

TECHNOLOGY

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Instagram @nikpollina

Nik Pollina shared her theory on a certain generation being most adaptable with regards to technology. She believes this generation is most able to “take over the world” with AI.

Millennial shares theory on why one generation is best at technology

BY RACHAEL O’CONNOR
Newsweek Life

A woman’s theory on the generation who will “take over” with Artificial Intelligence has gone viral.

Nik Pollina, 30, from New York, recently developed a theory that those born between 1992 and 1997, who she called the “MapQuest generation,” are the ones most suited to tackle the rise of AI. Because, she says, this generation grew up with an ever-changing internet, even something as simple as having MySpace and then moving to Facebook, while the younger generation has had major apps like Instagram and TikTok for years.

Going from brick phones and T9 texting to touch screens apps, growing alongside new

technologies helped this age group become the most “adaptable” generation, she said in a video to her Instagram account @nikpollina_ on September 17.

She explained to *Newsweek* that on a recent night out with friends, they began “laughing and reminiscing about MapQuest and what a weird transitional time that was,” referring to the 1996 website that helped transform physical maps on road trips to the modern-day driving directions and map apps.

“After that night I started to consider how some of the younger girls I work with at my store seem to be less tech-savvy than I am. I realized that I probably am in the most tech-literate generation because of all the changes that occurred in my lifetime,” she said.

Being a content creator, Pol-

lina decided to share her thoughts online, thinking “it would be relatable and spark debate, which it did.”

Since sharing her theory that those who grew up with an ever-changing technological landscape are more tech-savvy than those who grew up with smartphones and apps already at their disposal, Pollina’s video has been liked over 30,000 times and gained hundreds of comments.

One commenter agreed: “We learned how to freaking create code on MySpace to embed songs and new fonts on our page. We were so ahead of our time.”

“I did not study IT but I am tech support in every workplace I’ve ever been in because I can learn things and figure out things, whereas older peeps are too scared to break things and younger ones think it all just

happens automatically and only IT Techs can fix stuff,” another said.

Not everyone agreed, as one complained Pollina was “leaving out a decade worth of people,” and another said they were “born in 86 and I relate to all of this just as much as anybody born in 1990s. This is all millennials.”

Pollina, who previously worked in UX at Google, told *Newsweek* that after posting her video, she still thinks “there’s truth” to her theory.

Newsweek reached out to different experts on the theory, with many having theories of their own.

Dr Lisa Strohmman, attorney and author of *Digital Distress: Growing Up Online*, agreed the “so-called MapQuest generation” were forced to “be flexible and agile as new platforms and interfaces emerged.

“It would make sense from a psychological perspective that this group is not only adaptable, but also has experience using technology as a tool before a toy and not as a constant like Gen Z has grown up with.”

“There is a lot of evidence that would support the ‘MapQuest Generation’ is already comfortable with learning new technologies and using them in diverse ways, and that this may mean they are more naturally inclined to leverage AI tools as they become more integrated into business, healthcare, education and everyday life.”

But again, not everyone agreed, as Deborah Perry Piscione, author of *Employment Is Dead: How Disruptive Technologies Are Revolutionizing the Way We Work*, argued Gen Z, born 1997 to 2012, are better positioned for AI adoption, as “true digital natives who grew up with algorithmic recommendations shaping their entire online experience.

“They don’t see AI as something to adapt to, but as a creative medium to shape and customize.”

Dev Nag, CEO of AI-powered QueryPal, argued the “actual distinction is between the ‘computer generation,’ born 1981-1991, versus the ‘app generation’ [born] 1992-2000.

“The app generation’s strength lies in rapid adaptation to new platforms and interfaces, but the computer generation’s experience with system architecture and problem-solving may prove more valuable for AI development.

“The key predictor of AI success isn’t comfort with changing apps, but rather understanding how technology works under the hood—skills honed by necessity in the era before seamless interfaces.”

Edtech teacher Marlee Strawn, focused on bringing responsible AI to young people, explained that she herself is a millennial, and as a teacher she saw Gen Z interact with technology, and she is a parent to Gen Alpha, who she thinks “will take a very different approach.”

“They’re growing up in a world where we’re finally talking openly about the downsides of technology—privacy issues, misinformation, bias in algorithms.

“I think they’ll bring a thoughtful, critical perspective that will shape how AI evolves in the future.”

Pollina, who sparked the debate, told *Newsweek*: “On a serious note — regardless what generation owns it — someone does need to be advocating for safe, non-biased AI.

“We have to ensure that technology is used to benefit society and not to harm it.”

Jim Rossman: First Apple Intelligence features roll out

BY JIM ROSSMAN
The Tribune Content Agency

Recently, Apple released an update to its operating systems that introduced the beginnings of a new suite of artificial intelligence tools called Apple Intelligence.

Apple has been talking about Apple Intelligence since it was first mentioned back in June at their Worldwide Developer Conference.

The first Apple Intelligence features finally made it to consumers with the release of iOS 18.1, iPadOS 18.1 and MacOS 15.1.

Apple users may or may not see the new features, as you’ll need a recent device.

Apple Intelligence is only compatible with iPhone 15 and 16 models, iPads with an A17 Pro or M1 or later CPU and any Mac with an M1 or later CPU.

If you have a compatible Apple device, and you’ve updated to the latest version of the operating system, you’ll still have to opt in to activate Apple Intelligence inside the system preferences. The option you will find is to be added to the Apple Intelligence waitlist.

Why a waitlist?

The server and network infrastructure to handle the AI requests is new, and I think Apple wants to keep an eye on the system capacity.

That said, I clicked to join the waitlist on the first day and I received a notification that I’d been approved in about an hour.

So, what is included?

Writing Tools to help you summarize, proofread and rewrite text to change the wording or tone. You can choose to make your copy sound more professional, friendly or concise.

You should find the writing



JIM ROSSMAN TNS

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tools if you select a block of type and right-click with your mouse. Writing Tools will be listed in the pop-up menu.

You’ll also find Smart Reply options in Apple Mail, and you’ll see summaries of email conversations.

Summaries and smart reply will also appear in the Messages app notifications.

Photos gets some new features, including Clean Up, which lets you circle objects

you’d like to remove. I cleaned up the background in a picture of my wife and I was really impressed at the results; the cleanup only takes a few seconds.

Users can also search with natural language in the Photos app. You can search for things like “Christmas in Chicago” or “red convertibles” and the returned photos were surprisingly accurate. The searches even include your videos.

Siri gets enhancements including typing your Siri queries and asking Siri questions about how to use your Apple products. (Siri, how can I make text bigger on my iPhone?)

Apple will be releasing more Apple Intelligence features in future software upgrades, so you may want to turn on automatic updates in the Software Update system settings.