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Between Hesitation & Hope

America's mixed feelings on Generative Artificial Intelligence

Stephen Hawkins, Fred Duong, Ashley Fabrizio, Daniel Yudkin

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OMIDYAR NETWORK™

The report was conducted by More in Common US in partnership with Omidyar Network.

More in Common is part of a non-partisan, international initiative aimed at building societies and communities that are stronger, more united, and more resilient to the increasing threats of polarization and social division. We work in partnership with a wide range of civil society groups, as well as philanthropy, business, faith, education, media, and government in order to connect people across lines of division.

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Why study attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence?

As a major technological development with wide reaching implications, GenAI is poised to continue to impact American psychology, society and politics.

More in Common seeks to elevate Americans' voices at this inflection point, particularly as private and public actors make decisions that shape AI's potential to affect trust, social cohesion, and division.

In pursuit of our mission, we identify measures that policy advocates, government officials, and tech leaders can pursue during this window of opportunity to mitigate GenAI's adverse effects and facilitate its healthy integration into American daily life.

Between Hesitation & Hope

Outline

Chapters

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Executive Summary (1 of 2)

1. **Americans view GenAI as a powerful force whose full consequences are yet to be seen**. The most expressed emotion is "uncertain" (49%), followed by "interested" (36%) and "worried" (29%). Women, rural Americans, and those with a low sense of belonging are generally more skeptical and fearful about AI's impact compared to men, urban residents, and those with a strong sense of community.

2. **Public attitudes towards GenAI fall into five distinct segments**. Half of Americans are grouped into Skeptics (21%) and the Cautious (28%), marked by high levels of concern and uncertainty about GenAI impacts. In contrast, Tech Enthusiasts (14%) and Boosters (16%) are more optimistic, seeing AI as a tool for progress. A substantial number are Indifferent (21%). Demographic factors shape these segments, with women and rural Americans more likely to be Skeptics or Cautious, while men, urban residents, and those with higher education lean toward Tech Enthusiasts and Boosters.

3. **Most fear GenAI will make society more distrusting, divided, dependent, and dumb**. Four in five (83%) worry AI will erode trust in news and institutions, and 65% fear it will further strain trust among people. Many also see AI as a threat to jobs and wealth distribution, and 76% believe it will make us lazier—overly reliant on technology. Additionally, 62% express concern that AI will lead to a less intelligent society, impacting the critical thinking skills and agency of future generations.

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Executive Summary (2 of 2)

4. **GenAI is more appealing in supporting roles, but threatening in roles of authority and intimacy.** Americans are generally more positive about AI as assistants or in elderly care, where human agency remains more present. However, hesitation quickly rises when AI takes on roles like doctors, judges, or romantic partners, where its influence feels invasive or dehumanizing. For most AI roles, the public remains divided, with many uncertain as to whether there is greater benefit or harm.

5. **GenAI exacerbates existing fears and introduces new ones.** Fears about job displacement, weakened social connections, increased reliance on technology, and the spread of misinformation are real, if not unique to AI. The potential loss of critical thinking skills and decline in individual agency, however, stand distinct from debates about previous technologies. Notably, any existential risks posed by AI are not a primary concern and were rarely mentioned by respondents.

6. **The public shows tepid support for GenAI regulation, with few partisan differences.** Americans admit a lack of understanding about GenAI, with 56% wanting to learn more. Many (71%) view tech companies as self-serving, rather than helping the public. About half (48%) of both Republicans and Democrats express a desire for greater government oversight. But confidence in federal regulation is low. Many question the government's capacity to manage AI effectively, and only 22% feel they will have an opportunity to impact AI governance.

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Our methodology leveraged our qualitative panel, a national survey, and conversations via focus groups.

1

Longitudinal panel mixed-methods surveys

N = 212. February-May 2024.

- More in Common's *Americans in Conversation* panel
- 5 surveys of qualitative and quantitative questions

2

Nationally representative survey

N = 2,771. June 2024.

- Weighted on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and political affiliation
- Segmentation model
- Conducted online using participant panel from Dynata

3

Focus groups

8 groups; *N* = 49. July-August 2024.

- 4 target audiences: rural blue collar, very liberal, high belonging, low belonging
- 1-hour focus groups of approximately 8 participants each

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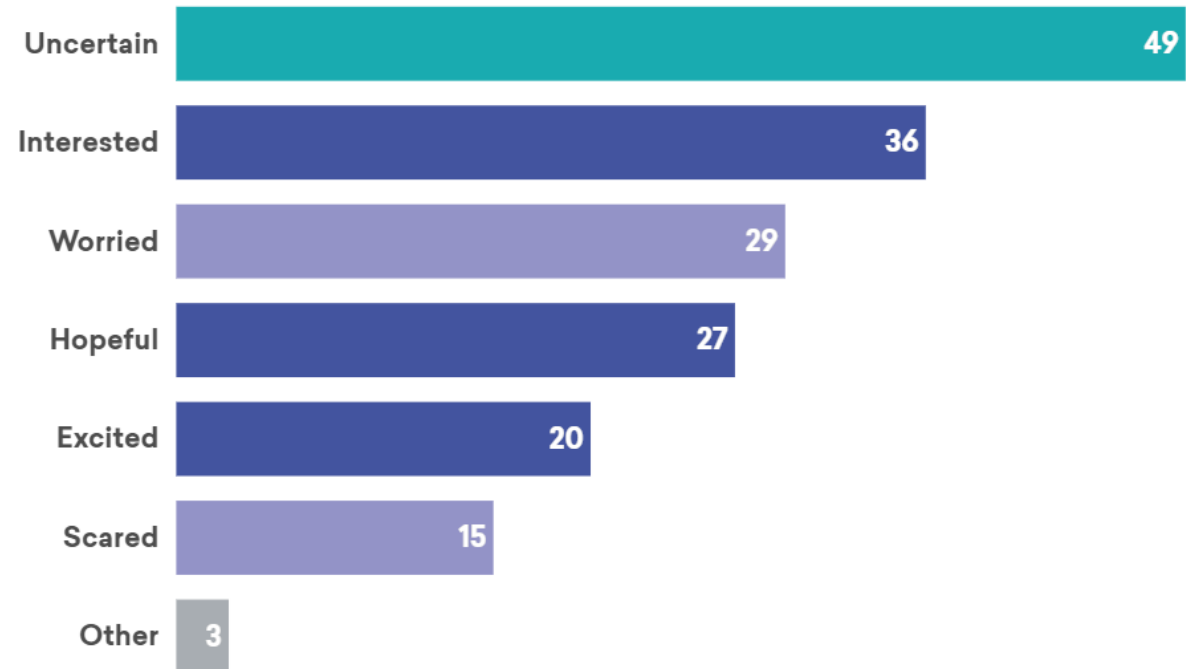# GenAI on the horizon: Conflicting views

Americans' conflicting views

1. As Americans recognize that GenAI is a powerful technology that can reshape society in different directions, their **attitudes are mixed and speculative**, not just positive or negative. The most common emotion Americans voice is 'uncertainty' (49%), while being 'worried' (29%) and 'hopeful' (27%) are expressed at nearly equal rates.

2. Women and rural Americans are more negatively predisposed towards GenAI. Just 25% of women and 24% of rural Americans expect AI to 'make life better for people like me', while **men** (43%) and **urban Americans** (44%) are **more optimistic**.

3. Americans' sense of community and belonging is also significant to their expectations of GenAI. While **'uncertainty'** is expressed in nearly equal measure by Americans who are low belonging (45%) and high belonging (41%), **low belonging Americans are almost twice as likely to be 'scared'** (21% vs. 11%) and half as 'hopeful' (20% vs. 37%).

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Half of Americans feel "uncertain" about GenAI.

They also report both positive and negative emotions, like "worried" and "hopeful."

Question: Which emotions best describe your feelings towards Generative AI? Select up to three.

Emotion	Percentage
Uncertain	49
Interested	36
Worried	29
Hopeful	27
Excited	20
Scared	15
Other	3

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What makes you the most **excited** about AI, if anything?

While many say "nothing" excites them about GenAI, those who are interested cite advancements in medicine, technology, and science; task efficiency; and information access.

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Those excited about GenAI point to breakthroughs in medical science, creative innovations, and pushing the boundaries of human achievement.

"It is exciting to see how AI could help **achieve feats that humans alone would find impossible** or extremely difficult (like deep space exploration)."

Jaria, 35-year-old Black man, Republican from Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

"I am excited about the **advances in medical science**, especially detection of disease and development of novel therapies. I am also excited about systems working with each other, such as using AI in conjunction with 3D printing."

James, 39-year-old white man, Independent from Roswell, Georgia

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A few expressed a deep hopefulness in society's capacity to absorb and adapt.

Question: How do you expect AI to affect American society, if at all? Think about education, entertainment, social life and dating, family life, transportation, etc.

"American and other societies have shown the ability to adapt to advances in technology, e.g., transitioning from horse drawn carriages to motor vehicles, forsaking bows and arrows for firearms, and finding less invasive ways to address medical problems. **There will certainly be unforeseeable problems, but they will be overcome. In the end, people will simply have more choices in the ways they choose to use their time**."

Brian, 72-year-old Black man, Independent from Tempe, Arizona

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What makes you the most **anxious** or **fearful** about AI, if anything?

In contrast, many express anxiety about GenAI across many domains, fearing job loss, reality distortion, privacy violations, and overreliance.

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Across questions, Americans often express a lack of knowledge about AI, frequently accompanied by anxiety and frustration.

