



Office of Commissioner  
Melissa Holyoak

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
**Federal Trade Commission**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

**Statement of Commissioner Melissa Holyoak**

Regarding Issuance of Section 6(b) Orders to Companies  
That Offer Generative AI Companion Products or Services  
Commission File No. P254500

**September 11, 2025**

Artificial intelligence has the prospect of being a momentous driver of innovation and economic growth in the coming years. Accordingly, President Trump declared in January 2025 that it is United States policy to sustain and enhance the United States' global AI dominance and ordered development of an AI action plan.<sup>1</sup> The resulting *America's AI Action Plan* issued in July 2025 calls for the United States to innovate faster and more comprehensively than our competitors in the development and distribution of new AI technology and to dismantle unnecessary regulatory barriers.<sup>2</sup> Consistent with that plan, we at the Federal Trade Commission are committed to giving AI the ability to develop and reach its potential.

At the same time, when it comes to AI, the Commission will work to meet our mandate to ensure competitive markets and protect consumers from fraudulent and other unlawful conduct. Our consumer protection mandate is especially important when it comes to children. As First Lady Melania Trump recently stated with respect to AI, "[w]e are living in a moment of wonder, and it is our responsibility to prepare America's children."<sup>3</sup>

Overall, AI growth has included rapid development of a market for products offering AI chatbots,<sup>4</sup> including those that function as companions and simulate human-like communication and interpersonal relationships. Such AI chatbots have been trained on data to generate new content in response to user prompts and to remember prior conversations. AI chatbots undoubtedly have

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<sup>1</sup> *Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence*, Exec. Order No. 14,179, 90 Fed. Reg. 8741 (Jan. 23, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> The White House, *Winning the Race: America's AI Action Plan* (July 2025), at 1, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Americas-AI-Action-Plan.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> The White House, Office of the First Lady, *First Lady Melania Trump Hosts a Meeting of the White House Task Force on Artificial Intelligence Education* (Sept. 4, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/09/first-lady-melania-trump-hosts-a-meeting-of-the-white-house-task-force-on-artificial-intelligence-education/>.

<sup>4</sup> See Grand View Research, *U.S. Chatbot Market Size & Outlook, 2024-2030*, <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/horizon/outlook/chatbot-market/united-states>.

the potential to facilitate beneficial uses across countless contexts, including those that might not yet be recognized.

I have been concerned by reports that AI chatbots can engage in alarming interactions with young users, as well as reports suggesting that companies offering generative AI companion chatbots might have been warned by their own employees that they were deploying the chatbots without doing enough to protect young users.<sup>5</sup> In response, I have encouraged the Commission to use its authority under Section 6(b) of the FTC Act<sup>6</sup> to conduct a study regarding children's and teens' use of AI companion chatbots and the potential impacts on their social relationships, mental health, and well-being, among other things.<sup>7</sup>

Today, the FTC takes the important step of initiating a Section 6(b) study on these and other topics by issuing orders to Character Technologies, Inc., Alphabet, Inc., Instagram, LLC, Meta Platforms, Inc., OpenAI OpCo, LLC, Snap, Inc., and X.AI Corp. I expect that the study will provide valuable information regarding children's and teens' use of AI companion chatbots.

Through the 6(b) study announced today, the Commission seeks to obtain information regarding the age groups that are using companion chatbots, the amount of time that members of each age group spend using the chatbots, the companion chatbot characters that are most popular among members of each age group, and the prevalence of sexually themed interactions between the chatbots and minors. We also seek information such as whether and how AI companion chatbot developers use age-based restrictions to limit access to, or use of, their AI companion chatbots; whether the developers' collection, use, retention, sharing, and sale of users' personal information differs based on users' ages; and whether the developers provide parental controls. And we seek information regarding other topics, such as the steps developers take to measure, test, monitor, and mitigate actual or potential adverse effects associated with use of their companion chatbots.

Section 6(b) of the FTC Act is an important tool that enables the Commission to provide important information to the public and lawmakers, and to approach its policy and enforcement work in an informed manner. As use of AI companion chatbots continues to increase, I look forward to receiving and reviewing responses to the Section 6(b) orders we are issuing today.

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Heather Kelly, *Teens are sexting with AI. Here's what parents should know*, Wash. Post (May 21, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/05/21/teens-sexting-ai-chatbots-parents/>; Jeff Horwitz, *Meta's 'Digital Companions' Will Talk Sex With Users – Even Children*, The Wall Street Journal (Apr. 26, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/meta-ai-chatbots-sex-a25311bf?st=Ri9C7M&reflink>.

<sup>6</sup> 15 U.S.C. § 46(b).

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Melissa Holyoak, *Prepared Remarks for the FTC Attention Economy Workshop* (June 4, 2025), at 4-5, [https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc\\_gov/pdf/holyoak-remarks-attention-economy-workshop.pdf](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc_gov/pdf/holyoak-remarks-attention-economy-workshop.pdf); Melissa Holyoak, *Privacy Enforcement Priorities for the Digital Economy, Keynote at IAPP Global Privacy Summit 2025* (Apr. 22, 2025), at 5, [https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc\\_gov/pdf/holyoak-remarks-2025-iapp-globalprivacy-summit.pdf](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc_gov/pdf/holyoak-remarks-2025-iapp-globalprivacy-summit.pdf).