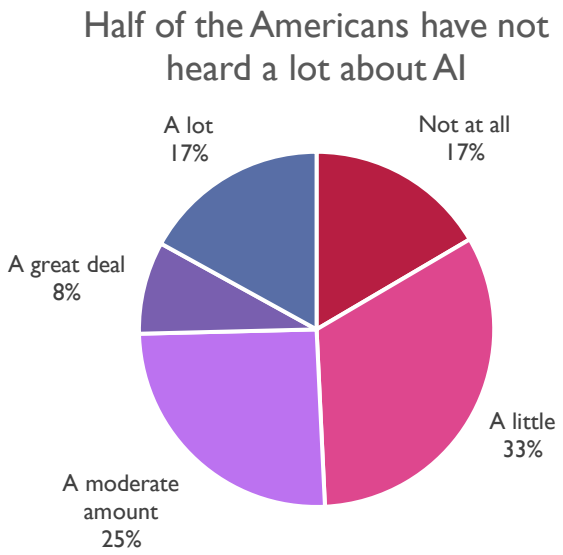


Figure 13 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - How much, if anything, have you heard about ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) tool used to create text?

In contrast, among younger individuals, the number of those who have heard about AI tools (more specific, about ChatGPT) is double compared to the sample average, highlighting a significant generational gap in awareness and familiarity with generative AI technologies.

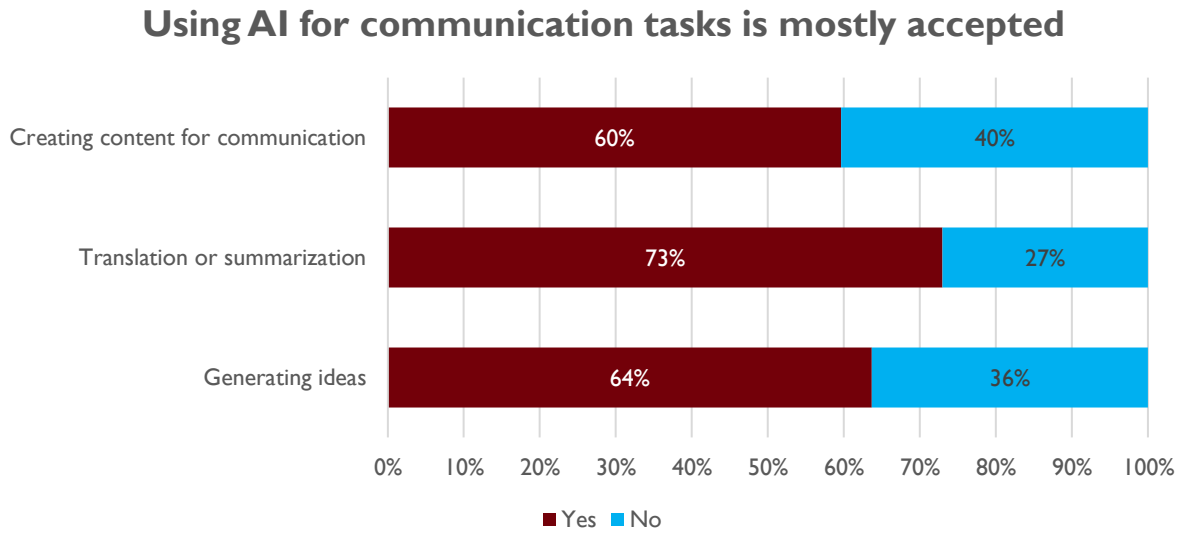


Figure 14 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Do you think it is acceptable for professionals to use ChatGPT or other AI tools for...

The survey results indicate varying levels of acceptance for professionals using ChatGPT or other AI tools. A significant majority, 73%, find it acceptable for translation or summarization tasks, while 64% support using AI for generating ideas, and 60% for creating content for communication. However, a notable minority remains skeptical, with 27% to 40% of respondents not considering it acceptable. This skepticism is particularly pronounced among those unfamiliar with these tools, reflecting a broader reticence towards AI among less informed individuals.

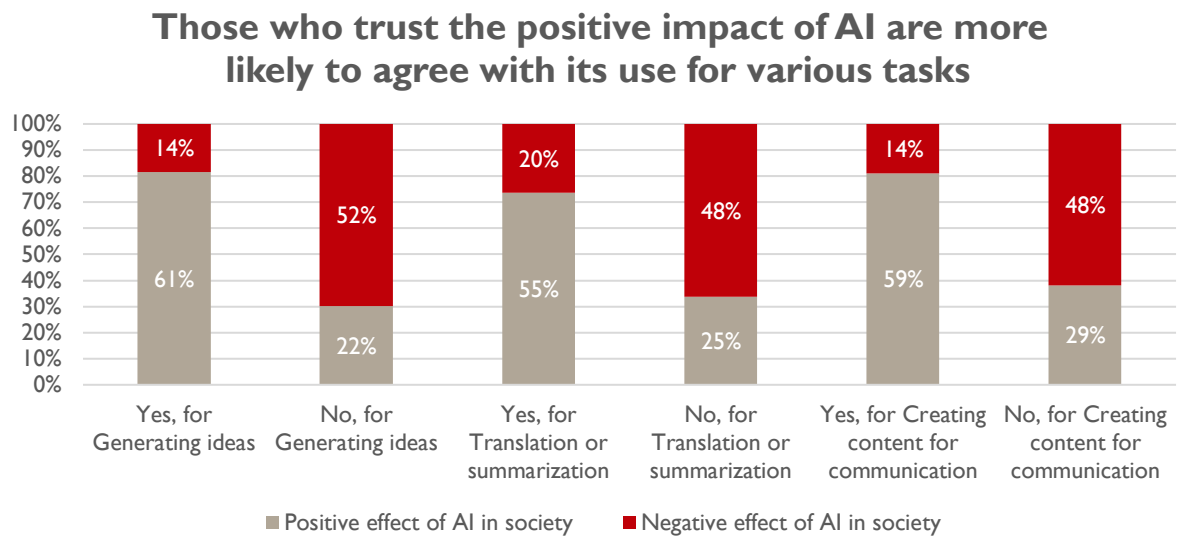


Figure 15 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Do you think it is acceptable for professionals to use ChatGPT or other AI tools for...Results for people who thinks that AI has either a positive or negative effect in our society.

USING AI TOOLS FOR DIFFERENT TASKS

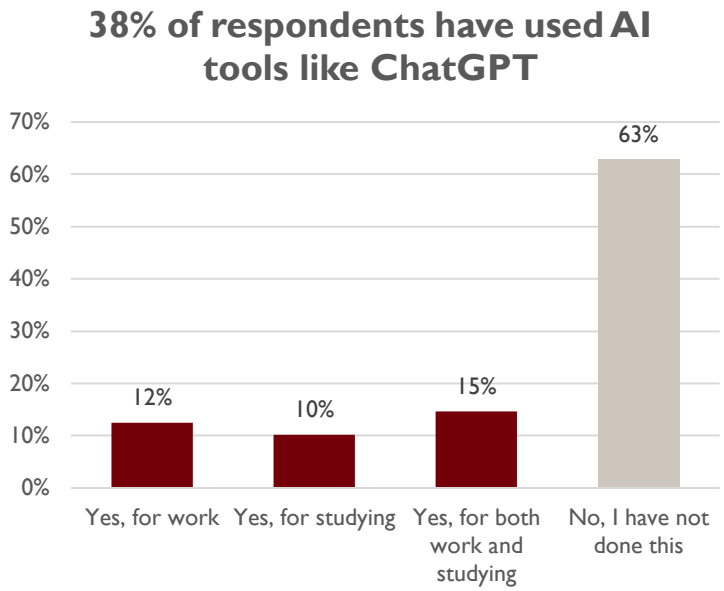


Figure 16 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with your work or study?

The survey reveals that 38% of respondents have used AI tools like ChatGPT for work or study purposes. This includes 12% who have used it for work, 10% for studying, and 15% for both work and studying. Usage is above average among younger individuals, people from the Western region of the United States, and those with medium to high income levels. This demographic insight suggests that familiarity and comfort with AI tools are higher among these specific groups.

