EXTRA READING TEXTS

~FOR L4 STUDENTS~

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Erciyes University
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2005-2006

In-Class-Writing I (Opinion Essays)

1. SUPREME COURT ALLOWS MISSISSIPPI SOCIAL MEDIA LAW TO GO INTO EFFECT

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to intervene in a lower court decision that affirmed a Mississippi law requiring users to verify their ages before using social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat.

The Mississippi law is far broader than a Supreme Court ruling just weeks ago that upheld a Texas law mandating age verification to access websites with sexually explicit material. Writing for the court's conservative supermajority in June, Justice Clarence Thomas held that requiring adults to verify their age prior to using sexually explicit sites did not violate the First Amendment's free speech clause because it is important to shield "children from sexually explicit content."
In contrast, the Mississippi law requires **all users** to verify their ages before using common social media sites ranging from Facebook to Nextdoor, a social media site that connects people to their nearby neighbors.

In addition to the age verification rule, the Mississippi law requires social media websites to work to prevent children from accessing "harmful materials" and prohibits minors from using social media websites, such as Instagram and YouTube, without parental consent.

NetChoice, a tech industry association committed to "protecting online freedom," sued, arguing that the law unconstitutionally restricts nine of its member websites, including those mentioned above: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Nextdoor and YouTube.

NetChoice argued that the law violates the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech without governmental interference. The "monitoring-and-censorship requirements for vague categories of speech," NetChoice argued, limits individuals' access to important information, ranging from university professors' online lectures to statements from political leaders, and other creative content. Though it is within parents' interests to protect their children from harmful content, said NetChoice, there are other tools — such as web browser parental controls — that parents can use to regulate their children's online use.
A District Court agreed with NetChoice, temporarily stopping the Mississippi law from going into effect while proceedings continued in the lower courts. But the conservative 5th Circuit Court of Appeals lifted the temporary block, without addressing whether the law violates the First Amendment.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh concurred with the court's order Thursday but wrote: "In short, under this Court's case law as it currently stands, the Mississippi law is likely unconstitutional. Nonetheless, because NetChoice has not sufficiently demonstrated that the balance of harms and equities favors it at this time, I concur in the Court's denial of the application for interim relief."

The Supreme Court refused to block the 5th Circuit's decision, allowing, at least temporarily, for the Mississippi law to go into effect.

https://www.npr.org/2025/08/14/nx-s1-5482925/scotus-netchoice

2. TECH MAY GET IN THE WAY OF GOOD CULTURE SHOCK WHILE STUDYING ABROAD

RACHEL MARTIN, HOST:
A record number of American college students are studying abroad - nearly 300,000 according to the most recent data. Educators say that's good - that international education promotes cross-cultural understanding. But many in the field also worry the influx of technology and social media may make it harder for American students to fully immerse themselves abroad. Vermont Public Radio's Nina Keck has more.
NINA KECK, BYLINE: It's late afternoon and Kris Roberts fixes a cup of tea, sets up her iPad and calls her daughter.
KRIS ROBERTS: Hi.
KATIE FUSCO: Hi, Mom. How are you?
ROBERTS: How are you, honey?
KECK: Roberts is in Vermont. Her 18-year-old daughter, Katie Fusco, is 4,000 miles away in Brazil. The two sit down for a video chat about once a week and text every few days. Fusco says she's been on social media as much, if not more, in Brazil. And while she likes being able to catch up with family and friends, she admits last month her phone broke and she was surprised to find the two weeks without it were the best of her trip.
FUSCO: Without my phone I would just stay downstairs and talk with my family. And it was, like - it was great. And now I have my phone back and I just kind of leave it in my room now because I don't like it anymore.
KECK: Technology was a hot topic at a recent study abroad fair at Middlebury College. Wairimu Ndirangu has directed St. Lawrence University's Kenya program for 15 years.
WAIRIMU NDIRANGU: We talk about it all the time. It's nice that students get connected and feel safe in that way, but then, on the other hand, we feel like we are losing quite a bit of the full student when they are plugged to the other side.

