Mind the ‘AI gap’ - Children in the UK falling behind Europe in AI education

Thursday 16 March, 2023

- Just a third (32%) of children in the UK are using AI technology to learn in school or at home
- Children in Austria lead the continent with 43% already using AI technology to learn, followed by children in Italy (41%) and children in Spain (40%)
- Just 6% of children in the UK say they are being taught about AI in school

16th March, London: As AI tools dominate the news agenda, with the emergence of ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer) kicking off a race in the big tech sector, a new study has revealed that kids in the UK have already fallen behind the rest of Europe in using AI technology, with just a third (32%) of them using it to learn in school or at home.

Children in Austria are leading the continent with 43% already using AI technology to learn, followed by those in Italy (41%) and Spain (40%), according to The GoStudent Future of Education Report 2023. The report was commissioned by leading online tutoring provider, GoStudent, with a view to helping parents, schools and education providers better understand what children want from their education.

The report found that whilst 19% of children are using AI to learn at school, just 6% of children say they are actually being taught about the technology in school.

Felix Ohswald, CEO and co-founder at GoStudent says: *“With the right application, AI has the potential to revolutionise education. AI-driven content, for example, can allow a class of children to engage with the same subject matter in entirely different ways, based on how quickly they absorb information or how they learn best - improving their learning outcomes and providing an individualised approach without losing the social setting of a classroom. We need to support more schools in using this kind of technology, because we know that four out of five (81%) children in the UK say that using technology makes it easier to learn.”*

He continues: “*That just six percent of students in the UK are learning about AI in school is a surprising insight: this technology is quickly becoming more commonplace and, in order for this generation of students to truly harness the technology, they need to understand what it is and how it works. From our research we know that 70% of 14-16 year olds wish school incorporated more tech into the curriculum, to help prepare them for their future job, so it appears they are acutely aware of this need.”*

The GoStudent Future of Education Report 2023 identified that children would like a greater focus on emerging technologies in their education, with six out of ten 14-16 year olds (59%) saying it's important for schools to use more adaptive learning in the next five years. It also revealed that children value the support technology as a whole can bring to their learning, with four out of five (81%) children in the UK saying technology makes it easier to learn and more than three-quarters (77%) feeling technology helps them to develop their creativity.

Parents do not feel armed to support their children, with just a quarter (25%) saying they have a good understanding of how to operate and use AI. They were keen that their children get the support they need from teachers. In total, more than eight out of ten parents (87%) agree that teachers should be skilled in using digital technology within the classroom.

As a company that helps students learn with tailor-made tutoring in virtual classrooms, GoStudent seeks to better understand how young people see education today. The GoStudent Future of Education Report 2023 listened to more than 6,000 children and their parents/guardians across Europe, including Austria, Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom (a total sample of more than 12,000). The aim is to uncover the experiences and aspirations of today’s Gen Z and Gen Alpha students.

The full report can be viewed here.

For more information or to set up an interview with a GoStudent spokesperson please contact:

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Notes to editor

GoStudent worked with its research partner Opinium, which conducted its study among 6147 parents or guardians and 6147 children aged between 10 and 16 years across 6 European countries: Austria, Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom from the 28th of October to the 21st of November 2022.

Around 1,000 parents or guardians and 1,000 children were interviewed in each country ensuring a representative quota across age, gender and region. Two focus groups were also conducted per country with children only, aged between 10 and 16 years old, covering a mix of age, gender, academic level and type of school.

About GoStudent

GoStudent is one of the world's leading tutoring providers and, with a €3bn valuation, Europe's highest valued EdTech company. Founded in Vienna, Austria, in 2016 by Felix Ohswald (CEO) and Gregor Müller (COO), the venture-backed unicorn has raised more than €590m from investors including Prosus and SoftBank Vision Fund 2. Believing the future of education is hybrid, GoStudent has expanded its offering over the past two years with the acquisition of three EdTech companies - Seneca Learning, Tus Media and Fox Education - and offline tutoring business, Studienkreis. Together, these companies aim to unite the best of the online and offline world to unlock every child's potential. Across its portfolio, GoStudent employs more than 1,500 staff and supports more than 5 million families each month. Learn more here: www.gostudent.org

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