



INSIGHT PAPER

How Students View and Use **AI** ✨ in College Search

Insights from a Survey of **5,000+** High School Students



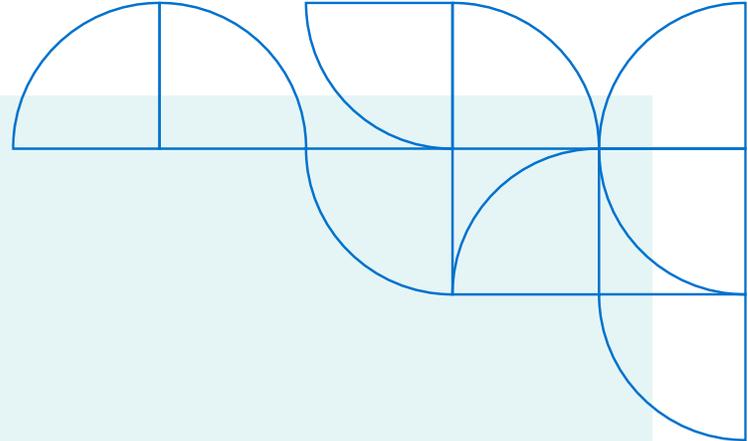


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Executive Overview



Preparing for the AI-Native Student

Gen Z is often described as the first generation of digital natives, and Gen Alpha is on track to become the first generation of true AI natives. As AI tools become a part of students' daily lives, they are also beginning to shape how students search for colleges, evaluate institutions, and think about their future education and careers. At the same time, colleges are weighing how to use AI to deliver more personalized experiences at scale without undermining trust or authenticity. This report provides a snapshot of how today's students use AI, how they feel about its growing role, and where uncertainty remains—offering enrollment leaders perspective into students' evolving expectations in an AI-shaped information environment.



About the 2025 AI Survey

5,095

High school students surveyed

40

Questions asked

Questions Included:

- How are students using AI in daily life and in college search?
- Where do students express confidence, concern, or uncertainty about AI?
- How is AI shaping how students discover and evaluate colleges?
- How do students respond to colleges' use of AI in communications?
- How do students view AI's impact on learning, careers, and college value?

For more details about the survey and participant profile, refer to p. 23 of this report.



AI in Daily Life

SECTION

1

Students Are Quickly Adapting to AI Tools

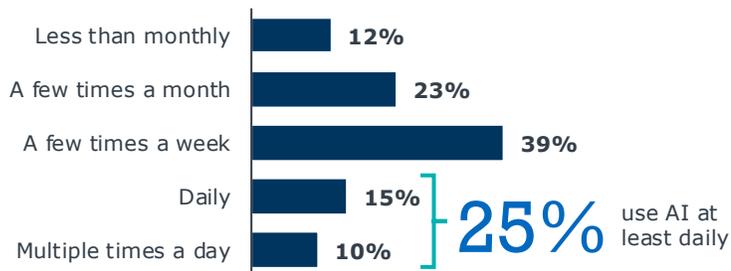
AI Has Rapidly Become a Regular Part of Students' Daily Lives

Although generative AI tools are relatively new, they have already become a routine part of daily life for most high school students. Eighty-nine percent of our survey participants have used AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity. Among those users, almost two-thirds use AI at least a few times a week, including one in four who use it daily or multiple times per day. This level of regular use suggests that AI has moved quickly from experimentation to habit.

Given how frequently students choose to engage with these tools, it's not surprising that overall sentiment about experiences with AI skews positive. A majority of students report favorable experiences with AI, while more than a third express neutral views and very few report negative reactions.

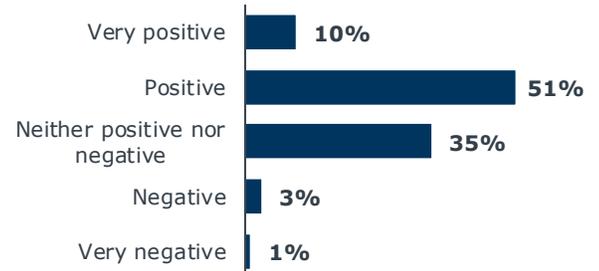
Students Use AI Tools Frequently

Q: How often do you use AI tools for any purpose? (n = 4,522)



Experiences with AI Skew Positive

Q: How would you rate your overall experience using AI? (n = 4,522)

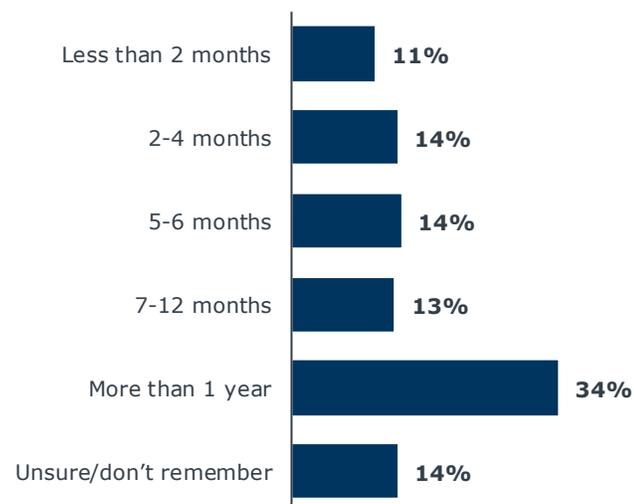


Students Are Still Moderately Early in Their AI Learning Curve

Even as AI use becomes routine, many students are still building their skills. Nearly four in ten report using AI for six months or less, and most describe their proficiency as intermediate or beginner rather than advanced. Fewer than one in five say they use AI regularly and effectively, and only a small share identify as experts. Taken together, these patterns suggest that many students are still early in their learning curve, leaving room for AI use to evolve quickly as students gain experience and experiment with new ways to apply these tools.