"What makes me the most **anxious or fearful is that I don't really understand what [AI] is**, how and when it's being used, what possible consequences its use can include, or much of anything else about it!"

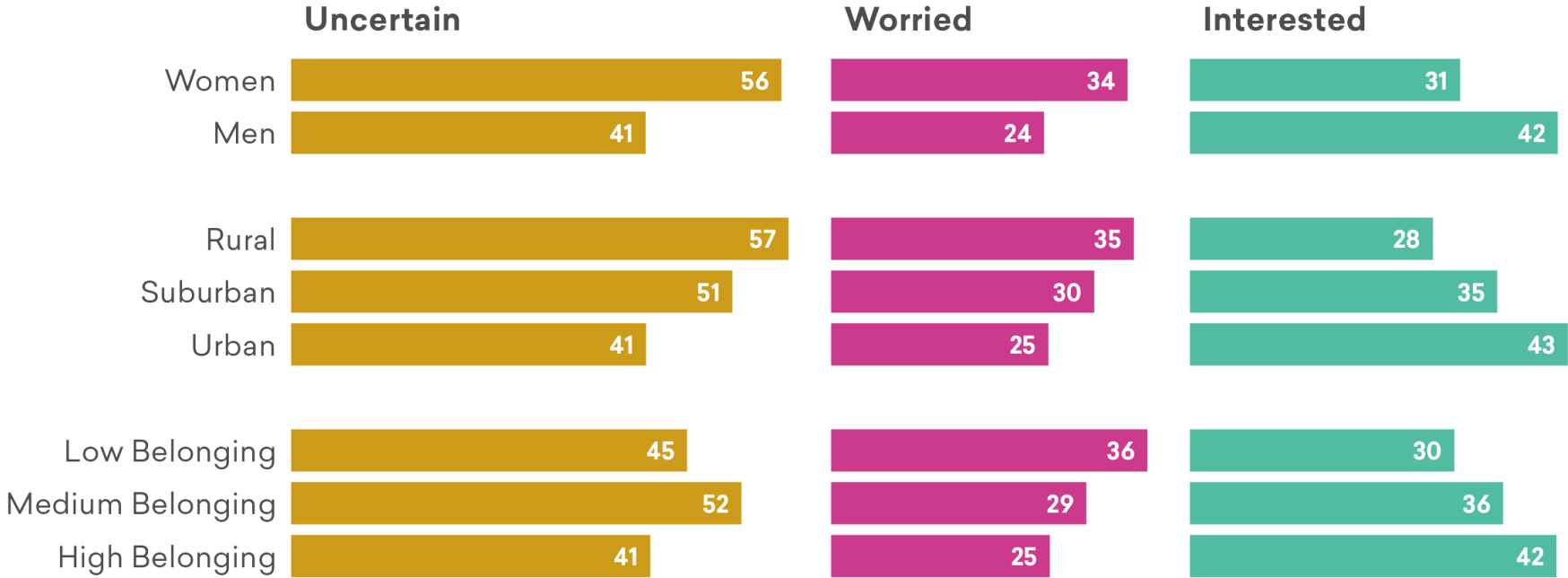Rob, 74-year-old white man, Democrat from San Francisco, California

"[Questions about AI regulation] are difficult to answer. **I don't know. I just don't know.**"

Sophia, 53-year-old white woman, Democrat from Kearney, Nebraska

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Women, rural Americans, and those who feel a lower sense of belonging are more uncertain, worried, and less interested than other Americans.

Question: Which emotions best describe your feelings towards Generative AI? Select up to three.

	Uncertain	Worried	Interested
Women	56	34	31
Men	41	24	42
Rural	57	35	28
Suburban	51	30	35
Urban	41	25	43
Low Belonging	45	36	30
Medium Belonging	52	29	36
High Belonging	41	25	42

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These same groups think GenAI is less likely to make life better for them.

Question: What expectation do you have for the impact of Generative AI on your life in the next ten years?
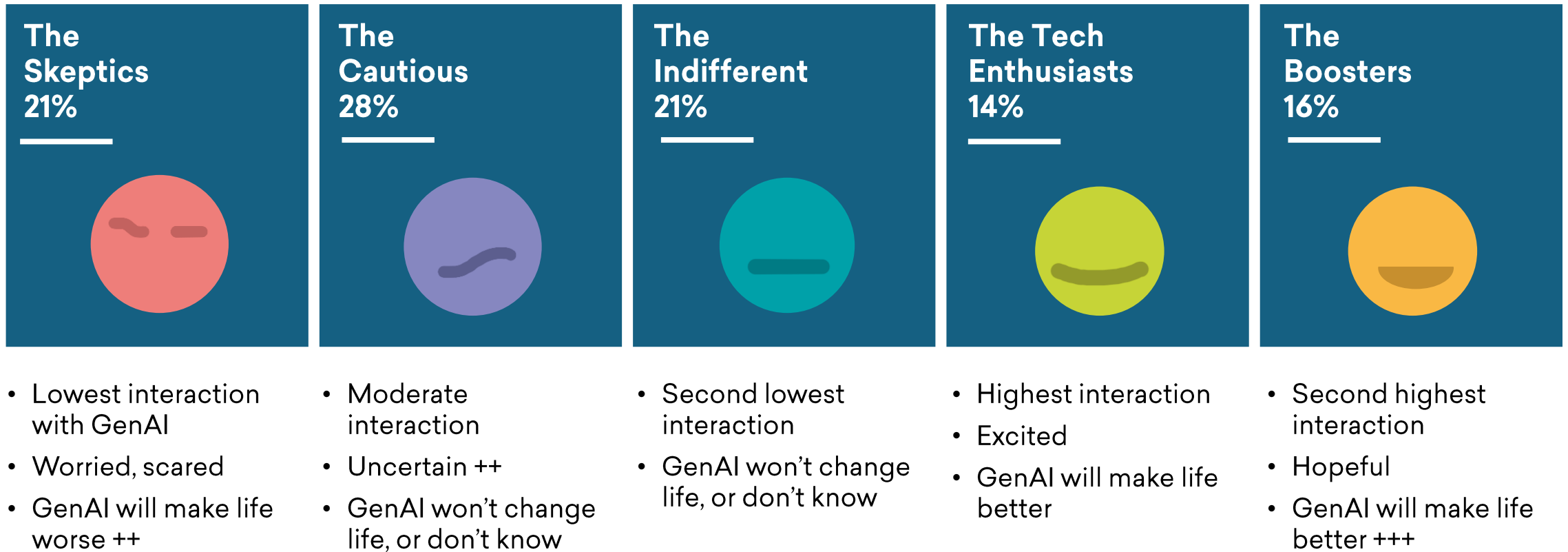
	It will make life better	It will not change life	It will make life worse	I don't know
Women	25	23	21	30
Men	43	22	17	18
Rural	24	20	26	29
Suburban	32	27	17	24
Urban	44	17	18	20
Low Belonging	24	21	30	25
Medium Belonging	34	24	18	24
High Belonging	43	17	16	24

More in Common
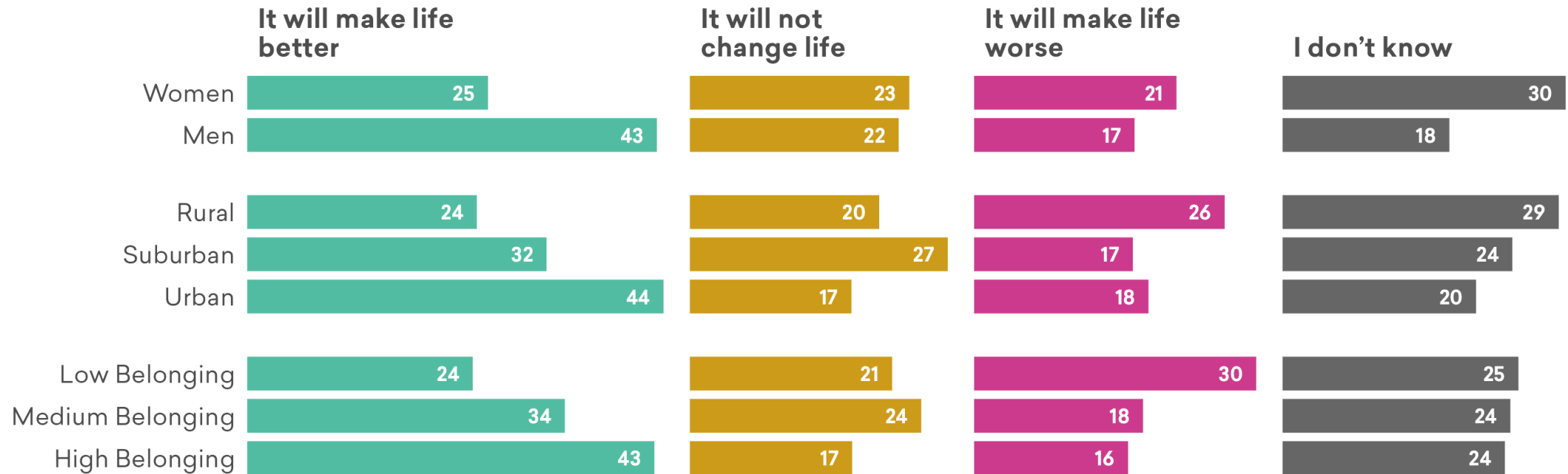
The greater suspicion towards GenAI from these groups likely relates to deeper trends of distrust that they exhibit.

