AI in Our Lives: The Ethics of AI Assistants

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About me

- I'm a doctoral researcher

- I use computer models to understand how humans understand and use language

- I teach linguistics courses at the Department of English Language and Linguistics

- Before this, I worked on creating language tools like chatbots and voice assistants

- I have also been developing language tools for local communities in the Himalayan region

- More about me: https://akkikek.xyz/about
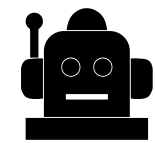
Your first thoughts on AI assistants

1. What is your first thought when you hear the term "AI assistants"?

2. What do you think are the most exciting possibilities of AI assistants?

3. What concerns do you have about using AI assistants?

4. Do you think AI assistants will replace human jobs?

Outline

🤖 AI assistants 101

🛡 Privacy concerns

⚖ Bias

🤖 AI assistants 101

AI assistants are more than (just) apps!

Traditional Apps:

    - Apps you use everyday, like messaging apps, navigation apps, and social media

    - They only ask for access to what they need to function

    - Example, Signal needs access to your contacts to help you find friends who are also using the app

    - They operate within specific, well-defined contexts

AI assistants:

    - They need access to various tools to help you

    - The more data and apps an AI assistant can access, the more helpful it can be

    - Example, Gemini offers to connect to Google workspace

From Apps to Intelligence

- AI assistants use advanced technology to learn from massive amounts of information

- This technology is based on something called a "model", which is an advanced computer program trained on vast amounts of data

- AI assistants use models to predict and generate text, image, audio, and audio based on patterns learned from the data

- These predictions are limited by the data they were trained on

How are models trained?

- The more data a model analyzes, the better it becomes it becomes at identifying patterns, which helps in predicting what comes next

- This learning process is called "training"

- A small model (trained on less data) can't do much

- A large model (trained on lots of data) can generate better, more coherent and natural-sounding language, realistic images, and even coherent audio and video

- These trained models form the foundation of AI assistants
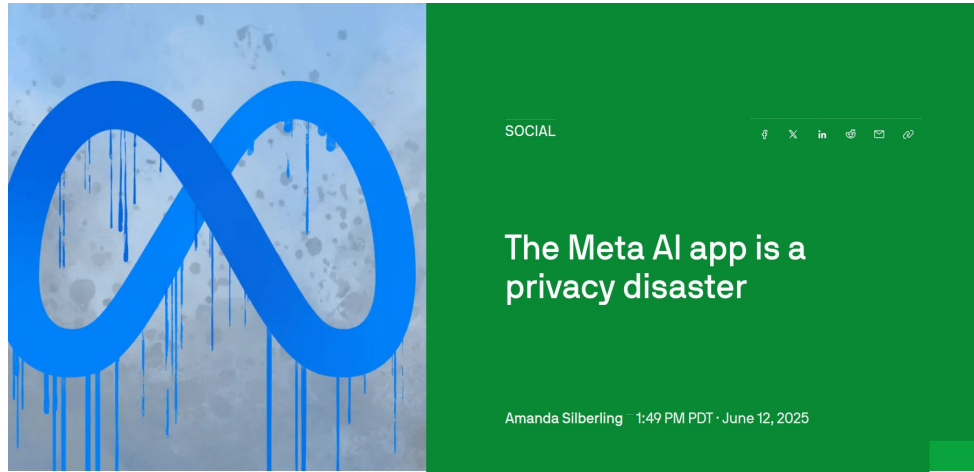
Technology and Society

- AI assistants are becoming more integrated into our lives

- Its important to consider key ethical issues:

    - <u>Privacy</u>: Protecting user data and ensuring confidentiality
    - <u>Bias:</u> Preventing unfair or discriminatory outcomes
    - <u>Fairness</u>: Ensuring equitable treatment to all users

🛡 Privacy concerns

Your data, their AI

- AI systems require vast amounts of data to function effectively

- This data can include personal information, online behavior, and even sensitive details

- But often we are unaware of our data is collected, stored and used by AI

- Surveillance is widespread across many areas of life, from social media to online shopping

