



THE STATE OF AI · 2026

State of AI: How and why users choose LLMs

From the tasks people trust AI with to how often they turn to it and why they pick one tool over another, Lorka AI surveyed 1,000 US adults to uncover how free and paid users are really using AI today.

SAMPLE

1,000 US adults

REGION

United States

FIELDWORK

4–9 June 2026

Methodology statement

This research was conducted via a quantitative online survey commissioned by Lorka AI and carried out by OnePoll between 4th and 9th June 2026. A total of 1,000 US adults were surveyed on their AI usage habits, including what they use AI for, how many AI models they use, how often they use AI, and their reasons for choosing a particular AI tool.

Key takeaways

35%

of Americans use AI tools regularly

\$47.88

is the average monthly spend on AI tools and subscriptions

59%

use AI for research or learning, which is the most common use case

61%

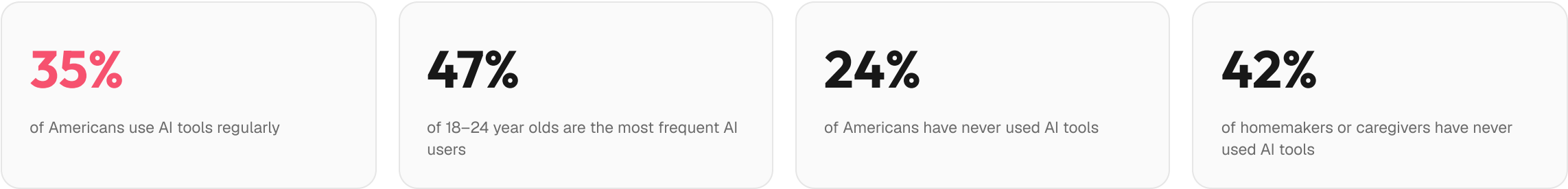
of users plan to use AI the same or more over the next 12 months

Frequency of AI use

35% of Americans use AI tools regularly, but the number jumps to 47% among 18–24 year olds



■ Use AI regularly 35% ■ Use occasionally 20% ■ Use infrequently 13% ■ Tried, but don't use anymore 8% ■ Never used AI tools 24%



Number of tools used

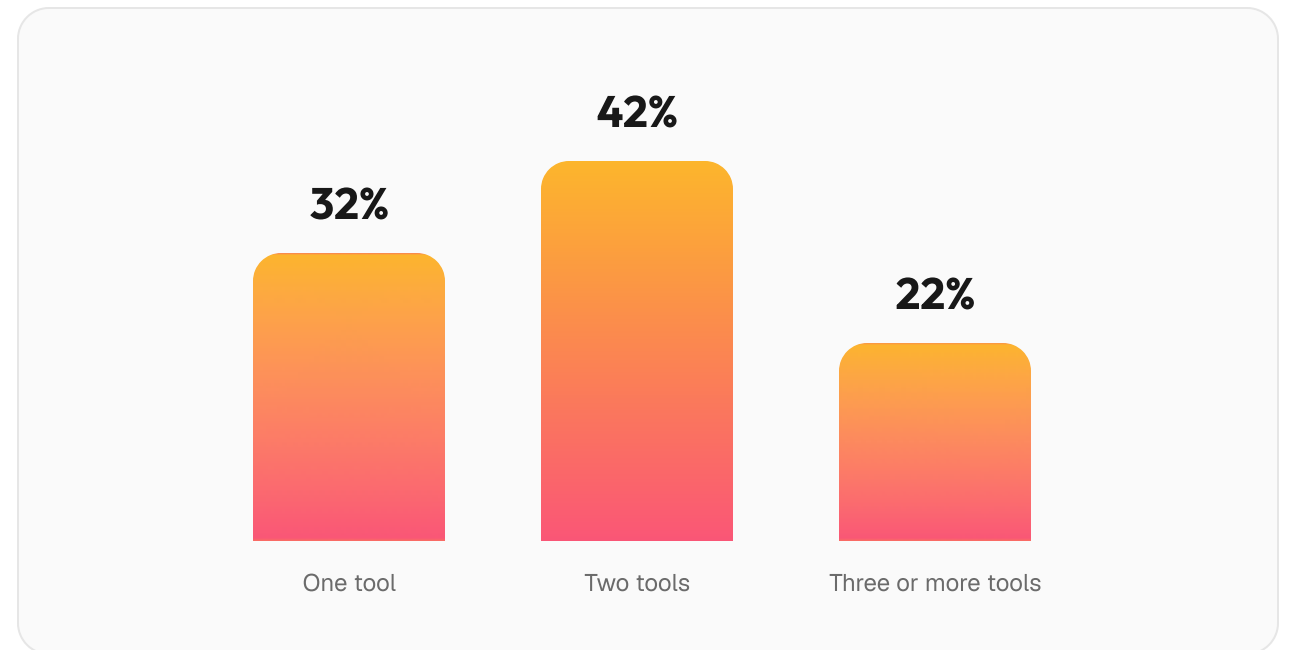
Nearly a third of users (32%) stick to a single AI tool, while more than a fifth (22%) juggle three or more.