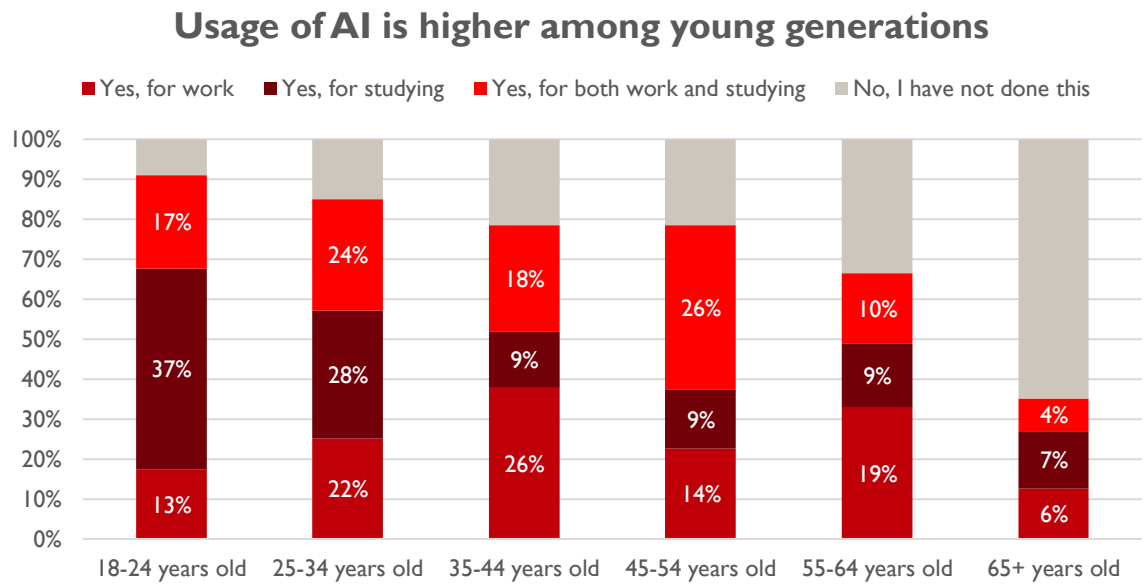


Figure 17 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with your work or study? Responses for each age group in the sample

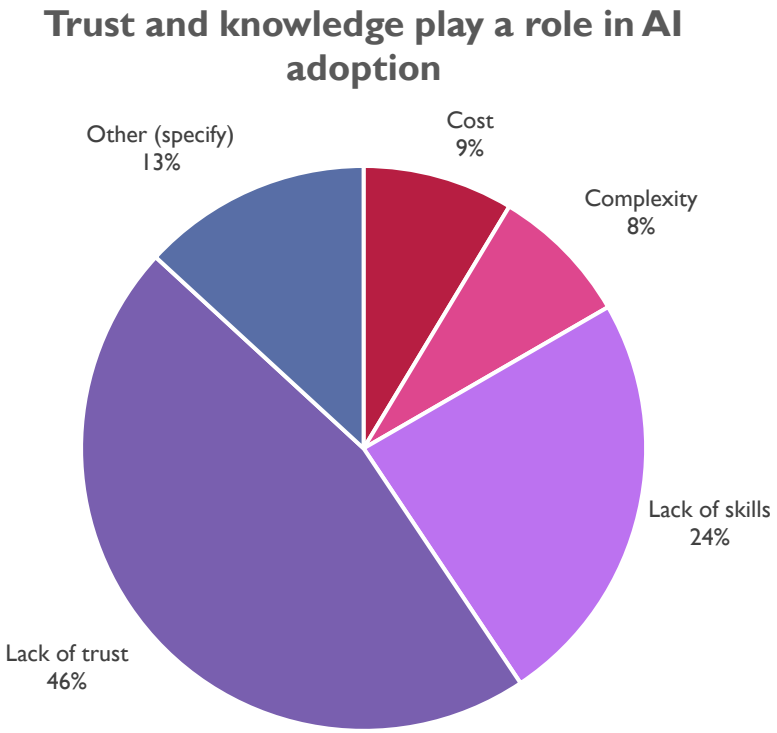


Figure 18 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - What are the main barriers to adopting AI in your work or study? Choose the most important one...

Among the reasons cited by those who have not used AI tools, the dominant argument is a lack of trust, mentioned by 46% of respondents. This is followed by a lack of skills, noted by 24%. The cost is a concern for only 9%, likely because many of these tools are currently available for free. This means that lack of trust and knowledge are the primary barriers to AI adoption, rather than financial constraints.

CHATGPT VS. OTHER AI ASSISTANTS

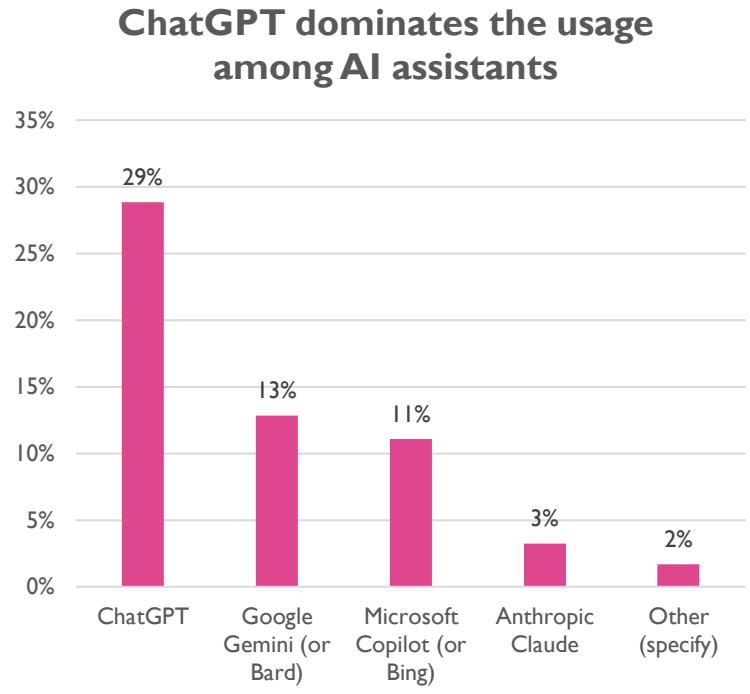


Figure 19 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Which type of AI assistant have you used? (Select all that apply)

The survey results show that ChatGPT dominates the usage among AI assistants, with 29% of respondents reporting having used it. Usage is higher across all active age groups. Google Gemini (or Bard) and Microsoft Copilot (or Bing) are used by 13% and 11% of respondents, respectively. Notably, these tools are more commonly used

by individuals aged 45-55 and those working in engineering and scientific industries. Anthropic Claude is used by 3%, and other AI assistants account for 2% of the usage. These trends highlight ChatGPT's broad appeal and the specific preferences for other AI tools within certain professional demographics.

AI TOOLS ACROSS INDUSTRIES

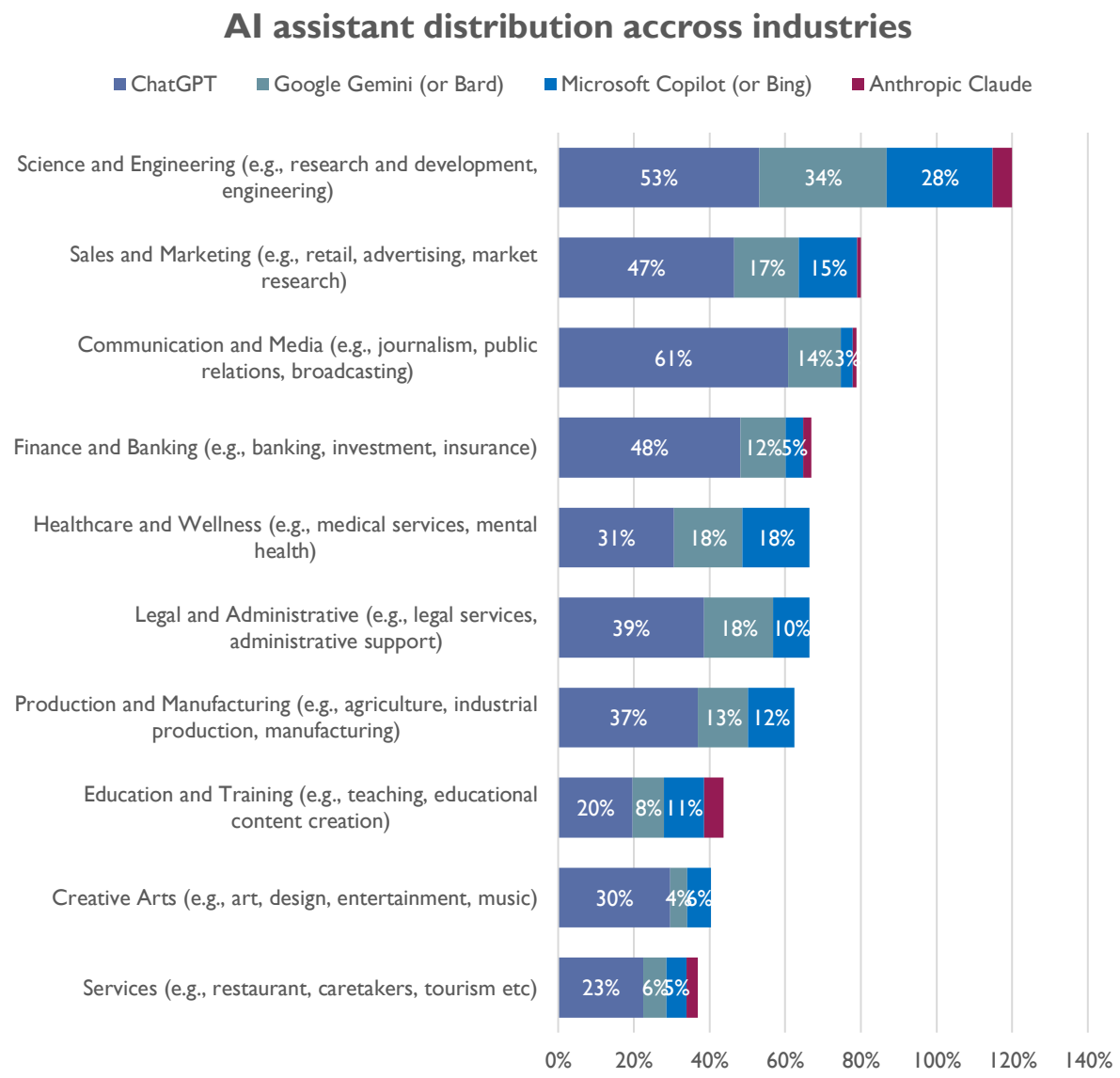
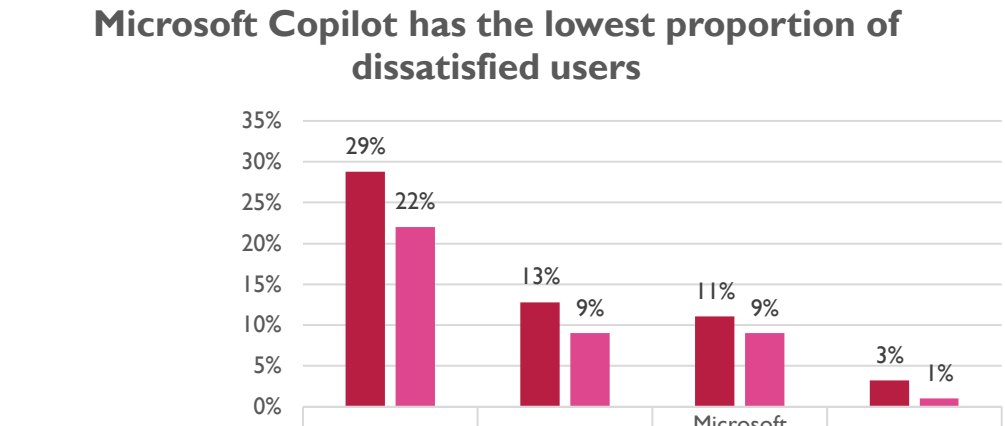


