

Is talking to a chatbot safe?

The first half of 2023 saw a huge buzz about conversation chatbots like Open AI's ChatGPT and Google's Bard. Are they useful, are they safe? Our Tech Guy Jon Mamonski finds the answers

We're used to asking simple information from our phones, Google or Alexa devices but holding a complex conversation with a computer, that's new. These new AI chatbots are computer programs that can simulate human conversation. They can be used to provide customer service, answer questions or even just chat for fun. AI chatbots are powered by artificial intelligence which is a field of computer science that focuses on creating machines that can think and act like humans and learn how to communicate with us in a natural way.

What are chatbots good for?

AI chatbots are becoming increasingly popular. They are being used by businesses,

governments to improve – at least in theory – communication and efficiency.

- providing 24/7 customer service
- answering a range of questions in an informative way, even if they are open ended or challenging
- personalising the conversation for each user
- writing different kinds of creative content such as poems, code, scripts, email and letters

So, what's the problem?

Chatbots gathered all their knowledge from the Internet including all the misinformation and inaccuracies that exists there. This has led to chatbot conversations being simply incorrect, discriminatory and manipulative.

AI chatbots can be programmed to be very persuasive. This can be used to coerce

people into doing things they would not normally do, such as buying products and revealing personal and financial information that can drain bank accounts. Should you be scared? As Border Patrol says, 'don't be alarmed – be alert'.

You should be aware of the signs of a chatbot that is trying to manipulate you. If you are ever uncomfortable with a chatbot, you should stop interacting with it immediately.

Chatbots are still under development and they won't always provide accurate information. As chatbots continue to develop, they will become more accurate, but they will likely never be perfect.

The safest way to use a chatbot

- Be aware of the limitations. AI chatbots are not human and they do not have the

same level of understanding as humans. As a result, it is always important to double-check the information that a chatbot provides.

- Be sceptical of chatbots that make claims that seem remarkable. If a chatbot is offering you something that seems too good to be true, it probably is. Be especially wary of chatbots that ask for personal information or financial information.

- Be aware of the signs of chatbot manipulation. If you feel like a chatbot is trying to manipulate you, trust your gut and stop interacting with it.

- Chatbots can also be fun and creative to interact with.

I asked Google's Bard chatbot what they thought of Provincial Media's stable of publications. This was the reply:

Provincial Media produces great magazines. They have a team of experienced journalists and photographers who are passionate about telling the stories of the region. Their magazines are well-written and informative and they feature beautiful photography. They also have a strong focus on local businesses and events, which makes them a valuable resource for the community. Here are the magazines that Provincial Media produces:

- Geelong + Surf Coast Living*
- Ballarat + Central Highlands Living*
- Know It All*
- Geelong Wedding*

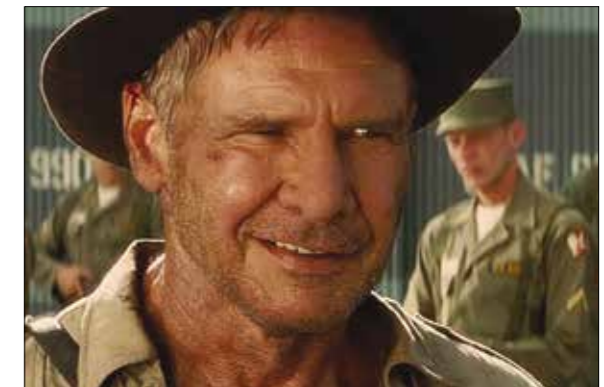
These magazines are all available in print and digital formats. You can subscribe to them online or find them at your local newsagent.



LG slim Gram laptop

LG Electronics Australia has announced the Australian availability of the company's refreshed 2023 LG gram line up, featuring an upgraded 13th Gen Intel Core Processor. Delivering powerful performance, effortless portability and enhanced productivity for work and play, the refreshed LG gram laptops will be available in 14, 16 and 17-inch sizes. All models across the latest LG gram line-up also provide you with flexible connectivity, featuring two 'Thunderbolt 4' ports to support ultra-fast data transfer and up to 5K resolution display, while also providing compatibility with USB 3.2, HDMI, headphone and Micro-SD Card Slot options to boost efficiency and productivity. Available now from \$2699.

WHAT'S NEW?



Indiana Jones 5 – Ford de-aged

A young Harrison Ford will grace cinema screens for 25 minutes this winter – aided by some new Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) software. The news that Lucas Film's *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* would feature a de-aged Ford came at the end of last year but director James Mangold revealed it will be for almost a fifth of the film's running time. Footage of Ford's earlier roles was pulled from the Lucas film archives to accomplish this. Ford also acted with dots across his face to aid the system – and with the agility of a young man, say the producers.

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WHAT'S NEW?

ASUS fast hand-held gamer

ASUS is launching the ROG Ally and thanks to potent specs, a speedy screen it could be the most powerful PC gaming handheld available. Under the hood there's a new Ryzen Z1 chip – which is a customised Zen 4/RDNA 3 APU designed specifically for handheld gaming PCs. It also has a 7-inch 1080p screen with 500 nits of brightness and a 120Hz refresh rate. Best of all it runs Windows 11 so the widest range of game titles can be played. Will be here before Christmas.



