

Introduction:

Artificial intelligence has rapidly grown in popularity and scale in the last five years. Both the effectiveness and effect of artificial intelligence is largely unknown, especially on neurodivergent individuals. This page aims to give advice to parents of autistic children, as well as autistic individuals themselves, on how to avoid common issues with Artificial Intelligence, stay safer online, and get the most out of artificial intelligence you choose to use.

Body:

Artificial intelligence has been suggested by both governments, academics, and corporations as an aid for autistic individuals. Many claim that it could be used for therapy, filling a large gap in care for autistic individuals. However, as it stands, any potential therapeutic benefit is highly debatable. These systems often end up being stop gaps to mitigate the harm done by cutting social programs for neurodivergent or autistic individuals, and should not be considered a replacement for actual therapeutic or medical programs.

Many autistic individuals form harmful social relationships with artificial relationships, especially those that mimic characters, such as Replika, CharacterAI, or Chai AI. These companies have a vested interest in keeping individuals on the platform, and as such can be highly addictive and agreeable in the extreme. This eventually leads to a reliance that can be deeply harmful to an individual's other social relationships with family, friends, or other loved ones.

A more subtle issue with artificial intelligence is the harm done to an autistic individual's self-worth. Many autistic individuals, especially children, suffer from low self-esteem and harmful self-image due to bullying or feeling like an outcast. Many autistic individuals derive self-worth from special interests or knowledge about their favoured topics. Artificial intelligence threatens to harm that by reducing the ability of autistic individuals to feel special about their knowledge as artificial intelligence either makes up fake knowledge, or presents itself as an expert in a specialist field.

Finally, many autistic individuals are at risk of far-right radicalisation, especially in the current political climate. Artificial intelligence has been used to create a large amount of far-right media targeting autistic individuals, attempting to radicalise them. This is very prevalent in the UK currently with AI generated anti-migrant content.

Conclusion:

The largest reason autistic people feel driven to use artificial intelligence is a perceived lack of judgement from the AI. While this may be true, it is often harmful to confide in a machine instead of a human.

- Parents must look to develop a non-judgemental space for their autistic children, allowing them to ask questions without any judgement

- Autistic individuals should look to cultivate relationships that lack judgement, allowing them to speak freely without being judged.

As a product, artificial intelligence is inherently being sold to users all the time. Special features, such as more complex models, video chats, or better memory are often used to sell the product, along with limits on how many messages users can send. Each AI company has a vested interest in getting users hooked.

- Parents should be aware of how much their children are using artificial intelligence, especially if it is paid. They should also discuss and explain to children how these tools are designed to keep people hooked.
- Autistic individuals should analyse how much benefit they are getting from artificial intelligence usage, and at what cost. If you're not paying, you're the product!

Not all AI are created equal. Many are designed for specific tasks such as mimicking characters, or simply helping make lists. Artificial intelligence is full of dark design patterns to keep users engaged.

- Parents should redirect autistic children towards more beneficial tools, such as [goblin.tools](#). Look at how this works, as opposed to something like ChatGPT. Compare the interaction methods and see how an intentionally purposed AI could benefit your child.
- Autistic individuals should limit time on artificial intelligence, and avoid anthropomorphizing it. Autistic individuals tend to form empathetic connections with inanimate objects, and this is exploited by many companies.

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"Autism, Isolation and Misanthropy" by Ember Green  Autism, Isolation & Misanthropy

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