BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker: Artificial Intelligence Summer 2022, UK

22 SEPTEMBER 2022   **Official Statistics**

This report covers questions on awareness and attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications from Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022 of the BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker.

What you need to know about these statistics: These results from the BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) were collected using the Address Based Online Surveying (ABOS) methodology introduced in Autumn 2021, which uses random probability sampling. The results should not be compared with previous PAT surveys, which used different data collection methods. For details, see the Technical Report.

The table below shows the topics covered in this report and when these questions were included in the BEIS Public Attitude Tracker. Links are included to the findings for each topic within this report.

Topic	When included	Link to findings
Awareness of and attitudes towards AI	Autumn 2021, Summer 2022	Link
Attitudes towards AI applications	Autumn 2021, Summer 2022	Link

Awareness of and attitudes towards AI

Awareness of AI

In Summer 2022, almost nine in ten people (88%) said they had heard of Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Figure 1.1). While 44% said they knew a lot or a fair amount, the same proportion said they knew a little or hardly anything (45%). Overall, 12% said they knew a lot about AI. These findings remain unchanged since Autumn 2021.

Figure 1.1: Awareness of AI (based on all people), Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022
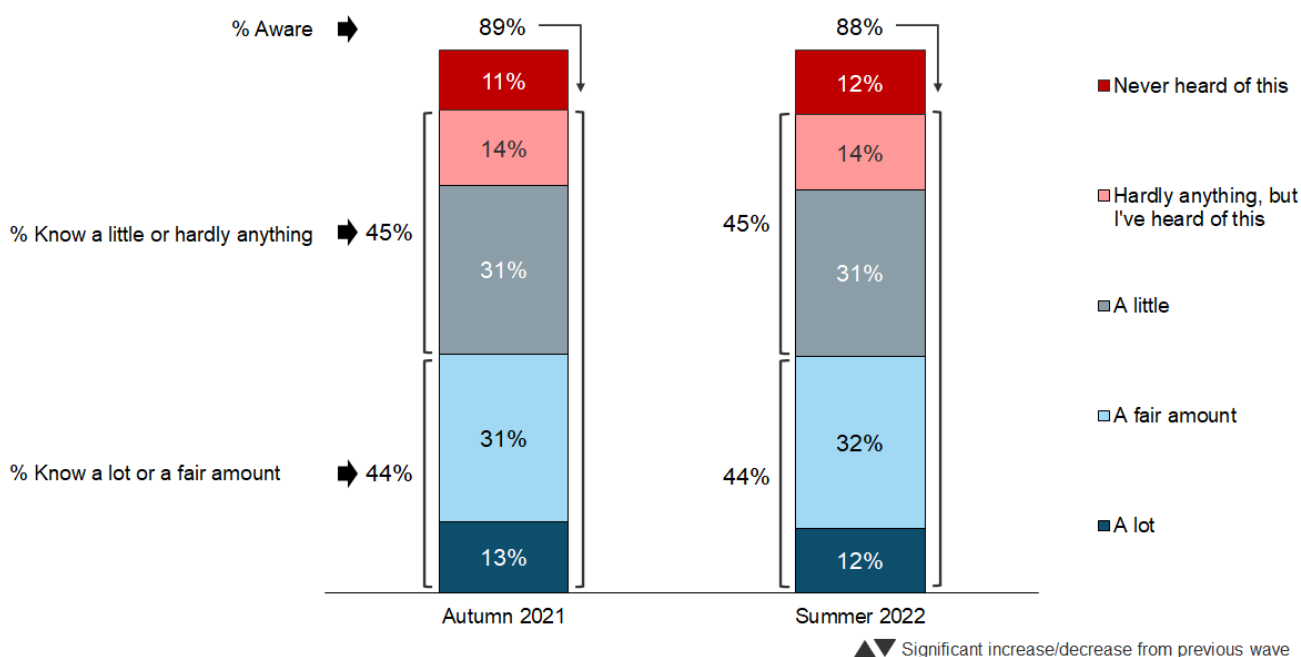
AIKNOW. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about artificial intelligence, otherwise known as 'AI'?
Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,554), Summer 2022 (4,487)

Awareness and knowledge of AI varied by gender, age, education and internet use.

Men were more likely than women to say they knew at least a fair amount (56% compared with 31%), as were people educated to degree level or above (58% compared with 40% of those with other qualifications and 24% with no qualifications).