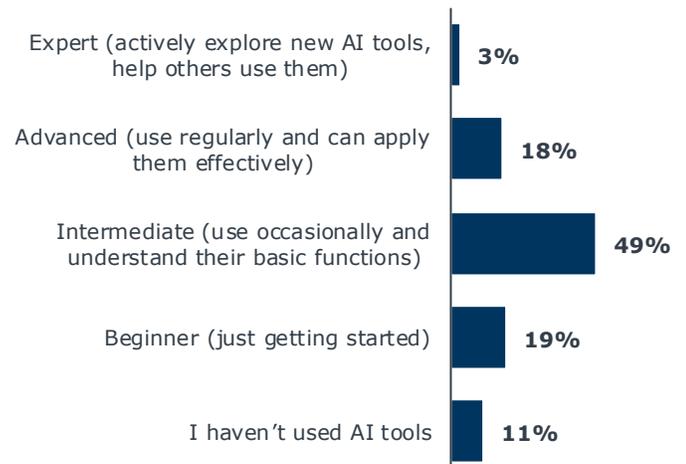
39% of Students Have Used AI for 6 Months or Less

Q: How long have you been using AI tools? (n = 4,522)



Students Report Intermediate Skill Level

Q: How would you rate your current skill level with using AI tools? (n = 5,095)



AI Is More a Thought Partner than an Encyclopedia

Students Use AI to Help Them Think Through Problems and Ideas

When students turn to AI, they are often looking for help with thinking, not just answers. The two most common use cases, helping with homework and brainstorming ideas, were both cited by more than half of students, reflecting AI's role in sense-making and ideation. While just over one-third of students report using AI to look up facts or trivia, most reported use cases involve higher-order support, such as exploring options, refining ideas, or working through uncertainty. Notably, more than a third of students use AI for advice, underscoring that students increasingly turn to tools such as ChatGPT to reason through decisions, generate perspective, and move forward when they feel stuck.

Top AI Use Cases Center Around Sense-Making and Ideation

Q: For what purposes have you used AI? (Select all that apply.) (n = 4,522)

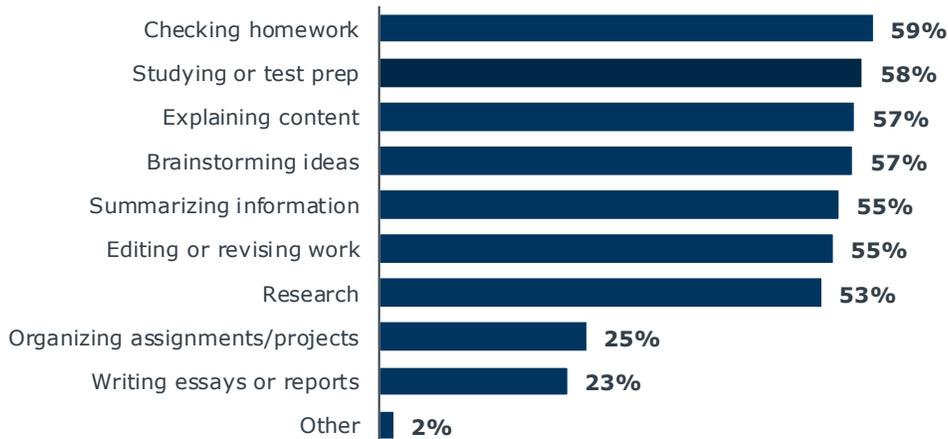


Schoolwork Use of AI Centers on Brainstorming and Learning Support

This pattern extends to how students use AI for schoolwork as well. Students most often report using AI to verify their understanding, clarify concepts, and refine their thinking, with the most common use cases including checking homework accuracy, studying or test preparation, explaining content, and brainstorming. These activities emphasize sense-making rather than bypassing academic work. Still, a notable minority of students (23%) report using AI to write essays or reports. It's also worth noting that students do not report clear consensus or guidance from teachers on how to use AI. A majority say teacher guidance on AI use varies, while nearly a quarter report being discouraged from using it altogether.

Students Report a Variety of Uses for AI in Schoolwork

Q: How have you used AI for schoolwork? (Select all that apply.) (n = 4,522)



Students Remain Somewhat Wary of AI

Students Approach AI with Cautious Curiosity

Even as AI use becomes more common, students' emotional responses reflect a balance of interest and unease. Skepticism is the most frequently cited feeling, followed closely by curiosity and concern, signaling that many students are still assessing whether, and to what extent, these tools are trustworthy. A substantial share of students also report feeling apprehensive or neutral. One major source of concern is grounded in practical considerations: Most students say they trust AI-generated information only "somewhat." Other major concerns included the ethical and responsible use of AI and its environmental impact.

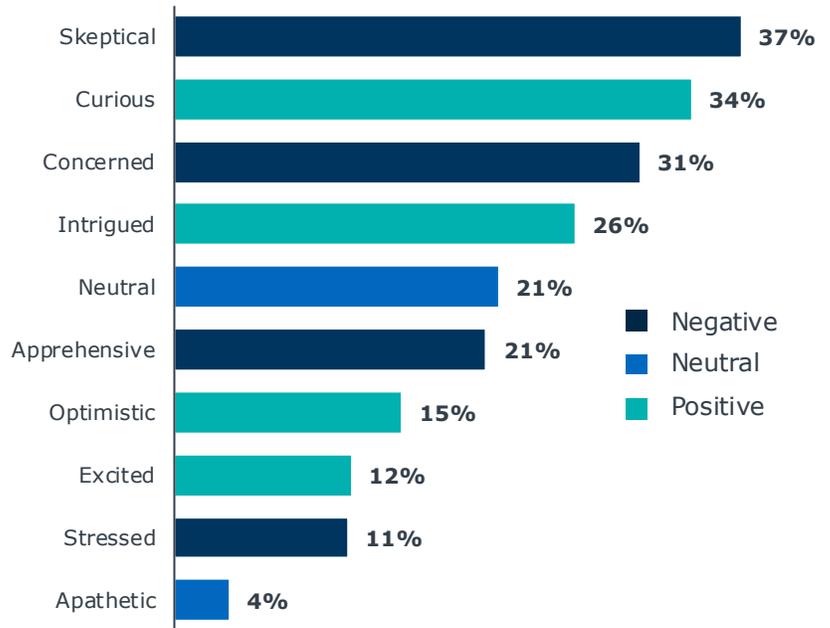
Students of Color Show Greater Openness to AI

Students of color are more likely than their White peers to express positive associations with AI. This pattern aligns with prior EAB research showing that students of color are more likely to rely on digital channels, particularly social media, when gathering information about colleges. Taken together, these findings suggest that greater familiarity with digitally mediated information environments may shape how students of color perceive and adopt AI tools. For colleges, this underscores the importance of engaging students through the digital channels they already trust and use.

"I'm concerned for the misuse of AI, but happy that it can actually be helpful in some situations."

