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GPT Chats Tech Topics

Artificial intelligence is no longer *in* the tech news; it almost *is* the tech news – **all of it**. No one seems to be talking about much else.

And no wonder. **Generative AI** is spectacular. On the plus side, it can produce eye-popping results from a simple prompt, talk confidently on any subject put to it, and occasionally comes up with surprisingly unexpected but cool results.

Not only that, this AI stuff seemingly came out of nowhere. It looks, frankly, like magic. Some experts even think it is **sentient**. In any case, all the Big Tech companies are **scrambling** to get onboard AI like it was the last lifeboat left.

Hocus pocus

But is AI good magic or bad? Because on the down side, there are fears of massive job losses, democracy-destroying disinformation, sophisticated scams, undetectable fakes, hidden biases – and AI notably often **makes things up**. Many of its own developers warn that AI unleashed could mean the end of truth online – and even possibly the outright **extinction** of humanity.

Who knows? It's way too soon to tell. But AI is here to stay, and so users need to understand it and its limits, how to use it and not be swayed by someone else using it. So SWCP's president, Mark Costlow, bravely took the bull by the horns, as it were, to ask ChatGPT what it would suggest as suitable future technical topics for the Portal.

The first paragraph is the **prompt** written by Mark. It describes the overall problem and asks ChatGPT for a solution. If Generative AI is magic, this is where the spell is cast. It can be tricky.

Like magic, there are many unspoken limits. Hard experience with testers and malicious users has caused Microsoft, OpenAI, and Google to

limit conversations to lessen chances that the chatbots will make things up. They also forbid them to promote violence and are working hard to eliminate any subtle baked-in biases.

However, creative users are still finding ways to twist chatbots any way they can. An eating-disorder helpline, for instance, just **disabled** its chatbot to replace staffers for encouraging weight loss in anorexics – doing exactly the opposite of what it was built and intended to do.

A lawyer also got into trouble not long ago when he used ChatGPT to write court documents and it made up **false citations**. So the first thing for users to know is that writing good prompts is critical, and the second is that fact-checking the chatbot's output is equally vital, especially if it contains important information.

With that in mind, Mark wrote the following prompt below, and with the resulting answer from ChatGPT, are presented here unedited.

Tech Topics for 40+

June 1, 2023

Our ISP has a monthly newsletter where we write short articles about technology and the internet. Many of our readers are over 40 years old. We focus on how technology affects daily life. For example we have covered many of the advances in AI and how chatGPT will affect us all in the future. We are trying to think up some new topics for the next couple of months, that do not focus on AI. Can you suggest 10 topics that would be of interest to our readers? Especially things that are not well known or heavily covered in the press.

ChatGPT

Certainly! Here are ten technology-related topics that might be of interest to your readers, particularly those over 40 years old:

1. The Rise of Digital Assistants: Exploring the evolution and growing popularity of digital assistants like Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple Siri, and how they can simplify daily tasks and enhance convenience.
2. The Internet of Things (IoT) in Everyday Life: Highlighting lesser-known IoT applications beyond smart home devices, such as

healthcare monitoring, energy efficiency, and agriculture, and their potential impact on daily life.

3. Augmented Reality (AR) in Practical Applications: Discussing how AR technology is being used in various industries like retail, education, and healthcare, and how it can enhance experiences and improve productivity.
4. Digital Wellness: Shedding light on the importance of maintaining a healthy relationship with technology, including tips for managing screen time, practicing digital mindfulness, and finding a balance between the online and offline worlds.
5. E-Waste Management: Exploring the environmental impact of electronic waste and discussing effective strategies for reducing, recycling, and responsibly disposing of old electronic devices.
6. Blockchain Beyond Cryptocurrency: Investigating the potential applications of blockchain technology beyond cryptocurrencies, such as supply chain management, voting systems, and secure digital identities.
7. Advancements in Health Tech: Examining recent innovations in health technology, including wearable devices, telemedicine, personalized medicine, and how these advancements are revolutionizing healthcare.
8. Cybersecurity in the Digital Age: Raising awareness about emerging cybersecurity threats, offering practical tips for staying safe online, and discussing the importance of data privacy and protection.
9. The Future of Work: Discussing how technology is reshaping the workplace, exploring topics like remote work trends, automation, gig economy platforms, and the skills needed to thrive in the digital era.
10. Tech for Seniors: Exploring technology designed specifically for older adults, such as wearable health monitors, smart home devices for aging in place, social connectivity tools, and digital learning platforms.

These topics should provide a diverse range of subjects for your readers to explore, showcasing lesser-known aspects of technology and its impact on daily life. [END]

From creators to editors

That's not bad, in fact pretty good., Most of those themes have been under consideration, a few are frequent visitors here, and some – like e-waste – have not been dealt with simply because there are so few local options to discuss. However, in all honesty, more of them should be addressed and hopefully will be.

If the list seems adequately useful, it is partly because the prompt was excellent. Mark obviously thought about the **Portal**; you, the audience; and what was needed, giving ChatGPT a goal, limits, and focus to do exactly as asked.

However, what happened is that in so doing, Mark's function changed from a list **creator** to a list **editor**. This may not require any less thought, just a whole different **kind** of thinking.

If the list is not very creative, ChatGPT could be simply fitting the answer to the theme. Or it might be because chatbots supposedly are really high-powered versions of **autocomplete**.

What chatbots actually do is guess the next most likely word. In that way, the AI works like when you type "chat" into the search bar of your browser and Google spits back a list with "chatbot" in it, only with vastly more information about words that would likely follow.

Yet what is really interesting are the **unexpected** things chatbots say. Where they come from, no one knows. Some are due to user abuse, others probably from unrecognized connections or biases, maybe glitches in the matrix.

But notice that despite Mark specifically instructing it to "not focus on AI", the very first item on the list is **digital assistants**. Is this perhaps a sign of **self-interest** on the part of ChatGPT?

Editors – as we all may become – should keep red pencils sharp and wits even sharper.

For an account of how ChatGPT can be used to write code, check Jamii's post: **ChatGPT – great new tool or coming for your job?**

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