
January 26, 2026

TO: RAILS Board Consortia Committee
FROM: Anne Slaughter, Director of Technology Services
SUBJECT: Consortia and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Interest in a discussion of how consortia are using or planning to use AI tools emerged as a timely topic from this committee's discussion of priorities. We invite you to share experiences, resources, and questions your organizations have encountered. Areas of discussion could include the development of AI ethics policies, best practices for its use in cataloging and other workflows, AI tools in vendor products, member library adoption, or anywhere else you're seeing impacts. Some additional resources are included below as background.

RAILS AI Activities

RAILS is preparing for an internal staff pilot test of Copilot, Microsoft's embedded AI tool, guided by the attached Ethical Artificial Intelligence policy passed by the RAILS Board in FY2025.

The RAILS Continuing Education team has also invested in providing learning opportunities representing a range of perspectives and applications. Recordings from recent events are listed below; a login to the RAILS website with L2 account credentials is required.

- [Developing AI Policies & Principles with Dr. Brandy McNeil](#)
- [Generative AI and the Library Collection](#)
- [Copyright, Text Mining, and AI](#)
- [Generative AI Tools for Creating Multimedia](#)
- [From Startups to Libraries: Experimentation as a Catalyst for Change](#)

Perspectives from Library Associations

As the library field grapples with its approaches to AI adoption and best practices, there is a growing body of work around policy and training issues. Recent developments are included below.

[American Library Association \(ALA\) AI Policy Working Group](#) (link requires ALA member login)

This group of representatives across interested ALA divisions, sections, and committees is charged with "creating an Artificial Intelligence Policy Statement for the American Library Association to be presented at Council at the 2026 Annual Meeting." It may take the form of a "values statement, vision statement, toolkit or all of the above."

[Association of College and Research Libraries \(ACRL\) AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers](#)

This resource is meant to serve as a “guiding framework for the creation of training programs and as a foundation for communities of librarians to adapt and develop their own AI competency frameworks.” It advocates for a “balance between informed engagement and thoughtful selectivity.”

[Public Library Association \(PLA\) Transformative Tech Task Force](#)

This group will “advise PLA on the evolving role and impacts of transformative technology on library work and to identify and recommend priority training topics relevant to public library staff and users.” It expects to “curate and develop resources focused on practical solutions, best practices, skills building, and community engagement strategies.”

ETHICAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth requirements RAILS will observe when acquiring and using software that meets the definition of “generative artificial intelligence.” RAILS recognizes that artificial intelligence is an emerging technology and will comply with all applicable statutes and regulations related to the use of artificial intelligence. Additional procedures may be developed as necessary in adherence with the recommendations and requirements of state, federal, and local law.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of RAILS.

Definition

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI) is a class of computer software and systems, or functionality within systems, that use large language models, algorithms, deep-learning, and machine-learning models, and are capable of generating new content, including but not limited to text, images, video, and audio, based on patterns and structures of input data. These also include systems capable of ingesting input and translating that input into another form, such as text-to-code systems. While this policy document includes principles that apply to AI technologies generally, the policy statements apply only to generative AI systems.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Principles

Principles describe general codes of conduct that represent RAILS values and are aligned with our responsibilities to the members we serve. These principles serve to guide RAILS employees in their use of both generative and traditional AI technology. RAILS employees shall adhere to the principles and requirements outlined in this policy and will be held accountable for compliance with these commitments. It is important to emphasize service to our members and the public at the center of our work.

Innovation: RAILS recognizes that there is value in generative AI, but there are also risks, not all of which may be immediately apparent. We embrace responsible experimentation, where we emphasize control and understanding of these tools while we develop new uses in service of our strategic plan and mission.

Transparency: The purpose and use of AI systems should be proactively communicated and disclosed to the public. A system, its data sources, its operational model, and policies that govern its use should be understandable and documented.

Accountability: Roles and responsibilities govern the deployment and maintenance of systems, and human oversight ensures adherence to relevant laws and regulations.

Bias and Harm Reduction and Fairness: RAILS acknowledges that AI systems have the potential to perpetuate inequity and bias resulting in unintended harm. RAILS will evaluate AI systems through an equity lens for potential impacts such as discrimination and unintended harms arising from data, human, or algorithmic bias to the extent possible. Employees shall not use AI

technologies to discriminate against any individual or group based on race, gender, age, religion, or other protected characteristics.

Privacy: RAILS values data privacy and understands the importance of protecting personal data. RAILS works to ensure that policies and standard operating procedures that reduce privacy risk are in place, and are applied to the AI system throughout development, testing, deployment, and use to the greatest extent possible. Personal and financial information shall not be collected and processed by AI systems unless there are reasonable assurances it will be treated with utmost confidentiality and security.

Security and Safety: Securing our data, systems, and infrastructure is important to RAILS. We will ensure AI systems are evaluated for confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and critical RAILS systems, through protection mechanisms to minimize security risks to the greatest extent possible, in alignment with governing policy and identified best practices.

Attribution, Accountability, and Transparency of Authorship

All images and videos created by Generative AI systems must be attributed to the appropriate Generative AI system. Wherever possible, attributions and citations should be embedded in the image or video.

If text generated by an AI system is used substantively in a final product, attribution to the relevant AI system is required.

If a significant amount of source code generated by an AI system is used in a final software product, or if any amount is used for an important or critical function, attribution to the appropriate AI system is required via comments in the source code and in the product documentation.

Departments shall interpret “substantive use” thresholds to be consistent with the principles outlined in this document as well as relevant intellectual property laws.

Non-compliance

The Director of Technology is responsible for compliance with this policy. Enforcement may be imposed in coordination with individual division directors and department leaders. Non-compliance may result in department leaders imposing disciplinary action, restriction of access, or more severe penalties up to and including termination of employment.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually. In addition, a detailed procedural document and regular training for staff on best practices for using AI should be regularly reviewed.

Related Policies from the Employee Handbook

Internet Safety Policy

Identity Protection

Confidentiality

Use of Electronic and Telephone Equipment