KECK: It's something Barbara Hofer, a psychology professor at Middlebury College, is researching. She says she was shocked at how intrusive social media had become while leading American students through Europe.

BARBARA HOFER: Before they ate a meal in a German pub having to take a picture of the big beer and the food before they actually ate it because they need to immediately post it on Facebook to let everybody back home know what they're doing.

KECK: Technology can certainly help students abroad, says Hofer, but she's found it definitely comes with a price. For example, she was part of a study abroad program in Kyoto, Japan, 10 years ago just as American students began to own cellphones. Hofer says the faculty felt those phones greatly hurt students' ability to learn Japanese and understand the culture.

HOFER: Prior to that time, when students lived in host families, they had to contact the host family via the landline in order to speak to the student who was living there in order to make plans. That required using a different form of the language and the way that you interact with your elders.

KECK: Historically, Hofer says students abroad have had to find their own solutions to problems that come up. But in her study she found that American students connected with their parents an average of 22.4 times a week, making those important lessons of autonomy and responsibility harder to learn. The Middlebury researcher says one of the most surprising findings from her study is that face-to-face connections, like Skype, make many students more homesick, not less. Zoe Kaslow, a senior at Middlebury who spent a semester in Indonesia, says it takes time to find the right balance.

ZOE KASLOW: At the beginning of the program, I relied a lot on the Wi-Fi and having access to the Internet, but I noticed that I didn't actually feel better after I had access to the Wi-Fi. I felt pretty anxious, kind of waiting to get messages. There was a 12-hour time difference from home, and it was just really frustrating.

KECK: After several weeks, she gave up and focused more on her surroundings and says since coming home she's chosen to be less connected. For NPR News, I'm Nina Keck in Chittenden, Vermont.

https://www.npr.org/transcripts/385267279

3. MUSICIANS KEEP LEAVING SPOTIFY IN PROTEST OF CEO'S DEFENSE INVESTMENTS

Over the summer, a slew of bands began to make similar announcements on social media: They'd be pulling their music off Spotify, the largest streaming service in the world.

It started in June with indie rock quartet Deerhoof. Within weeks, groups like Xiu Xiu, King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard and Hotline TNT followed suit. The wave of departures continued into September; most recently, The Mynabirds, WU LYF, Kadhja Bonet and Young Widows have all decided to leave Spotify. So why are musicians — many of them independent — removing their songs from the most popular streamer globally, which has nearly 700 million users?

All artists cite Spotify CEO Daniel Ek's ties to Helsing, an artificial intelligence defense company with a mission to "attain technological leadership so that democratic societies are free to make sovereign decisions and control their ethical standards." In 2021, Ek's venture capital firm Prima Materia invested more than $100 million into the German startup. This past June, Prima Materia raised more than $700 million for Helsing, where Ek is now also chairman. He told ***The Financial Times*** that Prima Materia is "doubling down" on its investments in light of the role that AI plays in Russia's war on Ukraine. ***The Financial Times*** reported that Helsing is now producing its own drones, aircraft and submarines.

It's not the first time artists have decided to cut ties with Spotify. In 2013, Thom Yorke removed his solo albums from the streaming service to protest low royalty payouts (his music has since reappeared on the platform). The following year, Taylor Swift wrote an op-ed in ***The Wall Street Journal*** arguing that "music should not be free" and pulled her songs from Spotify; three years later, she returned her discography to all streaming services. In 2022, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell left Spotify in objection to the company's exclusive relationship with Joe Rogan, citing concerns that Rogan was spreading COVID-19 vaccine misinformation on his massively successful podcast, ***The Joe Rogan Experience***. Young and Mitchell ended their boycott in 2024 after Rogan's podcast became available on multiple streaming platforms.

But this most recent exodus, which began shortly after the June fundraising news, marks a new wave of artist-led protests against Spotify.

"We don't want our music killing people. We don't want our success being tied to AI battle tech," Deerhoof wrote in a statement shared with NPR. "Deerhoof is a small mom and pop operation, and know when enough is enough. We aren't capitalists, and don't wish to take over the world. Especially if the price of 'discoverability' is letting oligarchs fill the globe with computerized weaponry, we're going to pass on the supposed benefits."