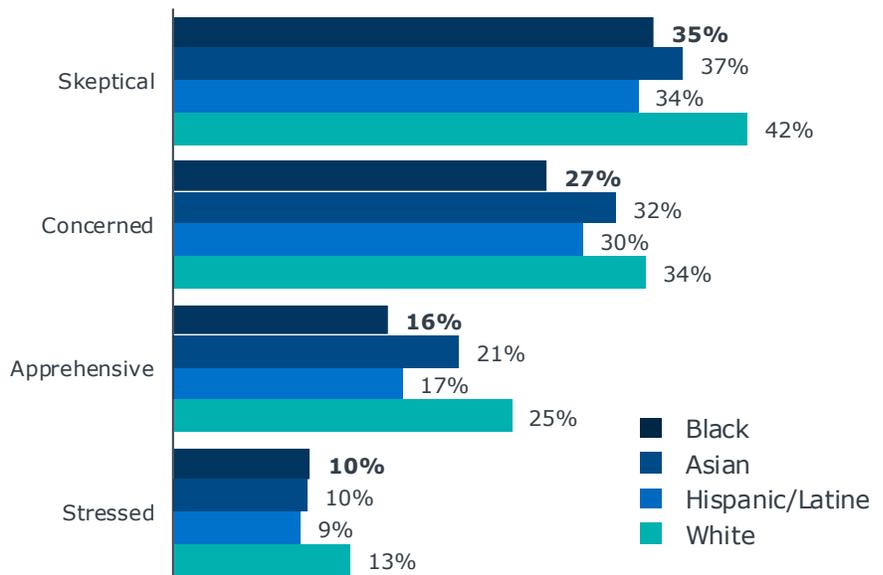
Mixed Feelings About AI

Q: When you think about using AI, which of the following words best describe how you feel? (Select all that apply.) (n = 5,095)



Students of Color Tend to Have Less Negative Associations

Q: When you think about using AI, which of the following words best describe how you feel? (Select all that apply.) (n = 5,095)





AI in College Search

SECTION

2

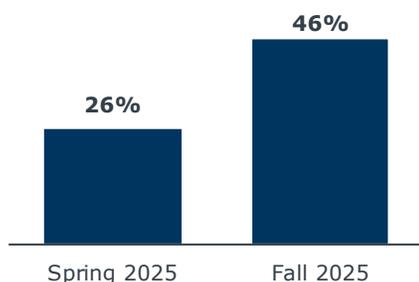
AI Shapes College Search—More than Students Realize

A Surge in AI Usage, Despite Lagging Trust

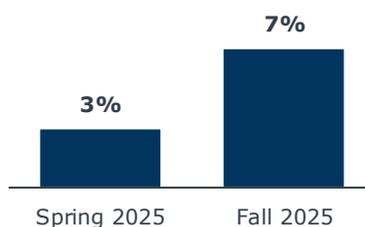
Given that AI tools have become rapidly embedded in daily life, it's not surprising that they are increasingly shaping college search as well. What stands out, however, is the speed of adoption: Reported use of AI in college search rose from 26% in spring 2025 to 46% by the end of the year. Over the same period, the share of students who name AI tools as one of their most trusted sources to provide accurate information has grown from 3% to 7%. While trust in AI lags behind that of other sources, the rapid relative increase in trust of AI sources is notable. For enrollment leaders, the key takeaway is clear: AI is rapidly reshaping how students discover and evaluate colleges, and institutions must adapt their digital strategies accordingly.

Growth in AI Usage and Trust in College Search

Share of Students **Using AI Tools**



Share of Students Reporting AI Tools as Their Top 1 or 2 **Most Trusted Resources**

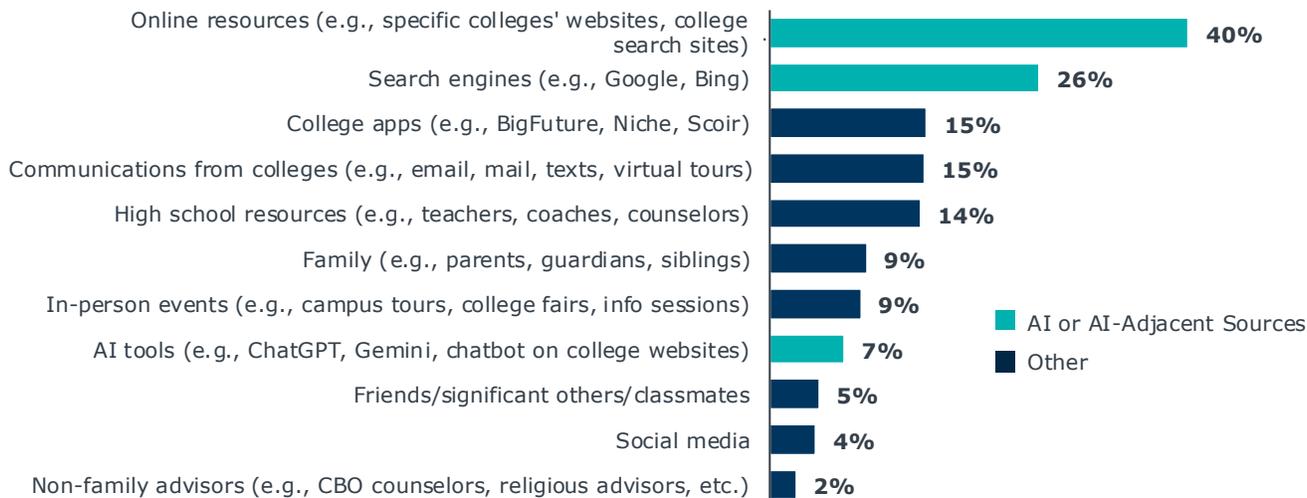


AI Shapes Search from the Very First Touchpoint

It's important to note that AI's role in college search extends well beyond explicit use of tools such as ChatGPT. Students' earliest points of contact, including search engines, college websites, and online college search platforms, are increasingly shaped by AI-driven ranking, personalization, and content generation, even when students do not perceive these sources as "AI." As a result, AI influences what information students encounter from the start of their search, often invisibly. For enrollment leaders, this dynamic heightens the importance of managing digital presence and content strategy. Students' first impressions are being filtered, summarized, and prioritized by AI systems long before they engage directly with an institution.

AI Influence in College Search Extends Beyond LLMs

Q: When you start looking for information about a specific school, who or what are your first points of contact? (Select up to two.) (n = 3,987)



Students Use AI as a Surrogate for Real-World Advisors

AI Is Influencing Real College Search Decisions

AI tools are increasingly shaping how students think about their college options, playing an influential role in decision-making that often resembles guidance from parents or counselors. More than half of students say AI has made their college search easier, and one in four report having an ongoing conversation with AI about their search. AI is also affecting concrete outcomes, with roughly one-third of students saying they discovered a school they had not previously considered through AI, a similar share reporting increased interest based on AI-supported research, and nearly one in five removing a school from consideration due to information surfaced by AI.

