Being responsible users of AI

AI tools offer us a lot of opportunities and some substantial risks too. We can manage these risks though by changing the way we use AI tools and systems. Here we have advice on how to use AI responsibly, so that you can experience the benefits of these tools safely.

Use AI as your assistant

It's important to use AI to support you, not take over your work, because AI can make us better at what we do, but it doesn't create or approach tasks in the same way humans do. When we work together with AI tools, we can combine their strengths with our own creativity and judgment to achieve the best results. This way, we stay in control and make sure the things we create are meaningful and accurate.

Let's say you have a big essay to write for your class, and you're feeling a bit overwhelmed by the topic. Instead of starting the research and writing process yourself, you decide to use an AI tool to handle the entire thing. You type in the essay prompt, and within minutes, the AI generates a complete essay for you. It might seem like a lifesaver, especially if you're short on time or struggling with the topic.

However, because the AI tool is doing all the work, you haven't spent any time understanding the material or forming your own ideas. The essay might be well-written, but it lacks your personal voice and insight. You also don't know if the AI has used accurate information or if it has included details that your teacher would expect you to discuss.

When you submit the AI-generated essay, you might get a decent grade or you might have submitted something worth no marks at all. Either way you haven't actually learned anything. Worse, if your teacher asks you to explain your thoughts or expand on certain points, you could struggle to respond because you didn't engage with the content yourself. Over time, relying too much on AI tools in this way can make it harder for you to develop your own writing and critical thinking skills, which are essential for success in college and beyond.

Using AI as a tool to help with ideas, research, or proofreading can be really helpful but make sure you're the one actively learning and shaping your work.

Know when AI can be used

Some qualifications allow the use of AI tools, but it is crucial to understand the rules. For example, you may be allowed to use AI to help with tasks like summarising complex ideas, generating visuals, or even improving your writing. Always ensure that any content generated using AI is properly referenced and remember that AI-generated content alone cannot earn your marks.

Look for bias

We might know how bias can enter the model through the training data, development decisions and user feedback.

As users of AI systems and tools we need to check the outputs of the tools we use for bias:

- **Writing an Essay:** If you use AI to help you write an essay or come up with ideas, make sure the information it gives you is fair to all sides. For example, if the AI suggests a point of view, check that it isn't unfairly favouring one group of people or one side of history.

- **Researching for a Project:** When you use AI to find information for a project, look at whether the AI is showing you different viewpoints. If it only gives you information from one perspective, you should look for other sources to make sure you're getting a full picture.

- **Creating Visual Presentations:** If you use AI to help design slides or choose images for a presentation, check to make sure the images are fair and include different types of people. For example, if the AI suggests pictures of leaders, make sure it's not just showing one gender or one type of person.

Protect your (and others) data privacy

AI tools often learn and improve by using the information that people put into them. This means that when you type something into an AI tool, like a chatbot, what you write could be saved and used to help train the AI to get better at answering questions in the future.

However, it's important to remember that once your data is used to train the AI, that information becomes a part of how the AI works. This makes it very hard, or even impossible, to remove specific pieces of data from the AI after it's been trained.

That's why you need to be careful about what kind of information you put into any AI system.

Be careful about sharing your own personal information:

Avoid putting things like your full name, address, phone number, or other private details into AI tools. Once the AI model learns from it, you probably won't be able to get that information back or delete it.

Be extra careful about other people's personal information:

If you are thinking of putting someone else's personal details into an AI tool, you should always ask them first and gain consent. It's important to respect their privacy and make sure they're okay with their information being used.

By thinking carefully about what you share, you can help keep your own and others' information safe when using AI tools.

How do you know if your inputs will be used to train an AI model?

You can check the terms and conditions of an AI tool to see if they use what you type or upload to train their models.

Sometimes, you might be able to choose whether you want your inputs used this way. Look in the terms and conditions or the settings of your account to find out.

Some services let users with paid accounts opt out of AI training as a special benefit. This means that if you use the tool for free, you might be "paying" with your data instead of money. Think about what you're okay with before deciding and still be careful about inputting any personal data.

Fact check

Generative AI tools can sometimes output information that sounds correct but is actually wrong. This mistake is called a "hallucination." These tools can also get confused and give the wrong answers, especially if we don't give them enough details or clear instructions.

As someone using these tools, it's important to check if the AI's answers are correct. This might mean doing some extra research to make sure the information is right, or asking a teacher or someone who knows a lot about the topic to help you verify the answers.

Acknowledging use of AI

As AI technology becomes more and more advanced it's getting harder to tell when AI has been used.

To be responsible users of AI, it's important to be honest about when and how you've used AI tools in your work. For example, if you used AI to help you write a report or create a piece of art, you should let people know.

Referencing AI

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has created a **"AI and Assessment: A Quick Guide for Students"** poster, which provides helpful guidance and information. If you're allowed to use AI tools, make sure to follow the referencing guidelines. These may include naming the tool, noting the date you used it, explaining how it helped, and saving a screenshot of the prompts and answers. Being transparent ensures others can see how AI contributed to your work.

When you submit an assessment, you will likely need to sign a declaration confirming that the work is your own. If you've used AI, make sure you've properly referenced everything before signing.

Misusing AI is cheating

If you misuse AI by submitting work that is not your own, this is considered cheating. If you're caught, you could lose your marks for that assessment, or in more serious cases, be disqualified from the subject altogether. It's important to know and follow the rules, and always ensure that the work you submit is truly your own.

Your school or college might have specific rules about how to acknowledge the use of AI in your work, so make sure to follow those guidelines.

Key Points

- Consider AI tools as helpful assistants for your work and not as a way to avoid doing the work yourself. This is the more effective way to use these tools too – they are great helpers but poor replacements for human creativity and intelligence.
- Being responsible means checking the AI tools outputs, whether this is recommendations made or content generated.
- Remember to check for potential biases and for accuracy - actively include a wide range of perspectives in your work.
- Avoid putting any personal information into AI tools and respect other's privacy by asking for consent before putting anyone else's information in too.
- Be transparent about when and how AI has been used in your work. Follow institutional rules and be honest when signing any declaration about the originality of your submission.