

# Responsible use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) - Guide

## IMPORTANT

The following City Standard GenAI tool has been approved for City use: Copilot (Web) – available to all City Employees

Any request to use a non-City standard Gen AI tool MUST be submitted through a Technology Solutions request via your Department's Technology Investment Lead.

Prior to using any GenAI tool it is important to read and understand this guide. You are also encouraged to explore the learning paths on the Create Responsibly with GenAI Learning Series page. If you are unclear of your roles and responsibilities when using these tools, please contact your manager to ensure you are compliant with all City policies and procedures.

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## Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to educate City employees in making informed decisions when using GenAI tools to support their work.

**Employees are responsible** for ensuring they adhere to all [City policies](#) and legislation when performing all work-related activities.

As GenAI is a rapidly evolving field, these guidelines are interim and subject to revisions or replacement by future policies or standards as more knowledge about GenAI, its technological advancements, and its integration into our organization is discovered.

*Note: Departmental leadership teams may choose to prescribe additional guidance and restrictions regarding how their employees use GenAI to support their work.*

## ^ Definitions

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is technology that enables machines to process and synthesize complex information and accomplish tasks that are traditionally difficult for computers but straightforward for humans. AI has become more powerful and accessible due to advancements in computing, algorithms, and data. AI can perform complex tasks, such as recognizing images, understanding languages or playing games.

**Generative AI (GenAI)** is a type of AI that can create realistic and diverse content, such as text, images, audio or video (popular examples include ChatGPT, Copilot, Bard, DALL-E). Generative AI uses deep neural networks (DNNs) to learn patterns from data, and generative adversarial networks (GANs) to generate the unique output. Generative AI is used for various purposes, such as content creation, data augmentation, image synthesis, text summarization, style transfer and more.

## ^ Overview

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools are constantly evolving in today's rapid technological environment. GenAI

### **Common challenges**

is a type of AI that can create realistic and diverse content, such as text, images, audio or video. GenAI poses **challenges and risks**, such as ethical, privacy, social, legal and technology security implications.

Therefore, it is important to understand the principles, methods and limitations of GenAI, as well as its potential. GenAI, can also help staff solve problems, enhance productivity, improve quality of life and create new opportunities.

Please visit the [Artificial Intelligence](#) SharePoint page for more information



- **Ethical:** Using GenAI for malicious purposes might lead to violations of moral principles, human and organizational values.
- **Decision-making:** Using GenAI without adequate oversight, transparency and explainability causes errors, biases and unfair outcomes.
  - **Note:** GenAI **must NOT** be used to make any decisions, especially those decisions pertaining to services or funding.
- **Social:** Using GenAI to influence or replace human interactions or to create/exacerbate social inequities. Generative AI tools can create realistic and convincing content that may be hard to distinguish from human-generated content. This poses a challenge for ensuring the authenticity, accuracy and accountability of the information that is shared and consumed online.

### **Common risks**

- **Privacy:** Using GenAI to collect, analyze or share information about individuals or groups without proper consent, security or accountability compromises privacy and data protection.
- **Legal:** Using GenAI in ways that are illegal or that pose challenges for legal responsibility, liability or enforcement presents the risk of violating or undermining existing laws, regulations or rights.

- **Technology Security:** There is always a risk of data loss for any information input into or available to the GenAI and other technology tools.

## ^ Mitigating risks of using GenAI tools

Before using GenAI tools, City employees must understand the benefits, risks and how they can use generative AI tools to support their work responsibly.

Generative AI tools can generate inaccurate content, amplify biases and violate intellectual property, privacy and other laws. When City employees use these tools, they must protect personal information and sensitive data.

To assist in mitigating risks associated with the use of these tools, it is recommended that employees restrict their use to activities where they can manage the risks effectively. AI risks should be included in each department's risk register and reviewed annually.

### **Questions to ask yourself**

- Is there an existing process, procedure or tool that I should be using instead of GenAI?
- Have I ensured that there will be human oversight over the GenAI output?
- Have I ensured that biases in the GenAI tool's outputs have been identified and mitigated?
- Have I clearly documented and disclosed the use of GenAI to all stakeholders, and am I prepared to provide explanations for its use in my work?
- Am I fully certain that no sensitive, confidential or personal data is at risk of being compromised?

- Have I consulted with legal or policy experts regarding regulatory implications?
- Am I prepared to take full responsibility for use of the GenAI tool's output?

*Note: these questions are intended to help assist you in determining the level of risks. This list is not comprehensive, and employees are personally responsible for assessing the risk of using GenAI to assist with a task or function.*

## ^ Guiding principles

To maintain public trust and ensure the responsible use of GenAI tools, staff must align with the following five principles:

### 1 - Ensure data security

*Ensure that the information you provide, and the content produced from these tools are compliant with all City policies and other data handling/protection regulations or provincial and federal best practice guidance. See [Additional Resources](#) section below for more information.*

- To reduce the risk of [data loss](#), do not use data classified as internal or confidential. Only provide information (e.g. text, photos, videos or voice recording) that is classified as public in these AI tools. Refer to the [Data Security Classification and Handling Policy](#) for more information about classifying data.
- Personal Information (including images and videos) must not be provided to GenAI tools. Use of personal information for City business must be in accordance with the relevant privacy legislation (i.e., MFIPPA, PHIPA, PIPEDA) and the City's [Privacy Policy](#). City staff must obtain explicit, written consent to use personal information for a purpose other than that for which it was collected.
- Commercially confidential information can only be used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contractual agreement in place.

