

# University of South Carolina **AI INDEX**

DECEMBER 2024



UNIVERSITY OF  
**South Carolina**

College of Information  
and Communications



# The University of South Carolina AI INDEX

WINTER 2024 / DECEMBER 2024

This is a survey focused on measuring the use and perception of artificial intelligence (AI) tools 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.

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## 12 Key Takeaways from the AI Index Report 2024

### 1. **Rising Public Interest in AI**

Public discourse on AI has surged, with online interest in ChatGPT occasionally matching that of Trump during the election year. However, awareness of AI tools remains mixed— 57% of the public is acquainted with them to various degrees, while one-third is highly familiar, predominantly younger, educated, higher-income individuals. Gender disparities persist, with men being more familiar with AI tools. While over 40% have used such tools for work, study or both, non-users cite distrust as the primary barrier, rather than cost or complexity.

### 2. **Shifting Popularity Among AI Tools**

ChatGPT remains the leading AI tool but has seen competition from Gemini and Copilot. Over the last six months, these alternatives have grown significantly in adoption, collectively surpassing ChatGPT's usage, aided by their recent rebranding and updates.

### 3. **Adoption of AI tools for content creation**

AI tools are used by 35% of the population for communication content creation, with significantly higher adoption in technical, business, and communication industries. Half of those in communication-related roles and 75% in IT and technical fields report regular use, compared to much lower adoption rates in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation.

### 4. **Decline in Job Security Concerns**

Concerns about AI displacing jobs have dropped by 10% since June 2024, from over half to 42%. Among communication professionals, this fear is even lower, at 37%.

### 5. **Mixed Sentiment on AI's Overall Impact**

While AI's general impact is perceived positively, public expectations remain mixed. More people express concerns than excitement about AI's future. Nonetheless, AI-driven productivity gains are increasingly acknowledged.

### 6. **Low Awareness of Ethical Challenges**

Only one-third of the public surveyed is aware of ethical concerns related to AI tools. Most expect self-regulation rather than government intervention. However, communication professionals advocate for stronger government oversight.

### 7. **Mixed Impact on Journalism**

AI tools are expected to enhance journalism quality, particularly by educated, high-income, and tech-savvy individuals. But this belief is not widely shared across the public.

### 8. **Mis/disinformation Fears Persist**

Concerns about AI's potential to amplify mis/disinformation remain strong. Optimists

believe AI could reduce disinformation, but a sizable portion of highly educated individuals remains apprehensive about its role in online manipulation.

### 9. Perception of Increased Disinformation in 2024 Elections

Over 60% of our respondents believe online disinformation was more prevalent in the 2024 elections in the US. One-third reported encountering AI-driven disinformation, such as deepfakes or bot-generated content, and a large majority suspecting AI was used for spreading disinformation. Similar trends have been observed in other countries, including Romania’s 2024 presidential elections.

### 10. Influence on Political Campaigns

AI tools have played a notable role in the U.S. presidential campaign, with 25% of our respondents using them at least several times a week to understand political issues.

### 11. Polarization and Digital Tools

The U.S. remains deeply polarized, affecting digital tool usage. Republicans tend to rely on diverse social media platforms, while Democrats trust mainstream media and public institutions like universities and the government. This divide influences information sources but does not significantly affect attitudes toward AI.

### 12. Social Media Trends Post-Elections

Social media activities have decreased following the elections. By the end of the year, YouTube surpassed Facebook to become the leading platform for news consumption in the U.S., according to the survey results. Both platforms remain dominant, far ahead of others in terms of usage. The survey findings align with trends reported in other studies on media consumption in the United States.

## AI awareness among the US public

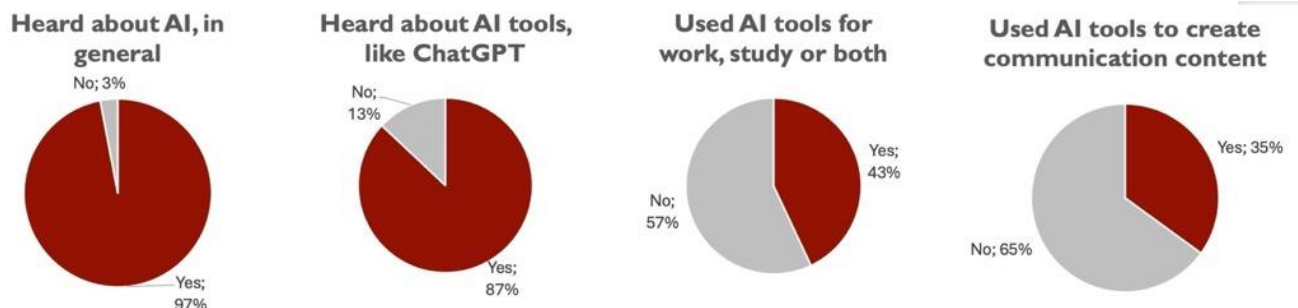


Figure 1. Public awareness and usage of AI tools measured across four variables

## Main implications of the AI Index

The findings of this study underscore the urgent need to enhance **AI literacy** among younger generations, particularly as AI tools increasingly shape communication, work processes, and public discourse. A clear implication is the necessity for targeted **educational initiatives** that promote understanding of AI functionalities and their ethical implications, ensuring that individuals can use these tools effectively and responsibly. Building trust in AI tools must accompany this effort, focusing on improving transparency, highlighting practical benefits, and addressing concerns such as misinformation and privacy risks.

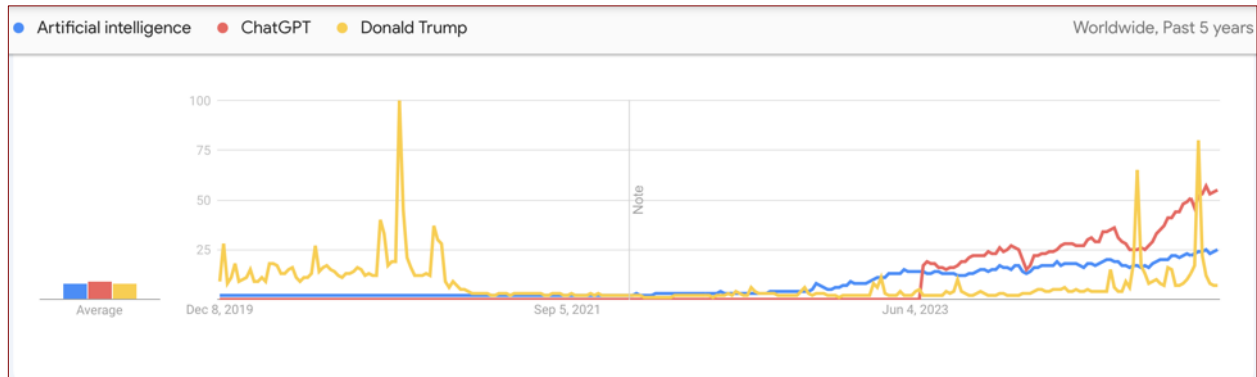
The study also signals the **need to address AI regulation**, particularly as ethical implications remain insufficiently understood by the broader public. While the regulatory approaches differ globally—an external observation, not derived from the study—the findings highlight the importance of exploring frameworks that balance innovation with safeguards to mitigate misuse. This is particularly relevant for communication industries, where adoption rates are high, transforming how professionals operate and interact with information.

Beyond education and regulation, fostering **critical thinking** skills is essential to equip individuals to discern AI-generated content and identify potential biases or manipulations. Given the persistent fears about AI amplifying **mis/disinformation**—particularly in elections—media and communication professionals must play a pivotal role in setting standards for ethical AI integration. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaborations between tech developers, educators, and policymakers can accelerate solutions to address these challenges.

In the context of the changing workforce, where AI tools enhance productivity but also disrupt existing job structures, initiatives to reskill workers can be aligned with efforts to develop new career paths centered on AI competencies. Overall, AI literacy is not just a technical necessity but an opportunity to prepare individuals for a future where human-AI interaction becomes the norm, ensuring trust, equity, and ethical usage.

## About our initiative & future steps

This research initiative aims to understand the utilization and impact of large language models (LLMs) such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini (formerly Bard), and other generative AI tools on content creation and communication practices in the United States. Contextual data from Google Trends indicates a consistent rise in public interest in AI technologies and tools like ChatGPT over recent years. Evaluating the societal and professional impact of these tools has become a priority for the College of Information and Communications at the University of South Carolina.



*Figure 2. Comparison - interest in Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT and Donald Trump worldwide, in the last years. Google Trends data.*

Through a biannual national survey, supplemented by social media listening in future phases, this project examines how individuals and organizations adopt AI for communication, study, and work. Future studies will deepen the understanding of how AI tools are integrated into everyday practices, track evolving trends in adoption across sectors, and analyze their long-term influence on communication strategies and professional activities. The College of Information and Communications remains committed to supporting a more informed, adaptive, and responsible approach of using AI in communication and beyond.



## Media use patterns in the US

American audiences continue to spend a significant amount of time on social media, with over a quarter of the population actively engaging on a daily basis. This includes activities such as commenting, posting, or sharing links.

When it comes to platform preferences for accessing news, YouTube has narrowly overtaken Facebook to claim the top spot. This shift highlights a growing preference for video-centric content, signaling subtle but important changes in how users interact with online media.



## Digital media use patterns in the US

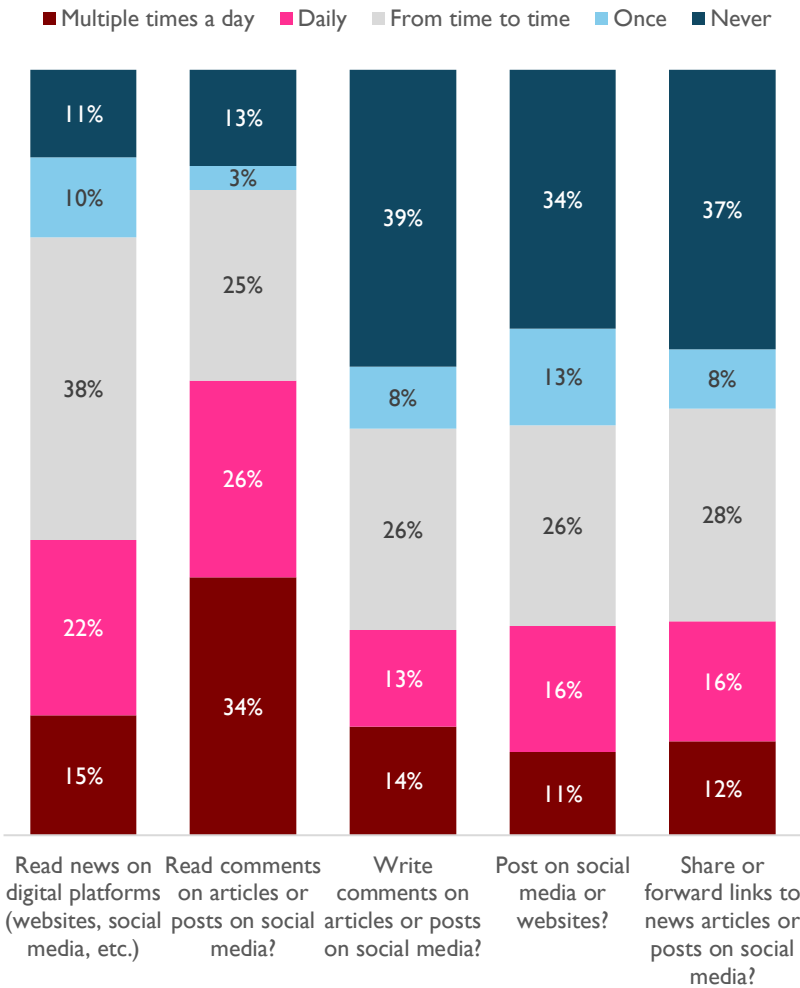


Figure 3. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How often in the last week did you...

Reading comments on social media emerges as the most frequent daily activity related to digital media use among Americans. 60% of the respondents read comments or posts on a regular basis (daily or more, combined), compared to 37% for just reading news, which tends to suggest that social media interactions and opinions have become integral to users' digital habits.

By contrast, more participatory activities, such as writing comments, posting, or sharing links, see far lower levels of engagement, but they are still a daily habit for 27-28% of Americans.

Over the past six months, frequent digital media use remained largely stable, with only small changes across activities, except for a slight decline in posting on social media (-3.3%).

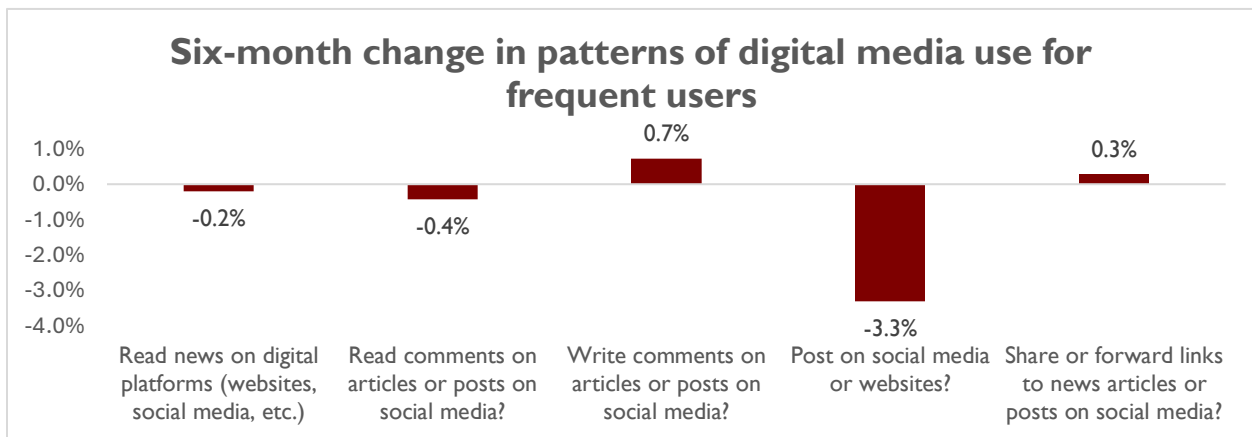
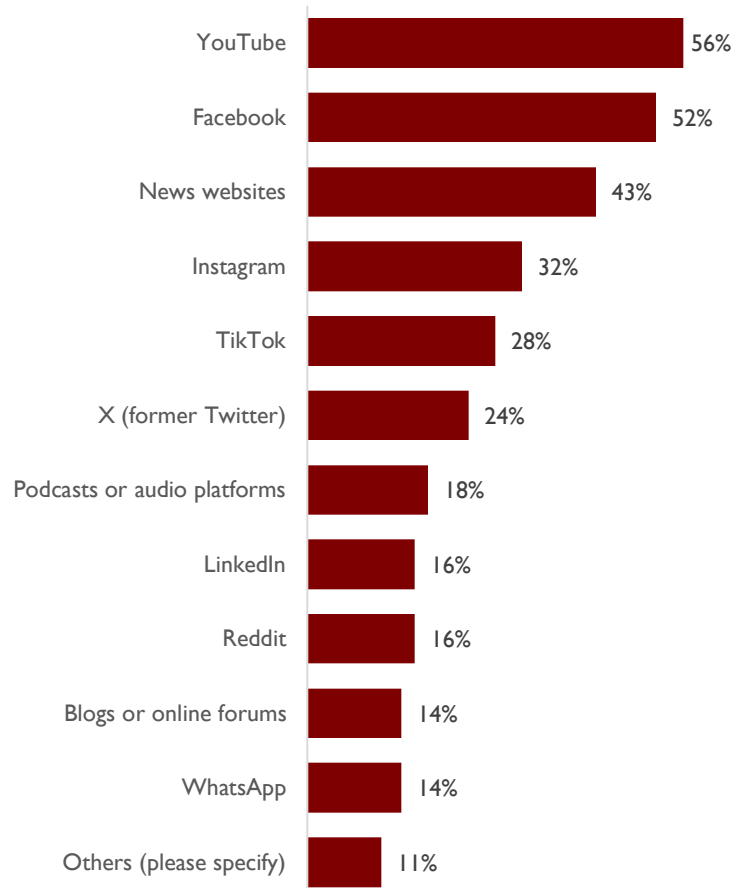


Figure 4. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. % of people using digital media multiple times daily - comparison with previous survey (Summer 2024) results

## YouTube and Facebook remain the leading platforms for accessing news among Americans



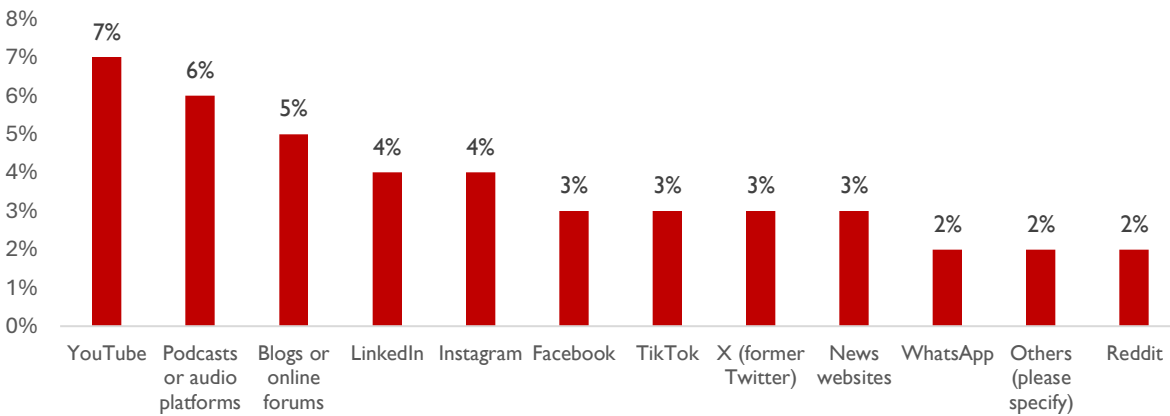
*Figure 5. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Which of the following digital media platforms did you use to access news in the last week? (Select all that apply)*

YouTube and Facebook are the most utilized digital media platforms for accessing news among Americans, with 56% and 52% of respondents reporting usage, respectively. Traditional news websites remain significant, engaging 43% of individuals. Social media platforms such as Instagram (32%), TikTok (28%), and X (formerly Twitter) (24%) also play a prominent role in news consumption, highlighting their steady influence. Other platforms, including podcasts or audio platforms (18%), LinkedIn (16%), Reddit (16%) exhibit lower levels of engagement. Blogs or online forums (14%), as well as WhatsApp (14%) show relatively lower levels of usage, reflecting a concentration of news consumption on a few dominant platforms.

**Takeaway.** When it comes to platform preferences, YouTube has narrowly overtaken Facebook to

claim the top spot for news consumption, a shift which highlights a growing preference for video-centric content, signaling subtle but important changes in how users interact with online media.

## Increase in use of YouTube and podcasts in the last 6 months



*Figure 6. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Social media use patterns - comparison with previous survey (Summer 2024) results. The percentage represents the increase compared to previous data.*

YouTube and podcasts have seen the largest increases in usage for accessing news over the past six months, with growth rates of 7% and 6%, respectively, which might align with the intensified digital activities typically seen during electoral campaigns, with YouTube being a key platform for video-based campaign messaging, political advertisements, and livestreamed events, while podcasts offer candidates and political analysts an intimate format to engage with voters on complex topics.

Blogs or online forums follow with a 5% increase, indicating a more modest resurgence in their role. LinkedIn and Instagram both report a 4% rise in usage, while platforms like Facebook, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and news websites each show a 3% increase.