Spotify and Helsing declined to comment on artists leaving the platform in protest of Ek's investments. But several artists NPR spoke with say their concerns with Spotify span far beyond how the CEO spends his earnings.

"The sound quality is horrible. The disposable-ness of music has become almost culturally endemic, and then obviously the financial aspect of it is a joke," says Jamie Stewart of the experimental rock group Xiu Xiu. "It has not done anything good for bands. It has done good things for itself."

Xiu Xiu formed in California in 2002. Stewart says the rise of file-sharing and iTunes caused a near-immediate decline in royalties, but in the last decade and a half, the popularization of streaming platforms like Spotify has significantly worsened financial compensation. In a statement shared with NPR, a Spotify spokesperson explained how the company's payout model is structured.

"All of the major streaming services use the same pro rata model for payouts to rightsholders, and we pay the most," the statement reads. "In this model, payouts are based on streamshare, not a per-stream rate. That means if an artist's catalog accounts for 1% of total streams, it would earn 1% of total royalties. It's not a coincidence that the least popular streaming services, where people listen the least, have the highest per-stream rates, as lack of user engagement is exactly what drives a higher per-stream rate."
Spotify's annual economic Loud & Clear report found that the company paid out $10 billion to the music industry in 2024, the most out of any streaming service. The number of people uploading music to Spotify has also grown, which means "the fraction who find success appears smaller over time."
Stewart says Spotify is a large source of digital revenue for Xiu Xiu, and they're expecting to feel an impact from exiting the platform. "We don't make very much money at all to begin with, but it's enough that it's a noticeable amount that we will not be making anymore," they explain. "It's not going to make any difference to Spotify. But it is a very, very small way of standing up to what tech companies have become."

https://www.npr.org/2025/09/09/nx-s1-5522297/musicians-leaving-spotify-protest-hotline-tnt-king-gizzard-and-the-lizard-wizard

4. HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA. THEIR GRANDMOTHERS UNITED TO FIND THEM

While Argentina experienced seven separate coups between 1930 and the reestablishment of democracy in 1983, it is the country's "Dirty War" that is perhaps the most infamous.
This period, which spanned 1976-1983, was one of brutal repression, with those deemed "subversive" systematically disappeared, tortured and murdered by the nation's military government. Before reading Haley Cohen Gilliland's gripping, true narrative, **A Flower Traveled in My Blood: The Incredible True Story of the Grandmothers Who Fought to Find a Stolen Generation of Children**, I hadn't realized that among the missing were hundreds of women who were pregnant or were kidnapped alongside their infants.

Gilliland's first book (of many, we should hope) tells the remarkable story of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo ("Grandmothers of the Plaza del Mayo"), a group of courageous grandmothers who spent decades searching for their stolen grandchildren. Their name refers to the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, where

the grandmothers held weekly marches outside the presidential palace, demanding justice and answers. Some of their grandchildren were illegally adopted by members of the very regime that had disappeared their parents.

The central figure Gilliland follows is Rosa Tarlovsky de Roisinblit, whose pregnant daughter, Patricia, became one of the **desaparecidos** — the disappeared — in 1978. Patricia and her partner, Jose, had once been active in the Montoneros, a leftist Peronist group. But by the time of her kidnapping, much of the group had been killed or forced into exile. With a young daughter and a child on the way, they ended their involvement. This, however, made no difference to Gen. Jorge Videla, who had assumed power during the 1976 coup. Videla's junta targeted "not only militants but those on the further peripheries of the left. Students. Artists. Journalists. Union leaders. Lawyers who defended unions. Musicians. Poets. Priests who ministered to the poor. Nuns who helped desperate families looking for their missing relatives. In the eyes of the dictatorship, they were all 'subversives,'" Gilliland writes. After the junta collapsed, then-newly elected President Raúl Alfonsín established the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons. The commission's report documented 8,960 disappearances, though it warned the number could be higher as the military had destroyed all relevant records. A classified memo from Operation Condor — a transnational alliance of Latin American military regimes intent on eliminating "leftists, communists, and Marxists" — estimated that by 1978, 22,000 Argentinians had been disappeared. More recent estimates suggest that the actual count approached 30,000. As for the stolen children, the official count is 392, though the Abuelas believe the figure could be as high as 500.

