

# AI GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS

## INTRODUCTION

The Public Relations (PR) industry has raised questions about what innovation in generative AI means for the sector in Singapore and beyond. To investigate this, the Institute of Public Relations of Singapore (IPRS) partnered with Sandpiper, an award-winning reputation and policy management consultancy group with extensive experience in generative AI.

Our joint survey of communications professionals in Singapore carried out in September 2023 revealed that 61% use generative AI in their work, but only 28% knew their organisations had an AI policy, and just 18% of respondents felt fully clear about the acceptable use of AI in their roles. There was an overwhelming belief that communications industry leaders, such as IPRS, should provide clear guidance and leadership on generative AI (81% believed this).

In response, Sandpiper and IPRS developed this guidance, which was crafted with input from in-house and agency communications leaders. Our intent is to foster a mindset that encourages responsible and informed AI use, creative problem-solving, and a commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our profession needs to update our approaches to the responsible use of data and fact-checking, so they remain fit-for-purpose given the rapid advances in AI technologies. This guidance provides the industry with a framework to make decisions in a flexible and consistent manner regardless of the specific circumstances. It breaks down into five key principles:

### 1. **Accountability, Governance and Human Supervision**

No matter the type of content generated with the help of AI, the input information and output reviews are extremely important to ensure high-quality assets. Context, legal compliance, bias, risk awareness, cultural considerations, and house style may all be factors that need your expert evaluation after content has been developed. Key considerations include:

- **Human-Centric Approach:** While generative AI offers huge potential, human supervision (i.e., 'human-in-the-loop') is critical so that AI complements and enhances human expertise rather than replacing it. Use AI as a tool to assist and augment your work, for example to support repetitive and time-consuming tasks, so you can focus on important things.
- **Content Review:** It's often hard to ascertain the training material used by a given AI system. Before sharing or publishing AI-generated content, always take the time to review it. This ensures that outputs maintain accuracy, quality, and adhere to our professional standards. Generative AI, because of the datasets that they are based on, can propagate misinformation, disinformation, and biases, so being mindful is important.
- **Regular Monitoring:** The monitoring of how AI is being used in your organisation can help inform how your processes should develop. You may want to assign a person or team (e.g., IT), to oversee the use of AI, manage approved tools, and support safe experimentation. They could be put in charge of evaluating tool performance, usage and impact on outputs and business.

## 2. Privacy, Security, and Data Protection

The importance of responsible data management has increased with generative AI's unique ability to learn from large datasets, recognise patterns, and generate new content. Unlike simple input tools like Google Search, mishandling data within AI systems can lead to lasting reputational damage. Avoid inputting non-public data into public generative AI platforms due to its unique and inherent vulnerabilities.

Establishing proper data handling protocols and clarifying safe data usage practices is more effective than rebuilding trust post-incident. Key considerations include:

- **Safeguard Sensitive Information:** Be careful when handling sensitive data to prevent an unintentional leak through publicly accessible AI systems. Importantly, you should be able to work with your IT team to identify which AI platforms are private or public and refrain from sharing sensitive data on public platforms. Data could include confidential personal, financial or client information, as well as other sensitive strategy documents. For public AI models, disable chat/data history where possible. Stay informed of your organisation's protective regulation and the technology assessments that have been carried out by your procurement teams.
- **Stay Informed and Compliant:** AI does not respect national borders. Stay up to date with regional and local data protection laws and regulations, ensuring your AI usage aligns with these.

