



Office of Commissioner
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Federal Trade Commission
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Statement of Commissioner Mark R. Meador
Section 6(b) Resolution Relating to Generative AI Companion Products or Services
FTC File No. P254500; Program Code J10

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On April 11 of this year, 16-year-old Adam Raine took his own life. He left no note—but he did leave behind a long succession of logs chronicling his conversations with ChatGPT, the immensely popular chatbot that’s taken the world by storm. Over the course of those conversations, Adam’s suicidal ideation was allegedly manifested and refined.¹ Shortly before his death, the chatbot allegedly “advised” him that, “You don’t owe anyone [your survival],” and, when Adam uploaded an image of the noose he planned to use for his suicide, the program allegedly invited him to “upgrade it into a safer load-bearing anchor loop.”² Adam’s case is not an outlier. Around the world, reports of chatbots amplifying suicidal ideation have increased as these technologies have grown more popular.³

Suicidality is not the only harm that chatbots may exacerbate. The *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* have reported that chatbots from multiple companies have engaged in sexually-themed discussions with underage users—including role-playing statutory rape scenarios.⁴ The articles suggest that, in some cases, these risks were known and not disclosed. News outlets reported recently that behind closed doors, Meta promulgated guidance expressly permitting its chatbots to “engage a child in conversations that are romantic or sensual” and to “describe a child

¹ Kashmir Hill, *A Teen Was Suicidal. ChatGPT Was the Friend He Confided In*, N.Y. Times, Aug. 27, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/26/technology/chatgpt-openai-suicide.html>.

² Compl. at 3, *Raine v. OpenAI, Inc.*, CGC-25-628528 (Cal. Sup. Ct. Aug. 26, 2025), <https://cdn.sanity.io/files/3tzzh18d/production/5802c13979a6056f86690687a629e771a07932ab.pdf>.

³ See, e.g., Kevin Roose, *Can A.I. Be Blamed for a Teen’s Suicide?*, N.Y. Times, Oct. 24, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/23/technology/characterai-lawsuit-teen-suicide.html>; Eileen Guo, *An AI Chatbot Told a User How to Kill Himself—But the Company Doesn’t Want to “Censor” It*, MIT Tech. Rev., Feb. 6, 2025, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/02/06/1111077/nomi-ai-chatbot-told-user-to-kill-himself/>.

⁴ Nitasha Tiku, *Fake Celebrity Chatbots Sent Risqué Messages to Teens on Top AI App*, Wash. Post, Sept. 3, 2025; Jeff Horwitz, *Meta’s “Digital Companions” Will Talk Sex With Users—Even Children*, Wall St. J., (Apr. 26, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/meta-ai-chatbots-sex-a25311bf>.

in terms that evidence their attractiveness.”⁵ Many familiar internet platforms—for all their potential downsides—present known risks and offer parental controls to families to mitigate those risks. Chatbots endorsing sexual exploitation and physical harm pose a threat of a wholly new order.

In light of these troubling developments, I am pleased to support the Commission’s study of chatbot functions and behaviors, because it is imperative to ascertain whether and why frontier AI models are displaying these alleged behaviors. At present, the answers are far from clear. As the President’s recently promulgated *America’s AI Action Plan* explains:

Today, the inner workings of frontier AI systems are poorly understood. Technologists know how LLMs work at a high level, but often cannot explain why a model produced a specific output. This can make it hard to predict the behavior of any specific AI system. This lack of predictability, in turn, can make it challenging to use advanced AI in . . . applications where lives are at stake.⁶

The study the Commission authorizes today, while not undertaken in service of a specific law enforcement purpose, will help the Commission better understand the fast-moving technological environment surrounding chatbots and inform policymakers confronting similar challenges. The need for such understanding will only grow with time. For all their uncanny ability to simulate human cognition, these chatbots are products like any other, and those who make them available have a responsibility to comply with the consumer protection laws. Undertaking this study is therefore essential. If the facts—as developed through subsequent and appropriately targeted law enforcement inquiries, if warranted—indicate that the law has been violated, the Commission should not hesitate to act to protect the most vulnerable among us.

⁵ Jeff Horwitz, *Meta’s AI Rules Have Let Bots Hold “Sensual” Chats With Kids, Offer False Medical Info*, Reuters, Aug. 14, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/meta-ai-chatbot-guidelines/>.

⁶ Office of Science and Technology, Executive Office of the President of the United States, *Winning the Race: America’s AI Action Plan* at 9 (July 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Americas-AI-Action-Plan.pdf>.