Though Rosa Roisinblit's story provides a throughline, Gilliland weaves in the real-life experiences of many other grandmothers, powerfully capturing both their heartbreak and their unyielding determination. These women marched, appealed to religious leaders, wrote letters to journalists and diplomats — efforts that put them at enormous risk. The Abuelas were infiltrated at one point, and three of their leaders were kidnapped and murdered — thrown from a plane, just as so many of their disappeared daughters had been after being kept alive only long enough to give birth, Gilliland writes.

Still, the Abuelas pushed on, developing ingenious strategies to continue their search. They passed information at fake birthday parties at cafes (where large groups attracted less suspicion), posed as mourners at cemeteries to gather intelligence, pretended to be "saleswomen promoting a new baby product," and went for "pedicures to extract information from salon owners who had also polished the toenails of suspected kidnappers." In one case, a grandmother arranged to be committed to a psychiatric hospital to gather intel.

If Gilliland had solely focused on the true stories of the Abuelas, her book would still be a noteworthy achievement. But she goes further, guiding the reader through Argentina's complex political history — and illuminating the many ways the United States was complicit in Argentina and beyond, as, she writes, when "Kissinger backed the assassination of a prominent Chilean general in hopes of facilitating a military takeover of socialist president Salvador Allende."

Despite the brutality Videla's junta inflicted upon its own citizens, **A Flower Traveled in My Blood** is not without hope. Their quest led the Abuelas to Mary-Claire King, the geneticist who discovered the inheritability of breast cancer and who later helped the women apply DNA in their searches. In fact, "King herself posits that she and the Abuelas were among the pioneers of genetic genealogy," Gilliland writes. Their efforts ultimately result in dozens of grandchildren being located.

It's unfortunate, but understandable, that some of these reunions created a new set of complications. In certain cases, children had been adopted by loving families who believed the children had been abandoned. Others did not want to provide DNA to confirm their lineage.

Nonetheless, it's hard to see the Abuelas and their accomplishments as anything but inspiring. Grandmothers came together across social divides to fight for their families, sometimes discovering reserves of strength they didn't know they had. The Abuelas remain united in their struggle to this day and Gillibrand does a masterful job conveying their extraordinary story. As the author notes, "The Plaza de Mayo seemed to take individual grief and transform it into collective determination." If that's not an impressive testament to resistance and solidarity, I don't know what is.

https://www.npr.org/2025/08/08/nx-s1-5494307/argentina-dirty-war-grandmothers-flower-traveled-in-my-blood

5. AFTER 10 YEARS OF BLACK HOLE SCIENCE, STEPHEN HAWKING IS PROVEN RIGHT

On Sept. 14, 2015, physicists attained the long-sought goal of detecting gravitational waves, the shockwaves spewed out by such cataclysmic events as the violent merger of two black holes.
This huge breakthrough quickly garnered three of the effort's key figures the physics Nobel Prize. In the 10 years since then, scientists have detected hundreds of black holes coming together, as well as other extreme cosmic events like neutron stars colliding and black holes merging with a neutron star.

Now, in the journal **Physical Review Letters**, researchers say their ability to analyze gravitational waves has improved so much over the past decade that they were recently able to verify a key idea about the growth of black holes — one put forth by Stephen Hawking back in 1971.

"There's a very famous statement in physics that Stephen Hawking worked out, which is that the area, the surface area, of black holes can never decrease," explains Maximiliano Isi, an astrophysicist with Columbia University and the Flatiron Institute.

And he says that's just what scientists observed after analyzing gravitational waves detected earlier this year. On Jan. 14, detectors registered gravitational waves that came from two colliding black holes about 1.3 billion light-years away.