Figure 20 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. The results of using different types of AI tools, for different industries

These findings highlight that professionals in science and technology are the most frequent users of AI tools, followed by those in sales, communication, and finance sectors. This distribution reflects the varying needs and adoption rates of AI technologies across different fields.



	ChatGPT	Google Gemini (or Bard)	Microsoft Copilot (or Bing)	Anthropic Claude
Type of AI assistant used	29%	13%	11%	3%
Satisfaction with using this AI	22%	9%	9%	1%

Figure 21 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Level of use of 4 AI tools & level of satisfaction with using this AI

The survey results indicate varying levels of satisfaction with different AI assistants when recalculating the proportions of dissatisfied users.

- ChatGPT: 29% of respondents have used it, with 22% expressing satisfaction. This leaves 7% who are dissatisfied, which translates to 24% of ChatGPT users.
- Google Gemini (or Bard): 13% have used it, with 9% satisfaction, leaving 4% dissatisfied, or approximately 30% of its users.
- Microsoft Copilot (or Bing): 11% of respondents have used it, with 9% satisfaction, resulting in 2% dissatisfaction, or about 18% of its users.
- Anthropic Claude: 3% have used it, with 1% satisfaction, leaving 2% dissatisfied, translating to approximately 67% of its users.

Among these four AI tools, **Microsoft Copilot has the lowest proportion of dissatisfied users** at 18%, indicating the highest overall user satisfaction compared to the other AI assistants.

THE EFFECTS & CHALLANGES OF USING AI TOOLS

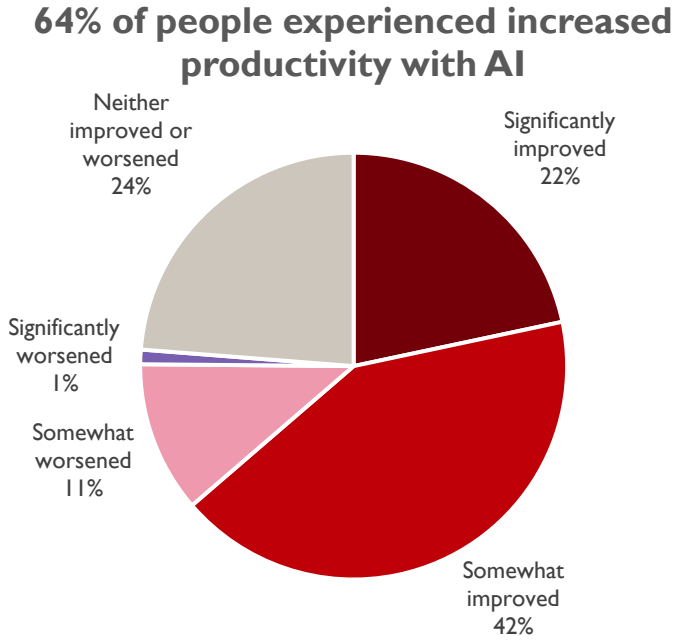


Figure 22 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - How has this AI assistant affected your productivity at work or study?

The survey results indicate that AI tools have generally improved productivity for about two-thirds of the respondents. For ChatGPT users - 68% reported increased productivity. For Google Gemini users: 75% experienced improved productivity. And for Microsoft Copilot users: 76% saw productivity gains. This suggests that those who have used AI tools report higher productivity scores overall. Among these tools, Microsoft Copilot users reported the highest improvement in productivity. This indicates a strong correlation between the use of AI assistants and perceived enhancements in work or study efficiency.

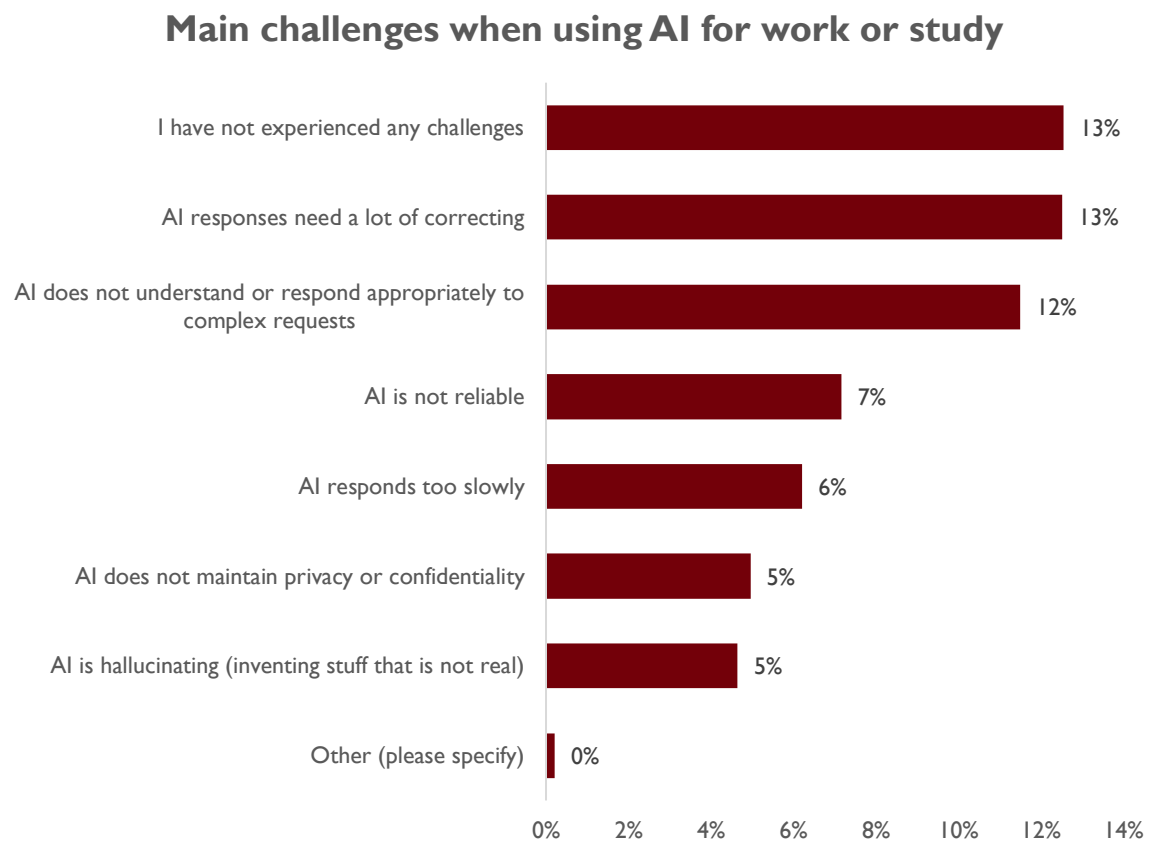


Figure 23 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Have you faced any of the following challenges in integrating AI into your work or study? (Select all that apply)

The survey results indicate that the most common challenges in integrating AI into work or study involve the complexity of requests and the need for constant corrections, each cited by 13% of respondents. This suggests that users (those responding) already have some experience using these tools. 12% mentioned that AI does not understand or respond appropriately to complex requests. Other issues include AI not being reliable (7%), responding too slowly (6%), not maintaining privacy or confidentiality (5%), and hallucinating (inventing stuff that is not real) (5%). Younger respondents provided more answers to this question than older respondents, confirming that the newer generations use these tools more extensively. This trend highlights the growing adoption of AI tools among younger demographics, who are more likely to encounter and report these challenges.

