

## **American teens are increasingly misled by fake content online, report shows**

As AI has made fake content much easier to produce, a growing number of American teenagers say they are being misled by AI-generated photos, videos or other content on the internet, a new study shows.

The study, published Wednesday by Common Sense Media, a nonprofit advocacy group, asked 1,000 teenagers aged 13 to 18 about their experiences with media made by generative AI tools. About 35% reported being **deceived** by fake content online. However, a larger 41% reported they had encountered content that was real yet misleading and 22% said they had shared information that turned out to be fake.

The findings come as a growing number of teenagers adopt artificial intelligence. A September Common Sense study showed that seven in 10 teenagers had at least tried generative AI.

Two years after ChatGPT's launch, the AI arena has grown increasingly crowded, with DeepSeek's meteoric arrival on Monday. But the top models are still prone to AI **hallucinations**, according to a July 2024 study from Cornell, the University of Washington and the University of Waterloo — meaning even the top AI platforms still create false information out of thin air.

And teenagers who encountered fake online content were more likely to say AI would **exacerbate** their verification of online information, according to Wednesday's study from Common Sense, a media and tech nonprofit.

The survey also pressed teenagers about their thoughts on major tech corporations, including Google, Apple, Meta, TikTok and Microsoft. Nearly half of teenagers don't trust Big Tech to make responsible decisions about how they use AI, according to the study.

“The ease and speed at which generative AI allows everyday users to spread unreliable claims and inauthentic media may

exacerbate teens' existing low levels of trust in institutions like the media and government," Wednesday's study said.

Teenagers' distrust of Big Tech echo a growing dissatisfaction with major tech companies in the United States. American adults also have to contend with increases in misleading or altogether fake content, exacerbated by the erosion of already limited digital **guardrails**.

Since acquiring Twitter in 2022 and renaming the platform X, Elon Musk has **gutted** its moderation teams, allowed misinformation and hate speech to spread and reinstated the accounts of previously banned conspiracy theorists, among other moves. Recently, Meta moved to replace third-party fact-checkers with Community Notes, which CEO Mark Zuckerberg has noted will lead to more harmful content appearing across Facebook, Instagram and its other platforms.

"Teens' perceptions of the accuracy of online content signal a distrust in digital platforms, pointing to an opportunity for educational interventions on misinformation for teens," the

study found, adding that there's also a "need for tech companies to prioritize transparency and develop features that enhance the credibility of the content shared on their platforms."

*Reference:* <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/30/tech/american-teens-ai-study/index.html>

# Key vocabularies

## Deceive (欺騙)

- **Explanation:** To make someone believe something that is not true, usually to gain an advantage.
- **Sentence:** Many teenagers reported being deceived by AI-generated fake content online.

## Hallucination (幻覺)

- **Explanation:** Seeing, hearing, or experiencing something that isn't real, often due to mental conditions or external influences.
- **Sentence:** Even the most advanced AI models still suffer from hallucinations, creating fake news or incorrect details.

## Exacerbate (惡化)

- **Explanation:** To make a problem, situation, or feeling worse.
- **Sentence:** The spread of misinformation online can exacerbate people's distrust in social media platforms.

## **Guardrail (安全機制)**

- **Explanation:** A barrier or rule designed to prevent danger or mistakes, often used metaphorically in discussions about regulations and online safety.
- **Sentence:** The erosion of digital guardrails has led to an increase in the spread of fake news and misinformation.

## **Gut (大幅刪減)**

- **Explanation:** To remove or destroy the essential parts of something, often leading to a loss of function.
- **Sentence:** Elon Musk gutted Twitter's moderation teams, allowing misinformation to spread unchecked.

## **Reading Comprehension**

1. What does the study by Common Sense Media reveal about teenagers and AI-generated content?

2. Why do experts say AI hallucinations are still a problem?

3. How has the use of generative AI affected teenagers' trust in online platforms?

4. What does "gutting Twitter's moderation teams" mean, and what impact did it have?

5. What are the concerns regarding the erosion of digital guardrails?