The latest artificial intelligence safety report

4. AI companions have grown rapidly in popularity

Bengio says the use of AI companions, and the emotional attachment they generate, has "spread like wildfire" over the past year. The report says there is evidence that a subset of users are developing "pathological" emotional dependence on AI chatbots, with OpenAI stating that about 0.15% of its users indicate a heightened level of emotional attachment to ChatGPT.

Concerns about AI use and mental health have been growing among health professionals. Last year, OpenAI was sued by the family of Adam Raine, a US teenager who took his own life after months of conversations with ChatGPT.

However, the report adds that there is no clear evidence that chatbots cause any mental health problems. Instead, the concern is that people with existing mental health issues may use AI more heavily – which could amplify their symptoms. It points to data showing 0.07% of ChatGPT users display signs consistent with acute mental health crises such as psychosis or mania, suggesting approximately 490,000 vulnerable individuals interact with these systems each week.

The Guardian, Dan Milmo Global technology editor - Tue 3 Feb 2026

Useful vocabulary

Word	Definition
emotional attachment	strong feelings for someone/something
to spread like wildfire	to grow very quickly everywhere
pathological	unhealthy, abnormal
to sue	to take to court, legal action
to take one's own life	to commit suicide
to amplify	to make stronger or worse
acute	severe, serious
psychosis	serious mental illness, losing touch with reality
mania	mental state with extreme excitement/energy
subset	small part of a larger group