- AI systems analyze this data to create detailed profiles of individuals and use it for targeted advertising, personalized recommendations, etc.
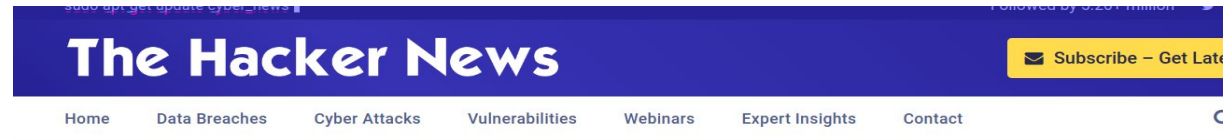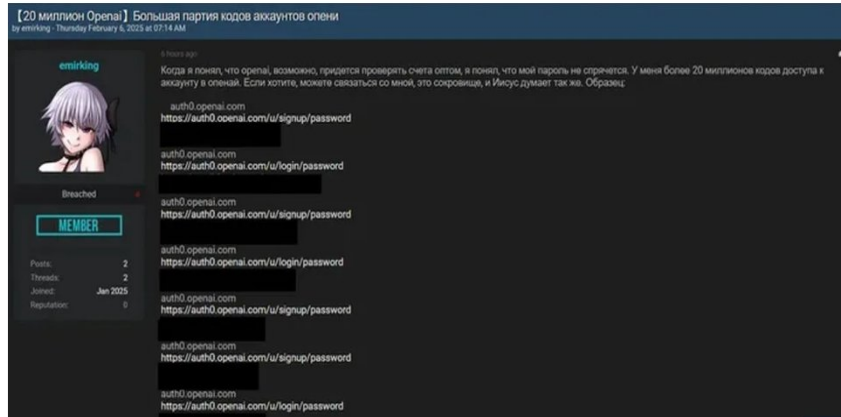
Stories from headlines

The Meta AI app is a privacy disaster

SOCIAL

Amanda Silberling · 1:49 PM PDT · June 12, 2025

BBC

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ChatGPT banned in Italy over privacy concerns

1 April 2023

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Shiona McCallum
Technology reporter

IEEE Spectrum   How Online Privacy Is Like Fishing

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How Online Privacy Is Like Fishing › In the wake of a Microsoft spying controversy, it's time for an ecosystem perspective

BY BARATH RAGHAVAN BRUCE SCHNEIER | 03 JUN 2024 | 3 MIN READ |

20 million OpenAI accounts offered for sale

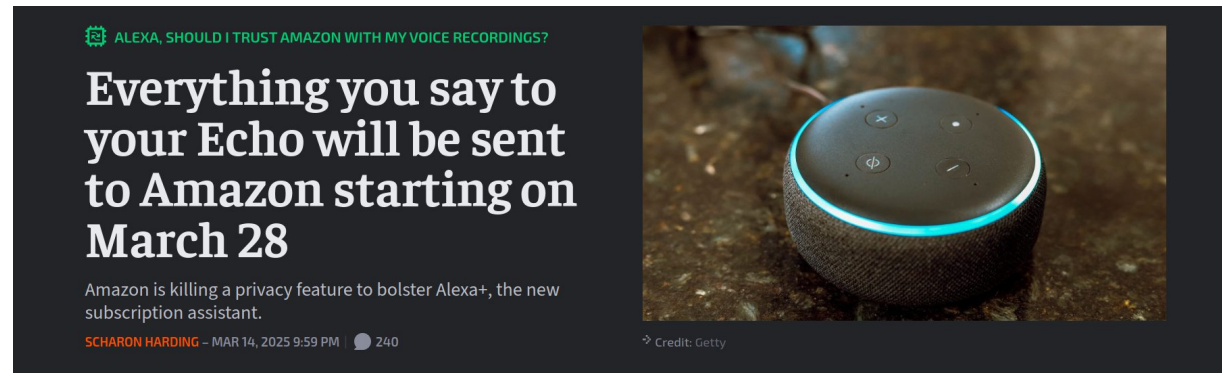Posted: February 7, 2025 by Pieter Arntz

A cybercriminal acting under the moniker "emirking" offered 20 million OpenAI user login credentials this week, sharing what appeared to be samples of the stolen data itself.

The Hacker News

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Italy Fines OpenAI €15 Million for ChatGPT GDPR Data Privacy Violations

📅 Dec 23, 2024   👤 Ravie Lakshmanan   GDPR / Data Privacy

🧩 ALEXA, SHOULD I TRUST AMAZON WITH MY VOICE RECORDINGS?

Everything you say to your Echo will be sent to Amazon starting on March 28

Amazon is killing a privacy feature to bolster Alexa+, the new subscription assistant.