USING AI TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

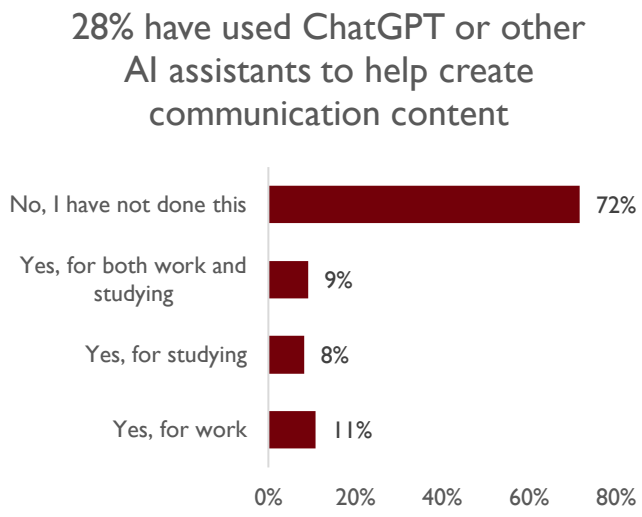


Figure 24 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content?

When examining the differences across industries, notable variations emerge. **Communication and Media** lead the way, with 71% of respondents using AI tools for content creation. This high engagement might suggest the industry's reliance on AI for enhancing productivity. Half of those working in communications and media admit to using these AI tools daily, highlighting their integral role in the industry. The trend reflects the industry's rapid adoption and integration of AI technologies.

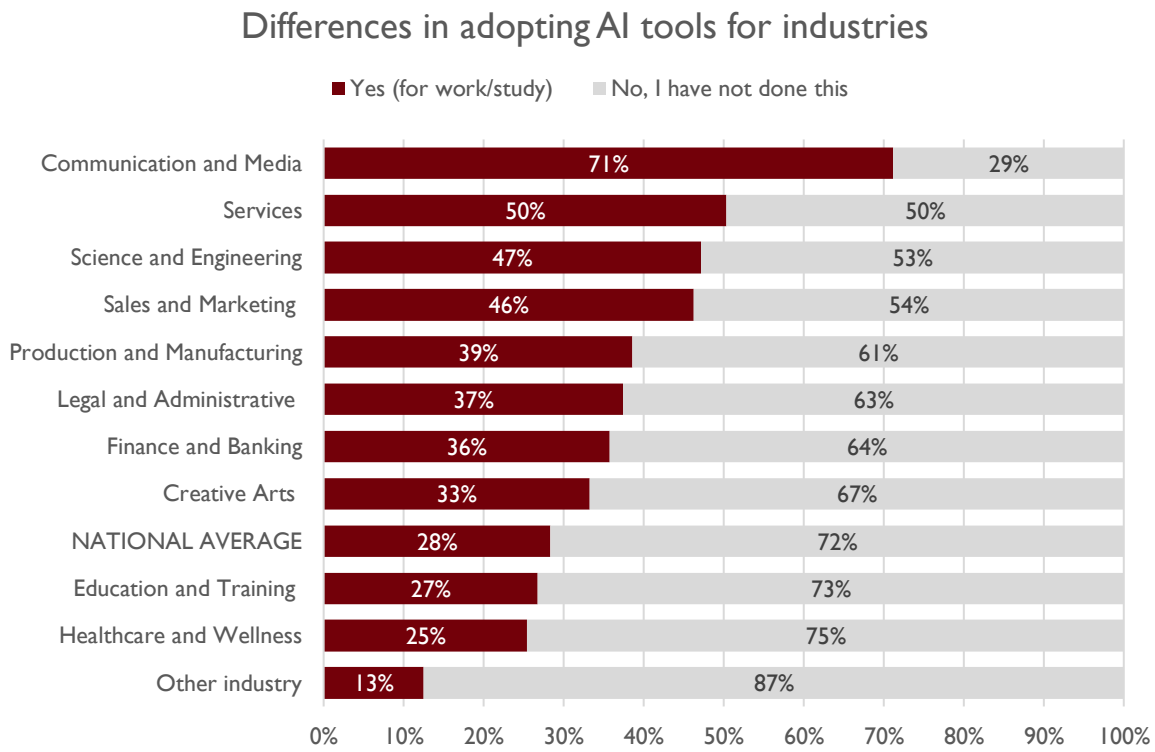


Figure 25 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content?

Services follow with 50%, indicating a balanced adoption rate for content creation purposes. In **Science and Engineering**, 47% have utilized AI tools. In contrast, **Healthcare and Wellness**

show a lower adoption rate at 25%. Similarly, in **Education and Training**, where the respondents were primarily educators and not students, only 27% admitted that they have used AI tools, suggesting a cautious approach towards AI in educational content creation. Thus, while AI is embraced in certain industries for its productivity and creative potential, others remain hesitant, potentially due to specific industry challenges or concerns.

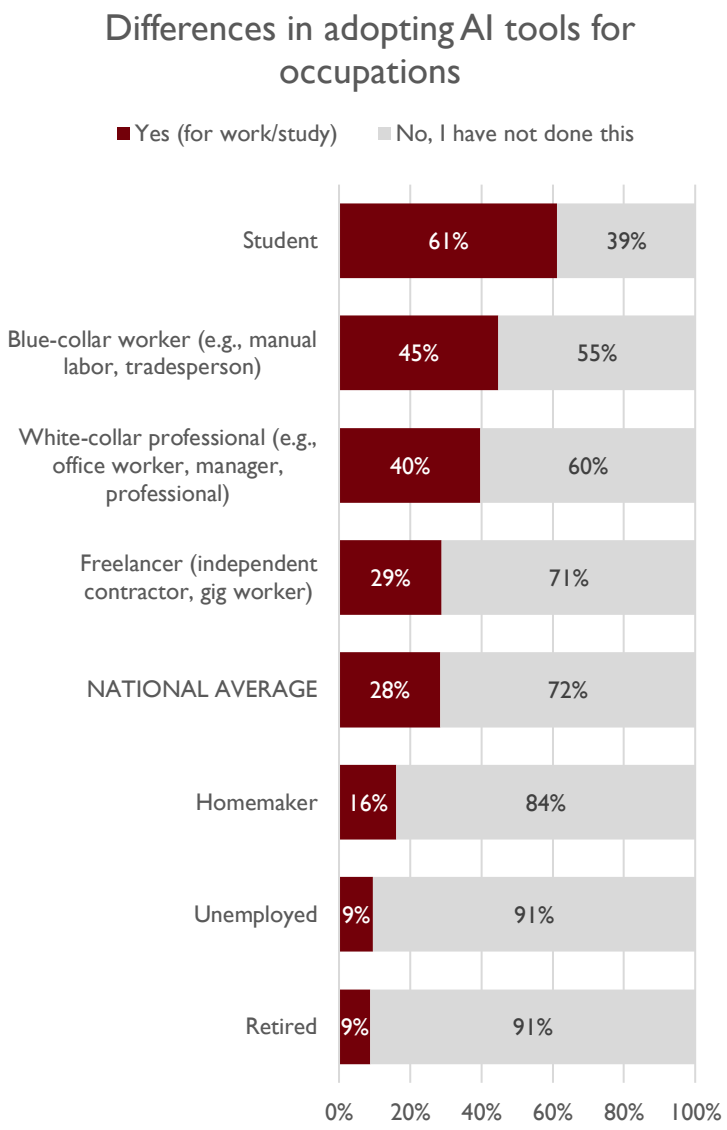


Figure 26 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content?

The survey reveals that students are the primary beneficiaries of AI tools like ChatGPT, with 61% using them for creating communication content. Following closely are white-collar professionals, such as office workers and managers, with 40% utilizing these tools. Blue-collar workers also show notable usage at 45%, indicating that AI tools are beneficial across a range of professions. In contrast, homemakers (16%), the unemployed (9%), and retirees (9%) report significantly lower usage rates, highlighting a clear divide in AI tool adoption based on occupation.

