# Google's AI Overview Feature Faces Backlash for Delivering Misinformation



On May 24, 2024, Google introduced its AI Overview feature during the company's annual developer conference, Google I/O. This new AI-powered search tool aimed to enhance user experience by providing summarized search results directly, leveraging its latest AI model, Gemini.

Despite its ambitious intent, the AI Overview feature quickly faced backlash for delivering erroneous and sometimes dangerous information. For example, the AI suggested incorporating nontoxic glue into pizza recipes and ingesting rocks for nutrients, based on outdated or satirical posts from platforms like Reddit and The Onion. This led to significant public outcry and numerous users sharing screenshots of these misinformation instances on social media platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter).

These errors have raised concerns about Google’s capacity to deliver reliable information, essential given that over two billion people use Google’s search engine. Critics have highlighted that previous Google AI rollouts also encountered problems, notably with the chatbot Bard, which gave inaccurate information about outer space.

Google’s spokesperson, Lara Levin, clarified that most AI Overview queries provided high-quality information and that the problematic instances were uncommon and sometimes manipulated. She also mentioned that these examples would help refine the system.

This development underscores the ongoing challenges posed by large language models, which process vast amounts of web data, including false information and jokes, rather than being programmed like traditional software. As Google strives to keep up with competitors like Microsoft and OpenAI, the company acknowledges the need for rapid development, even if it involves certain growing pains.

Financial analysts, including Thomas Monteiro of Investing.com, argue that Google has no choice but to accelerate its AI integrations to remain competitive, despite these issues. This rapid deployment, however, has inevitably led to some errors that tarnish Google’s reputation as a provider of reliable search results.