People who said they never use the internet were much more likely than average to have never heard of AI at all (46% compared with 12% overall). The proportion who said they knew at least a fair amount about AI varied considerably by frequency of internet use, from 57% of those who use the internet almost all the time to 7% of those who never use it.

The proportion who knew at least a fair amount about AI was much higher for younger people (see Figure 1.2). Almost six in ten (58%) of 16 to 24 year olds said they knew at least a fair amount about AI, declining through the age bands to 27% among those aged 65 or over.

## Figure 1.2: Awareness of AI by age (based on all people), Summer 2022
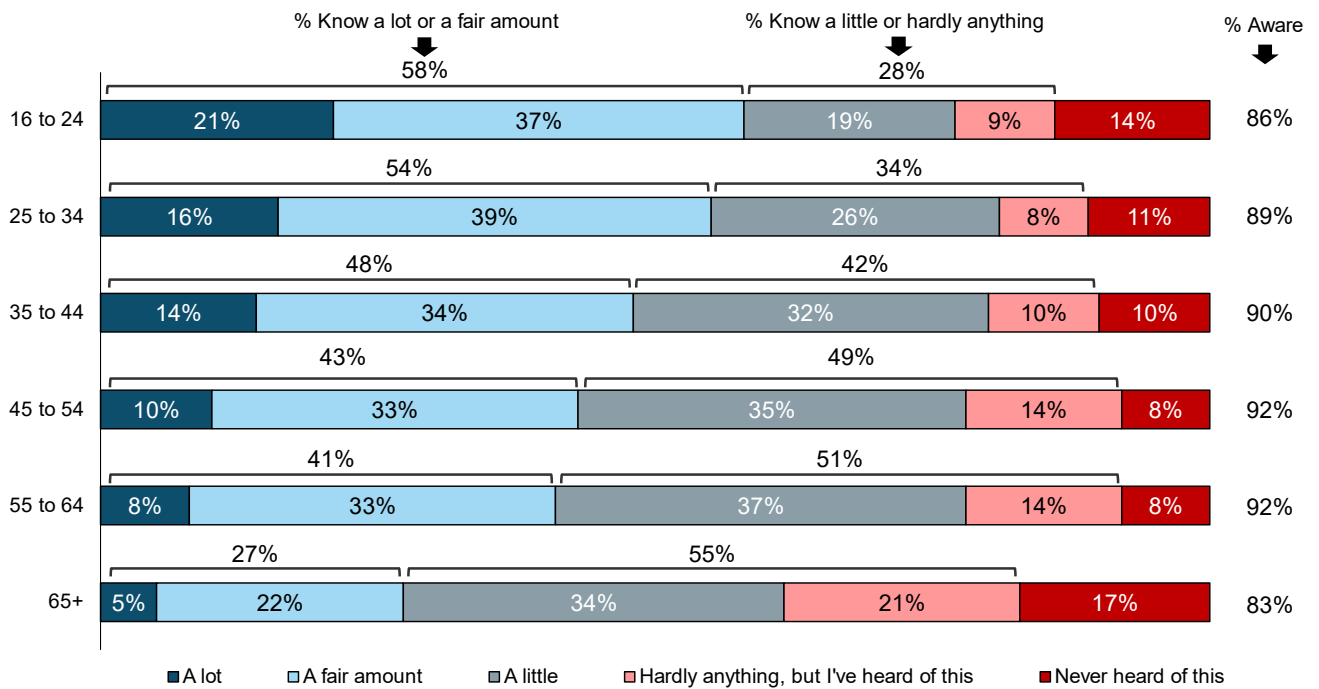
AIKNOW. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about artificial intelligence, otherwise known as 'AI'?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022: 16-24 (264), 25-34 (583), 35-44 (707), 45-54 (680), 55-64 (847), 65+ (1,353)

Interest in AI

In Summer 2022, 72% of people said they were interested in AI (Figure 1.3), with 38% saying they either actively sought out news stories about AI or would take an interest in future developments (referred to here as 'engaged'); these proportions remained unchanged since Autumn 2021. However, there was a small increase since Autumn 2021 in the proportion who said they were not interested in AI (23% up from 21%), mirrored by a small decrease in the proportion saying they were very interested (6% down from 8%).

