Photo of the Day |



Student pets a sleepy piglet on the Student Union Lawn in Storrs, Connecticut on November 7, 2026. The Huskies had a fun afternoon at Harvest Fest, an event hosted by SUBOG.
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In Medias Res:

GOOGLE'S A.I. MONOPOLY POSES THREAT TO OUR STUDENTS

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Last week, Google announced that it would turn off artificial intelligence tool access for K-12 students using its popular software, unless school administrators explicitly choose to make such features available.

On its face, this decision sounds like a remarkable win for advocates opposed to AI's increasing integration into the classroom experience. However, there is a catch: schools that choose to restrict the company's AI features will have Google Search disabled. "Search and AI are deeply integrated," said Chris Phillips, Google's vice president for education. If a school has banned AI, he added, students "will not have access to search, and they'll see a message from their school that indicates it's not available."

While Google has not explicitly said schools "must" adopt its AI features, it has issued an ultimatum: agree to its terms, or schools' technologies will be crippled. Google is among the most dominant market players in K-12 education. Its search feature is a crucial part of early childhood classroom experience, and its suite of education apps — ranging from Google Classroom to Gmail and Docs — form the backbone of our nation's education. Nationwide, 93% of school districts have purchased Google Chromebooks, and 80% of teachers report students having individually assigned devices. Google Search is a vital piece of this software network.

In Aug. 2024, a federal judge found Google guilty of monopoly in its illicit quest to make Google Search the dominant search engine on the market. The company had been paying other companies, such as Apple and Microsoft, billions of dollars a year to promote Google Search instead of alternative options. Lina Khan, a former chair of the Federal Trade Commission, took note of this in her statement that Google was using its "search monopoly to coerce schools" into adopting its AI.

School administrators have reason to be wary of AI in the classroom. A report by Oxford University found for six in ten students, the technology negatively impacted the retention of the skills they learned in class. On average, students who learned with AI perform worse than those who learned without it. A 2026 study by the Brookings Institution, focused on school systems from over 50 countries, found that AI in education poses the risk of undermining the core foundational development of students. Research shows chatbots can also hinder critical thinking and ensnare adolescents in emotional dependency.

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Disregarding the broader scope of AI concerns, Google's AI features pose a litany of issues in the classroom. Its AI overview has proved unreliable; it draws from disreputable sources and discourages students from seeking out multiple sources for balanced information. Google's "Guided Learning," a student feature within Gemini's chatbot, is intended to guide students through topics step-by-step without providing answers that could short-circuit learning. It is supposed to offer an experience modeled on one-to-one tutoring. The consumer version of this technology is already widely available, however, and has put Google's claim that "Guided Learning" is not a tool for cheating into a dubious light. In one reporter's test, it quickly produced a detailed essay in response to an Advanced Placement history prompt.

Schools that cave to Google's demands invite into their buildings a trojan horse that will only contribute to our nation's declining education system. If Google's current operating system cannot separate AI from everyday use, it is not up to schools to bear the consequences; it is up to Google to fix their system. Zohran Mamdani, mayor of New York City, responded best to Google's announcement Tuesday: "No corporation should have the power to dictate how we teach our children. Our public schools exist to serve students, not to grow the profit margin of Big Tech."

Alternatives to Google exist, yes. DuckDuckGo, for instance, has recently begun an advertising campaign highlighting its rejection of AI technologies. However, an extraction from school's reliance on Google would be long and costly. In the meantime, our government must hold Google responsible for the blatant misuse of its grip on the market, as it has before. As church has been separated from state, the classroom must always come before capital — no matter the technological titan we face down.