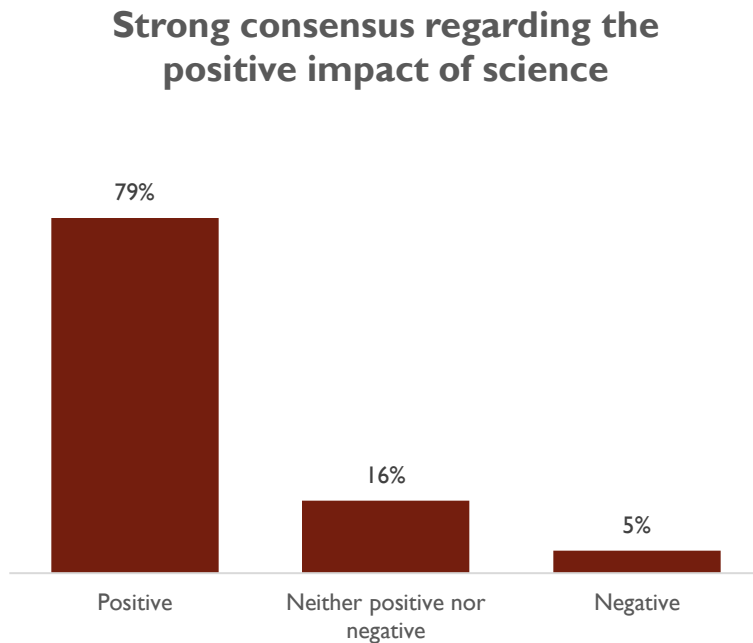


## AI impact in general

The role of science remains overwhelmingly positive in the eyes of Americans, with only 5% believing it has a negative impact. This strong endorsement highlights the continued trust in scientific progress as a driver of societal development. When it comes to artificial intelligence, perceptions are also predominantly positive. For every American who views AI's current impact as negative, there are two who believe its effects are beneficial.

## Science & AI impact, in general

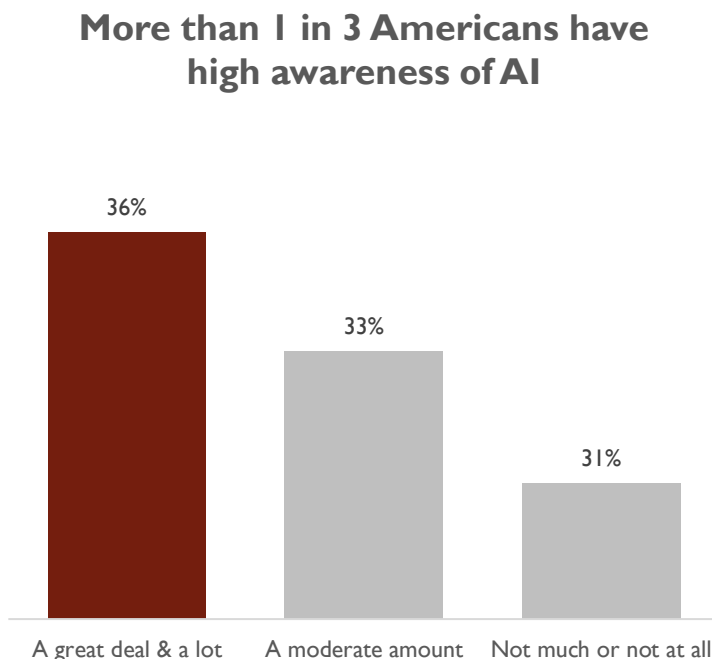
Figure 7. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Overall, would you say science has had a mostly positive effect on our society or a mostly negative effect on our society?



A significant majority of respondents (79%) perceive science as having a positive impact on society, demonstrating a strong societal consensus on its value.

Only a small proportion of individuals (5%) view science as having a negative impact, while 16% hold neutral opinions, indicating that skepticism or ambivalence toward science remains minimal.

Figure 8. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Artificial intelligence (AI) is designed to learn tasks that humans typically do, for instance, recognizing speech or pictures. How much have you heard or read about AI?



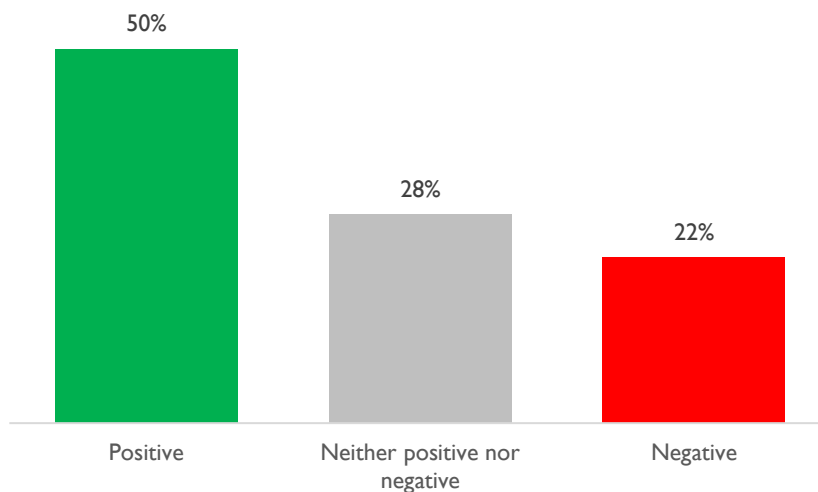
The data also indicates that 36% of Americans report having a high level of awareness of artificial intelligence (AI), either "a great deal" or "a lot." An additional 33% possess a moderate awareness, suggesting that nearly 70% of Americans are at least somewhat familiar with AI. However, 31% report having little to no awareness of AI, highlighting a knowledge gap among a significant portion of the population, which underscores the need for broader public education and outreach regarding AI, especially as its applications increasingly permeate everyday life and societal infrastructure.

## Perspectives about AI impact. Positive or negative?

Half of Americans (50%) perceive AI's effects positively, reflecting a generally optimistic attitude toward its impact. Meanwhile, 22% view AI negatively, and 28% hold a neutral stance, seeing its effects as neither positive nor negative.

The strong prevalence of positive perceptions suggests widespread recognition of AI's potential to drive innovation, efficiency, and problem-solving. However, the notable proportion of negative views points to concerns such as job displacement, ethical dilemmas, or privacy issues, while the sizable neutral group highlights the importance of fostering greater public awareness and discussion to address uncertainties about AI.

### Positive perception of AI effect is more prevalent than negative view



*Figure 9. Source: Winter 2024 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?*

### Mixed feelings regarding AI tools in daily life

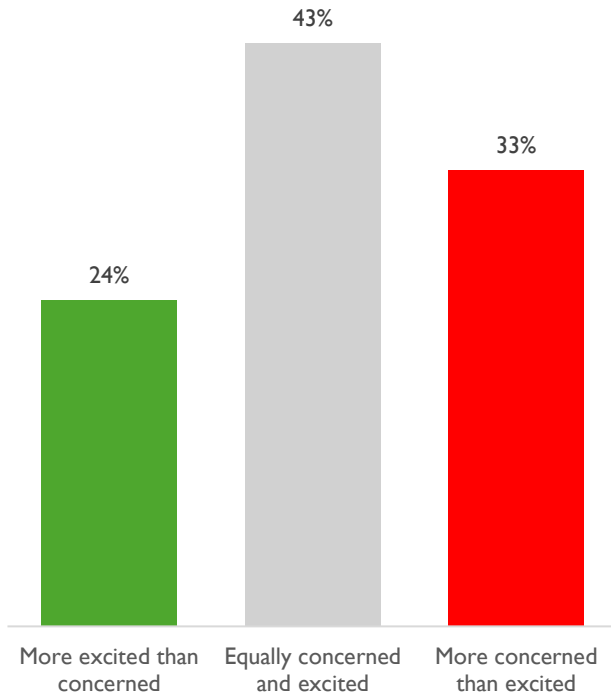


Figure 10. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: AI tools are software programs designed to understand and generate text. Overall, would you say the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in daily life makes you feel... (excited or concerned).

Looking to the future, expectations are more divided. While opinions are mixed, there is a tilt toward pessimism, with more Americans expressing concerns rather than excitement about the role AI plays in daily life.

A significant proportion of Americans (43%) report feeling equally excited and concerned about the integration of AI tools into daily life, reflecting a nuanced balance between optimism about potential benefits and apprehension about associated risks. The 33% who express more concerns than excitement point to lingering unease, likely driven by various fears, including those associated with the potential for unintended societal consequences. Conversely, the 24% who feel more excitement than concerns most likely indicate confidence in

the transformative potential of AI to enhance efficiency, innovation, and quality of life.

### Equal perspective about the impact of AI in our life, despite political divisions

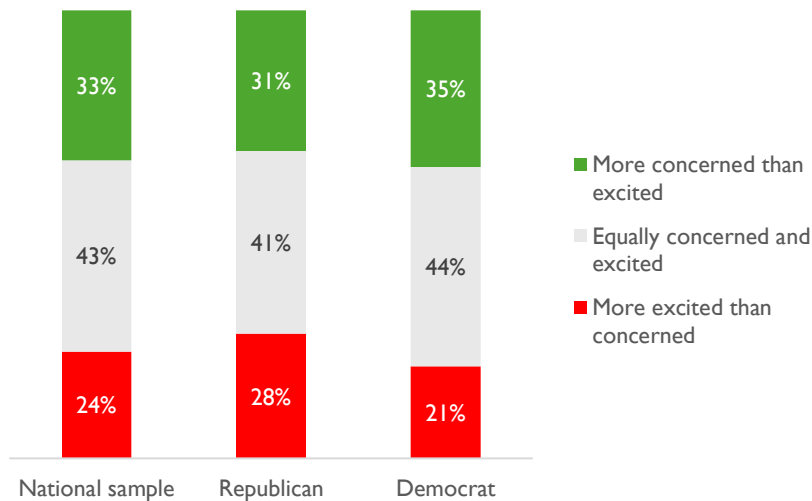


Figure 11. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: AI tools are software programs designed to understand and generate text. Overall, would you say the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in daily life makes you feel.... Political divisions



## ChatGPT and other AI tools

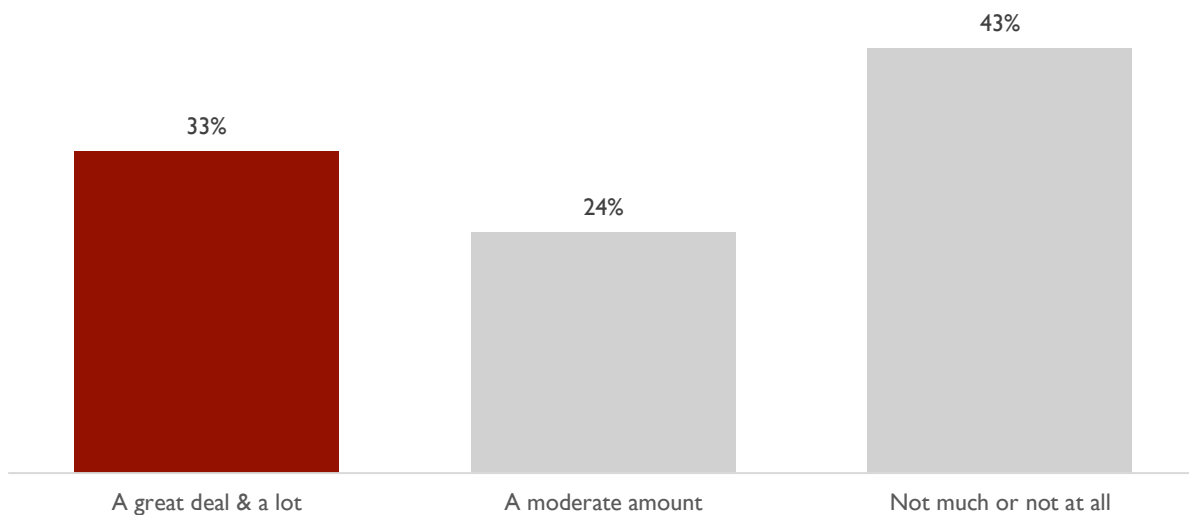
ChatGPT continues to lead the ranking of AI tools, but significant growth has been observed for Gemini and Copilot over the past few months.



## ChatGPT & other AI tools

Living in a world increasingly shaped by Artificial Intelligence (AI), tools such as ChatGPT are revolutionizing ways in which we communicate, go to work, and access information. From writing emails to analyzing political trends, these AI assistants are becoming indispensable for many users. But what drives people to adopt these technologies? It's a mix of factors, such as how often they engage with digital platforms, their level of comfort with new technology, and even their trust in the information they consume.

### A majority of Americans are aware of ChatGPT



*Figure 12. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How much, if anything, have you heard about ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) tool used to create text?*

The data shows that 57% of Americans have at least some awareness of instruments like ChatGPT, with 33% indicating a high level of familiarity ("a great deal or a lot") and 24% reporting moderate awareness.

However, a significant 43% state that they have little to no awareness of this AI assistant, highlighting a considerable gap in public familiarity with this AI tool.

### 43% used AI assistants for work or study

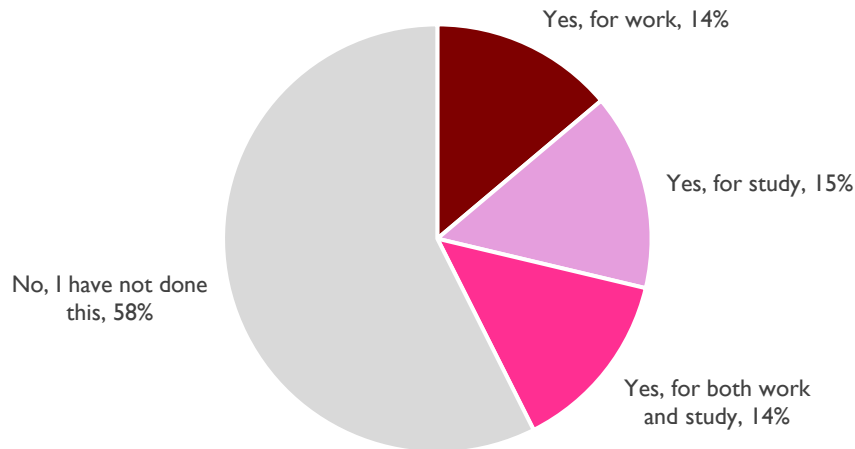


Figure 13. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with your work or study?

AI assistants are being utilized by 43% of respondents for professional or educational purposes, with 14% applying them specifically for work, 15% for study, and another 14% for both. In contrast, 58% of Americans have not engaged with these tools in either domain.

This distribution highlights the increasing integration of AI into specific areas of daily life while emphasizing that a significant portion of the population remains untapped by this trend.

### Lack of trust is the most important barrier to adopting AI

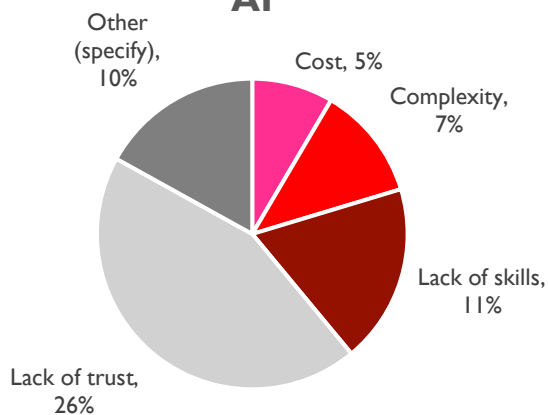


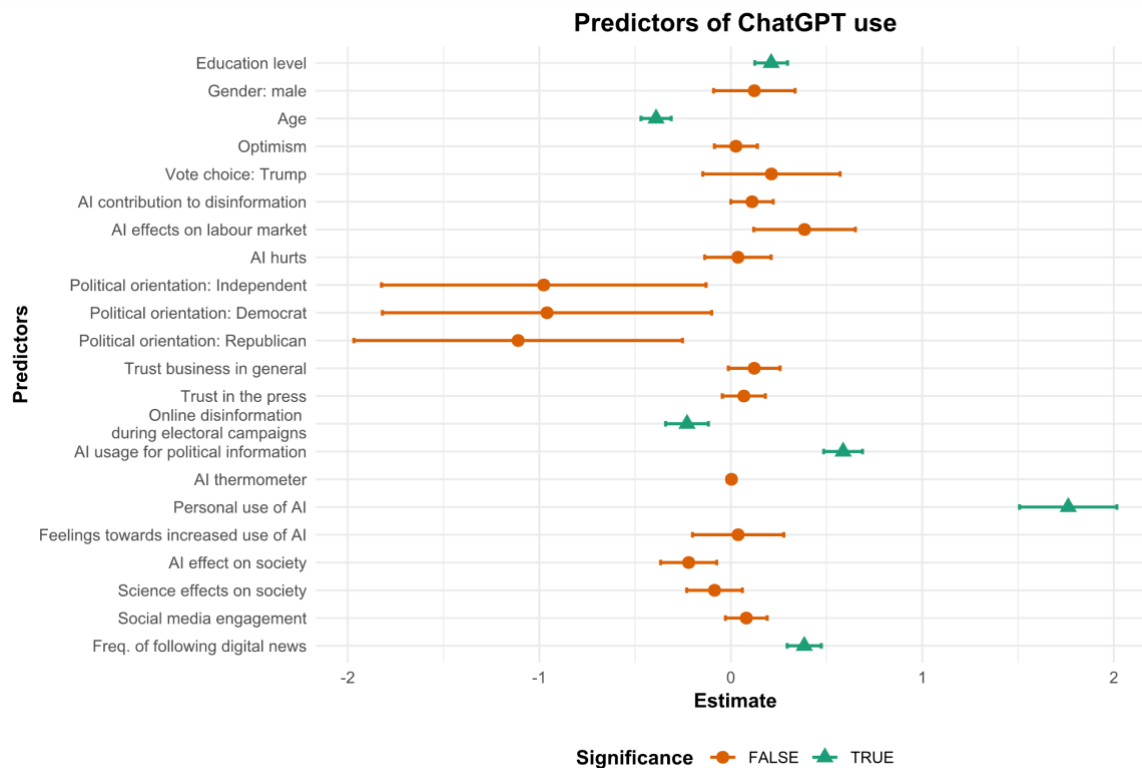
Figure 14. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: What are the main barriers to adopting AI in your work or study? Choose the most important one...

**A lack of trust emerges as the primary barrier to AI adoption**, cited by 26% of respondents. Other challenges include a lack of skills (11%), complexity (7%), and cost (5%), highlighting various practical and psychological obstacles to integrating AI technologies (an additional 10% selected "other" factors, suggesting other diverse concerns).

These findings emphasize the importance of building trust and addressing perceived complexity to facilitate wider acceptance and adoption of AI systems. Enhanced education, transparent practices, and user-friendly designs could mitigate these barriers.

## Predictors of AI usage and AI effect in society

Figure 15. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Individuals' predictors of using AI assistants. Linear regression results



The first step in understanding AI adoption is to explore what motivates individuals to use these advanced tools (see Figure 15).

