AI Usage Policy

Microsoft Resource Guide

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What Is an AI Usage Policy?

An AI Usage Policy is a document that outlines the rules and principles for using artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in an ethical and responsible way within an organization. It is also called an AI Acceptable Use Policy.

Additionally, a policy document helps your nonprofit follow existing legal and regulatory standards related to artificial intelligence, protects your nonprofit's data, and prevents bias and discrimination.

Regardless of your nonprofit's stance on AI, it is essential to develop, communicate, and implement a clear, practical policy so employees know what you expect from them regarding the changing technology.

In order to develop an AI policy, you will need to evaluate AI needs and objectives within your nonprofit, establish a governance framework, train employees, monitor the performance of AI technologies, and finally, conduct regular reviews of your policy document.

Note: This guide is focused on generative AI solutions as these are currently the most common AI technologies used by nonprofits. If your organization uses other kinds of AI you will need to adjust the policy document according to the specific use cases and challenges the technology poses.

Why Create an AI Usage Policy?

Generative AI and its applications in the nonprofit sector can be powerful tools for organizations, but they also pose various challenges. Clear guides and policies help both staff and external vendors to follow your organization's core values, ethics, and laws when using AI, and they increase the chances that they will use such technologies safely and securely.

Nonprofit organizations need to guide staff, volunteers, contractors, and external stakeholders on how to use these technologies.

These are the main benefits of using a generative AI policy document:

- **Ensure compliance and avoid legal and regulatory issues:** As AI laws and regulations keep changing, you'll need to ensure that your nonprofit follows them. You will also need to comply with laws related to data privacy, intellectual property rights, and consumer protection.
- **Establish trust:** Organizations using AI systems to generate content are accountable for its quality and accuracy. An AI policy helps set standards and guidelines to ensure that generated content is reliable and transparent, which is essential to keeping the trust of donors and other stakeholders.
- **Protect sensitive data:** Generative AI tools learn from the data you enter into their system, which means that sensitive or proprietary data can be accessed by the AI tool. A policy can mitigate this risk by setting strict data protection protocols and educating staff on what data is safe to share.
- **Avoid biased or discriminatory output:** Generative AI models reflect the characteristics of their training data, which means that if this data is biased, your output is likely to be as well. Acceptable use policies include measures to ensure that all AI-generated output is carefully checked to avoid discrimination and bias.
- **Encourage a culture of AI awareness:** By setting clear expectations and guidelines, employees are made aware of the risks and motivated to use AI tools responsibly.

Factors to Consider

To create a policy for generative AI tools, nonprofit organizations need more than just knowledge of the technology and its possibilities. They also need to create a framework that defines operational limits and protections required when using these technologies.

Here are a few important factors to consider when creating a policy document for generative AI tools.

Determine the Users of AI

Before creating the policy, consider who will be using AI. Is it the entire team, a single department, or a few specific people? You will then be able to understand the needs of the team and various use cases for generative AI. Once you have a clear understanding of who is using AI, and for what purpose, you can clearly define the scope of the policy.

Balance Innovation with Risk Management

Striking a balance between using innovative AI technologies and managing associated risks is crucial. Artificial intelligence and machine learning models can offer nonprofits significant advantages, but they can also pose a threat to security, privacy, and fairness. Generative AI can create highly realistic and convincing content that is misleading or harmful. Consider how you can responsibly promote AI usage and avoid such occurrences. You should focus on risk identification and mitigation strategies and regularly monitor the AI technology used.

Tip: One way to do this is to document use cases of tasks that are low-risk and high-risk and those that should be completely avoided so employees are aware of when to use AI. You should also list all the licensed AI tools approved for use.

Check for Copyright

Generative AI tools have been trained using information from the Internet. There are growing concerns that some of this information may be copyrighted or used without the owner's consent. It is important to be aware of this fact while using such technologies. In the case of generative imaging models, evidence has been presented that some of the platforms may not recognize, or may even ignore, rules surrounding Creative Commons licensing. Make sure you do not inadvertently publish copyrighted information and put in place measures to mitigate such an occurrence.

Ensure Data Privacy and Security

A nonprofit's AI policy should address data privacy and security concerns, ensuring that personal data and sensitive information are handled securely. This includes defining procedures for data anonymization, consent, access controls, and compliance with applicable data protection regulations. Provide training sessions and workshops for employees on topics such as data privacy, security, and ethical use of AI to ensure that staff members are aware of safe practices.

Tip: Consider using enterprise-level generative AI accounts that let nonprofits control important privacy and information-sharing settings.

View the Policy as a Working Document

Given the rapid pace of AI evolution, it's important to regularly review and update your nonprofit's AI policy. Monitor changes in technology, regulations, and societal norms and update your policy accordingly. You may also want to incorporate feedback from employees and other stakeholders. View your policy as a working document that is reflective of how your nonprofit currently functions and its goals for the future. It should serve as a guide for your team.

Transparency and Accountability

Stakeholders, including employees, beneficiaries, and partners, should understand how your company uses AI, what data it is processing, and how decisions are made. Set out clear guidelines on transparency and establish an accountability framework for any issues arising from AI applications. Providing comprehensive knowledge about AI and its ethical implications can also help foster a culture of transparency.

Impact on Staff

Be transparent with staff about introducing AI tools and provide appropriate training and support to help everyone adapt to changes. Where necessary, consider consulting with experts in the area of technology and organizational ethics to further discuss the consequences of introducing AI tools into your workplace.

Social Impact

AI has had a significant impact on society, influencing public opinion and affecting decision-making processes. An AI policy should take this into account and consider the broader societal implications of your AI systems. This can involve engaging in public discourse, collaborating with external stakeholders, and taking responsibility for the social consequences of AI-generated content.

EXAMPLES OF AI USAGE POLICIES

TechSoup AI Usage Policy:
Download the policy here (PDF)

Microsoft AI Tools and Resources:
Responsible AI Tools and Practices

AI USAGE POLICY TEMPLATE

How to Use the Template

You will need to customize this template in order to use it for your organization. We have included spaces for you to enter your organization's name, contact details, and any other customizable information.

Feel free to include additional principles or utilization guidelines or remove those that are not relevant to your work.

Click here to download the template and create your own AI Usage Policy.

Note: This guide was produced with the assistance of generative AI (Microsoft Copilot).

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