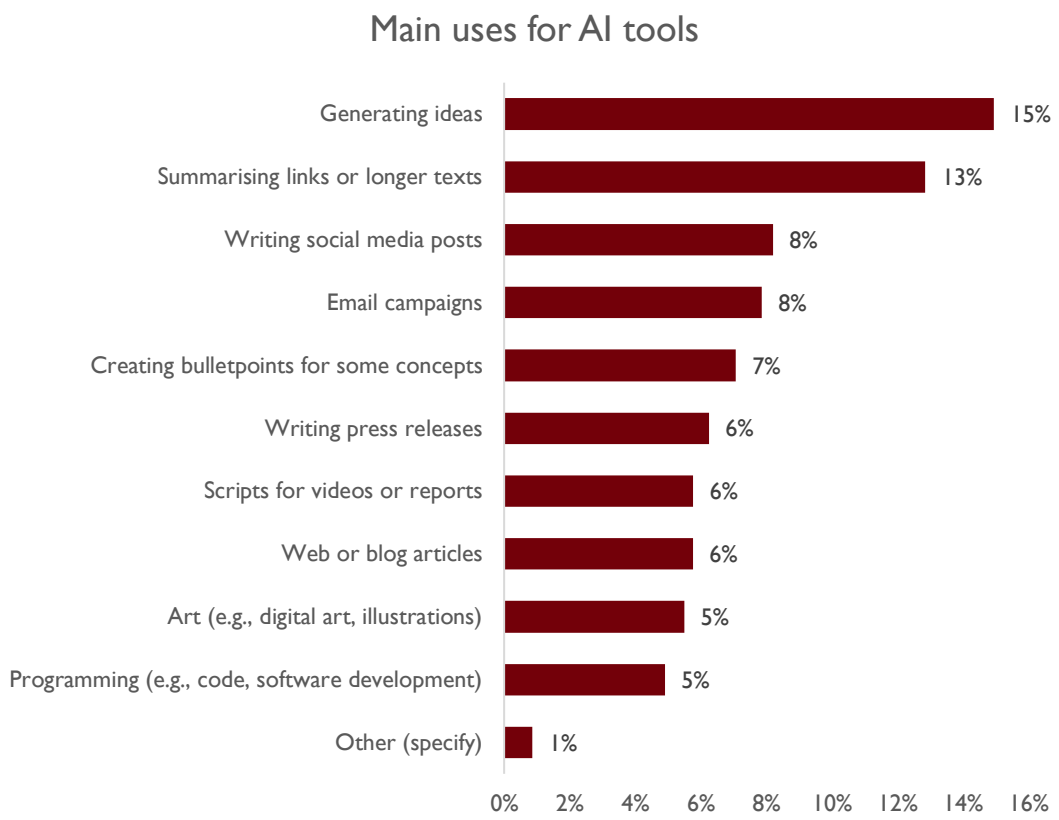


Figure 27 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Among the 28% of respondents who reported using AI tools like ChatGPT - What types of communication-related tasks do you use ChatGPT or other AI assistants for? (Select all that apply). 292 responses (people who used AI tools for communication content)

This data reflects the diverse applications of AI tools among users who regularly incorporate them into their workflows, focusing mainly on idea generation and summarizing content. More complex tasks like programming or art generation are a target for a much smaller group of respondents.

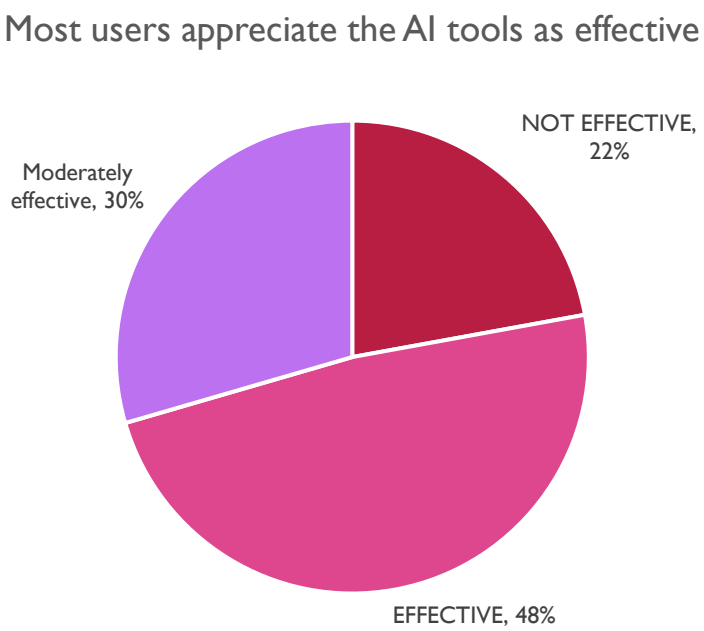


Figure 28 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - How effective do you find AI assistants in aiding your content creation process for communication tasks? 292 responses (people who used AI tools for communication content)

Among those who reported using AI tools for content creation, nearly half (48%) consider them to be effective, while 30% find them moderately effective. Only 22% of users are dissatisfied, deeming the tools not effective. This indicates that a significant majority of users appreciate the value and efficiency AI assistants bring to their communication tasks, so far.

THE FUTURE OF JOBS IN COMMUNICATION,

WITH MORE INFLUENCE OF AI ASSISTANTS

The survey reveals mixed expectations about the impact of AI on jobs in the communication field. Half of the respondents (52%) fear that AI will reduce the number of jobs due to task automation.

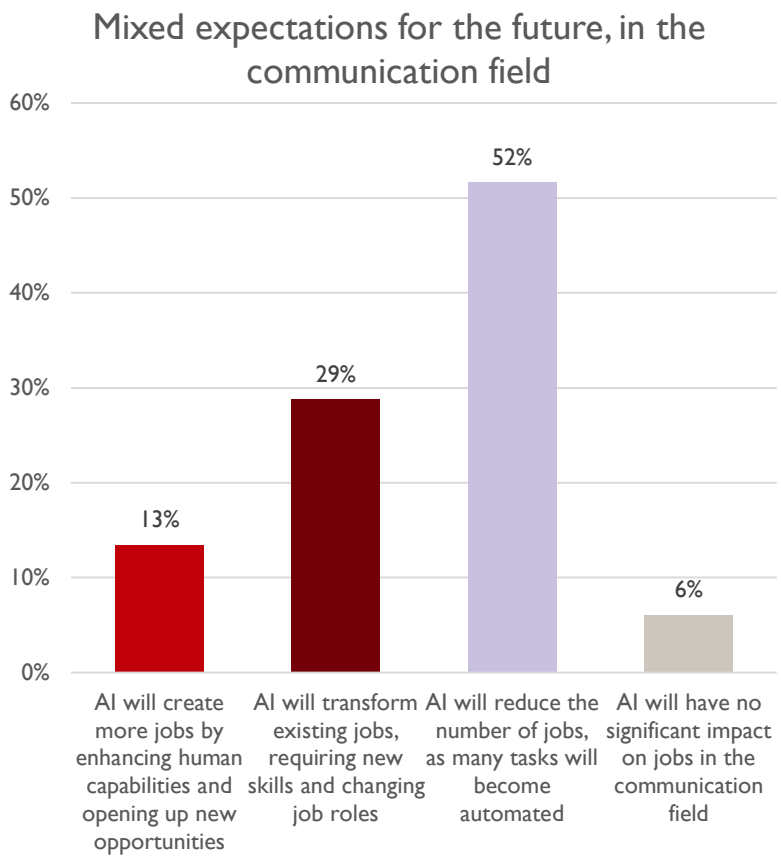


Figure 29 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Considering the increasing use of AI assistants in tasks like writing emails, creating content, or managing social media, how do you think these technologies will affect jobs in the communication field?

Meanwhile, 29% expect AI to transform existing jobs, requiring new skills and changing job roles. Additionally, 13% believe AI will create more jobs by enhancing human capabilities and opening new opportunities. Overall, a dominant portion of respondents anticipates significant changes, whether through job reduction or transformation. Only a small minority (6%) believes that AI will have no significant impact on jobs in the communication field. Interestingly, older respondents are much more likely than the average to think that AI tools will have no influence on jobs in this domain, highlighting a generational divide in perceptions about the future of AI in the workplace.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN USING AI TOOLS

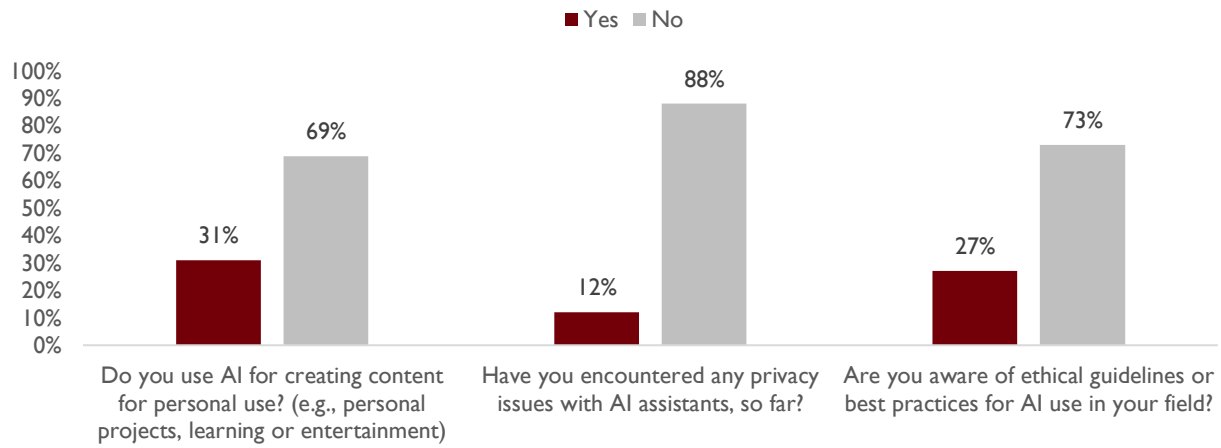


Figure 30 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Questions about the privacy and ethical problems.