In free-response answers, students described using AI in a range of creative ways during college search, as detailed on the following page. Many highlighted AI's ability to generate highly personalized comparisons across schools, a use case echoed in the survey data, with 62% using AI to find schools that are a good fit and 48% using it to research application requirements. At the same time, students frequently noted that AI-generated information could be inaccurate or inconsistent with official college websites, underscoring the need for institutions to ensure that core information is clear, current, and easy for AI tools to interpret.

How AI Is Changing Search

56%

of students say using AI has **made their search easier**

25%

of students have an **"ongoing conversation with AI"** about their college search

34%

of students say their **interest in a school has grown** because of AI research

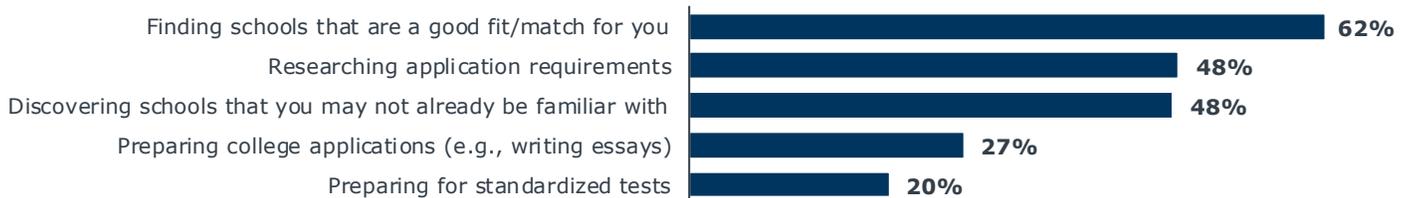
18%

of students have **removed a school from their list** because of results from AI search

"I appreciate how the [ChatGPT] chat box is like messages, **it feels like an actual admissions officer** is communicating with me through text."

Students Use AI Tools for a Variety of Tasks in Search

Q: In what ways, if any, have you used AI for your college search? (Select all that apply.) Asked of students who use AI in college search. (n = 1,677)



Increased Self-Directed Research Raises the Stakes for College Websites

AI's growing influence reflects a shift toward more self-directed college research. In 2025, only 66% of students reported consulting parents for college information, down from 73% in 2021, signaling a move away from peak parental involvement during the pandemic. As students increasingly navigate the search on their own, often with help from AI, colleges face higher stakes for digital accuracy. Much of what students see through AI-driven search comes directly from institutional websites, which makes clear, current, and well-structured information essential to shaping early impressions.

EAB helps institutions ensure their most important .edu content remains discoverable, even as AI changes how students search. To learn more, visit eab.com/digital-agency.

In Students' Own Words: Popular Uses of AI in Search

Analysis of 1,800+ Free-Response Answers

Students describe using AI in a variety of creative and practical ways throughout the college search process, from discovering schools and comparing options to managing application details. The examples below highlight how students explain AI's role in helping them navigate college search.



Creating School Lists

- "I asked AI to find colleges that are in **California**, have **Computer Engineering**, are **safety and reach** schools, and that work with my **parents' income**/financial aid index number."
- "I asked AI about colleges that have **low tuition**, what schools **I can get into** with my stats, and what **scholarship programs** are available **that I might qualify for**."
- "**Based on what you know about me**, what colleges would you recommend I apply for?"



Comparing Institutions

- "AI has helped me to narrow down my college search and **compare/contrast specific aspects** of various schools."
- "I have asked AI to compare two schools that I was having **difficulty choosing between**. Of course, I double checked the information it outputted and most of it checked out!"
- "**Pros and cons** of this college compared to this one and **how easy is each college to finish**."



Assessing School Fit

- "I asked for a **day in the life** of a student."
- "[I asked ChatGPT to] **look at comments/chats from students** enrolled there and **describe the vibe**."
- "I explained that I want to stay in state, do not want to spend a lot on college, and want to prioritize my studies. I explained that I don't care about on campus life and would love to stay from home. **It confirmed that [school] is the right fit**."



Synthesizing Complex Information

- "AI has really helped my research into finding out what college is right for me, especially really with **all the charts and visuals that AI can give me**."
- "It's nice how it **synthesizes results into one cohesive answer** instead of Googling something and searching for a while through different websites."
- "ChatGPT is very helpful in not only **going in depth** about a certain college, but also providing links to resources, events, and other plug ins to **make my search significantly easier**."



Facilitating Fact Finding

- "I use it to ask specific questions **I can't find on the [school's] website**."
- "**I have it on my phone**, so whenever I have a question about a specific college I am interested in, I ask ChatGPT and **it gives me a direct answer**."
- "Does [school] require **SAT/ACT scores**? What is the **deadline** for applications? How much is the **application fee** for [school]?"



Managing the Application Process

- "It has **provided the deadlines** for all colleges I'm applying to."
- "AI has helped me to **organize information** and start **writing essays**."
- "Can you **read my essay** and find any **punctuation or grammar mistakes** and highlight them for me?"

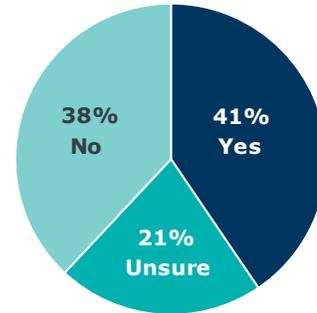
Negative Views of AI-Generated College Messages

Perceived Exposure to AI-Generated Messages from Colleges Is Limited

In addition to examining how students use AI in college search, our survey explored students' experiences with college communications that may have been AI-generated. Students' reported exposure to these messages is mixed. Fewer than half say they have definitively received a communication they believed was AI-generated, while many report either no exposure or uncertainty.

Q: Have you received communications from a school that seemed like they were AI-generated?

(n = 5,095)

