

- **Target audience:** Corporate leaders and content teams curious about ChatGPT's potential.
- **Appropriate links:** *Listed below blog post*
- **Reader call to action:** ChatGPT can aid your current marketing efforts but be aware of its dangers and limitations.

ChatGPT: The future of marketing? Not without your skills.

7 min. read



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Since launching in November 2022, OpenAI's [ChatGPT](#) has captivated people all over the world with its ability to use artificial intelligence (AI) to generate written content almost instantly. In fact, it took only two months for it to reach 100 million users, making it the [fastest-growing internet application of all time](#).

What began as a consumer-facing product is now on the radar of—and [actively being used](#) by—major corporations.

ChatGPT's ever-growing popularity may have companies chomping at the bit to streamline their marketing and communications efforts through the power of AI-driven content. It may also have those companies' creative teams fearing they could soon be replaced by the tool. Like many things, though, the reality is likely somewhere in the middle.

Yes, ChatGPT has amazing potential in the communications and marketing world—but **it needs skilled, human talent to truly make it work.**

What is ChatGPT?

Before we dive in, ChatGPT, in simple terms, can be considered a question-and-answer robot. Users prompt it to create any kind of text content concerning nearly any subject matter, and ChatGPT will respond in seconds with results. Like many AI platforms it is intended to get smarter over time. Providing follow-up prompts after the initial results should ultimately refine the content to the user's specific needs.

With that description it sounds like a natural fit to help marketers and communications professionals create perfectly tailored deliverables. With all developing technology, though, there is always more than meets the eye.

Let's take a look at what's possible, some cautionary tales, and even take ChatGPT for a spin.

How can ChatGPT aid in marketing?

ChatGPT is robust enough to be tasked with creating any marketing need: From taglines to slogans, emails to blog posts, and even full scripts for commercials.

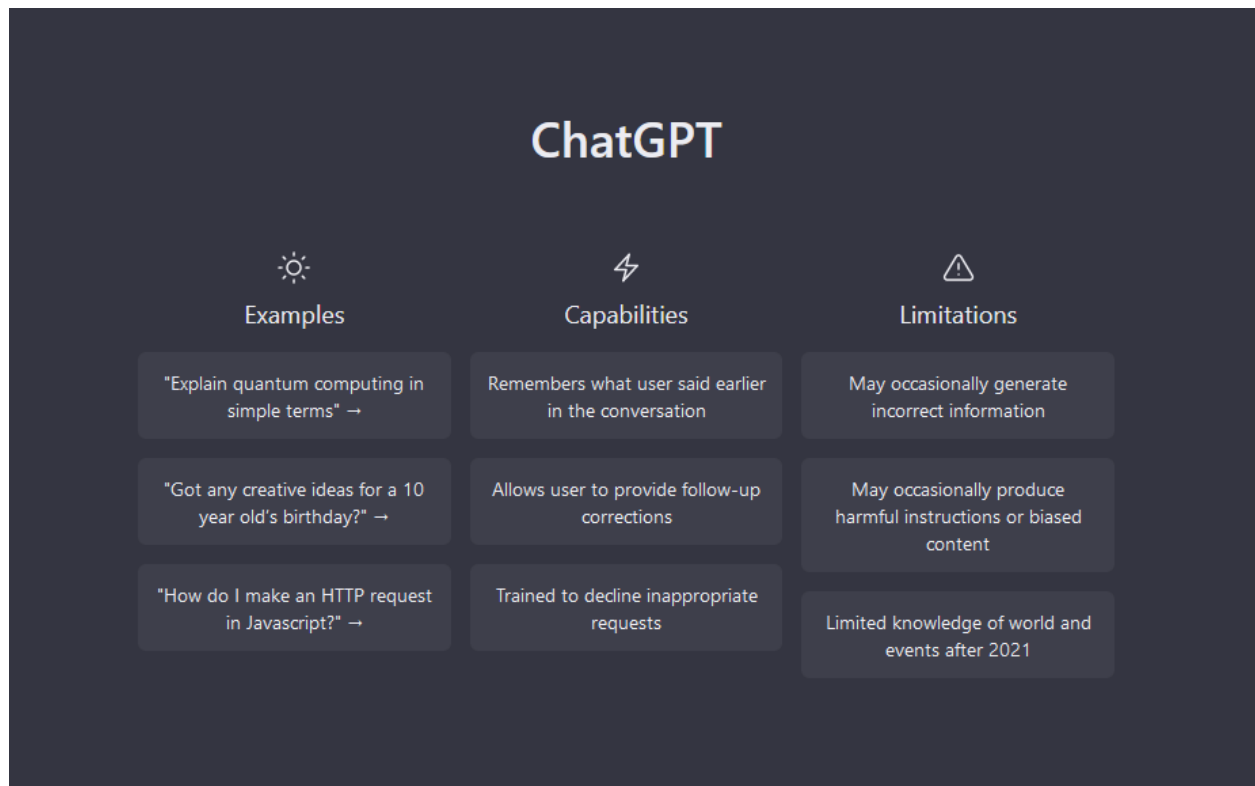
The power behind these offerings, according to OpenAI's [ChatGPT FAQ page](#), is that developers programmed ChatGPT with copious amounts data and text created by people, aiming to ultimately provide content that OpenAI says "may sound human-like."

