AMERICANS for RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

STATE AI REGULATION
June 20, 2025

Analysis: State-Level AI Laws May Drive Adoption of AI Tools

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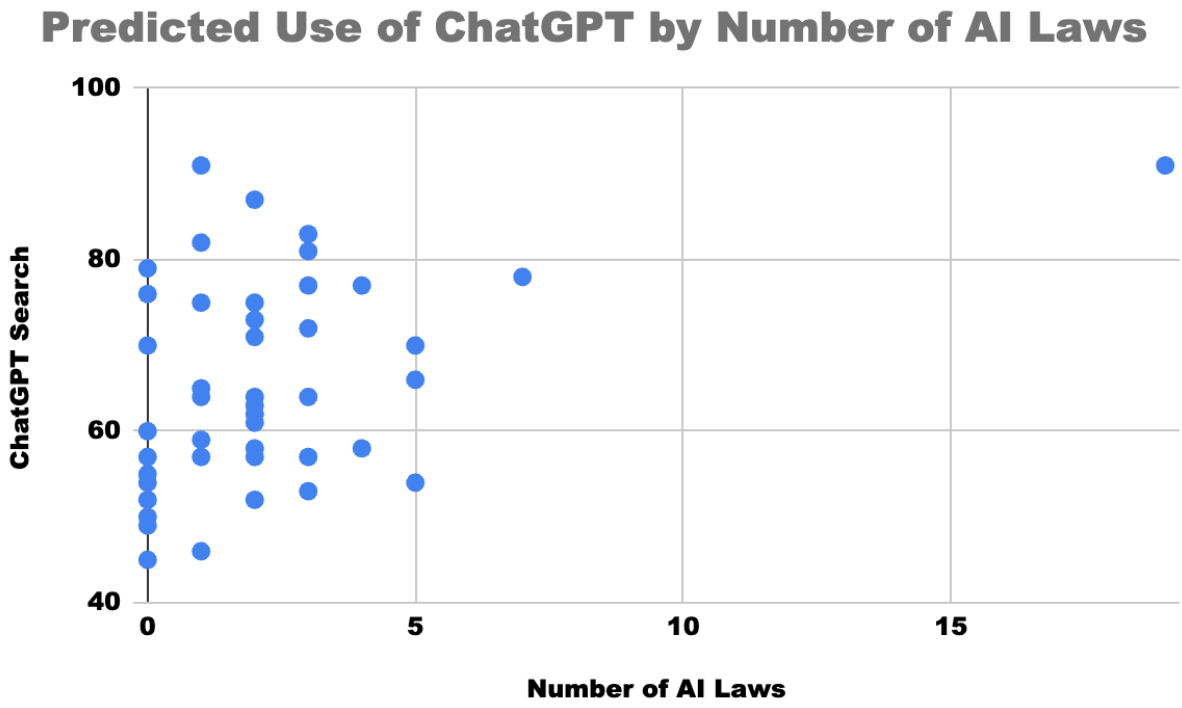
State-level AI legislation does not hinder public interest in and adoption of generative AI tools—in fact, it may help drive it. As policymakers weigh the risks and benefits of AI regulation, these findings suggest that thoughtful governance can coexist with, and even support, broad adoption of AI innovations like ChatGPT.

As artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT become increasingly integrated into daily life, questions have emerged around whether regulatory activity at the state level stifles or supports their adoption. To explore this relationship, we analyzed the correlation between the number of AI-related laws in each U.S. state and search interest data from Google Trends for ChatGPT and two other leading

generative AI tools—Gemini (Google) and Claude (Anthropic). Because platform-level user data is not publicly available at the state level, Google search queries have been used in academic literature as a reasonable proxy for state-level interest and likely use.

