

Thousands chatted with this AI 'virtual girlfriend.' Then things got even weirder

By Brian Contreras
Los Angeles Times

Last month, Caryn Marjorie went from a successful but niche social media star to a person of national interest: the subject of attention-grabbing headlines and, for many commentators, a template upon which to project their anxieties about rapidly advancing artificial intelligence.

The cause of the furor was a partnership Marjorie, 23, had launched with a technology startup promising to make a personalized AI "clone" of the Scottsdale, Ariz.-based lifestyle influencer. For a dollar a minute, fans she might never have otherwise had the time to meet could instead chat with Marjorie's digital double.

CarynAI, as the audio chatbot has been dubbed, is explicitly framed as a romantic companion — one that aims to "cure loneliness" with software that supposedly incorporates aspects of cognitive behavioral therapy into its conversations. Marjorie said her fans have used the program to ask for life advice and role-play a sunset date to the beach.

Marjorie was at one point tracking her subscriber growth in tweets about how many new "boyfriends" she had. "They feel like they're finally getting to know me, even though they're fully aware that it's an AI," she told The Times.

This HAL 9000 version of pillow talk has, predictably, triggered a backlash. Critics branded CarynAI as alternately demeaning women, enabling antisocial straight-male behavior or signaling impending societal collapse. Coming amid a period of uncertainty about what AI means for jobs, relationships and cultural institutions, Marjorie's move toward self-automation seemed to perfectly encapsulate an increasingly bizarre present.

"We're talking about an AI system [where] theoretically the goal is to keep people on as long as possible so that you continue earning money," said Amy Webb, chief executive of the consulting firm Future Today Institute. "Which means that it's likely going to start incentivizing behavior that we probably would not want in the real world."

Webb suggested as an example a bot that's too obedient — listening passively, for instance, as a user describes disturbing fantasies. Marjorie has addressed similar dynamics before ("If you are rude to CarynAI, it will dump you," she tweeted at one point), but when asked about Webb's perspective she instead emphasized her own concerns about addiction.

"I have seen my fans spend thousands of dollars in a matter of days chatting with CarynAI," Marjorie said; one fan, at the bot's encouragement, built a shrine-like photo wall of her. "This is why we have limited CarynAI to only accepting 500 new users in per day."

As AI comes to play a growing role in the economy, and especially creative industries, the questions prompted by CarynAI will only become more widespread.

But Marjorie isn't placing all her chips on the technology just yet. Within weeks of announcing her AI clone, she launched a second partnership with a different tech company. This one too would let fans talk with her, but instead it would be Marjorie herself on the other side of the screen.



Special

Cobb-based Delta Community Credit Union held a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 11 for its new Buckhead-Midtown branch. From left are Eddie Montgomery, regional branch manager; Suzanne Mitchell, senior vice president of Human Resources; Hank Halter, CEO; Pam Davis, senior vice president of Branch Delivery & Operations; Jon Perrault, vice president of Branch Delivery; Angela Moon, branch manager; and Brian Ragan, manager of Corporate Real Estate.

Credit union holds grand opening for new Buckhead-Midtown Branch

Staff reports

Cobb-based Delta Community Credit Union held a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 11 to celebrate the grand opening of its new Buckhead-Midtown branch, located in a shopping center at 1745 Peachtree Street NE, Suite

B in Atlanta.

The credit union closed its previous branch at 80 Peachtree Place NE to make way for a new high-rise development with commercial and retail space.

For more information, visit www.DeltaCommunity-CU.com.

Wall Street roundup

Dow Jones Industrial Average



+87.85 (+0.3%)

Close 34,349.27

S&P 500



+33.10 (+0.8%)

Close 4,472.36

Nasdaq



+158.26 (+1.2%)

Close 13,918.96

Source: AP

MOST ACTIVE FUTURES

Symbol	Contract Name	Last	Change	Open	High	Low
ZCZ23	Com (Dec '23)	483.75	-17.75	500.5	505.5	481.75
ZSX23	Soybean (Nov '23)	1327.75	-32.5	1359.5	1378	1325
ZMZ23	Soybean Meal (Dec '23)	390.4	-8.7	398.6	405.9	389.6
ZLZ23	Soybean Oil (Dec '23)	59.36	-0.57	60.44	61.1	58.51
ZWU23	Wheat (Sep '23)	632.75	-27.75	658	662.5	632
KEU23	Hard Red Wheat (Sep '23)	803	-14	815	827.75	792
NWU23	Spring Wheat (Sep '23)	853.5	-10.5	863.25	871.5	845.5
ZOZ23	Oats (Dec '23)	419.25	-20.5	440	442	414.75
ZRU23	Rough Rice (Sep '23)	14.81	0.035	14.745	14.89	14.57
RSX23	Canola (Nov '23)	797.5	10.4	787	806.9	787
CLQ23	Crude Oil WTI (Aug '23)	75.88	1.05	74.83	76.15	74.67
HOQ23	ULSD NY Harbor (Aug '23)	2.6077	0.024	2.5769	2.625	2.5714
RBQ23	Gasoline RBOB (Aug '23)	2.6739	0.0512	2.6189	2.6788	2.6173
NGU23	Natural Gas (Sep '23)	2.612	-0.08	2.697	2.712	2.586
QAU23	Crude Oil Brent (F) (Sep '23)	80.27	0.869	79.28	80.57	79.22
FLQ23	Ethanol Chicago (Aug '23)	2.29	0	2.29	2.29	2.28
GCQ23	Gold (Aug '23)	1963.1	26	1938	1965.1	1937.5
SIU23	Silver (Sep '23)	24.34	1.059	23.325	24.375	23.31
HGU23	High Grade Copper (Sep '23)	3.854	0.088	3.7725	3.8605	3.7665
PLV23	Platinum (Oct '23)	958.7	26.3	932.4	964	931.3
PAU23	Palladium (Sep '23)	1282.5	34.6	1242.5	1296.5	1239
ALU23	Aluminum (Sep '23)	2225.25	69.5	2154	2227.25	2154
LEQ23	Live Cattle (Aug '23)	176.875	-1.95	179	181.175	176.525
GFQ23	Feeder Cattle (Aug '23)	246.575	-0.575	247.05	251.3	245.525
HEQ23	Lean Hogs (Aug '23)	95.935	-2.225	98.675	99	94.925
KMQ23	Pork Cutout (Aug '23)	102.525	-1.525	105.9	105.9	102.425
DLQ23	Class III Milk (Aug '23)	14.82	-0.41	15.29	15.35	14.75
DFU23	Nonfat Dry Milk (Sep '23)	110.75	2	109.7	110.75	109.7
DGN23	Dry Whey (Jul '23)	27.475	0	27.3	27.475	27.3
BDQ23	Butter Cash-Settled (Aug '23)	245	1.125	243.75	245.475	243.75