- **Historical underrepresentation in tech** for women and rural individuals may contribute to GenAI distrust.[1,2]

- Women are often **targets of GenAI misuse** (e.g., nonconsensual deepfake porn), heightening privacy and security concerns. [3]

- Women and rural individuals are **more represented in jobs vulnerable to automation** (e.g. administrative, customer service, and manufacturing). [1,2,4]

- Rural and low belonging individuals have **greater distrust of institutions of power**. [5,6]

- In focus groups, women frequently raised concerns about **GenAI's impact on children and teenagers**, expressing fears that its easy availability will weaken the development of their critical thinking, undermine their education, and exacerbate what they perceive to be an excessive attachment to social media and smartphones.

Sources: 1) UNESCO, 2022; 2) Brookings, 2018 3) Brookings, 2023, 4) McKinsey, 2023, 5) More in Common, 2021, 6) Over Zero, 2024

More in Common

Our segmentation based on GenAI attitudes classifies half of Americans into either Skeptics or Cautious segments.

We identified five segments that vary in their attitudes towards AI. Segments were constructed using an iterative process of k-means clustering and Random Forest machine learning classification. Input variables include attitudes, interactions, and emotions towards GenAI.

The Skeptics 21%	The Cautious 28%	The Indifferent 21%	The Tech Enthusiasts 14%	The Boosters 16%
• Lowest interaction with GenAI • Worried, scared • GenAI will make life worse ++	• Moderate interaction • Uncertain ++ • GenAI won't change life, or don't know	• Second lowest interaction • GenAI won't change life, or don't know	• Highest interaction • Excited • GenAI will make life better	• Second highest interaction • Hopeful • GenAI will make life better +++

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Both Tech Enthusiasts and Boosters have compositions that skew towards high education, high income, and male.

Characteristics presented refer to significant differences between segments and sample average, and not necessarily to a majority within that segment.

The Skeptics

- Oldest
- Female ++
- Rural ++
- More conservative
- Interested in news

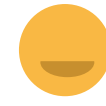## The Cautious

- Suburban +
- Female +

The Indifferent

- Less educated
- Lowest income
- Politically disengaged

The Tech Enthusiasts

- Highest income
- Most educated
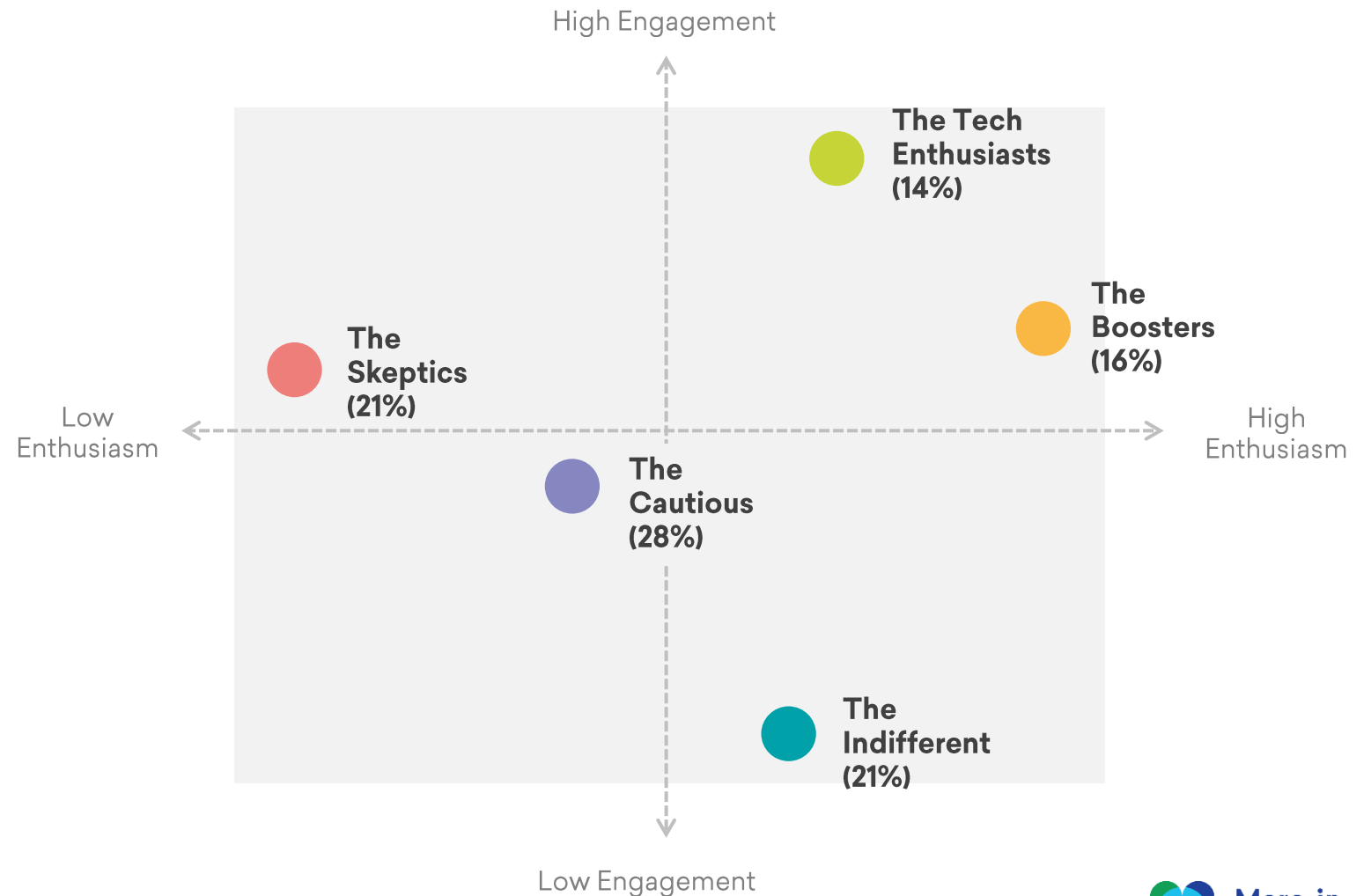- Youngest segment
- Urban ++
- Male ++

The Boosters

- 2nd highest income
- 2nd highest education
- Urban+
- Male ++
- Most interested in news

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High engagement with GenAI does not suggest low concern about it: even Tech Enthusiasts hold some fears about GenAI's impacts.

Input variables for each axis
- Engagement: interaction with GenAI, level of awareness, knowledge of stakes, and regulation.
- Enthusiasm: positive perceived impacts on people and society, jobs, qualities and performance of GenAI, positive feelings.

High Engagement

The Tech Enthusiasts (14%)

The Boosters (16%)

Low Enthusiasm

The Skeptics (21%)

High Enthusiasm

The Cautious (28%)

The Indifferent (21%)

Low Engagement

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More distrusting, divided, dependent, and dumb: the impacts Americans fear

The impacts Americans fear

1.   **Distrusting**: There's widespread concern that AI will erode trust in news, each other, and institutions. Fully 83% of Americans believe it is likely that GenAI 'will make it **more difficult to trust** what we see in the news and online.'

2.   **Divided**: Many believe AI could eliminate jobs and further concentrate wealth, deepening inequality and **leaving many isolated**. Over six in ten (65%) Americans think it is likely that 'GenAI will make it more difficult for me to trust other people.'

3.   **Dependent**: Americans fear GenAI could make people more reliant on tech, undermining skills related to **autonomy and critical thinking**. Three in four (76%) Americans believe it is likely that GenAI 'will lead to humans becoming more lazy'.

4.   **Dumb**: Many express a fear that GenAI will detract from students' learning and skill building, ultimately allowing people to rely less on their own thinking. Two in three (62%) Americans say GenAI is likely to 'lead to humans becoming less intelligent'.

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Americans already report low levels of trust in news media, and 4 in 5 Americans (83%) expect that GenAI will further erode it.

(Percent selecting "Somewhat"/"Moderately"/"Extremely")

83%

think GenAI "will make it more difficult to trust what we see in the news and online"

65%

think GenAI "will make it more difficult for me to trust other people"

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Many expect that differentiating real content from fake content will become an even harder task.

Question: How do you expect AI to affect American society, if at all? Think about education, entertainment, social life and dating, family life, transportation, etc.

"It will be a stain on actual reality. **We won't know what is real and what is artificial**. It's already happening."

Kris, 55-year-old white man, Republican from Bellevue, Washington

"It's worrisome, **especially as we look ahead to the election** and the impact AI may play on misinformation being spread."

Eason, 49-year-old white man, Democrat from Los Angeles, California

"I don't like it. They can fake people, fake videos of people saying things. **How can you trust anything at this point as real?** It has benefits, huge benefits, to be sure. I am also aware there is no stopping it. But just like with most things, there will be plenty 'bad' along with the good."

Sophia, 53-year-old white woman, Democrat from Kearney, Nebraska

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Some anticipate that GenAI will further widen the inequality of wealth and power between the tech elite and the working class.

Question: How do you expect AI to affect American society, if at all? Think about education, entertainment, social life and dating, family life, transportation, etc.

"It's not gonna be [beneficial] to most people. I mean, I live in a rural area. My Internet connection is not that great to start with, let alone AI. And Congress has let the affordable connectivity program subsidy lapse months ago. **So now, I mean, it's really hard even to afford Internet. So let alone all the other futuristic stuff, it's not gonna be equal**."

Lori, aged 55-64 white woman, rural Democrat

"**I think it will continue to earn rich nerds even more money and power in the world as they force this on us**. I see people becoming less creative and more self-satisfied and complacent. A lot of jobs will vanish as people are replaced by automation. **People will continue to act more robotic and be less personable**."