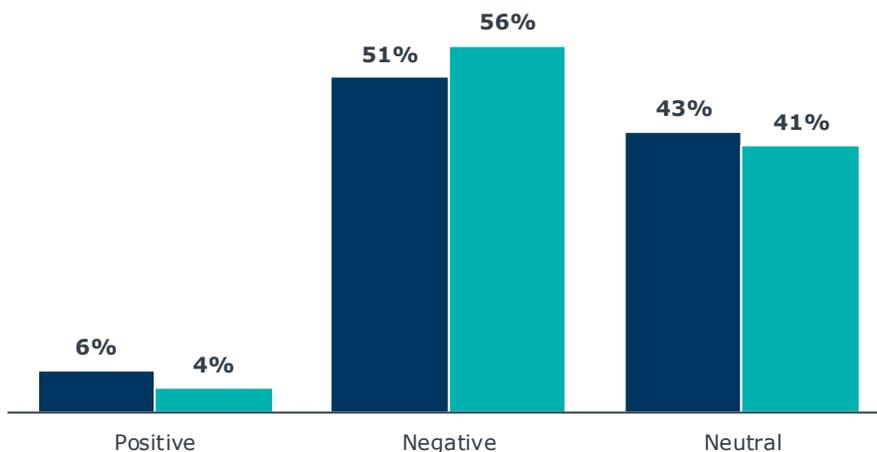


AI-Generated Messages Risk Negative Reactions if Poorly Executed

Among students who believe they have received AI-generated messages, most report negative reactions. Skepticism extends even to those who have not yet encountered such communications, with more than half saying they would expect a negative reaction if they did. Together, these findings suggest that students are sensitive to perceived inauthenticity in institutional messaging. AI-generated content that feels generic or impersonal risks eroding trust, suggesting that poorly executed automation may do more harm than good. However, early EAB testing data has shown that personalization, including through AI, can increase student response. As colleges experiment with AI in communications, maintaining quality and a human-centered tone will be essential. Institutions should also consider how AI tools can be used to elevate human interactions, including by allowing counselors to focus on personal outreach.

Students Report Negative Reactions to AI-Generated College Messages

Q: How did/would it make you feel to receive an AI-generated communication from a school? (n = 3,031)



- Students who have seen AI-generated communications from colleges
- Students who have not seen AI-generated communications from colleges/not sure



Personalization Boosts Engagement

Despite students' aversion to generic AI messaging, EAB testing shows that customized communications increase student response.

+29 pts

Increase in engagement rate with hyper-personalized content compared to standard content (55% vs. 26%)

Confidence Outpaces Accuracy in Identifying AI

Students' Ability to Identify AI Is Mixed

We examined students' perceived and actual ability to identify AI-generated content. Nearly eight in ten students report at least moderate confidence in their ability to distinguish AI-generated content from human-created material. However, testing shows that accuracy is more uneven. When asked to identify AI-generated examples, 63% correctly identified the image below and 58% correctly identified the text sample—only modestly better than a coin flip. These findings suggest students are beginning to develop a practical literacy around AI, but they're not yet that accurate. For enrollment leaders, this reinforces the importance of thoughtful strategy and high-quality execution when using AI-generated content, as some attempts to pass off generic or automated materials will be noticed.

Students Are Fairly Confident in Ability to Detect AI

Q: How confident are you that you can tell the difference between AI-generated content and content created by a human? (n = 5,095)



63% of Students Correctly Identified the AI-Generated Image Below

AI-Generated



Not AI-Generated



58% of Students Correctly Identified the AI-Generated Text Below

AI-Generated

With more than 50 undergraduate degree programs across diverse fields, BearU empowers students to explore their passions and prepare for dynamic careers. Hands-on learning is central to the experience, with access to research initiatives, internships, and partnerships that connect students to real-world challenges and professional networks. Throughout it all, BearU's dedicated faculty provide personalized mentorship and guidance, ensuring every student has the support they need to reach their full potential.

Not AI-Generated

Bear University is the perfect environment for you to take the skills and knowledge gained in high school to the next level. You'll receive a distinguished education that will set the stage for a successful future. We offer wide-ranging academic options (31 undergraduate degree programs), abundant research opportunities (including sought-after internships), and easy access to faculty members who are leaders and innovators in their fields of study.



AI's Influence on Education and Career Choices

SECTION

3

Students Anticipate AI Will Impact Career Choices

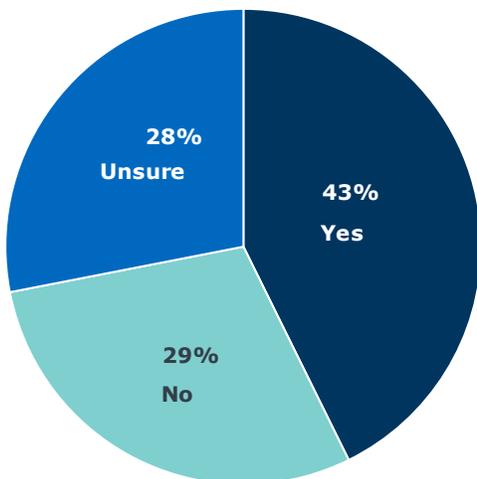
Students Expect AI to Affect Their Careers, but They Are Uncertain How

In addition to examining AI's role in college search, our survey explored how students expect AI to affect their career choices. Nearly half of students (43%) say AI will influence the career or job they pursue, while another 38% say they are unsure. This pattern points to broad awareness that AI will matter for students' futures, alongside uncertainty about how that influence will take shape.

Students' emotional responses reinforce that lack of clarity. When asked how they feel about AI's effect on their future careers, the most common response was "uncertain," cited by 44% of students. Other frequently selected emotions skew negative, including skepticism (33%), concern (32%), and anxiety (31%). Both the quantitative results and students' open-ended comments suggest that students expect AI to reshape career paths but feel unsure how to plan for those changes or what they will mean for their own futures.

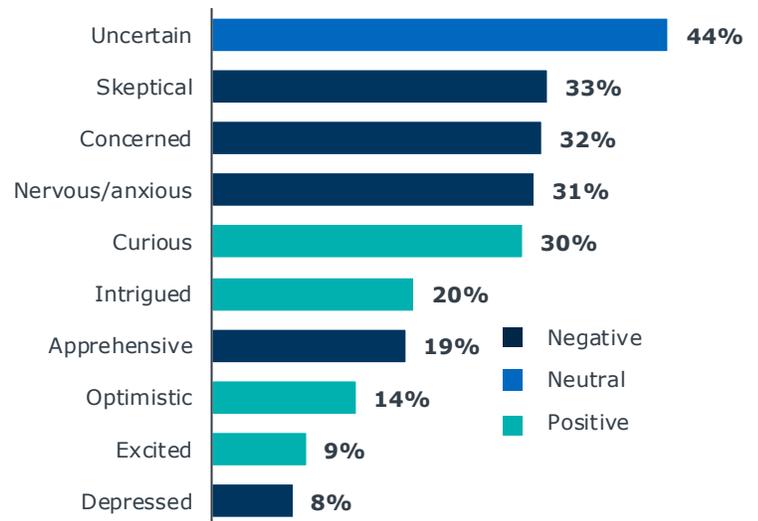
Almost Half of Students Say That AI Will Impact the Job They Pursue

Q: Do you think AI will influence the job/career you pursue? (n = 5,095)



Q: Which of the following best describe how you feel about the impact of AI on your future career?

Students could select all that apply. (n = 5,095)



Students Report Ambivalence About the Impact of AI on Their Futures

"I'm optimistic about AI as a tool, but cautious about job security."