Figure 1.3: Interest in AI (based on all people), Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022
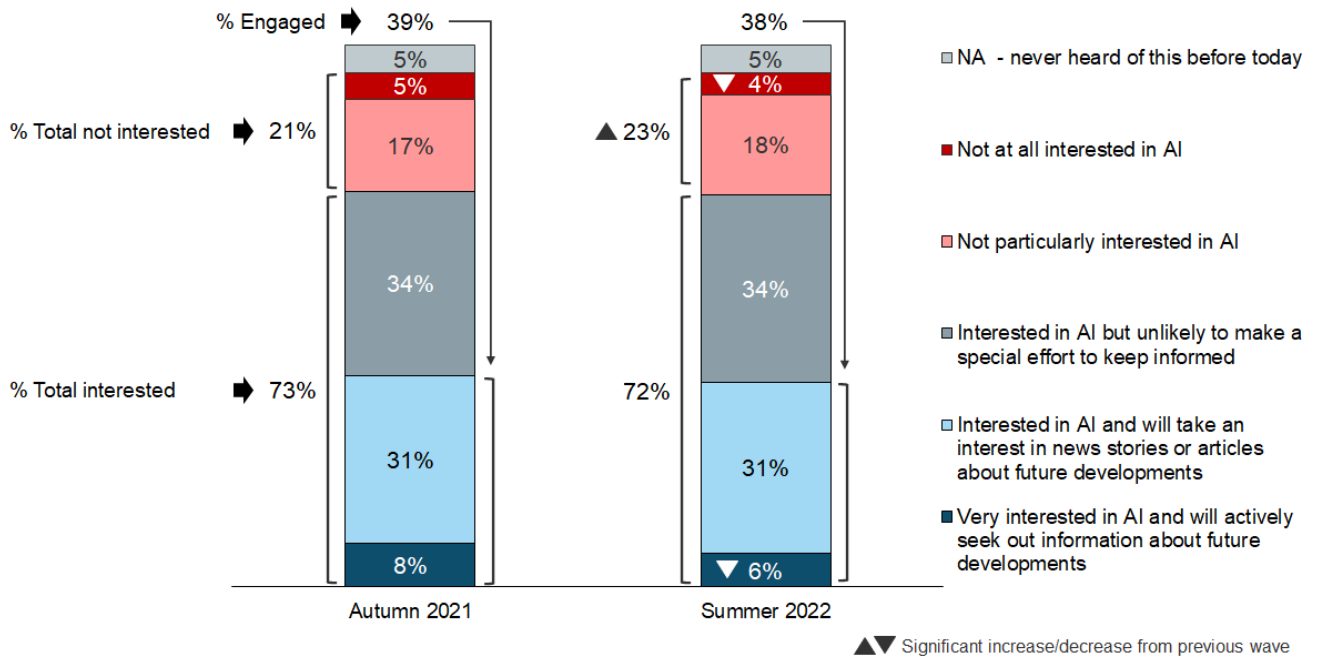
AILEVEL. Which of these statements best describes your level of interest in artificial intelligence?
Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,554), Summer 2022 (4,488)

Level of interest in and engagement with AI was clearly related to reported knowledge. Among those who said they knew at least a fair amount about AI, 92% were interested and 62% were engaged, while among those who knew only a little or hardly anything, 63% were interested and 21% were engaged.

Men were more likely than women to be interested (79% compared with 65%) and engaged (48% compared with 27%). There was less marked variation by age, with overall interest a little higher for those aged 16 to 54 (75%) compared with those aged 55 and over (68%). Education was strongly associated with interest and engagement, with those educated to degree level more likely to be interested (83%) and engaged (50%) compared with those who had no qualifications (54% interested, 22% engaged).

Linked to different levels of knowledge about AI, overall interest in AI was over twice as high among those who used the internet at least many times a day (76%) compared with non-internet users (32%). Frequency of internet use was also related to being engaged in the topic of AI, with 46% of those who used the internet almost all the time being engaged compared to 10% of non-internet users

Attitudes towards AI

In Summer 2022, on balance people remained more positive (34%) than negative (15%) about the increasing use of AI in the UK (Figure 1.4). The proportion who said they felt positive (34%) was slightly lower than in Autumn 2021 (38%), with this fall driven by a decrease in those feeling 'fairly positive' (28%, down from 32%).

