OpenAI | NC Department of State Treasurer | NC Central University — Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research

JULY 2025

Lessons from NC Treasurer's Office Generative AI Pilot with ChatGPT

Report Summary

Overview

The 2025 ChatGPT Pilot engaged a diverse group of public sector employees to explore how generative AI could support day-to-day operations. Feedback from pre- and post-pilot surveys showed broad enthusiasm, with **85% of participants reporting a positive experience**. Time savings averaged **30–60+ minutes per day**, and real-world usage evolved significantly beyond initial expectations. Participants used ChatGPT to:

- Explore new ideas and accelerate problem-solving in complex workflows.
- Draft communications and summarize long texts for both internal and external stakeholders.
- Translate complex or technical information into clear, actionable outputs that improve service delivery.

These use cases directly addressed pain points in government workflows, enabling employees to perform with greater clarity, speed, and confidence. The pilot helped illustrate how generative AI tools can be adopted across varied job types when supported with proper training and guidance.

Driving Government Impact

The most frequent use cases of ChatGPT stood out because public sector employees found ChatGPT most useful and effective in completing tasks that are uniquely complex in government settings. Many teams faced extensive documentation, procedural ambiguity, and multi-stakeholder coordination. ChatGPT provided a flexible, responsive tool to manage these pressures. Survey data and user feedback revealed that **ChatGPT enabled participants to succeed in government work as:**

Innovation Engines
Empowering employees to generate ideas, explore alternatives, and quickly test scenarios—especially during policy brainstorming, training content development, and early drafting.
"It's great for doing, not for thinking" — user feedback captured in follow-up interviews.

Bureaucracy Hackers
Participants used ChatGPT to demystify outdated policies, summarize multi-page audits, rewrite compliance documents, and navigate complex approval workflows.
"I dreaded doing that part [manual searches]... now it's not time-consuming".
"20 minutes versus 20 seconds" for document comparisons.

Strategic Communicators
ChatGPT helped improve message clarity and reduce turnaround time for formal communications. Participants leaned on the tool to rewrite complex content into plain English, clarify tone, and ensure internal documentation was accessible across job levels.
"It made the final product more fitting for the target audience" — pilot participant comment.

The NC Department of State Treasurer is grateful to North Carolina Central University's Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research for their support and expertise in analyzing the pilot data.

Top 5 Findings

01 85% of participants reported a positive experience using ChatGPT, indicating high satisfaction across departments and job types.

02 Users estimated saving 30–60+ minutes per day, especially on drafting and editing tasks that previously required more manual effort.

03 Adoption was strongest among those comfortable with new technology, but even moderate users saw tangible benefits.

04 ChatGPT did not replace human judgment—participants often refined outputs to include their expertise, judgment, and nuance.

05 Barriers such as accuracy and privacy decreased with training, showing that exposure and support can mitigate early-stage concerns.

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OVERVIEW

Background

In March 2025, the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer launched a ChatGPT pilot. This program forms part of the state's broader exploration of generative AI in government. Automating queries uncovered millions of dollars in potential property and illustrated how AI can streamline workflows.

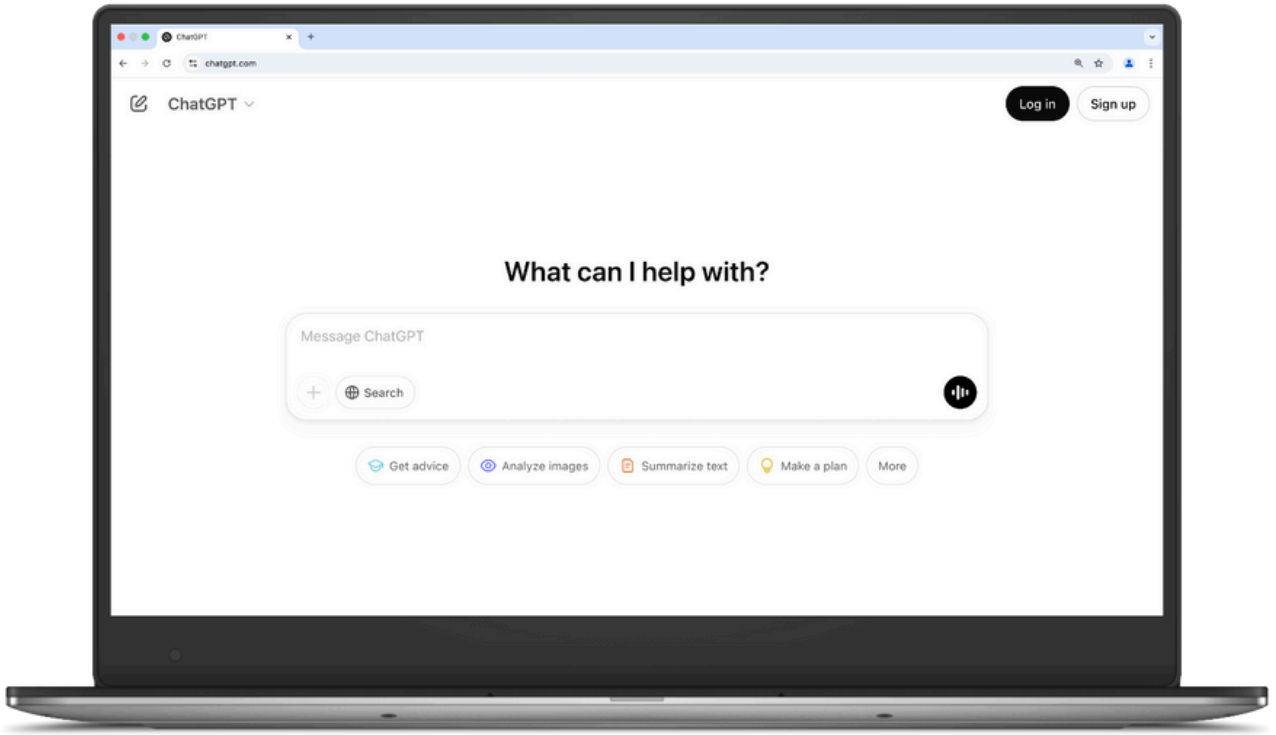
The pilot identified millions of dollars in unclaimed property and generated tangible workflow improvements by automating search results.

— "Brad Briner, State Treasurer on Unclaimed Property Division"

OVERVIEW

Background

The North Carolina Department of State Treasurer's office tested ChatGPT's potential to support government workflows. The pilot tracked user sentiment, adoption patterns, and time savings to assess how generative AI could responsibly enhance operations and complement employee expertise.



