Masked Mischief Podcast Transcript

0:07
Hey there trash pandas, welcome to Masked Mischief
0:11
where your hosts April, Abi, and Eve rummage
0:14
through the hilarious, bizarre, and sometimes questionable world
0:17
of college life.
0:19
Our mission is to dig through the chaos
0:21
and deliver the raw, unfiltered truth straight from
0:25
the source.
0:25
So buckle up, it's about to get mischievous.
0:42
Today's hot topic, AI confessions, because apparently some
0:45
of us have been getting a little help
0:47
for more than just spellcheck.
0:49
Yeah, we've all heard about AI, chat GPT,
0:51
mid-journey, you name it.
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But let's be real, who's actually using it
0:55
just for grammar?
0:56
We looked at a few university reddit boards,
0:58
dropped an anonymous survey, and now we're about
1:01
to share what students across Alabama are really
1:03
doing with AI.
1:04
From last-minute essays to AI generated excuses
1:09
for missed assignments, it turns out students are
1:12
getting creative.

1:13
But here's the real question, is it innovative?
1:16
Is it cheating?
1:18
Or maybe is it a little bit of
1:20
both?
1:21
Today we're diving into the ethical gray areas
1:24
of AI in college by interviewing students right
1:26
here at the University of Alabama in Huntsville,
1:29
sharing anonymous confessions and exploring the hype and
1:32
hesitations around AI.
1:34
Whether you're a chat GPT super fan or
1:36
just AI curious, we've got stories that'll make
1:39
you laugh or maybe even think twice about
1:41
that next essay.
1:43
So sit back, relax, and let's take a
1:45
deep dive into the AI-fueled world of
1:47
academia, because trust us, this episode's got more
1:50
secrets than the average study session.
2:08
Hello listeners.
2:09
For this first segment, I sat down with
2:11
three students at the University of Alabama in
2:13
Huntsville to discuss the ethics of using AI
2:16
in their coursework.
2:17
As the topic can get a little heavy

2:19
and involve borderline confessing about academic dyslexia, we
2:23
use code names and AI text-to-speech
2:25
to protect the identities of the students.
2:28
To start our interviews, we descended to the
2:30
basement of Morton Hall to get the real
2:32
scoot from students.
2:34
I'll start with our talk with Earthworm and
2:36
Red Panda, two computer science majors who caution
2:38
against the overuse of AI in academic work
2:41
and coding beyond the classroom.
2:44
So, Earthworm, do you set any personal boundaries
2:47
on when or how you use AI in
2:49
your academic work?
2:51
My view is that you should not be
2:53
using it as a junior developer or as
2:55
a student at all.
2:56
Like, if it's like making creative stuff, like
2:58
that's different, but you know, for academic purposes,
3:01
I don't think you should use it at
3:03
all, because it's not.
3:05
Your goal as a software developer is going
3:06
to be to solve problems, which doesn't always
3:09
necessarily mean like, like your job is not

3:11
just to write code, it is to solve
3:13
these problems.
3:14
But when you do that with ChatGPT or
3:17
any other like AI stuff, you're taking away
3:19
your ability to also be learning new ways
3:21
to solve problems.
3:23
So, ChatGPT, like you were saying, spits out
3:26
a lot of the same like plot points.
3:28
It'll eventually just do the same things when
3:30
you ask it to help you solve different
3:32
problems.
3:33
So you're not learning anything new.
3:35
You're not.
3:36
You're giving up your ability to learn new
3:38
things, which is crucial for software, just to
3:40
help you solve a problem in that moment.
3:43
In your opinion, Red Panda, when does using
3:46
AI in coursework cross the line into academic
3:49
dishonesty?
3:50
The moment that you have to like rely
3:52
on it to do the work for you.
3:54
I guess the same way you would plagiarize
3:56
from another person.

3:57
If you ask a bot, oh, how do
3:59
I program this or that?
4:01
And that bot gives you a block of
4:02
code and you just take it and paste
4:04
it in.
4:05
And that's like very clearly plagiarism.
4:07
You change the words in your essay.
4:10
It's the same thing.
4:11
And I think it's even worse because the
4:12
idea of ChatGPT is that it learns from
4:15
tons and tons of writing.
4:17
And so it's like, who knows what you're
4:19
plagiarizing, you know, plagiarizing from.
4:21
It's also like a process of like, if
4:24
you just paste the code and you have
4:25
no clue what the code does, then you're
4:27
not learning anything.
4:29
Right?
4:30
The reason people should become college educated is
4:33
to be well-rounded.
4:34
So let's say that you have somebody who
4:36
like doesn't care about their English courses, their
4:39
psych courses, anything like that.