Figure 1.4: How positive or negative feel about increasing use of AI in the UK (based on all people), Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022
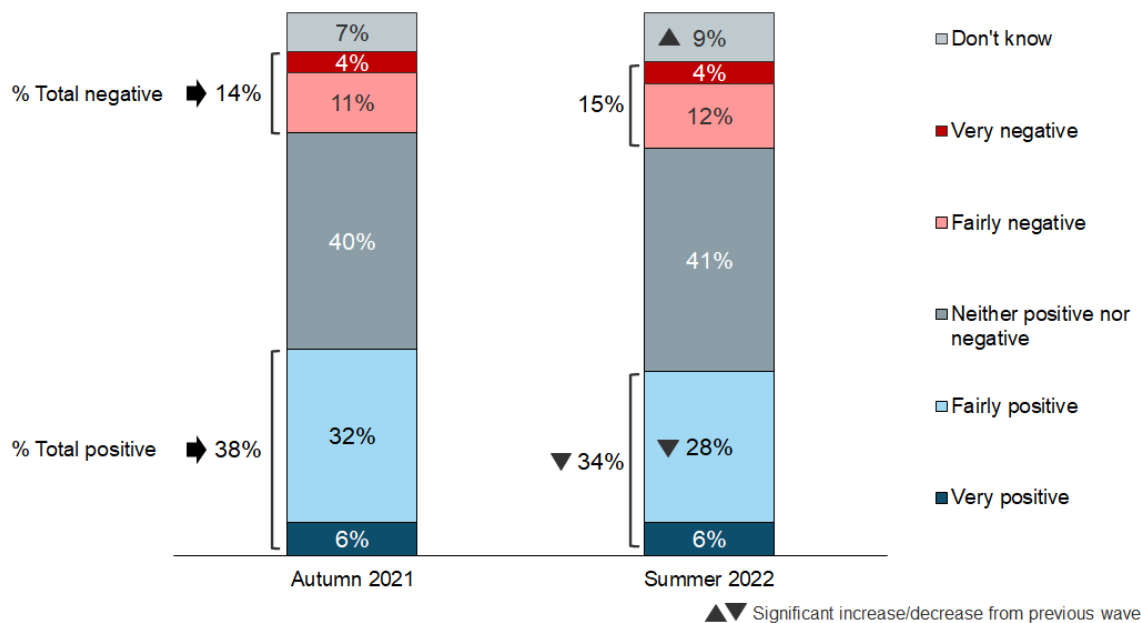
AIPOSNEG. Overall, how positive or negative do you feel about the increasing use of artificial intelligence in the UK?
Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,558), Summer 2022 (4,484)

Positivity about the increasing use of AI was related to knowledge about AI. Those who knew at least a fair amount about AI were more likely to be positive (52%) than those who knew hardly anything or a little (22%) or nothing (16%). Similarly, positivity about the increasing use of AI was related to internet use, falling from 44% among those who used it almost all the time to 12% among non-internet users.

Positivity towards the increasing use of AI was also higher among men (42% compared with 27% of women) and people with degree level qualifications or higher (42% compared with 32% of those with lower or no qualifications).

However, it is worth noting that the groups noted above who display less positivity are not more negative than others. The lower rates of positivity are instead driven by much higher proportions of 'don't know' among these groups.

Positivity was also higher among younger people: 43% of those aged 16 to 24 were positive about the increasing use of AI, with this figure declining through the age bands to 29% of those aged 55 and over. People aged 55 and over were also more negative about this issue than people aged 16-34 (18% compared with 12%).

# Attitudes toward specific AI applications

Awareness of AI applications

In Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022, people were asked about five applications of AI:

- Computer applications that can recognise speech and answer questions
- Facial recognition applications which can recognise images
- Computer applications that target advertising based on web browsing
- Computer applications which help diagnose patients by analysing medical symptoms and records
- Computer applications that review CVs and help employers decide who to interview

People were asked about their level of awareness about each of these. In Summer 2022 there were very small declines in overall awareness of all five applications since Autumn 2021 (Figure 2.1), although at least three quarters of people remained aware of each. Awareness remained highest for facial recognition applications (94%) and lowest for computer applications to help employers review CVs (75%), with this latter application also displaying the largest decline in awareness (from 80% in Autumn 2021 to 75% in Summer 2022).