OVERVIEW

Pilot Scope

3

months of research and observation

2

cohorts of employees signed up for the pilot

36

employees equipped with ChatGPT Enterprise

37.5%

participants who had never used ChatGPT before

38

surveys submitted by pilot participants

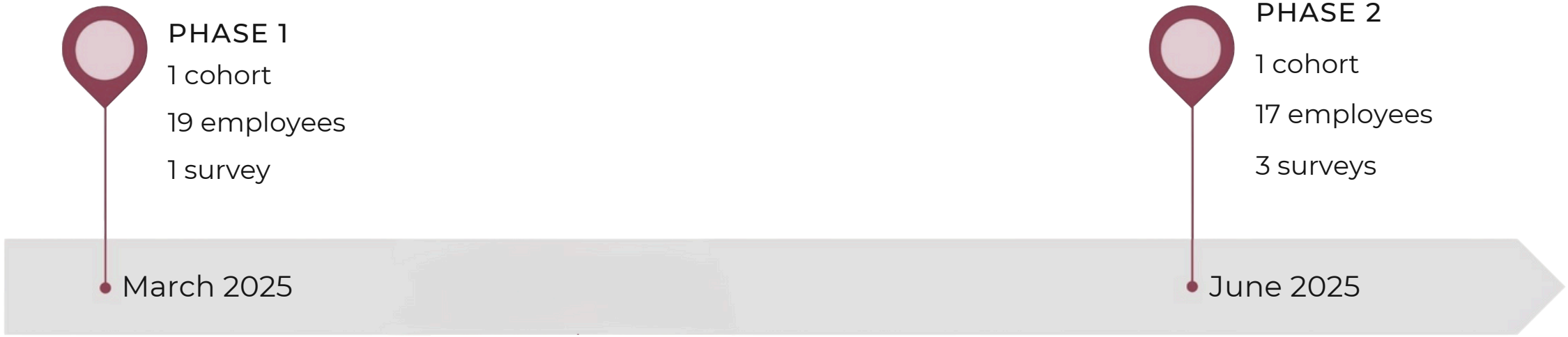
13

Final departments represented in the pilot

OVERVIEW

Timeline

The timeline allowed for onboarding, regular usage, and reflections on the tool's benefits and limitations.



Please Note: Not every pilot participant provided survey-based feedback. The above represents the timeline for the 36 employees who provided direct feedback throughout the pilot.

OVERVIEW

Pilot Resources & Trainings

Participants received some preliminary training and resources during the course of the pilot. This helped improve participants' overall outcomes with ChatGPT and also reduced accuracy concerns. Most participants engaged in a combination of:

Onboarding

- *ChatGPT use guidelines*
- *Live onboarding sessions*

OpenAI led trainings

- *ChatGPT enablement sessions*
- *Prompt engineering*

Ongoing support

- *Weekly engagements*
- *Feedback sessions*

General AI trainings

- *Foundational AI 101 sessions on request*
- *AI presentations to provide broader AI knowledge*

OVERVIEW

About the Study

Recruitment

Phase 1: In March 2025, all employees within the two teams at the department of state treasurer were invited to participate in the pilot by email. The first cohort of employees with a range of job types were manually selected to begin the pilot.

Phase 2: Interested staff from the department were added to the pilot on a rolling basis.

Pilot participants: Pilot participants tended to be 35-65+ years old and have at least an associate degree. Beyond these similarities, participants ranged widely in terms of job function, job tenure, prior GenAI use, and expectations for the pilot.

Methods

Pilot participants reported on their experience using ChatGPT at work through two channels:

Surveys: After beginning the pilot, participants received surveys every other week for ~8 weeks, plus an exit survey at the pilot's end.

Interviews: Select participants spoke one-on-one with the research team during Phase 2.

Please Note: Pilot participants were not a representative sample of the state treasurer's employees. Their experiences provide insights into understanding generative AI tools, but are not predictive for all of the department's employees.

Findings

FINDINGS

Research Findings

Throughout the pilot, their search team collected observations under five key areas:

- ChatGPT Use Cases
- User Experience
- User Types
- ChatGPT Challenges
- Barriers to Use