The results indicate that a significant portion of the public has mixed views regarding the ethical use of AI. Only 12% have encountered privacy issues with AI assistants and 27% of the respondents are aware of ethical guidelines or best practices for AI use in their field. The survey reveals that women and those with higher education levels are more likely to consider AI as unethical. Conversely, individuals working in science and technology, as well as the male demographic, are less concerned about AI ethics, indicating a potential divide in ethical considerations based on gender, education, and professional background.

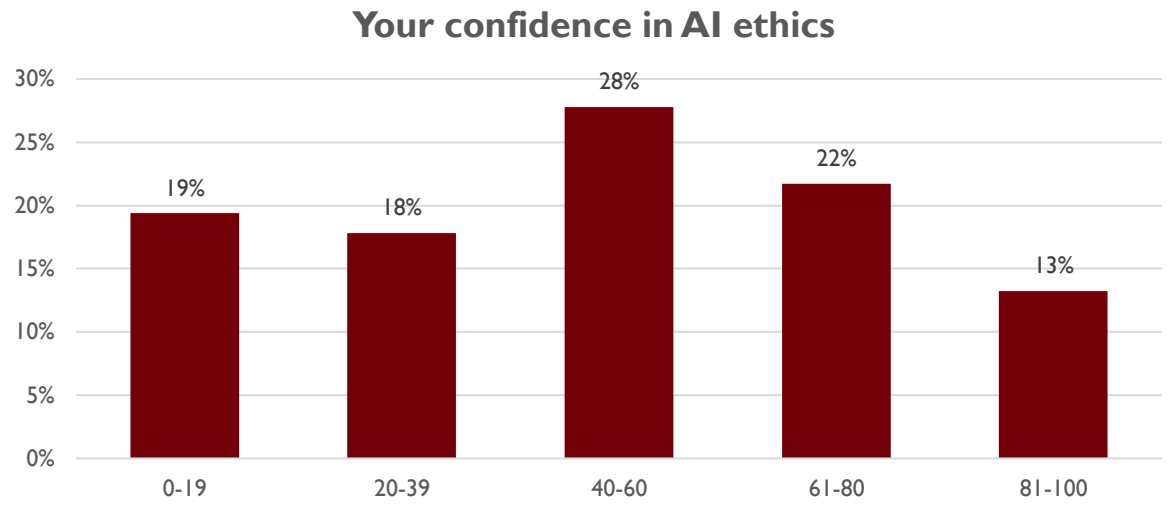


Figure 31 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - How much do you believe that AI will act according to ethical standards and values? (With 1 being lowest and 100 being highest, assigning any number in between to represent your confidence in AI ethics) Average – 46.5

AI HELPS OR HURTS?

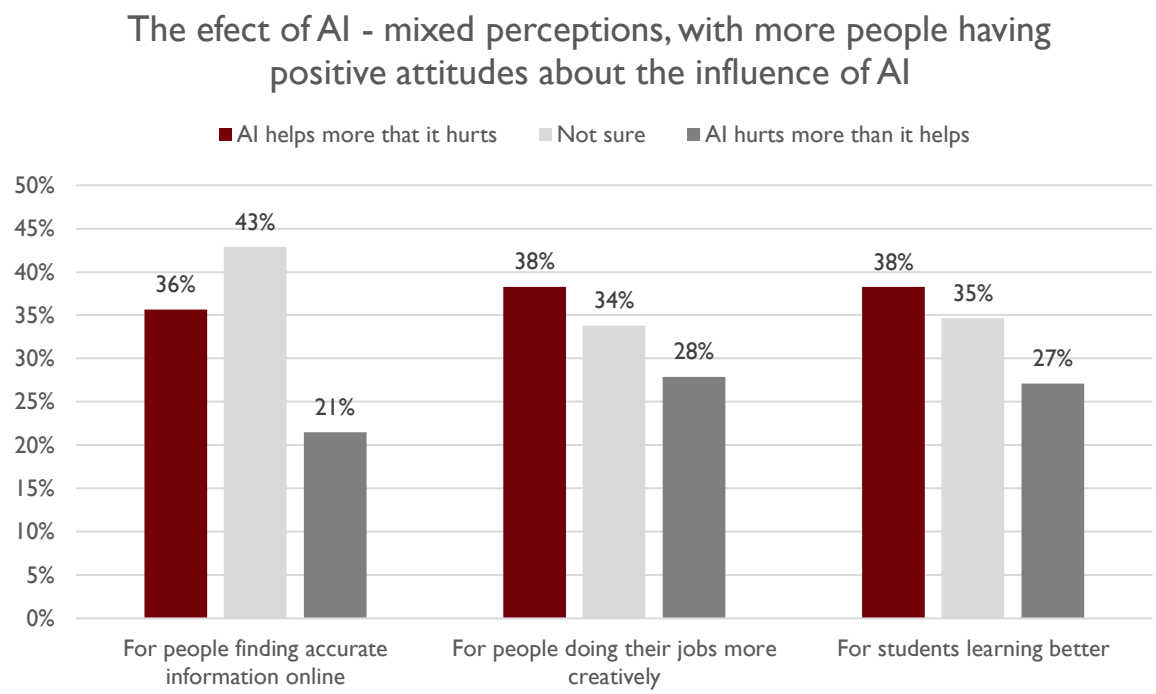


Figure 32 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Questions about the effect of AI for different tasks

Overall, the public remains divided on AI's benefits and drawbacks. Interestingly, men tend to have a more positive view of AI's impact, but the balance of opinions is relatively consistent across different demographic groups, which might suggest a nuanced understanding of AI's potential and challenges among the broader population.

THE EFFECT OF AI IN JOURNALISM AND POLITICS

The survey indicates a divided outlook on AI's influence on the quality of journalism, with *positive influence* for 46%, *negative influence* for 36%, and *no significant impact* - for 18%. Interestingly, skepticism about AI's role in journalism increases with higher education levels and age, suggesting that more educated and older respondents are more cautious about the potential negative effects of AI on journalistic quality.

However, the overall sentiment remains somewhat positive, with a larger portion of the population leaning towards the belief that AI will enhance rather than undermine journalism quality.

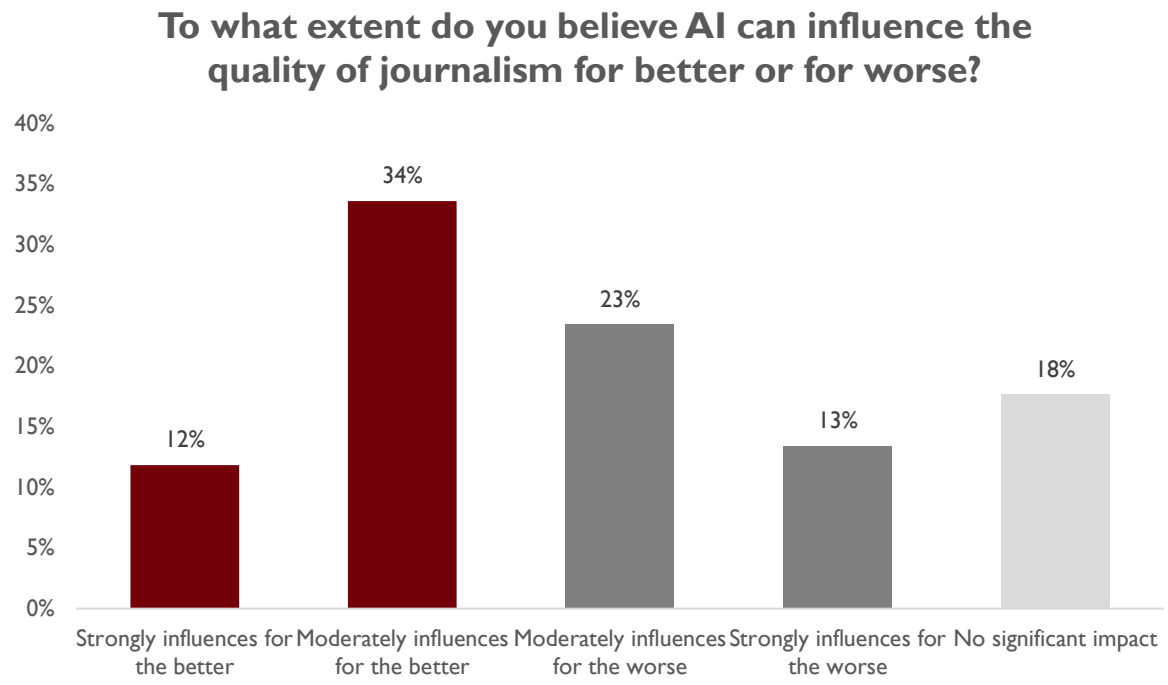


Figure 33 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Questions about the AI tools and the quality of journalism

When discussing the impact of AI on specific areas, the survey results reveal mixed opinions among the public.