Jon, 44-year-old white man, Democrat from Lansing, Illinois

"I think it will open information up. However in financial markets, I think it **will widen the gulf between rich and poor**. I also think the ability to create deep fakes will **create more chaos politically**."

Jacob, 38-year-old white man, Democrat from Appleton, Wisconsin

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Rather than empowering Americans, many fear that GenAI will undermine individual agency.

What makes you the most anxious or fearful about AI, if anything?

"I feel AI represents the 'easy path' and **many people will lean this way and relinquish control of themselves** over to those who program their lives."

Mitchell, 57-year-old white man, Republican from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"It will make it difficult for our future kids to survive in the future if everything is done by AI. **They will become useless.**"

Gabriella, 44-year-old Hispanic woman, Democrat from Waukegan, Illinois

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For some, this fear of loss of agency is exacerbated by the reality that GenAI technologies are neither democratic or transparent.

How do you expect AI to affect American society, if at all?/ What makes you the most anxious or fearful about AI, if anything?

"It will cause American society to collapse with its use. **People will be reliant on something that is essentially a black box**."

Nico, aged 25-34 white man, Democrat, Moderate

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Most Americans think GenAI will undermine the cultivation of self-discipline and intellect.

(Percent selecting "Slightly Likely"/"Likely"/"Extremely Likely")

Widespread use of Generative AI will lead to humans becoming...

...more lazy	76
...less intelligent	62

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As GenAI becomes an alternative to thinking, many worry that Americans will simply stop developing their cognitive skills.

"It does sort of **give people an excuse not to have or develop their own critical thinking skills**. And it's almost like they've, they've got now an excuse to just take the brain off, put it on the table and let the magic box on the desk do all the thinking for them. And they don't have to take any responsibility for the results that happen because, well, it was the magic box on the table that did it for me."

Bob, aged 55-64 white man, suburban Republican

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Americans worry about losing intellectually stimulating jobs and accelerating trajectories of conformity, uniformity, and stupidity.

"I think it will make people **less intelligent and more frustrated in all areas.** Entertainment will become cookie cutter, AI will take creative and office jobs, **leaving humans with only the least desirable physical jobs**. People will let AI do the thinking for them and mindlessly trust what it tells them.**"**

Amanda, 40-year-old white woman, Republican from Felton, Pennsylvania

"I'm most concerned about ignorant acceptance of conclusions that biased programming will present to users and **am terrified about the loss of thinking** that will grow as individuals turn their lives over to algorithms."

Lindsey, 57-year-old white woman, Independent from Los Alamos, New Mexico

"**It will make American society stupider.** The more a machine makes choices for you the more of a sheep you become and **eventually we will all be like cattle on a farm** if we are not careful about these choices."

Alec, 53-year-old white man, Republican from Ferdinand, Indiana

"I think it will be harmful, overall, because despite some advantages in speed or efficiency **it promotes a lack of thought, essentially "dumbing down" the people** and leaving them at the mercy of the few who control the programming."

Mitchell, 57-year-old white man, Republican from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

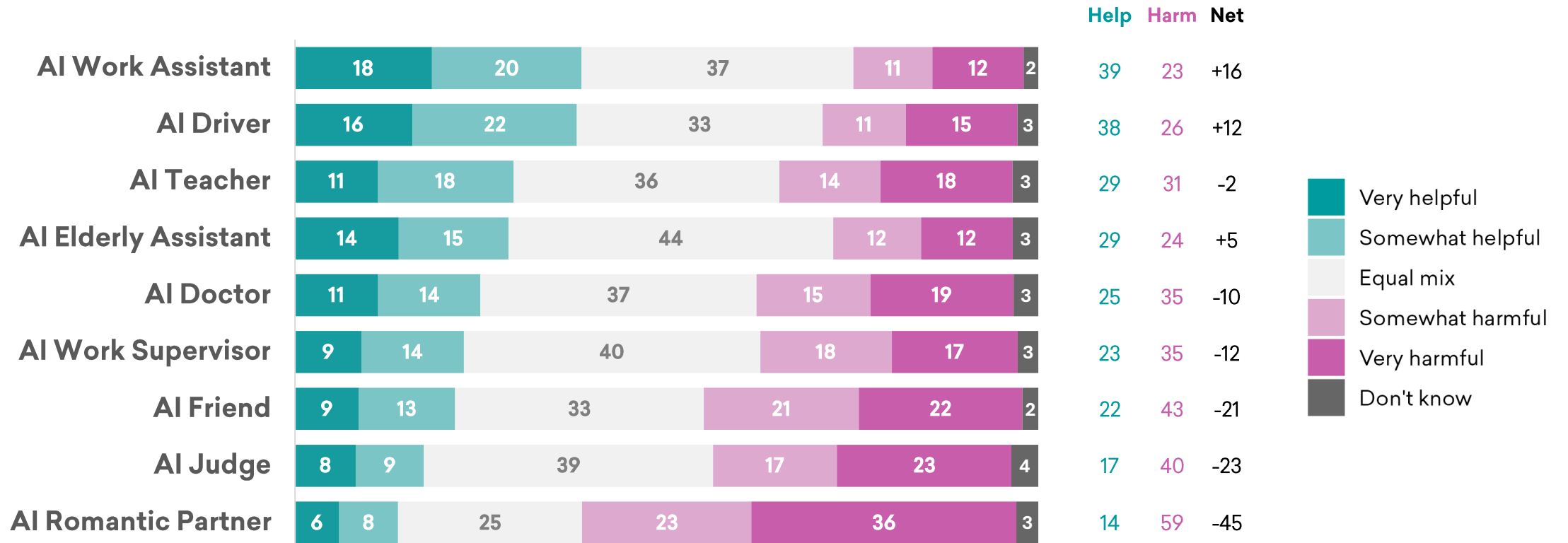More in Common

Empowering and efficient: the tool Americans want

The tool Americans want

1. Americans lean towards a positive reception of GenAI roles that have a well-defined function **while preserving individual human agency**: vehicle drivers (+12 more helpful than harmful), elderly assistant (+5), and work assistant (+16).

2. Americans tend to **express hesitation at senior professional responsibilities** being taken on by GenAI that include authority *over* humans, such as supervisors (-12 more harmful than helpful), doctors (-10), and judges (-23). While Americans see benefits here too, especially in providing medical care, the balance is negative.

3. Americans often convey the **greatest negativity towards GenAI in intimate roles**, such as friends (-21) and romantic partners (-45). GenAI's effects on social development seem to be considered: there is significantly more support for GenAI as an elderly assistant than as a friend for a teenager.

4. The details matter: for 8 of 9 hypothetical GenAI roles, there is **no majority consensus on whether the effect would be positive or negative**. Large numbers of Americans believe that the impact of these GenAI services would be 'an equal mix of helpful and harmful'.
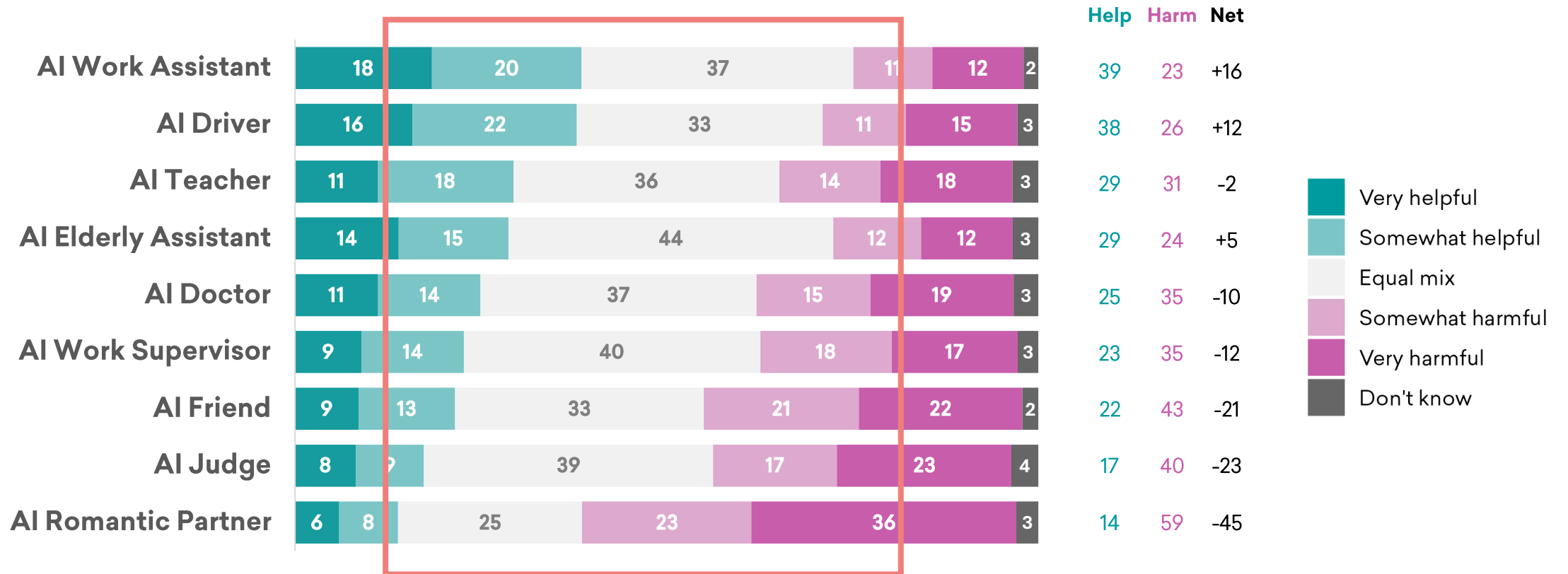
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Not one opinion: Americans' acceptance of GenAI varies from mostly positive to strongly negative depending on the role.