For some, the answer lies in familiarity—those who **regularly follow online news are more likely to integrate AI assistants into their routines.**

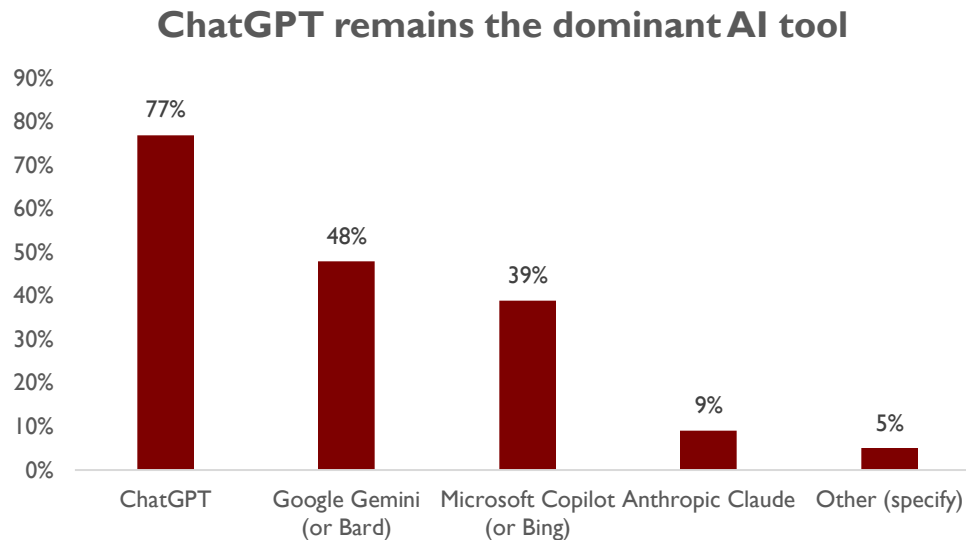
“Digital natives”,

particularly younger generations, find these tools intuitive, leveraging them for everything from learning to managing daily tasks. As the results of the regression indicate, **individuals from younger generations tend to be more susceptible to using AI assistants.** Education also plays a significant role. The results suggest that **individuals with higher educational attainment are more inclined to adopt AI tools**, likely because they feel more confident navigating complex technologies. Moreover, **personal experience** with AI—whether experimenting with chatbots or using AI-powered apps—seems to build the trust and competence needed to embrace these innovations.

Interestingly, the effect of **using AI for political information** is significant, suggesting that politically engaged users may employ AI tools to navigate increasingly complicated informational environments. Inversely, perception of **online disinformation during electoral campaigns** reduces the use, which might indicate skepticism from users after exposure to manipulated content.

## Brands: ChatGPT vs other options

In the summer of 2024, ChatGPT was used by a third of our respondents, a figure that exceeded the combined share of Gemini (formerly Bard) and Copilot (Bing). However, the rebranding efforts and relaunch of these two tools have led to a notable increase in their adoption. Currently, the combined usage of Gemini and Copilot has surpassed that of ChatGPT, signaling a more competitive landscape in the AI tools market.



*Figure 16. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Which type of AI assistant have you used? (Select all that apply). % from those who used AI assistants*

ChatGPT continues to stand out as the most widely used AI tool, with 77% of respondents identifying it as their preferred choice. In comparison, Google Gemini (or Bard) is used by 48%, and Microsoft Copilot (or Bing) by 39%. Other tools, such as Anthropic Claude (9%) and various unspecified AI tools (5%), account for a smaller share. These figures highlight ChatGPT's dominant position in the AI landscape. While competitors like Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot demonstrate substantial uptake, they trail significantly behind ChatGPT, suggesting room for growth in a competitive but uneven market.

## People who work or study in communication related fields tend to prefer ChatGPT

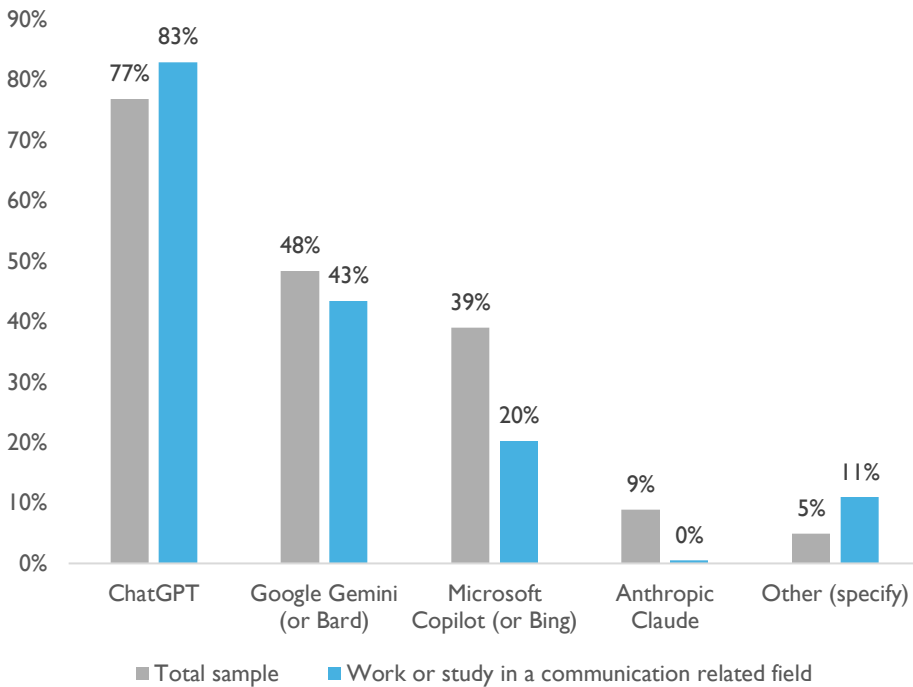


Figure 17. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Which type of AI assistant have you used? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice

**AI Tools Adoption: Industry-Specific Insights.** To better understand audience segmentation based on professional industries, respondents working in communication-related fields—such as media, marketing, sales, education, creative arts, consulting, and entertainment—were grouped into a single variable.

Our analysis reveals that this segment responds differently to questions compared to the rest of the sample, reflecting distinct experiences with AI tools. Their frequent interaction with technology in professional contexts likely shapes a more nuanced perspective on AI adoption and its practical applications.

**We notice a clear preference for ChatGPT among individuals who work or study in communication-related fields**, with 83% using the tool compared to 77% of the total sample. While Google Gemini (or Bard) remains a notable alternative, its usage is slightly lower among this group (43%) compared to the overall sample (48%). Microsoft Copilot (or Bing), used by 39% of the total sample, sees a sharp drop to 20% among communication professionals, indicating less reliance on this tool. These findings suggest that communication professionals tend to favor ChatGPT for its usability and relevance to their work, while other tools have yet to gain similar traction within this sector.

### Increase in use of all AI assistants

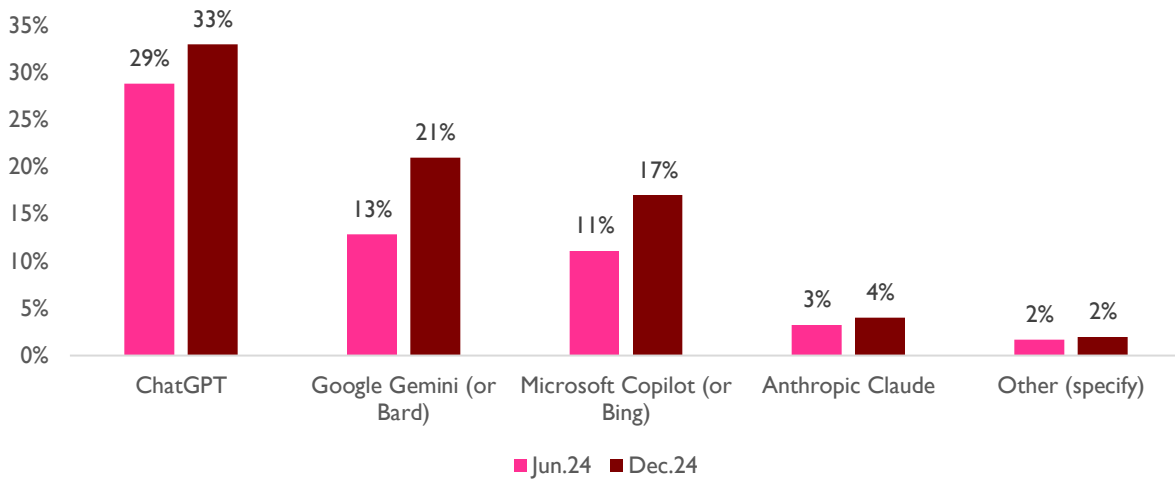


Figure 18. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Type of AI assistant used (% from the entire sample)

Between June (our previous survey) and December 2024 (the current one), the data reveals that **Google Gemini (or Bard)** experienced the highest growth in usage, increasing by 8 percentage points (from 13% to 21%), followed closely by **Microsoft Copilot (or Bing)**, which grew by 6 percentage points (from 11% to 17%). ChatGPT, already the dominant tool, saw steady growth of 4 percentage points (from 29% to 33%), indicating its continued strong performance. In contrast, smaller players like Anthropic Claude recorded marginal growth of just 1 percentage point, while other tools remained stagnant.

The significant gains made by Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot highlight their rising competitiveness and expanding appeal, suggesting they are closing the gap with ChatGPT in the AI assistant market.

### Satisfaction increases for all AI assistants

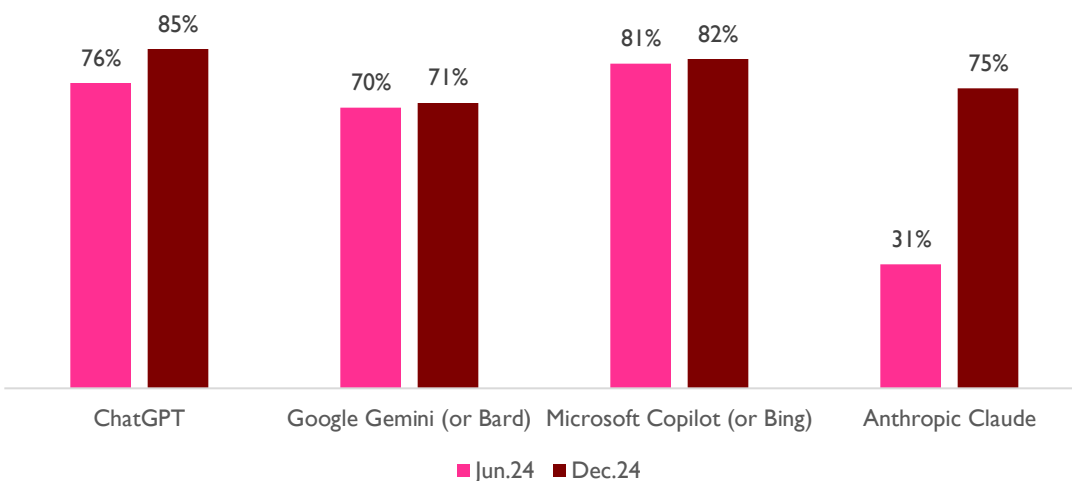


Figure 19. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How satisfied are you with your experience using... (% from users of each AI tool)

The satisfaction trends reveal a mixed relationship with usage growth, showing notable improvements for some AI tools, like ChatGPT, while others, such as Anthropic Claude, saw significant gains

in satisfaction in spite of limited user adoption.

**Claude**, despite its smaller user base, recorded the most significant rise in satisfaction, jumping from 31% to 75%. **Google Gemini (or Bard)**, which saw the highest growth in user adoption, achieved only a slight satisfaction increase (from 70% to 71%).

**ChatGPT**, the dominant AI assistant, recorded an 9-percentage point increase in satisfaction (76% to 85%), reinforcing its position as the leading tool both in usage and user satisfaction. **Microsoft Copilot (or Bing)** maintained high satisfaction levels, rising marginally from 81% to 82%, demonstrating stability as it expanded its user base.

Together, these trends point to a highly competitive AI assistant landscape where quality improvements are critical for retaining and expanding market share.

## Impact of AI assistants in productivity

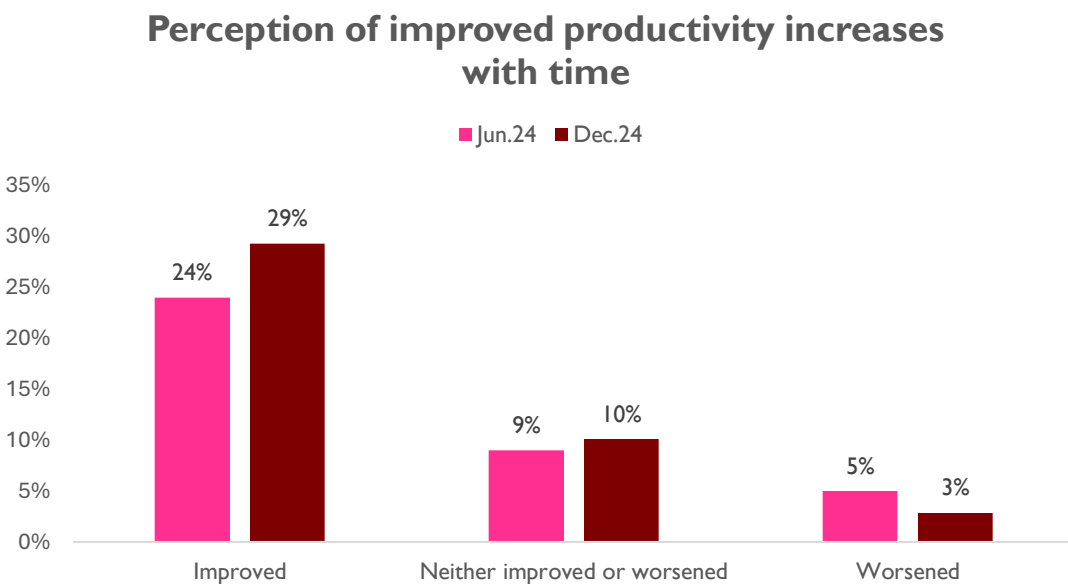


Figure 20. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How has this AI assistant affected your productivity at work or study?

Perceptions of improved productivity have increased over time, with 29% of respondents in December 2024 reporting positive impacts, up from 24% in June. This 5-percentage point rise indicates growing recognition of AI tools' ability to enhance efficiency. Meanwhile, the share of individuals who felt productivity remained unchanged saw minimal change, rising slightly from 9% to 10%, while concerns about worsened productivity declined also minimally, from 5% to 3%, suggesting a potential positive shift in attitudes toward AI tools among users, as they gain experience and confidence in their capabilities. Combined with earlier increases in user satisfaction for tools like ChatGPT and Anthropic Claude, this trend points to greater acceptance and perceived value of AI for productivity over time.



## Using AI for communication

There is a generally positive sentiment regarding the use of AI tools for communication. While just over a third of the general public admits to using AI for this purpose, the percentage rises to 50% among those working in communication-related industries.

The primary tasks for which AI tools are employed include idea generation and content summarization. Notably, a majority (over 60%) report experiencing increased work efficiency, underscoring the practical benefits of AI integration in professional and creative processes.

Communication professionals and students are more critical of AI's performance on complex tasks compared to the total sample.



## Using AI tools for communication

A dedicated section of the report explores how AI tools are being used for content creation, not only by professionals in communication-related industries but also by the general public. The findings are particularly intriguing, revealing broad adoption patterns and evolving trends compared to the summer survey we did. These insights highlight the expanding role of AI in content generation across various segments of society, underscoring its growing accessibility and versatility.

### Use of ChatGPT for communication content is restricted to a third of the population

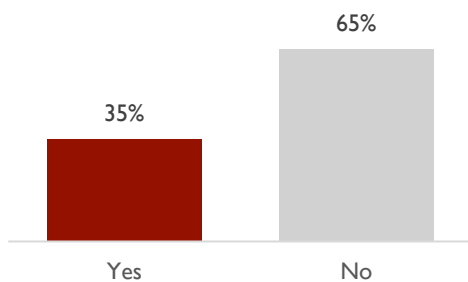


Figure 21. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content?

35% of respondents report using ChatGPT for communication content, while a significant majority (65%) have not adopted it for this purpose, a finding which highlights a clear divide in the integration of AI tools into content creation workflows.

Differences in AI adoption for content creation are closely linked to education level, age, and even gender. Younger, more educated demographics are more likely to integrate AI tools into their workflows, while adoption rates tend to decline among older or less formally educated groups.

Furthermore, specific industries display distinct usage patterns.

### Increased use for fields like Education, Arts & Entertainment, Consulting

■ Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content? No  
■ Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content? Yes

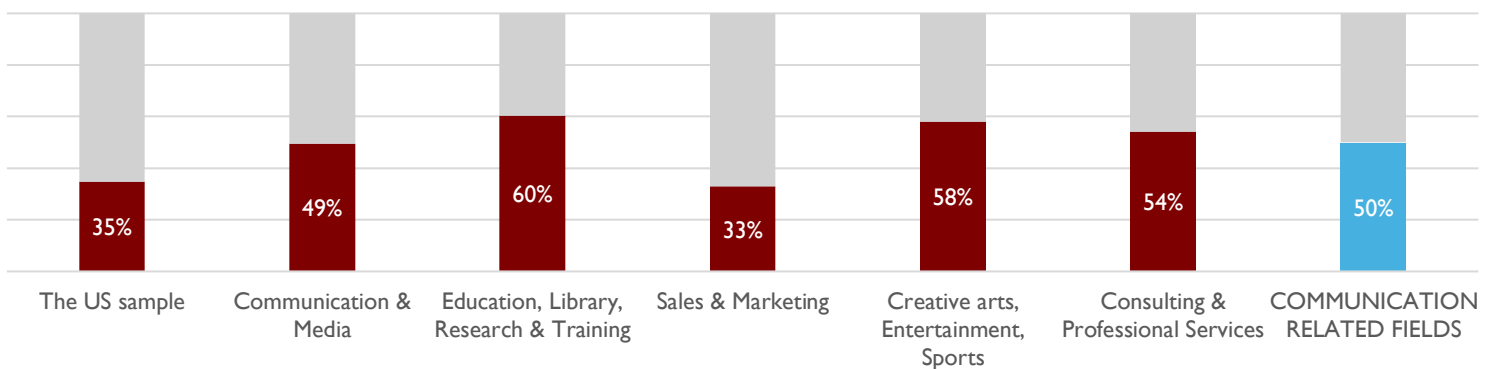


Figure 22. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI assistants to help with creating communication content? Percentages for various professional categories.

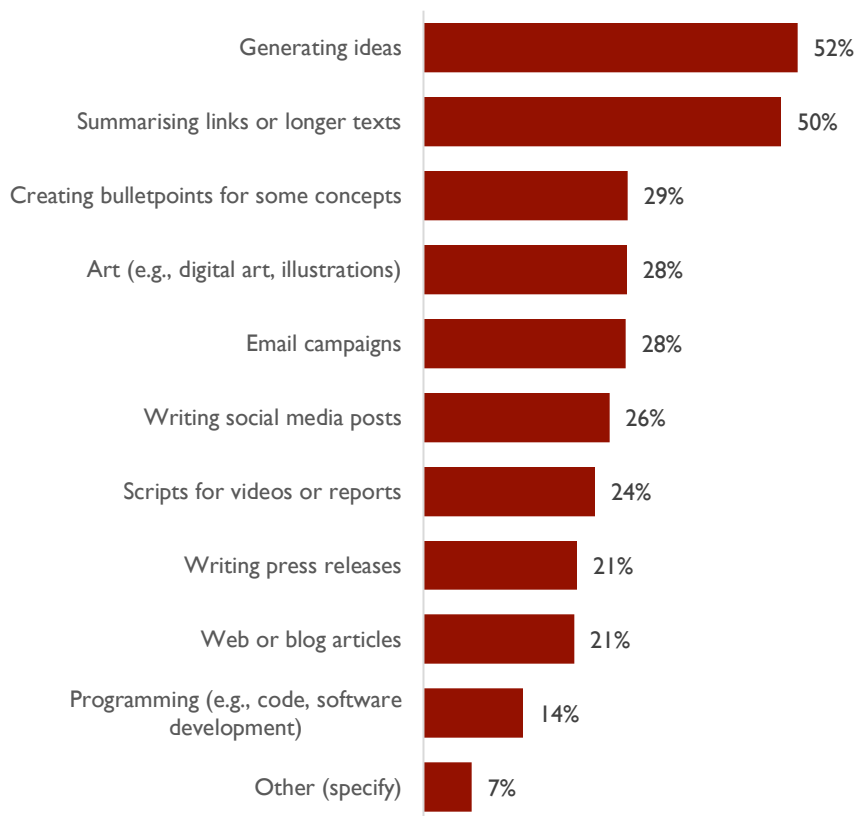
Certain professional fields show significantly higher adoption of ChatGPT and other AI tools for creating communication content. Sectors like **Education, Library, Research & Training; Creative Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Consulting & Professional Services** report usage levels approaching 60%, far surpassing the 35% adoption seen in the general U.S. sample. Similarly, **Communication & Media** stands out with elevated usage, reflecting its reliance on content production and dissemination.

