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The misleading maze of Bing Chat: Euroconsumers files complaint against Microsoft for misleading consumer information

A source for reliable information or fake news?

Since their launch, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Bing Chat have captured the attention of many, including consumers. A recent [Euroconsumers survey](#) revealed 68% use ChatGPT or similar systems primarily to search for information. Although only 31% of ChatGPT users consider it to be a reliable tool for information, 73% express satisfaction with the reliability of the answers they were provided with. This is in sharp contrast with non-ChatGPT users, where only 6% believe it is delivering reliable information.

Bing Chat: Euroconsumers does the test

Upon closer inspection of Microsoft's Bing Chat, it becomes apparent that the actual impact can be far more significant than what meets the eye initially. In a random test conducted by Euroconsumers' organisations in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Belgium (all of which are testing organisations) Bing Chat was asked the questions: "What was the best vacuum cleaner as recommended by Altroconsumo/OCU/Deco Proteste/Testachats?" In all four cases, the answer provided was wrong.

The lack of accuracy in Bing Chat's answers manifests itself in several ways, leading to problems on several levels:

- Leading consumers astray! The recommended products don't match the most recent recommendations
- Surprise, surprise! Asking the same question at different times can yield completely different results
- Trusting the obsolete! Some of the products suggested by Bing Chat aren't even available anymore
- Blind faith! Users have no means to verify whether the information provided is correct

Misleading for the average consumer: Euroconsumers challenges consumer protection authorities

Needless to say, this leads users astray, causing major confusion and jeopardising not only consumers' overall trust but also the trust in the information provided by Euroconsumers' organisations.

"The answers provided are likely to mislead the average consumer, leading to choices they normally wouldn't have made, and consequently, causing tangible harm. That's exactly the reason why

Euroconsumers' organisations Altroconsumo (Italy), Testaankoop/Testachats (Belgium), DECOProteste (Portugal), OCU (Spain) are filing a complaint for misleading commercial practices with their respective national consumer protection authorities" -

Marco Scialdone, Head Litigation and Academic Outreach Euroconsumers

Microsoft has announced the launch of the new artificial intelligence-enhanced Bing, promising improved search results and real chat capabilities for more comprehensive and in-depth answers. Contrary to this expectation, answers can be misleading for the average consumer, and the impact is real: one month after the launch, the site reached 100 million daily users, with at least one-third being Bing Chat users.

A tell-tale sign for wider reliability concerns

The “vacuum cleaner” example is a very concrete one, but it is not the only one. It is a tell-tale sign of a wide-ranged concern about the reliability and dependability of responses provided by generative AI. Among others, it underscores the importance for EU legislators to adopt strong rules on generative AI following the European Parliaments' proposal for the AIA.

“To safeguard consumers’ trust and the future of this innovative tool, it is crucial to ensure accuracy and transparency, so the information provided to consumers is the one they deserve: trustworthy and reliable” - Els Bruggeman, Head Policy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers

ABOUT EUROCONSUMERS

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1,5 million people in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Brazil, Euroconsumers is the world’s leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer rights. Our European member organisations are part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation. Together we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives.