Understanding AI in Everyday Life

Useful technology, thoughtful choices.

AI is already part of ordinary life

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad term for computer systems that identify patterns, make predictions, generate content, or help people complete tasks. You may encounter it when your phone suggests a word, a streaming service recommends a show, or a navigation app estimates traffic.

What generative AI does

Generative AI tools can create drafts, images, summaries, and conversational responses from instructions. They can be useful for brainstorming, explaining unfamiliar terms, or getting a first draft started. Their output still needs human review.

Where AI can help

You might ask an AI assistant to rewrite a confusing email in plain language, suggest questions for an appointment, practice a job interview, or explain the difference between two technology terms. Think of it as a starting point rather than the final authority.

Where AI can go wrong

AI can produce confident-sounding information that is inaccurate, outdated, incomplete, or made up. It may also reflect biases in its training data. Check important claims against trustworthy sources, particularly for medical, financial, legal, or safety decisions.

Protect your personal information

Avoid entering passwords, financial account numbers, private medical records, student information, or other sensitive details into an AI tool unless you understand its privacy protections and have a legitimate reason to share them. Use fictional examples when possible.

Watch for AI-powered deception

A realistic voice, image, or video is not proof that something is genuine. Scammers may use synthetic voices or edited media to impersonate someone you know. If a request is unexpected, verify through a separate trusted channel. Families can agree on a private verification phrase.

A practical three-question check

Before relying on an AI response, ask: Is this accurate? Can I verify it? Is it appropriate to share the information I am entering? These questions help you use AI confidently without treating it as infallible.

Try it yourself

Choose a low-stakes task, such as ‘Explain what a QR code is in three simple sentences.’ Then compare the response with a reputable technology guide. Notice what the AI explains clearly and what you might still need to check.