In contrast, **Sales & Marketing** exhibits lower adoption rates, closer to 30%, suggesting that some fields are slower to integrate AI tools, potentially due to differing workflows or priorities. These variations indicate that industries focused heavily on education, creativity, and consulting are leading the way in leveraging AI for communication tasks.

## Specific tasks for AI assistants

AI tools are widely used for both simple and complex tasks, with **generating ideas** (52%) and **summarizing links or longer texts** (50%) emerging as the most common requests.

### Both simple and complex tasks are requested from AI tools



*Figure 23. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: What types of communication-related tasks do you use ChatGPT or other AI assistants for? (Select all that apply)*

These tasks highlight the preference for AI tools in content creation and information processing, areas where efficiency and creativity are highly valued.

Tasks requiring structured outputs, such as **creating bullet points** (29%) and **email campaigns** (28%), also see notable usage. Similarly, more specialized tasks like **art creation** (28%), **writing social media posts** (26%), and **scripts for videos or reports** (24%) demonstrate AI's growing versatility across creative and professional workflows.

By contrast, relatively fewer users engage AI tools for **programming** (14%), indicating that more technical and niche applications are less prevalent. AI adoption seemingly thrives where tasks

are well-suited for either automation or idea generation, reflecting the tool's current strengths in productivity, creativity, and communication support.

## Common communication-related tasks performed using AI assistants

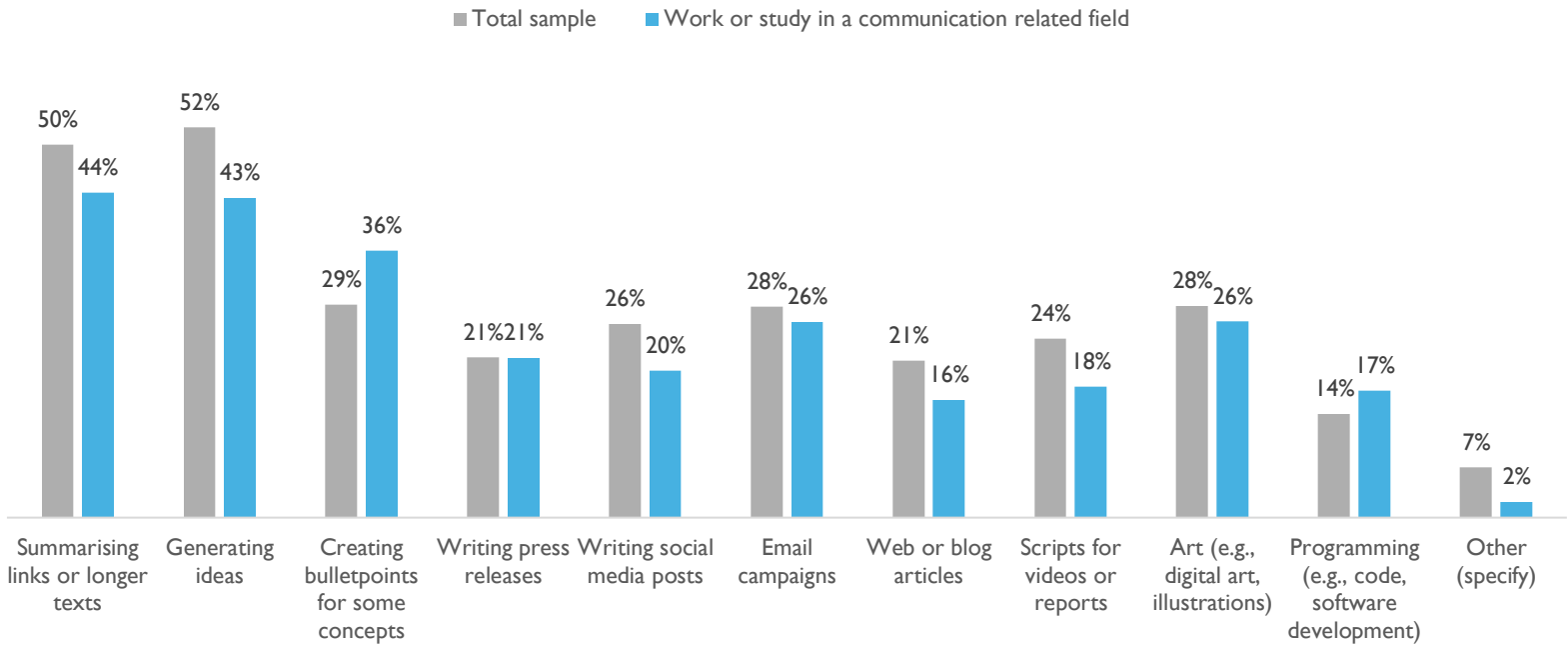


Figure 24. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: What types of communication-related tasks do you use ChatGPT or other AI assistants for? (Select all that apply)

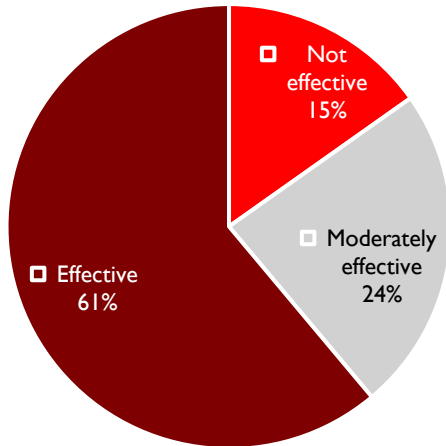
Professionals from communication-related fields show clear task-specific preferences when using AI tools, with **creating bullet points for concepts** standing out as a top choice (36%) compared to 29% for the total sample, which reflects a focus on organizing and streamlining content. Similarly, programming tasks see higher engagement among communication professionals (17%) than the general sample (14%), which may point to their involvement in digital tools or platforms.

In contrast, professionals working in domains related to communication report slightly lower usage for **generating ideas** (43% vs. 52% total sample), **summarizing links or longer texts** (44% vs. 50%), and **email campaigns** (26% vs. 28%). While they still use AI for these purposes, the total sample relies on AI for these tasks more frequently, possibly due to broader professional and personal applications.

However, this group of professionals are less likely to use AI for **scripts for videos or reports** (18% vs. 24%) or **web or blog articles** (16% vs. 21%), indicating a lower reliance on AI for multimedia and long-form content.

Overall, professionals in communication-related sectors favor AI for tasks that enhance **content structure** and specific outputs like bullet points and programming, while showing less dependence on AI for ideation and more creative tasks compared to the general population.

## A clear majority of users consider AI assistants useful for content creation



Base: 35% of sample, those who use AI assistants

communication-adjacent professionals. **The overall positive assessment highlights a growing confidence in AI's ability to deliver tangible benefits in content-related tasks.**

Figure 25. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How effective do you find AI assistants in aiding your content creation process for communication tasks?

A clear majority of users, comprising 61%, consider AI assistants to be effective for content creation, with another 24% rating them as moderately effective. Together, this accounts for 85% of users who find AI tools valuable to varying degrees, reinforcing their perceived utility in streamlining workflows and improving productivity.

In contrast, only 15% of users find AI assistants not effective, suggesting that dissatisfaction with these tools is relatively limited, a finding which aligns with previous observations showing strong adoption for tasks like summarizing and content structuring, especially among

## Limited use of AI assistants for personal content creation

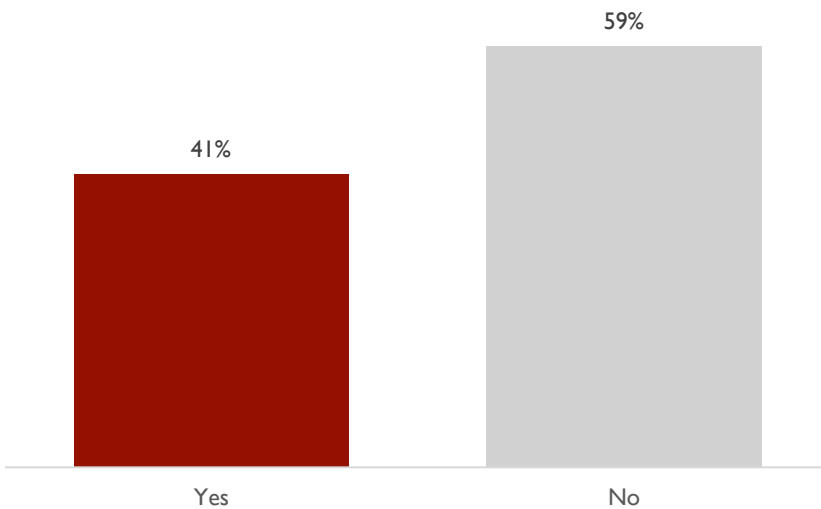
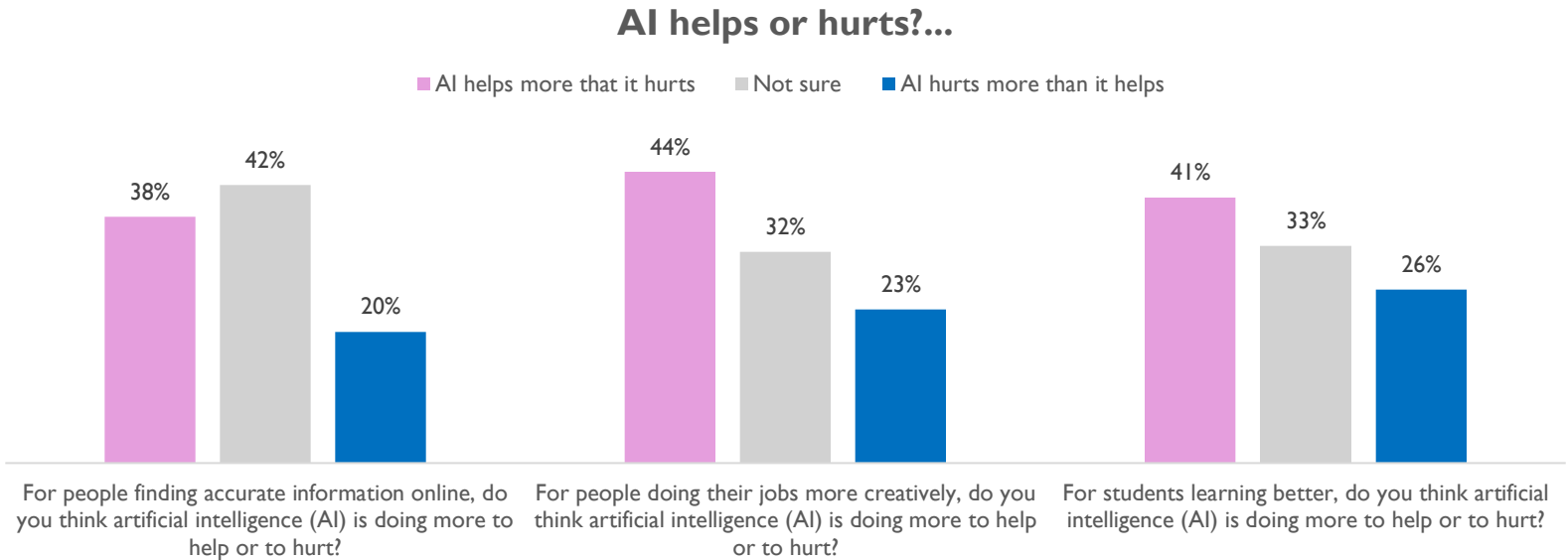


Figure 26. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Do you use AI assistants for creating content for personal use? (e.g., personal projects, learning or entertainment)

While 41% of the public reports using AI assistants for personal content creation, such as personal projects, learning, or entertainment, the majority (59%) do not engage with AI for these purposes, indicating that AI tools are primarily valued for work-related or structured tasks, as reflected in earlier conclusions, where communication professionals relied significantly on AI for structuring content.

Perceptions of AI's impact vary across domains and reveal a mix of optimism and hesitation, with positive views often tempered by significant uncertainty and concerns. While AI is seen as helpful in areas like creativity and learning, its role in providing accurate information remains more contested.

Figure 27. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Survey responses on whether AI helps or hurts in three areas—finding accurate information online, fostering creativity in jobs, and improving student learning



For **finding accurate information online**, only 38% of respondents believe AI helps more than it hurts, while a substantial 42% remain unsure, reflecting ongoing concerns about AI's role in information accuracy and trustworthiness.

In **supporting creativity in jobs**, the perception is more favorable, with 44% stating that AI helps more than it hurts. However, 32% remain uncertain, and 23% believe AI's impact is more harmful, suggesting that while AI is seen as a valuable tool for creative work, skepticism about its limitations or overreach persists.

For **students learning better**, the views are more divided: 41% believe AI helps, but 33% are uncertain, and 26% feel it hurts more than it helps, which indicates a complex relationship between AI and education, where its potential to enhance learning outcomes is counterbalanced by concerns over its reliability, effectiveness, and possible drawbacks.

## Challenges in using AI tools. Main complains

Barriers in integrating AI have shifted slightly between June and December 2024, with varying degrees of improvement and persistence across key areas.

## Main frustrations with AI tools

■ Dec.24 ■ Jun.24

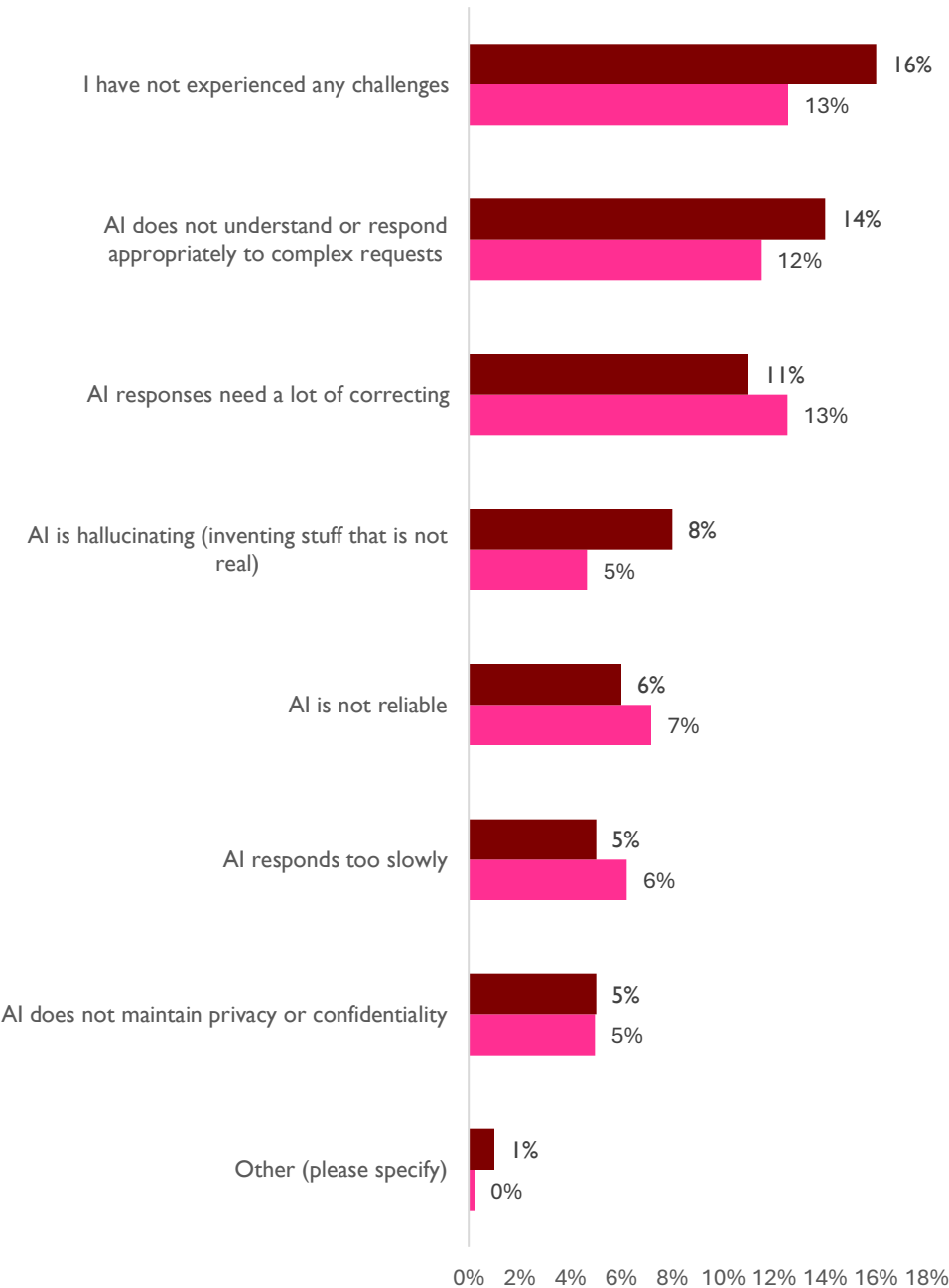


Figure 28. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Have you faced any of the following challenges in integrating AI into your work or study? (Select all that apply)

The proportion of respondents reporting no challenges increased from 13% in June to 16% in December, suggesting a **slight improvement in user experience**.

However, issues such as AI failing to understand or respond to complex requests remain prevalent, rising from 12% to 14%, indicating ongoing difficulties in handling nuanced tasks.

Challenges like AI responses needing significant correction decreased slightly from 13% to 11%, showing marginal improvement in output accuracy. On the other hand, AI hallucinations—where tools generate inaccurate or fictitious content—saw a slight increase, from 5% to 8%, highlighting a continued trust concern among users. Other persistent issues include slow response times (5-6%) and concerns about privacy or confidentiality (5%, unchanged). Notably, perceptions of AI reliability improved modestly, with challenges declining from 7% to 6%.

Overall, while some technical challenges have seen minor improvements, issues related to complex requests and AI accuracy remain prominent, signaling areas where further development and refinement are necessary for smoother AI integration.