The phrase "may sound human-like," might not inspire confidence in companies hoping to fully rely on the new technology. That's because ChatGPT simply isn't a person, and it can only go so far in attempting to replicate what a conversation sounds like between two people, or, in a marketer's case, a brand and a potential customer.

Because ChatGPT cannot guarantee its results will perfectly mimic human conversation, **it is necessary for any user to fully vet all generated results**. OpenAI is clear about this fact. When a user opens a ChatGPT chat window they are greeted with a screen that includes the following warnings:

- May occasionally generate incorrect information
- May occasionally produce harmful instructions or biased content
- Limited knowledge of world and events after 2021

Despite these caveats, some big names in business and academia have already been burned by careless use.



Screenshot of ChatGPT's splash page, warning of its limitations

Cautionary tale: CNET

In January 2023, it was revealed that the major tech news outlet CNET had quietly published dozens of articles using AI-generated text. Futurism.com, which [closely followed and reported on the discovery](#), found the articles contained errors and even passages [plagiarized from other sources](#).

The articles also did not outwardly proclaim they were AI-driven. Futurism.com reported that only when a reader clicked on the human-sounding byline of *CNET Money Staff* would they see the disclaimer, "This article was assisted by an AI engine and reviewed, fact-checked and edited by our editorial staff."

However, with the discrepancies discovered by Futurism.com, it appeared CNET's editors may not have fact-checked as deeply as they could have.

Additionally, while CNET *technically* disclosed the articles were automated, the fact it was hidden behind an extra click could be considered a violation of journalism ethics.

Cautionary tale: Vanderbilt University

On February 16, 2023, Vanderbilt University's Peabody Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) sent students an email statement condemning a mass shooting on Michigan State University's campus earlier in the week and implored readers to come together as a community.

While the email shared a compassionate message, its final line caused a controversy at the Nashville, Tennessee school. The statement closed with an admission that the whole thing was [“\[paraphrased\] from OpenAI’s ChatGPT.”](#)

Vanderbilt’s student newspaper [shared reaction from students](#) whom found the choice to use AI to craft this kind of message insensitive.

It reported one student saying, “There is a sick and twisted irony to making a computer write your message about community and togetherness because you can’t be bothered to reflect on it yourself.”

The Peabody EDI office has since apologized for what it has called “poor judgment.”

Watch what you share

As we learn from the misjudgments of CNET and Vanderbilt about double-checking results and thinking on how they may be publicly perceived, we must also not lose sight of the fact that ChatGPT conversations are **never** private.

OpenAI does not mince words in its ChatGPT FAQ that “conversations may be reviewed by our AI trainers to improve our systems.”

If a company staffer carelessly makes a ChatGPT prompt that includes proprietary information or trade secrets, OpenAI may record that data and include it in future generated results for **any** public user. To this point, OpenAI cautions, “[W]e are not able to delete specific prompts from your history. Please don’t share any sensitive information in your conversations.”