Figure 2.1: Awareness of AI applications (based on all people), Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022
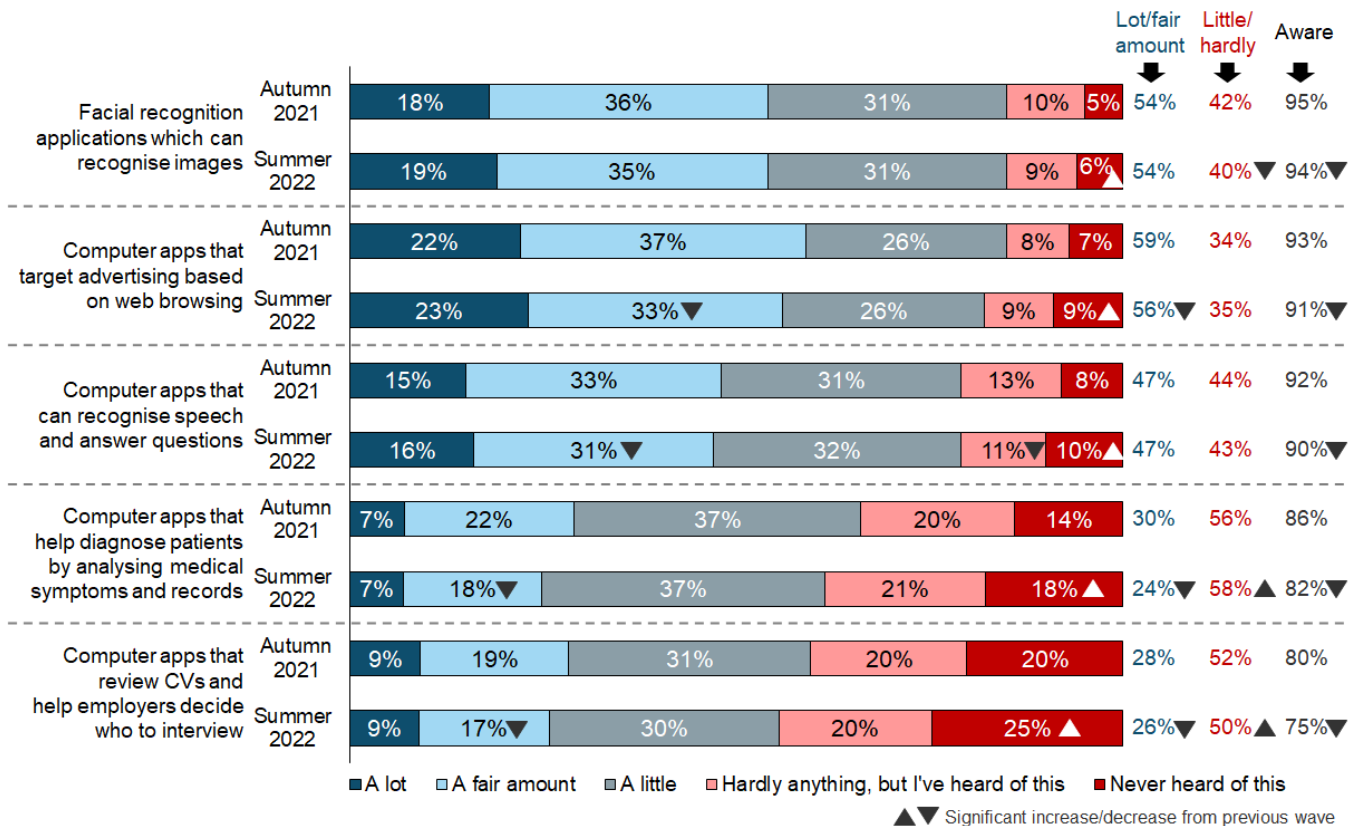
AITYPEKNOWA-AITYPEKNOWE. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about the following applications of artificial intelligence?
Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021/Summer 2022: Facial recognition (5,528/4,479), Advertising (5,520/4,475), Speech recognition (5,541/4,486), Diagnosis (5,525/4,476), CVs (5,528/4,475)

The proportion of those knowing at least a fair amount remained highest for targeted advertising applications, with 56% saying they knew a lot or a fair amount, although this had declined from 59% in Autumn 2021. A similar proportion said they knew at least a fair amount about facial recognition applications (54%), while 47% said they knew at least a fair amount about speech recognition applications - both showing no change since Autumn 2021.