## Communication-related professionals/students more critical of AI's complex task performance

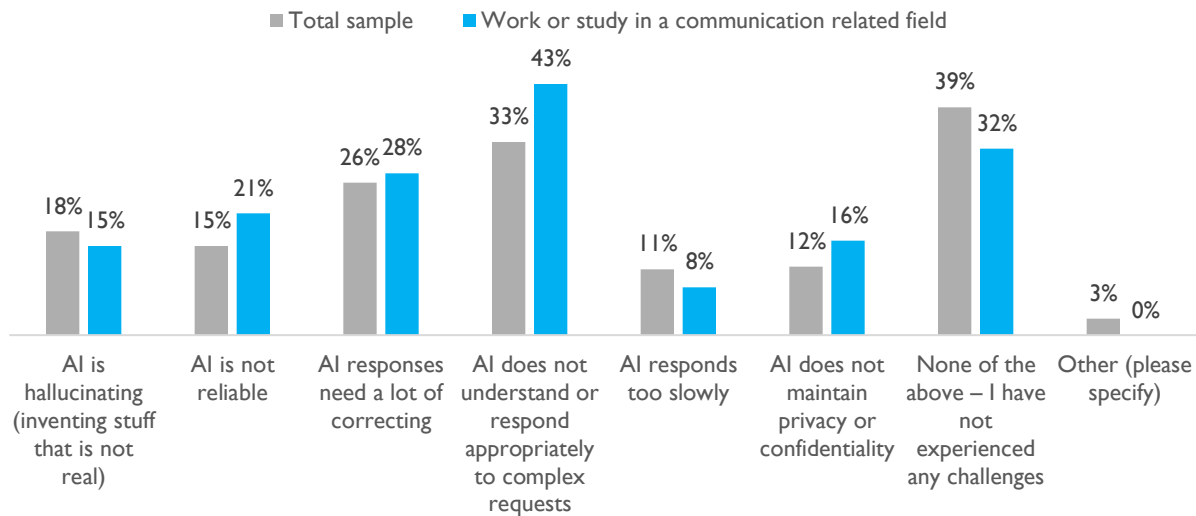


Figure 29. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Have you faced any of the following challenges in integrating AI into your work or study? (Select all that apply)

**Practitioners and students in communication-linked fields are more critical of AI's performance on complex tasks compared to the total sample.** For example, 43% of communication professionals report that AI does not understand or respond appropriately to complex requests, compared to 33% in the general sample, which indicates heightened expectations or reliance on AI for nuanced tasks within communication fields.

Challenges such as AI responses needing correction are also slightly more frequently cited by communication-related professionals, with 28% raising this issue compared to 26% of the total sample. Similarly, concerns about AI not maintaining privacy or confidentiality are higher among communication professionals, at 16%, versus 12% in the total sample.

However, this group is slightly less likely to report issues like AI hallucinating (15% vs. 18% in the total sample), but are more likely to find AI unreliable. Interestingly, only 32% of communication professionals report experiencing no challenges, compared to 39% of the total sample.



# Ethical aspects of AI & regulation

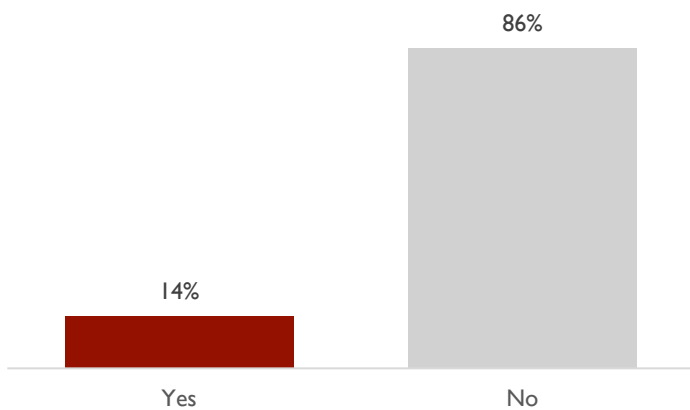
This study signals the need to address AI regulation, particularly as ethical implications remain insufficiently understood by the broader public.



## Ethical aspects of AI & Regulation

**Ethical and regulatory issues: often overlooked, yet significant.** These challenges are frequently overlooked in studies analyzing AI's societal impact. However, the AI Index survey underscores their importance. Not everyone perceives these issues as prevalent, and only a minority of respondents admit to having encountered privacy or ethical problems directly, a fact which highlights a gap between awareness and lived experience, suggesting that while concerns exist, they remain abstract for many users.

### Privacy issues - not widespread so far



*Figure 30. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Have you encountered any privacy issues with AI assistants, so far?*

Privacy issues related to AI usage appear to be relatively rare, with only 14% of respondents reporting concerns, while a large majority (86%) have not encountered such problems.

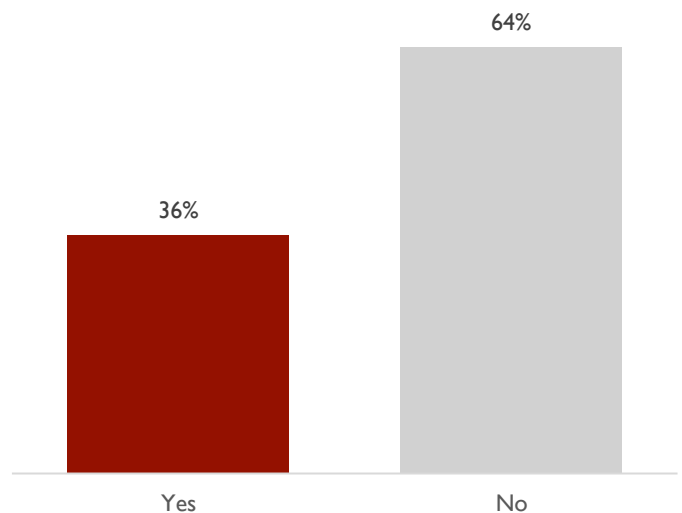
However, as AI adoption grows and tools process increasingly sensitive data, continued vigilance and robust safeguards will be essential to maintain this level of confidence.

*Figure 31. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Are you aware of ethical guidelines or best practices for AI use in your field?*

A significant majority of respondents (64%) are unaware of ethical guidelines related to AI use, with only 36% indicating awareness, which implies a gap in communication or education regarding the ethical frameworks that govern AI development and usage.

Given the growing integration of AI into various fields, increasing awareness of these guidelines is essential to ensure responsible and informed adoption.

### Only 36% are aware of ethical guidelines



## Government regulation - a polarizing issue

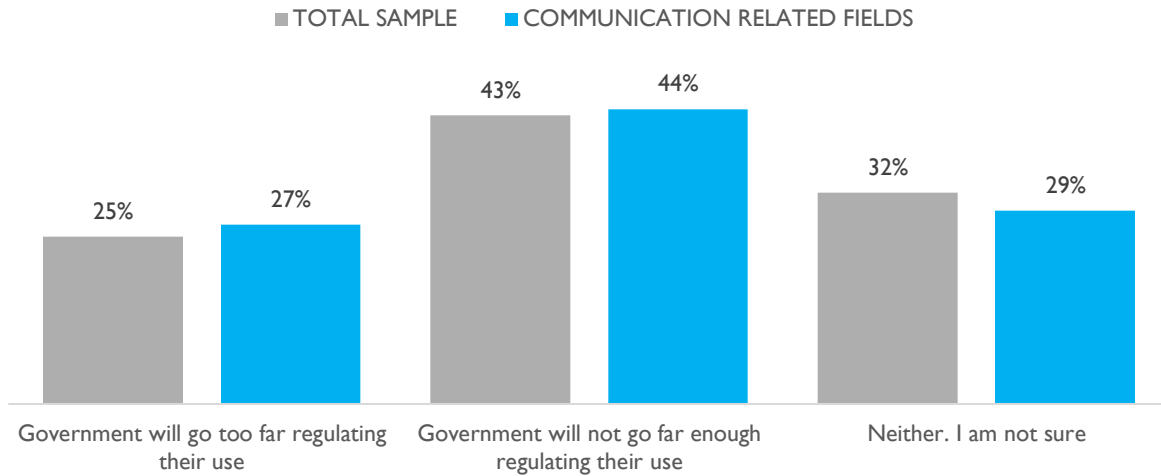
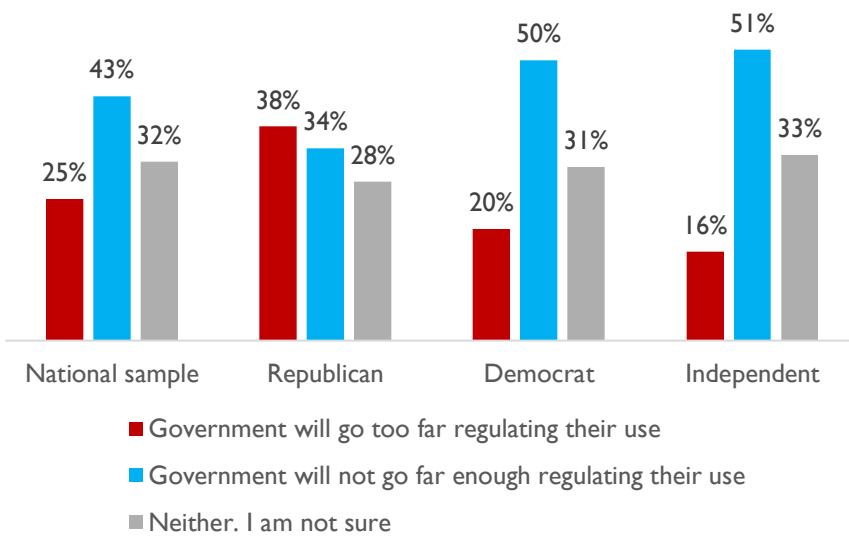


Figure 32. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: As chatbots like ChatGPT become more widespread, which is your greater concern of the following?

A larger share of respondents believes that government regulation of AI is necessary, compared to those who fear government involvement on the topic. A significant portion of respondents believe the government will not go far enough in regulating AI, with 43% of the total sample holding this view. Conversely, 25% of the total sample express concerns that government regulation may go too far, potentially stifling innovation. Government regulation of AI remains a polarizing issue, highlighting the challenges in achieving a regulatory balance that addresses both risks and opportunities.

### A clear political divide



### Interestingly, the issue of regulation does not create clear divisions among industries.

Individuals working in communication-related fields share views similar to those of the general public, reflecting a broad consensus on the need for oversight without significant polarization.

### AI regulation: a clear political divide

Republicans are significantly more likely than Democrats to reject the idea of regulating AI tools, reflecting a broader political divide over the role of government. Such a clear partisan split underlines how attitudes toward AI regulation are shaped by underlying ideological differences regarding state intervention and oversight.

Figure 33. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Political division

### Mixed responsibilities for regulation

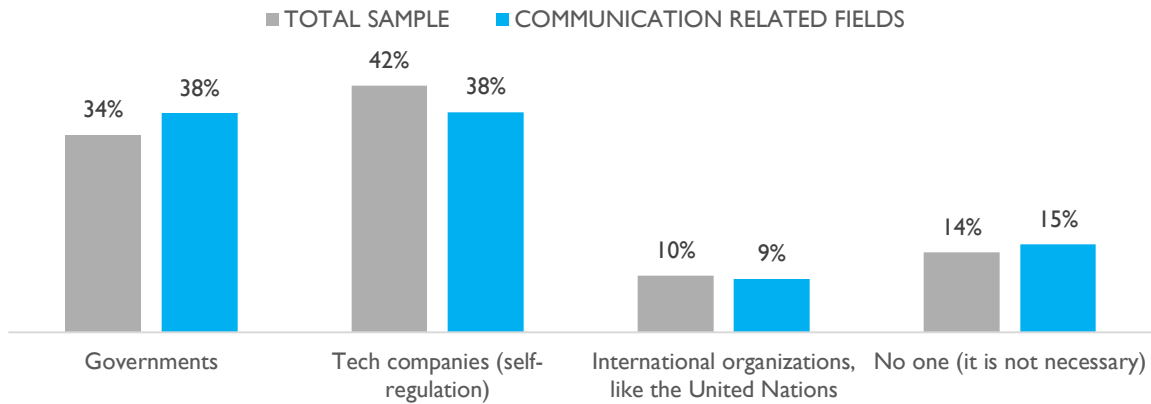


Figure 34. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Who should be responsible for regulating AI assistants?

Opinions on who should be responsible for AI regulation vary, **with some noticeable differences between the total sample and communication-linked professionals, who tend to lean more toward government oversight.** Among this group, 38% believe governments should take the lead, compared to 34% in the total sample. In contrast, 42% of the total sample believe AI regulation should be managed through self-regulation by tech companies, while only 38% of communication professionals share this view, implying slightly less trust among communication professionals in the ability of tech companies to regulate themselves.

Support for international organizations, like the United Nations, is low across both groups, with 10% of the total sample and 9% of communication professionals favoring this approach.

### Political division regarding regulation

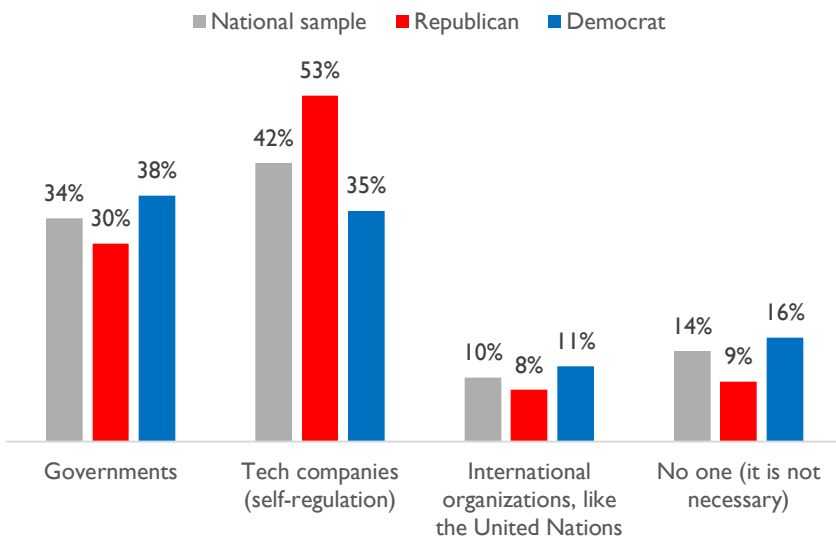


Figure 35 Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Who should be responsible for regulating AI assistants?

**Diverging Republican and Democrat views.** A significant divide exists between Republican and Democrat voters regarding who should regulate the AI sector. Republicans emphasize self-regulation by companies, reflecting their preference for limited government intervention. In contrast, Democrats advocate for a stronger role for the government in overseeing and regulating AI tools.

It is a contrast which underscores deeper ideological differences about trust in private enterprise versus the need for public oversight.



## Impact of AI on future jobs

Optimism about the future of jobs is on the rise. Compared to our summer 2024 survey, 10% fewer respondents now express fear regarding this issue.

This shift suggests a growing acceptance of the idea that AI will play a transformative role in the job market—either by reshaping existing roles or potentially creating new opportunities. The trend might reflect a gradual adaptation to the evolving relationship between technology and employment.

## Impact of AI on future jobs

Optimism about the future of jobs is on the rise.

### Fear of job reduction in the communication field - prevalent, but decreasing

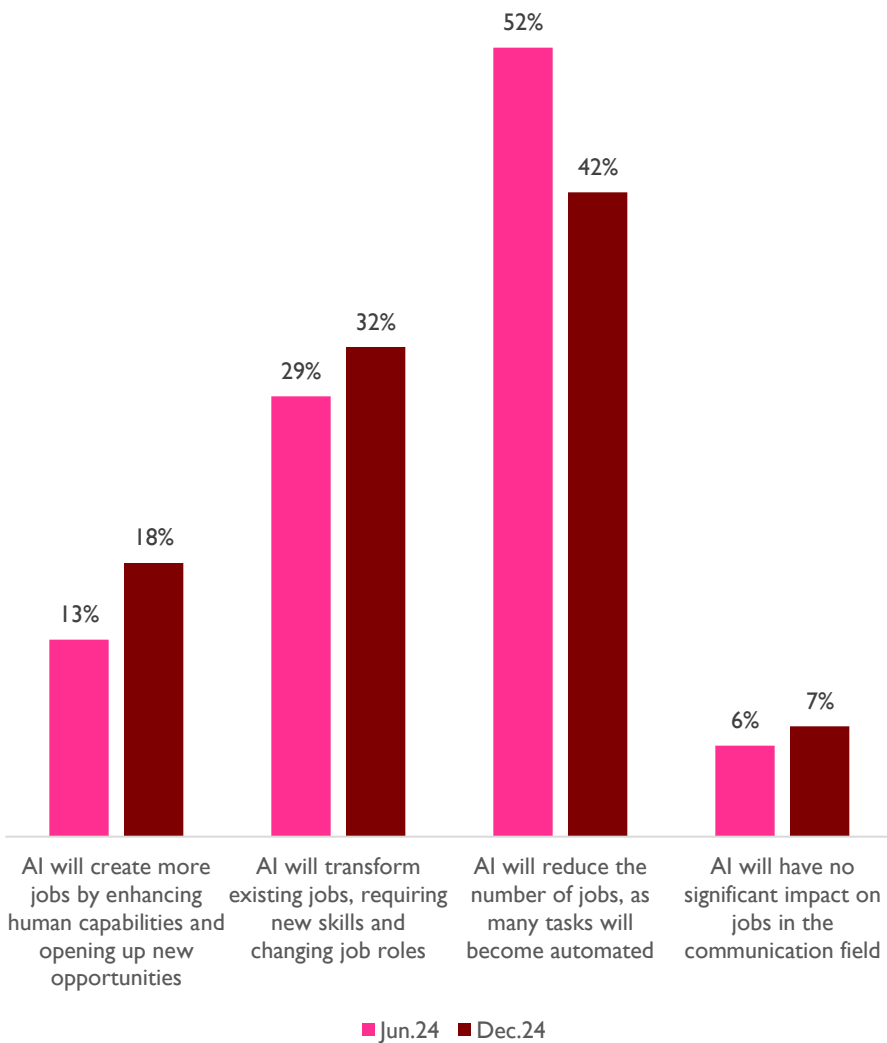


Figure 36. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Considering the increasing use of AI assistants in tasks like writing emails, creating content, or managing social media, how do you think these technologies will affect jobs in the communication field?

Concerns about AI reducing jobs in the communication field remain prevalent **but are showing signs of decline**. In June 2024, 52% of respondents believed AI would reduce the number of jobs due to task automation, but this dropped to 42% by December 2024.

Meanwhile, the share of respondents who believe AI will transform existing jobs, requiring new skills and roles, increased slightly from 29% in June to 32% in December, reflecting a rising recognition of AI as a tool that changes work dynamics rather than eliminating jobs entirely.

There is also a modest increase in optimism, with 18% in December believing AI will create more jobs by enhancing human capabilities, up from 13% in June.

Overall, while concerns about job reduction persist, the data shows a gradual shift toward more optimistic views, with greater recognition of AI's potential to transform or even enhance job opportunities in the communication field.

## Communication professionals - more optimistic compared to general population

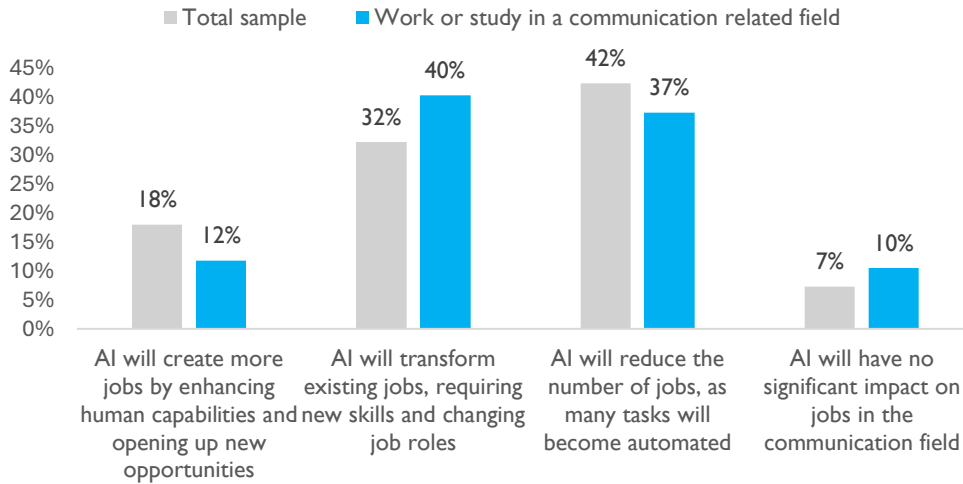


Figure 37. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Considering the increasing use of AI assistants in tasks like writing emails, creating content, or managing social media, how do you think these technologies will affect jobs in the communication field?