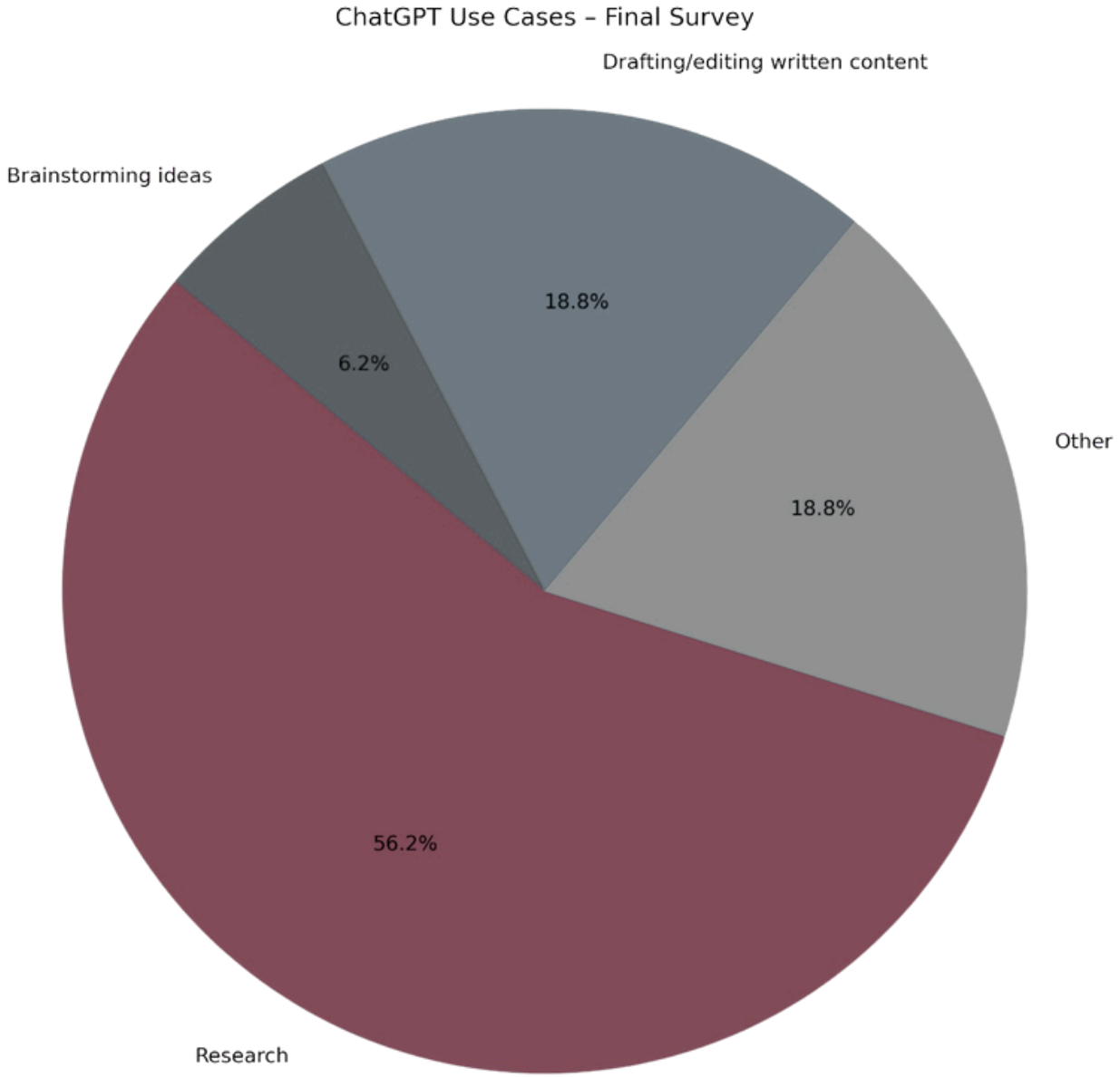
ChatGPT Use Cases

How Pilot Participants Used ChatGPT

USE CASES

Most Frequent Uses

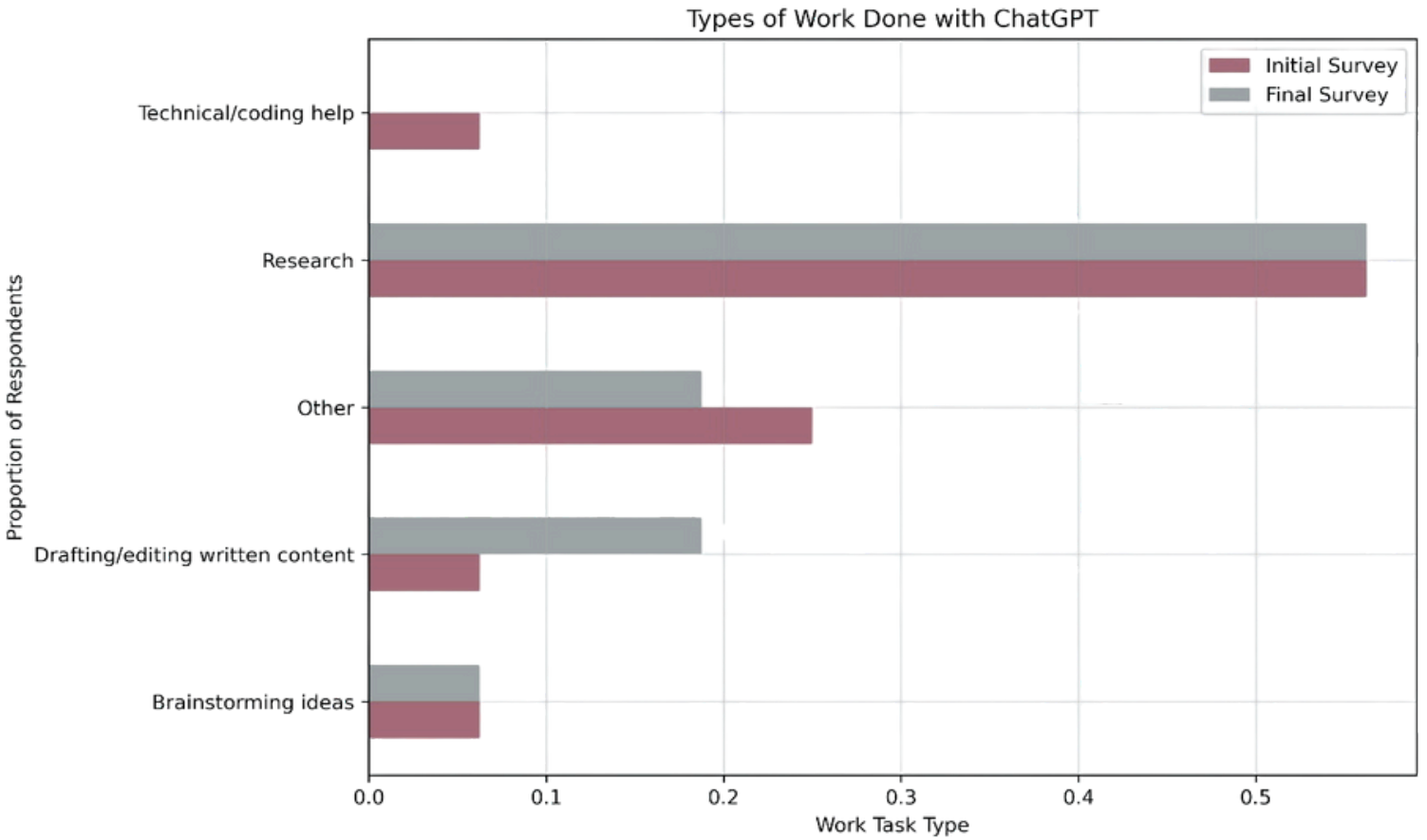
Pilot participants turned to ChatGPT when tackling a wide range of work tasks. The most frequently reported often involved navigating text-based information such as research, editing written content, other activities and brainstorming.



USE CASES

Most Frequent Uses of ChatGPT

Initial expectations focused on research. The final survey shows that other usage emphasized communication support, including writing, summarization, and editing.



USE CASES

Key Applications

Participants often used ChatGPT to:

- Draft professional communications, reports, and memos.
- Translate technical documentation into plain language.
- Brainstorm content for policy documents, training materials, and outreach.
- Summarize legal text, multi-page reports, and public submissions.
- Ask clarifying questions when researching complex or unfamiliar topics.

USE CASES

Innovation Engines: Brainstorming

“It’s great for doing, not for thinking” — user feedback captured in follow-up interviews.

USE CASES

Bureaucracy Hackers: Research & Summarizing

“I dreaded doing that part [manual searches]… now it’s not time-consuming”.

“20 minutes versus 20 seconds” for document comparisons.

USE CASES

Strategic Communicators: Writing Assistance

“It made the final product more fitting for the target audience” — pilot participant comment.

User Experience

Overall Impressions from Pilot Participants

USER SENTIMENT

Speed and Efficiency Appreciated

Users highlighted dramatic time saving, such as:

- 20 minutes vs 20 seconds to compare audits.
- 90 minutes to review one vendor audit request vs AI 30/40 minutes.
- Identifying 25 fast food franchisees in NC in seconds vs hours of cross-reference.