4:41
So they just want like some kind of
4:43
ChatGPT or whatever to generate their essays, their
4:46
discussion posts, everything like that.
4:49
When you do that, you are bypassing all
4:51
of the critical thinking abilities that like your
4:53
lower level English, psych, any other like humanities
4:57
courses are teaching you.
4:58
And you're not getting any benefits out of
5:01
being here.
5:01
Because I think it's important to take something
5:04
positive away from every single class you go
5:06
through.
5:07
Even if it's like, you know, maybe a
5:09
new study habit, like maybe if it's not
5:11
specifically content related.
5:13
I don't think it would be ethical to
5:14
use it and I don't think it benefits
5:16
anyone.
5:17
It doesn't benefit you.
5:18
You're paying however much money to be here
5:20
to go through these classes.
5:22
I get.
5:23
Some people just want the grade.

5:25
But like graduating from college and still not
5:27
being able to put together like a short
5:29
three-page essay because you just use ChatGPT
5:32
the whole time.
5:33
Like it's going to be rough out like
5:34
and nobody's going to trust you because they're
5:36
just going to be like, well you you
5:38
can't put a thought together because you have
5:40
to go ask AI every time.
5:42
I think the important idea of generative content
5:44
like this is that it's always going to
5:46
be kind of going for the top of
5:47
the bell curve.
5:49
And so it's going to be the, you
5:51
know, accumulation of all the ideas from everyone.
5:54
Smart, dumb, in the middle.
5:56
And it's not good at coming up with
5:57
new ideas.
5:58
So it's just, it's going to meet this
6:01
point every time.
6:02
And that's not going to help your writing.
6:04
It might not hurt it, but it's definitely
6:07
not going to help it.

6:09
My next talk with Manta Ray, a College
6:11
of Business student, explores some of the dangers
6:14
that Earthworm and Red Panda warned me about
6:16
in their discussion.
6:17
Just a warning, this interview is the most
6:19
scandalous confession in our podcast episode today.
6:23
All right, Manta Ray, what AI tools do
6:26
you use on a regular basis, and for
6:27
what purposes?
6:29
I use ChatGPT to look up homework and
6:31
quiz answers, and I also use it to
6:33
write my discussion post.
6:35
But obviously, ChatGPT is, people can tell when
6:39
you use ChatGPT.
6:40
So then I use ZeroGPT to figure out
6:43
if it's like, if you can tell.
6:45
It's like AI detector AI.
6:46
So I use that, and then if you
6:48
can detect it, I go into a humanizer
6:50
AI.
6:51
And then I put it in there, and
6:52
then I go and I check it in
6:54
ZeroGPT again till it says 0% AI

6:57
detected, and then I post it in my
6:58
discussion board.
7:00
I get 100 on my discussion posts, and
7:02
it's only for classes that I feel like
7:04
I don't need, like electives and stuff.
7:06
For like business electives, like where it's just
7:08
like, talk about this stupid thing that you
7:10
don't care about and respond to other people,
7:12
other students.
7:13
I use LitteroAI sometimes to do essays, because,
7:17
but this is only if it's like an
7:18
essay that needs sources.
7:21
Because what's cool about Littero is it will
7:23
find your sources for you, which I love.
7:26
Would you also use those tools in an
7:27
exam?
7:28
Okay, I actually don't really use ChatGPT for
7:31
exams, because I don't trust it that much,
7:33
like on quizzes.
7:35
Here's my formula, right?
7:37
So on quizzes, I will copy and paste
7:39
it into Google, and I'll check like Chegg
7:41
and Quizlet first.

7:42
But if they don't have Chegg or Quizlet,
7:44
then I put it in ChatSheet to you.
7:46
So ChatGPT is always like my last resort,
7:50
because I know it's not like the most
7:51
accurate, whereas like you can just find a
7:53
Quizlet for like a whole thing.
7:55
When do you think using AI in schoolwork
7:56
crosses the line into academic dishonesty?
7:59
I mean, if the professor says don't use
8:01
AI, then using AI is academically dishonest.
8:04
If you're just basically blatantly copying and pasting
8:07
it, I would say like using it as
8:09
outlines is not academically dishonest.
8:12
I think that's totally fine.
8:13
I mean, like I do every, I do
8:14
all of it, so who cares?
8:16
But I still will own up to being
8:18
academically dishonest, period.
8:20
But I think it really just depends on
8:22
if you're not learning anything, and you're just
8:23
letting the AI do all the work for
8:25
you, whereas if you're using it as a
8:27
tool.

