NEWS LESSON

The Chatbot Sounds Sure. Should You Trust It?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What decision would you happily ask an AI chatbot to help with?
2. Does a confident answer make you more likely to trust advice?
3. Would you prefer advice from a person who knows you or a tool with lots of information?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**polished**	☐	A	a meeting to get advice from an expert
2	**counterargument**	☐	B	listening carefully and showing interest
3	**apparent**	☐	C	unfair opinions that favour one side
4	**fluent**	☐	D	seeming real but perhaps not true
5	**biases**	☐	E	a reason against what someone has just said
6	**attentive**	☐	F	very smooth and carefully finished
7	**empathy**	☐	G	the ability to share and understand another person's feelings
8	**consultation**	☐	H	speaking or writing smoothly and easily

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A chatbot sets out your options in seconds, neatly and confidently. In a June 2025 Pew survey of 5,023 US adults, roughly two-thirds said AI should have no role in judging whether two people could fall in love.

1 An AI chatbot can seem like an ideal adviser when a decision feels difficult: it replies instantly, organises your options and never seems impatient. The help may be useful, but a confident answer can still miss important details. Its neat presentation should not settle the decision for you.

2 Pew Research Center surveyed 5,023 US adults in June 2025 and published the findings that September. Respondents were more open to AI helping with analytical tasks, such as weather forecasting, than with intimate personal matters. Roughly two-thirds thought AI should have no role in judging whether two people could fall in love. Those findings describe US opinion, rather than what the technology can reliably do.

3 Practical value and decision-making authority should be separated. AI might help a prospective employee identify questions about a contract, or help a patient understand unfamiliar medical language. Such uses are different from trusting a chatbot to recommend a particular treatment, relationship decision or risky investment without qualified human oversight. But fluent language is not the same as sound judgement. An AI system may overlook missing information, reproduce biases or present an uncertain suggestion with more confidence than it deserves.

4 The technology can be inaccurate, may lack crucial context and sometimes presents uncertainty poorly. An additional concern is privacy: people may disclose information to a chatbot that they would hesitate to share with almost anybody else. The convenience of an apparently attentive conversational partner can obscure how the service handles sensitive data.

5 There is a counterargument. Human advisers can be biased, impatient, expensive or unavailable. For those who cannot easily fall back on professional expertise, a digital tool that helps them explore possibilities may be valuable. The solution is therefore unlikely to lie in ruling out AI assistance altogether. AI can help someone find questions they had missed. The answers still need checking, and serious decisions may need help from someone qualified to advise.

6 Effective use of AI depends partly on the distinction between generating options and selecting among them. A chatbot might identify practical considerations for a career change, explain legal terminology or help a patient prepare questions for a consultation. These tasks can improve the quality of subsequent decisions without requiring the system to make them.

7 The greater danger arises when its polished presentation glosses over missing context, uncertain evidence or errors in factual assumptions. People may mistake a coherent argument for one grounded in their specific circumstances. A robust approach therefore combines independent verification, appropriate expert advice and careful handling of private information. It also requires resisting the temptation to regard apparent empathy as evidence that the system understands personal consequences in the way a human adviser might.

8 What matters is maintaining a distinction between support and delegation. A useful system should make its limitations visible and encourage verification. Before a serious decision, a person could ask a chatbot for a checklist of questions, then take that list to someone qualified to answer them.

Sources: Pew Research Center. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The writer would see a patient using a chatbot to prepare questions for a consultation as appropriate. T F NG
2. The writer treats a fluent answer as good evidence that the system understands the user's situation. T F NG
3. Most people in the survey admitted sharing private information with a chatbot. T F NG
4. The survey was published in a different month from the one in which it was carried out. T F NG
5. The writer presents human advisers as free from the weaknesses a chatbot has. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

coherent	expertise	hesitate	obscure	oversight	prospective	reproduce	tangible

1. Without proper _____ by a regulator, the firm's accounts went unchecked for years.
2. A long, technical introduction can _____ the main point rather than explain it.
3. Scientists could not _____ the result when they repeated the experiment, so doubts grew.
4. Many patients _____ to ask questions because they do not want to seem foolish.
5. The report was long but _____ , with each section leading logically to the next.
6. Several _____ buyers viewed the house on Saturday, but none had yet made an offer.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. Experts warned that the chatbot's advice was _____ for patients with rare conditions. (SUIT)
2. The _____ of the figures was questioned by several economists. (ACCURATE)
3. She was _____ to rely on a machine for such a personal choice. (WILL)
4. Independent _____ of each claim takes time but prevents errors. (VERIFY)
5. Too much _____ on a single tool can weaken our own judgement. (RELY)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Abstract nouns and adjectives usually take one fixed preposition (susceptible to, a distinction between). Check each before you choose.

against between in of over to with

1. Critics accuse some developers _____ overstating what the software can do.
2. There is a clear distinction _____ offering information and making a decision.
3. The writer does not suggest that we should dispense _____ human experts altogether.
4. Regulators may need to intervene _____ cases where personal data is mishandled.
5. People under stress may be especially susceptible _____ persuasive but unreliable advice.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Which decisions should always stay with a person?
2. What would you check before acting on an AI suggestion?
3. Could asking for advice too often make choosing harder on your own?

9 Role-play: let the chatbot decide?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the person with two job offers

You have two job offers and cannot choose. You want to ask a chatbot to decide for you. Explain why you think it is a good idea. Listen to your friend's worries.

Student B · the friend

You think your friend should not let a chatbot choose. Ask questions about the jobs. Suggest a better way to use the chatbot, and say who should make the final decision.

Useful phrases

I'm thinking of asking a chatbot to decide.
That's a big decision, so I wouldn't let it choose.
What if the answer's wrong?
It could help you make a list of questions.
I'd still check the facts myself.
Let's agree that the final choice is yours.

Afterwards, tell the class: did your friend change your mind, and who should make the final decision?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 F · 2 E · 3 D · 4 H · 5 C · 6 B · 7 G · 8 A

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 oversight · 2 obscure · 3 reproduce · 4 hesitate · 5 coherent · 6 prospective

6 Word forms

1 unsuitable · 2 accuracy · 3 unwilling · 4 verification · 5 reliance

7 Language focus

1 of · 2 between · 3 with · 4 in · 5 to

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