CRACKING THE CODE: SIIA'S DEEP DIVE INTO GENERATIVE AI ADOPTION AND AWARENESS

In the fast-paced world of technology, understanding how people seek and interact with information online is crucial for businesses and policymakers alike. The Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), the leading trade association for the information business, recently partnered with Opinium to delve into the intricacies of online behavior, with a focus on Generative AI ("GenAI"). The survey, encompassing 2,000 U.S. internet users aged 18-70, uncovered fascinating insights that shed light on the current digital landscape.

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Low Awareness**: Over 60% lack familiarity with GenAI.
- **Demographic Gaps**: More awareness among men, millennials, and senior-level professionals.
- **Primary Use for Information Discovery**: Mostly used for information discovery, rather than creative purposes.
- **Concerns About Validity and Skepticism**: Users express concerns about the accuracy of generated information.

Generative AI ("GenAI") Defined:

Generative AI refers to AI models that generate new digital material or content, such as text, images, music, audio, and videos.

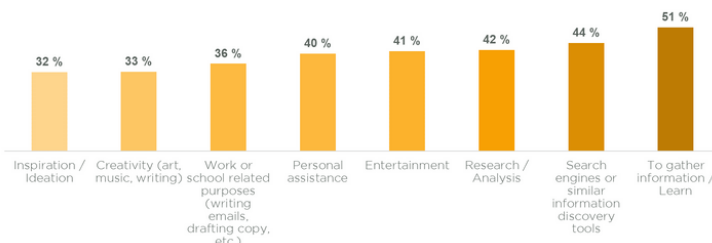## GenAI: One Year In

Familiarity levels with Generative AI

■ Not at all familiar ■ Slightly familiar ■ Somewhat familiar ■ Moderately familiar ■ Extremely familiar

| 37 % | 23 % | 15 % | 13 % | 13 % |

60% Slightly or not at all familiar

26% Extremely or moderately familiar
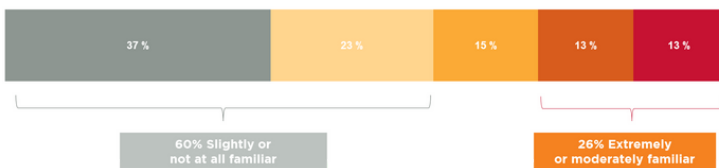
While GenAI has been making waves in the media and with policymakers over the last year, the SIIA survey suggests that most individuals are still in the dark when it comes to their familiarity with GenAI. Over 60% of people are slightly or not at all familiar with GenAI, while only 26% of those surveyed said they were extremely or moderately familiar with GenAI. Of those familiar with GenAI, less than half use it at least once a month.

Not only is GenAI unfamiliar to most people, but there is a noticeable gender and age disparity regarding awareness. The survey found that awareness remains relatively low, particularly among women and older respondents. The technology, a type of machine learning, is gaining traction primarily among men, millennials, and senior/executive-level professionals. As the world grapples with the implications of AI, bridging this divide becomes imperative for a more inclusive digital future.
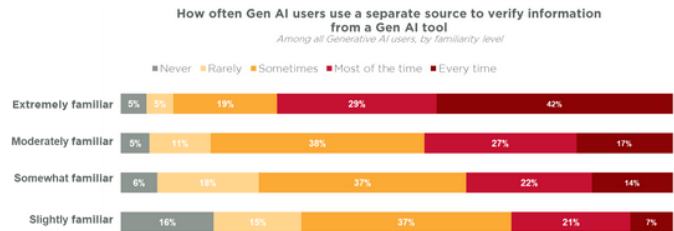

How Generative AI is being used
Among Generative AI users

Inspiration / Ideation	Creativity (art, music, writing)	Work or school related purposes (writing emails, drafting copy, etc.)	Personal assistance	Entertainment	Research / Analysis	Search engines or similar information discovery tools	To gather information / Learn
32 %	33 %	36 %	40 %	41 %	42 %	44 %	51 %

Despite its potential for creative endeavors, users are predominantly leveraging GenAI as an information discovery tool, the same way people might use search engines. Using GenAI

more experimentally – for inspiration, ideation, and other creative purposes – is less common. Among GenAI users, most Millennial and Gen Z users agree that it makes it easier to find information online while enhancing one's creativity, inspiration, education, or planning. GenAI is a new chapter in the long and continually evolving history of ways users find information online.

While the overall attitude toward GenAI is positive, concerns remain about the validity of the information generated. When using GenAI to complete or help with a task, 40% rely on the tool mostly or entirely – suggesting that users tend to depend on the tool, accepting the information at face value, seldom verifying its accuracy.

How often Gen AI users use a separate source to verify information from a Gen AI tool
Among all Generative AI users, by familiarity level

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Sometimes ■ Most of the time ■ Every time

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Every time
Extremely familiar	5%	5%	19%	29%	42%
Moderately familiar	5%	11%	38%	27%	17%
Somewhat familiar	6%	19%	37%	22%	14%
Slightly familiar	16%	19%	37%	21%	7%

However, there is skepticism toward GenAI. Those most familiar with the technology – who are aware that current GenAI tools can "hallucinate" – independently verify the information it generates. This shift in perception challenges conventional notions and prompts a reevaluation of the technology's role in our digital toolkit.

This survey provides not just a snapshot but a dynamic narrative of the digital frontier. It prompts us to question assumptions, recognize generational differences, and adapt strategies for an inclusive and responsive digital future.

The key takeaway is clear: as businesses, policymakers, and individuals navigate the shifting sands of technology, adaptability is paramount. Whether it's fostering awareness of emerging technologies like GenAI, understanding the intricacies of generational shifts, or recognizing the dual nature of online behavior, staying ahead demands a willingness to explore, adapt, and embrace the ever-changing digital landscape. As Gen Alpha emerges on the digital stage, new trends and behaviors will undoubtedly reshape our understanding of online interaction. To guarantee the establishment of ethical principles, there is a pressing need for heightened education and regulation in this ever-evolving landscape.

Learn more about
SIIA's Policy Priorities at:
https://www.siia.net/policy/

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