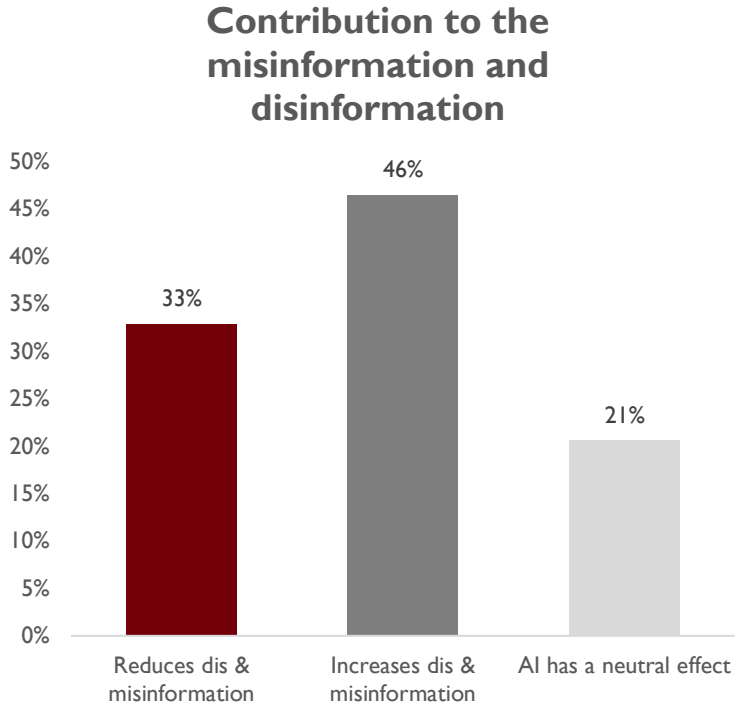


Figure 34 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - To what extent AI do you think can contribute to online misinformation and disinformation?

The concern about AI increasing online misinformation is evident, with 46% believing that AI will heighten misinformation. Conversely, 33% think AI might reduce misinformation, while 21% believe AI's impact will be neutral. The trend shows that younger respondents feel less at risk from misinformation, potentially indicating a gap in awareness about the dangers of AI-generated content. Educated individuals, on the other hand, show greater apprehension about the rise of misinformation due to AI.

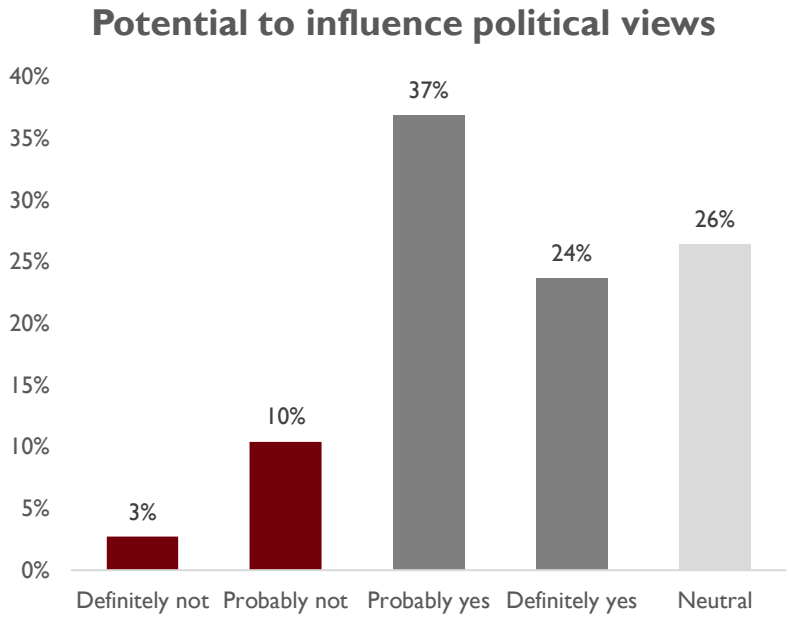


Figure 35 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - Do you believe that AI-generated content has the potential to influence political views, especially in the context of future elections?

A significant portion of respondents believe AI-generated content could influence political views, particularly in the context of future elections. Specifically, 61% (37% "probably yes" and 24% "definitely yes") think it has this potential. Only a small fraction, 13%, dismiss this possibility ("definitely not" and "probably not"). Again, notably, younger individuals feel less exposed to the influence of AI-generated content on political views, possibly making them more vulnerable to subtle manipulations. In contrast, those with higher education levels are more aware and concerned about such influences.

These insights underline the complexity of public perceptions regarding AI's role in influencing information and politics. They highlight the need for heightened awareness and education, especially among younger demographics, to better navigate the potential pitfalls of AI in shaping opinions and disseminating information.

Also, **public perceptions on the government's role in regulating AI tools like ChatGPT are notably mixed**. According to the survey, 26% worry that the government might over-regulate, potentially stifling innovation and the beneficial applications of AI. The self-labeled Republicans are even more concerned than the average American (40%).

Conversely, 38% of respondents are concerned that the government will not go far enough in regulating the use of AI, indicating a desire for more stringent oversight to manage potential risks and ethical considerations. Self-labeled Democrats are interested in a higher regulation in proportion of 48%.

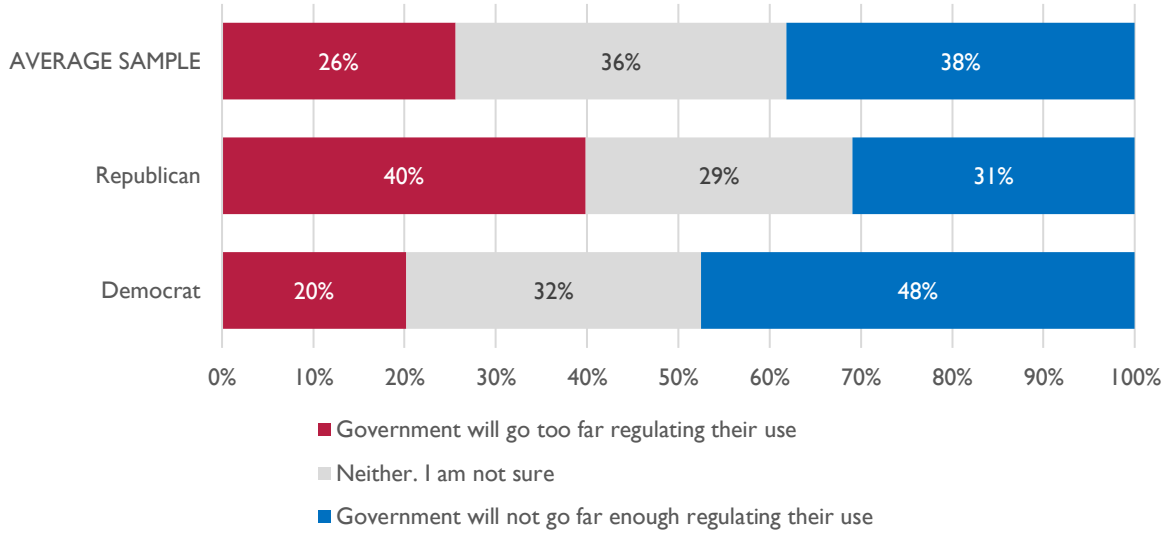


Figure 36 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Question - As chatbots like ChatGPT become more widespread, which is your greater concern of the following?