These black holes had masses 30 to 40 times that of our sun, so their collision was very similar to the one that led to the first gravitational wave detection back in 2015. Since that time, however, the pair of giant detectors run by LIGO, in Louisiana and Washington state, have been repeatedly upgraded.
"Because the detectors are so much better today, we can record the signal so much more clearly," says Katerina Chatziioannou, a gravitational wave physicist at Caltech.

That allowed them to perform a new analysis showing that between the two of them, the initial black holes had a combined surface area of 240,000 square kilometers (roughly the size of Oregon). After they merged to form a single black hole, its area was about 400,000 square kilometers (roughly the size of California).

Hawking's theory says that the final area of the black hole has to be bigger than the sum of the two initial areas, says Chatziioannou, "and this is what we demonstrated observationally with that signal."
This kind of proof is just what Hawking hoped for a decade ago, when the first gravitational wave detection was announced. He actually reached out to one of the scientists involved in that effort to see if gravitational waves could be used to test this prediction, says Isi.

Back then, though, it just wasn't possible because there was too much noise in the data and the analytic techniques hadn't advanced enough.

Hawking died in 2018. "It's unfortunate that Hawking is not around anymore, but certainly this is a way in which his legacy lives on," says Isi.

"All of these ideas that people thought up in the '70s, thinking it was just idle speculation, now they are manifested in actual data," adds Isi. "We see these things happening almost exactly as predicted."
Albert Einstein, who predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916, thought that they'd never be detected. "If we told him that we are detecting gravitational waves from colliding black holes every other day, or every two or three days or so," says Isi, "I'm sure it would have been mind-blowing to him."

Overall, researchers have been surprised by how many merging black holes they have seen, says gravitational wave researcher Gabriela González with Louisiana State University.

"We have seen so many black hole mergers. We are learning so much about them that sometimes I feel tempted to call this 'black hole astronomy' rather than 'gravitational wave astronomy,'" she says.
She would have predicted that they'd see far more mergers between neutron stars, but they've only seen a couple of examples of that so far.

That could change, as researchers are already working on plans for new, even bigger gravitational wave detectors that would be 10 times more sensitive. "That's our dream," she says, adding that in another decade, these detectors could be under construction — perhaps even completed.

https://www.npr.org/2025/09/11/nx-s1-5537131/ligo-10-years-black-holes-hawking-theory-confirmed

In-Class-Writing II (Cause and Effect Essays)

1. SCIENTISTS LINK HUNDREDS OF SEVERE HEAT WAVES TO FOSSIL FUEL PRODUCERS' POLLUTION

The 2021 heat dome in the Pacific Northwest that overwhelmed emergency rooms and left hundreds dead. The 2022 heat wave in India that devastated the wheat harvest. The deadly heat waves in France in 2003, and China in 2013.

A new study links these recent heat waves — and more than 200 others — to human-caused climate change, and the greenhouse gas pollution of major fossil fuel producers.

The new study, published Wednesday in the journal **Nature**, found that 213 heat waves were substantially more likely and intense because of the activity of major fossil fuel producers, also called carbon majors. They include oil, coal and cement companies, as well as some countries.

The scientists found as much as a quarter of the heat waves would be "virtually impossible" without the climate pollution from major fossil fuel producers. Some individual fossil fuel companies, such as ExxonMobil, Chevron and BP, had emissions high enough to cause some of the more extreme heat waves, the research found.

"The main findings show clearly that the carbon majors play very important roles for those recent heat waves that were analyzed," says Sonia Seneviratne, climate scientist at ETH Zürich, a university in Switzerland, and one of the co-authors of the study.

"This is an important part of the equation," Seneviratne says, "to basically provide better quantification of their responsibility."

ExxonMobil, Chevron and BP did not respond to NPR's requests for comment.

The study adds to a growing body of research linking the emissions of fossil fuel companies to extreme weather events that have had catastrophic impacts for economies and human health.

At least 489,000 people died annually from heat between 2000 and 2019, according to the World Health Organization, many from climate-change fueled heat waves.

Climate researchers say as more and more states, cities and countries file suit against oil companies for climate-change related damages, studies attributing particular climate events back to particular corporations and countries could become more important in litigation.

