

The Daily Collegian’s Guidance and Policies on using AI in our Work

Generative artificial intelligence is the use of large language models to create something new, such as text, images, graphics and interactive media. Although generative AI has the potential to improve newsgathering, it also has the potential to harm journalists’ credibility and our unique relationship with our audience.

As we proceed, the following five core values will guide our work. These principles apply explicitly to the newsroom.

Transparency

When AI tools influence audience-facing content, we will tell the audience in ways that both disclose and educate news consumers. We will work with editors to create disclosures that are precise in language, while remaining accessible to our audience. When appropriate, we will include the prompts that are fed into the model to generate the material.

Internally, you must consult with your editor before using generative AI to assist with your work. The AI Committee may review and discuss usage, and the editor-in-chief has final approval over whether it is permitted. This process will support collective learning and allow us to develop flexible, evolving policies as the technologies change.

Externally, communication and disclosure ideally create opportunities to get feedback from the audience, as well as educate consumers. As journalists, part of our job is to empower the audience with news literacy skills. AI literacy – understanding how generative AI works, what benefits it brings to the information ecosystem and how to avoid AI-generated misinformation – is a subset of news literacy.

Accuracy and Human Verification

In alignment with our overall standards of verification, all information generated by AI requires human verification. When using AI for approved purposes, users must be able to reproduce the output to verify its accuracy. Increasingly in all of our work, it is important to be explicit about how we know facts are facts. It is imperative that we are vigilant in fact-checking AI, as it is subject to errors and may reflect biases in its responses. Editors will review prompts, and any other inputs used.

For example, if a reporter uses AI to help summarize lengthy court documents, they must be able to reproduce the summary and cross-check it against the original filings to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Audience Service

Our work in AI should be guided by what will be useful to our audience as we serve them. We have a responsibility to provide readers with ethical, accurate human-centered news produced by people, and to be transparent about how we gather information and create content.

Privacy and Security

Our relationship with our audience is rooted in trust and respect. To that end, we must protect our audience's data in accordance with our newsroom's privacy policies.

The editor-in-chief will connect with The Daily Collegian's attorney to develop this section of our guidelines and provide the staff with an update when one is available.

Exploration with Responsibility

With the four previous principles as our foundation, we will embrace exploration and experimentation but with great responsibility.

As a student newspaper, it is our top priority to provide training and experience that allows students to confidently produce accurate, ethical journalism on their own while being prepared for an evolving media landscape.

We encourage you to share any ideas, questions or concerns you have regarding generative AI use in our newsroom to the AI Committee at any time.

Logistics

The point person on generative AI in our newsroom is Mercedes Hamilton, who is supported by the following AI committee members: Kahlie Wray, Avery Titora, Mia Debelevich, Andrew Deal, Zeyda Frye, Nadya Solometo, Jailyn Sharpe, Aayan Hamdani, Tyler Nolt, Victoria Pugh and Taylor McGillvray.

Members of this team will:

- Monitor content management systems and content editing software for updates that may include AI tools.
- Write clear guidance about how you will or will not use AI in content-generation.
- Seek input from our audience, through surveys and other feedback mechanisms.
- Understand our privacy policies and explain how they apply to AI.
- Create ways to communicate with the audience to both educate them and gather insight about their needs and concerns.

You should expect to hear at least monthly communication from this team with updates on what we are doing and guidance on what activities are generally approved.

Current editorial use:

All uses of AI should start with journalism-centered intentions and cleared by the AI Committee.

You should not be using generative AI to perform tasks you can easily do yourself, such as generating interview questions and headlines. AI may have negative environmental impacts, reflect systemic biases and prevent you from developing essential journalistic skills. Additionally, AI is not human and cannot replicate human conversation, judgment or nuance.

If you'd like to request AI use, here's the form you should use:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdL5AUvrvcUvVan5P9MGMItnzKGOPvSAkZkGiPSWn9jr_B9OQ/viewform?usp=publish-editor

Here are the generative AI platforms you are allowed to use after receiving permission:

OpenAI ChatGPT, Anthropic Claude, Google Pinpoint, Google Gemini

Editorial use:

Generative AI is generally permitted for the following purposes, but you must obtain permission from your editor and submit the request form before doing anything and you must archive your use to be filed with your editor.

Searching and assembling data - You are permitted to use AI to search for information, mine public databases or assemble and calculate statistics that would be useful to our audience. You must fact-check and analyze findings on your own.

Sorting through and organizing large amounts of public records - You may use AI to help organize and review large sets of public records. You must ensure accuracy, verify all results independently, and disclose AI use to your editor.

Visuals - Always ask your editor before using AI features on platforms we use, including Adobe services and Canva. Photographers and videographers may use Adobe Lightroom and Premiere denoise features but must ensure quality and disclose their use to the editor. Do not use AI to manipulate photos. Be wary of how all AI usage impacts the accuracy, integrity and context of a photo or video.

Fact-checking

You may not use AI for independent fact-checking. Facts should be checked against multiple authoritative sources that have been created, edited or curated by human beings. When fact-checking AI-generated information, a single source is not sufficient; information should be checked against multiple sources.

Social media use

Use of content or promotional captions generated by AI are not permitted on our social channels, except for audio captioning in reels, which must be fact checked.

Privacy and security

- No personal information from your staff or your sources should be entered into programs.
- None of our intellectual property should be entered into a program.
- Staff working with AI tools should have a clear understanding of our organization's privacy policy.

Ongoing training

Regular resources and training on AI tools and experiments will be available and at times even mandatory. This training will be delivered by a combination of members from the internal committee and outside experts.

Environmental impacts

The Daily Collegian acknowledges the energy demands associated with training and deploying large-scale AI systems. As part of our commitment to sustainable journalism, we recognize that responsible AI use includes minimizing our environmental footprint. We commit to prioritizing efficient tools and offsetting responsibly.

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