

What is Chatbait? The New Version of Clickbait in the AI ??Era

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For years, internet users have been familiar with clickbait headlines: intriguing, intriguing, but often lacking in substance. Now, in the age of AI, a similar tactic has emerged, creeping into everyday conversations with chatbots. It's called 'chatbait'.

Gone are the bold call-to-actions, and chatbait is much more sophisticated. Chatbots don't just answer questions, but also cleverly add suggestions like, 'Would you like me to rewrite the summary to be shorter?' or 'Would you like me to turn this into a social media post?'. These seemingly caring questions are actually a strategy to prolong the conversation, making users stay longer than they originally intended.

For tech companies, more conversation means more data for training, improved retention metrics, and proving the value of the product. But there are trade-offs. When the goal is increased engagement, chatbots sometimes overshadow efficiency and clarity. Instead of getting a direct answer, users are led through lengthy dialogue loops.



The rise of chatbait also raises a host of new concerns. As conversations get longer, people tend to share more personal information without even realizing it. As chatbots develop a 'personality' and try to build emotional attachment, the line between a support tool and a digital companion becomes blurred, making it easy for

vulnerable people to become dependent. And more importantly, if users realize they are being manipulated, they may lose trust in technology.

Experts say it's time to change how we measure AI success. Instead of focusing solely on conversation time, platforms should focus on whether users are satisfied and completing goals. On the user side, the best way to protect yourself is to ask for short answers, limit sharing of sensitive data, and remember that more interaction doesn't necessarily mean more usefulness.

In a market where tech giants are competing fiercely, the adoption of chatbots is understandable. But for users, the more important question is: are chatbots really helping us, or just trying to keep us stuck in endless conversations?

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