2.0

is the average number of AI tools used by regular or occasional users

22%

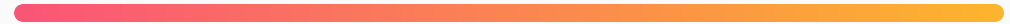
of AI users rely on three or more tools



What people use AI for

People most often turn to AI to learn, with research and learning as the most common use cases, well ahead of writing, wellness, creative tasks, and casual conversation.

Research or learning 59%



Rises to 72% among over-65s

Writing or editing 36%



Health or wellness information 33%



Entertainment or casual conversation 31%



Rises to 43% among 45–54-year-olds

Creative projects 31%



59%

use AI for research or learning, which is the most common use case

72%

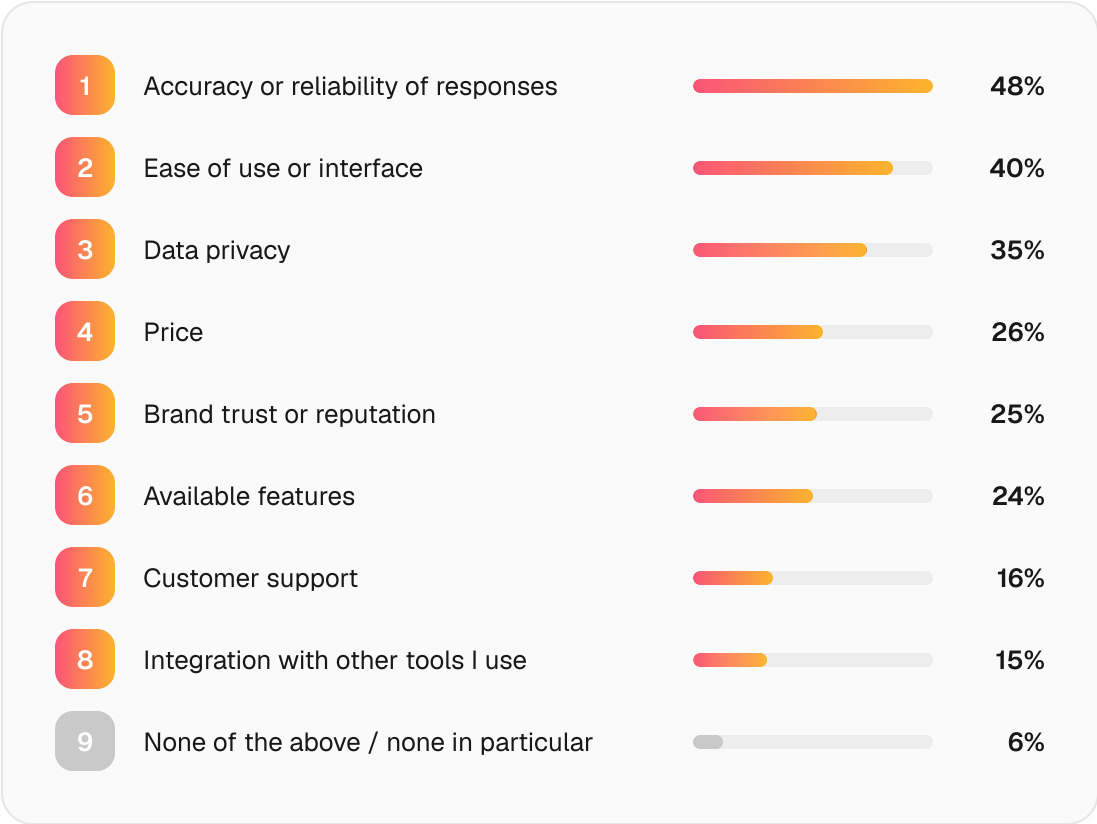
of over-65s use AI for research or learning