SCHARON HARDING – MAR 14, 2025 9:59 PM | 💬 240

⌖ Credit: Getty

TIME

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Thousands of Amazon Workers Listen to Alexa Users' Conversations
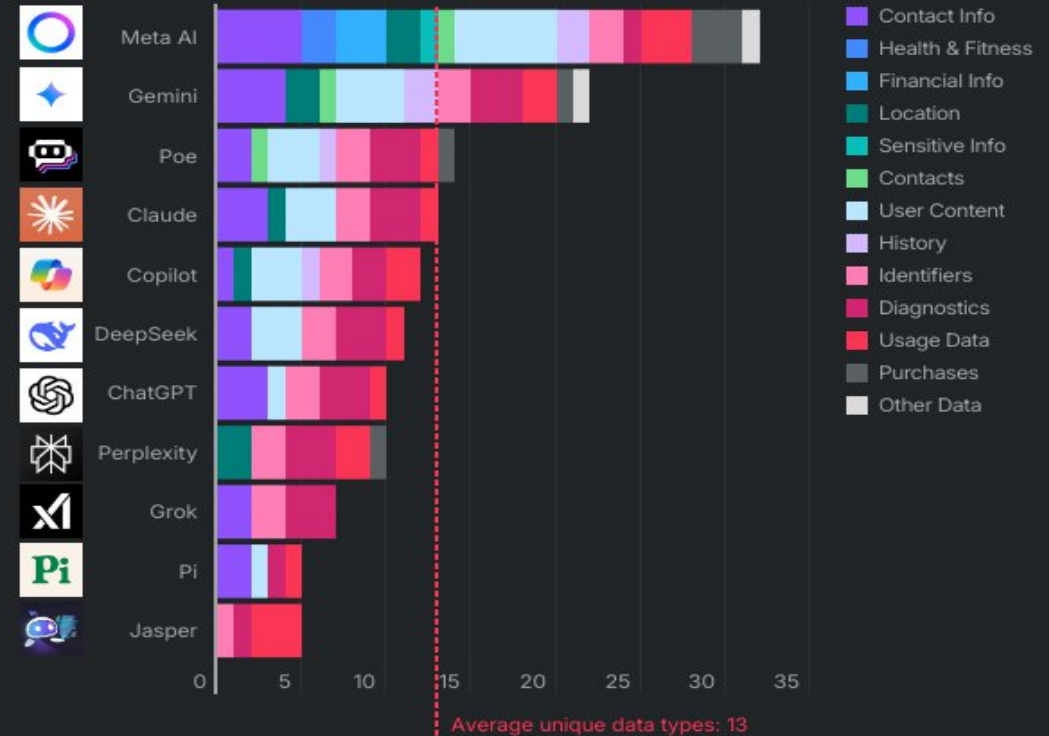
Nearly one-third of popular AI chatbots share user data with third parties!

OpenAI data privacy policies

Do humans view my content?

A limited number of authorized OpenAI personnel, as well as trusted service providers that are subject to confidentiality and security obligations, may access user content only as needed for these reasons: (1) investigating abuse or a security incident; (2) to provide support to you if you reach out to us with questions about your account; (3) to handle legal matters; or (4) to improve model performance (unless you have opted out). Access to content is subject to technical access controls and limited only to authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis. Additionally, we monitor and log all access to user content and authorized personnel must undergo security and privacy training prior to accessing any user content.

Please don't enter sensitive information that you wouldn't want reviewed or used.

Is my content shared with third parties?

We share content with a select group of trusted service providers that help us provide our services. We share the minimum amount of content we need in order to accomplish this purpose and our service providers are subject to strict confidentiality and security obligations. We do not use or share user content for marketing or advertising purposes.

Please see our Privacy Policy for more information on who we may share your content with.

- OpenAI uses your data to train their models
- Staff and "trusted service providers" have access to your data

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Protect your data!

- Read the privacy policies carefully

- Disable chat history

- Limit data sharing

- Opt out of personalized ads

- Be cautious when sharing personal/sensitive details

Protect your data!

- Review your settings and stay updated on latest privacy policy changes

- Reach out to the service provider if you have concerns

- Ask for all your data about you periodically to ensure transparency

Your turn

Do you believe the convenience offered by AI assistants is worth the privacy trade-offs?

⚖️ Bias

Understanding bias

- AI assistants can reflect biases present in the data they learn from

- This can result in unfair or discriminatory responses

- For example, imagine asking an AI assistant for job recommendations, and it consistently suggests roles based on stereotypes rather than your skills

Gender bias

- [AI assistants often default to female voices](#) for helping roles, reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes

- Male professionals are often described with traits like "intelligent", "ambitious", and "professional"

- Female professionals are frequently described with adjectives like "empathetic", "patient", and "loving"

- Gendered voice assistants [can influence user behavior](#)

Stories from headlines

When Artificial Intelligence Gets It Wrong

Unregulated and untested AI technologies have put innocent people at risk of being wrongly convicted.

Op-Ed | 09.19.23 | By Christina Swarns

Amazon ditched AI recruiting tool that favored men for technical jobs

Specialists had been building computer programs since 2014 to review résumés in an effort to automate the search process

Reuters

Thu 11 Oct 2018 01.42 CEST

Share

Amazon's automated hiring tool was found to be inadequate after penalizing the résumés of female candidates. Photograph: Brian Snyder/Reuters

Other biases

- Algorithmic and data bias: AI inherits pattern from flawed datasets

- Censorship bias: Certain perspectives are filtered out

- Confirmation bias: Comfirming to existing beliefs

- Social bias: AI perpetuates societal stereotypes

- Temporal bias: Altering past responses

and so on...

Your turn

Have you ever noticed a bias in an AI response? If so, how did you feel about it?

Stay informed, stay critical!