### 2 - Be accountable and transparent

*Take responsibility for the content generated by these tools. It is your responsibility to verify and ensure the validity of outputs and that they are factual, legal, ethical and compliant with City policies and procedures. Be open about the use of these tools in interactions with the public. This transparency builds trust and confidence in government use of data-enhanced technologies and encourages dialogue between technology users and those affected by it.*

- Always include plain language notifications to the public and/or staff when GenAI is being used in any part of a process/activity.
- Always verify information generated by GenAI tools
- Always be transparent about the use and workings of GenAI tools.
- Decisions must be made with a human-centric approach. GenAI must not be used to automate decision-making. GenAI may be used to support research for human decision-making with meaningful explanations and documentation.
- Verify, explain and document the use and outcome of GenAI tools to ensure fairness and non-discrimination.
- State when GenAI is used and cite its usage in product creation and decision-making. Refer to the [Accountability and transparency SharePoint page](#), and the City's [Accountability framework](#) and [Accountability and Transparency Policy](#).
- Always cite the GenAI tool used as the source of any content and the original source(s) that the GenAI tool pulled the information from.
- Document the rationale for using the chosen GenAI tool as a source. This involves documenting any relevant aspects of using GenAI as Official Business Records (OBRs). Such aspects may include: the functional uses of the GenAI tool involved (editing, summarizing, analyzing data, etc.), the input data, any prompts used, generated contents or outputs and any changes made to the outputs.
- Document GenAI output as OBRs in accordance with the City's [Record Management Policy](#).

### **3 - Foster equity and inclusiveness**

*Users must ensure the content created by GenAI tools is fair, respectful, does not include or amplify any biases and that it complies with all equity policies, guidelines, legislation and standards.*

- Seek to understand how the GenAI tool formulated the response and be mindful that GenAI responses have the potential for bias. GenAI tools results are based on patterns and relationships processed and synthesized from large

datasets derived from existing human knowledge and AI generated information. These large data sets may contain errors, and are biased across race, sex, gender identity, disability and many other factors.

- Review all content generated by GenAI to ensure it aligns with City of Ottawa values and ethics. This includes assessing for biases or stereotypical associations and ensuring the [City's inclusive communications guidelines](#) are followed.
- Formulate effective prompts that provide holistic perspectives and minimize biases. Examples of elements to include in effective prompts include using open-ended questions, being specific, using constraints and providing context and background.
- Ensure that any decisions made with research support from GenAI tools are equitable and identify/reverse adverse impacts or barriers to equity-denied groups.
- Allocate opportunities, resources and information in ways that are equitable to all users.
- Visit [CSSD Gender & Race Equ, Incl, Ind Rel & Soc Dev Services - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#) to learn more about Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development.
- Visit [Corporate Accessibility Office - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#) to learn more about Corporate Accessibility.

## 4 - Validity, trust and reliability

*Users must consult trustworthy sources to confirm that the facts and details in the AI generated content are accurate and trustworthy. Trustworthy sources include official City documents and peer-reviewed journals. Consult your supervisor for other trustworthy sources. It is imperative the City ensures AI system results are accurate and consistent to increase trustworthiness.*

- Review and fact-check all outputs you receive from GenAI.
- Take all necessary actions to ensure the City maintains trust with its residents and partners by providing accurate information.
- Always engage with the appropriate City department to validate information where applicable.

## 5 - Human-centric

*City employees must maintain human oversight to ensure the AI-generated outputs meet ethical, privacy, policy and legislation standards. Human centric means focusing on human beings and their values, thoughts and experience as the key entity in the*

world.

- City employees are relied upon and trusted to use GenAI tools with due consideration, and to take precautions to avoid any negative impacts to the City and its residents.
- As stewards of City assets and property used to serve the public, City employees are expected to use GenAI tools responsibly, ethically, respectfully and in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct.
- The use of Generative AI (and all AI) must support the work of our workforce to create strong, caring, safe and inclusive communities.

*These principles are aligned with the those in [Government of Canada's Guide on the use of Generative AI](#) for Federal Institutions but tailored to our organization's specific needs and context.*

## ^ Sample use cases

GenAI can support your work by creating original content such as text, images or code. GenAI tools have been trained on large volumes of data, including publicly available data from the Internet. Based on the training data, these models generate content that is statistically likely in response to a prompt (a set of instructions). You can improve the GenAI tool's response by refining your prompt or asking the tool follow-up questions. Once you receive the best response from the GenAI tool it's up to you to then verify, fact check and research that response to ensure it aligns with the principles, best practices and suggestions outlined in this guide.