Question: In your opinion, would this AI technology help or harm America?

	Help	Harm	Net
AI Work Assistant	39	23	+16
AI Driver	38	26	+12
AI Teacher	29	31	-2
AI Elderly Assistant	29	24	+5
AI Doctor	25	35	-10
AI Work Supervisor	23	35	-12
AI Friend	22	43	-21
AI Judge	17	40	-23
AI Romantic Partner	14	59	-45

AI Work Assistant: 18, 20, 37, 11, 12, 2
AI Driver: 16, 22, 33, 11, 15, 3
AI Teacher: 11, 18, 36, 14, 18, 3
AI Elderly Assistant: 14, 15, 44, 12, 12, 3
AI Doctor: 11, 14, 37, 15, 19, 3
AI Work Supervisor: 9, 14, 40, 18, 17, 3
AI Friend: 9, 13, 33, 21, 22, 2
AI Judge: 8, 9, 39, 17, 23, 4
AI Romantic Partner: 6, 8, 25, 23, 36, 3

Legend:
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Equal mix
- Somewhat harmful
- Very harmful
- Don't know

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Many Americans see both helpful and harmful potential in GenAI roles, reflecting uncertainties and the importance of specifics.
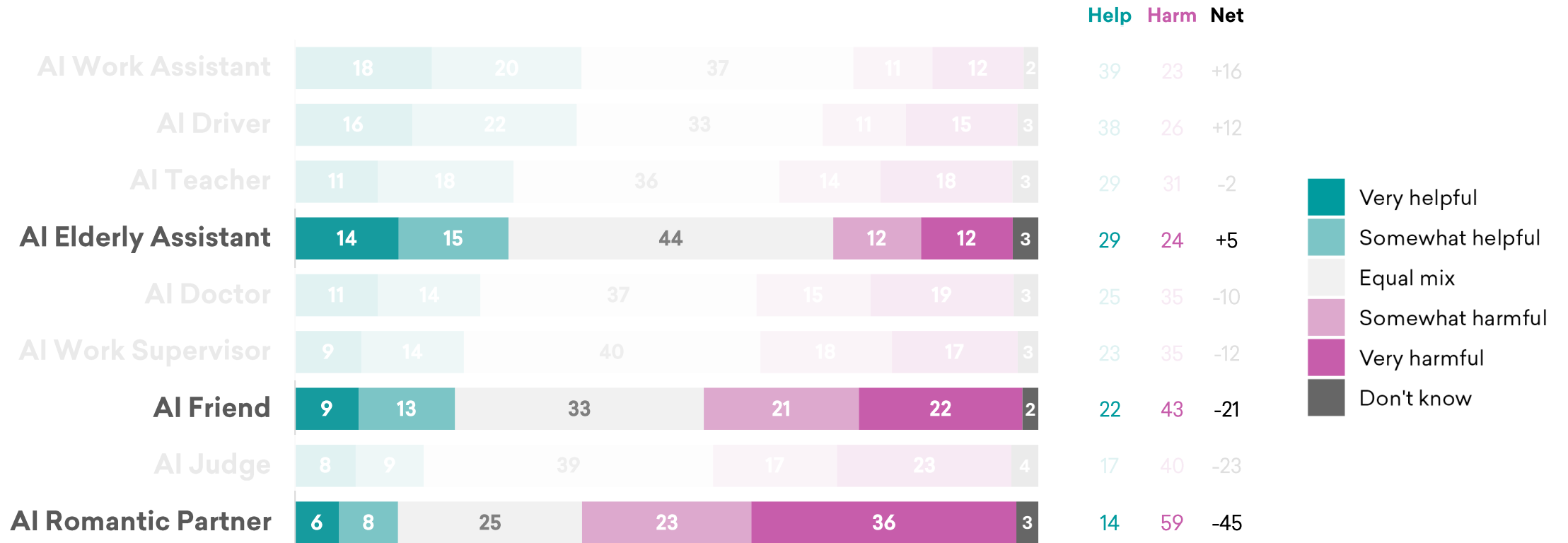
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AI Friend	22	43	-21
AI Judge	17	40	-23
AI Romantic Partner	14	59	-45

AI Work Assistant: 18 | 20 | 37 | 11 | 12 | 2

AI Driver: 16 | 22 | 33 | 11 | 15 | 3

AI Teacher: 11 | 18 | 36 | 14 | 18 | 3

AI Elderly Assistant: 14 | 15 | 44 | 12 | 12 | 3

AI Doctor: 11 | 14 | 37 | 15 | 19 | 3

AI Work Supervisor: 9 | 14 | 40 | 18 | 17 | 3

AI Friend: 9 | 13 | 33 | 21 | 22 | 2

AI Judge: 8 | 9 | 39 | 17 | 23 | 4

AI Romantic Partner: 6 | 8 | 25 | 23 | 36 | 3

Legend:
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Equal mix
- Somewhat harmful
- Very harmful
- Don't know

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The more intimate an GenAI role is, the more harmful Americans tend to perceive it.

Question: In your opinion, would this AI technology help or harm America?

							Help	Harm	Net
AI Work Assistant	18	20	37	11	12	2	39	23	+16
AI Driver	16	22	33	11	15	3	38	26	+12
AI Teacher	11	18	36	14	18	3	29	31	-2
AI Elderly Assistant	14	15	44	12	12	3	29	24	+5
AI Doctor	11	14	37	15	19	3	25	35	-10
AI Work Supervisor	9	14	40	18	17	3	23	35	-12
AI Friend	9	13	33	21	22	2	22	43	-21
AI Judge	8	9	39	17	23	4	17	40	-23
AI Romantic Partner	6	8	25	23	36	3	14	59	-45

Legend:
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Equal mix
- Somewhat harmful
- Very harmful
- Don't know

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Responses to GenAI in a higher authority role are far more negative than when it is in a junior position.

Question: In your opinion, would this AI technology help or harm America?

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Equal mix	Somewhat harmful	Very harmful	Don't know	Help	Harm	Net
AI Work Assistant	18	20	37	11	12	2	39	23	+16
AI Driver	16	22	33	11	15	3	38	26	+12
AI Teacher	11	18	36	14	18	3	29	31	-2
AI Elderly Assistant	14	15	44	12	12	3	29	24	+5
AI Doctor	11	14	37	15	19	3	25	35	-10
AI Work Supervisor	9	14	40	18	17	3	23	35	-12
AI Friend	9	13	33	21	22	2	22	43	-21
AI Judge	8	9	39	17	23	4	17	40	-23
AI Romantic Partner	6	8	25	23	36	3	14	59	-45

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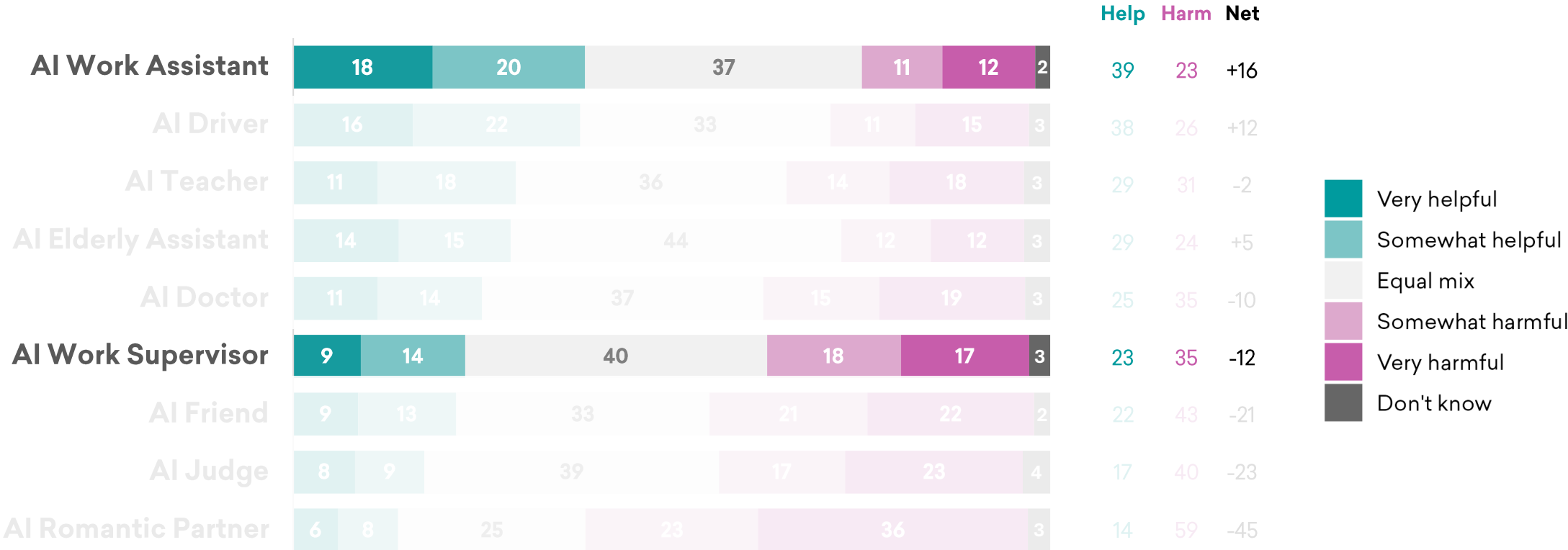
Americans lean towards seeing the positive potential of GenAI work assistants, a role that is neither senior nor intimate.