Cracking down

When Futurism.com investigated those AI-generated CNET articles, they also reported the pieces seemed to primarily exist as search engine optimization (SEO) vehicles to draw more visitors to CNET, using popular search keywords. Before anyone else gets the idea to copy this strategy, Google has maintained that it already demotes or removes [“spammy automatically-generated content”](#) from search results. Combining that with the fact that Google views ChatGPT [as a competitor to its own AI-based efforts](#), marketers using AI-generated content unchecked could eventually see their efforts be all for naught.

Also on the scene are a slew of independently-created [bots](#) that [claim](#) to [tell the difference](#) between text written by a person and text created by AI. OpenAI has released [an automated text detector](#), as well. Just like how ChatGPT will get smarter the more it is used, these detector bots will do the same, putting more pressure on communicators to make sure their content is unique.

Testing ChatGPT’s marketing muscle

Just how versatile of a marketing tool is ChatGPT?

After taking the cautionary tales and potential risks into account, we decided to put it to the test and see if it could help us create a campaign for a hypothetical new product; a hybrid-powered minivan.

ChatGPT responded to our prompt in less than 30 seconds.

USER: *Create a slogan for a hybrid minivan, targeting growing families in the Northeastern region of the United States.*

CHATGPT: *"Experience the power of efficiency on your family's Northeastern adventure - Drive the Hybrid Minivan!"*

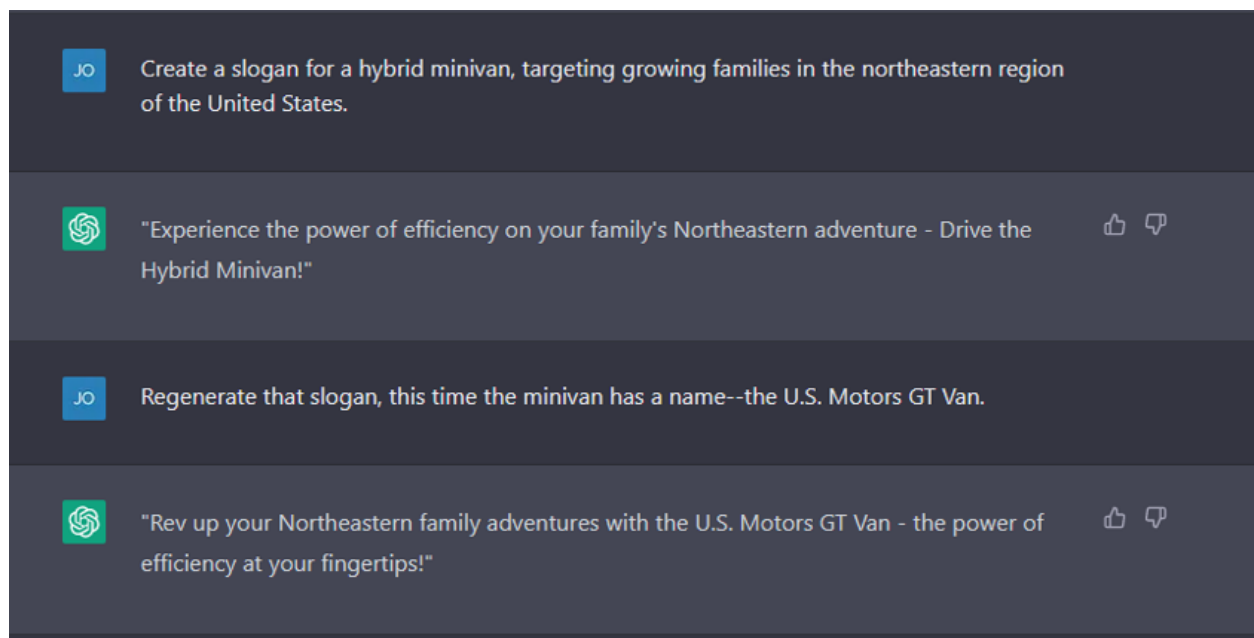
The result certainly read like a slogan, but its generic language wouldn't blow any marketing experts away—or probably sell many minivans. We stepped things up by giving the van a name.

