WA schools and the use of AI

The WA Department of Education (DoE) moved to ban access to ChatGPT in schools at the start of the 2023 school year.

The ban prevents access to ChatGPT from DoE servers and devices and has been put in place to prevent students submitting work generated by artificial intelligence (AI) at school.

The ban cannot prevent students from accessing the controversial tool outside of school.

DoE director general Lisa Rodgers told media that teachers would be able to distinguish or identify work submitted by students that used the AI tool.

“Teachers know their students and their level of capability, and also the types of things that they would write about and the position they would take on issues,” she said to The West Australian newspaper.

Teachers are not banned from using the tool outside of the school either, with

Ms Rodgers acknowledging their usefulness in generating teaching resources.

“We can’t stop what people are doing outside of school, so teachers might [as] well use ChatGPT,” Ms Rodgers told the newspaper.

“They are going to put together resources that best meet the needs of their students.”

At time of press educational authorities in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania have banned the use of AI such as ChatGPT.

South Australian schools have allowed the use of AI, but not for graded work.

“It can’t be used for exams, and when students are graded the technology is already in place to be able to prevent that, we’ll do that,” SA Education Minister Blair Boyer told ABC News.

“But I think we need to find a way of having it embraced to an extent that we can teach kids the upsides, the pitfalls, how to work with it and also focus on the things that our graduates will be able to do that artificial intelligence can’t do.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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