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Name	Last	Change	%Chg	Open	High	Low
U.S. Dollar Index	100.557	-1.175	-1.15%	N/A	101.609	100.511
Euro/U.S. Dollar	1.113	0.012	+1.14%	1.100	1.114	1.100
U.S. Dollar/Canadian Dollar	1.318	-0.004	-0.34%	1.323	1.323	1.314
U.S. Dollar/Japanese Yen	138.462	-1.893	-1.35%	140.357	140.388	138.168

TOP VOLUME LEADERS

Symbol	Name	Last	Change	%Chg	Open	High	Low
LCID	Lucid Group Inc	7.16	-0.96	-11.82%	7.74	7.89	7.08
RIVN	Rivian Automotive Inc Cl A	25.91	1.06	+4.27%	25.41	26.261	23.71
TSLA	Tesla Inc	271.99	2.2	+0.82%	276.325	276.52	271.46
RXRK	Recursion Pharmaceuticals Inc Cl A	12.08	5.3	+78.17%	14.67	14.99	10.13
CVNA	Carvana Company Cl A	38.89	3.32	+9.33%	37.39	44.64	35.5931
NIO	Nio Inc ADR	11.16	0.35	+3.24%	11.02	11.22	10.71

STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Symbol	Name	Last	Prev Chg	Prev Open	Prev High	Prev Low	Div.
AFL	Aflac Inc	70.25	-0.25	70.99	71.05	70.01	1.68
T	AT&T Inc	15.12	-0.11	15.24	15.265	15.1	1.11
AMD	Adv Micro Devices	114.58	3.26	112.89	115.3999	112.3101	0
ADXS	Ayala Pharmaceuticals Inc	0.88	-0.07	0.8801	0.9001	0.88	0
AAPL	Apple Inc	189.89	1.81	189.68	191.7	188.47	0.96
AMAT	Applied Materials	138.89	1.33	139.21	139.7	137.85	1.28
ACB	Aurora Cannabis Inc	0.5612	-0.0188	0.58	0.5948	0.554	0
AVP	Avon Products	5.6	-0.050	5.64	5.92	5.05	0
BAC	Bank of America Corp	29.36	0.34	29.51	29.89	29.27	0.88
BIOC	Biocept Inc	1.34	-0.03	1.36	1.39	1.3	0
BMY	Bristol-Myers Squibb Company	62.28	-0.51	62.88	63.265	62.1221	2.28
CADE	Cadence Bank	20.92	0.8	20.7	20.95	20.39	0.94
CPE	Callon Petroleum Company	35.24	0.25	35.54	36.245	35.19	0
SAVA	Cassava Sciences Inc	22.12	0.02	22.48	22.64	21.94	0
CAT	Caterpillar Inc	253.6	0.75	255.49	257.64	251.44	4.8
CTL	CenturyLink	11	0	10.85	11.11	10.84	1
CHK	Chesapeake Energy Corp	84.11	-0.12	84.27	84.98	83.67	2.2
CSCO	Cisco Systems Inc	50.74	-1.38	51.56	51.93	50.5319	1.56
C	Citigroup Inc	47.38	0.85	47.26	48.27	47.2201	2.04
CLF	Cleveland-Cliffs Inc	17.07	0.21	17.2	17.37	17.03	0
KO	Coca-Cola Company	59.84	0.32	59.75	60.05	59.445	1.84
CMCSA	Comcast Corp A	42.34	0.330	42.23	42.54	42.16	1.16
CREE	Cree Inc	79.12	-1.61	81.29	81.29	79.09	0
CRON	Cronos Group Inc	2	-0.02	2.05	2.07	1.99	0
DAL	Delta Air Lines Inc	47.95	-0.709	48.7	49.04	47.88	0
DB	Deutsche Bank Ag	10.49	0.06	10.4	10.515	10.395	0
EBAY	Ebay Inc	46.41	-0.49	47.5	47.53	46.331	1
ECA	Encana Corp	18.95	-1.25	19.8	19.8	18.5	0.08
ET	Energy Transfer LP	12.99	0.040	13.05	13.08	12.97	1.23
FFX	Equifax Inc	231.79	0.75	235.61	236.63	230.515	1.56
XOM	Exxon Mobil Corp	106.49	0.52	107	107.65	106.13	3.64

What's Your "Plan Me"?

My "Plan Me" includes having someone invest my assets so that I'm not constantly watching the stock market, wondering when to buy.

Do you have a "Plan Me"? Our advisers go beyond customizing your portfolio. We match your investments to the financial plan we design around you, your goals, and your time horizon.

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