

Session title: How should our higher education institutions respond to innovations in new AI-based language processing software (like Chat GPT)?

Session type: Plenary Session

Main presenter(s): Sue Beckingham, Sheffield Hallam University

Co-presenter(s): Professor Peter Hartley, Visiting Professor Edge Hill University, Professor Dawne Irving-Bell, BPP University, Mark Dawson, Coventry University

Session summary:

Education Development staff and units are already receiving enquiries from academics who are concerned about new AI-based language processing software (like Chat GPT) and more recent innovations from Microsoft and Google, using current internet search data. This session will summarise main issues and the most likely developments in this software before suggesting major steps which every institution could/should take to ensure that we take advantage of its considerable educational potential.

Session outline:

A leading expert on artificial intelligence (AI) and its application to learning, Donald Clark, suggests that the date of ChatGPT's official release:

"...will go down in history as the day a new wave of innovation around AI was given birth. This will change everything in learning." (1)

In its own words:

"ChatGPT can understand, generate and respond to human language. It is a sophisticated technology that can help in various applications like chatbot and other language generation tasks." (2)

ChatGPT became the fastest-growing software application of all time, immediately generating media headlines such as: "Goodbye homework" (The Telegraph) and "AI bot ChatGPT stuns academics with essay-writing skills" (The Guardian)

Academics are running pilots/trials (3) and have already demonstrated that ChatGPT can:

- Write assignments and reports (which can be adapted to communicate to different levels of audience) and achieve pass grades at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. (4)
- Grade assignments against assessment criteria and produce an appropriate feedback report. (5)
- Write module specifications. (5)
- Produce lesson plans for specified topics. (5)
- Be a useful study aid (6)
- Construct several different drafts on a given topic. (6)
- Produce outlines for essays or reports. (6)
- Write working computer code. (7)

- Produce illustrations from a written description. (8)

ChatGPT's success and new products (such as Bing from Microsoft and the Bard from Google) raises fundamental questions about its use by students. Will they use it to enhance learning (as 'study buddy' or 'writer's assistant') or as a sophisticated plagiarism tool (which cannot yet be reliably detected by tools like Turnitin)?

This session will summarise main issues and the most likely developments in this software (9, 10) before suggesting major steps which every institution could/should take to ensure that we take advantage of its considerable educational affordances and potential "PedAlgogical" impact (11).

References:

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11. Clark, D. (2023) PedAlgogy – new era of knowledge and learning where AI changes everything. <http://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.com/2023/03/pedaigogy-new-era-of-knowledge-and.html>