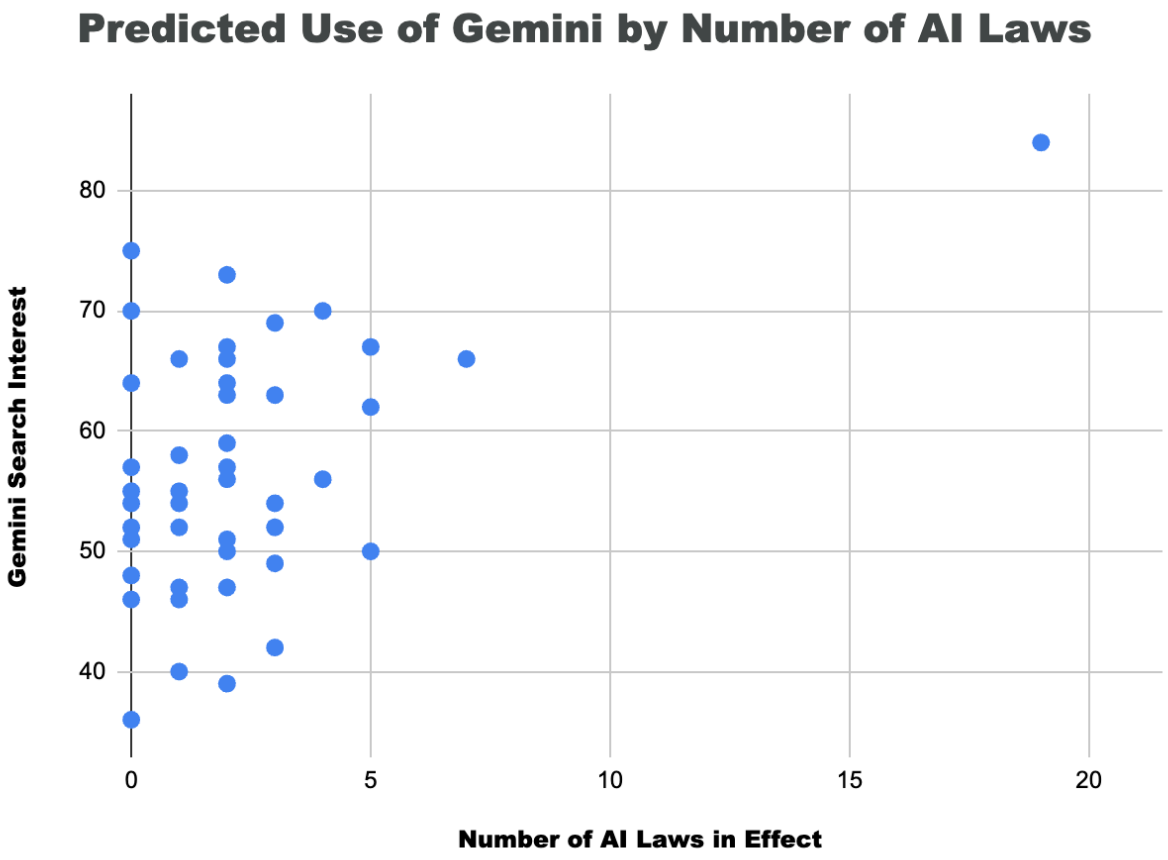
The analysis revealed a consistent, moderate positive correlation between the presence of AI laws and search interest across all three tools. For ChatGPT specifically, the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.42, for Gemini it is 0.46, and for Claude it is 0.45. This pattern suggests that regulatory engagement is associated with, rather than in opposition to, greater public interest in using generative AI technologies.



These findings counter the common narrative that AI regulation may suppress innovation or reduce tool adoption. On the contrary, states that are actively legislating on AI issues—such as California, Colorado, and Connecticut—tend to have a greater share of residents actively seeking out and experimenting with

