

In recent years the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has rapidly increased, as has distrust and pushback from those concerned about accuracy, authenticity, and community effects. Similarly, library staff increasingly want guidelines for how to use these AI tools responsibly and effectively. The draft policy recommendation below attempts to thread this needle, acknowledging that generative AI tools have utility in the world as a whole—and certainly in a library setting—but must be used with care.

For the record, AI was not used in any capacity on this draft; rather, it was informed by other library policies, the [American Library Association](#), conversations with other humans, and AI policies in other industries.

If this policy draft were to be adopted, the following edits to existing policies are recommended as well:

- [Privacy Policy](#): p.3, “Who Has Access to...” section, final paragraph. Insert this as the last sentence: “We do not use personally identifiable patron data with any artificial intelligence tools.”
- [Materials Selection Policy](#): p. 3, “Selection Guidelines” section. Add this as the second sentence in the first paragraph: “AI-generated materials may not be added to the library collection.”

Submitted by John Rucker

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

Adopted: n/a

Last Revised: n/a

Purpose

The Branch District Library (BDL) understands that artificial intelligence tools have the potential to increase productivity and innovation, and we support their use in a safe and ethical manner. We also recognize that these tools can introduce errors and falsehoods which may pose a risk to our operations and to library users. BDL's reputation as a trusted partner in the community must not be tarnished by the irresponsible use of artificial intelligence, nor should human dignity be diminished.

This policy provides guidance for how artificial intelligence may be used at BDL to assist, but not replace, human expertise and effort. BDL Employees are ultimately responsible for final decisions, communications, and work output. Any significant use of artificial intelligence must be disclosed.

Definitions

- "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) means a computational system capable of performing tasks typically associated with human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and decision-making. The use of "AI" in this document should be construed to mean any or all of the subtypes of AI listed below.
- "Generative Artificial Intelligence" (Generative AI) means a type of artificial intelligence that uses models capable of generating text, images, video, audio, software code, or other types of data. These models may run locally on a library system or be offered through an online service. For the purposes of this policy it does not matter where the model is run.
- "Agentic Artificial Intelligence" (Agentic AI) means an artificial intelligence tool that autonomously pursues goals. Agentic AI is capable of using software tools to further its goal,



monitoring outputs from those tools, waiting, adjusting, and looping until a given task is completed.

- “Library Record” means a document, record, or other method of storing information retained by a library that contains information that personally identifies a library user, including the user's name, address, or telephone number, or that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials from a library.
- “Audiovisual Media” means any instance of imagery, video, or audio presented in any physical or digital format.
- “Fair Use” means a doctrine in intellectual property law that permits the use of another’s copyrighted material under narrowly defined circumstances.

Scope

This policy governs all use of AI by BDL employees and volunteers [and the BDL Board?] (hereafter, “BDL Employees”). Areas in which AI might be used include, but are not limited to: communications, staff operations, user-facing technologies, programs and events, services, and features embedded in products from third-party vendors.

Policy

1. Privacy Protection

BDL is bound by the [Michigan Library Privacy Act](#) (Act 455 of 1982) and adheres to the [Code of Ethics](#) from the American Library Association. As a result, protecting the privacy of library users is paramount. BDL Employees may not use AI tools with library, staff, or business records.

BDL Employees may not use AI to record, summarize, or analyze meetings or meeting minutes without the express permission of the Library Director and every participant in attendance of said meeting, unless this restriction would result in a violation of Michigan’s [Open Meetings Act](#) (Act 267 of 1976), such as with a public board meeting.

2. Inspiration and Research

BDL Employees may use AI for brainstorming and inspiration or to establish outlines and workflows. Results from these tools must never be treated as authoritative and all output must be verified. If these tools recommend sources that BDL Employees intend to use as part of their work, all sources must be confirmed to actually exist. Any quotations used must come from the verified source itself and not from the AI output.

3. Content Creation: Text

BDL Employees may use Generative AI tools to assist in tasks but not to replace human expertise or creativity. BDL Employees may not use Generative or Agentic AI to create reports, analyses, commentary, social media posts, website posts, or any other type of textual content published in the name of the library or library staff. This prohibition includes BDL Employees using Generative or Agentic AI to write emails, letters, or any other type of communication as part of their duties.

Generative AI tools may be used to assist with editing in ways that do not remove BDL Employees as the authors of the content, including recommendations for grammar and spelling improvements and style suggestions, and this use does not require any disclosure.

AI or machine translation tools may not be used for translating text into another language to be published in any public-facing medium. A reputable translator must be used.

The only time it is acceptable for BDL Employees to use content derived entirely from Generative AI is in the context of educating the public or staff about such tools. In these cases, Generative AI content must be clearly identified and disclosed.

4. Content Creation: Audiovisual Media

Audiovisual media shared with the public must be original content produced by BDL Employees or non-AI-generated content sourced from commercial services. If Generative AI is used to significantly modify audiovisual content, BDL Employees must disclose that Generative AI was used in the creation of the media, and the disclosure must be as close to the media as possible.

BDL may not publish audiovisual content depicting real or historical events that was derived entirely from Generative AI tools.

BDL Employees may use AI tools for standard tasks like retouching, color correction, cropping, and contrast adjustments, and this use does not require any disclosure.

5. Patron Services

BDL Employees may not simply give library users Generative AI output in answer to their requests for information. Generative AI tools, including summaries that search engines may automatically provide before traditional search results, can be factually incorrect and must be used only as a starting point to discover and verify sources.

AI translation tools on library devices may be used by BDL Employees to facilitate in-person communication with library users.

BDL Employees will support digital literacy by providing instruction, resources, and programming to help library users understand the benefits and risks of Generative AI technologies.

6. Collections and Third-Party Vendors

BDL Employees may not add AI-generated materials to the library collection. BDL Employees shall suppress AI-generated materials from subscription databases and platforms whenever technically possible. The Library Director shall review the AI privacy protections of third-party services before implementation.

Any third-party AI tools selected by BDL for use by the public shall be evaluated for accessibility and compatibility with assistive technologies. BDL shall maintain reasonable alternative methods for accessing services and information when AI-based systems are inaccessible to those with disabilities.

7. BDL Business Operations

BDL Employees may use Generative AI tools for brainstorming about library operations but may not be used directly to make decisions.

BDL Employees may not use AI tools for any human resources functions, including, but not limited to: hiring, recruiting, promotions, performance reviews, disciplinary actions, or anything else involving sensitive employee records.

BDL Employees may not use Agentic AI tools to manage library operations.

8. Copyright Concerns

Because Generative AI tools are often trained on copyrighted materials without the original creators' consent, the output may be suspect on copyright grounds. BDL Employees must use professional judgment to avoid using AI-modified content that may be unintentionally copyright-infringing and outside the boundaries of Fair Use.

9. Potential Biases

AI-generated or AI-modified content may contain inaccuracies, biases, stereotypes, or omissions. BDL Employees using AI tools must exercise professional judgment and review outputs for fairness, accuracy, inclusiveness, and alignment with the library's values.

10. Training

Newly hired BDL Employees will undergo training on this policy and AI tools in general. BDL will periodically conduct training for all staff as a refresher.