42%

18–24-year-olds use AI for work or professional tasks

Factors that matter most when choosing an AI tool

Accuracy or reliability (48%) is the top factor when choosing an AI tool, followed by ease of use (40%) and data privacy (35%).



48%

say accuracy or reliability matters most when choosing an AI tool

40%

prioritize ease of use when choosing an AI tool

21%

of full-time employees value integration with other tools

AI Spending



is the average monthly spend on AI tools and subscriptions

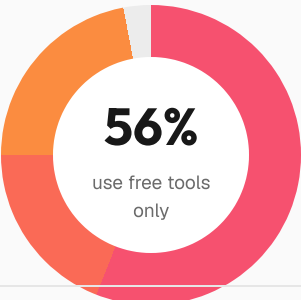


is the average monthly spend among full-time employees



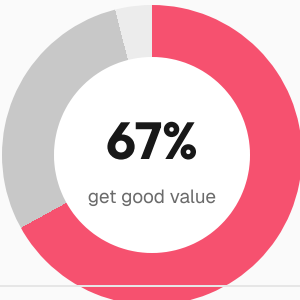
is the average monthly spend among households earning \$100,000+

FREE VS. PAID USERS



- Free tools only / don't pay 56%
- Spend \$1–\$19 per month 19%
- Spend \$20 or more per month 22%

VALUE PERCEPTION

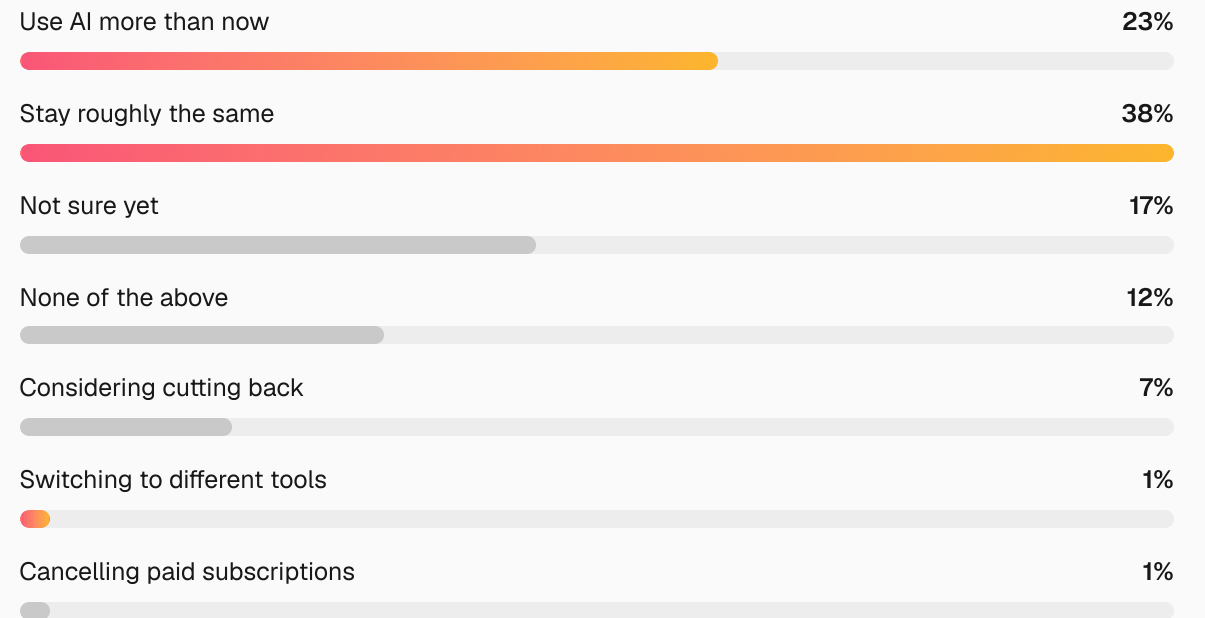


- Get good value for what they pay 67%
- Pay too much for what they use 15%
- Could be getting more for what they pay 14%

