Responsible and ethical use of generative AI

1. Introduction

Welcome to our online tutorial on the ethical and responsible use of Generative AI tools.

Generative AI tools can be effective tools for learning but to ensure they are enhancing learning; they need to be used in a responsible and ethical way.

Using this tutorial

Click on the tabs to look at each individual topic, then use the next button at the bottom right of the screen to navigate to the quiz!

Learning outcomes

By the end of this tutorial you should know how to use Generative AI tools in a more ethical and responsible way.

2. Overreliance

Ensure you are using generative AI tools to enhance your learning. Dependency on generative AI tools can create a number of problems:

1. **Stunted Problem-Solving Skills:** Relying heavily on generative AI tools can impede the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When faced with challenges or assignments, instead of engaging in thoughtful analysis and creative problem-solving, you might default to using generative AI tools for quick solutions. Over time, this can lead to a reliance on external tools rather than your own cognitive abilities.

2. **Reduced Creativity:** Creativity is an essential aspect of academic work, whether it's writing essays, conducting research, or presenting ideas. Over-dependence on generative AI tools can limit your creativity by narrowing your thinking to the patterns and structures generated by the tool. This can inhibit your ability to come up with innovative solutions or original ideas.

3. **Risk of Inaccuracy:** Generative AI tools, while powerful, are not infallible. They may produce inaccurate or incomplete results, especially if they're not appropriately trained or if the input data is flawed. Relying solely on AI-generated content without verifying its accuracy can lead to errors in your work and undermine your academic credibility.

4. **Loss of Ownership:** When you rely heavily on generative AI tools to generate content, there's a risk of losing ownership and authorship over your work. Academic integrity requires that you take responsibility for the ideas and arguments you present. If you rely too much on AI-generated content, it can blur the lines between your original work and content generated by machines.

5. **Limited Adaptability:** Over-reliance on generative AI tools can make you less adaptable to situations where those tools are not available or appropriate. In academic or professional settings where generative AI tools may not be accessible or allowed, you may struggle to perform tasks or solve problems effectively if you've become overly dependent on them.

To mitigate the risks of dependency on generative AI tools, it's important to strike a balance between using these tools as aids and developing your own cognitive skills. Use generative AI tools to augment your work, but also invest time in honing your critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative abilities independently. Additionally, always verify the output of generative AI tools and ensure that you maintain ownership and integrity in your academic work.

3. Bias

Generative AI tools can exhibit bias in their responses, often generating stereotypical or prejudiced content. This is because they are trained on large datasets that may contain biased information. Despite safeguards put in place to prevent this, these tools can sometimes produce sexist, racist, or homophobic content. Be aware of this and critically evaluate any generated content.

4. Fact Check

Generative AI tools can sometimes generate information that is incorrect, or "hallucinate". This is because it is just predicting the next likely word in a sequence, it doesn't have any knowledge. Always "fact check" generated information for accuracy with a trusted source of information, such as reputable websites, Library Search or Library Databases. Watch the following video for more information on the OU online library.

https://youtu.be/cHo3qOjsnEo

5. Transparency

If you're using Generative AI for academic work, you should always acknowledge when, where and how you've used these tools:

- Give credit to any AI generated content in your work.

- Reference it, as you would any other source.

Copyright

Any information you enter into a Generative AI tool could be used to train the tool and could become public. Make sure you don't enter any sensitive or copyright protected information, including module materials or assignment questions.

Plagiarism

Be aware of what might be considered plagiarism. Please refer to The Open University's guidance on [Generative AI for students](#) for further information (you will need to have an Open University login to access this).

For more information on Generative AI, Referencing, Plagiarism and Copyright, you may like to complete the next activity in the Generative AI pathway.

6. Quiz

Question 1 of 3

Which of these would be considered plagiarism?

1. Entering an assignment question into a generative AI tool and copying and pasting the response into your assignment
2. Using a Generative AI tool to generate inital ideas on an assignment and to help with structure, adapted by yourself, based on your own understanding of the topic.

Question 1 Feedback for Option 1

True. Not only is this plagiarism, but this is also a breach of copyright. Module material should not be entered into generative AI tools, including assignment questions.

Question 1 Feedback for Option 2

False. You can use Generative AI tools to bounce idea off but remember to acknowledge your use of these tools.

Question 2 of 3

Which practice would be considered responsible use of generative AI tools?

1. Acknowledging where and why you've used generative AI tools in your studies
2. Using Generative AI tools to rewrite paragraphs of your assignment.

Question 2 Feedback for Option 1

True. You should always acknowledge your use of generative AI tools and reference, as you would any other resource.

Question 2 Feedback for Option 2

False. You should never copy and paste from generative AI tools into your assignments.

Question 3 of 3

Which of these would be considered a responsible use of generative AI tools?

Click all that apply.

1. Relying on generative AI to complete assignments.
2. Fact checking any output from generative AI tools using reputable sources of information, such as Library Search or Library databases.
3. Critically evaluating output from generative AI to check for bias.

Question 3 Feedback for Option 1

Wrong! This would be considered plagiarism, as it is not your own work.

Question 3 Feedback for Option 2

Correct! You should always fact check any output created from Generative AI tools.

Question 3 Feedback for Option 3

Correct! You should always check outputs from generative AI tools for bias.