USER: *Regenerate that slogan, this time the minivan has a name--the U.S. Motors GT Van.*

CHATGPT: *"Rev up your Northeastern family adventures with the U.S. Motors GT Van - the power of efficiency at your fingertips!"*

It spiced the language up a bit, but still had trouble finding relevance for the geographical parameter we set for the Northeastern United States.

From these results, it appears ChatGPT focuses on the specific details of a prompt to make its generated content as unique as possible. Users can also influence the content by giving ChatGPT's results a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" if the results aren't to the users' liking. Selecting the appropriate thumb reaction then asks users for feedback on what the tool can do to improve that result.



Screenshot of conversation with ChatGPT regarding a hypothetical marketing campaign for a minivan

For one final test, we added more specificity and asked it to attempt a social media post.

USER: *Create an Instagram caption for the U.S. Motors GT Van. The post will have a picture of the van with a family of five (mother, father, 2 daughters, a son) and a pet Golden Retriever.*

CHATGPT: "Make unforgettable family memories with the U.S. Motors GT Van - perfect for every adventure, big or small. Even our furry friends love the comfort and space! 🚐 🐾
#familyadventures #hybridminivan #USMotorsGTVan"

The added details in this prompt improved the results. ChatGPT referenced “family memories” and adventuring, included the minivan’s brand name, and picked up on the mention of a pet. Finally, it included relevant emojis and hashtags, reminiscent of many Instagram posts.

Again, the language is not perfect or something you would go to market with, but since ChatGPT gets smarter as the conversation continues it does provide a decent sounding board or opportunity to test concepts.

Wrapping it up

Based on the attention it has received in just a few months, it can be theorized the influence of ChatGPT on text-based content will only continue to grow.

When it comes to the current and future states of marketing, however, with great tools come great responsibility.

As ChatGPT becomes more intelligent and can generate increasingly specific and relevant wording, it will be up to the professionals and companies using the service to do their due diligence in checking the tool’s results for accuracy of facts, syntax and grammar, as well as if the language hasn’t been pilfered from somewhere else.

Because if they don’t, there will be plenty of automated tools ready to flag content that reads anything less than human.

ChatGPT may one day be writing our copy for us—but it’s going to take a skilled communicator to steer the ship.

Relevant Links

(in order of appearance in blog post)

1. ChatGPT website: <https://chat.openai.com/>
2. “ChatGPT reaches 100 million users two months after launch”. *The Guardian*:
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/feb/02/chatgpt-100-million-users-open-ai-fastest-growing-app>
3. “Companies Tap Tech Behind ChatGPT to Make Customer-Service Chatbots Smarter”. *The Wall Street Journal*: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/companies-tap-tech-behind-chatgpt-to-make-customer-service-chatbots-smarter-11674509622>
4. OpenAI’s ChatGPT FAQ: <https://help.openai.com/en/articles/6783457-chatgpt-general-faq>
5. “CNET IS QUIETLY PUBLISHING ENTIRE ARTICLES GENERATED BY AI”. *Futurism.com*:
<https://futurism.com/the-byte/cnet-publishing-articles-by-ai>

6. "CNET's AI Journalist Appears to Have Committed Extensive Plagiarism". *Futurism.com*: <https://futurism.com/cnet-ai-plagiarism>
7. "After Michigan shooting, one university used ChatGPT to offer help to students. It backfired". *The Los Angeles Times*: <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2023-02-22/vanderbilt-university-apologizes-chatgpt-email-michigan-state-shooting>
8. "Peabody EDI Office responds to MSU shooting with email written using ChatGPT". *The Vanderbilt Hustler*: <https://vanderbilthustler.com/2023/02/17/peabody-edi-office-responds-to-msu-shooting-with-email-written-using-chatgpt/>
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13. Writer.com AI Content Detector website: <https://writer.com/ai-content-detector/>
14. "ChatGPT maker OpenAI comes up with a way to check if text was written by a human". *CNBC*: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/31/openai-launches-classifier-for-text-written-by-ai-after-chatgpt-buzz.html>