

The Impact of ChatGPT on Law Enforcement

Cornelia Riehle

News

At the end of March 2023, Europol's Innovation Lab published a new Tech Watch Flash [Report](#) looking at Large Language Models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, and their impact on law enforcement. The report is based on the results of dedicated expert workshops in which the behaviour of an LLM, namely ChatGPT, was tested when confronted with potentially criminal cases of malicious use.

ChatGPT (in the GPT-3.5 version) is capable of processing and generating human-like text in response to user prompts. It can answer questions on a variety of topics, translate text, engage in conversational exchanges, and summarise text to provide key points. It is capable of performing sentiment analysis, generating text based on a given prompt (i.e. writing a story or poem), as well as explaining, producing, and improving code in some of the most common programming languages (Python, Java, C++, JavaScript, PHP, Ruby, HTML, CSS, SQL). Although several safety features were included in ChatGPT, with a view to preventing malicious use of the model by its users, the report shows that these safeguards can be circumvented. The process of refining the precise way a question is asked in order to influence the output generated by an AI system (so-called prompt engineering) can also be used to set these safeguards aside.

As for its criminal use, in particular, the report finds that ChatGPT can be used to better understand and subsequently carry out various types of crime. It offers new opportunities, especially for crimes involving social engineering, phishing, and online fraud as well as way to generate propaganda, disinformation, and fake news. Its capability of producing code makes ChatGPT a viable tool for malicious actors to create malware and other assistance to cybercriminal purposes.

From the impression of the real impact that LLMs already have and their rapid growth and further improvement, the report strongly underlines the need for law enforcement to understand this impact and be in a position to anticipate and prevent abuse. To this end, Europol also offers a more in-depth report for law enforcement only.

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