"It feels like AI is 'stealing' all the things. I'm not *fully* no longer considering any jobs...but I am feeling concerned I won't be able to get a job later because of AI."

"I am concerned that by the time I graduate society will have shifted away from certain careers."

AI Is Raising New Questions About Value of College

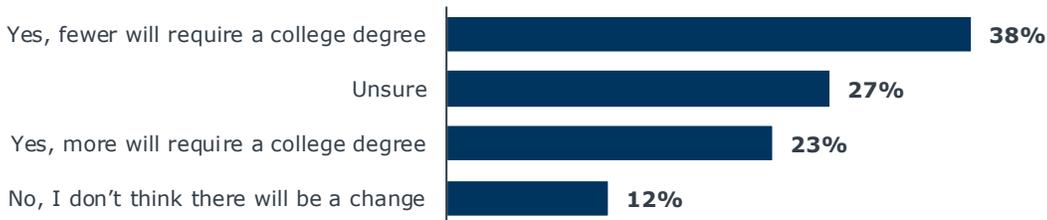
AI Introduces New Doubts About the Value of a College Education

The survey also asked students how expected changes in the workforce might shape how they view the value of college. When asked how AI will influence demand for jobs that require a college degree, the largest share of students (38%) said AI will reduce the number of such roles. Almost half of students report that these anticipated workforce shifts might impact them personally, with 39% saying they are considering a college alternative because of advances in AI technology. Top alternatives considered include starting a business, engaging in self-study, entering the workforce, and doing an apprenticeship.

These findings build on a broader pattern EAB has tracked in recent years: growing hesitation about whether college is the right choice. Recent AI advances appear to be exacerbating that challenge for colleges. However, it's important to note that student viewpoints remain divided: 27% of students are unsure whether AI will affect the number of careers requiring a college degree, and 23% believe that more jobs will require one.

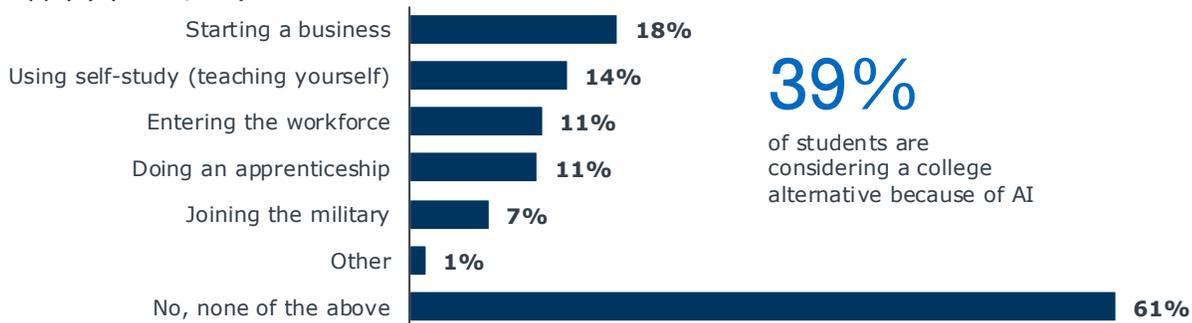
Mixed Feelings on Whether AI Will Impact Jobs Requiring a College Degree

Q: Do you think the number of jobs/careers that require a college degree will change because of advances in AI technology? (n = 5,095)



Top College Alternatives Considered Because of AI

Q: Are you considering any of the following college alternatives because of advances in AI technology? (Select all that apply.) (n = 5,095)

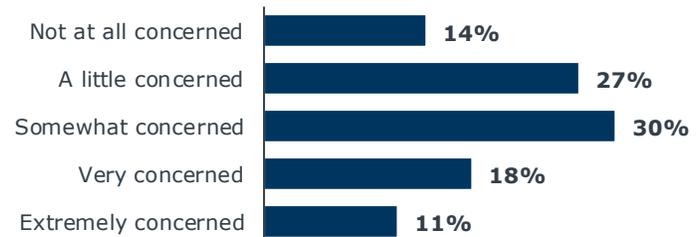


Impact on Critical Thinking

Students also express uncertainty about how AI might affect their ability to develop critical thinking skills, an outcome traditionally viewed as a core value of college. As the chart at right shows, most students worry that AI could weaken critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving, with 29% reporting they are at least very concerned and 59% reporting they are at least somewhat concerned.

Q: How concerned are you that using AI could reduce your critical thinking skills?

(n = 5,095)



Impact on Major Choice and Institutional Expectations

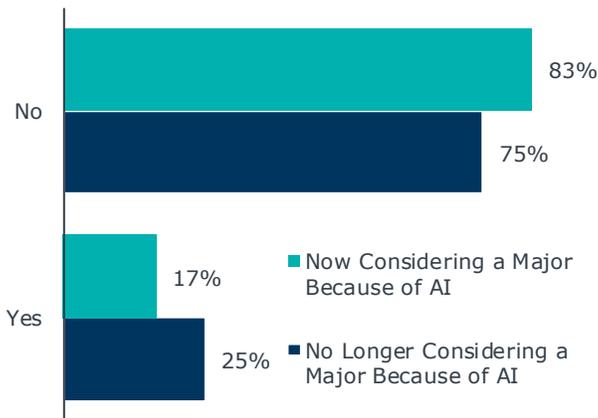
AI Is Prompting Some Students to Reconsider Major Choices

Fewer students report changing their intended major because of AI than report considering alternatives to college more broadly. Only 25% of students say they are no longer considering a major because of AI, and even fewer say AI has led them to consider a new major. These shifts are more common among first-generation and lower-income students, suggesting that concerns about workforce stability and return on investment may carry greater weight for students with fewer financial buffers.

Notably, there is substantial overlap in the majors students cite as both newly considered and no longer considered. Fields such as technology, engineering, and health care appear high on both lists. Rather than prompting students to move decisively away from certain fields, AI seems to be introducing hesitation, leading students to reassess majors they once viewed as stable or promising without yet settling on clear alternatives.

Q: Are you considering a different major because of advances in AI technology?

