AI in Higher Education & Workforce Survey Findings

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Research Methodology

The study was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the University of Phoenix from July 12-14, 2023 among 2,045 adults ages 18 and older. Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Survey Findings

Despite generative AI being a hot topic in the news lately, few US adults are currently familiar with different types of AI. Still, the majority are open to hearing more on the topic of AI.

- Nearly 2 in 5 US adults (39%) say they are aware of different types of artificial intelligence, with the average being 2.5 types. The majority of US adults (60%) say they aren't aware there are different types of AI. **[Q1]**
    o Perhaps unsurprisingly, lack of awareness of different types of AI tends to increase with age; notably though, nearly half of Gen Z aren't aware of different types (Gen Z ages 18-26, 48%; Millennials ages 27-42, 48%; Gen X ages 43-58, 57%; Boomers/Seniors ages 59+, 77%).

- The majority of US adults – including Gen Z – are not familiar with various types of AI models. Only around a quarter of adults say they are very/somewhat familiar with generative AI (26%) or machine learning (24%). And despite the recent popularity of the term, nearly half of adults say they've never heard of generative AI (49%). **[Q2]**
    o The majority of adults have never heard of other types of AI models as well, including Naïve Bayes (86%), K-nearest neighbors (84%), logistic regression (75%), decision tree (74%), deep neural networks (73%), large language model (72%), linear regression (72%), deep learning (64%), or machine learning (54%).
        ▪ This lack of familiarity tends to increase with age, with Gen Z and Millennials the most likely to be familiar with each of these AI models.

- Despite lack of familiarity with specific types of AI models, more than 3 in 5 adults (63%) say they are interested in reading, hearing, or seeing information on the topic of AI, with nearly a quarter (23%) saying they are *very interested*. **[Q3]**
    o About 3 in 4 Gen Z (73%) and Millennials (77%) say they are interested; more than a third of Millennials (35%) say they are *very interested* on the topic of AI.
    o African Americans (72%) and Hispanics (68%) also are more likely than their White counterparts (59%) to report interest in AI.

There is no clear consensus as accessing AI evokes similar proportions of negative and positive feelings. Perhaps this is because Americans are generally satisfied with the amount of information they can access about AI but are unsure about the accuracy of the information that exists about it.

- Nearly 2 in 5 adults (38%) say they've never purposefully engaged with AI, while a similar proportion (38%) say the last time they did so was a week ago or less. Around 1 in 7 (14%) are not sure. **[Q8]**
    o More than half of younger adults (Gen Z, 53%; Millennials, 55%) say they've purposefully engaged with AI within the past week.

- The resource that nearly a quarter of adults (23%) say they are using the most often to find out more about AI is social media. Close to 1 in 5 adults (18%) say the resource they use most often is technology websites. TV (14%) and news websites (12%) are also reported by some as the resource used most often to find out more about AI. Few say academic journals (2%) or radio (2%) are the most often used. **[Q5]**
    o The resource used most often to find out more about AI differs by generation. By far, Gen Z report using social media (47%) most often, while Millennials tend to be a bit more split between social media (33%) and technology websites (22%). For Gen X, technology websites (21%) slightly edge out social media (19%) and news websites (14%). Boomers/Seniors report using TV (20%) most often to find out more about AI.

- Half of adults (50%) say the amount of information they are currently able to access on AI is just the right amount. Another third (32%) say it is not enough. Only 18% say it is too much. **[Q4]**
  - More than a third of Gen X (35%) and Boomers/Seniors (35%) say the amount of information they are currently able to access on AI is not enough, while only 26% of Millennials say the same.

- Similar proportions of adults report negative (43%) and positive (37%) emotions when they think about the information and sources they can access to learn about AI. Many are curious (38%). Some are fearful (21%), confused (20%), or overwhelmed (20%). Others are optimistic (22%), excited (20%), or comfortable (15%). **[Q6]**
  - In particular, younger generations are more likely than their older counterparts to associate positive words with AI.
  - Interestingly, those who are interested in AI are more likely than those who are not to say they are optimistic (32% vs. 6%) and excited (31% vs. 3%), but also overwhelmed (22% vs. 16%).

- Perhaps these feelings of confusion, fear, and feeling overwhelmed stem from the inaccuracy and complexity of information surrounding AI. Close to half of adults (45%) agree the information that exists about AI isn't accurate and a similar proportion (45%) agree that AI is too complex to be useful to everyday Americans. **[Q7]**
  - Agreement with these statements increases with age, with older generations the most likely to agree with these sentiments.

While some believe jobs could be replaced by AI tools, AI isn't viewed as a threat by the majority. Instead, many see AI as a resource in both workplace and classroom settings.

- When thinking about AI in the workplace, US adults believe about 36% (on average) of jobs could be replaced by AI tools. Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) say more than 50% of jobs could be replaced. **[Q11]**

- In fact, less than half of adults (44%) say fears around AI taking away jobs are overhyped. **[Q7]**
  - Millennials (55%) are more likely than their younger and older counterparts to agree with this statement (Gen Z, 44%; Gen X, 41%; Boomers/Seniors, 38%).

- Instead of taking away their job, when Americans think of AI being integrated into their work life, nearly half of employed adults (47%) say they see AI as something that can complement them in their job and make things easier for them. Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) say they don't see AI having an impact on them and the job they perform. Only 15% see AI replacing their job. **[Q10]**

- In fact, more than 2 in 5 (43%) say they would use AI to help them complete an assignment or project for work or school. Among them, 13% already do so as AI tools are integrated into their work or school activities and 30% say they would be open to it but haven't had an opportunity yet. On the other hand, 37% of adults say they would not be open to using AI to help them complete an assignment or project for work or school. **[Q9]**
  - Nearly 3 in 5 Gen Z (58%) and Millennials (59%) say they already/would be willing to use AI to help them complete an assignment for school or work.

- Nearly 3 in 5 adults agree workplace training departments *should* leverage AI tools in the process of teaching and learning (59%) and a similar proportion say educators should do the same (57%). In fact, the majority of adults (59%) believe the use of AI in learning environments (e.g., work, school) could make content more engaging. **[Q14]**

Despite being seen as a potential benefit, there is no consensus on the accuracy of AI results which may be inhibiting Americans' comfort level.

- More than 2 in 5 US adults (45%) say they would engage with an AI chatbot rather than conduct an internet search to learn more about a topic or subject for work or school. **[Q14]**
  - o Hispanics (53%) and African Americans (52%) are more likely than their White counterparts (39%) to say would engage with an AI chatbot rather than conduct an internet search to learn more about a topic.
  - o More than half of Gen Z (56%) and Millennials (60%) agree.

- Nearly 3 in 4 adults (74%) believe the information that AI tools generate is accurate. However, few (14%) would describe it as *very accurate.* **[Q12]**
  - o Even among the youngest groups (who are also the most familiar with it), only 14% of Gen Z and 21% of Millennials believe it is *very accurate.*
  - o And, only 19% of those who are interested in AI say it is *very accurate*.

- Americans are divided on whether the results current AI tools can generate are **accurate enough** that they would be comfortable integrating it into their work or school assignments, with about a third saying they would be comfortable (35%), another third (30%) saying they wouldn't be comfortable, and the final third (35%) saying they are not sure. **[Q13]**
  - o Around half of Gen Z (46%) and Millennials (52%) say the results current AI tools can generate are accurate enough to make them comfortable enough to integrate it into their work or school assignments.
  - o Hispanics (49%) and African Americans (41%) are more likely than their White counterparts (28%) to say current AI tools can generate results accurate enough to make them comfortable utilizing.