User plans for the year ahead

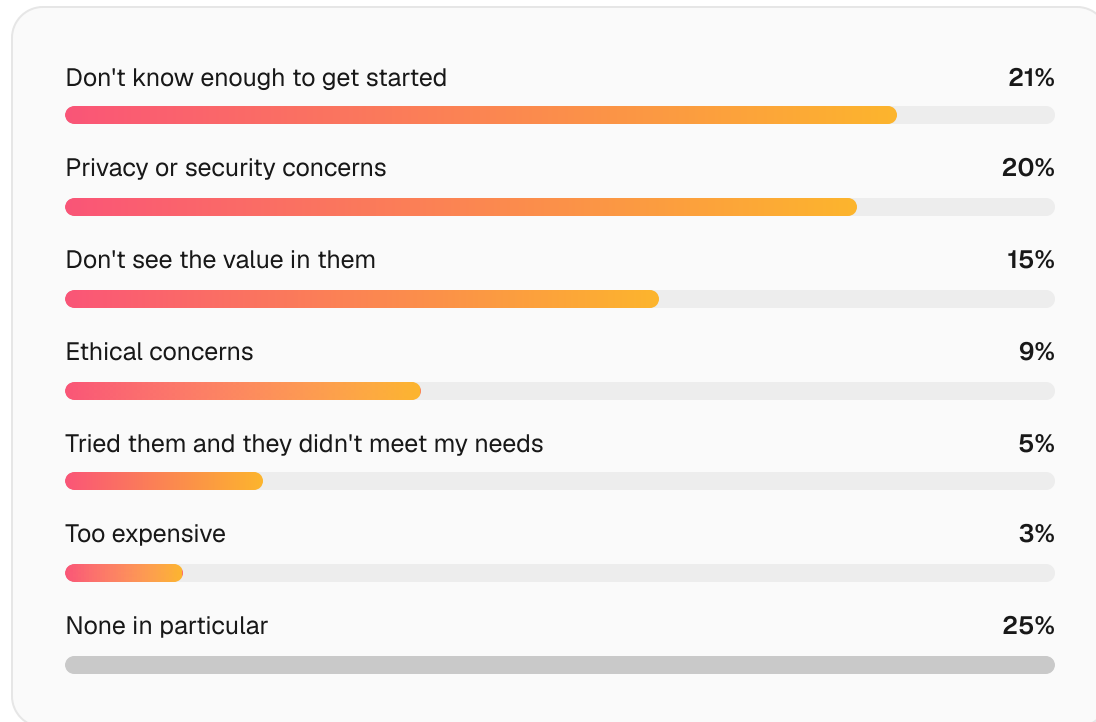
61%

61% of users plan to use AI the same or more over the next 12 months, while just 7% are considering cutting back on their AI usage.



Why some are staying away from AI

Among the 24% of Americans who don't use AI, the top barriers aren't cost or ethics. Non-AI users do not know where to start (21%) and do not see the value (15%).