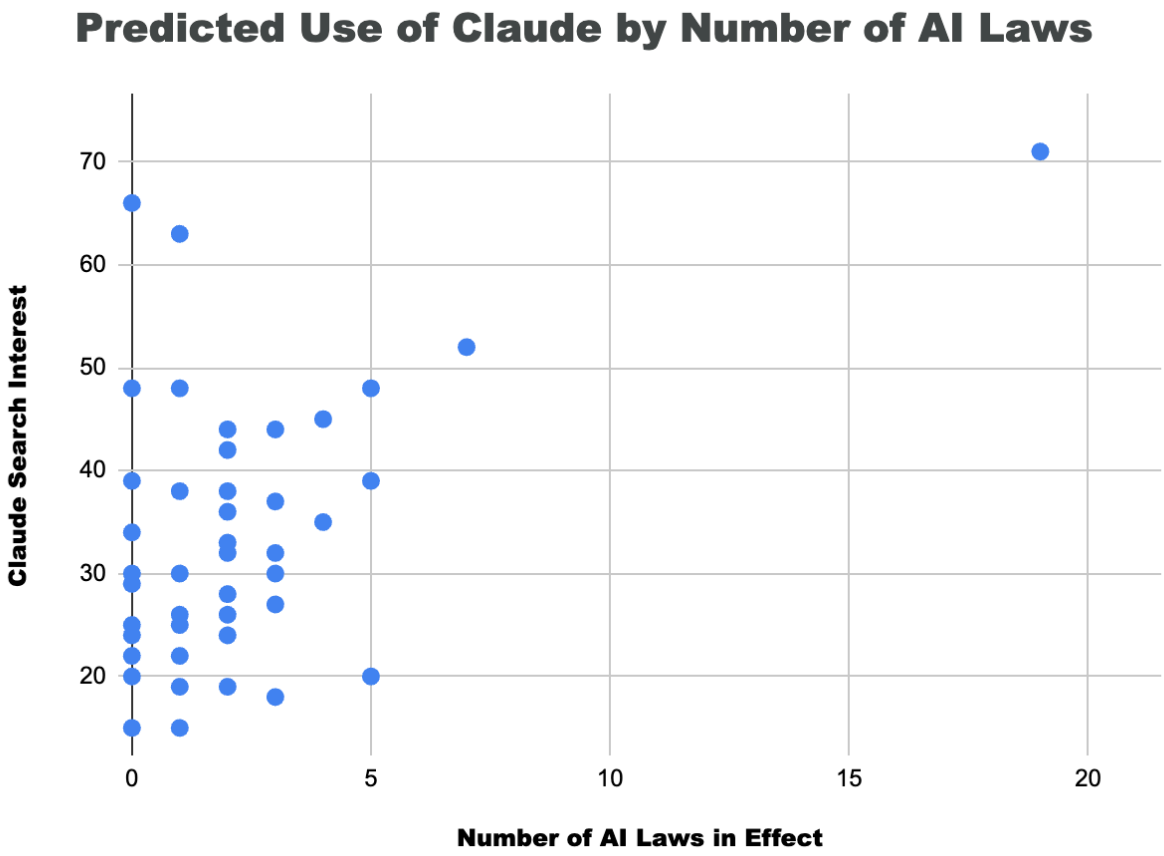
these tools. This may be due to a variety of factors, including stronger digital infrastructure, more active tech sectors, public trust stemming from clear governance, or greater integration of AI tools in education and public services.

Importantly, states without AI laws do not exhibit higher search volumes. Instead, their search interest in ChatGPT and other tools tends to be more variable, with some states showing lower-than-average engagement. This may reflect a lack of policy leadership or digital readiness rather than a resistance to the tools themselves.



While search interest does not provide exact user counts, existing research supports its reliability as a proxy for tool adoption at the population level. Academic studies have repeatedly demonstrated that spikes in search query

volume often align with adoption trends, making it a useful metric for comparative state-level analysis.



In conclusion, the data show that state-level AI legislation does not hinder public interest in generative AI tools—in fact, it may help drive it. As policymakers weigh the risks and benefits of AI regulation, these findings suggest that thoughtful governance can coexist with, and even support, broad adoption of AI innovations like ChatGPT.

Note on Methodology:

Search results method: Values are calculated on a scale from 0 to 100, where 100 is the location with the most popularity as a fraction of total searches in that location, and a value of 50 indicates a location which is half as popular. Since

state-level values in our dataset are greater than 15, the y-axes have been truncated (more info).

Number of AI laws: The number of AI laws in effect in each state was collected from Orrick AI Law Center (more info).