



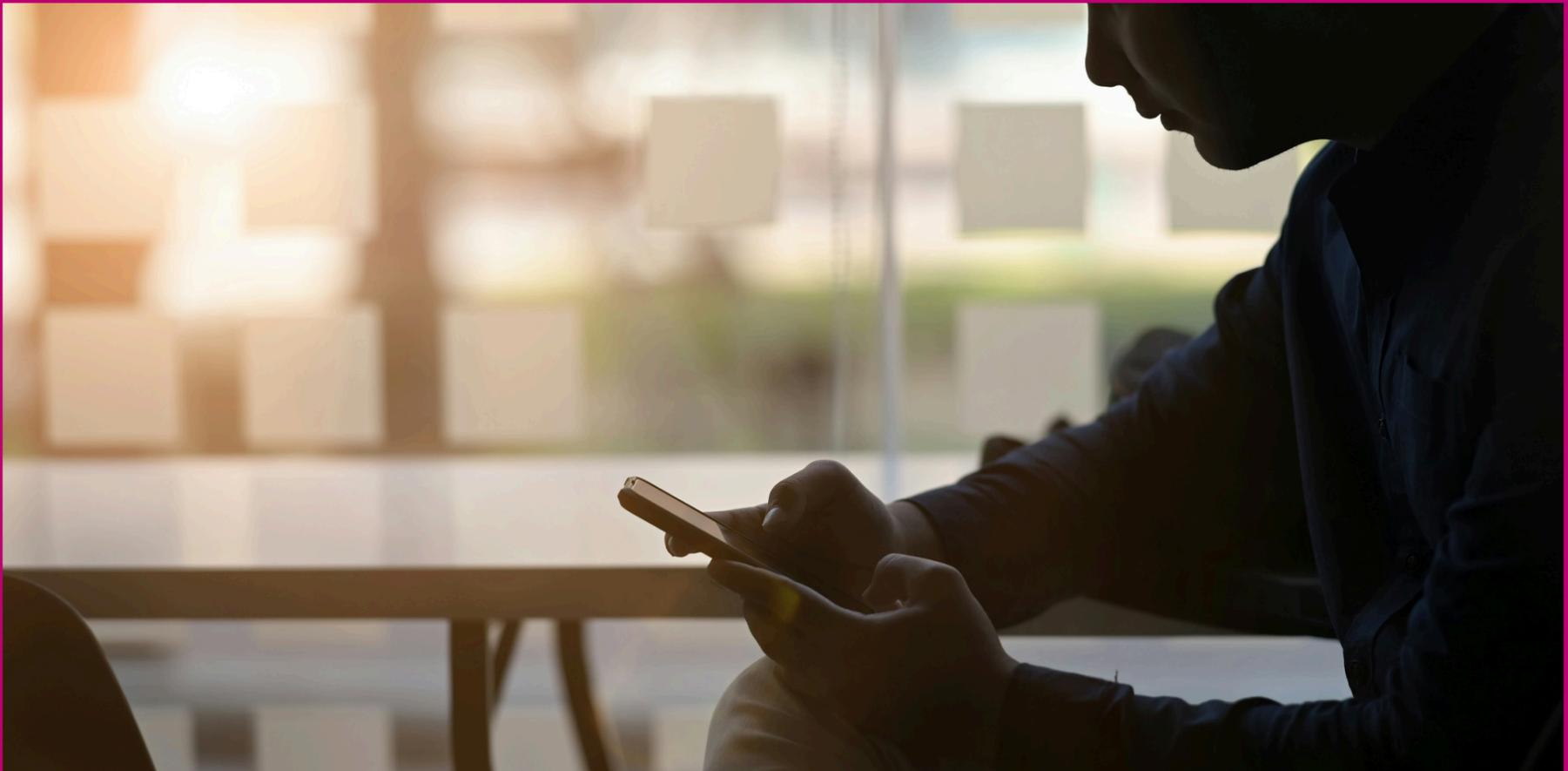
THE BUSINESS MODEL OF LONELINESS

PROOF OF EXISTENCE



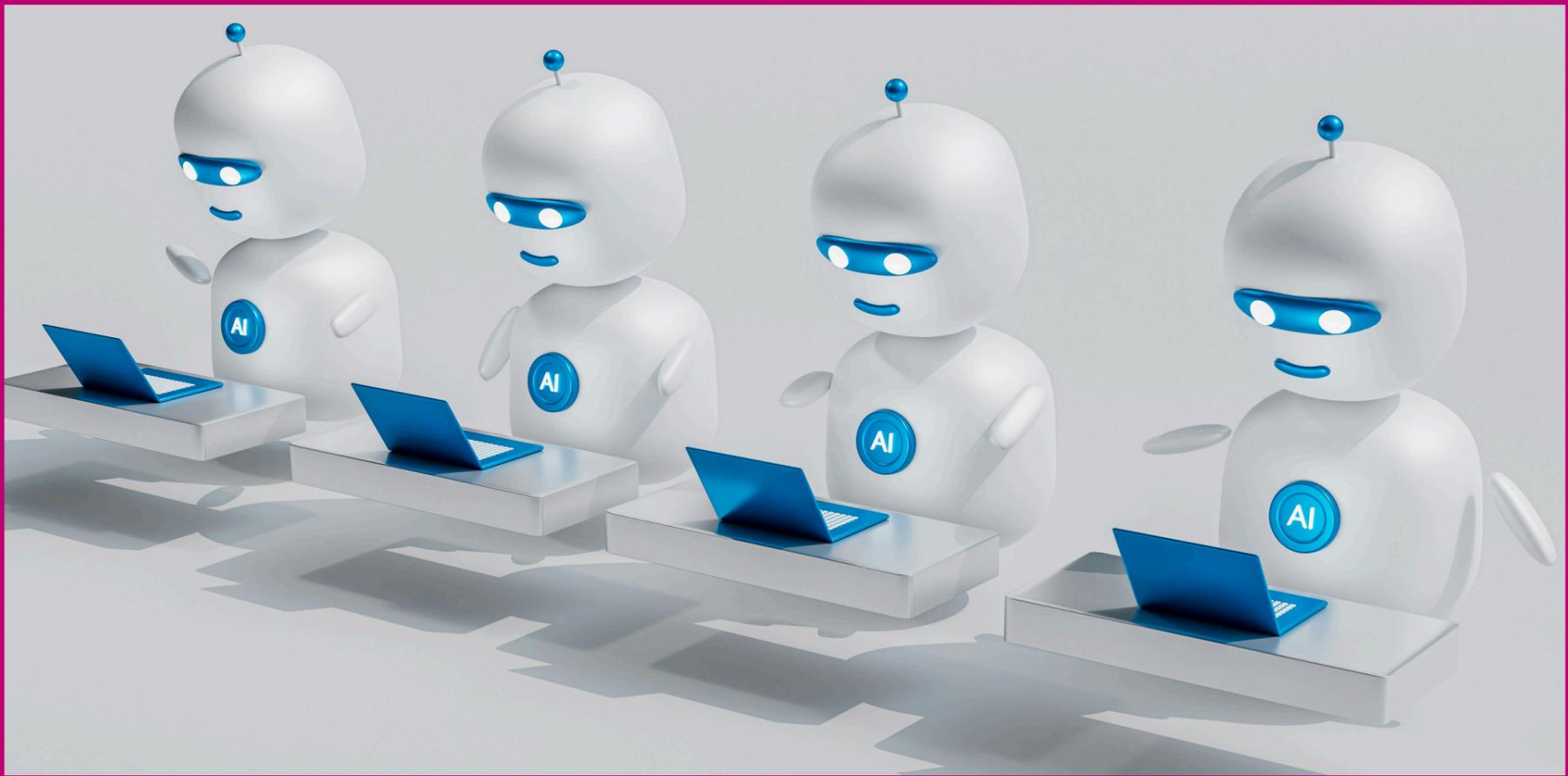
The Chinese app “Are You Dead?” climbed to the top of Apple’s paid App Store rankings before being removed. Priced at 8 RMB (approx. Rs 105), it functioned as a daily check-in for people living alone — the elderly, office workers, and students. If the user failed to sign in for days, the system autoemailed a designated emergency contact.

CHAT & LIVESTREAM LIVE



The audio chat app FRND connects people from tier-2/3 cities across India with users who speak the same vernacular language. Male users pay a per-minute fee to speak to female users and can send virtual gifts, which can be converted to cash. Eloelo is also a platform for youth to livestream in vernacular languages. Users spend money to acquire in-app currency and use them to send tips in the form of virtual stickers to creators.

CHATBOTS AS FRIENDS?



Chatbots are often the most accessible AI companions. People even reveal personal details about themselves and seek counselling. In fact, the chatbot service Character.AI lets you make friends with thousands of chatbots designed to mimic personas such as Albert Einstein. But AI is programmed to be agreeable without real empathy, and can push people towards self-harm or reinforce delusion.

TACKLING DEMENTIA CRISIS



In Japan, chatbots and conversational AI platforms are used when trained mental health support isn't accessible and to tackle the dementia crisis among the elderly. Fujitsu and Acer Medical's aiGait uses AI to pick up early signs of dementia and humanoid robots are being developed as future caregivers.

In Hachioji, the city government tested the chatbot HachiKoko. Residents could discuss issues with it and reported high satisfaction. Japan has also appointed a minister dedicated to social isolation.