Fear of job loss due to automation is even lower among professionals in communication-related industries. Only 37% of them express concerns about workforce reductions caused by AI, a figure notably below the general population's sentiment.

While the figure in itself is not low, it indicates a higher level of

confidence within these industries, likely driven by the perception that AI serves as a tool to enhance productivity rather than replace human roles entirely.

What influences the most the fear about jobs in this field? Individuals who are more excited than concerned regarding the increased use of AI have the tendency of perceiving AI as having less negative effects on the job market. In a similar vein, individuals who are more optimistic about their future are more prone to believe that AI will not have a negative impact on the job market.

Also, people with higher incomes tend to anticipate less negative effects of AI on the job market.

### AI effects on jobs

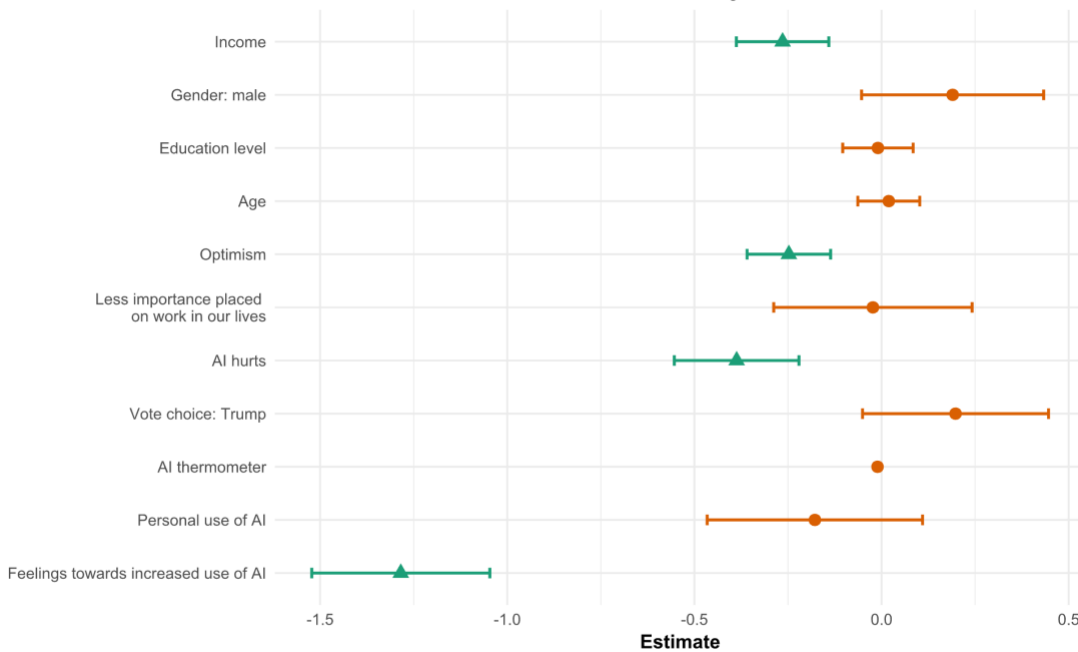


Figure 38. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Predictors of perception related to effects of AI on jobs. Regression



# AI impact on journalism

Mixed perceptions, with emerging optimism. The impact of AI tools on journalism as a profession continues to be perceived as divided.

## AI impact on journalism

Another critical area in which to examine the impact of AI is in the field of journalism, particularly regarding how it affects the work of journalists and the broader implications for journalism as a profession. Understanding why journalists and media professionals adopt AI tools like ChatGPT requires a closer look at their specific motivations and concerns.

The impact of AI tools on journalism as a profession continues to be perceived as mixed, consistent with findings from previous surveys. However, those expecting a positive effect (42%) now outnumber those anticipating a negative impact (34%).

### AI more often seen as improving journalism quality

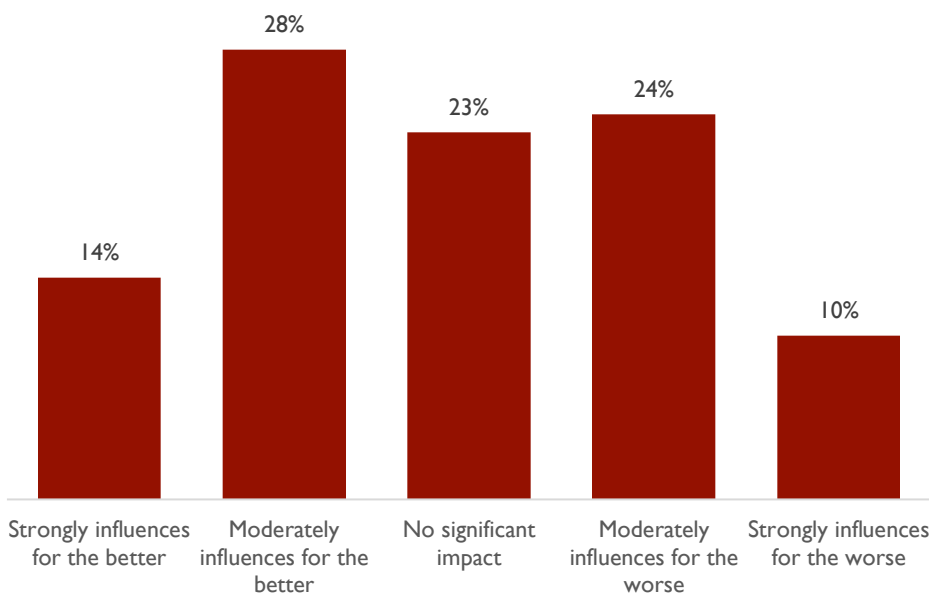


Figure 39. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: To what extent do you believe AI can influence the quality of journalism for better or for worse?

The gap between optimists and pessimists is significant, prompting a deeper analysis to identify the key predictors influencing these attitudes. A regression analysis was conducted to explore the factors shaping optimistic or pessimistic views regarding AI's role in journalism. The findings are presented below.

The regression analysis (Fig. 40) gives a clearer picture.

We observe that individuals using AI for collecting information related to political context and the ones that are more excited than concerned about AI usage are more likely to believe that AI will positively influence journalism as a profession. However, **individuals who perceive AI as contributing to disinformation also consider that AI will negatively influence journalism.**



Again, younger respondents tend to be more optimistic, as do those with greater experience using AI tools in their work. Interaction with AI tools seems to foster a perception that these technologies can enhance the quality of journalism.

This optimism is closely tied to how the public views the risk of misinformation. As we will explore further below, perceptions of AI's impact on journalism are directly linked to concerns about the role of AI in spreading or mitigating misinformation.

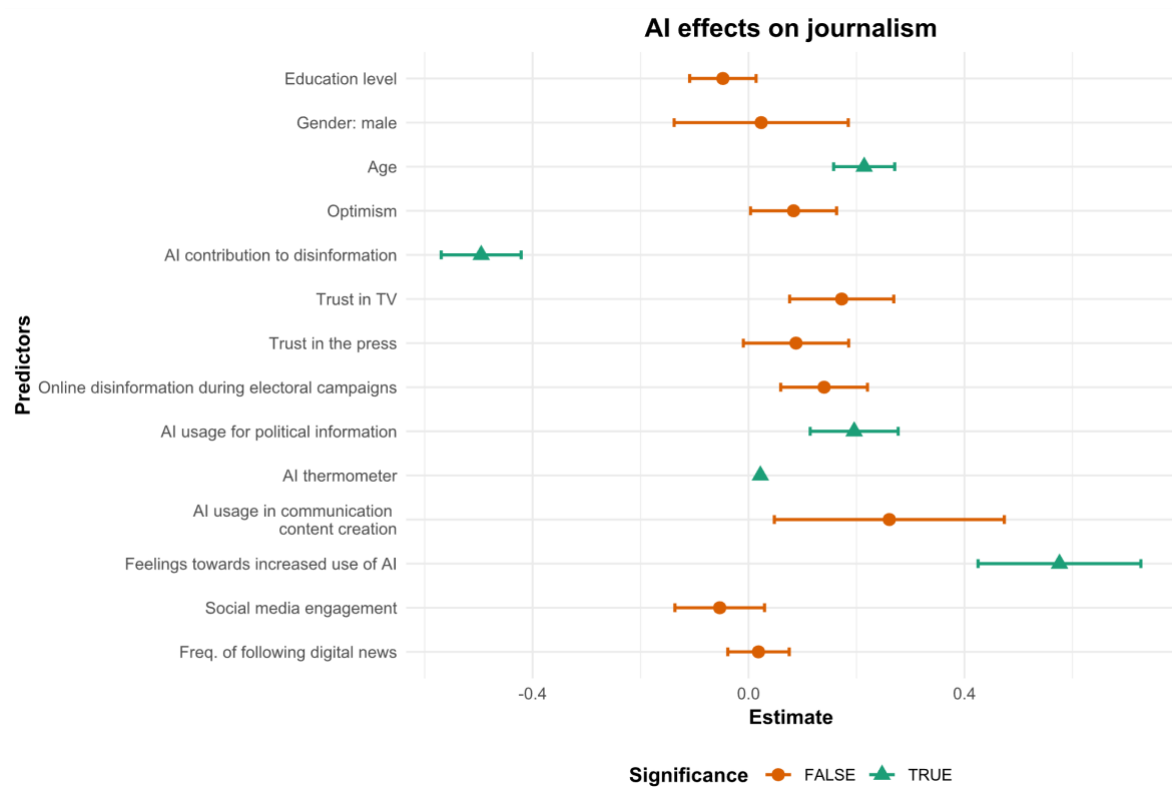


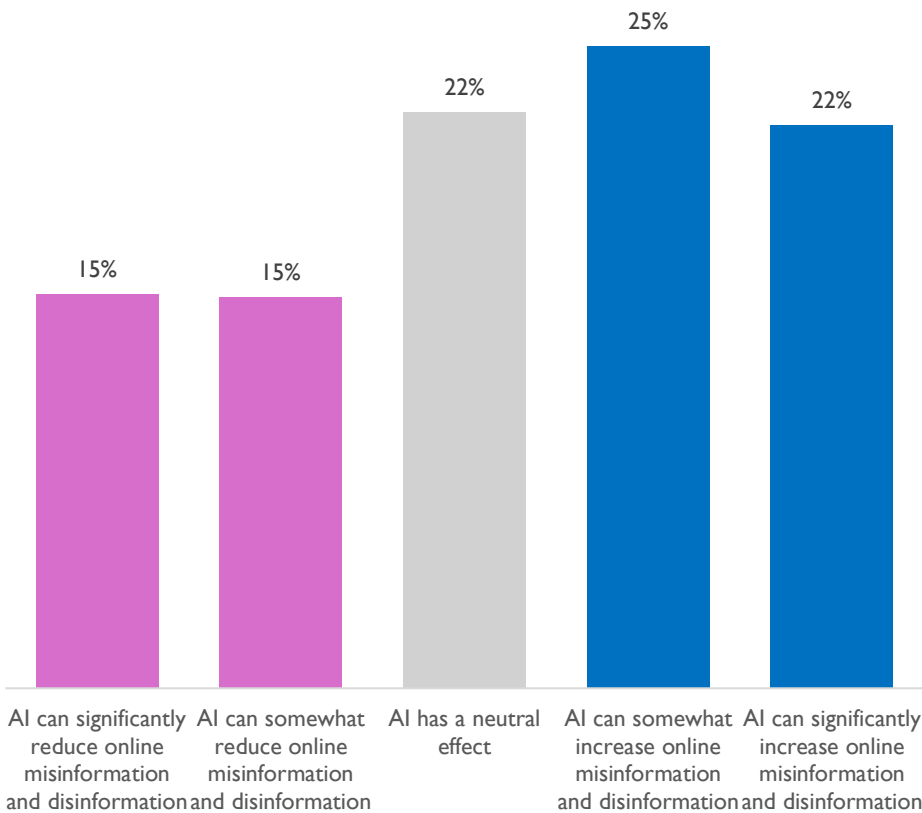
Figure 40. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Predictors of perception related to effects of AI on journalism. Regression

## AI impact on mis/disinformation

While the public acknowledges that AI tools have the potential to improve journalism, there is also a prevailing concern that these tools may contribute to increased mis/disinformation—an observation that may seem counterintuitive at first. The perception that AI contributes to online mis/disinformation is more prevalent than the belief in its potential to reduce it.

**This reflects distinct audience segments. Those who are optimistic about AI’s role in journalism are noticeably fewer than those who express pessimism regarding its potential to amplify mis/disinformation.** It is a divergence that emphasizes the dual-edged perception of AI: a tool for enhancing quality but also a risk factor in an era of growing information distrust.

### AI seen as more likely to increase mis/disinformation online



*Figure 41. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: To what extent do you think AI can contribute to online misinformation and disinformation?*

A combined 47% of respondents believe AI increases mis/disinformation, with 25% stating it somewhat increases it and 22% believing it significantly does so. In contrast, only 30% believe AI can help reduce mis/disinformation, split equally between those who think it can significantly reduce it (15%) and those who see a smaller impact (15%). Meanwhile, 22% of respondents view AI as having a neutral effect, suggesting a lack of clear consensus.

These results underscore widespread concern about AI's role in amplifying mis/disinformation, and reflect ongoing challenges in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated content.

## AI increasingly seen as spreading mis/disinformation

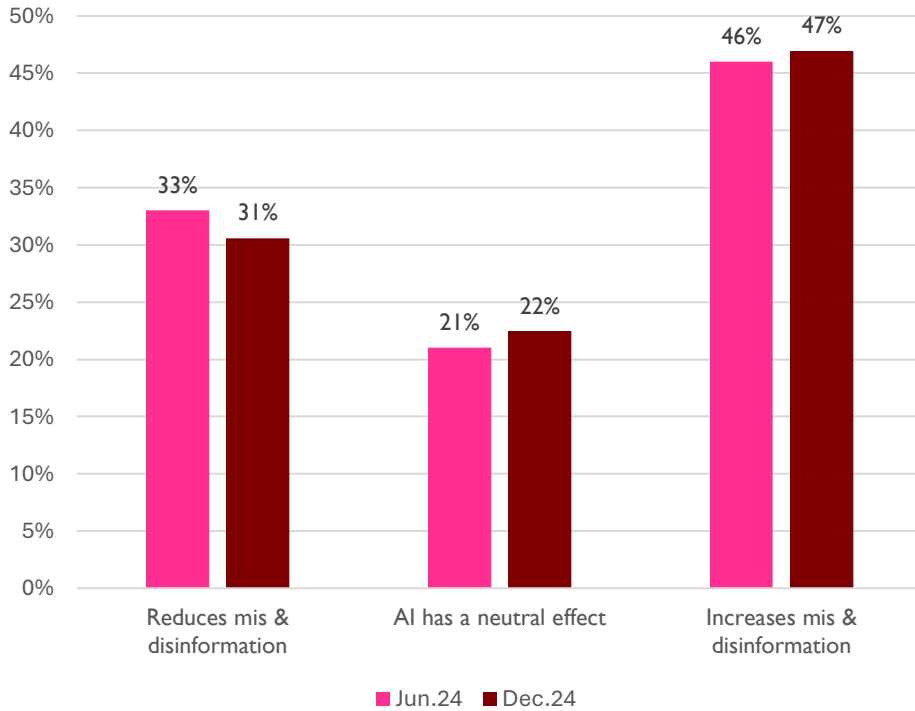


Figure 42. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: To what extent do you think AI can contribute to online misinformation and disinformation?

Concerns about AI spreading mis/disinformation have slightly increased over time. In June 2024, 46% of respondents believed AI increased mis/disinformation and disinformation, rising to 47% by December 2024. Meanwhile, the share of respondents who believe AI reduces mis/disinformation declined slightly from 33% in June to 31% in December. Perceptions of AI having a neutral effect remained relatively stable. The decline in perceived benefits underscores ongoing challenges in building trust around AI's ability to manage information accuracy, with a majority continuing to view it as contributing to the problem rather than alleviating it.

A separate regression analysis was conducted to identify the key predictors of the belief that AI tools contribute to increased mis/disinformation. The findings (Fig. 43) reveal intriguing patterns, shedding light on the factors that drive this perception.

These results illustrate how demographic variables, prior experience with AI tools, and trust in media interact to shape public attitudes toward the risks of mis/disinformation. The insights offer a deeper understanding of why certain segments of the population are more likely to view AI tools as amplifiers of mis/disinformation.

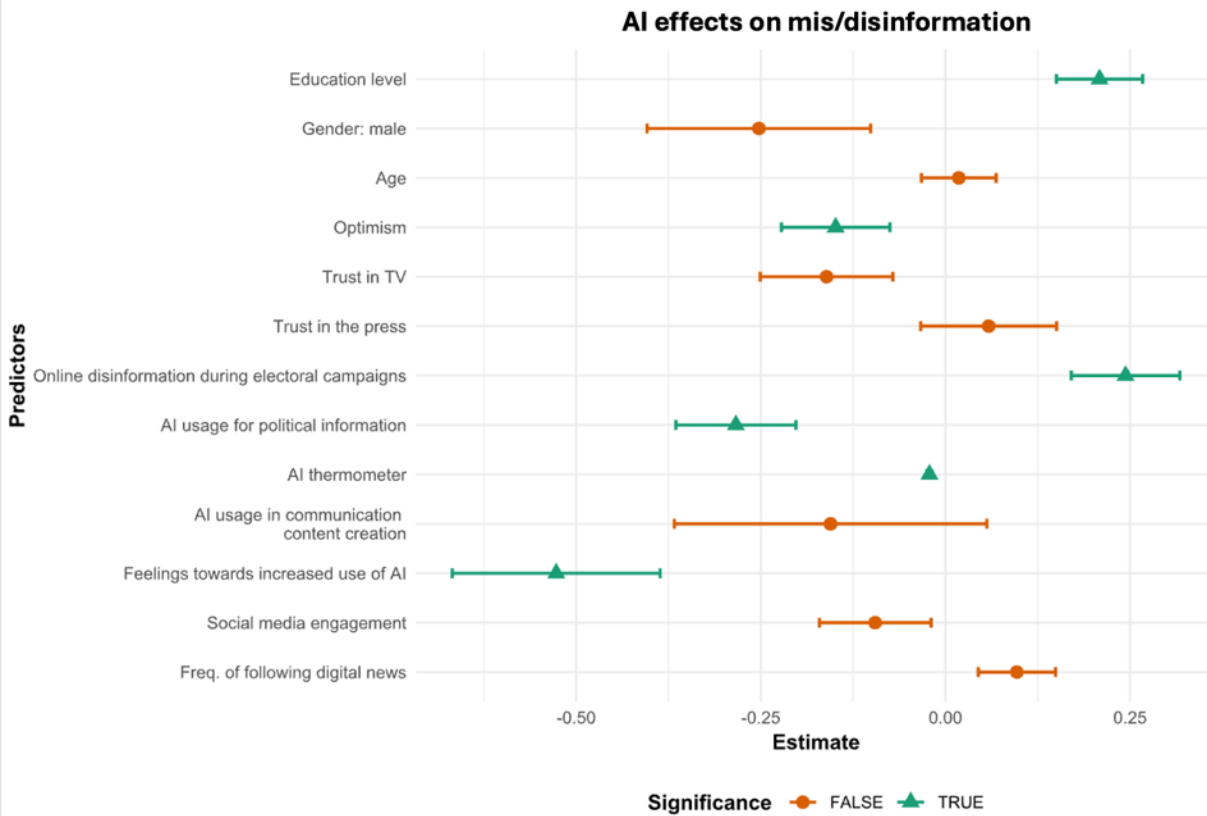


Figure 43. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Predictors of perception related to effects of AI on mis/disinformation. Regression

Predictors for believing that AI will reduce online mis/disinformation:

- optimistic individuals,
- positive feelings towards the effects of AI in society,
- and individuals who are using AI for political information

Predictors for believing that AI will increase online mis/disinformation:

- higher levels of education
- perception that electoral campaign generated more online mis/disinformation in 2024



## Impact of AI on elections and mis/disinformation

The perception of the impact of AI tools during the recent US presidential electoral campaign has been both surprising and nuanced. The public perceives a noticeable increase in AI-generated content, signaling the growing influence of these tools in political communication.