(n = 4,776)



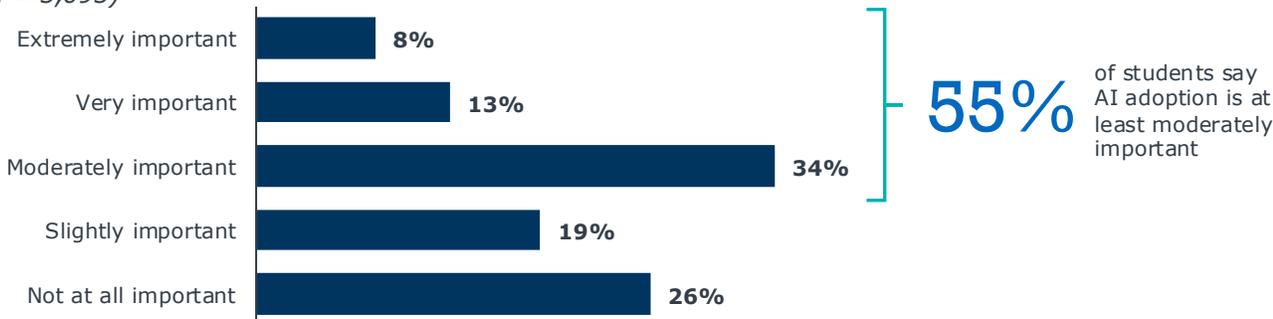
Top Majors Now Considered		Top Majors No Longer Considered	
Engineering	13%	Computer/Data Science	14%
Computer/Data Science	13%	Health Care/Medical (excluding nursing)	9%
Tech/AI-Related Majors	12%	Art	8%
Health Care/Medical (excluding nursing)	10%	Engineering	8%
Unsure	7%	Nursing	7%

Students Expect Colleges to Adapt to AI Changes

Even as most students report no change in major choice, many expect institutions to be attentive to how AI is reshaping education and work. Nearly half of students say a school's adoption of AI in its programming is at least moderately important in their application decision. These findings suggest that enrollment leaders should address student concerns about AI in their marketing. Students may feel reassured to know that colleges are monitoring AI-driven change and preparing graduates accordingly.

Q: How important is a school's adoption of AI in their programming (e.g., teaching students how to use it, courses on AI, career opportunities in AI) to your decision whether to apply to that school?

(n = 5,095)





Key Takeaways and Additional Resources

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

8 Imperatives for Enrollment Leaders in the Age of AI-Enabled College Search



Plan for Continuous Adaptation

Student behaviors and expectations are evolving rapidly, as are AI technologies. While uncertainty about the pace and direction of AI-driven change can be paralyzing, waiting for clarity is not a viable strategy. Enrollment leaders must assume that AI will continue to evolve and therefore build agile, cross-functional teams that are capable of ongoing experimentation, rapid learning, and response to emerging technologies and regulations.



Optimize for AI as an Audience

AI is quickly becoming a primary gatekeeper between institutions and prospective students, interpreting college information long before direct engagement occurs. Survey findings reinforce that students increasingly encounter colleges through AI-influenced channels, making it essential to optimize content for both human readers and AI systems. This shift requires moving beyond traditional search engine optimization (SEO) toward Answer Engine Optimization (AEO)—ensuring institutional content is structured, accurate, and machine readable. Institutions that adapt early will gain a critical advantage in an increasingly algorithmic college-search environment.



Focus on Digital Brand Visibility and Management

In an AI-mediated world, brand management is no longer just about logos, messaging, or visual identity—it's about actively shaping perception. Our survey research shows that students increasingly rely on AI-generated explanations when evaluating colleges, and these descriptions are drawn from a wide range of digital sources, including websites, social platforms, forums, and media coverage. This means brand perception is formed by both official messaging and by how third-party content is interpreted and summarized by AI agents. Colleges must monitor how their programs and outcomes appear online and promptly correct inaccuracies. Effective brand management now requires ongoing review of AI outputs and reinforcement of key differentiators across platforms that influence both human and AI audiences.

Introducing Hybrid

Hybrid, a global digital marketing agency, is now a part of EAB. Hybrid helps institutions strengthen their brands and engage students across their preferred digital platforms.

To learn more about Hybrid, visit their website at [Hybrid.co](https://www.hybrid.co).



Elevate Human Connection

Our survey data consistently shows that students trust in-person interactions above all other sources in college search. In an AI-saturated environment, moments that feel genuine—such as conversations with counselors, handwritten notes from faculty, peer-led tours—stand out as powerful differentiators. Elevating human connection does not mean rejecting AI; it means using AI to enable more meaningful engagement by freeing staff time and focusing outreach where it has the greatest impact.



Anticipate Workforce and Value Shifts

As AI reshapes the labor market, students are rethinking what they expect from college and what they are willing to pay for it. Survey responses reflect uncertainty about careers, employability, and return on investment—pressures colleges must address directly. To do so, colleges should strengthen partnerships with employers, embed work-based learning into programs, and highlight tangible outcomes: career placement rates, skill development, and alumni success stories. Academic leaders must also ensure curricula evolve alongside technological change, integrating digital literacy, AI fluency, and human-centered problem-solving.

Key Takeaways (continued)

8 Imperatives for Enrollment Leaders in the Age of AI-Enabled College Search



Shore Up Data Integrity

In an AI-driven search environment, data accuracy is no longer just an operational concern—it is a reputational one. With students increasingly relying on AI-mediated discovery, inaccuracies in public-facing information can be surfaced and amplified quickly. Colleges must ensure that information about programs, costs, and outcomes is accurate, consistent, and accessible to the systems interpreting it. This requires clear data ownership, regular audits, and strong governance across websites and third-party platforms. Institutions that fail to maintain data integrity risk having outdated or misleading information shape student perceptions before direct engagement occurs.



Strengthen Parent and Counselor Relationships

While parental influence in college search has waned since immediately after the pandemic, parents and counselors remain critical influences in shaping trust and final decisions. When students rely on AI tools to filter, summarize, or prioritize information, these human advisors often serve as validators, helping interpret recommendations, assess credibility, and guide next steps. In an AI-mediated search environment, colleges that under-invest in these relationships risk losing influence as discovery becomes more algorithm-driven. Colleges should ensure parents and counselors have access to clear, accurate information and are equipped to support students navigating AI-assisted search. Strengthening these relationships is not a rejection of AI but a strategic way to maintain trust as intelligent systems shape early exploration.



Evolve Recruitment Marketing Campaigns

Even as AI reshapes how students discover information, traditional recruitment marketing campaigns remain essential for driving awareness, engagement, and conversion. However, the nature of effective campaigns is changing. Our survey findings suggest students are sensitive to messaging that feels generic or overly automated, yet EAB testing data shows that they respond positively to personalization. Messages are increasingly filtered or summarized by AI systems, raising the bar for clarity, differentiation, and authenticity. Enrollment teams must design campaigns that perform well for both human audiences and AI intermediaries, balancing scale with resonance.

Related Research

College Search in the Age of AI

Four Scenarios for Future Planning

Enrollment success will depend on leaders' ability to plan for and adapt to an AI-enabled world, regardless of how quickly or unevenly change unfolds. This report explores four plausible futures for AI in college search and offers guidance for enrollment teams.