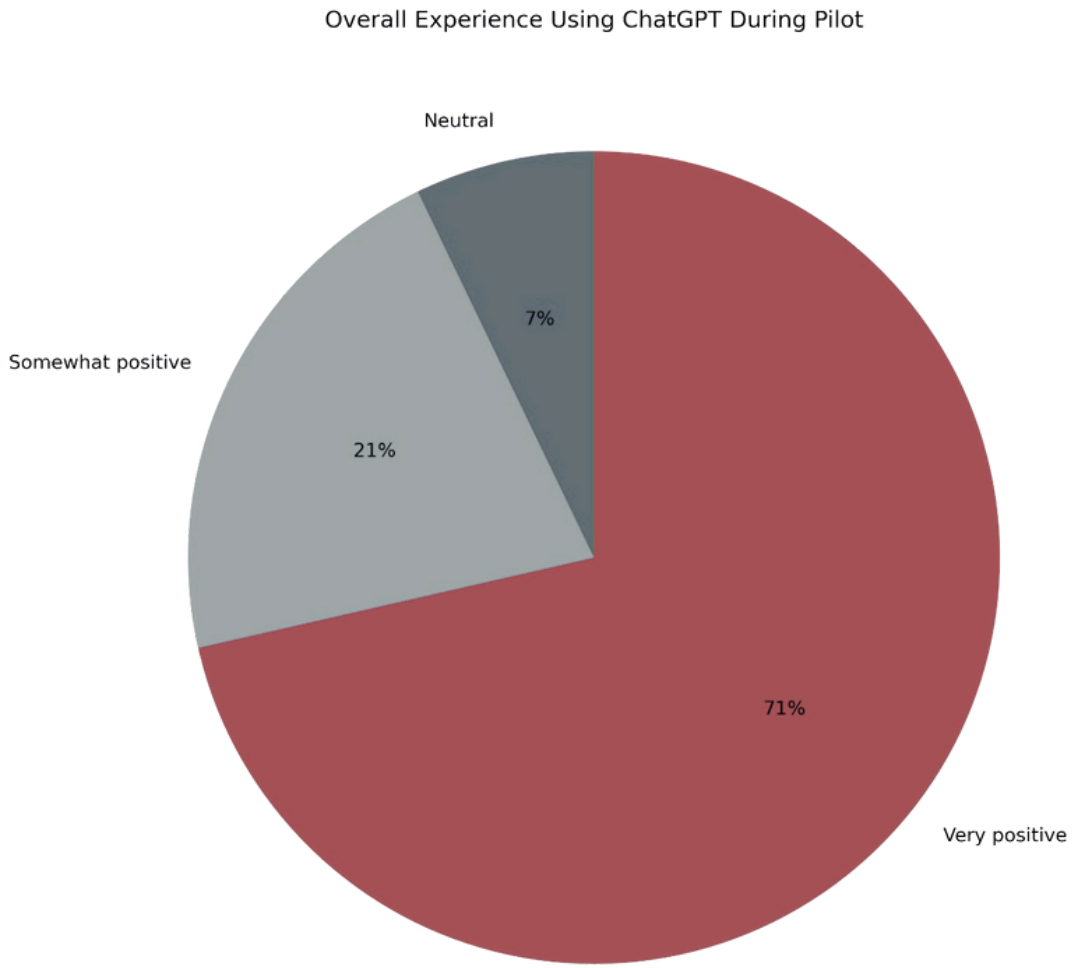
Tasks that previously required deep manual review—audits, entity lookups, and mailing verifications—were shortened to minutes or seconds. Many users explicitly called this a

“Tremendous time management tool”.

USER SENTIMENT

Employees Enjoyed Using ChatGPT

Several qualitative comments expressed relief, enthusiasm, and even delight:



Research is great—I would be bummed if we didn't have it.

It's great for doing, not for thinking.

I dreaded doing that part [manual searches]... now it's not time-consuming.

USER SENTIMENT

Employees Enjoyed Using ChatGPT

Thematic Mapping showed the most prominent feedback based on the pilot participants' sentiments.

USER SENTIMENT

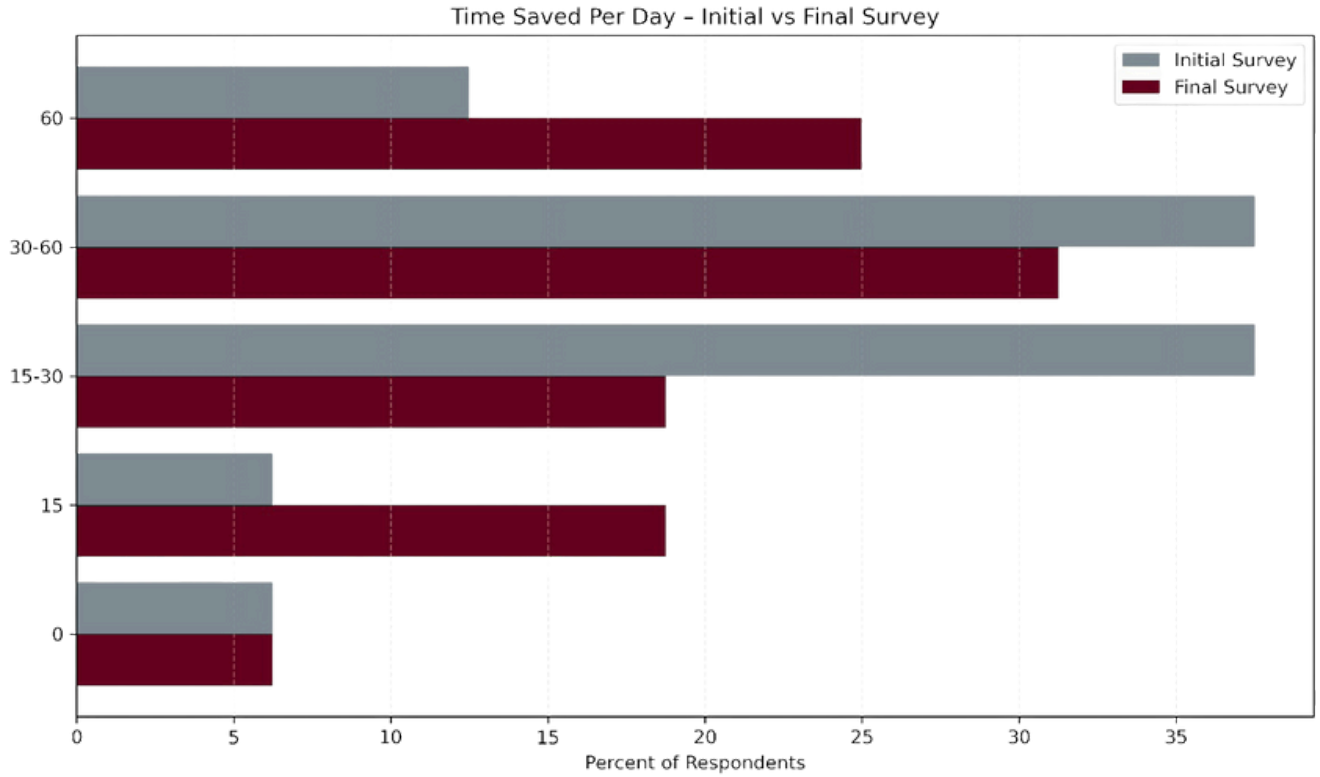
Employees' Most Helpful Use Cases

Tasks that previously required several review cycles or rewording were completed in **fewer steps**.

