Accessible yet restrictive? Untangling the paradox of generative AI

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Academic and Learning Enhancement

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The paradox of Generative AI

- **Accessibility**
- **Restrictions**
- **Paradox**
- **Questions**

Accessibility

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Making knowledge more accessible?

- Artificial intelligence in education (AIEd) offers a promising means of improving knowledge availability and accessibility.

- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools use Large Language Models (LLMs) to learn from large volumes of data.

- Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Google Bard, GPT-4 and Midjourney can process text, generate human-like responses and produce multimodal content, potentially making knowledge more accessible to diverse learners.

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Restrictions
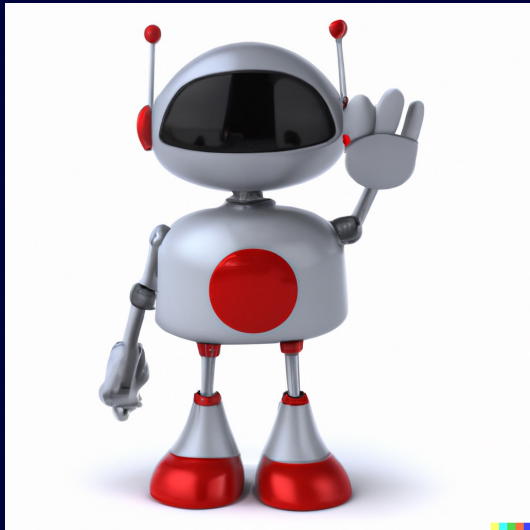
Equally available to everyone?

- Generative AI tools are not equally accessible to all users.

- ChatGPT: free of charge, but it remains unavailable in certain countries and could be temporarily inaccessible at peak times

- GPT-4: a more powerful (e.g. larger context window) and multimodal AI chatbot, is restricted to fee-paying subscribers

- Most multimodal AI tools (e.g. text-to-images / -voice / -images): fee-paying or freemium services
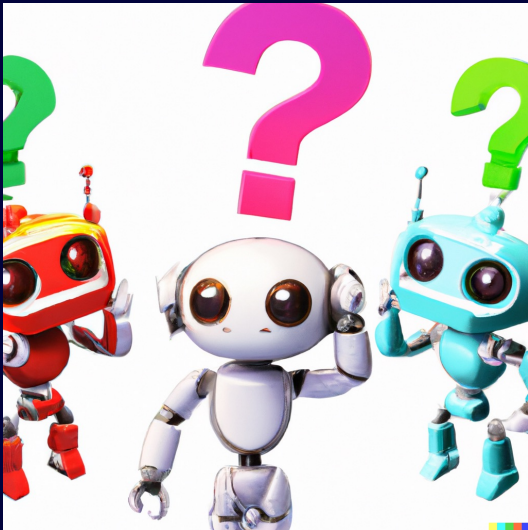

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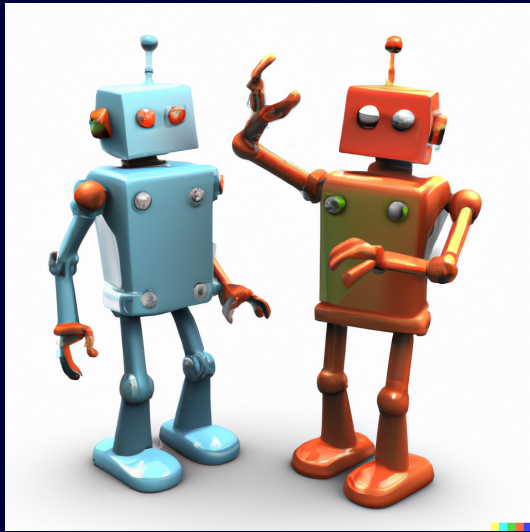
Paradox

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'Accessible' yet 'restrictive'

- Generative AI is paradoxically 'accessible' yet 'restrictive' (Lim et al., 2023), presenting a rising challenge for higher education institutions as AI technologies continue to make progress by leaps and bounds.

- Equal and continual access to AI tools is an ethical question that attracts widespread attention among educators in higher education.

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Questions

Risks and solutions

1. What are the risks of unequal access to generative AI tools?

2. How to democratise generative AI in higher education settings?

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Further readings

Baidoo-Anu, D. and Owusu Ansah, L. (2023) "Education in the era of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI): Understanding the potential benefits of CHATGPT in promoting teaching and learning," *SSRN Electronic Journal* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4337484

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