"If you've contributed to emissions, you've contributed to extreme heat," says Justin Mankin, geography professor at Dartmouth College, who did not participate in the study but reviewed a copy of it.

"Being able to benchmark it to heat waves with a known societal impact — that's what I think is actually pretty important about this work," he says.

For the new study, the scientists looked at something called the disaster database, a global list of disasters maintained by university researchers, to identify heat waves with significant casualties, economic losses and calls for international assistance. The scientists then used historical reconstructions and statistical models to see how human-caused global warming made each heat wave more likely and more intense.

Then, to examine the link to major fossil fuel producers, the researchers relied on the Carbon Majors Database to understand the emissions of major oil, gas, coal and cement producers.

"We ran a climate model to reconstruct the historical period, and then we ran it again but without the emissions of a specific carbon major, thus deducing its contribution to global warming," Yann Quilcaille, climate scientist at ETH Zürich and lead author of the study, says in an email.

While some of the contributions to heat waves came from larger well-known fossil fuel companies, the study found that some smaller, lesser-known fossil fuel companies are producing enough greenhouse gas emissions to cause heat waves too, Quilcaille says.

Mankin says this study comes at an important time for climate policy in the United States. The Trump administration wants the government to stop regulating climate pollution.

The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing rolling back what's known as the endangerment finding, the basis for rules regulating climate pollution, including from coal and gas-fired power plants, cars and trucks, and methane from the oil and gas industry.

As federal agencies make the argument that greenhouse gases are not harmful to society, Mankin says research like this is important because it shows the opposite is the case.
Mankin says of the Trump administration: "They think these emissions don't actually have societal consequences and Yann's research and Sonia's research here shows — very clearly — that these emissions have an undeniable impact on society.

"It's a deleterious, harmful impact, enhancing the likelihood and magnitude of extreme heat."
The EPA declined to answer NPR's question about whether it acknowledges that greenhouse gases released from burning fossil fuels endanger public health. It said in an email that "the agency considered a variety of sources and information in assessing whether the predictions made, and assumptions used, in the 2009 Endangerment Finding are accurate."
It added: "The public comment period is currently open, and EPA looks forward to receiving them."

https://www.npr.org/2025/09/11/nx-s1-5534484/oil-companies-heat-waves-climate

2. A TRAIL RUN WITH BLACKBERRIES AND LATE SUMMER FLOWERS ON OREGON'S SAUVIE ISLAND

NEAR ST. HELENS, Ore. — It's a hot September afternoon as I set off running past farm fields into the woods on Sauvie Island, which lies at the meeting of the Columbia and Willamette rivers.
It's a perfect trail for running with 60-year-old knees, the forest floor soft with leaves and pine needles. The gentle path offers views of the vast Columbia River.
After a day of work, I love finding places like this, where I can turn off my brain and just move and breathe. On this day, I stumble across an unexpected delight: blackberry thickets so dense I have to dodge the thorns as I run.
The fruit is perfectly ripe, berries hanging thick and dark. I pick and eat, then run a little, but again and again the berries tempt me to slow down and snack.

Finally I run on, my fingers stained purple. I can smell the river and the leaf dust of the trail kicked up by my running shoes. Afternoon sun ribbons through the high forest canopy. This island has deep history.

It was busy with Multnomah Native villages through the 18th century, communities that were later swept away by European diseases. The American explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark also camped nearby on their expeditions in 1805 and 1806.

I come out of the tunnel of trees into a beautiful, open green meadow, the wind blowing through grass. There are wildflowers on every side, tansy and Queen Anne's lace and goldenrod, the bright colors of late summer. This is one of my favorite seasons for running. The heat has mellowed, but it's not quite autumn. Kids are back in school, so the crowds in wild places like this have faded away.

