

# Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Guidelines

## Purpose

As a trusted public institution, Timberland Regional Library (TRL) must ensure that all Artificial Intelligence (AI) use aligns with core library values, protects patron confidentiality, and maintains human oversight. This guideline provides a framework for responsible AI use by TRL staff and outlines best practices.

## Scope

This guideline applies to all TRL staff, all AI tools used for library-related work, and all library services, operations, and communications.

## Background

AI tools are increasingly used in workplaces, including libraries. While these tools offer potential benefits such as idea generation, enhanced efficiency, and data analysis, they also raise significant concerns related to privacy, accuracy, bias, transparency, public records, and copyright.

AI systems may retain interaction data and generate inferences based on the information provided to them, which could be exposed in security breaches.

Adherence to these guidelines is essential to protect patron data, ensure ethical use, and safeguard TRL operations.

## Definitions

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Computer systems designed to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving.

**AI Prompt:** The input or instruction given to an AI by a user to request information or direct it to perform a task or create content.

## Approved AI Tools & Account Guidelines

Staff are encouraged to only use AI tools that have been reviewed and approved by TRL. The AI tools currently provided to staff are:

**Microsoft Copilot:** A large language model that is included with Microsoft 365 apps; AI interactions are retained for ninety (90) days.

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**Canva.com:** A graphic design platform that includes generative AI functionality to create images based on user prompts. Each branch has its own account.

### **Paid Subscriptions for AI Tools**

Except for Microsoft Copilot and Canva.com, TRL does not maintain paid subscriptions to AI services.

Staff may use publicly available, free-access AI tools when necessary; however, these tools often have limits on queries or features.

To ensure availability for work-related needs, staff should not use AI tools for personal purposes while on TRL systems or during work time.

### **AI Account Registration and Privacy Settings**

Many AI tools require users to create an account to access their features.

Anonymous access is preferred when meaningful use without account registration is possible.

If registration is required, staff should use their work email address.

After registration, staff must review and configure any available privacy settings to:

- Prevent interactions from being used for AI training or learning purposes if possible
- Minimize the amount and duration of data storage or retention by the service

### **Public Records Requests**

All AI use may be subject to public records requests under the Washington State Public Records Act (PRA). Staff must adhere to the following.

#### **Provide AI data if requested.**

**Microsoft Copilot:** IT will retrieve the records; AI interactions are retained for ninety (90) days.

- Other platforms (e.g., ChatGPT): Staff are responsible for exporting all existing relevant chat history, ensuring it is complete and uncontaminated

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**Disclose AI use:** staff must maintain transparency by disclosing when AI tools are used to create library materials, whether for internal or public-facing purposes

- Internal example: “Microsoft Co-Pilot was used in the initial draft of this document”
- External example: “AI tools from Canva.com were used to create this image”

**Familiarize yourself:** With the data retention, export options, and privacy practices of each AI tool to maintain compliance with applicable public records requirements.

## **Approved Tasks for AI Usage**

AI is a tool to assist staff, not a decision-maker. All outputs **must be reviewed and verified by staff**. Uses consistent with these examples may proceed; unique or novel applications must be reviewed by a supervisor prior to implementation.

### **Brainstorming & Planning**

- Program ideas, concepts, names, or themes
- Creating outlines, workflows, or project plans

### **Writing & Editing**

- Drafting, editing, or rewriting text
- Generating summaries, blurbs, or talking points
- Improving clarity, readability, or accessibility

### **Marketing & Design**

- Creating promotional copies for programs, services, and the library
- Generating alt text for images
- Photo & Graphic editing in approved platforms (Adobe, Canva) that preserves the original content without changing meaning.

### **Research & Information**

- Searching for or summarizing web-based information
- Conducting general background research

### **Generating Images**

- Generating images with Canva.com while adhering to copyright laws

## **AI Usage – Guiding Principles**

To safeguard TRL systems, data, and patron privacy, the following guidelines must be observed when using AI.

**Protect patron information:** Do not share any personal identifiable information (PII) with AI, including names, addresses, library card numbers, ages, or other sensitive details. Keep prompts vague and general.

**Protect internal TRL data:** Do not provide AI with non-public TRL information. Only use data that is already publicly accessible.

**Verify AI outputs:** Always review AI-generated content for accuracy and reliability before using it.

**Ensure fairness and reduce bias:** Use human judgment to identify and mitigate bias in AI outputs and modify or discard content that could mislead or cause harm.

**Ensure ethical and compliant use:** AI must not be used to influence regulated decisions, favor, or exclude individuals or vendors, or bypass required processes, approvals, or legal and policy requirements (e.g., RFPs).

**Disclose AI usage:** When AI is used to create content for internal or public purposes, staff must clearly indicate that AI contributed to its development.

**Exercise caution when uploading data:** Only upload or copy/paste documents into AI tools when it is necessary to complete the task.

When uploading or copying/pasting documents:

- Remove all PII and non-public library data before uploading for AI analysis or summarization
- Ensure datasets are fully anonymized so that no individual or sensitive information can be identified
- Review metadata (e.g., author information, creation details) to ensure no sensitive or confidential information is included

## **Canva AI Tools – Image Generation**

Canva.com provides generative AI tools to create images based on prompts from the user.

- Use Canva AI cautiously and only when necessary
- Staff are responsible for ensuring all input and output complies with copyright and privacy laws
- Canva does not guarantee the accuracy or reliability of AI-generated content; always reviews output before sharing
- Clearly label AI-generated content in public-facing materials
- Do not create misleading or inappropriate content

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- For more information, refer to the [Canva AI Product Terms](#) and [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

## **References and Disclosures**

This policy was developed with guidance from AI use policies of peer public libraries, State of Washington government guidelines, and professional library standards.

*Washington State Public Records Act, [Chapter 42.56 RCW](#).*

*[Executive Order 24-01: Generative AI](#) – Office of Governor Jay Inslee. Establishes statewide direction for preparing Washington for the opportunities and challenges of generative AI.*

*[Interim Guidelines for Purposeful and Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) in Washington State Government](#) - Provides a framework for ethical and responsible use of generative AI.*

*[Library Copyright Alliance \(LCA\)](#) – Professional guidance on copyright, fair use, and access to information in libraries.*

*[Initial Procurement Guidelines for Public Sector Procurement, Deployment, and Monitoring of Generative AI Technology](#) – Guidance for evaluating, procuring, and overseeing generative AI tools.*

*[TRL Confidentiality of Library Records and Data Privacy Policy](#) - Informs visitors of TRL's commitment to protect patron PII data and confidentiality.*

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