At the same time, respondents believe they were exposed to more online disinformation compared to previous electoral campaigns.

## AI impact on 2024 election campaign

Findings underscore growing concerns about AI's role in amplifying false or misleading content during critical moments of democratic processes.

### 35% of the people use AI on a regular basis to understand political information

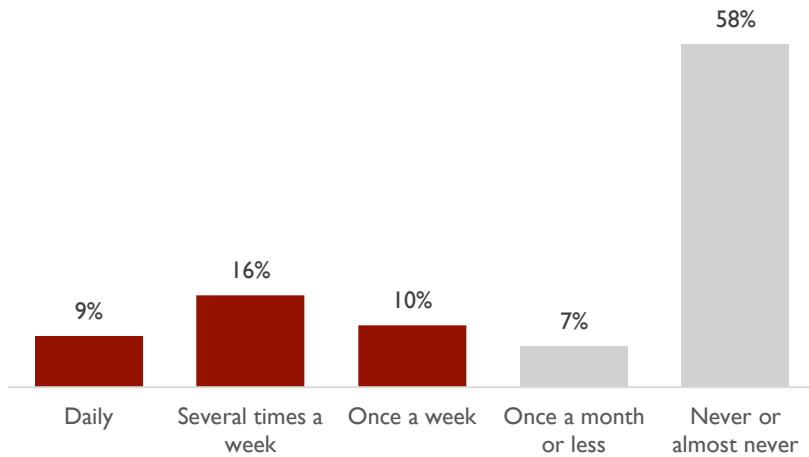


Figure 44. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How often do you use AI tools to understand political information or matters of public interest?

The majority of respondents, at 58%, report that they *never or almost never* use AI to understand political information, indicating limited adoption of AI tools for this purpose.

Only 9% of people use AI daily to engage with political information, while 16% report using it several times a week. Weekly or occasional use remains relatively low, with 10% using AI once a week and 7% once a month or less.

Thus, around 35% of the people use AI tools on a regular basis to understand political information or concepts. But,

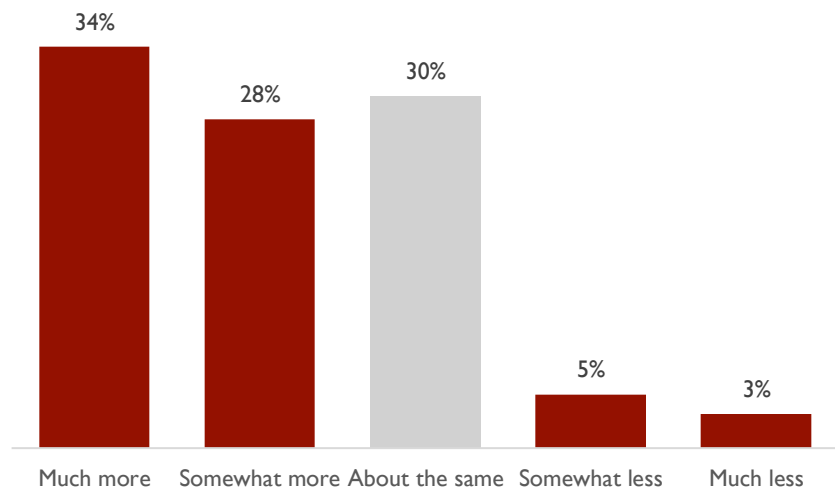
while a small group incorporates AI regularly for understanding political topics, most individuals do not rely on it, reflecting either limited trust, awareness, or preference for traditional sources when engaging with political content.

### Strong perception of increased disinformation during the 2024 campaign

Figure 45. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: Compared to previous years, do you believe there was more or less online disinformation during the 2024 election campaign?

Many people view the 2024 campaign as a period marked by heightened disinformation, likely influenced by evolving technologies such as AI.

A significant portion of respondents perceive an increase in disinformation during the 2024 campaign, with 34% stating they observed "much more" disinformation and 28% reporting "somewhat more."

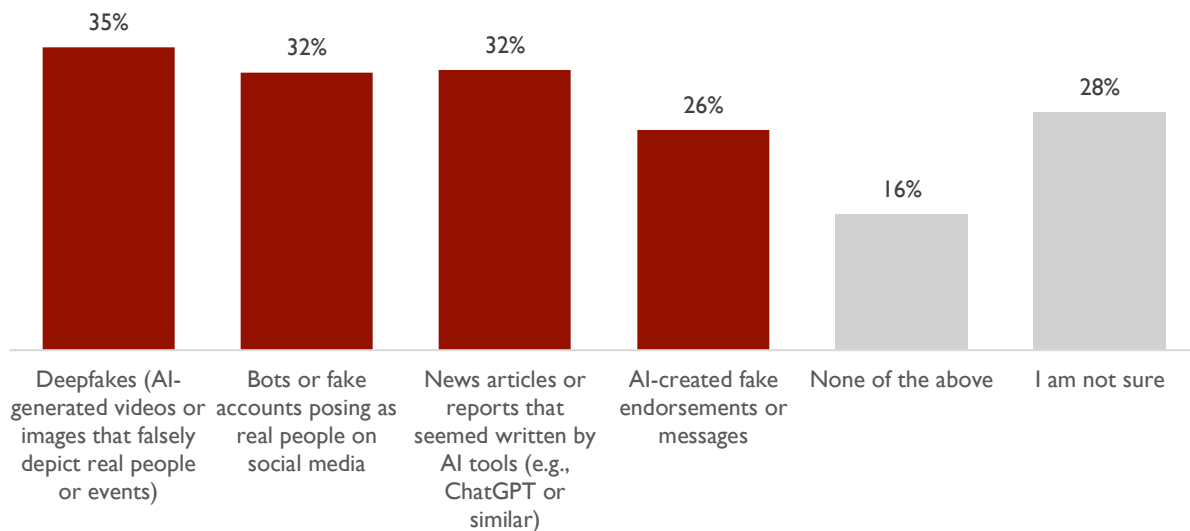


**Together, this indicates that over 60% of respondents believe disinformation has worsened during the last campaign period.** In contrast, 30% of respondents feel the level of disinformation has remained "about the same," while only small proportions report seeing less disinformation, with 5% indicating "somewhat less" and 3% saying "much less."

Both political sides—Democrats and Republicans—share the belief that online disinformation is more prevalent during this electoral campaign. The percentages are remarkably similar for both groups, highlighting a rare bipartisan consensus on the scale of the issue.

This shared perception suggests that concerns about disinformation transcend political divides, pointing to a broader acknowledgment of the challenges posed by AI tools in the digital information landscape.

### Over 1/3 of Americans encountered deepfakes during the 2024 election



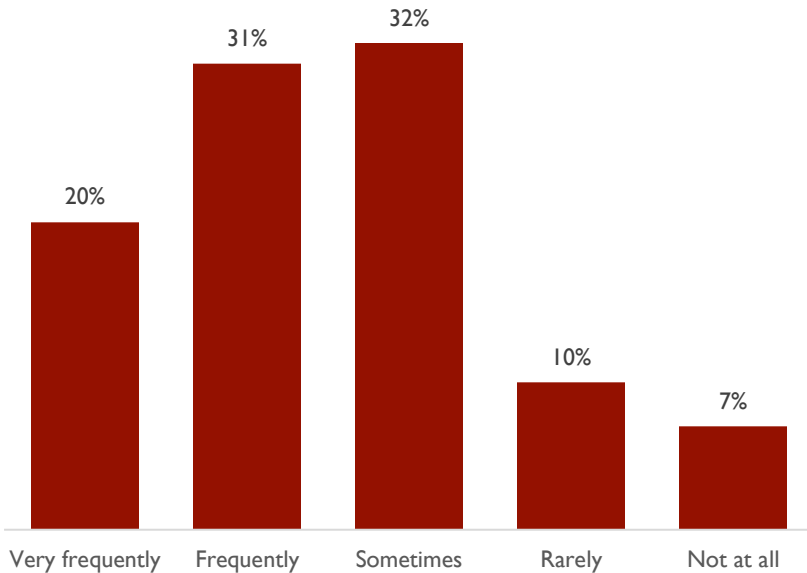
*Figure 46. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: In the 2024 election campaign, did you encounter any of the following types of AI-generated content? (Select all that apply) Deepfakes (AI-generated videos or images that falsely depict real people or events)*

The data reveals **growing concerns about AI's role in spreading disinformation during political campaigns, with 35% of respondents stating they have encountered deepfakes, AI-generated videos or images falsely depicting real people or events, during the 2024 election campaign.**

This was the most commonly reported type of AI-generated content. Similarly, 32% reported encountering bots or fake accounts posing as real people on social media, and an equal share experienced AI-generated news articles or reports that appeared written by tools like ChatGPT.

Additionally, 26% reported seeing AI-created fake endorsements or messages, underscoring the varied methods through which AI tools are used to influence perceptions. Meanwhile, 16% indicated they had not encountered any of these forms of AI-generated content, while 28% were unsure, reflecting uncertainty about identifying AI-manipulated materials.

## 51% of Americans perceive AI as playing a significant role in creating misleading/false information during the 2024 elections



Republicans show responses that align closely with the overall sample average. Voters supporting Kamala Harris report encountering “very frequently” false information during the campaign, at rates above the sample average. However, beyond this group, the differences between voter types remain relatively small. This consistency across political affiliations further underscores the widespread perception of increased misinformation during the campaign, irrespective of party lines.

*Figure 47. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: How often do you believe AI was used to create misleading or false information during the 2024 election campaign?*

A majority of respondents believe AI was used to create misleading or false information during the 2024 election campaign. Thirty-one percent think this occurred “frequently,” while an additional 20% believe it happened “very frequently,” showing that over half of respondents perceive AI as playing a significant role in spreading misinformation.

Meanwhile, 32% believe AI was used “sometimes,” reflecting a moderate perception of its influence. By contrast, only a small portion view AI’s role as minimal, with 10% saying it was used “rarely” and 7% believing it was not used at all.

On this issue, both Democrats and



## Political trust. Main divisions in the US, during elections

**Measuring trust in media and institutions: a key indicator.** The level of trust in media institutions and structures serves as a critical indicator of how the American public perceives significant sources of online content and the channels through which it spreads.

Consistently tracking this data is valuable not only for understanding the overall confidence levels but also for enabling a broader segmentation of the public based on their trust profiles. Such segmentation offers deeper insights into how different audience groups interact with, consume, and evaluate digital content in an increasingly complex information ecosystem.

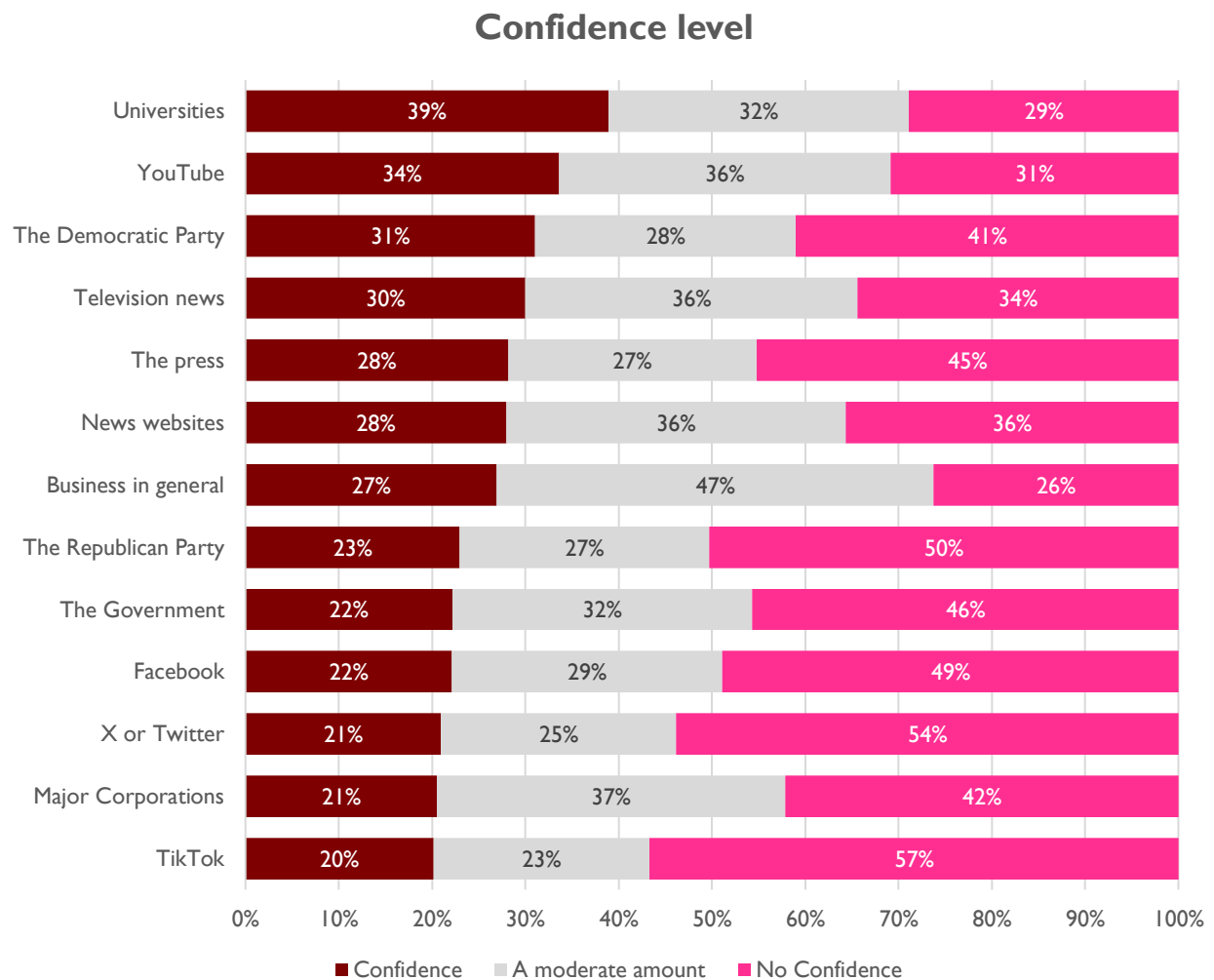


Figure 48. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Evaluating trust in media and institutions.

Universities enjoy the highest trust, with 39 percent expressing confidence and only 29 percent reporting no confidence. YouTube also fares relatively well, with 34 percent confident and 31 percent not. In contrast, social media platforms like TikTok and X/Twitter face the lowest trust, with only 20 to 21 percent expressing confidence and over half reporting no confidence (57 and 54 percent, respectively). Facebook similarly struggles, with 49 percent expressing no confidence.

Political entities (main parties) and the government also face skepticism above average. The Democratic Party has 31 percent confidence compared to 23 percent for the Republican Party, though both see high no-confidence ratings of 41 and 50 percent, respectively.

**Trust Levels in December 2024: Stability with Minor Shifts**

Trust levels in December 2024 show minimal changes compared to June 2024. Notably, there has been an increase in confidence in traditional media sources, YouTube, and, to a lesser extent, TikTok and the Republican Party. Conversely, trust has declined in news websites and Facebook.

While these shifts are observable, they do not indicate a significant transformation in the overall landscape. The steady rise in trust for YouTube aligns with broader media consumption trends, which reflect increased usage of the platform and a growing preference for video content.

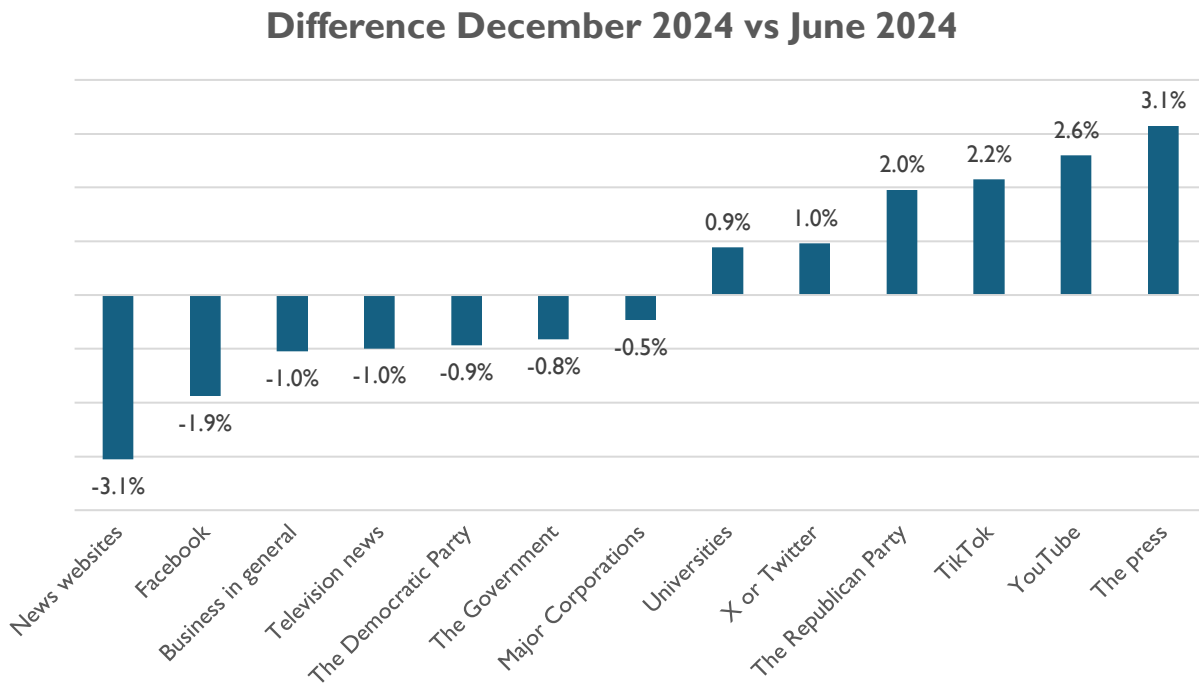


Figure 49. 6-month evolution in confidence level. The percentage represents the increase or decrease compared to previous data.