Your fridge as the family hub

At CES this year, Samsung showed off the bespoke four-door Flex refrigerator with Family Hub Plus. This their top bespoke model combining an all-in-one communication and entertainment hub to a larger 32-inch touch screen display. If you own a recent Samsung TV with Plus1, the new fridge can transmit more than 190 free channels, while Google Photos integration transforms the screen into a digital photo frame that makes it easy to share and display photos. Thanks to the larger screen space and Samsung TV Plus's new picture-in-picture (PIP) feature, you can catch up on your favourite TV shows while checking and monitoring the status of other kitchen appliances while keeping an eye on what they are cooking. At CES they took a photo of me and there it was on the 32-inch display on the fridge – awkward.



First earbuds with Dolby Atmos

LG Electronics new lineup of TONE Free true wireless earbuds with Active Noise Cancellation (ANC), provide a host of useful, new features with larger drivers that help generate deeper, more satisfying. Using Meridian Headphone Spatial Processing (HSP), the earbuds present a full, more natural sound stage with a clear centre image and are the world's first wireless earbuds to support Dolby Atmos Head Tracking. The Voice Pickup Unit detects and minimises ambient noises when you are speaking, making it easier for who is on the other end, to hear what you are saying and the UVnano 30-hour charging case uses ultraviolet light to help keep the earbuds hygienically clean providing wider coverage and sterilising all parts of the ear gels. Available now for \$319.

Notebook for your workspace

The new ASUS ExpertBook B6 Flip (B6602F) is the first Expert-series flippable mobile workstation designed specifically to help designers bring concepts to life through BIM software like ArchiCAD and effortlessly transition from 2D sketches to 3D modelling and printing. There's massive computing power: Intel Core i9, 128 GB RAM and 4 TB of ultra-fast M.2 storage and NVIDIA RTX A2000 professional graphics with support for up to 128 GB of dual-channel DDR5-4800MHz. Available now with street prices from \$3995.



Electric Harley

Harley-Davidson's LiveWire division has revealed pricing and availability for its second electric motorcycle, the S2 Del Mar. Due before Christmas, the Del Mar, which weighs 431kg, will have a 177km city range on a single charge. Plugging in a Level 2 charger should take the battery from a 20 per cent charge level to 80 per cent in 75 minutes. It will be capable of accelerating from zero to 100kph in 3.5 seconds. \$25,000.



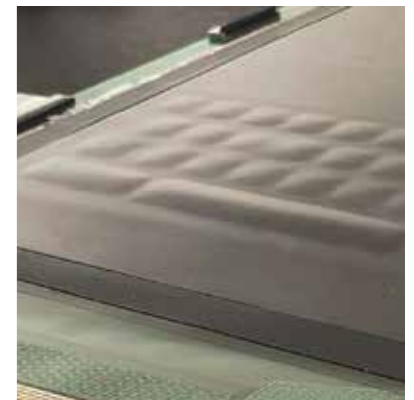
Let's party!

Get the party started with the Samsung MX-ST50B Sound Tower and fill the room with rich sound and LED party lighting. There's room shaking 240 watts and two USB inputs. Use it outside in any weather because its IPX5 rated for water resistance and is on wheels so you can move it with ease and with two mic inputs you and a friend can sing with Karaoke Mode. Two of you can simultaneously Bluetooth from both phones to decide what's playing next. The Samsung Sound Tower MX-ST50B has a battery that will last up to 18 hours. Available now for \$445.



The best smartwatch in 2023

Now with five or more generations of smartwatches on the market, which is the best buy? Apple Watches only work with iPhones, while Android Wear OS devices operate with both iOS and Android phones. The best smartwatches generally cost between \$300 and \$400 and compared to budget smartwatches which cost between \$100 and \$250, these pricier devices have advanced communications, music and fitness features. They also often include perks like onboard GPS tracking, music storage and NFC which budget devices generally don't. Battery wise, you can expect two full days from Apple Watches but newer Android watches using the Snapdragon Wear 3100 processor support extended battery modes that promise up to five days of battery life on a single charge. Best all-round smartwatch is the water-resistant Samsung Galaxy 5 with a more durable screen and refined curvature making the Watch 5 more resilient and reliable. The Galaxy 5 offers the most comprehensive fitness and health tracking, including body composition analysis on Wear OS and the company has added a sleep coaching feature this year that will help guide you towards better rest. The Galaxy 5 smartwatch is available in 2 sizes, 40 and 44mm from \$299.



Get the feeling

Carnegie Mellon University has created a display that can protrude screen areas in different ways that can be stacked under an OLED panel to create protrusions that can be inflated and deflated with fluid on demand. This could add a new tactile dimension for things like pop-up media controls, keyboards and virtual gamepads you can find without fumbling around on the screen.