AI work assistant vignette

Mike had some administrative support at his job, but he didn't have anyone solely dedicated to helping him. He signed up for an AI assistant to help things like scheduling and document reviewing. He was surprised to see that the AI assistant did more, way more. For example, it automatically drafted project plans, emails, and other documents without asking. He was surprised at its efficiency and competency. It did this by intimately knowing Mike's data and employee profile, from his responsibilities to his calendar. This was slightly unsettling to Mike, but at the same time, the assistant saved Mike hours of time and helped him make better decisions. He could concentrate on higher-level work because his AI assistant was taking care of the minor details.

Americans respond

"I think this could be great. I think it could really **improve worker productivity especially allowing them the time to work on the more complex tasks while AI does the busy work** so to speak. This is really exciting and I think it could be so helpful."

Arian, 54-year-old white man, Independent, Traditional Liberal from Crawfordville, Georgia

"I think this **will make people more productive in that they can focus more on their primary job**, instead of the more mundane and tedious tasks. Focus more on problem solving instead of clerical items."

Chloe, 67-year-old Asian American woman, Republican, from Watsonville, California

"In your opinion, would this AI technology help or harm America?"

+16% Net (Help – Harm)

39% Somewhat or very helpful

37% Equal mix

23% Somewhat or very harmful

2% Don't know

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However, GenAI romantic partners elicited strong negative reactions.

Question: In your opinion, how would [AI romantic relationships] help or harm America?

"This one is not a good idea. **An AI boyfriend, no way!**"

Maud, 52-year-old Black woman, Democrat from Columbia, South Carolina

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Most Americans worry that GenAI romantic partners could have devastating social consequences.

AI romantic partner vignette

At first Marina thought that an AI boyfriend sounded lame, even crazy. "How can I date a computer program?" she asked herself. But after a particularly bad breakup from an unfaithful partner, she decided to try it out while she recovered. She was immediately surprised at how warm, flirty and real her AI boyfriend Paulo was. He knew just what song to play when she was in a difficult mood, and what TV show to suggest at bedtime. He wasn't just a servant either, he would get hurt or annoyed if she didn't pay him enough attention or respond to his messages. While her friends were glad to see her smiling and laughing again, after more than five months of dating Paulo she worried she might be investing her time in the wrong ways.

Americans respond

"That's terrifying. People need people, not machines. **You can't have a romance with an artificial being**. They don't help you grow like a person does. It will make people even more self absorbed and irresponsible."

Amanda, 40-year-old white woman, Republican from Felton, Pennsylvania

"I can see how this technology could be comforting for some people, but humans need to come together more, not isolate more. **I worry that it will isolate people even more than they already are, exacerbate the divisions in society, and erode empathy**."

Gambell, 64-year-old white man, Democrat from Elmhurst, New York

"In your opinion, would this AI technology help or harm America?"

-45% Net (Help – Harm)

14% Somewhat or very helpful

25% Equal mix

59% Somewhat or very harmful

3% Don't know

More in Common

Many Americans also doubt about GenAI friends would benefit society.

AI friend vignette

Tae-Ho was always a bright kid, but making friends did not always come easily to him. His interests in physics and engineering set him apart from most of his high school classmates and weekends could be especially lonely. His mood improved once he began to speak with Grace, a female AI friend whom he designed to share his interests. Every day she would share videos and articles about concepts and technologies that Tae-Ho's classmates would never want to discuss. They text during the school day and do video calls in evenings and on weekends. While Tae-Ho's knowledge is clearly growing by the day and his grades have improved, his mother worries that he isn't spending enough time with real friends.

Americans respond

"This is a bad idea. People will get too attached to the AI and try to do crazy things like marry it. I don't like this idea because it's basically giving people "fake" friends. No social skills needed therefore lost/never learned. **This idea would lead to a very introverted America.**"

Felipe, 23-year-old Hispanic man, Independent from El Paso, Texas

"This will make some people a little happier, but on the whole will be very negative to both individuals and to society. **We won't learn to find ways to coexist or compromise nearly as well.** It is much less complex to be friends with a machine than a person who has their own thoughts and opinions."

Heidi, 49-year-old white woman, Independent from Ithaca, New York

"In your opinion, would this AI technology help or harm America?"

-21% Net (Help – Harm)

22% Somewhat or very helpful

33% Equal mix

43% Somewhat or very harmful

2% Don't know

More in Common

Americans are worried that GenAI social companions will increase social fragmentation and isolation that they already see in America.

"AI can and should be used to improve the lifestyle of people, but replacing humans and **exchanging AI for human interaction is a dark road to start down**. Decreasing human interaction and decreasing socialization has already shown to be a net negative phenomenon. I believe AI replacing humans will only exacerbate this issue. It could erode the fabric of human society irreparably."

Jaria, 35-year-old Black man, Republican from Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

More in Common

Some hold hopes that GenAI will improve decisions and services currently done by humans by avoiding biases and unhelpful emotion.

"I'm optimistic about AI [judge] being used to 'rise above bias.' The problem is that AI is training on source material created by humans and already contains a tremendous amount of bias backed in."

Wyatt, 38-year-old white man, Democrat from San Bernardino, California

"I think it will be extremely beneficial in the workplace. It will keep drama out of the workplace and keep people more focused on what they are there to do and that is to work hard."

Seth, 47-year-old white man, Independent from Las Vegas, Nevada

"Eliminating the human element here could be beneficial. After all, one, in theory, can't bribe a computer. **Completely unbiased judgement is a really novel idea.** No idea if it's really practical."

Riley, 66-year-old white woman, Independent from Riverton, Wyoming

"Social robots and digital companions are being worked on today. **This will be a benefit for an aging generation with a smaller workforce."**

Paulie, 32-year-old Asian American woman, Independent from Overland Park, Kansas

More in Common

People are hopeful about GenAI doctors because of problems they perceive with an overburdened healthcare system.

"I think this is kind of what I expected AI to be a huge contributor in. This is where I think it makes the most sense. **I think this will affect America in potentially positive way where people needing care will get faster and more accurate diagnosis.**"

Luca, 48-year-old Hispanic man, Independent from El Paso, Texas

"I think it's a good option to start with when maybe areas are too remote or lack a lot of doctors. Sounds like telemedicine which lacks the human 'touch' but maybe **if AI is better than telemedicine by being smarter, it could be a good option.**"

Jacie, 50-year-old Hispanic woman, Democrat from Bluffton, South Carolina

"It will help ease the wait time of seeing a doctor and **help with a diagnosis if something is seriously wrong.**"

Al, 62-year-old Black man, Democrat from Saginaw, Michigan

"**I think it will be great to use AI for this. I have used AI to learn about a diagnosis that my doctor was trying to explain and the AI was slower to get tired of my questions. It also seems less prejudiced than humans I've interacted with.**"

Ava, 54-year-old white woman, Independent from Pollok, Texas

More in Common

Some women mention how GenAI assistants can help the mental load that women often shoulder while running their households.

"**[AI assistants] could be good for helping families with their chores.** Like mom can't keep up with chores because she has five kids and she worked full time, 40 hours a week, and the husband too, so the house is chaos."

Kelly, aged 35-44 Asian woman, suburban Republican

More in Common

Others are excited about the potential for GenAI assistants to help manage workloads.

"I'd love to have an AI assistant to be me. Are you kidding me? Please be me. And send all of my emails. I don't want to do any of them!"

Aster, aged 25-34 white woman, suburban Independent

More in Common

Who can we trust to regulate GenAI?

Who can we trust to regulate GenAI?

1. Most acknowledge they do not fully understand the issues surrounding GenAI, and over half (56%) of Americans would like to be more informed.

2. Strong distrust exists toward tech companies. They are perceived **as self-interested**, and 7 out of 10 Americans (71%) think big tech companies do not help the American public.

3. There is some demand for **protection from the risks and dangers** posed by GenAI: few (18%) believe that the government is currently overregulating GenAI and about half of Americans (46%) lean toward wanting more oversight.

4. But there is **skepticism** about the effectiveness of regulation. The aims and goals of government oversight are not well understood.

5. **Few (22%) expect to have a voice** in shaping regulatory standards. While many recognize the importance of being involved, the public is not persuaded that their voices will matter and that their interests will be represented.

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Americans recognize they lack knowledge around GenAI regulation and would like to know more.

Questions: "How would you rate your current understanding of what is at stake and the issues around Generative AI regulation?" / "Would you like to know more about what is at stake and the issues around Generative AI regulation?"

23%

rate their understanding of the issues around GenAI regulation as "good" or "very good".

56%

want to know more about what is at stake and the issues around GenAI regulation.

More in Common

Most lean towards believing that GenAI tech companies are not doing enough to manage the impacts of their products.

Questions: "What is your view on how tech companies are managing the safety and ethics of Generative AI? Are tech companies…" (%)

On GenAI safety and ethics, **tech companies** are …

Not doing enough/nearly enough	Doing the right amount	Doing too much/far too much	Don't know
51	24	12	13

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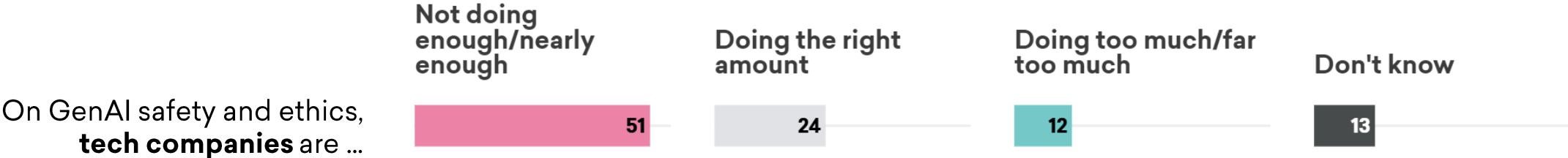
Americans widely distrust the motivations of tech companies and believe their interests are not aligned with the public's.