8:28
Well, how do you ensure that your own
8:30
critical thinking and learning aren't compromised by using
8:33
AI?
8:35
I feel like my brain has turned into
8:37
a fried egg, but more because of TikTok
8:39
and less because of using AI.
8:41
I just like can't seem to sit down
8:43
and do work at all ever anymore.
8:45
I'm just screwed.
8:47
How do you think AI will affect your
8:48
future career?
8:51
I definitely think it's only going to get
8:53
crazier and like more like in-depth in
8:56
the future.
8:56
Like we probably one day won't be able
8:58
to tell.
8:59
We can already are already barely tell if
9:01
there's AI, and there's no like way to
9:04
directly prove if someone's used AI in a
9:06
paper or anything like that, which is also
9:08
why I'm kind of so like ballsy about
9:10
using it, because they literally can't prove if
9:12
I've used it or not.

9:14
Even if it says AI, because I could
9:16
write something, and it could still come up
9:18
with an AI score even though I wrote
9:19
it by hand.
9:21
To end our interview, I asked Manta Ray,
9:24
do you think the university will ever catch
9:25
you?
9:27
I mean, I'm a senior at this point.
9:29
No, I don't think so.
9:30
I mean, unless you turn me in.
9:33
Well, I have the journalistic duty to protect
9:36
Manta Ray's identity, but how would you handle
9:38
the situation if another student said this to
9:40
you?
9:41
Listen more and see if your opinions change.
9:46
I sat down with some of my fellow
9:48
grad students to discuss what they thought about
9:50
the use of AI in education.
9:53
It's safe to say they had some pretty
9:55
strong feelings about the topic, but it was
9:58
an enlightening conversation.
10:00
Let's take a listen.
10:12
I'm all for progress, but I think AI

10:14
is the devil.
10:16
A, it's really bad for the planet.
10:18
Like I'm pretty sure Google just opened like
10:20
40 new nuclear power plants to power their
10:22
AI.
10:23
Yeah, and I don't think it has any
10:25
place in education.
10:28
I think the whole point of like an
10:30
education is to think for yourself, but AI
10:32
does the thinking for you.
10:36
Hmm, I didn't realize just how much energy
10:39
it takes to power artificial intelligence, although it
10:42
certainly makes sense.
10:44
And she's right.
10:45
Google recently signed a deal with Cairo's power
10:48
to construct seven new nuclear power plants by
10:51
2035, but they're not alone.
10:54
Microsoft plans to resurrect a defunct nuclear plant
10:58
on Three Mile Island, the location of the
11:01
most serious nuclear meltdown and radiation leak in
11:05
US history.
11:06
And to top all that off, Amazon secured
11:08
its own $500 million deal.

11:11
All this to meet the growing computing power
11:14
demands.
11:15
Now, let's get back to the chat.
11:21
In terms of teaching, I think that AI
11:25
can be used as a tool simply because
11:29
I have learned that chat GPT in particular
11:33
is not set up for nuance and operates
11:38
at the Lexile level of a college freshman.
11:40
So it's really good from the teaching perspective
11:43
to clarify prompts and set up rubrics.
11:48
And in my classroom, I don't have assignments,
11:51
so they can't use AI, but I teach
11:54
it as a tool.
11:55
And I explain it doesn't understand nuance.
11:58
It can't enter, it can't infer, and it
12:01
can't create for you, but it can analyze.
12:06
So you can ask it questions for clarification
12:09
and correction, not for creation.
12:13
We're English majors, we're liberal arts majors.
12:15
Our degrees are already hard enough to get
12:16
a job afterwards.
12:17
I don't need any other feature disqualifying me
12:22
from the potential workplace.

12:24
And I think my one single fear is
12:27
that especially with things like engineering firms and
12:30
engineering companies hiring liberal arts degrees for tech
12:33
writing, whatever the functional English degree, you know,
12:36
how is that going to replace humans in
12:39
the workplace?
12:42
I think that is a fear we all
12:44
have.
12:45
Am I right?
12:46
And Forbes does say the experts predict that
12:48
the impact of AI on the job market
12:51
will be significant.
12:53
According to the World Economic Foundation, 85 million
12:57
jobs will be displaced.
13:00
However, it also believes that 97 million new
13:04
jobs will be created by the AI revolution.
13:08
I guess door-to-door encyclopedia salespeople or
13:13
VCR repairman would understand that fear all too
13:16
well.
13:17
But technology growth is not going to stop,
13:21
so it's up to us to grow with
13:23
it.
13:27
As an educator, I understand the dangers of

