

[< View all Press](#)

# Convenience Drives Teen Generative AI Use While Loss of Critical Thinking Emerges as Top Fear

Topic:

Press Release



Family Online Safety Institute



November 10, 2025



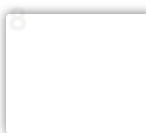
## FAMILY ONLINE SAFETY INSTITUTE



# Generative AI in Uncertain Times: How Teens are Navigating a New Digital Frontier

**PRESS RELEASE**

*An independent publication by the*  
**FAMILY ONLINE SAFETY INSTITUTE**



## New U.S. research from the Family Online Safety Institute reveals how older teens are using, understanding, and feeling about generative AI

**Washington, D.C. – November 10, 2025** — As generative AI transforms everyday life, a new study from the [Family Online Safety Institute \(FOSI\)](#) shows how older teens are engaging with these tools and what they see as the benefits and risks.

The report, [Generative AI and Uncertain Times: How Teens Are Navigating a New Digital Frontier](#), focuses on teens ages 15 to 18 and their use of generative AI tools. Based on focus group discussions and a national survey of 1,000 U.S. teen generative AI users, the study provides an early look at how the next generation relates to this technology at school, at home, and in social settings.

*“Generative AI is reshaping how young people learn, create, and communicate,” said [Alanna Powers-O’Brien](#), co-author of the report “This research highlights both opportunity and challenge. Teens are curious and resourceful, and they need clear guidance, responsible design, and a voice in shaping the digital future.”*

### Key Findings

- **45%** of teen generative AI users engage with these tools more than once a week.
- **Convenience (30%)** and **speed (18%)** are the most cited benefits.
- Concerns about generative AI are relatively evenly distributed. **Loss of critical thinking skills (19%)** is the top concern, followed by **impact on future generations (15%)**.
- **42%** have talked about their feelings with a generative AI chatbot.
- **60%** say they feel safe while using generative AI, but **44%** say generative AI’s behaviors “freak them out.”
- **54%** believe young people should be involved in the design of GenAI tools.
- **57%** report that their parents do not have rules about GenAI use.

The data reveal differences by gender and identity. Teen girls are more likely to worry about generative AI’s potential erosion of critical thinking skills, but are also more likely to value its convenience. Teen boys are more likely to see accuracy as a benefit of the technology, but worry about potential impacts on the job market. LGBTQ+ teens are

more likely to talk about their feelings with chatbots. Members of this community also tend to have greater privacy and safety concerns.

## Global Implications

Findings point to practical steps for key stakeholders:

- **Parents:** Start open conversations, set household boundaries, and learn alongside teens.
- **Industry:** Design with youth, not just for them. Make safety, transparency, and privacy the default.
- **Policymakers:** Use evidence-based approaches that balance innovation and protection. Establish baseline standards and invest in media and digital literacy.

*“Understanding how teens think and feel about generative AI is essential to building the right policies and protections,” said [Andrew Zack](#), Senior Policy Manager. “Their perspectives can guide more thoughtful, inclusive, and effective solutions.”*

## About the Research

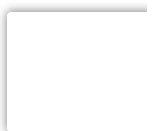
This mixed-methods study includes four focus groups, three youth reflection sessions, and a national survey of 1,000 U.S. teens who used generative AI in the past six months. Qualitative data collection was conducted with [In Tandem](#). Quantitative data collection was conducted by [TeenVoice](#).

## About the Family Online Safety Institute

The [Family Online Safety Institute \(FOSI\)](#) unites leaders in industry, government, and the nonprofit sector to create solutions that promote a safer and more positive digital world for children and families. Through research, resources, and advocacy, FOSI works globally to make the online world safer for kids and families. Learn more at [www.fosi.org](http://www.fosi.org).

Download the full report: [GenAI and Uncertain Times: How Teens Are Navigating a New Digital Frontier](#)

###



## Media Contact:

Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI)

amy@fosi.org | [www.fosi.org](http://www.fosi.org) | 480-201-6733



### About

[About FOSI](#)

[Team](#)

[Events](#)

[Press](#)

[Contact](#)

### For Caregivers

[Good Digital Parenting](#)

[Online Safety Resources](#)

### For Practitioners

[Policy](#)

[Research](#)

### Join FOSI

[Careers](#)

[Members](#)

## Join our Mailing List

Receive the latest on online security news, research and upcoming events.



**[Privacy Policy](#)** | **[Cookie Policy](#)** | **[Manage Cookies](#)**

© 2026 "FOSI" and "Family Online Safety Institute" are trademarks of FOSI-US registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. ESRB® Certified

The Family Online Safety Institute is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. EIN: [82-2774079](#)

