



Using AI to talk to the deceased

In the age of technological advancements, artificial intelligence (AI) has found its way into almost every aspect of our lives. One of the more controversial and emotional uses is using AI technology to recreate conversations with those who are no longer with us. **1** _____. While this idea may seem like a groundbreaking way to cope with the loss of a loved one, its complex application of technology raises significant ethical concerns and questions about its impact on the healing process of those suffering from loss.

AI-powered chatbots and virtual avatars are created using vast amounts of information collected from the deceased's digital footprint, including social media posts, text messages, emails, and other forms of communication. **2** _____. The result is an interactive experience that can feel very real, allowing the bereaved to engage in conversations that resemble those they once had.

One of the main concerns about the use of AI to communicate with the deceased is the commercialisation of grief. Companies offering these services may take advantage of vulnerable individuals, turning a deeply personal and emotional event into a business opportunity. **3** _____. As a result, it may cause distress to the AI user instead of providing support.

4 _____. While AI technology has advanced to the point where it can replicate speech patterns and generate responses based on existing data, it cannot truly recreate a person's thoughts and feelings. This artificial interaction may appear so real that it might prevent the user from going through the natural grieving process and impede their ability to accept their loss and eventually move on.

Perhaps the most significant ethical issue regarding the use of AI to communicate with the deceased is about respecting the privacy of those who have passed away and the potential misuse of their digital information. **5** _____. Without clear consent from the deceased, not only there is a risk of violating their privacy rights but also of using their digital information for purposes they may not have approved of during their lifetime.

For some individuals, the opportunity to converse with a digital version of a loved one can provide temporary peace and a sense of connection. It may help in expressing unresolved feelings and gaining a form of closure. The technology could offer comfort in the early stages of grief, but relying on AI too much could delay this process. **6** _____. Therefore, maintaining a digital connection might prevent individuals from fully accepting their loss.



- A.** This can make this experience seem less important and more like a product to buy and sell.
- B.** Some services may allow users to customise this service with specific memories or information about their departed to improve the experience.
- C.** This technology aims to offer comfort to their family and friends by allowing them to "communicate" with digital versions of those they have lost.
- D.** Grief is about accepting the situation as it is and that it cannot be changed while experiencing a range of emotions.
- E.** As this technology continues to evolve and be tested, it is unlikely that the deceased explicitly agreed to the use of their personal data in this manner.
- F.** This data is analysed and processed to build a digital version of the deceased that mimics their speech patterns, style, and personality traits.
- G.** Another significant concern is the risk of users becoming emotionally dependent on what they perceive as real conversations with the deceased through AI.



Coolcationing: A new travel trend

With its increasing heatwaves, floods, and storms, climate change is influencing holiday choices. In recent years, tourism patterns have changed to follow a trend the industry has called 'coolcations'. Travellers seek cooler destinations, such as Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, to avoid extreme heat. Norwegian Air added 10 new routes to northern Norway in response to growing demand, while international arrivals to Norway, Ireland, and Sweden increased by over 10%. Similarly, Alaska experienced a 10% jump in domestic flights, with a 30% rise in travelers from Dallas, Texas—a city known for its extreme summer heat. Tourism agencies in Scandinavia have welcomed this trend, promoting cooler alternatives to typical holidays in the scorching sun.

The Mediterranean, a long-standing summer favorite destination, has been affected by extreme weather events. Spain and Italy have recorded their hottest years in 2022 and 2023, while Greece has battled severe wildfires and droughts. A 2023 EU Commission study forecast the growth of tourism demand in northern and central Europe and its decline in the south by 2100. To support this prediction, a European Travel Commission survey found that 74% of travelers now avoid destinations with extreme heat.

As a result, it has been noted that the Mediterranean summer is moving away from a single high-priced peak season in July and August. Travellers braving the hottest months might, in fact, benefit from lower rates. On the other hand, the new trend suggests that there will be two high seasons, May-June and September-October. This shift means that hotels and other accommodation establishments in central and southern Italy and in the south of France are staying open for longer, even all-year round on some occasions.

In Kenya, owners of safari camps have noticed a breakdown of traditional seasonal predictability. One of them explains that consistent and easily forecast weather patterns used to force all safari camps to close during the rainy season. However, the rains now arrive unpredictably – sometimes early, sometimes late, or not at all – leading to unforeseen or unnecessary closures. As a result, they are seeing more visitors opting for safaris during traditionally off-peak and rainy periods to take advantage of lower prices.

However, not all experts agree that coolcations are a lasting trend. On Visit Sweden's website, there's no clear indication whether demand for cooler climates is rising, while Visit Norway's website suggests that favorable exchange rates and marketing are responsible for their tourism growth—not just weather. The vast majority of German tourists, for example, still prefer warm destinations—though that could change in the future. In 2023, out of Germany's 65 million vacations, only 3.6 million were to northern countries like Sweden or Norway. Spain, Italy, and Greece remain top choices, with "sun and beach" destinations as the main attraction for European travel.

Although northern Europe and the Alps could become popular options if Mediterranean summers become too hot to handle, experts believe such a change would take decades. For now, Southern Europe's popularity continues, with over 300 million travelers visiting the



region in 2023 compared to 80 million in the north. However, many argue that coolcation is more of a marketing approach than a real movement. Some researchers say that such a trend doesn't exist, but it's an idea that some countries' tourism boards have made up, hoping to attract more visitors during less popular months.

1 In the first paragraph, how is climate change affecting the tourism industry?

- A. Holiday makers are less inclined to travel abroad due to worries about extreme weather.
- B. Increasing temperatures are pushing tourists towards countries where the weather is mild.
- C. Eco-friendly visitors tend to reduce their impact on the environment by staying local.
- D. Trips to Alaska have increased by 30%.

2 In the second paragraph, what does the research predict?

- A. The majority of tourists will choose holiday destinations outside Europe in the near future.
- B. Countries in central and northern Europe will attract more visitors than those in the south.
- C. Some European countries need international support to deal with extreme weather events.
- D. It is unlikely that European countries will experience such high temperatures again soon.

3 Which consequence to coolcation does the writer mention in paragraph three?

- A. Holidays during typically high-season months will become less expensive.
- B. In some countries, hotels will bring down their prices to attract more tourists.
- C. Hotels and other establishments in the south of Europe will always be open.
- D. Some countries will offer spring and autumn promotions for holiday makers.

4 In the fourth paragraph, the writer talks about the situation in Kenya to...

- A. highlight what negative impact coolcation has on local tourism.
- B. explain why some safari camps had to close down without notice.
- C. indicate how unexpected weather changes are affecting business.
- D. warn about the dangers of unpredictable weather during a safari.

5 What point is the writer trying to make in paragraph five?

- A. Northern countries fear that coolcation won't last long enough to affect their economy.
- B. German tourists have specific holiday preferences that won't be affected by coolcation.
- C. Southern Europe's popularity isn't expected to last as tourists' holiday interests change.
- D. Scandinavian tourism organisations can't identify one single cause for the region's popularity increase.

6 In the last paragraph, researchers

- A. Suspect that coolcation might be a strategy to improve tourism during quieter months.
- B. Confirm that Northern Europe had more visitors than Southern Europe in 2023.
- C. Predict that the popularity of cooler destinations will have a sudden increase.
- D. Doubt that future holiday makers will travel to Europe during quieter months.