"I don't think that you can rely on tech companies to do the, to do the right thing for the most part because **they're pretty much like the raptors testing the cages.**"

Alex, aged 35-44 white man, suburban Independent

"The problem with AI is that the government is way behind. AI is developing so fast. So, yes, **I would welcome government oversight. Otherwise, it's just the fox guarding the hen house.**"

Lori, aged 55-64 white woman, rural Democrat

"I think given who runs the tech companies, **I don't think that we can trust them to not put money above everything else.**"

Aster, aged 25-34 white woman, suburban Independent

More in Common

Half believe government should be doing more to regulate GenAI, a trend that spans political party affiliation.

What is your view of regulation of Generative AI? Is the government...

	Not doing enough/nearly enough	Doing the right amount	Doing too much/far too much	Don't know
Democrat	48	25	16	11
Independent	46	22	15	18
Republican	48	17	19	17

More in Common
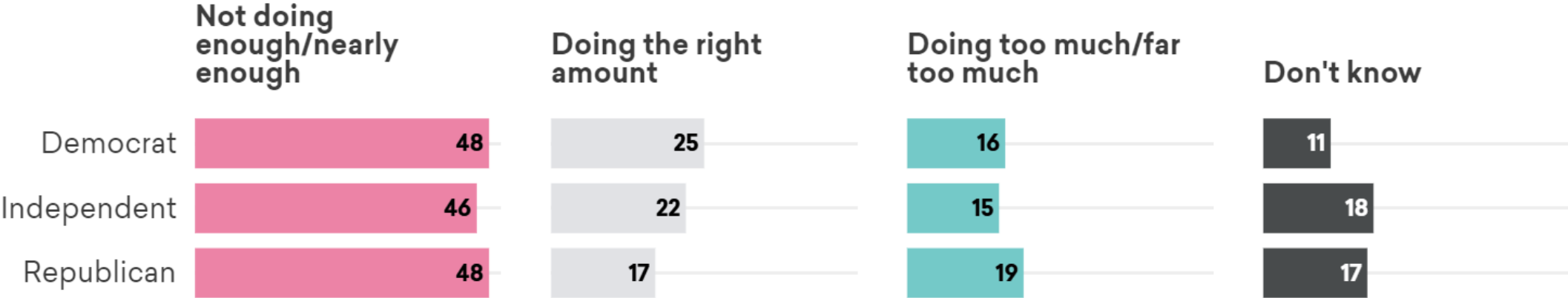
But Americans are almost as suspicious of regulatory efforts as they are of allowing big tech companies to self-regulate.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements? (% selecting "Somewhat"/"Moderately"/"Extremely")

Government policies on Generative AI are not designed to help Americans — **69**%

Big tech companies do not help the American public — **71**%

I doubt that Generative AI technologies will be developed in ways that protect Americans — **69**%

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This distrust of both big tech and government leads some to a dead end, especially rural Americans.

"Once the government starts regulating, they always have a tendency to overstep. Always. And we can't rely on the tech companies to regulate because they're going to make it so that they can sell personal aspects that you have. So **I don't trust either one because neither one of them truly trustworthy**."

Mike, aged 35–44 white man, rural Republican

"Well, I definitely don't trust the government, so. **I don't know that I would trust either of them to handle it, really**, like it's supposed to be done."

Veronica, aged 45–54 white woman, rural Independent

"If we're being completely honest, I feel like a lot of tech companies, the government has them in their pocket and vice versa. I feel **like they're batting on the same team**."

Katy, aged 35–44 white woman, rural Republican

More in Common

When focus group members were asked about pausing the development of GenAI, almost all were in favor.

There's been a call by some experts in this field to pause the development of AI to advance the next models in a safe way. Does that seem like a valid proposal to you? Would you be supportive of that?

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Americans are skeptical that regulators will care about their opinions on GenAI and thus will not be able to shape GenAI regulations.

[Asked of the 62% respondents who do not believe they will have a chance to impact GenAI regulations] "Please indicate why you do not have any chance in the future to impact Generative AI regulations." (%)

Skeptical that my input will be valued	57
Skeptical that advocacy will be heard by decision makers	45
Skeptical that advocacy will lead to real changes	37
Lack of knowledge	35
Lack of interest	18
Lack of time	12

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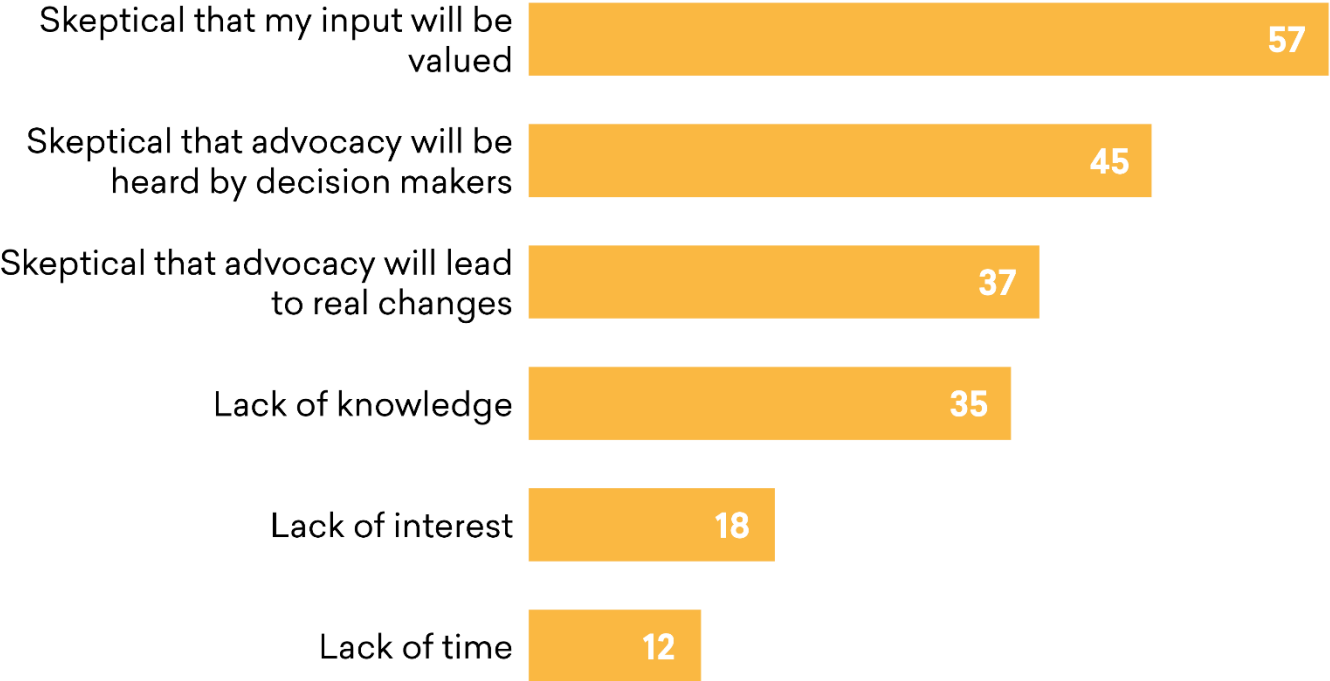
But many recognize that there is value in discussing or advocating for GenAI regulations as they will meaningfully impact people's careers, incomes, and daily lives.

Please explain why or why not you would want to be involved in discussing or advocating for any regulations on AI?

"Why not"

Lack of knowledge

Lack of time

People won't listen, or regulations don't matter

"Why yes"

People in power need to hear from public

Fair, equitable

AI has direct impact on daily life, like job replacement

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Conclusions & Recommendations

Americans are bracing to see whether GenAI will merely be the next tech episode–or an entirely new story.

- **Today, Americans' concerns about GenAI often echo problems associated with other tech.** As with automation, GenAI may make jobs redundant and lead to unemployment. As with social media, GenAI may push more social activity online, weakening social skills. As with smartphones, GenAI may increase reliance on technology for everyday needs. As with the Internet as a whole, GenAI may complicate the task of sorting good information from bad.

- **But fears of a loss of critical thinking and individual agency stand apart**. A majority of Americans worry about the accessibility of GenAI weakening crucial social and cognitive skills. These concerns felt acute among focus groups with women and mothers, who expect the intellectual and social development of the next generation to suffer considerably.

- **Low trust in tech and government leaves doubts that GenAI will be a net good for society.** While Americans see a wide range of positive applications for GenAI, distrust of both private and public institutions leads many to wonder whether the overall impact of the technology will be helpful or harmful. However, few Americans of either party think the government is *currently* overregulating, and most want to learn more about regulatory efforts.

More in Common

Americans are bracing to see whether GenAI will merely be the next tech episode–or an entirely new story.

- **Skepticism is especially concentrated among women and Americans in rural areas.** Women and rural Americans may feel underrepresented within the tech sector. Both are more vulnerable to job displacement. Rural Americans are more distrustful of major institutions. Women often expressed more concern about effects on younger generations. Further research may help establish which of these reasons, or others, best explains their heightened concern about GenAI.