At the other end of the scale, only around a quarter said they knew at least a fair amount about applications to help medical diagnosis (24%, down from 30% in Autumn 2021), and applications to help review CVs (26%, down from 28% in Autumn 2021).

In terms of the level of reported knowledge, there were clear differences by age, with the proportion who knew at least a fair amount about each application highest among those aged 16 to 24 and lowest among those aged 65 or over. There were particularly sharp drops in level of awareness between those aged 55 to 64 and those aged 65 or over (see Figure 2.2).

Overall awareness of each application was lower among people aged 65 and over compared with younger people. More notably, 94% of those aged 16 to 64 were aware of applications to target advertising compared with 82% of those aged 65 or over.

Other patterns of awareness and knowledge mirror those seen more generally for awareness of AI, that is awareness of each application was higher for men compared with women, degree educated people compared with those who have lower levels of education, and people using the internet more frequently compared with less frequent and non-internet users.

Figure 2.2: Proportion who knew a lot or a fair amount about AI applications, by age (based on all people), Summer 2022
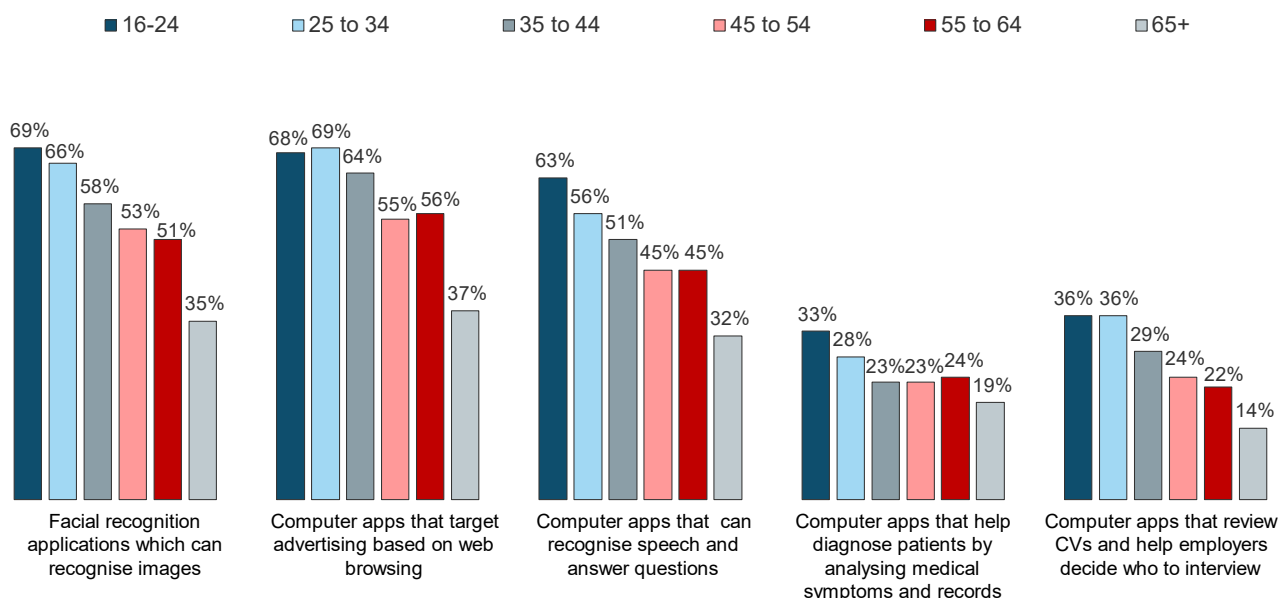
AITYPENOWA-AITYPENOWE. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about the following applications of artificial intelligence?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022: 16-24 (264), 25-34 (583), 35-44 (707), 45-54 (679-680), 55-64 (845-847), 65+ (1,344-1,347): exact number of respondents can vary by application

Support for AI applications

People were asked to what extent they supported each of the five applications noted in the section above.

In Summer 2022, for three of the applications of AI on balance there was more support than opposition (Figure 2.3):

- •applications to help medical diagnosis (57% support, 14% oppose)

- •facial recognition applications (57% support, 11% oppose)

- •speech recognition applications (57% support, up from 55%, 8% oppose)

There was little change in overall support levels since Autumn 2021 on any of these measures

While the proportion who expressed strong support remained fairly low for each, this had increased since Autumn 2021 for facial recognition applications (14% up from 12%) and speech recognition applications (15% up from 13%).

