

ChatGPT Is Writing Lots of Job Applications, But Companies Are Quickly Catching On. Here's How.

More candidates are using AI to crack a tough job market, and it's not only increasing the number of applications employers have to look through, but it's also requiring hiring managers to pay close attention to the wording of resumes and cover letters.

A Tuesday Financial Times report found that, based on the employers and recruiters the outlet talked to, about half of current job applicants use AI tools like ChatGPT or Google Gemini to add keywords to their resumes, write polished cover letters, and complete assessments.

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AI-generated applications have also led to about twice as many applications per job posting as candidates.

But employers say it's getting easier to tell, sometimes with just a glance.

"Without proper editing, the language will be clunky and generic, and hiring managers can detect this," Victoria McLean, chief executive of career consultancy CityCV, told the Financial Times.

AI "simply can't" inject applications with the candidate's story and unique voice, according to McLean.

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According to Stanford University research, four words are a giveaway that someone may have used AI for writing help: realm, intricate, showcasing, and pivotal.

Another AI keyword that could make recruiters suspicious about AI use is the word delve. Paul Graham, co-founder of startup accelerator Y Combinator, noted in April that he received a cold email proposing a new project. When he saw the word “delve” in the email, he inferred that ChatGPT played a part in writing it.

Many large companies do not tolerate AI use by candidates. An April survey from Resume Genius found that AI-generated resumes were the biggest red flag for 625 U.S. hiring managers.

But that doesn't mean companies oppose using it to make hiring decisions – over 97% of Fortune 500 companies use AI software to filter candidates.

CVS settled a class action lawsuit last month over allegations that the company used AI facial tracking software in interviews without candidates knowing about it. The technology picked up on facial expressions and gave each candidate an “employability score” based on its AI analysis, per the complaint.

Workday, an AI screening software used by 10,000 companies including Adobe and Salesforce, also faces a lawsuit because of how it recommends some candidates and rejects others, potentially impacting who advances to an in-person interview.

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