**Five AI chatbots that you can trust**  [The Washington Post May 8, 2023; Shira Ovide](https://www.proquest.com/docview/2810740208/fulltext/81897851C9514587PQ/1?accountid=14525" \o ")

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The AI mania and the internet scam economy are a combustible combination.

It should make you wary of most things that claim to be AI chatbots.

My recommendation is not to download an app that says it's powered by ChatGPT software. It's difficult to distinguish legitimate ChatGPT-related apps from those that want to make a quick buck off you.

Don't click on AI chatbot ads in Facebook or Google. It might be a scam.

Be careful with web browser add-ons that promise AI productivity hacks. It might be a scam.

I hate giving you this advice. I don't want you to be paranoid. And you should experiment with AI chatbot software like ChatGPT, Microsoft Bing and Google's Bard.

But there is so much money to be made from AI cons or cash grabs that it's hard to know what to trust.

Scammers capitalize on what's trendy. A year ago, they tricked people with cryptocurrency scams. Now bad guys and greedy companies are pitching you AI chatbots. Powerful companies including Google and Meta are enabling them.

"There is a bit of a Wild West from a safety perspective," said Mustafa Suleyman, co-founder of Inflection AI, the company behind the Pi chatbot.

What you can do: For now, I suggest that you try AI chatbots only from companies including Suleyman's that you can (mostly) have faith in. I'll give you a list in a minute.

This caution might make you miss out on something great. That's the unfortunate price you pay when the internet betrays your trust.

***Five chatbots you can trust***

*ChatGPT from the OpenAI start-up*: ChatGPT is available online. There isn't a ChatGPT smartphone app although look-alikes have sometimes popped up in app stores.

Also check out the OpenAI partners that have added ChatGPT features to sites like OpenTable, Expedia, Snapchat, Duolingo and Instacart. Not all of these companies let you use their chatbot features yet.

*Bing AI:*It's now available for everyone. Bing AI works best if you use Microsoft's Edge web browser or app.

You can also use Bing AI in the iPhone or Android app.

*Bard:*Google's AI chatbot isn't yet available for everyone, but you can join the waiting list.

*Claude and Pi:*Other worthwhile chatbots include those powered by the Claude software from a start-up called Anthropic. For example, try Quora's Poe AI chatbot.

Also check out Pi chatbot, which promotes itself as a supportive AI companion. There's also a Pi app for iPhones. (There isn't an Android version yet.)

Suleyman suggested asking Pi to help you with a problem like repairing a kitchen sink.

Know that these AI chatbots, which are all based on technology called a large language model, may give you wrong information.

***Is that 'ChatGPT' app what you're looking for?***

For now, exercise caution with AI chatbots that weren't on my list.

The top charts for Apple's and Google's smartphone app stores are peppered with apps that say they're powered by ChatGPT software and ask you for money.

These apps could be useful and they might be legitimate. OpenAI gives permission to meld ChatGPT software into other companies' websites and apps.

But it's not obvious what's a genuine ChatGPT app and what might be falsely claiming to use ChatGPT to sell you a trash app. Apple and Google don't help you distinguish. As far as I know, neither does OpenAI.

My request: OpenAI should have a list online of companies that pay to license ChatGPT software. OpenAI didn't respond to my questions.

You might decide that you're comfortable with the risk of trying an unfamiliar chatbot app. That's a fine choice.

***Be wary of chatbot advertising pitches***

Meta last week warned that it found con artists pretending to be ChatGPT or other chatbots that were Trojan horses to take over your online accounts.

Meta said those scammers created software for web browsers that had some real ChatGPT functions to disguise their malicious purpose. Meta said it stopped more than 1,000 links to chatbot fakes from being shared on its apps like Facebook and Instagram.

Meta also needs to take responsibility for its own role in the chatbot scam economy. My colleague Jeremy Merrill discovered numerous Facebook ads that pretended to be ChatGPT or Google's Bard to secretly steal online accounts.

Meta told me that it continually improves its enforcement of ads.

My advice is not to click on a link you see on Facebook, Instagram or Google that says it's related to AI or AI chatbots. This is overkill. Most of the time, it will be innocuous.

The underlying problem is that Facebook and Google don't verify all ads. This creates an opening for cons.

And since Meta mentioned bogus browser extensions, take care with AI-related ones.

Extensions or add-ons are small software files you download from web browsers including Chrome and Apple's Safari. Many of them are great.

But because browser extensions are a notorious privacy nightmare and AI scams are ubiquitous, I'd suggest not downloading an AI-related extension unless you trust the company that made it.

**One tiny win**

If you hate the little red notification dots on apps, you can make them disappear:

On an iPhone, go to Settings, then Notifications. Tap on the app and turn off the Badges slider. The method for turning off Android phone notification dots varies by device. Try going to your phone's settings (the gear icon), then Notifications, then the Notification dot on app icon. Flip this option off.