

## Gen Z Is Using AI — But Reports Gaps in School and Workplace Support

*Walton-GSV-Gallup survey finds young people feel unprepared and anxious regarding AI, lack guidance in schools and workplaces.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — April 8, 2025** — Gen Z is diving headfirst into the AI era — nearly half (47%) use generative AI weekly — but many say they're doing so without a map. A new [Gallup survey released](#) today by the Walton Family Foundation and GSV Ventures reveals four in 10 (41%) Gen Zers feel anxious about the technology, pointing to a growing disconnect between their AI exposure and the guidance they receive from schools and employers. Young people who do have clear guidance feel more confident in their abilities — students who say their schools allow AI use are 25% more likely to feel prepared to use the technology after graduation than those whose schools do not allow AI (57% vs. 32%).

### Gen Z Reports Anxiety, Excitement Around AI

Seventy nine percent of Gen Z say they have used AI tools, and they report a range of emotions about the technology, including anxiety (41%) and excitement (36%), coupled with a smaller percentage expressing feelings of hope (27%) or anger (22%). Adult Gen Zers are significantly more likely to say AI makes them feel anxious than their school-aged counterparts (53% vs. 21%). Those with no AI experience report the most negative sentiment — 55% say it makes them feel anxious, and only 10% report feeling excited.

Gen Z also expresses concern about the impacts of AI on their cognition. While Gen Z is slightly more likely to believe AI will help rather than hurt their ability to search for accurate information (43% to 38%) and come up with new ideas (42% to 36%), almost half (49%) are concerned that artificial intelligence will harm their ability to think carefully about information.

“When high schools provide opportunities to build and practice life and career skills Gen Z is all in. The more we can do to realize their vision for K-12 education, the better our system will be,” says Romy Drucker, Education Program Director, Walton Family Foundation.

When asked to choose between AI- and human-delivered services, Gen Z expresses strong reservations on replacing humans with AI. Just 5% say they would choose an AI doctor over a human, and even the most accepted application — AI tutors — only garners support from 18%. And at least two-thirds of Gen Z adults say they would prefer humans as their financial advisors, customer service agents and ride-share drivers.

### Students Want AI Training — But Say Schools Aren't Ready

When considering their postgraduation plans, over four in 10 Gen Z students (44%) believe they will need to know how to use AI in their future careers, and over half (52%) say schools should be required to teach them how to use it. Despite this, only 28% report that their school explicitly allows AI use, and nearly half (49%) say their school has no policy or they are unsure if one exists.

Among those students who say their school does have AI policies, only about one in three (36%) say those policies are “extremely clear.” This lack of clarity has consequences: Nearly half (47%) of students say they have avoided using AI in schoolwork because they were not sure if it was allowed.

“AI is only becoming more embedded in the future of work and learning, and schools will play a critical role in helping students navigate it,” said Stephanie Marken, senior partner for U.S. research at Gallup. “These findings point to a clear opportunity for educators to guide Gen Z in using AI with purpose and confidence as they prepare for the future.”

### **At Work, Gen Z Finds AI Use Murky and Limited**

The gap in clarity and guidance is echoed by adult Gen Zers. While nearly one in four (39%) Gen Z adults report that AI use is permitted at their workplace, only 30% report using it for work, and over half say (55%) their workplace has not instituted a formal AI use policy.

The research also illuminates opportunities for greater guidance on use cases and benefits of AI in the workplace. Almost one in three Gen Z adults (29%) believe artificial intelligence does not exist for their work. And even when AI is used, 36% of Gen Z workers say the risks of AI in the workplace outweigh the benefits.

“This survey data is a wake-up call. Gen Z is already living in an AI-powered world, but the systems meant to prepare them — schools and employers — have work to do to catch up,” said Jason Horne, Partner and Co-President at GSV. “We have a responsibility to turn their anxiety into agency, with real training, clear policies and opportunities to lead in this new era.”

## **Methodology**

Results are based on a Gallup Panel™ web survey conducted March 6-13, 2025, with a sample of 3,465 13- to 28-year-olds living in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Gallup Panel is a probability-based panel of U.S. adults who are randomly selected using address-based sampling methodology. Gallup also recruits using random-digit-dial phone interviews that cover landline and cellphones.

For the total sample of 3,465 Gen Z respondents, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 2.4$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 1,460 children still enrolled in K-12 school, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.3$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 2,005 Gen Z youth who are no longer enrolled in K-12 school, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.3$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

## **About Walton Family Foundation**

The Walton Family Foundation is, at its core, a family-led foundation. Three generations of the descendants of our founders, Sam and Helen Walton, and their spouses work together to lead the foundation and create access to opportunity for people and communities. We work in three areas: improving education, protecting rivers and oceans and the communities they support, and investing in our home region of Northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta. To learn more, visit [waltonfamilyfoundation.org](http://waltonfamilyfoundation.org) and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## **About Gallup**

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 85 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.