13:29
AI.
13:30
But I, for one, am an advocate for
13:34
using it for things such as prompt building,
13:36
outlining, helping for inspiration for ideas.
13:40
I think that there's a nuance within the
13:42
argument that it takes away the authenticity from
13:45
art, because obviously within art there's inspiration derived
13:49
from different things.
13:51
So I think it's a really good tool
13:52
to be used, and I do encourage my
13:54
students to use it when they get to
13:56
a point where they have ideas that they
13:58
can't like fully flesh out, because usually that
14:01
can help you kind of structure some things
14:03
out.
14:03
And I'm, you know, that's like one of
14:05
the hardest things when you're in the paper
14:06
writing process.
14:07
So I think having that for a tool,
14:09
yes, it's super duper helpful.
14:12
A professor friend of mine recently posted something
14:16
that really hit home.
14:17
He pointed out that in education from K

14:20
through 12 and college, we've somehow started to
14:23
focus so much on the final deliverable that
14:27
we've lost sight of fostering genuine curiosity and
14:30
creativity in students.
14:32
Honestly, it wasn't until grad school that I
14:35
even realized the deliverable wasn't the main point.
14:39
I'll admit, I use chat GPT a lot
14:42
to help me write papers in undergrad.
14:44
But in grad school, I finally understood that
14:47
relying on it was actually holding me back
14:50
from learning, and I wasn't doing myself any
14:53
favors.
14:58
And I think that something that other people
15:01
have mentioned is that it can be very,
15:04
it can be really difficult when you're starting
15:06
out.
15:07
The hardest part of writing is figuring out,
15:10
you know, how to say exactly what you
15:11
want to say, how to structure your argument.
15:15
Asking chat GPT to do that for you,
15:17
asking an AI to do that for you
15:19
is not helping you build that skill.
15:21
Because at the end of the day, that's

15:23
what learning to write is about.
15:25
It's learning how to organize your paper, learning
15:29
how to structure your argument, learning where to
15:34
use evidence, where to not use evidence, learning
15:36
how to privilege your own voice within your
15:39
writing.
15:40
Asking chat GPT to do that for you
15:42
does not help you figure out how to
15:43
do that.
15:44
It lets AI do it for you.
15:50
I really enjoyed exploring this topic with my
15:53
classmates.
15:54
Their diverse and thoughtful perspectives sparked some really
15:58
engaging conversation.
16:00
And frankly, they taught me a lot.
16:02
Hearing different viewpoints was eye-opening, and it's
16:06
given me some serious food for thought about
16:08
my own reliance on AI.
16:11
I will, however, continue to tell chat GPT
16:14
please and thank you.
16:16
That way, when the AI overlords take over,
16:19
they'll remember that I was polite.
16:32
In addition to our on the street interviews,

16:34
we created a Google survey asking people to
16:36
share their stories using AI, good or bad.
16:39
The best part?
16:40
It's completely anonymous, so people can give the
16:43
full truth without hesitation.
16:45
We shared the survey through Reddit and Discord
16:47
and got a whopping 55 responses.
16:50
We did have a few demographic questions, and
16:52
the results are what you'd likely expect.
16:55
The majority of participants were in the 18
16:57
to 21 age range.
16:59
However, there were a handful of older participants.
17:02
About 50% identified as male, 30%
17:05
as female, 10% as non-binary, and
17:07
the rest preferred not to say.
17:10
80% were undergraduate students, but there were
17:13
some graduate students and a couple of miscellaneous.
17:15
Most people who listed their college attend UAH,
17:18
but there are several responses from other schools.
17:21
55% of our students are engineering and
17:24
technology majors, to be expected for mostly UAH
17:27
students.
17:28
Half of our participants use chat GPT, a

17:31
good chunk use Grammarly, some use Microsoft Copilot
17:35
and Turnitin, and then there's one to a
17:37
few people who use the other AI tools.
17:40
51 of the 55 responses rated one to
17:44
three out of five for their institution's adoption
17:47
of AI, meaning minimal to some integration.
17:51
Most of our responses are split into four
17:52
types.
17:53
Those who don't like AI or don't use
17:56
it, those who use it to help with
17:57
simple tasks but are still wary about it,
18:00
those who think it's an effective tool, and
18:02
those who have had or know people who
18:04
used it to complete full assignments.
18:06
I've picked out a few stories for us
18:08
to go over.
18:10
For our first response, an 18-year-old
18:12
man who's an undergraduate engineering and technology student
18:15
at UAH wrote that he has friends who
18:17
use chat GPT to write essays, but he
18:20
doesn't use AI because he believes that he's
18:22
capable of writing much better essays.
18:24
However, he thinks that AI is useful for