The trail takes me to one more delight: an old lighthouse and a long strand of empty sand beach. A barge rumbles past out on the river; otherwise, it feels private and peaceful. I strip off my running shoes and my sweaty T-shirt and dive in. The cold water feels amazing after the run, and I drift for a long time in the stillness.

https://www.npr.org/2025/09/11/nx-s1-5532150/trail-running-oregon-sauvie-island

3. LAB RESULTS CONFUSING? SOME PATIENTS USE AI TO INTERPRET THEM, FOR BETTER OR WORSE

When Judith Miller had routine blood work done in July, she got a phone alert the same day that her lab results were posted online. So, when her doctor messaged her the next day that overall her tests were fine, Miller wrote back to ask about the elevated carbon dioxide and something called "low anion gap" listed in the report.

While the 76-year-old Milwaukee resident waited to hear back, Miller did something patients increasingly do when they can't reach their health care team. She put her test results into Claude and asked the AI assistant to evaluate the data.

"Claude helped give me a clear understanding of the abnormalities," Miller said. The generative AI model didn't report anything alarming, so she wasn't anxious while waiting to hear back from her doctor, she said.

Patients have unprecedented access to their medical records, often through online patient portals such as MyChart, because federal law requires health organizations to immediately release electronic health information, such as notes on doctor visits and test results.

And many patients are using large language models, or LLMs, like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Anthropic's Claude, and Google's Gemini, to interpret their records. That help comes with some risk, though. Physicians and patient advocates warn that AI chatbots can produce wrong answers and that sensitive medical information might not remain private.

But does AI know what it's talking about?

Yet, most adults are cautious about AI and health. Fifty-six percent of those who use or interact with AI are not confident that information provided by AI chatbots is accurate, according to a 2024 KFF poll. (KFF is a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News.)

That instinct is born out in research.

"LLMs are theoretically very powerful and they can give great advice, but they can also give truly terrible advice depending on how they're prompted," said Adam Rodman, an internist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Massachusetts and chair of a steering group on generative AI at Harvard Medical School.

Justin Honce, a neuroradiologist at UCHealth in Colorado, said it can be very difficult for patients who are not medically trained to know whether AI chatbots make mistakes.

"Ultimately, it's just the need for caution overall with LLMs. With the latest models, these concerns are continuing to get less and less of an issue but have not been entirely resolved," Honce said.

Rodman has seen a surge in AI use among his patients in the past six months. In one case, a patient took a screenshot of his hospital lab results on MyChart then uploaded them to ChatGPT to prepare questions ahead of his appointment. Rodman said he welcomes patients' showing him how they use AI, and that their research creates an opportunity for discussion.

Roughly 1 in 7 adults over 50 use AI to receive health information, according to a recent poll from the University of Michigan, while 1 in 4 adults under age 30 do so, according to the KFF poll.

Using the internet to advocate for better care for oneself isn't new. Patients have traditionally used websites such as WebMD, PubMed, or

Google to search for the latest research and have sought advice from other patients on social media platforms like Facebook or Reddit. But AI chatbots' ability to generate personalized recommendations or second opinions in seconds is novel.

https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/09/11/nx-s1-5537067/ai-medicine-privacy-test-results

4. AMERICA, WE HAVE PROBLEM. PEOPLE AREN'T FEELING ENGAGED WITH THEIR WORK

MARY LOUISE KELLY, HOST:

American workplaces have a problem. A growing number of people just aren't that into their jobs. A new Gallup report finds less than a third of people are engaged with their work. As NPR's Andrea Hsu reports, that is not just an issue for workers. It could hurt their companies.

ANDREA HSU, BYLINE: This drop in employee engagement started in the pandemic, and it's only getting worse. Jim Harter is Gallup's chief workplace scientist.

JIM HARTER: The younger workers, in particular, are less connected to their organization, less satisfied with their organization overall.

HSU: Young millennials and Gen Zers reported feeling less cared for at work, less heard. Fewer of them said they have someone who encourages their development. Fewer have a best friend at work. Harter says that's become an important predictor of whether someone might recommend their company or consider looking for a different job.

HARTER: Having a friend at work matters more now than it did pre-pandemic.

HSU: Gallup found engagement fell most among people who could work remotely but have to work on-site. But the survey found another problem with fully remote workers. A growing number of them are now in a middle zone that Jim Harter equates to quiet quitting.