Download the insight paper at eab.com/AIFutures.



Research Overview

About the Student AI Survey

EAB’s University Research Partners conducted a survey of high school students in October and November 2025. The survey asked students about their perceptions of and experiences with AI, including use of AI tools in college search and expectations of how AI might change their career path. The findings in this report are based on responses from 5,095 students.

Participant Profile

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage*
African/African American/Black	21%
Asian (Central/South/East/Southeast)	12%
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	1%
Hispanic or Latine	19%
Middle Eastern or West Asian	2%
Native American or Alaska Native	3%
White	56%
Other	1%

First-Generation Status	Percentage
First-Generation	24%
Non-First-Generation	76%

Gender Identity	Percentage
Female	72%
Male	24%
Nonbinary	3%
Other	1%

High School Class	Percentage
9th grade	3%
10th grade	8%
11th grade	20%
12th grade	63%
Graduated from high school	5%
Not in high school yet	0.2%

Region of Residence	Percentage
Northeast	14%
Southeast	25%
Midwest	25%
Southwest	16%
West	19%

Household Income	Percentage
\$60,000 or less	23%
\$60,001-\$120,000	21%
More than \$120,000	15%
Not sure or prefer not to respond	41%

* Participants could select multiple options.

The Leading AI Innovator in Higher Education



EAB's AI Approach Is Research-Backed, Responsible, and Built for What's Next

Deep Survey Research and Listening



We uncover what students, families, and practitioners want from AI

40K+ students surveyed on AI; dozens of new surveys annually

Rigorous Testing and Refinement



We test and refine AI strategies at scale, drawing from the largest higher ed dataset

200+ AI-driven hyper-personalization tests this cycle

Embedded, Essential Agentic AI



We build AI agents that seamlessly support enrollment and retention results

1,200+ institutions with live enrollment and success agents

Proprietary technology and approaches

Comprehensive technical & strategic partnership support

Our AI Capabilities for Enrollment

AI-Driven Campaign Optimization

Conversation Agents

Hyper-Personalization at Scale

AI-Enabled Virtual Tours

Transformational Results from AI Innovation

15K+

Student queries answered by EAB's AI agents in Fall 2025

68%

Lift in engagement from AI-driven personalization in EAB campaigns

25%+

Average capacity increase for staff using EAB AI

The Future of Student-Centric Recruitment

enroll **360**
by EAB

Cultivate

Affinity-Building Inquiry and Nurture Campaigns

Apply

Demand-Generating Application Marketing Campaigns

Aid

Data-Driven Policy Creation and Financial Aid Optimization

Yield

Actionable Analytics to Drive Conversion-Boosting Campaigns

AI Search Visibility

Solutions to Boost SEO, AEO, and GEO

Intersect

Connection Point to Millions of Naviance Users

Appily Leads

High-Quality Inquiries and Prospects

Appily Tours

Best-in-Class AI-Powered Digital Experiences

Appily Match

Today's Top Direct Admission Platform

Enrollment CRM

Higher Ed's Most Trusted CRM, Powered by Responsible AI

Powered by  **appily** The leading college-search site



The Enroll360 Difference:

Real Enrollment Results



A Unique, Proven Method of Partnership



The Leader in High-Impact AI Innovation



A Trusted Execution Machine

To speak with an expert or schedule a diagnostic conversation, email eabenrollmentcomm@eab.com.

Learn more at eab.com/Enroll360.

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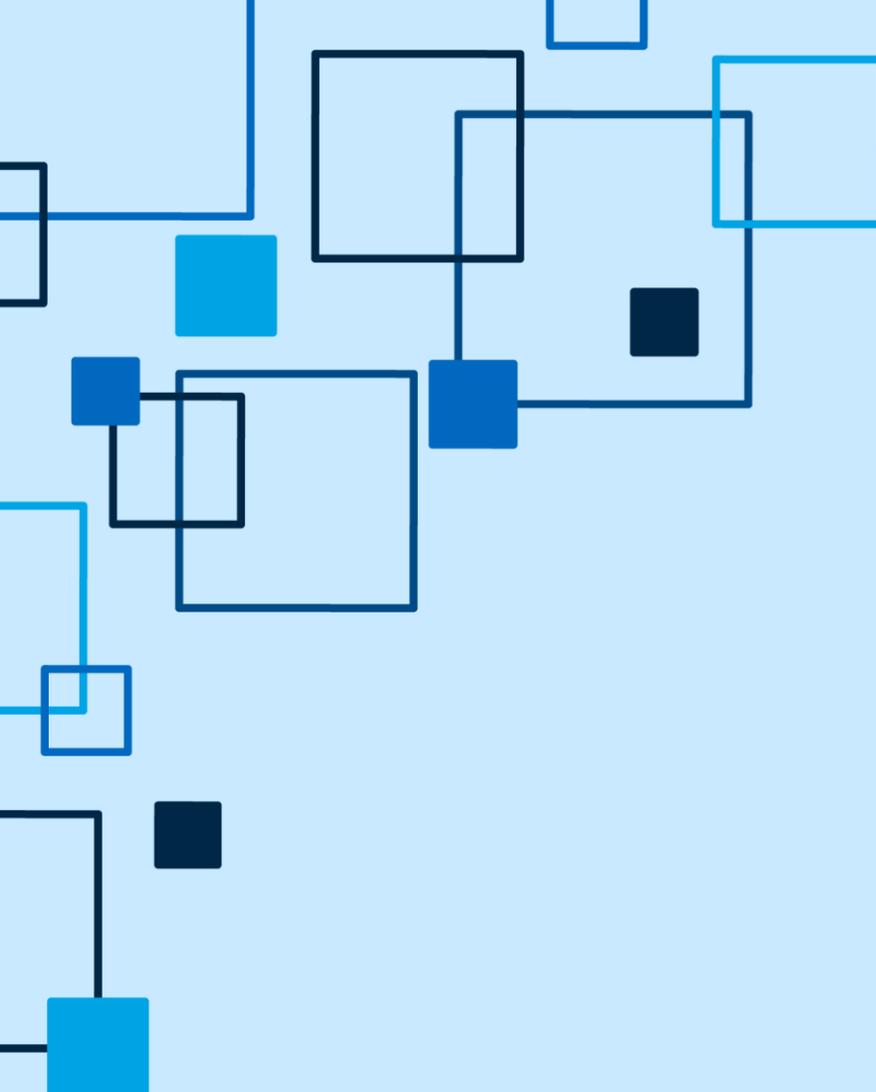
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