

AI: benefits and risks (1)

Oxford students have free, individual access to ChatGPT Edu accounts.

ChatGPT is an AI chatbot developed by an American company called OpenAI. It uses natural language processing to generate humanlike text, hold conversations, and perform a wide range of other tasks.

ChatGPT Edu is the version built for universities. The University of Oxford recognizes its usefulness for academic knowledge **but** its benefits come with *significant risks*.

Refer to the History Faculty **AI Guidance** on the Oxford Historians Hub

FACULTY OF HISTORY

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AI Guidance

Guidance on the use of AI in Coursework and Assessments

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The purpose of this document is to set out the principles that define the faculty's engagement with AI. It is intended to be neither comprehensive nor definitive. This is a rapidly evolving field, and we anticipate that this document will be updated at regular intervals. It is also important that it is read in conjunction with the other documents to which it provides links. Students should also refer to their tutors or supervisors on any specific issues regarding the use of AI.

The Faculty cautions students against the uncritical use of generative AI. In particular, the use of AI tools to prepare essays, or other written texts, will result in texts that will be bland, impersonal, and may contain rogue references (hallucinations, as they are often termed) to non-existent sources or works. It is therefore essential that students approach it as a critical tool, much as they would any other resource. The most important tool however is their own historical intelligence.

Led by the [Russell Group Principles](#) on the use of generative AI tools in education, the faculty supports students who may wish to use AI to complement their learning, and at the same time, wishes to ensure that students are aware of the limitations and biases associated with AI which can result in misleading or incorrect information.

Definitions of AI for the purposes of this document

Basic AI	Generative AI
Where an AI tool is simply automating tasks e.g., sorting data, generating graphs, or analysing trends, and the focus is on automation and analytics rather than creating new content.	Where an AI tool provides substantial intellectual contributions e.g., generating summaries, insights or interpretations, where the focus is on creating new content. Generative AI models such as ChatGPT work by predicting text based on the information on which they have been trained. These models (currently) have no understanding or consciousness and simply generate the next most likely word based on probabilities.

AI: benefits and risks (2)

What is AI?

It's an **artificial** intelligence tool. It's a form of technology and as such, a lot depends on how you use it.

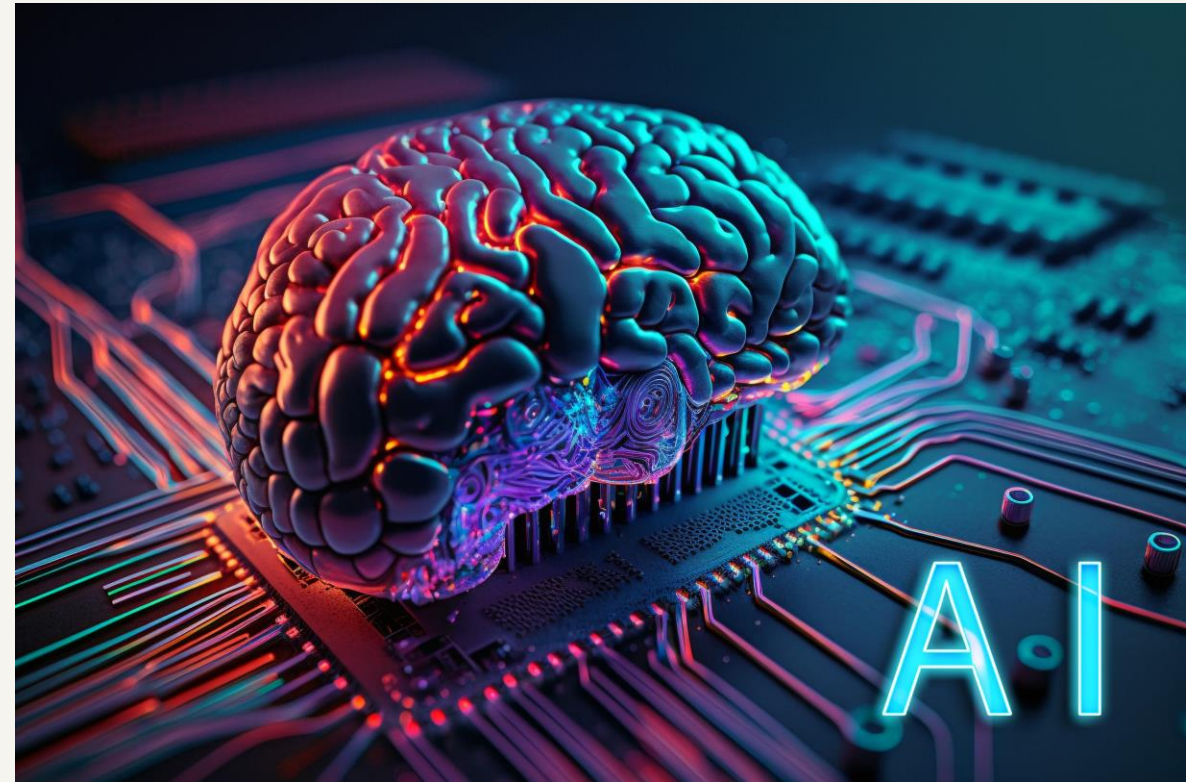
What can AI do?

It can process an enormous amount of data in a very short time and provide you with *outputs in different forms* (writing, drawing, speech).

AI and humanist knowledge

The use and impact of AI is **not** the same in the Humanities as in other subjects.

Critical reading and **individual writing** is historically at the core of **humanist knowledge**
=> we have learnt from written texts and thought through writing for millennia.



AI: benefits and risks (3)

Learn how to use AI in your interest

What can AI do for you?

- quick in processing information (but needs to be double checked)
- it can translate sources into English (helpful for the thesis!)

How can AI cheat you?

It doesn't think!!! => It retains your prompt's bias => It tries to make you happy!

When it writes for you, it relies on old, average information available online: **if you let your style and argument to be shaped by its writing, you will write mediocre essays.**

Using AI to read, write and take notes *may limit* tutors' ability to help you.

It is produced for the market by firms that seek a financial return. It has heavy environmental impact.



AI: benefits and risks (4)

An *AI turn* in History?

Long-term => *honestly* nobody knows.

We're all facing the same *uncertainty*.

Short-term => *your* History degree is *now*.

Don't let a very *recent product*, whose impact is still *subject to debate*, shape **the most important thing** that you have in your life, which is **your education** based on *developing critical reading and writing skills*.

Distinguish between *coursework/exams* and *research*.

- AI **will not help you with exams**, it may do your work **worse** => talk with your tutors.
- AI may help with some aspects of your **research for your thesis**, but not its actual writing => talk with your supervisors.

