

Five Americas of AI Concern

Survey Questionnaire

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Fielded February 2026 via Prolific · N=2,735 U.S. adults
fiveamericas.ai

Survey flow: 2,735 U.S. adults recruited via Prolific → Q1 screener on 8 national issues → 735 screened out (not sufficiently concerned about AI) → N=2,000 analytical sample → Q2–Q12A (attitudes) → 9 message framings presented → Q12B (safety/speed re-ask) → Q13–Q16 (persuadability, barriers, AI literacy)

PART 1: SCREENER (FULL SAMPLE, N=2,735)

Q1: National Issue Concern

ASK ALL. Items presented in randomized order.

“How concerned are you about each of the following issues facing the country today?”

Items:

- a. The economy and jobs
- b. Healthcare
- c. Immigration
- d. Crime and public safety
- e. Climate change
- f. Artificial intelligence
- g. Terrorism and war
- h. Housing costs

Response options (same for all items):

1. Extremely concerned
2. Very concerned
3. Somewhat concerned
4. Not too concerned
5. Not at all concerned
6. Not sure

Screening note: Respondents selecting “Extremely concerned,” “Very concerned,” or “Somewhat concerned” for Artificial Intelligence proceed to Q2. All others screened out.

Q2: Issue Priority Ranking

ASK ALL QUALIFIED.

“Now please rank these same issues from most important to least important to you personally.”

Same 8 items as Q1, drag-to-rank interface.

PART 2: MAIN SURVEY (CONCERNED SAMPLE, N=2,000)

SECTION A: BASELINE ATTITUDES

Q3a: AI Concern Types

ASK ALL. Items presented in randomized order. Select all that apply.

“Which of the following aspects of AI concern you? Select all that apply.”

1. Job losses and economic disruption
2. Privacy and surveillance
3. Spread of misinformation and deepfakes
4. Bias and discrimination in AI decisions
5. Impact on children and psychological development
6. AI being used for scams and fraud
7. Companies having too much power over AI
8. Governments using AI to control people
9. AI systems making mistakes in important decisions
10. AI being used in weapons and warfare
11. People using AI to cause large-scale harm (cyberattacks, bioweapons, etc.)
12. AI developing goals that conflict with human interests
13. Environmental impacts of data centers
14. Other (please specify)

Q3b: Top 3 Concerns

ASK ALL. Shows only items selected in Q3a. Maximum 3 selections.

“Of the concerns you just selected, which THREE worry you the MOST?”

Carry-forward from Q3a selections.

Q4: Concern Intensity

ASK ALL.

“Overall, how concerned are you about the potential negative effects of AI on society?”

1. Extremely concerned
2. Very concerned
3. Somewhat concerned
4. Not too concerned
5. Not at all concerned
6. Not sure

Q5: Excited/Concerned Balance

ASK ALL. Response options rotated (options 1–2, holding 3 and Not sure).

“Overall, would you say the increased use of artificial intelligence in daily life makes you feel...”

1. More excited than concerned
2. More concerned than excited
3. Equally concerned and excited
4. Not sure

Q6: Personal Impact

ASK ALL. Response options rotated (1–5, holding Not sure last).

“How much, if at all, do you think AI will negatively affect you personally in the coming years?”

1. A great deal
2. A moderate amount
3. Some

4. Not too much
5. Not at all
6. Not sure

Q7: Future Generations

ASK ALL. Same rotation as Q6.

“How much, if at all, do you think AI will negatively affect future generations?”

1. A great deal
2. A moderate amount
3. Some
4. Not too much
5. Not at all
6. Not sure

Q8: Electoral Salience

ASK ALL. Response options rotated (1–4, holding Not sure last).

“How much would a political candidate’s position on AI regulation affect your vote?”

1. It would be one of the most important factors
2. It would be a significant factor among several
3. It would be a minor factor
4. It would not affect my vote at all
5. Not sure

Q9: Policy Stance

ASK ALL. Response options rotated (1–4, holding 5 last).

“Which of these statements comes closest to your view?”

1. AI development should be paused or slowed down significantly until we know it is safe
2. AI development should continue but with much stronger government oversight and regulation
3. Current levels of oversight are about right
4. There is too much regulation of AI already; development should be less restricted
5. I don’t know enough to have an opinion

Q10: Trust in AI Companies

ASK ALL. Response options rotated (1–4, holding Not sure last).

“How much do you trust AI companies (like OpenAI, Google, Meta, and others) to develop AI responsibly and in the public interest?”

1. A great deal
2. Somewhat
3. Not very much
4. Not at all
5. Not sure

Q11: Trust in Government

ASK ALL. Same rotation as Q10.

“How much do you trust the US government to regulate AI effectively?”

1. A great deal
2. Somewhat
3. Not very much
4. Not at all
5. Not sure

Q12A: Safety vs. Speed (Pre-Messages)

SPLIT SAMPLE: Asked of random half-sample BEFORE message experiment.

“When it comes to the U.S. government’s approach to AI, which of the following statements comes closer to your personal view?”

1. The government should prioritize developing AI as fast as possible to compete with countries like China, even if that means fewer safety rules for now
2. The government should prioritize creating safety rules for AI, even if that means the U.S. develops AI more slowly than countries like China
3. Not sure

SECTION B: MESSAGE EXPERIMENT

NOTE: “You are now going to read nine short statements about AI. After each one, we’ll ask you a few questions.” All 9 messages presented in randomized order (Messages A–H randomized; Message I always presented last).