18:27
source gathering because it can give potential sources
18:30
quickly, which saves a lot of time when
18:32
writing research papers.
18:33
I have used AI to get sources for
18:35
papers before.
18:36
It's definitely helpful as a starting point and
18:38
can give what you're looking for in a
18:40
source, but it narrows your results by whatever
18:42
the algorithm chooses.
18:44
I also found that it wasn't good to
18:45
get sources that work well together for the
18:47
theme of the overall paper.
18:49
I think the process of combing through all
18:51
the different sources helps your understanding of a
18:53
topic and the various perspectives, even if it
18:56
is time consuming.
18:57
I completely agree with this response.
19:00
As you heard in my table talk segment,
19:02
I was a frequent user of chat GPT
19:04
in undergrad, and once I got to grad
19:06
school, I realized I was doing myself a
19:09
disservice because I wasn't becoming a better writer.
19:12
I was just delivering papers to get grades

19:14
to get my degree.
19:15
That is not what college is for, and
19:17
I'm sad that it took me so long
19:19
to realize it.
19:22
Our next response was from a 20-year
19:24
-old woman who is an undergraduate engineering and
19:27
technology student at UAH.
19:29
She admits that she has not used AI
19:31
tools as the concept is unnerving, and she
19:34
doesn't love the industry's lack of copyright regulation.
19:38
However, she knows that others don't have a
19:40
problem using it and is annoyed by their
19:42
difference in academic ethic.
19:45
She mentions that students like her who don't
19:48
touch chat GPT are disadvantaged and would prefer
19:51
that professors either require AI use on assignments
19:54
or ban it altogether.
19:56
She says she'd enjoy watching AI progress if
20:00
she were more sure how AI's implementations would
20:03
affect her life.
20:06
Getting frustrated with cheaters, I completely get it.
20:09
I remember having to withdraw from a class
20:11
because how frustrated I'd feel because the professor's

20:14
test would differ so much from the coursework.
20:16
Meanwhile, people who cheated using Quizlet on exams
20:19
succeeded and stayed in the class.
20:21
I'd imagine that chat GPT is making this
20:23
process much more manageable.
20:24
I think the issue of people not learning
20:26
from their classes because they're relying so much
20:28
on AI is more serious than people think.
20:31
I've heard a lot of people say it's
20:32
fine to use when it comes to classes
20:34
that aren't contributing to their degree, but you
20:36
gain important skills from those classes as well.
20:40
Our last response is from a 33-year
20:42
-old doctoral student in social sciences at the
20:44
University of Kentucky.
20:46
She shared her experience of being accused of
20:48
using AI to write a paper based on
20:50
an unreliable AI detection tool.
20:53
Despite providing detailed evidence of her research process,
20:56
including notes, drafts, and edits, she was still
20:59
forced to rewrite flag sections multiple times until
21:02
they met the university's arbitrary AI score threshold.
21:05
This made her simplify her writing to appease

21:07
the tool, undermining her academic work.
21:10
She expressed frustration with the restrictive nature of
21:13
academic writing and questioned the stigma surrounding AI,
21:16
advocating for its potential to make knowledge more
21:19
accessible.
21:21
I was surprised we got a response from
21:22
a graduate student from another university.
21:25
She rated the University of Kentucky's adoption of
21:28
AI tools as one, much lower than UAH's
21:30
range of responses.
21:32
I remember taking classes using Turnitin before the
21:34
rampant use of AI in student papers.
21:37
It was concerning how much of the score
21:38
was increased purely because it caught me using
21:40
citations.
21:41
After all, some professors would say that they
21:43
would report students for academic dishonesty when they
21:46
got above a certain percentage.
21:48
This situation is problematic in so many ways,
21:52
but mainly because the Turnitin AI detector is
21:54
new technology that is frequently unreliable.
21:58
The fact that she gave them detailed evidence
22:00
of her research process should have been enough.

22:03
Just like a lie detector is not permissible
22:05
in court because it's often considered junk science,
22:09
Turnitin should not be used to jeopardize a
22:12
student's degree.
22:21
We hope you enjoyed this episode.
22:23
Let us know what you'd like for us
22:24
to scavenge next from the deaths of college
22:26
campuses on Mass Mischief.
22:28
Mass Mischief was produced this week by April
22:30
Zark, Abigail Vo, and Eve Grandinetti, edited by
22:33
Abigail Vo, music by Sergei Quadrato.
22:37
We are part of the New Media and
22:38
Rhetoric podcast family, now headquartered at the University
22:41
of Alabama in Morton Hall in the beautiful
22:43
city of Huntsville, Alabama.
22:46
Lastly, find us wherever you get your podcast
22:48
from at MassMischief, and we hope to see
22:50
you soon