Generative AI Guidelines for TechSoup Team

This guide was originally created as a resource for Quad members only. Quad is TechSoup's membership community where nonprofits can connect with tech experts and each other to find the deeper support they need. We're able to share this with the wider public thanks to a generous grant from Microsoft.

About this document. This document is a shared copy of TechSoup generative AI guidelines. This may evolve. To use this document, simply copy into your own drive and edit to fit your organization. Feedback on this document? We'd love to hear it. Please share in the [Quad thread](#).

The information in these Guidelines does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available are for general informational purposes only.

Introduction

Generative AI is a rapidly developing technology that is becoming increasingly accessible to organizations of all sizes. These tools can be used to generate text, images, code snippets and other assets, and they have the potential to revolutionize the way we work.

However, generative AI also raises a number of ethical and legal concerns. For example, there is a risk that generative AI could be used to generate false or misleading content, or to discriminate against certain groups of people.

To help ensure that generative AI is used responsibly, TechSoup has developed these guidelines. These guidelines are designed to help TechSoup employees and partners use generative AI tools in a way that is ethical, legal, and responsible.

The guidelines cover a number of topics, including:
- Disclosing the use of generative AI.
- Protecting proprietary information.
- Using AI accounts for work purposes only.
- Protecting the data of users.
- Sharing useful prompts with colleagues.
- Sharing tips, tricks, and uses with the community.
- Identifying and sharing the limits of generative AI.
- Check for IP and copyright violations. ([see Appendix](#))
- Apply an ethical framework.

By following these guidelines, TechSoup employees and partners can help to ensure that generative AI is used in a way that benefits the organization and the community.

Guiding Principles

These principles should guide the way you use Generative AI for work. We will edit and add to these principles as we get questions, the technology changes, or new needs arise. Changes will be noted in the change log at the top of this document.

Principle 1: Disclose use of generative AI.

TechSoup should disclose its use of generative AI in all communications, including in its privacy policy and terms of service. This will help to ensure that users are aware of the fact that TechSoup is using generative AI, and that they can make informed decisions about whether or not to use TechSoup's services.

Principle 2: Do not share proprietary information.

TechSoup should not share proprietary information about its projects or products with generative AI tools. This includes information that is confidential, trade secret, or otherwise protected by law. Sharing this type of information could give competitors an unfair advantage, or could harm TechSoup's business interests.

Principle 3: Use AI accounts for work purposes only.

TechSoup employees should use their AI accounts for work purposes only. This means that they should not use their accounts for personal or private purposes. This will help to ensure that TechSoup's AI accounts are used for legitimate business purposes, and that they are not used to violate the privacy of others.

Principle 4: Protect the data of users.

TechSoup should protect the data of its users, including members, staff, board, volunteers, and contractors. This means that TechSoup should not collect or use personally identifiable information about users without their consent. TechSoup should also take steps to secure the data of users from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.

Principle 5: Share useful prompts with colleagues.

TechSoup employees should share useful prompts with their colleagues across the organization. This will help to ensure that everyone is aware of the best ways to use generative AI tools, and that they are able to collaborate on projects and ideas.

Principle 6: Share tips, tricks, and uses with the community.

TechSoup should share tips, tricks, and uses for generative AI tools with the community at large. This will help to promote the responsible use of generative AI, and to educate others about the potential benefits and risks of this technology.

Principle 7: Identify and share the limits of generative AI.

TechSoup should identify and share the limits of generative AI with its colleagues and the community. This includes the fact that generative AI tools are not perfect, and that they can sometimes produce inaccurate or biased results. It is important to be aware of these limitations in order to use generative AI tools responsibly.

Principle 8: Check for IP and copyright violations.

TechSoup employees should check the content produced by generative AI tools for any potential violations of IP or copyright law (see Appendix). This includes checking for content that is copied from other sources, or that uses trademarked or copyrighted images or text.

Principle 9: Apply an Ethical Framework

Ensure that the development, deployment and use of AI systems meets the seven key requirements for Trustworthy AI: (1) human agency and oversight, (2) technical robustness and safety, (3) privacy and data governance, (4) transparency, (5) diversity, non-discrimination and fairness, (6) environmental and societal well-being and (7) accountability.

Appendix

Additional Reading

How WIRED Will Use Generative AI Tools

Google AI Principles

How Good Are Google's New AI Ethics Principles?

Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI - European Commission

OECD's live repository of AI strategies & policies

Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (Unesco)

[AI systems compliance: other guides, tools and best practices](#) (CNIL)

[Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence and Data Protection](#) (Council of Europe)

How to Check for Copyright infringement

Essentially every creative work (like an article, photograph, painting, or song) is protected by copyright law as soon as the work is made. A common misconception is that giving credit to the creator of the work or adding a disclaimer like "I don't own the rights" absolves you of any potential liability. It does not.

Some works are created to be freely shared without restrictions, and thus are in the public domain as opposed to copyrighted. Others have a Creative Commons license, meaning there are some small conditions. Others have had their copyright protection period expire. Here are some guidelines to help you avoid copyright infringement.

Assume that a work is copyrighted and therefore fully restricted unless it's clearly in the public domain or has a Creative Commons license. In Google Images, you can filter for the latter: Tools>Usage Rights>Creative Commons.
- Make sure to click "License Details" on the picture to see the exact rights being granted to you and your obligations, such as providing the name of the creator of the work whenever using the image (attribution).
- If you already have a particular image you're unsure about, reverse Google image search it and check for a Creative Commons license or other information indicating permission to use.
    1. Right click the image and select "copy image address."
    2. Go to https://images.google.com/
    3. Make sure to click on the picture of a camera, between the microphone and magnifying glass and then paste the image address. You can also upload the photo instead.
- Two great resources for free to use works are Unsplash.com and Getty Search Gateway
- Signs that a work is protected by copyright (most useful for images):
    - It features a copyright symbol: ©
    - The caption typically provides information about the owner
    - It features a watermark, typically indicating the creator of the work

Never remove a watermark from someone else's work!

If you want to use a work you know or think could be copyrighted, *always ask for permission first*. Written works such as articles should always have listed authors, whereas an image's watermark, for example, should communicate who the owner is. **Get this permission in written form in case you ever need to provide proof.**

What about image service subscriptions, e.g. Canto?
The only rights we have are the ones granted to us in the Terms of Service, which make clear that we do not own any images except the ones we create. (https://www.canto.com/americas/).

Though not a copyright issue, if we take a picture of a child and want to use the image, we should always secure parental consent first.

Finally, many questions of copyright duration are complex. We recommend checking out The Copyright Genie, a helpful tool for determining whether a work is covered by U.S. copyright: https://librarycopyright.net/resources/genie/index.php.

Generative AI Notification

This was written with support from Bard.