Time savings increased as users became more proficient:

- Initial savings: 15–30 minutes/day
- Final savings: 30–60+ minutes/day

Tasks that previously required several review cycles or rewording were completed in fewer steps using AI assistance.



USER SENTIMENT

Increased Confidence & Documentation

An unanticipated benefit was that **some users became more rigorous about documentation**:

“Prior to the use of AI, I wasn’t documenting time per task.
Now I am, and I’m more accurate in reporting.”
“It helps you think of questions or perspectives you hadn’t considered.”

USER SENTIMENT

Human Oversight Remains Essential

Participants emphasized that ChatGPT helped accelerate work but required human judgment.

Outputs often needed customization for audience, accuracy, or tone.

The best results occurred when users collaborated with ChatGPT, refining outputs together.

USER SENTIMENT

Usefulness Varies by Task Type

Sentiment was mostly positive when ChatGPT was used to:

- Draft emails and letters.
- Summarize meeting transcriptions.
- Find hidden or outdated information, especially from difficult data sources.
- Assist with legal or compliance phrasing and documentation.

Usage Patterns

Who used ChatGPT and How

USER TYPES

ChatGPT Use Patterns

Usage varied by comfort level and job needs:

Sporadic, General Users

– Used as needed, occasionally for novel challenges

48% of participants

Specific, Consistent Users

– Relied on ChatGPT for specific, repeatable tasks

12% of participants

Super users

– Integrated ChatGPT into multiple workflows daily

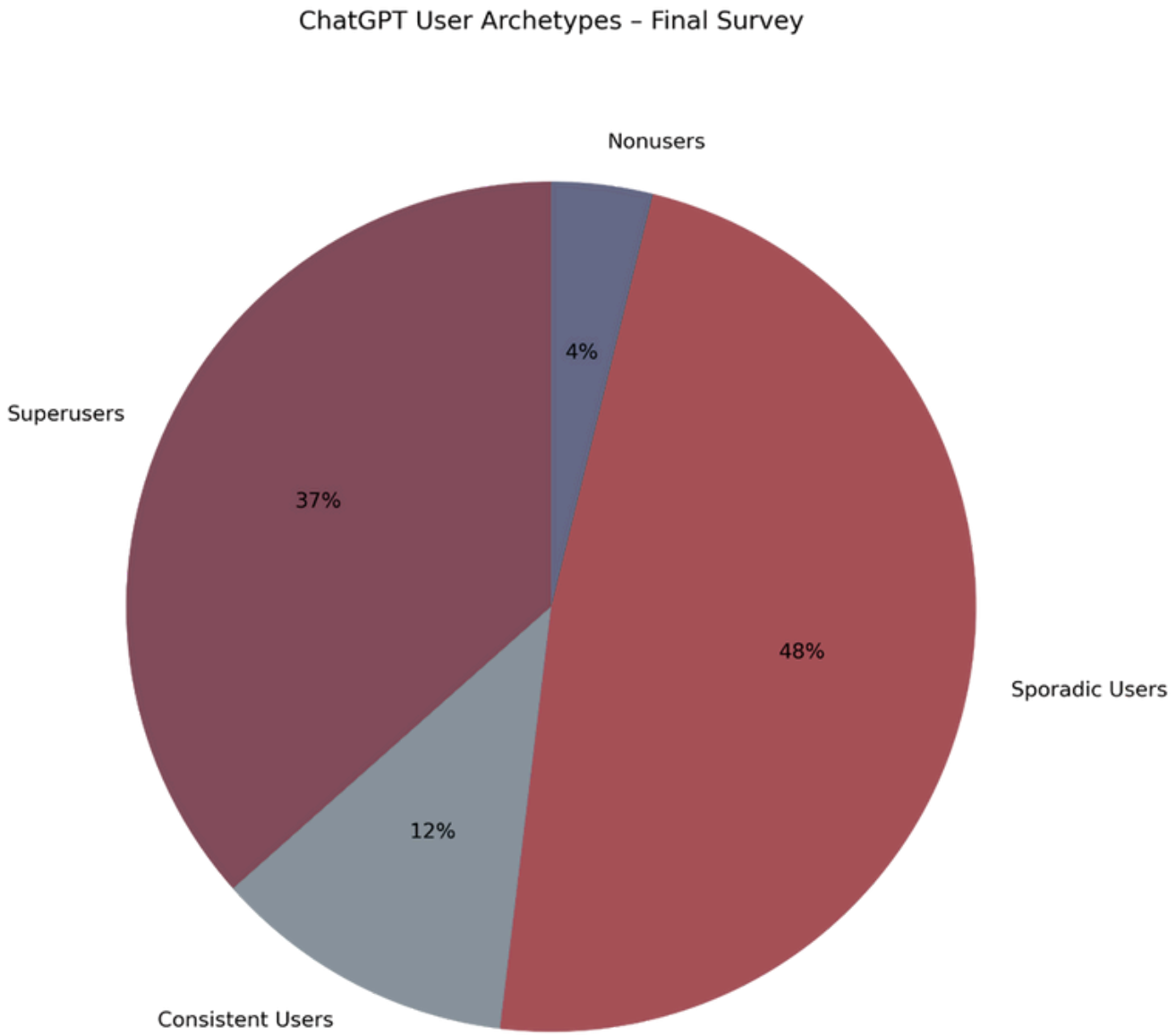
37% of participants

Non users

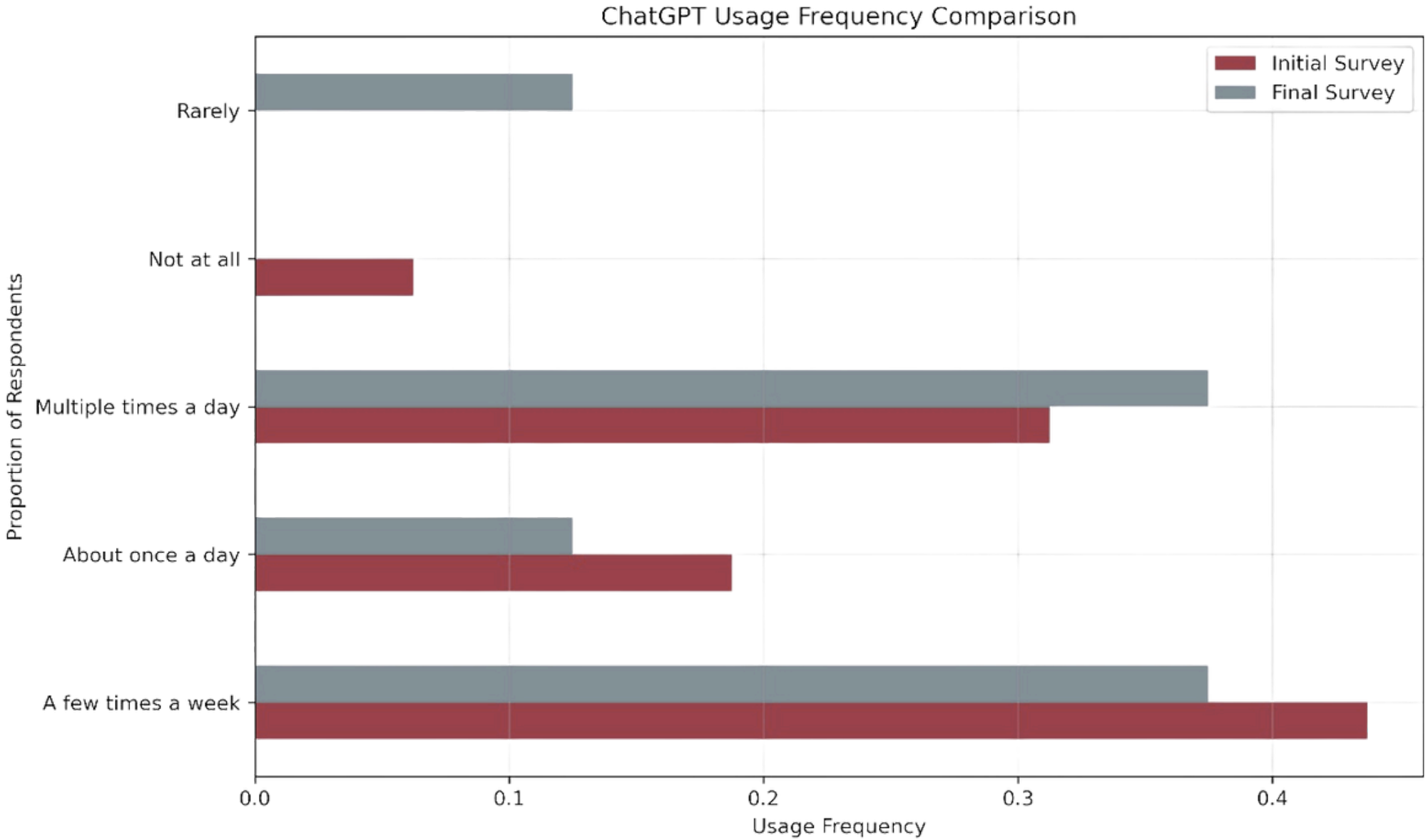
– Limited use due to constraints or discomfort

4% of participants

USER TYPES

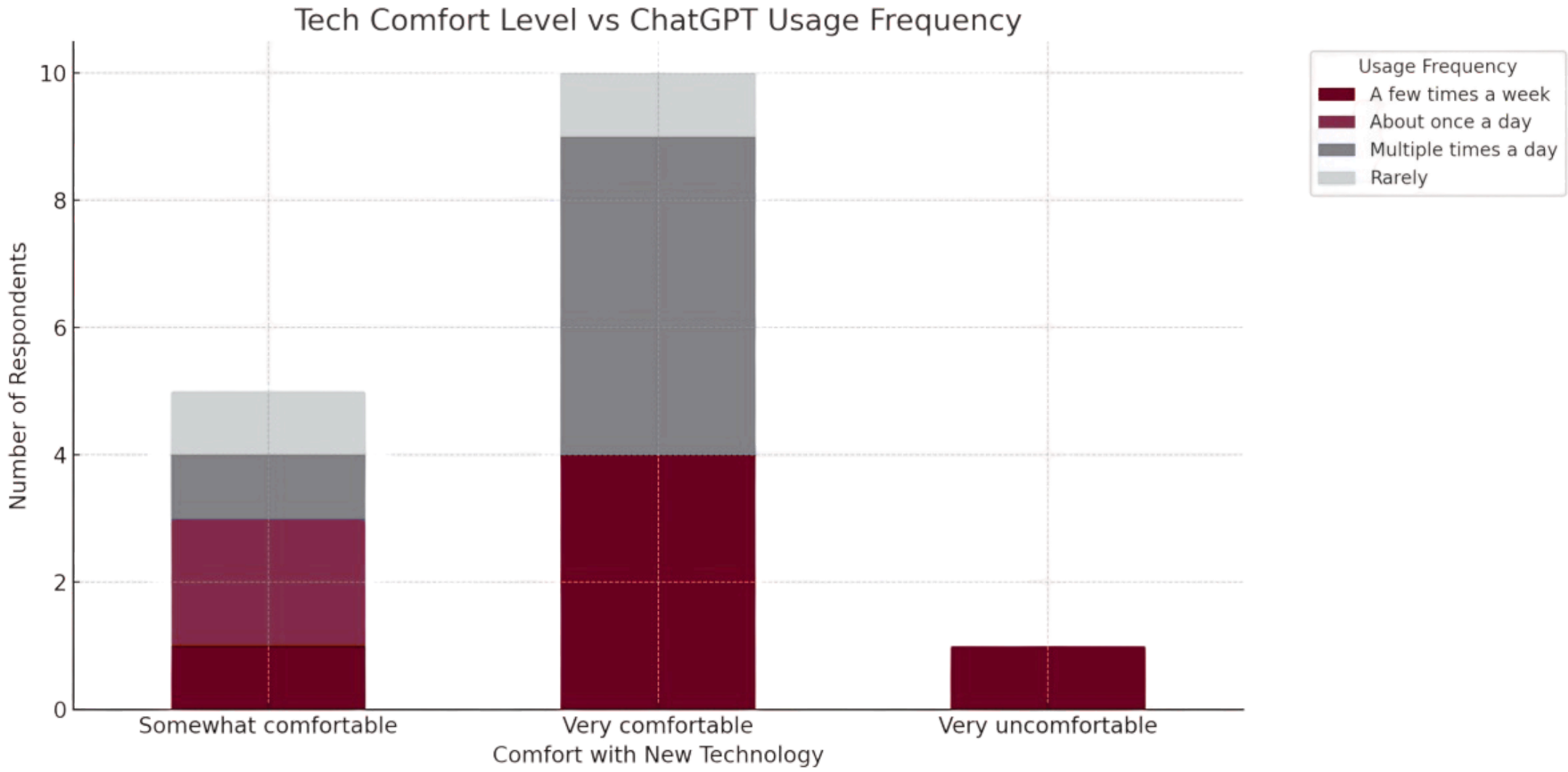

ChatGPT User Archetypes – Final Survey
Nonusers
4%
Superusers
37%
48%
Sporadic Users
12%
Consistent Users

USER TYPES


ChatGPT Usage Frequency Comparison
Initial Survey
Final Survey
Rarely
Not at all
Multiple times a day
About once a day
A few times a week
Proportion of Respondents
0.0
0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
Usage Frequency

USER TYPES

Those most comfortable with technology tended to explore and benefit from broader use.