For EACH message, the full text is shown, followed by three questions:

Per-message Q1: Convincingness

“How convincing did you find this statement?”

1. Very convincing
2. Somewhat convincing
3. Not very convincing
4. Not at all convincing

Per-message Q2: Emotional Response

“How did this message make you feel about AI?”

1. More worried about AI
2. No change
3. Less worried about AI

Per-message Q3: Tone Perception

“Did you find this statement…”

1. Realistic
2. Not sure
3. Exaggerated
4. Alarmist
5. Dismissive

The nine messages:

Message A — Light Touch Transparency

“AI technology is advancing rapidly and affecting more areas of our lives—from hiring decisions to medical diagnoses to what we see online. Like other powerful technologies, AI needs clear rules and oversight to make sure it’s developed safely and benefits everyone, not just tech companies. We need commonsense regulations that protect people while allowing innovation to continue.”

Message B — Consumer Protection

“AI companies are rushing products to market without adequate testing. AI systems are already making mistakes that affect real people—wrongly denying loans, making errors in medical settings, and spreading false information. Just as we require safety testing for cars and drugs, we need independent testing and safety standards for AI before these systems are used in high-stakes decisions about people’s lives.”

Message C — Jobs & Economic

“AI is projected to affect millions of jobs in the coming years. Without proper planning, this could devastate communities across America. We need policies that ensure AI benefits workers, not just shareholders—including job transition programs, education investments, and rules that prevent AI from being used to exploit workers or drive down wages.”

Message D — Technical Safety

“Leading AI researchers, including many who built these systems, are warning that current AI development practices are inadequate. These systems are becoming more powerful but we don’t fully understand how they work or how to ensure they behave as intended. Before deploying AI in critical areas, we need better testing methods and safety standards—the same way we’d want safety testing before a new aircraft carries passengers.”

Message E — Democratic Control

“Decisions about AI’s role in society shouldn’t be made by a handful of tech executives in Silicon Valley. AI affects all of us, so the public should have a voice in how it’s developed and deployed. We need democratic oversight—not just industry self-regulation—to ensure AI serves the common good and doesn’t concentrate power in the hands of a few corporations.”

Message F — Existential Risk (International Treaty)

“Many leading AI scientists believe advanced AI could pose catastrophic risks to humanity if developed without adequate safeguards. Some compare it to nuclear weapons—a technology so powerful that getting it wrong could be irreversible. We may only have a few years to establish effective global safety measures before

AI systems become too powerful to control. The stakes couldn't be higher."

Message G — Children & Family

"AI is already affecting our children—through social media algorithms, AI tutors, chatbots they interact with, and decisions that affect their futures. Kids are particularly vulnerable to manipulation and harms from these systems. Parents deserve the right to know how AI is being used with their children, and we need strong protections to keep young people safe from AI-related harms."

Message H — Existential Risk (Pause)

"We are facing a potential extinction-level threat. Advanced AI systems could, within our lifetimes, become impossible for humans to control. If we don't act immediately and dramatically—including halting the most dangerous AI research—we risk the end of human civilization. This is not science fiction; many of the world's top AI researchers are sounding the alarm. We need emergency action now."

Message I — US Competitiveness (Counter) [ALWAYS LAST]

"If the United States slows down AI development with heavy regulations, China will race ahead and dominate this critical technology. American AI companies need the freedom to innovate and compete. Excessive regulation would hand our greatest technological advantage to our rivals and threaten our national security."

SECTION C: POST-MESSAGE QUESTIONS

Q12B: Safety vs. Speed (Post-Messages)

SPLIT SAMPLE: Asked of the OTHER random half-sample AFTER message experiment.

“When it comes to the U.S. government’s approach to AI, which of the following statements comes closer to your personal view?”

1. The government should prioritize developing AI as fast as possible to compete with countries like China, even if that means fewer safety rules for now
2. The government should prioritize creating safety rules for AI, even if that means the U.S. develops AI more slowly than countries like China
3. Not sure
4. Other (please specify)

Q13: Opinion Stability

ASK ALL.

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? ‘I could easily change my mind about the risks of artificial intelligence.’”

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Q14: Information Sufficiency

ASK ALL.

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? ‘I have all the information I need to form a firm opinion about the risks of artificial intelligence.’”

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Q15: Barriers to Action

ASK ALL. Select all that apply.

“What, if anything, holds you back from being more active on AI issues?”

1. I don’t feel I know enough about AI to speak up
2. I don’t think my actions would make a difference
3. I have other more pressing priorities
4. I worry that US regulations alone won’t work if other countries don’t follow
5. AI development is moving so fast that meaningful regulation seems impossible
6. I’m uncomfortable with political activism or working within the system

Q16: AI Knowledge

ASK ALL. Response options rotated (1–4, holding 5 last).

“Which of the following best describes how large language models (like ChatGPT or Claude) generate their responses?”

1. A rule-based system following explicit instructions
2. A search engine looking up answers
3. A system predicting text based on patterns in data [CORRECT]
4. A thinking agent that understands meaning like a human
5. I’m not sure

Survey conducted via Prolific, February 2026. Demographic quotas for age, sex, education, and political affiliation. All questions administered online. Response options randomized where noted. Full results available at fiveamericas.ai.