Here are some examples of ways you can use GenAI to support your work responsibly:

Exploring and asking questions about new concepts	Building structured information from informal summaries	Feedback on written work
GenAI can provide summaries and explanations of various concepts, which	With GenAI, you can informally describe a problem, situation or task you've been faced with, and	GenAI can be used to provide feedback on document drafts, enhancing clarity and

Exploring and asking questions about new concepts	Building structured information from informal summaries	Feedback on written work
<p>can be used by employees as a starting place.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A team lead in Public Works heard about Agile project management from a friend in another department. The team lead decides to use a GenAI tool. They describe to the tool: what the team does, the problems they're facing and asks about how Agile could help. After some back-and-forth, the team lead sees some areas that Agile could help out in and begins to explore City resources for official training.</p>	<p>have it generate structured text like to-do lists to help you organize your work.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Throughout the day, an assistant receives a few dense messages from their busy boss about various tasks that need to be taken care of for an event tomorrow. The assistant prefers structured to-do lists, so after asking their boss if it would be alright to do so, the assistant uses GenAI to generate a comprehensive to-do list on everything that needs to be done using the messages that were sent to them.</p>	<p>coherence before they are reviewed by colleagues.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> An analyst has written a presentation on a new service that they have been researching. For the audience it will be the first time they've heard of the service. The analyst provides the presentation to the GenAI tool, asks it to act as if it doesn't have any experience with the service and to provide feedback based on what is and isn't clear. The analyst uses the feedback as inspiration to make some wording changes for clarity.</p>

Additional use-cases and more information can be found on the [Generative AI Prompting and Use-Case](#) page.

## ^ Use cases to avoid

Here are some examples of using GenAI that may be irresponsible or risky:

Misrepresentation of AI involvement	Over-reliance on AI for public communications	Inputting raw data into GenAI for analysis or summarization
Analysis or reporting taken directly from a GenAI tool must never be	Using GenAI without adequate human oversight and review	It is unsafe to use GenAI to do any processing on data that contains sensitive or confidential

Misrepresentation of AI involvement	Over-reliance on AI for public communications	Inputting raw data into GenAI for analysis or summarization
<p>presented as human analysis.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Without indicating the use of AI, an analyst submits to the leadership team a report on traffic congestion solutions that was based largely on content output from a GenAI tool. Some initial decisions are made, but later questions arise about the origin and reliability of the data. The investigation afterwards determines that the report contained made-up information.</p>	<p>to write communications can cause harm to the public.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> During a severe weather event, a staff member hastily uses GenAI to create a communication updating the public on the status of City crews. But the lack of context-specific review results in unclear instructions to the public, causing confusion.</p>	<p>information. GenAI tools cannot be relied on to generate output that does not contain traces of the sensitive data from the input.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A staff member working on a homelessness study uses GenAI to summarize the results survey data for briefing an external partner of the City. In the output, the staff member doesn't catch a personal identifier that was copy-and-pasted over, inadvertently exposing personal details of vulnerable individuals.</p>

## ^ Additional resources

## ^ Key contacts and more information

Check out the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) - Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence \(GenAI\)\\_\(sharepoint.com\)](#) for answers to commonly asked questions.

Select the contact that best matches the nature of your inquiry:

- Questions about GenAI tools or how to use them
  - Visit the [Artificial Intelligence SharePoint Page](#) on the [Self-Service Automation and AI SharePoint Site](#)
- Questions about Access to Information and Protection of Privacy
  - Visit the [Access to information and Protection of Privacy SharePoint Site](#) or email [privacy-vieprivee@ottawa.ca](mailto:privacy-vieprivee@ottawa.ca) or email [mfippa@ottawa.ca](mailto:mfippa@ottawa.ca)
- Questions about accessibility
  - Visit the [Corporate Accessibility Office SharePoint Site](#) or email [accessibilityoffice@ottawa.ca](mailto:accessibilityoffice@ottawa.ca)
- Questions related to workplace equity, inclusion and belonging
  - Visit the [Workplace Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Branch \(formerly Equity Secretariat\)\\_\(sharepoint.com\)](#) or submit [CSSD Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development Intake Form](#)
- Questions about impacts to employees or human resources
  - Visit the [Human Resources SharePoint Site](#) or email [hrrservicecentre@ottawa.ca](mailto:hrrservicecentre@ottawa.ca)

- Questions about records or information management
  - Visit the [Information Management SharePoint Site](#)
- Questions about media, public information or external communications on a corporate level
  - Visit the [Public Information and Media Relations SharePoint site](#) or email [publicinformation@ottawa.ca](mailto:publicinformation@ottawa.ca).

## ^ **Submit feedback**

Have ideas for the next version of the Responsible Use of GenAI guide? Submit your feedback and ideas to the form below.

**This guide was developed in partnership with the following stakeholders**

- City Manager's Office - Experience Design and Innovation; Public Information and Media Relations
- Finance and Corporate Services - Business and Technical Support Services; Human Resources - Programs and Planning
- Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development Services
- Information Technology Services
- Legal Services - Ethics Team
- Office of the City Clerk – Access to Information and Privacy Office; Corporate Accessibility Office; Information Management; and Municipal Elections and French Language Services