Artificial Intelligence 101

AI

Artificial Intelligence: AI, at a high level, is technology that imitates human intelligence to perform tasks that traditionally required human intervention.[1] For example, asking Siri for directions, receiving show recommendations on Netflix, self-driving cars.

BIGGEST PLAYERS

- OpenAI (ChatGPT with GPT-4.5, DALL·E)
- Apple (Apple Intelligence, Siri, On-Device AI)
- Google DeepMind (Gemini AI)
- Meta Platforms (AI Assistant across Facebook, Instagram, etc. LLaMA)
- Microsoft (Copilot, integrated across Windows, Microsoft 365 etc.)
- Anthropic (Claude AI Assistant)

PROS

- **AI-Powered Tutors and Adaptive Learning Platforms** AI can help personalize learning and provide analytics to teachers and parents
- **Creative Exploration** AI tools like DALL·E and ChatGPT allow kids to explore STEM, art, and storytelling
- **Accessibility Support** AI-driven tools such as speech-to-text, language translation, and visual readers can serve as powerful assistive technology for kids with disabilities
- **Online Safety** AI-based apps like Bark can help monitor online behavior, filter inappropriate content, and detect potential risks in real time
- **Smarter Family Organization and Communication** Voice assistants like Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa, Apple Siri can help set reminders, send messages and streamline schedules

CONS

- **Chatbot Companions** AI chatbots are increasingly marketed as emotional companions, which can hinder kids from forming real-world relationships, expose them to inappropriate or harmful advice, and even lead them to form genuine emotional attachments to artificial characters
- **Deepfakes** AI-generated or AI-altered content can make it difficult for kids to distinguish between what's real and what's fake
- **Data Privacy** Many AI-driven platforms collect and store large amounts of personal data—often without clear understanding or consent—putting kids' privacy at risk
- **Addictive Algorithms** AI-powered recommendations on platforms like TikTok, YouTube are designed to keep users engaged, making it harder for kids to self-regulate screen time and focus
- **Job & Skill Displacement** AI is reshaping the job market, making it essential to teach kids critical thinking, ethics, and adaptability in an AI-driven world

FAMILY TIPS

- Start the conversation early! Ask your kids what they already know about AI and what excites or concerns them
- Talk to your kids about the importance of not sharing personal information with AI tools or apps, and help them understand how companies collect data
- Use simple explanations, such as: AI isn't the same as talking to a real person. It isn't perfect and can make mistakes.
- Challenge them to consider, 'How can I be sure this information is accurate?'
- Establish family rules for using AI, such as when and how AI tools like assistants or chatbots can be used
- For older kids, ask how they might be using it at school

1. Fiegerman, Seth, and Nate Lanxon. "AI Glossary: A–Z of Artificial Intelligence Terms to Know." Bloomberg, 4 Oct. 2024, https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-artificial-intelligence-glossary/.

Note: All information provided is current as of April 2025 and may change as AI evolves

NEW CANAAN UNPLUGGED