For AI applications that review CVs, opinions remained more balanced, with 29% saying they support and 31% that they oppose this, similar to Autumn 2021. In contrast, for applications that target advertising, the level of opposition (45%) continued to outweigh the level of support (19%), albeit with a slight shift towards support over time (from 17% in Autumn 2021 to 19% in Summer 2022).

Figure 2.3: Whether support AI applications (based on all people), Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022
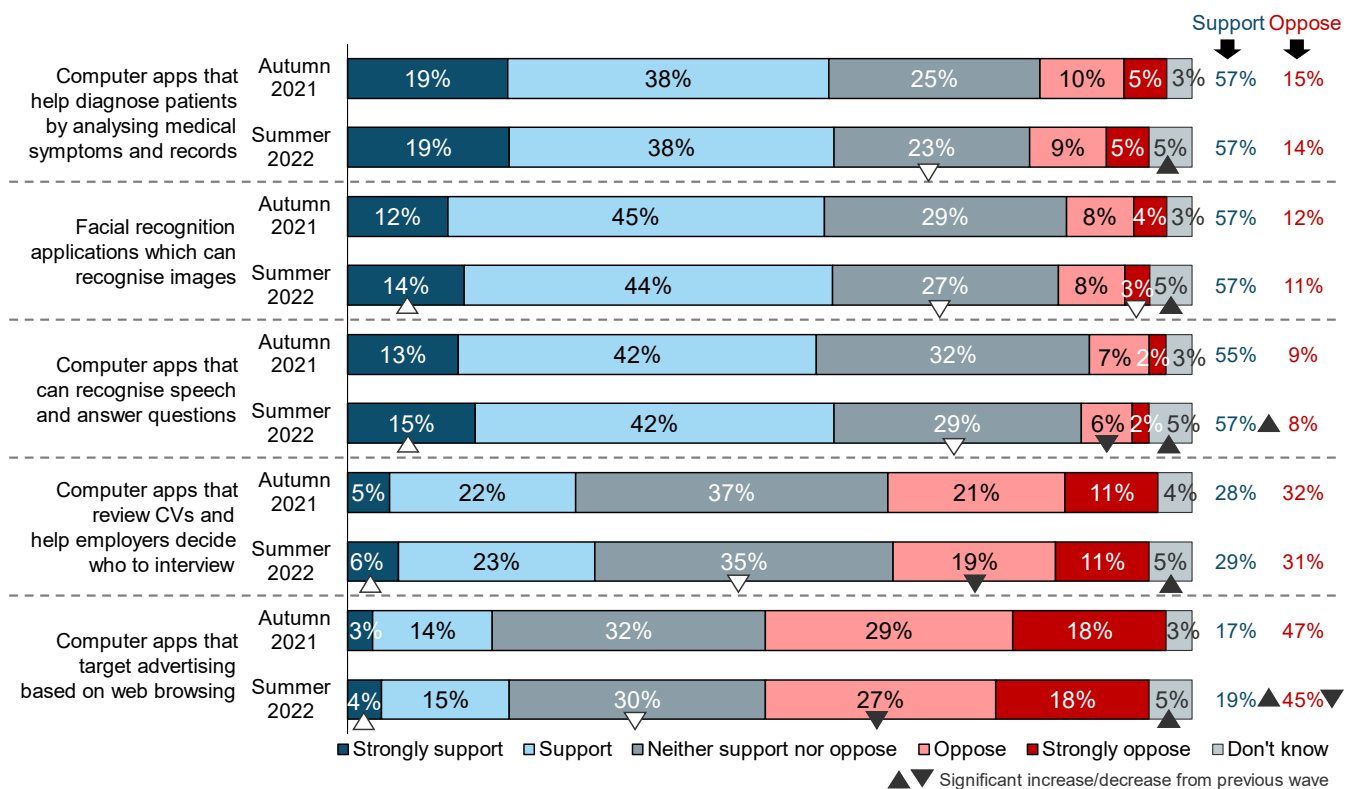
AISUPPORTA-AISUPPORTE. And to what extent do you support or oppose each of the following applications of artificial intelligence?
Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021/Summer 2022: Diagnosis (5,534/4,475), Facial recognition (5,537/4,477), Speech recognition (5,542/4,480), CVs (5,531/4,474), Advertising (5,540/4,477)

Similar to Autumn 2021, it is notable that around a quarter to a third (23% to 35%) of people said that they neither supported nor opposed each type of application. There were some small differences by gender: men were more likely than women to say they supported applications for medical diagnosis (64% compared with 51%) and speech recognition (61% compared with 54%).

