

Gemini Advanced is most impressive when it's working with Google

Chatbots occupy a tricky space for users – they have to be a search engine, a creation tool, and an assistant all at once. That's especially true for a chatbot coming from Google, which is increasingly counting on AI to supplement its search engine, its voice assistant, and just about every productivity tool in its arsenal.

Right now, the ultimate version of Google's AI is Gemini Advanced, which launched last week for users willing to pay \$20 per month for the privilege – the same price OpenAI charges for its upgraded ChatGPT Plus. So I plunked down \$20 and decided to see how Gemini Advanced stood up to the rival service.

The older Gemini was already pretty good. It could summarize Shakespeare, give tea recommendations, and create a somewhat passable chocolate cake recipe. But it couldn't give you a photo of a majestic horse – at least until recently – and can be slower to respond than ChatGPT.

Now, Gemini Advanced promises to do more than just answer questions or give a Cliffs Notes summary of books. Gemini Advanced runs on a more powerful AI model – Gemini Ultra – that's supposed to let it translate text, handle multiple instructions in one sentence, and generate images from more complex prompts.

Ultimately, I found that Gemini Advanced works as promised – it just doesn't do some of those things all that great. Its

competitor, ChatGPT Plus, manages to generate less horrifying photos thanks to its DALL-E 3 integration. But Gemini Advanced, even more so than Gemini, is better at telling users about current events and, thanks to Google Maps, even gives better information about businesses people search for. The paid Gemini is often better at doing these kinds of “Google tasks” than generative AI ones.

There’s still a lot of work needed to get consistent, accurate results from these chatbots, and people need to keep using them for the bots to learn how to best respond to questions. Here are some tests I ran to see how they held up.

a:hover]:text-black [>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63”>What a cute dog! Wait, is that two tongues? Nooooo...

a:hover]:text-black [>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63”>Another Gemini-generated dog.

What’s a good Filipino restaurant in NYC? What’s a good Ethiopian restaurant in NYC?

Gemini Advanced can tap into other Google products, which worked in its favor when it tapped Google Maps for both questions. It returned a rundown of several Filipino and Ethiopian

restaurants in New York City, attaching Google Maps coordinates for each.

A few days ago, I asked ChatGPT Plus for restaurant recommendations – not for this test, I was just looking for new restaurants – and the results were inaccurate. The names of the restaurants were correct – these were establishments that do exist – however, none of the locations were right. I reprompted ChatGPT Plus for this test and got much more accurate locations but a smaller list of restaurants. So in this case, Gemini clearly worked better for this request.

Summarize these paragraphs and then write a 150-word article about it

One of the main reasons someone like me would use a chatbot is to summarize complicated papers. I fed Gemini Advanced two paragraphs from Apple's recent paper on AI image editing. The paper gave me a headache the first time I read it, so I figured it would be easy for Gemini to at least give me the gist. To fully test out its new abilities, I also wanted to see how the chatbot strings the two different instructions. One was asking to summarize; the other is to make it generate text.

The summary was... passable. It really did give me a

rundown of the concepts discussed in those two paragraphs, but it didn't "translate" it into plain language. I probably should've prompted that. Gemini then moved on to writing the article I asked for, and you know what? Those 150 words explained things so much better than the summary I asked for.

Gemini Advanced is capable. There's no denying it works much better than the lower-tier Gemini. It definitely works best when integrated with Google's other products like Search and Maps. But for more obviously "creative" multimodal requests – things that involve images, for example – Gemini has a long way to go. The chatbot understands longer strings of instructions, but once you add the photos, you're probably better off choosing an AI model specifically designed to make pictures.

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