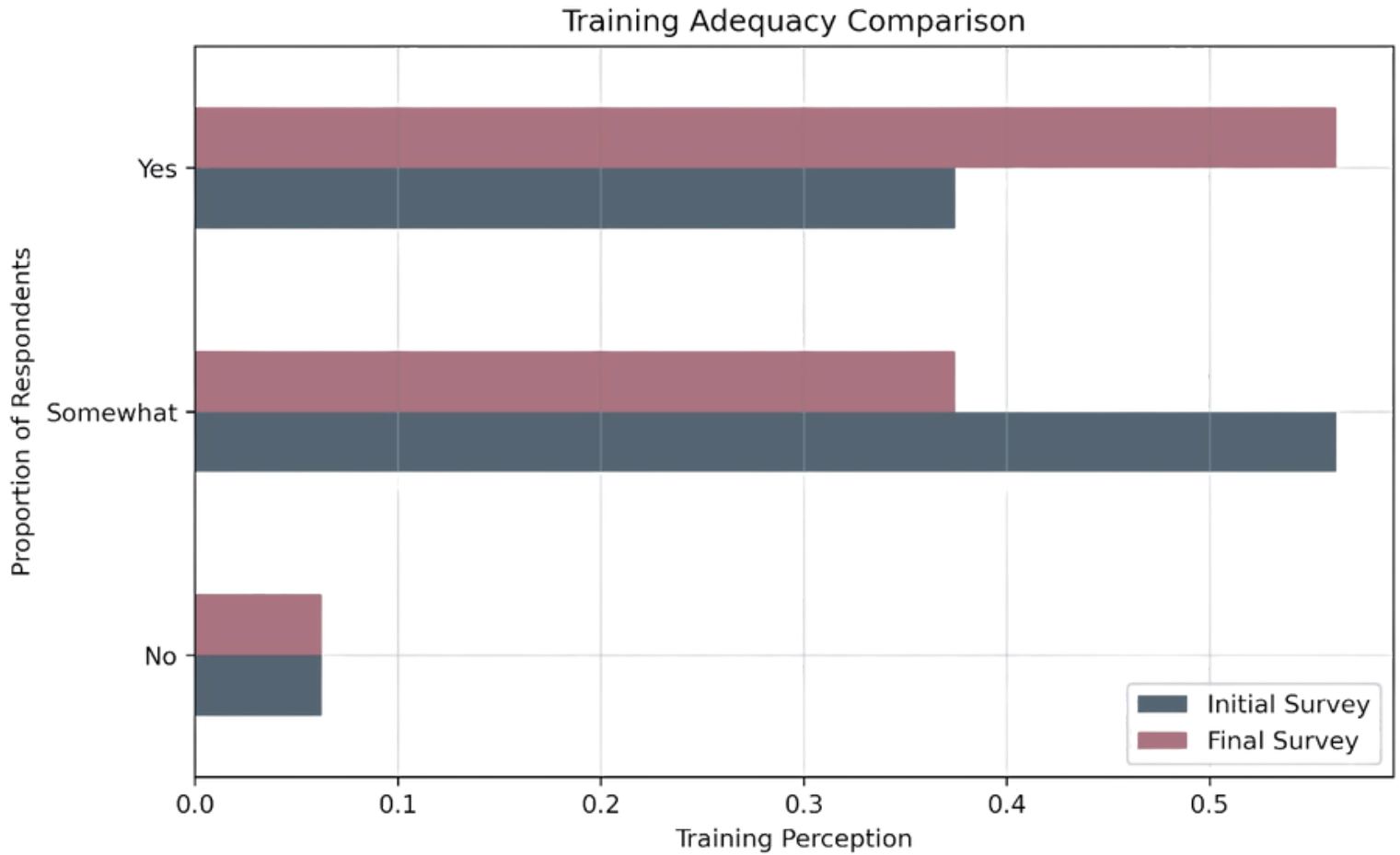


USER TYPES

Training and Enablement

Training played a vital role in adoption success. Most users felt adequately trained or somewhat trained.

However, several responses suggested that additional role-specific prompts and guided scenarios could improve confidence.



ChatGPT Challenges

When ChatGPT Fell Short of Expectations

CHALLENGES

ChatGPT Functionality Challenges

- Accuracy issues: Occasionally produced incorrect facts or citations.
- Tone problems: Responses needed refinement to suit formal or public audiences.
- Formatting issues: Generated inconsistent tables, forms, or templates.
- Specialized tasks: Underperformed in coding, legal precision, or math-heavy work.

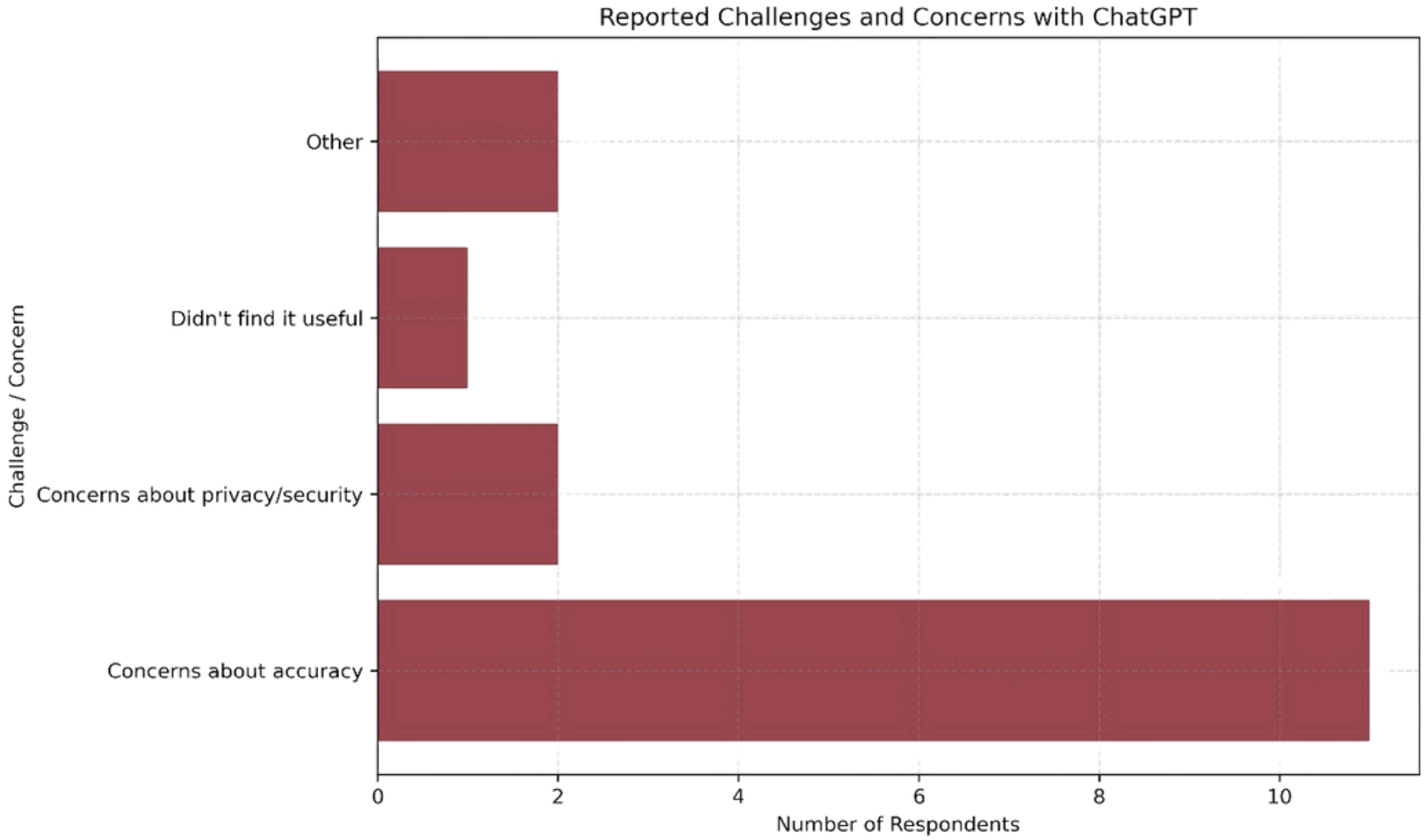
So what?

