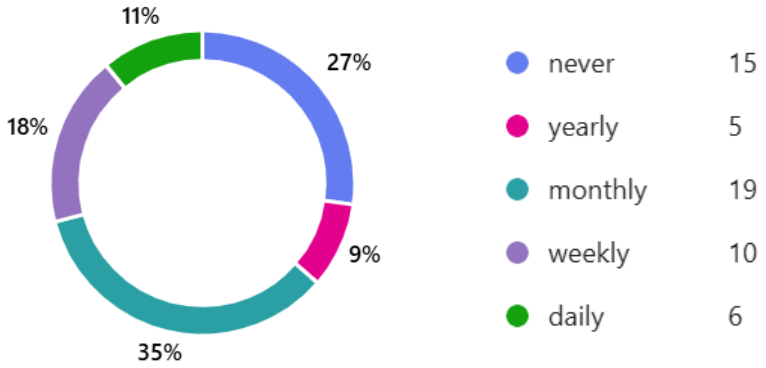
Wondering How Your Peers Use (or Don't Use, or Don't *Mean* to Use) AI?

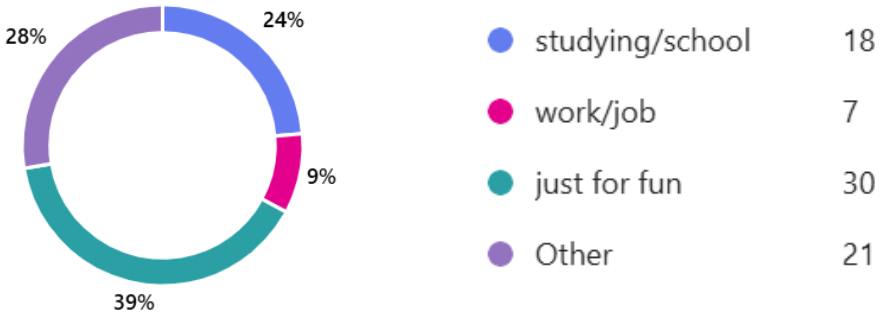
By Ali LeJeune

Since AI became popular, it's been discussed many times by Altamont students and teachers. As AI programs have progressed, restrictions against AI have increased and conversations about AI have grown even more frequent. Recently, Dr. Josh Barnard led a presentation that included information on how AI hallucinates, and how it's often just a 'yes-man' for anyone who has a "conversation" with it. Since AI is such a popular conversation topic (and partner?) and relevant to students' lives, *The Acta Diurna* conducted a survey about AI usage here at Altamont.

Of 55 responses, 73 percent are using AI on purpose in some capacity, and 29 percent of respondents reported using AI on a daily or weekly basis.

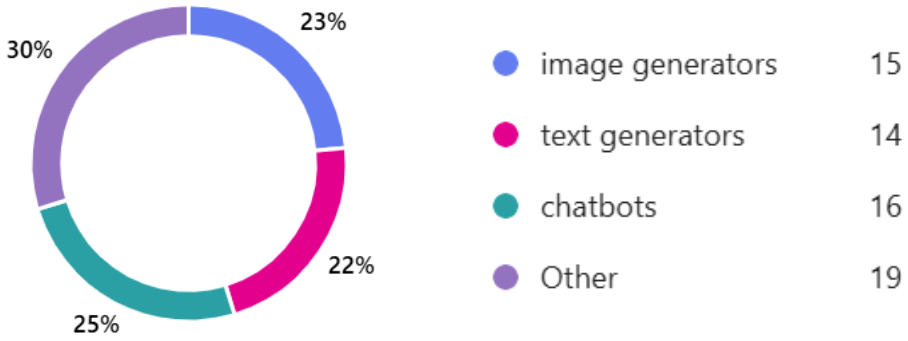


Of the 55 responses, 30 people reported using AI "just for fun." Under this umbrella lie chatbots and image generators. Responding to the poll's "other" category, people noted using AI for research for extracurriculars like debate or for Creative Writing class stories.



Many people even reported using AI accidentally in situations where they'd had no intention of doing so. Automatic AI overviews have become staples of different search engines, and AI-generated summaries of articles, emails, and other forms of media are frequently a default setting.

Regarding different *kinds* of AI programs, usage was pretty evenly spread across text generators, image generators, and chatbots, with chatbots being the most popular by a small margin. Under the "other" category, people again noted the AI summaries that pop up in search engines and other platforms.



Regarding preferences for specific AI platforms, more than 50 percent of respondents chose ChatGPT. Grok and Gauth were less-popular choices. A few respondents reported using Flint to help with studying and understanding concepts.

Of the 55 participants, 37 reported that they didn't use AI for schoolwork, leaving 19 people saying they did. Many reported using AI for making study guides. Several people cited using AI to generate practice questions or to summarize reading content or study materials. Using AI on schoolwork is not inherently wrong if you're using it to understand a concept or study, but using it to cheat on tests, quizzes, or assignments violates Altamont's Honor Code. According to the Altamont Family Handbook section on Generative AI:

Using ChatGPT, Google Bard, DALL-E, Scholar, Grammarly, etc. on any assignment without explicit permission from the teacher is a violation of the Altamont Honor Code. A generative writing aid is any form of AI that creates or revises or translates phrases or sentences that are not the student's original ideas, writing, or words. AI may only be used for assignments when explicitly stated by the teacher, including which tools may be used and specific guidelines for such usage. Unauthorized use of AI tools to complete an assignment or assessment constitutes cheating and plagiarism.

In an open-ended question seeking thoughts and opinions about AI, several people noted environmental concerns and worries about AI's effect on learning and thinking in general. Another concern was that AI art is just stealing different aspects of art pieces and creating something "new" with it (see previous *Acta Diurna* story here). One anonymous participant wrote "I'm worried about originality of works and artists/jobs being compromised or taken over by AI," and that AI "literally uses references from actual artists to create whatever someone asks it to."

One poll question asked whether students and teachers should be allowed to use AI. Around half of participants thought that using AI could help students learn if a teacher doesn't explain something well enough, or if they just want to better comprehend material. The other half thought that AI takes away from the learning process by substituting actual comprehension with an information feed that requires no effort to develop or comprehend.

Capturing the complexity of these issues, a few respondents cited both the good and the bad of AI. One response said "AI can be used in a way that doesn't give us *exactly* what we need, but instead gives us a path to learn what we can do to study or get better at something," adding, "[s]ometimes using AI can be a bad thing, and other times it can be a good thing."