How Teens Use and View AI — Why Nari Matters

A short essay based on Pew Research Centre's February 2026 report

Pew Research Centre's February 2026 report, How Teens Use and View AI, makes one point unavoidable: AI chatbots are already normal in teenage life, but parents and institutions are not mentally or practically caught up. Over half of US teens say they have used chatbots for schoolwork, and many use them for everyday information seeking and entertainment. A smaller but meaningful minority reports using chatbots for emotional support. In parallel, most teens say chatbot-assisted cheating happens at their school, at least sometimes. This is not a future problem. It is a current behavioural baseline.

The core risk is not simply "AI is dangerous". It is that AI is being used privately, inconsistently, and without shared norms. Teenagers are not, on average, using AI well. They are using it as a shortcut, a search engine, a homework machine, or a casual companion. Those uses are understandable: they are fast, low-effort, and socially frictionless. But they often produce shallow learning, inflated confidence, and dependency on plausible-sounding text. When a chatbot gives an answer, the teen can mistake fluency for truth, and completion for understanding. In schoolwork, the immediate temptation is obvious: outsource the hard thinking, submit the polished output, and move on. Even when the teen is not "cheating", the default behaviour can still be cognitively lazy: copy, paraphrase, accept.

Now add the second problem: the disjoint between parents and teens. Most parents do not know what their child has tried, which tools they are using, what the outputs look like, or how the interaction shapes thinking. Many do not know how to test whether a chatbot answer is reliable, or how to distinguish "help me understand" from "do it for me". Teenagers, meanwhile, do not experience "AI" as a policy debate. They experience it as a convenient helper that is available privately, instantly, and without judgement. That combination produces a predictable pattern: teenagers explore; parents react late; schools impose blunt rules; trust erodes; usage goes underground. The household lacks a shared vocabulary, shared examples, and shared boundaries.

Nari matters because it is designed as the missing interface layer between capability and comprehension. It replaces the intimidating blank box with guided starting points that make AI behaviour visible and discussable. Instead of asking a teen to "use AI responsibly" (a meaningless instruction), Nari gives them concrete ways to use it well: to research a topic by generating questions first; to solve a problem by showing working and checking assumptions; to rewrite a paragraph while preserving the student's voice; to debate both sides before forming a view; to test understanding with short quizzes rather than produce an essay on demand. These are not moral lectures. They are interaction patterns that systematically produce better thinking.

Crucially, Nari also repairs the parent–teen dialogue. Parents do not need to become technical. They need a shared set of behaviours they can recognise and talk about. Nari provides that shared surface: three simple starter tasks that both parties can see, repeat, and discuss. It gives parents the ability to ask better questions than "Are you using AI?" such as: "Which task did you use?", "What did you change?", "What did it get wrong?", "How did you verify it?", "What did you learn that you could explain without the tool?" This moves the conversation from suspicion to competence.

The report describes mass adoption. The problem is not adoption; it is quality of use and the absence of family-level norms. Nari is important because it turns private, haphazard usage into structured, accountable usage with a shared language across generations. That is how AI becomes socially usable inside families: not by pretending teens will stop using it, and not by demanding parents become experts, but by giving both sides a practical, guided way to engage with it well.