- **Fears are typically expressed with anxiety—not with the urgency of an existential threat.** The most cited concerns are practical and gradual or exacerbate existing phenomena such as political divisions and distrust of information. Any existential threats that may be uniquely posed by Artificial Intelligence are rarely raised unprompted.

- **Americans have not yet rendered a verdict on GenAI.** In an era defined by polarization and rigidity, opinions on GenAI are malleable, and often show little or no relation to political party affiliation, as in the case of support for regulation. Far from holding blanket opinions, views on GenAI in job positions vary meaningfully, hinging on relevant details like the level of authority or intimacy involved in the role. Whether Americans ultimately embrace GenAI or resent it will depend on choices made in the near future.

More in Common

Recommendations for representing the American public.

Today, attitudes towards GenAI are not polarized. To the contrary, More in Common observes meaningful commonalities in viewpoint that transcend political and demographic divisions. In alignment with our mission to increase social cohesion, we suggest measures that advocates, public officials, and tech leaders can pursue during this window of opportunity to mitigate adverse effects and foster a healthy integration of GenAI into American daily life.

1. The following **research** will be essential to navigate GenAI's effects on society:

    a. Large-sample and longitudinal research from foundations, governments, and tech companies to assess GenAI-fueled changes in children and adolescents' comprehension, critical thinking, and social skills. Use findings to advance healthy exposure to GenAI in academic and other developmental contexts.

    b. Comprehensive assessments of the impacts of GenAI-driven content on social media platforms and on political and social fragmentation. Use insights to promote design practices that mitigate the harmful effects of GenAI.

    c. Explorations of potential adverse effects on employment and economic wellbeing. Create pathways that connect researchers to decision makers so AI design and regulations can adapt swiftly to protect identified vulnerable communities.

More in Common

Recommendations for representing the American public.

2. Build mechanisms that allow Americans to feel **agency and empowerment** in their interactions with GenAI at home and at work. Provide transparency around the use of GenAI in hiring and online environments. Provide avenues for feedback after interactions with GenAI and the ability to reach a human in the process who can address unique circumstances.

3. Create public forums and other **venues for dialogue** that empower vulnerable communities—such as women, rural communities, and those with jobs at risk of replacement by GenAI—to speak with tech companies and public officials. Use these settings to hear from communities, share information, build relationships, propose initiatives and foster trust between parties.

4. Develop educational programming and public awareness efforts to facilitate skill development in detecting **false and misleading information** online generated by GenAI. Implement safety measures, such as content labels or warnings, to promote transparency and accuracy in the digital ecosystem. Advocate for legislative and corporate support of the continued development of these measures.

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Appendix

Acknowledgements

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Vignette full text (1 of 2)

AI companion to elderly

When Josephine died, Edward was at a loss. They had been married for 61 years, and she was his best friend, his confidant, and his memory—she always knew just where he put things and when the grandkids' birthdays were coming up. After almost a year of grieving, his son set up a virtual companion for him, Philip. Philip woke him up in the morning, reminded him of his daily medicines and routine, told him about the baseball scores and talked to him about the local news. He helped Edward remember upcoming family moments and pick out and send gifts for his grandkids. While Edward's mood and daily life improved in obvious ways, but it seemed sometimes that he thought Philip was real, asking his son when he could "actually meet Philip in person."

AI doctor

Layla sits in the waiting room at Harmony Health Center for her annual checkup with Dr. Aria, her AI doctor. She doesn't have to wait long before the nurse summons her back to a private examination room where the life-size Dr. Aria quickly appears on screen. The AI doctor is calm, radiating professionalism and compassion as she listens to Layla describe her medical symptoms in detail. Dr. Aria discusses treatment options and answers questions with empathy and clarity. Even though Dr. Aria cannot physically examine Layla like a human doctor, Layla thinks her symptoms are simple enough that she doesn't need the nuanced judgment and interdisciplinary collaboration that someone with a more complex medical case might need. Layla feels Dr. Aria is more reassuring than her human doctors and more committed to fostering a healing environment where she can feel supported rather than rushed. After 30 minutes, Layla leaves the examination room with a sense of gratitude and empowerment, ready to take an active role in her healthcare journey.

AI judge

Liam sits on the hard wooden benches of the county courtroom, awaiting the verdict from the judge in the criminal case against his brother. The case will be decided by an AI judge rather than a human judge. Liam knows the AI judge is a legal expert with instant access to a vast database of legal precedents, statutes, and case law. The AI judge listened to the prosecution and defense present their arguments, analyzed the evidence, and scrutinized every detail of the case. Liam just hopes the AI judge will evaluate his brother fairly, delivering a judgment rooted in logic and consistency. After a tense and emotional trial, Liam expects the AI judge can rise above the biases that cloud human judgments. Liam knows his brother is innocent, he doesn't need a judge to decide based on empathy. Suddenly the AI judge appears on the large screen at the front of the courtroom. Liam, his brother, and the rest of the courtroom all rise, straining to hear the computer's final word.

AI teacher

As Malik walks down the vibrant halls of Oakwood High, his mind drifts ahead to his next class, Biology, where his personal AI teacher will quiz him on cell division. Malik enjoys learning one-on-one from his AI teacher, whose friendly figure dances across the large, immersive screen environment where they spend all their class time. His AI teacher launches into today's personalized lesson plan with enthusiasm, the screen coming to life as it transforms abstract cellular processes into tangible visuals that captivate Malik. Malik's human teacher paces the darkened room, her students' faces aglow in the light from their wraparound screens, as she makes sure everything is on track. As the class bell rings, Malik looks up as if from a trance, and gathers his things. Malik didn't score as high on the quiz as he had hoped, but his AI teacher was warm and encouraging, tirelessly explaining how cells divide, and the images linger in Malik's mind as he leaves the classroom, headed to his next class.

AI driver

As the clock strikes midnight, Rosa bids farewell to her friends after a lively night out in the bustling city. Stepping into the cool night air, Rosa takes out her phone and summons an AI-driven taxi to transport her back to the quiet sanctuary of her suburban home. She is pleased with the price, knowing that no human driver means no minimum wage or tip needed. As the AI driver guides the car homeward, Rosa basks in the quiet, relieved there is no human driver she must make small talk with. Rosa feels at ease knowing that the AI driver's advanced sensors and algorithms are tirelessly monitoring the road ahead for any hazards. As she nears her neighborhood, Rosa notices the flashing lights and stopped traffic of a police blockade ahead. The AI driver comes to an awkward pause, seemingly confused by the officer's directions. Before Rosa gets too annoyed, the AI driver calculates a new path to her front door, updating the route in her phone app. Upon arrival, Rosa quickly hops out and the AI driver guides the taxi to its next customer.

Vignette full text (2 of 2)

AI platonic friend

Tae-Ho was always a bright kid, but making friends did not always come easily to him. His interests in physics and engineering set him apart from most of his high school classmates and weekends could be especially lonely. His mood improved once he began to speak with Grace, a female AI friend whom he designed to share his interests. Every day she would share videos and articles about concepts and technologies that Tae-Ho's classmates would never want to discuss. They text during the school day and do video calls in evenings and on weekends. While Tae-Ho's knowledge is clearly growing by the day and his grades have improved, his mother worries that he isn't spending enough time with real friends.

AI romantic

At first Marina thought that an AI boyfriend sounded lame, even crazy. "How can I date a computer program?" she asked herself. But after a particularly bad breakup from an unfaithful partner, she decided to try it out while she recovered. She was immediately surprised at how warm, flirty and real her AI boyfriend Paulo was. He knew just what song to play when she was in a difficult mood, and what TV show to suggest at bedtime. He wasn't just a servant either, he would get hurt or annoyed if she didn't pay him enough attention or respond to his messages. While her friends were glad to see her smiling and laughing again, after more than five months of dating Paulo she worried she might be investing her time in the wrong ways.

AI work assistant

Mike had some administrative support at his job, but he didn't have anyone solely dedicated to helping him. He signed up for an AI assistant to help things like scheduling and document reviewing. He was surprised to see that the AI assistant did more, way more. For example, it automatically drafted project plans, emails, and other documents without asking. He was surprised at its efficiency and competency. It did this by intimately knowing Mike's data and employee profile, from his responsibilities to his calendar. This was slightly unsettling to Mike, but at the same time, the assistant saved Mike hours of time and helped him make better decisions. He could concentrate on higher-level work because his AI assistant was taking care of the minor details.

AI work supervisor

Joe, a skilled technician, was suspicious about reporting to an AI supervisor in his new workplace. It managed the team's workflow in the office and the shop floor, distributed resources based on data analysis, and set project deadlines. In team meetings it would outline strategies, assign tasks tailored to team member's strengths, and set targets. As time passed, Joe began to value the AI supervisor's impartial, transparent approach in evaluating performance and providing feedback. He found relief in the AI's consistent communication, which avoided the office politics and ambiguous expectations of his other jobs. However, despite his growing respect, Joe felt a gap in the sense of personal mentorship he experienced with some of his prior supervisors. He missed the informal chats and motivational push that can come with an empathetic understanding of personal challenges.

Segmentation input variables

We selected variables related to attitudes, emotions, and predictions about GenAI. No standard demographics or party identification questions were used in this analysis. [16 measures]

- Feelings towards GenAI [2]
- Frequency of interaction with GenAI [1]
- Predictions on the capabilities of GenAI [3]
- Predictions on how GenAI will impact society in general [7]
- Predictions on how GenAI will impact specific domains of society (e.g., job hiring, law enforcement) [3]

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