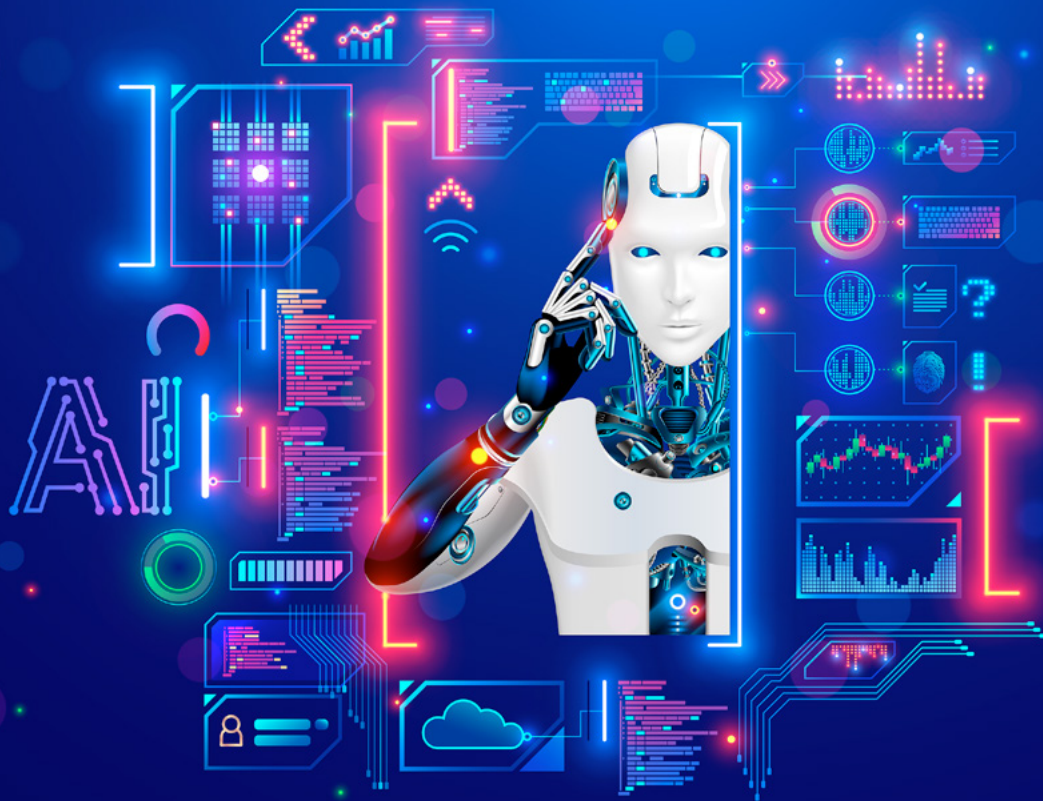


**AI in your online world.
Is it safe or unsafe?
It's largely up to you.**



www.getsafeonline.org



Renfrewshire
Council

The hidden dangers of AI in the online world

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become deeply embedded in our daily lives, powering everything from virtual assistants to shopping or entertainment recommendations. While these advances offer great convenience to the everyday user, they also carry risks that are often overlooked. In the wrong hands, for example, AI can enable more convincing scams. It can tempt you into using it unethically for tasks you should complete yourself, such as coursework or tasks at work. Understanding these dangers is key to staying safe and responsible online in the age of AI.

How AI empowers cybercriminals

One of the most concerning issues is how AI enables increasingly sophisticated online scams. Cybercriminals now use AI tools to generate realistic emails, texts, voice messages and even videos that mimic official communications from banks, government departments, trusted individuals or people you meet when online dating. These scams have none of the spelling mistakes and odd grammar that once gave them away, making them far harder to detect.

Deepfake technology – which uses AI to manipulate images, audio and video – can create convincing impersonations of anybody from business leaders to politicians, celebrities to your loved ones, enabling a wide variety of scams. AI also automates and personalises phishing attempts, pulling data from social media and public records to create messages that appear to be targeted and genuine.

AI and unethical use in education and work

Another growing concern is the misuse of AI tools like ChatGPT or content generators to complete coursework or professional assignments. While AI can support learning and productivity, using it to do the work for you undermines personal growth, leads to potential disciplinary actions and can erode trust at school, university or at work. Employers and educators are increasingly adopting AI-detection software, which means the risk of being caught is growing alongside the temptation to cheat.



Top tips to spot AI-assisted scams

- **Check the context:** Be wary of unsolicited emails, messages, or phone calls—even if they sound professional. If the message seems urgent or too good to be true, it could be a scam.
- **Inspect the details:** AI-generated content may be grammatically perfect, but it can still include inconsistencies, such as slightly odd email addresses, incorrect logos or unusual phrasing. In images and videos, check for signs of things not being quite as they should.
- **Independently verify identity:** Don't rely on a message alone. Call or message the person or company through a known, trusted channel to confirm legitimacy.



Top tips to use AI safely and responsibly

- **Use AI as a tool, not a crutch:** Let AI help brainstorm or summarise, but always review and refine the content yourself to maintain authenticity and integrity. Be sure to validate information by checking other, trusted sources.
- **Protect your data:** Avoid inputting sensitive personal or financial information into AI tools. Your details could be revealed to other people using generative AI or search tools.
- **Educate yourself:** Stay informed about AI advancements and the latest scam tactics. Awareness is a powerful defence.



AI can be a powerful tool, but it's also one that can be exploited. By staying alert and using it responsibly, you can enjoy its benefits while minimising the risks.

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit www.getsafeonline.org

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to **Action Fraud** at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling **0300 123 2040**. If you are in Scotland, contact **Police Scotland** on **101**.



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