GenAI isn't perfect. It makes mistakes. Employees must be responsible for their AI-assisted work product. AI training should include how to anticipate and check for errors in GenAI outputs.

CHALLENGES

ChatGPT Functionality Challenges

Participants learned to check outputs and prompt more precisely to avoid these issues.



CHALLENGES

Particularly Challenging Cases

Users did encounter issues with phrasing, incompleteness in data comparisons, or hallucinations:

"Changes between two documents are correct—but not always complete."

"Still working with IT to figure out what's allowable to input."

"Phrasing issues here and there."

"Concerned about definitive answers—AI tends to generalize when asked to confirm".

Despite these concerns, many users developed informal guardrails: using ChatGPT for drafting, then verifying or customizing with their expertise.

Barriers to Use

Challenges to Consistent ChatGPT Adoption

BARRIERS TO USE

Adoption Barriers

Top reported barriers

1. Inaccuracy – Concerns over correctness, especially in legal or factual content.
2. Habit – Difficulty integrating ChatGPT into existing workflows.
3. Time – Initial setup and learning curve felt too steep during busy periods

4. Steep Learning Curve – Some users felt overwhelmed or unsure how to start.
5. Privacy Concerns – Uncertainty about what could safely be entered into the tool.

NEXT STEPS

Post-Pilot Insights and Action Items

NEXT STEPS

The Post-pilot Path

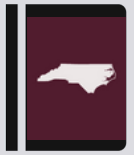
The pilot showed that generative-AI adoption is driven by time-saving benefits and positive user experiences, yet hindered by concerns around accuracy, privacy, and unfamiliarity. The Department of State Treasurer should now scale these lessons to help employees confidently integrate generative AI into their work.

Create pathways

Drive Value

Set up for Success

Investigate Impact



Sharing the AI playbook

NEXT STEPS

Create Pathways

Generative-AI features, tools and opportunities are evolving rapidly. North Carolina will continue to provide safe and effective pathways for employees to use these tools so they enhance, rather than impede, their work.

- Provide generative-AI solutions that match employees' needs, enabling them to leverage AI both broadly and within specific domains.
- Create flexible tool options that evolve with the department's dynamic generative-AI landscape.

NEXT STEPS

Drive Value

North Carolina's public servants need the best tools to tackle shared challenges, and the Department of State Treasurer should continue highlighting and enabling teams where generative-AI delivers clear value. In that spirit, users should:

- Experiment with generative-AI tools and share successful use cases to help colleagues identify high-impact applications.
- Embrace the roles highlighted in the pilot—innovation engines, bureaucracy hackers and strategic communicators—by using AI for brainstorming, summarising policies, and refining communications.
- Maintain human oversight by reviewing AI-generated content for accuracy and appropriateness, using it as a starting point rather than a definitive answer.

NEXT STEPS

Set Up for Success

Some pilot participants found it difficult to get started with ChatGPT because they were overwhelmed by the new technology, hesitant to change established work habits, or simply too busy to experiment. Future GenAI initiatives must shrink the learning curve for such users by:

- Building an AI ambassador network or community of practice where colleagues share ideas, use cases and onboarding support.
- Creating step-by-step guides to try low-effort, high-impact tasks such as drafting emails, summarising reports, or generating policy outlines.
- Helping employees document and share their successes and challenges to refine training resources and identify high-impact workflows for the next phase of generative-AI adoption.

NEXT STEPS

Investigate GenAI Further

As generative-AI technologies evolve, the NC Department of State Treasurer recognizes that a user-informed approach is essential. With more employees engaging with ChatGPT, it's vital to continue gathering feedback on new opportunities and challenges. Future AI feedback and research should include:

- Which generative-AI training formats and prompt libraries are most effective for employees?
- Which roles or departments within the Treasurer's office stand to benefit most from enterprise-, sandbox- or domain-specific generative-AI tools?
- How do best practices and adoption patterns evolve when entire teams, rather than individual employees, integrate ChatGPT into their workflows?
- Where do simple successes with AI spark interest in more ambitious or complex implementations across the organization?

NEXT STEPS

Share the AI playbook

The GenAI pilot proved a strong success, and we are eager to share these findings with other states looking to deploy generative-AI tools. If you work in government and want to learn more about our user-centered approach and results, please get in touch.

NC Central University
Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research

About IAIER

The Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research (IAIER) at North Carolina Central University is committed to ensuring AI serves as a force for inclusivity, empowerment, and social good. Through groundbreaking research and community-focused initiatives, we aim to address critical disparities while amplifying opportunities for underrepresented communities in the AI space.

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Acknowledgements

The Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research (IAIER) at North Carolina Central University thanks the North Carolina Office of State Treasurer and OpenAI for their leadership and partnership in this pilot initiative.

We also recognize the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, whose AI pilot—led by Governor Josh Shapiro's administration—provided a valuable model for our approach to responsible AI use in government.

Special thanks to the IAIER research and implementation team for their dedication throughout this effort.

Finally, we appreciate the leadership of NCCU for supporting this collaboration at the intersection of AI, public service, and innovation.

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