HARTER: They show up, do the minimum required, but not much else, and they'll still look for other opportunities out there.

HSU: These findings don't surprise Tanvi Sinha. She's an audit manager at the accounting firm Matthews, Carter & Boyce in Fairfax, Va. She started her career back when everyone was in the office every day - even Saturdays in the busy season.

TANVI SINHA: You develop that relationship with people. You make friends with people. You're spending most of the time at work, you know, going out for lunches. So those are the things that you're missing, you know?

HSU: Now that coming to the office is optional. But it's not just about being social, Sinha says. It can help your career to get a holistic view of your company.

SINHA: Working remotely, you're working on one project. You don't even know what kind of other projects your firm does or what kind of other people you can be working with. You have very little exposure.

HSU: The Gallup survey backs that up. Across age groups and no matter where people were working, it found that employees were less connected to the broader purpose of their companies, also less clear about what's expected of them. Jim Harter says that's worrisome.

HARTER: You could almost equate it to employees becoming a little bit more like gig workers.

HSU: Who aren't as loyal to their employers - who aren't in it for the long haul.

STEPHANIE FRIAS: I believe that companies are having a reckoning.

HSU: Stephanie Frias is chief people officer at Lyra Health, which provides mental health services to companies. With all the quiet and real quitting going on, she says companies are now realizing that workers want something different and expect something different.

FRIAS: We're going through a time where what work means is being redefined, and it's being challenged, right? What worked in the past isn't going to work. And what makes it hard is that no one truly has a playbook.

HSU: Frias says focusing on mental wellness is key to increasing worker engagement and retention. What she's hearing from workers is this.

FRIAS: I still want to engage in the workplace, but I want to do it in a way that is convenient and palatable to my lifestyle.

HSU: The accounting firm where Tanvi Sinha works is trying to find a good balance. People aren't required to be in the office, but managers like Sinha do encourage their teams to come in, and preferably on the same days.

SINHA: Pick a few days. You know, mingle with people. Talk to people.

HSU: Sinha says technology can help. She does set up regular video calls with her team members to check in. But even so, there are pitfalls.

SINHA: Some people who were hired in COVID - I mean, I went to work after a long time, and I couldn't even recognize that this was the person. So that's bad on my part.

HSU: Jim Harter at Gallup says good managers are now more important than ever. They're the ones who can make sure employees know what's expected of them and help employees feel cared for.

https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1150816271

5. HOW TO DEAL WITH ONLINE HARASSMENT — AND PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FUTURE ATTACKS

If you're posting on social media, there's a chance that someday, one of those posts may make you a target of online harassment. The harassment can range from ugly comments to physical threats against your safety, which may cause great emotional distress.

Harlo Holmes, director of digital security and chief information security officer at the Freedom of the Press Foundation, a free speech advocacy organization, and Ra'il I'nasah Kiam, an artist and independent researcher who has personally experienced online attacks, talk to Life Kit about what to do when harassment strikes. They share steps you can take to protect your information and your sense of wellbeing while using the internet. Here are some links to helpful resources online:

- **Identify your situation.** There are many kinds of online harassment, from cyberbullying to hacking to phishing. PEN America, a human rights organization**,** has a glossary of terms that can help you identify what you're going through — and tips on what to do in each situation. For example, if someone is impersonating you online, the group suggests reporting the harassment to the platform on which it appears. PEN America also has guidelines on when to involve law enforcement.
- **Take care of yourself emotionally if you become a target.** Online harassment can make you feel anxious and distressed. This tip sheet from the anti-online harassment group Heartmob offers

advice on how to deal with the mental health effects of being harassed: take a break from online spaces, talk about what happened with trusted friends and family — and remember you are not to blame.

- **Protect yourself from future attacks by strengthening your online privacy.** Make it difficult for hackers to access your accounts and personal information by practicing good "digital hygiene." That includes using complex and unique passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, and securing your messages with encrypted apps. This Life Kit guide on digital privacy has more tips.

https://www.npr.org/2022/06/23/1107226998/how-to-deal-with-online-harassment-and-protect-yourself-from-future-attacks