21%

don't use AI because they don't know enough to get started

20%

cite privacy or security concerns

15%

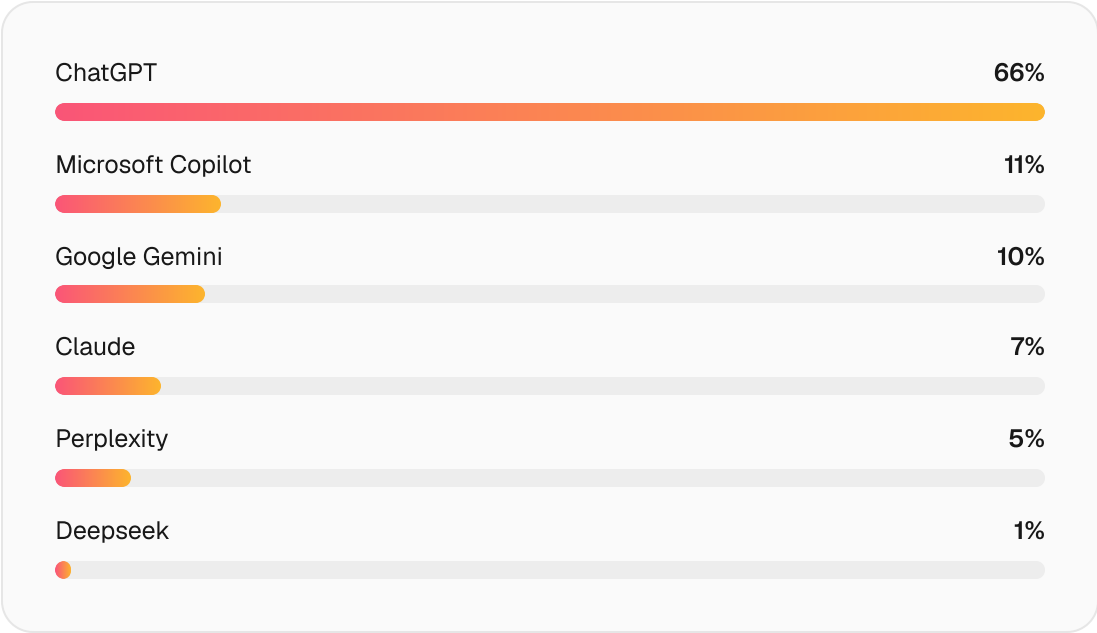
say they don't see the value in AI tools

9%

have ethical concerns

2025-2026 AI LLM Usage Trends in the US

ChatGPT still leads US AI chatbot usage at 66%, followed by Microsoft Copilot (11%), Google Gemini (10%), Claude (7%), Perplexity (5%), and Deepseek (1%).

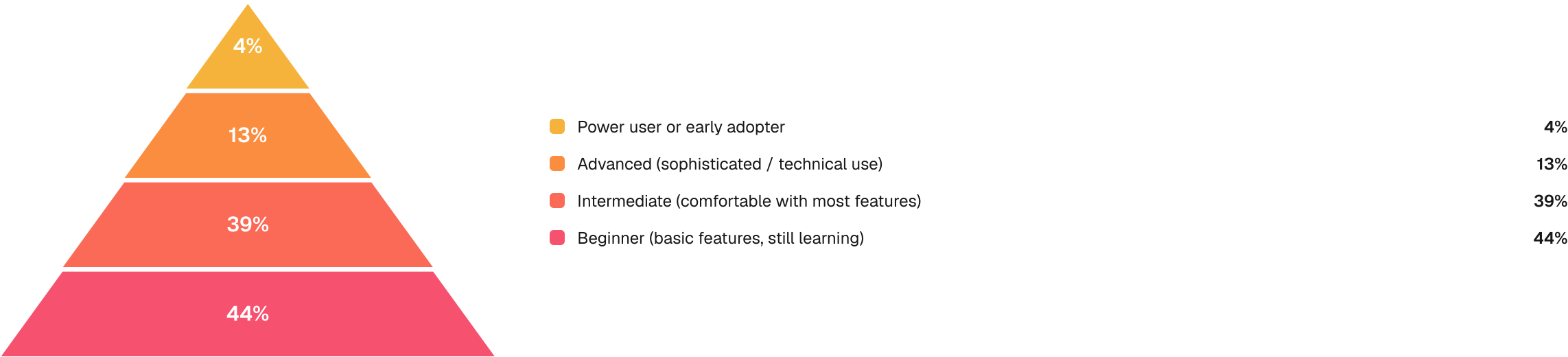


Source: Statcounter: AI Chatbot Market Share in United States Of America - June 2026

In the last year, ChatGPT's US market share dropped from 76% to 66% as users are changing to a multi-model approach, with Claude rising to nearly 7% and Google Gemini exceeding 10%.

Experience level

Among those who use AI at least infrequently, most describe themselves as beginners or intermediate users.



Spend by segment

Monthly spend on AI tools and subscriptions varies sharply by gender, employment and household income.