## 3. Appropriate Transparency

What transparent use of generative AI means will become increasingly challenging. As generative AI use transitions into 'business as usual', it unveils new possibilities, underscoring the importance of transparency. Creating AI-generated or AI-assisted content, particularly

images, videos, or unchecked information, without flagging this can unintentionally feed into misinformation online and undermine trust. Key considerations include:

- **No 'One-Size-Fits-All' Approach:** The appropriate level of disclosure relating to your use of AI will vary, based on content type or frequency, to the scope of AI's involvement. If your company is embracing generative AI in your day-to-day work, then you may want to disclose this on your website. Increasingly, companies are publishing AI guidelines to be transparent about their use of AI. If you are generating images or videos using AI, you can add a watermark or content credentials ( 'signature') making this clear. In the case of interactive AI systems (e.g., chatbots), you may want to inform users about the purpose, criteria and limitations of the data gathered and decision(s) generated. Ultimately, what is important is to agree within your organisation what your take on transparency and AI use is.
- **Understand Copyright and Ownership:** Especially when creating content such as images, audio or video, you should be mindful of intellectual property (IP) implications. Be aware of the terms & conditions for different generative AI platforms. For example, tools like Midjourney stipulate that non-members do not own the assets they create.
- **Anticipate Progress:** Today, we are already using AI-enabled tools without knowing it. As AI becomes seamlessly embedded in our daily workflows, tools, and processes, it will gradually become 'invisible' in its operation. This integration may reduce the need to highlight the role of AI in content development, like copy proofing or ghost writing.

#### 4. Fairness, Accuracy, and Inclusivity

As communications professionals, we should ensure AI is used in a way that reflects fairness, accuracy, and inclusivity. Key considerations include:

- **Checks on Outputs:** Like humans, generative AI can make mistakes, so comprehensive fact-checking is important. Cross-reference information, consult experts, and validate data sources to ensure accuracy.
- **Actively Counteract Bias:** Humans' inherent bias affects the datasets on which generative AI relies, causing AI models and tools often to reflect these biases. Strive to reduce biases in the content produced, always with human judgment at the forefront. When building AI tools or systems, diversify your testers and consultants to cover a broader spectrum of perspectives, and take steps to identify and mitigate bias.
- **Actual Inclusivity:** For many organisations, diversity, equity, and inclusion is important. Like with other tools, infuse these values in the use of generative AI. This means involving diverse voices in activities, ensuring any data you are using is representative, and keep in mind how it will be rolled out, giving reference to your company's DEI policy.
- **Sustainable AI Practices:** Sustainability is an increasingly important priority for many companies. We should aim to minimise the environmental impact of large language models, for example by choosing the appropriate LLM for each task, monitoring resource usage, finding ways to optimise workloads, effective prompt engineering, or even considering trade-offs between generative AI and more traditional less resource-intensive solutions.

## 5. Capability Building

Despite widespread use of generative AI in the corporate affairs industry, many still are unsure about how to use it effectively. Focused learning and training are important for safe experimentation and staying updated on AI developments. Key considerations include:

- **Commitment to Upskilling:** Prioritise continuous learning and regular training to ensure staff can effectively guide, interpret, and oversee AI systems, ensuring that outputs align with organisational values and goals. Put in place focused learning sessions to familiarise teams with the use cases, best practices, legal implications, and ethical considerations of AI deployment. This not only ensures awareness and compliance, but also fosters a culture of responsibility.
- **Horizon Scanning:** Stay updated about AI advancements by actively scanning for, monitoring, and sharing innovations and emerging ethical concerns. This awareness ensures your teams are well-equipped to address and pre-empt potential challenges, but also to harness new opportunities.

The above principles are important to bear in mind to navigate opportunities and complexities in a thoughtful informed way, and we should continuously strive to put these into action across our organisations. This document intends to guide, inform, and inspire your approach as AI capabilities advance. In parallel, we must actively promote and encourage the ethical application of AI in our industry.

Please note that this guidance does not constitute legal advice – consult with legal counsel to understand specific responsibilities and obligations related to the use of AI within your organisation or market.

If you have questions, suggestions regarding this guidance, or are interested in AI training opportunities for your team or organisation, please reach out to IPRS Secretariat via [admin@iprs.org.sg](mailto:admin@iprs.org.sg), or Sandpiper via [rob.vanalphen@sandpipercomms.com](mailto:rob.vanalphen@sandpipercomms.com).