Among those with degree level qualifications, support was higher than those with no qualifications for AI applications on speech recognition, facial recognition and medical diagnosis. However, degree-educated people were more likely than those with no qualifications to oppose AI applications for facial recognition (15% compared with 8%), targeted advertising (54% compared with 29%) and CV reviewing (41% compared with 17%).

The level of support for each application was lowest among people aged 65 or over.

Among those using the internet at least once a day, support for each of the five applications was generally higher compared with less frequent and non-internet users. However, frequent internet users were also more likely than less frequent users to oppose AI for targeted advertising and CV reviewing (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Whether support AI applications by frequency of internet use (based on all people), Summer 2022
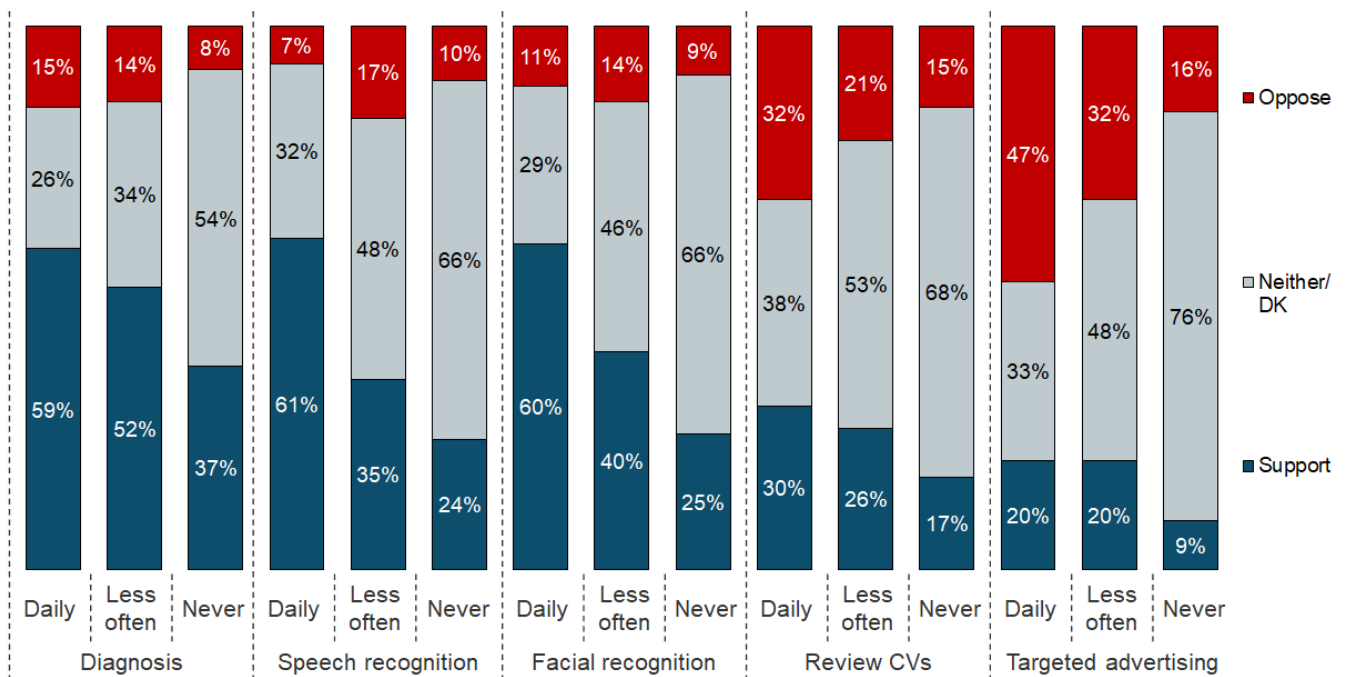
AISUPPORTA-AISUPPORTE. And to what extent do you support or oppose each of the following applications of artificial intelligence?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022: Use internet daily (4095-4098), Use internet less often (223-225), Do not use internet (152-154): exact number of respondents can vary by application

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