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS & MEDIA

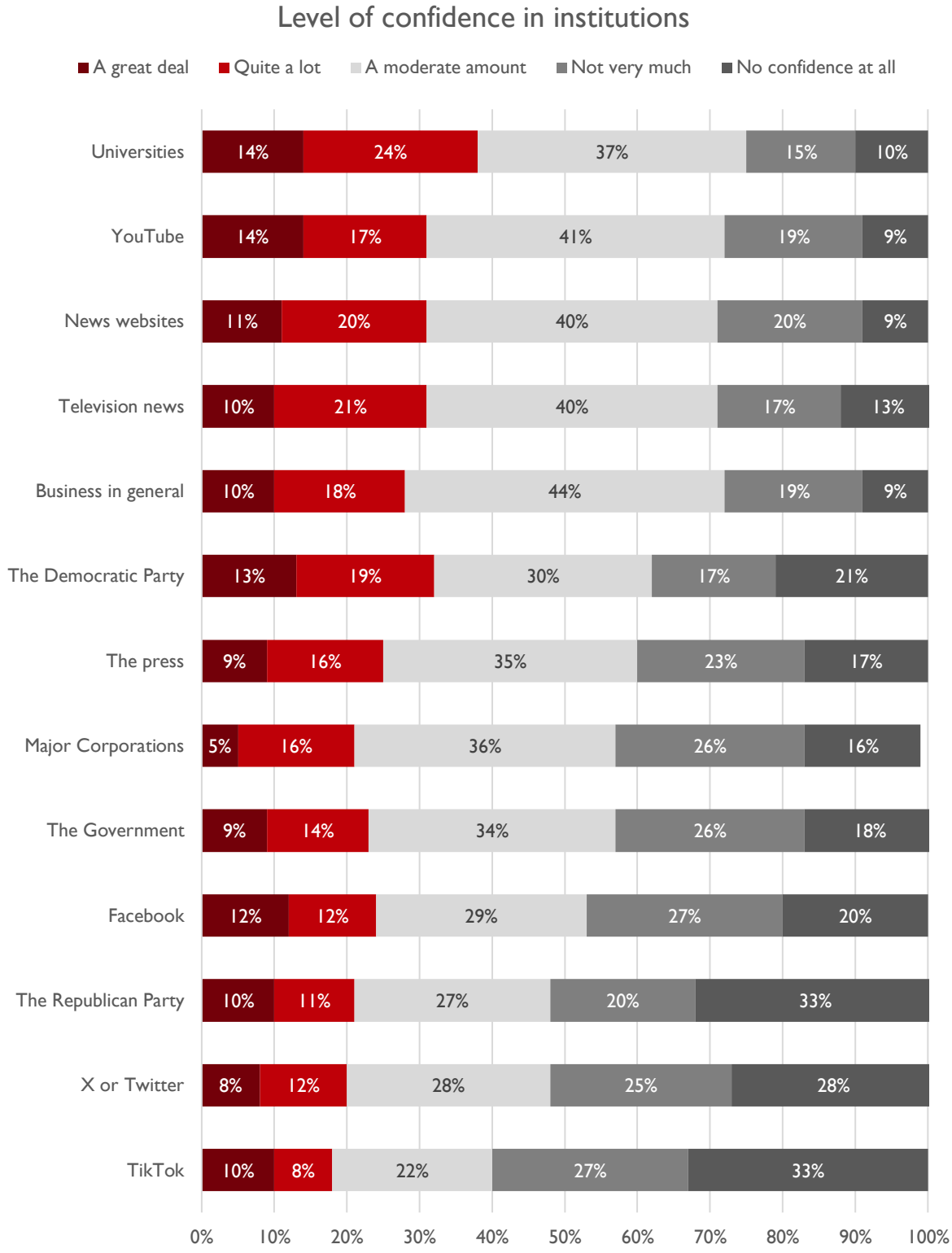


Figure 37 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Questions about the level of confidence in institutions. Results are presented in order of the average score (higher average in top)

The data on institutional trust shows a clear hierarchy, with universities enjoying the highest levels of confidence from the public, followed by YouTube, news websites, and

television news. Conversely, TikTok is at the bottom of the trust scale, indicating significant skepticism about this platform. Among social media channels, YouTube stands out as the most trusted, reflecting its perceived reliability and influence.

The principal component analysis (PCA) in the second graph further elucidates the public's trust patterns. It reveals distinct clusters of trust in various institutions. This analysis helps understanding the underlying patterns of trust among different demographic groups. For instance, there are clear divisions between those who trust traditional institutions like universities, TV news, and government and those who place their trust in newer, digital platforms like X, TikTok or YouTube. The PCA plot provides a visual representation of these trust dynamics, highlighting the diverse trust profiles within the surveyed population.

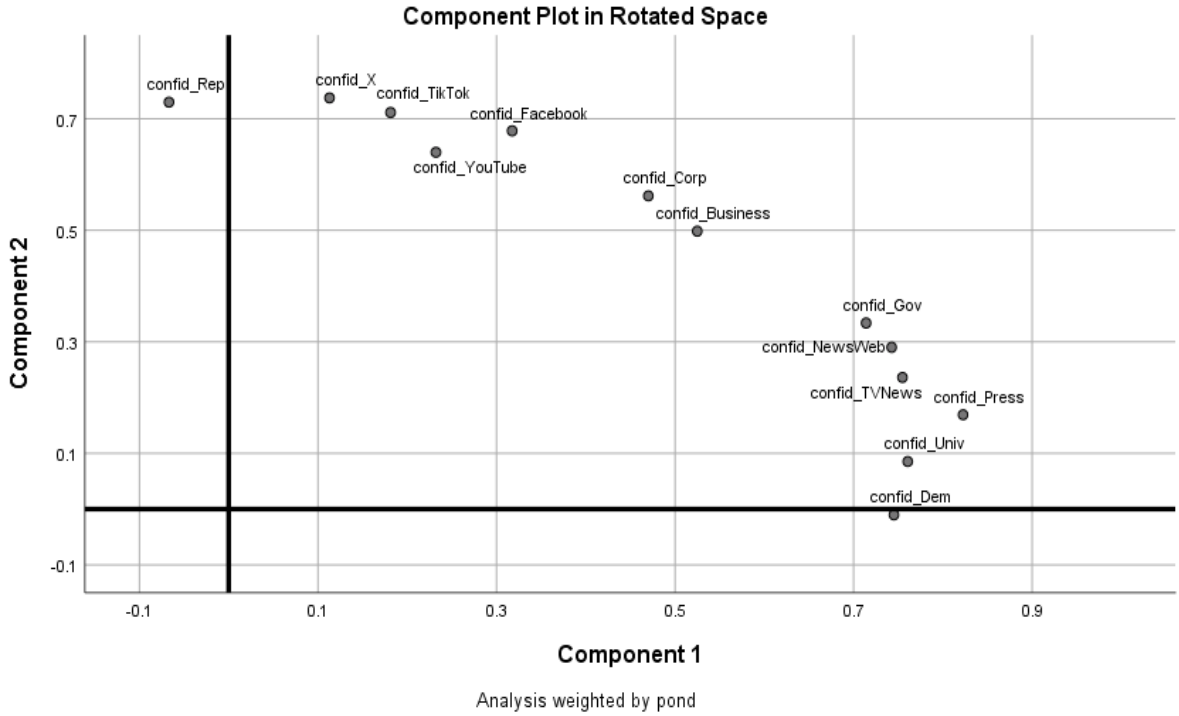


Figure 38 A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of survey responses concerning trust in various U.S. institutions. Each point represents an individual's trust levels, with the x-axis (PC1) capturing the most variance and the y-axis (PC2) showing the second highest variance. Clusters indicate groups with similar trust profiles, while distances between points reflect differences in trust levels. Institutions are depicted as vectors, showing their influence on the respondents' positions in the PCA space. The length and direction of each vector indicate the strength and nature of the relationship between trust in that institution and the principal components. This visualization reveals underlying patterns and distinct trust profiles among different demographic or psychographic groups.

College of Information and Communications
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

DESCRIPTIVES OF THE SAMPLE. WEIGHTING

The Summer 2024 USC AI Index was conducted June 27 – July 3, 2024, by the College of Information and Communications at University of South Carolina, using Qualtrics panel respondents. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,061 adults ages 18+.
The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, for results based on the entire sample of adults. The margin of sampling error takes into account the design effect. The margin of sampling error is higher and varies for results based on sub-samples. Sampling error is only one potential source of error. There may be other unmeasured non-sampling errors in this or any poll. In questions that permit multiple responses, columns may total substantially more than 100%, depending on the number of different responses offered by each respondent.
The study was conducted in English. The data were weighted by age, gender, household income, Census region, education, occupation, race/ethnicity. We did not weight the sample by vote.
The demographic benchmarks came from 2023 Current Population Survey (CPS) from the US Census Bureau.

Age. How old are you?

	Valid Percent
18-24 years old	12.0
25-34 years old	17.5
35-44 years old	16.0
45-54 years old	15.1
55-64 years old	16.6
65+ years old	22.9

Gender. How do you describe yourself?

	Valid Percent
Male	50.3
Female	49.2
Other	.5

Region (based on ZIP Code & US Census)

	Valid Percent
Midwest	21.0
Northeast	17.0
South	38.0
West	24.0

Education. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	Valid Percent
Some high school or less	9.0
High school diploma or GED	28.0
Some college, but no degree	15.0
Associates or technical degree	10.0
Bachelor's degree	24.0
Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS etc.)	14.0

Occupation. What best describes your current occupation? - Selected Choice

	Valid Percent
Student	7.4
White-collar professional	30.0
Blue-collar worker	13.2
Freelancer	3.0
Retired	25.3
Homemaker	6.0
Unemployed	11.1
Other (please specify)	4.1

Income. What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?

	Valid Percent
Less than $25,000	17.1
$25,000-$49,999	19.8
$50,000-$99,999	28.3
$100,000-$199,999	27.4
More than $200,000	7.4

Race / ethnicity

	Valid Percent
AmericanIndian&Other	7.4
Asian&Pacific	6.7
Black	11.1
Hispanic or Latino	18.5

Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2.2
White	54.1

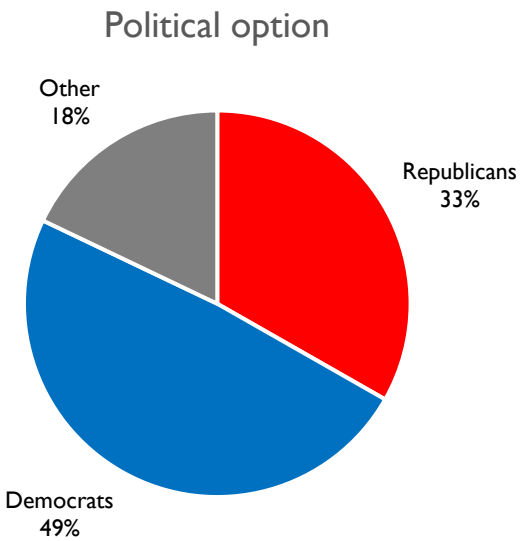


Figure 39 Source: Summer 2024 USC AI Index. Questions - In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent? Recoded categories

There is an increase proportion of independents and a lower ratio of Republicans, as compared with other studies. We did not weight the sample, based on the vote or political preferences.

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