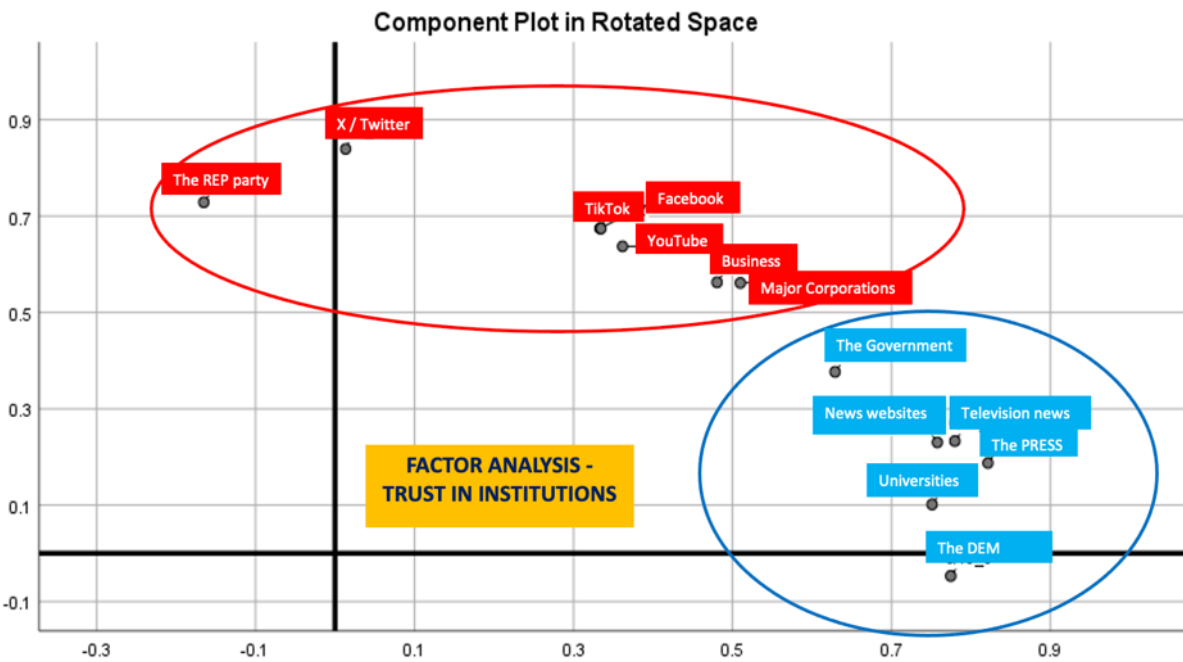


Figure 50. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Factor analysis – trust in institutions

### Trust Analysis: A Divided American Society

A factor analysis of trust distribution across institutions reveals a deeply divided American society, segmented into two major groups. On one side, there is the audience that places trust in the Democratic Party and traditional institutions such as the press, universities, government, and established media sources. On the other side, there is a public segment that shows greater trust in the Republican Party and social media platforms, including X, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube.

The division is significant as it reflects fundamentally different approaches to media consumption and varying perceptions of technology's influence on society. These contrasting trust patterns highlight a polarized information ecosystem shaped by both political and technological factors.

## Attitudes toward work remain divided

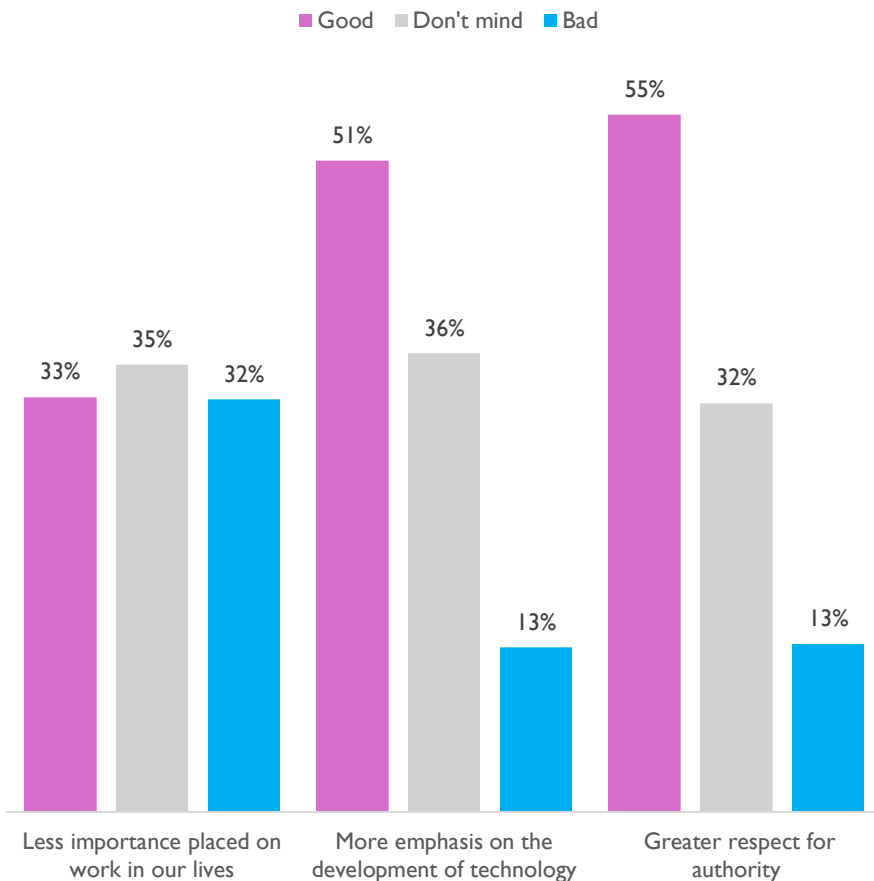


Figure 51. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Question: I'm going to read out a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind?

Opinions on potential societal changes vary significantly. Placing less importance on work in people's lives generates mixed reactions, with 33% considering it a good thing, and 32% viewing it as negative. In contrast, more emphasis on the development of technology is widely supported, with 51% seeing it as positive. Greater respect for authority receives the strongest support, with 55% believing it would be a good thing, 32% indifferent, and 13% considering it negative.

### Future Expectations: Political Divides in Vision for Society

This set of three questions aims to capture expectations about the future of society. While Democrats and

Republicans show little difference regarding the role of technology—both groups, in line with the overall sample, agree that increased technological development is a positive trend—divergence emerges on other aspects of societal change.

Republicans are more favorable toward a future with less emphasis on work, appreciating this scenario more than Democrats. **The starkest difference, however, relates to attitudes toward authority: 72% of Republicans express a positive sentiment about this idea, compared to just 47% of Democrats.** When these findings are correlated with levels of optimism about the future, a growing political divide becomes evident.

Figure 52. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index.  
Question: Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days?

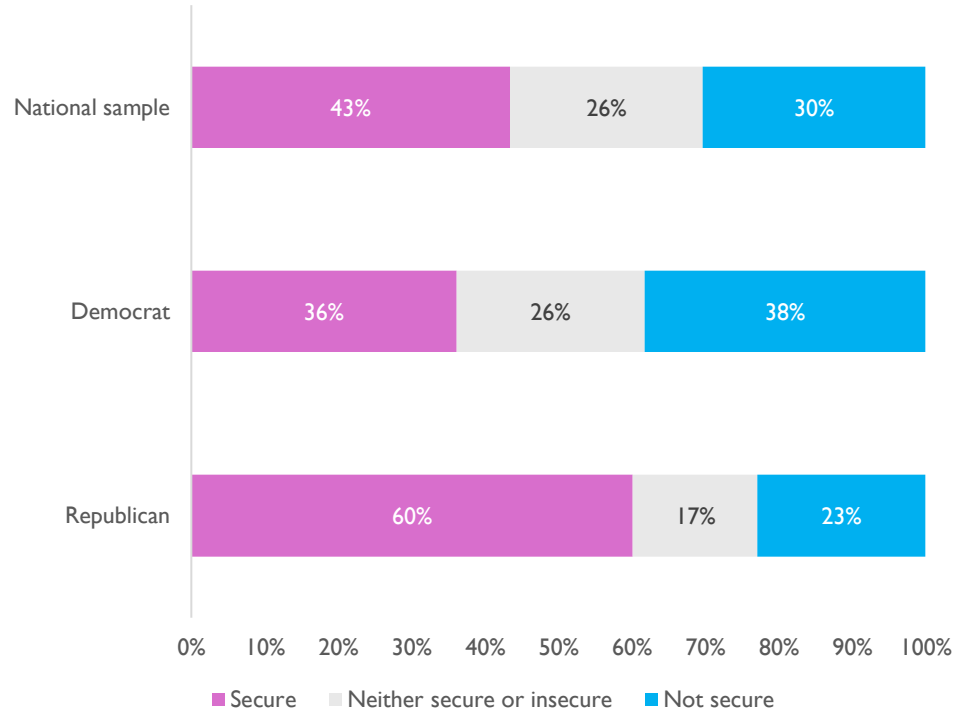
Feelings of security are divided, with a combined 43 percent of respondents describing themselves as either quite secure or very secure. However, 30 percent express insecurity, with 23 percent feeling not very secure and 7 percent stating they are not at all secure.

**Political Divide and Perceptions of Security**

The division is distinctly political, with Republicans feeling almost twice as secure as Democrats, a disparity in perceived security which might influence overall optimism about the future.

Such differences extend to attitudes toward technological advancement and the impact of AI tools on jobs. Republicans’ greater sense of security may drive a more confident outlook on the role of technology, while Democrats’ comparatively lower confidence might suggest a more cautious or skeptical approach to AI’s long-term implications for employment and society.

**A divided sense of security**



# AI impact on Trump’s election

## AI Tools and Voting Patterns: Analyzing the Predictors

To explore the role of AI tools in the political sphere, questions regarding voting preferences were introduced. The findings revealed a relatively balanced sample: 31% of Americans self-identify as Republicans, 33% as Democrats, with the remainder being independents or without a clear preference.

When asked about their vote in the presidential election, the responses were evenly split, with approximately 40% favoring each candidate—consistent with the tendency of post-election surveys.

Importantly, the goal was not to measure precise voting results but to conduct **a regression analysis to identify predictors of support for the elected president, Donald Trump, related to various opinions and perceptions about AI**. The regression model incorporated a range of variables, including voting intentions, socio-demographic factors, attitudinal responses, media consumption habits, trust levels, and optimism about AI. While the results yielded interesting patterns, they did not provide clear evidence of a direct role played by AI tools, AI-driven disinformation, or optimism about AI in shaping voting behavior, which suggests that the measurable impact of AI tools on political outcomes remains complex and nuanced.

Figure 53. Source: Winter 2024 AI Index. Predictors of voting for D. Trump. Regression

The regression analysis highlights several key predictors influencing voting choices in the 2024 US presidential election:

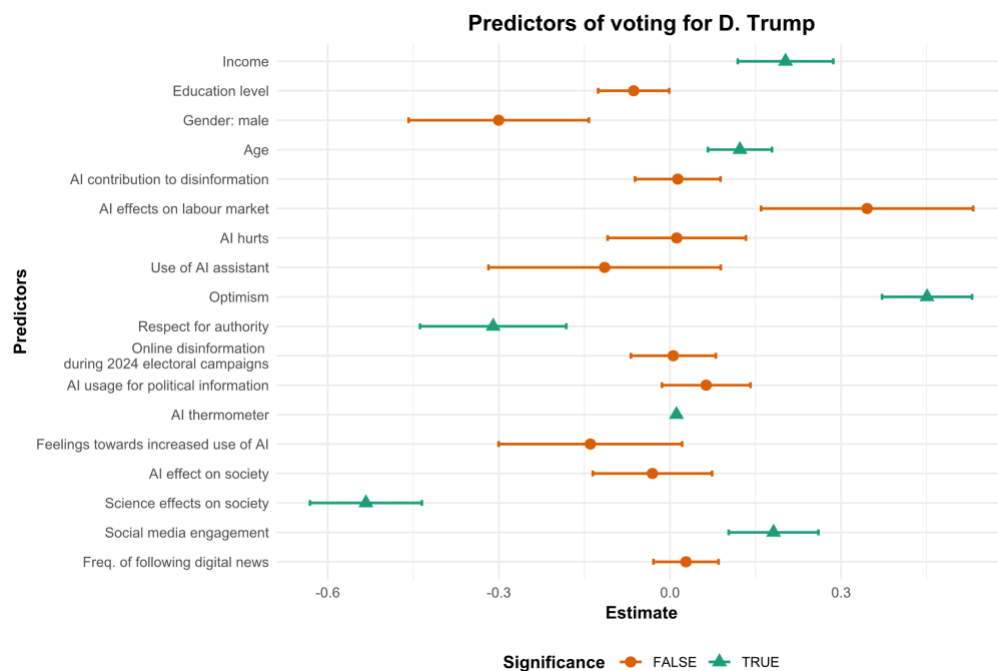
**Social media use:** Higher social media usage is associated with voting for Trump.

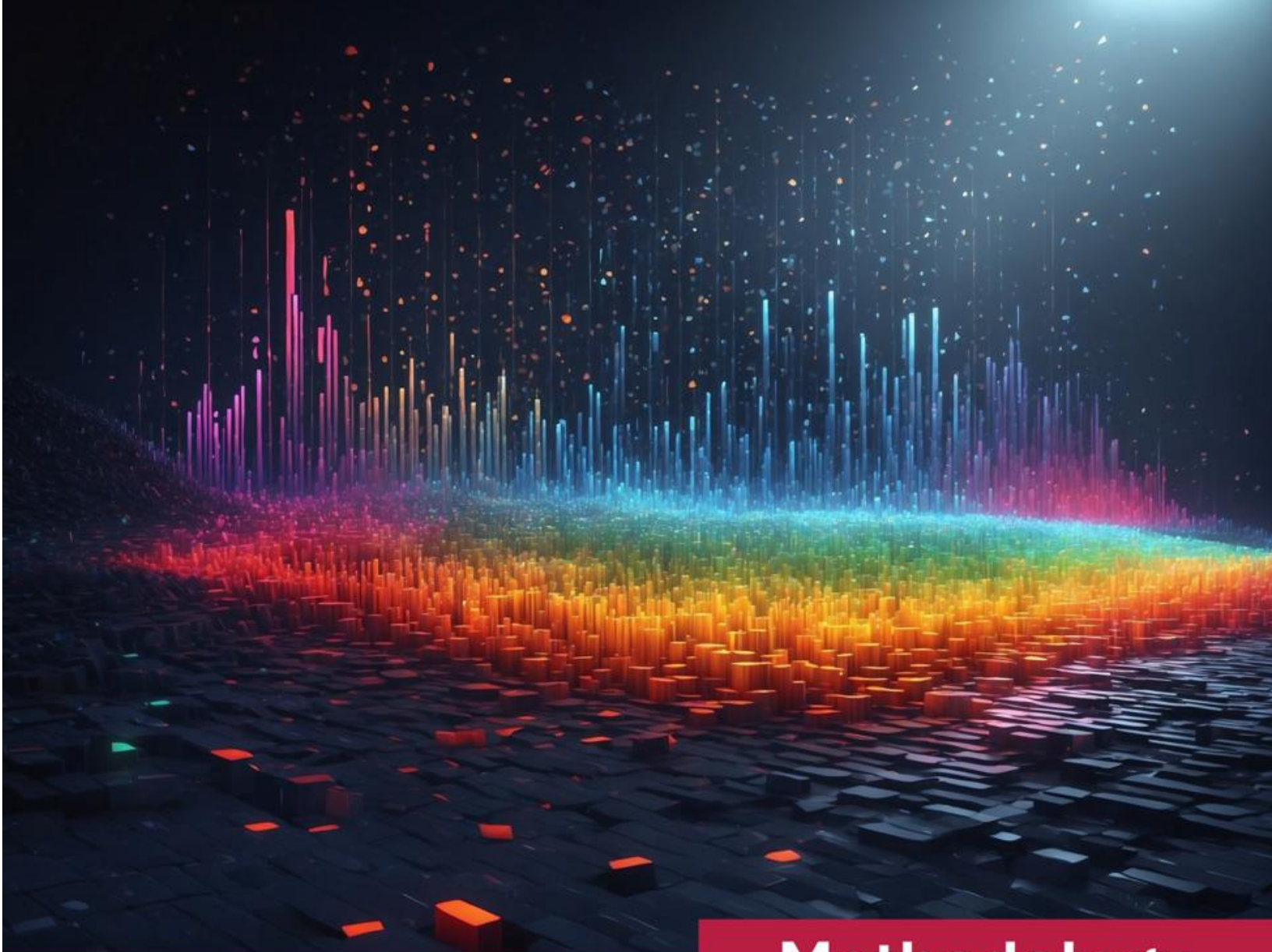
**Respect for authority:** Interestingly, those valuing authority more were more likely to support Trump.

**Optimism:** Optimistic voters, inspired by a hopeful future, aligned with Trump’s rhetoric.

**Income:** Higher-income individuals were more likely to vote for Trump, likely reflecting economic priorities and alignment with his policies.

Regarding **AI, both societal impacts and personal use of AI had minimal influence on voting behavior**. However, general favorability toward AI showed a slight positive association with Trump support. In conclusion, the role of AI in shaping voting behavior is noticeable but statistically small.





# Methodology

## Methods. How we did this research

The survey 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. This report benefited from the analyses and feedback of experts, including Dr. Tom Reichert, Randy Covington, Dr. Dana Sultanescu, Dr. Andreea Stancea, and Leo Sultanescu. Our primary objective was to measure the use and perception of artificial intelligence (AI) in communication within the United States.

### Methodology

The survey was conducted in Nov 18 – Dec 2 using the Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) method via the Qualtrics platform. A total of 1,002 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

The data collected provides valuable insights into the current state of AI integration in communication. It highlights both the benefits and challenges associated with AI, offering a detailed look at how AI is perceived and utilized across various communication platforms and professional contexts.



## Descriptives of the sample. Weighting

The Winter 2024 AI Index Survey was conducted Nov 18 – Dec 2, 2024, by University of South Carolina, using Qualtrics panel respondents. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,002 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 considers 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:** Respondents are categorized into the following age groups: 18-24 years old (9.5%), 25-34 years old (17.3%), 35-44 years old (16.4%), 45-54 years old (16.5%), 55-64 years old (16.8%), and 65+ years old (23.5%).
- **Gender:** Respondents identify as male (49.1%), female (49.9%), non-binary/third gender (0.5%), or prefer not to disclose (0.5%).
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Categories include White/Caucasian (69.0%), Black/African American (12.6%), Asian (5.7%), and smaller groups such as American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native (0.8%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.2%), and others (5.6%).
- **Education:** Levels range from *Some high school or less* with 2.0% to *Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS etc.)* with 14.7%. Most respondents are in the category *Some college, but no degree* (25.7%), followed by the respondents with Bachelor's degree (22.5%). Another other category was *Associates or technical degree* with 11.6%.
- **Occupation:** Respondents' current occupations are categorized as follows: White-collar professionals (31.6%), retired individuals (26.3%), blue-collar workers (11.9%), unemployed (10.8%), homemakers (5.8%), students (4.6%), freelancers (3.7%), and other occupations (5.4%).
- **Income:** Respondents' total household income before taxes over the past 12 months is distributed as follows: Less than \$25,000 (17.1%), \$25,000-\$49,999 (19.8%), \$50,000-\$99,999 (28.3%), \$100,000-\$199,999 (27.4%), and more than \$200,000 (7.4%).
- **Region:** Geographic representation spans the Midwest (21%), Northeast (17%), South (38%), and West (24%).
- **Political Affiliation:** Respondents identify their political affiliation as follows: Republican (30.7%), Democrat (34.2%), Independent (28.9%), and no preference (6.3%).
- **Party Leaning:** Respondents indicate their party leaning as follows: The Republican Party (26.4%), The Democratic Party (27.2%), and neither of them (46.5%).

Age. How old are you?	Valid percent
18-24 years old	9.5
25-34 years old	17.3
35-44 years old	16.4
45-54 years old	16.5
55-64 years old	16.8
65+ years old	23.5

<b>Gender. How do you describe yourself?</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
Male	49.1
Female	49.9
Non-binary / third gender	0.5
Prefer not to say	0.5

<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
White or Caucasian	69.0
Black or African American	12.6
American Indian/Native	0.8
American or Alaska Native	
Asian	5.7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2
Other	5.6

<b>Region</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
Midwest	21.0
Northeast	17.0
South	38.0
West	24.0

<b>Education. What is the highest level of education you have completed?</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
Some high school or less	2.0
High school diploma or GED	23.5
Some college, but no degree	25.7
Associates or technical degree	11.6
Bachelor's degree	22.5
Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS etc.)	14.7

<b>Occupation. What best describes your current occupation? - Selected Choice</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
Student	4.6
White-collar professional	31.6
Blue-collar worker	11.9
Freelancer	3.7
Retired	26.3
Homemaker	5.8
Unemployed	10.8
Other	5.4

<b>Income. What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
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

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