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# AI Statement

Overview   
This Statement sets out the approach of the National Library of Scotland to the responsible adoption and use of Artificial Intelligence. It will guide our decision-making on how we employ AI tools, communicate about our use of AI, collect AI-generated material, and allow our data to be used by others.

Definitions Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a broad term used to refer to a range of algorithm-based technologies capable of performing tasks commonly requiring human intelligence.[[1]](#footnote-2) For the purposes of this Statement, we will use "AI" to refer to computer-driven automation systems with the potential to impact the people and work of the National Library of Scotland.

AI applications such as image and text recognition have been in use for a long time, whilst other areas are developing at a fast pace – for example, Large Language Models (LLMs) and generative capabilities around text, imagery, audio and video.

Without familiar patterns of use, established standards and regulation, certain types of automation can present risks of misuse and harm dependent on their context, scale and application. These include data protection issues, copyright infringement, digital exclusion, patterns of bias, environmental impacts, exploitative labour practices and further ethical considerations.

At the same time, we recognise that AI tools present multiple opportunities for libraries to improve how we work including improving access to content, automating processes around the management of collections and enabling new forms of research and creativity with collections.

## Responsible adoption

As a National Library we have a role to play as a trustworthy source of information and a responsible steward of collections and data. We have both an immediate and generational responsibility to prioritise both our people and collections, providing reliable access to knowledge and information, and creating spaces for debate and discussion. This requires us to think carefully about how and when new technology is used.

## Our commitments

* We will seek to create a culture of "curiosity and care" when working with AI.[[2]](#footnote-3)
* We will adopt, test, and use AI tools in a way that upholds our organisational values and supports our mission to enhance Scotland's international reputation by making a significant and lasting contribution to global knowledge and the memory of the world.
* We will work with AI tools that are accurate, subject to risk assessments, and include human oversight. They should appropriately safeguard personal information and adhere to existing data protection standards and other legal requirements.
* We will be transparent about where we have employed AI tools, indicating where possible when and how the content and data we produce has been machine generated.
* We will be proactive in identifying and communicating biases or harmful patterns in data when developing or using tools.
* As we carry out our responsibility to collect, preserve and provide public access to Scotland's published and recorded memory, we will make decisions on when and how to collect AI generated material.[[3]](#footnote-4)
* We will continue to open up access to collections to enable public use and research alongside safeguarding sensitive data from automated access, upholding the rights of authors and protecting copyright.
* We acknowledge the negative environmental consequences of AI tools and the difficulties of measuring these impacts. Where possible, we will evaluate potential environmental impacts when adopting new technologies at scale and be open about these impacts with staff and our audiences.
* We will evaluate the financial sustainability of new AI tools and monitor their use to ensure value over the long-term.
* We expect our partners and collaborators to give similar regard to the protections, standards, and potential harms of AI technologies.

## References

This document was created with reference to and awareness of a range of AI definitions, statements, and policies from sources we trust. These include:

* Information Commissioners Office (ICO) – [Definition of AI](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/artificial-intelligence/explaining-decisions-made-with-artificial-intelligence/part-1-the-basics-of-explaining-ai/definitions/#:~:text=Artificial%20Intelligence%20(AI)%20can%20be,that%20previously%20required%20human%20thinking.)
* Organisation for Economic Collaboration and Development (OECD) – [AI Principles](https://oecd.ai/en/ai-principles)
* Scottish Government – [Scotland's AI Strategy](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-ai-strategy-trustworthy-ethical-inclusive/)
* UK Government – [Artificial Intelligence Playbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ai-playbook-for-the-uk-government/artificial-intelligence-playbook-for-the-uk-government-html)
* BBC – [AI Principles](https://www.bbc.co.uk/supplying/working-with-us/ai-principles)
* Smithsonian – [AI Values Statement](https://datascience.si.edu/ai-values-statement)
* The National Library of the Netherlands (KB) – [AI in Libraries: Seven Principles](https://zenodo.org/records/3865344)

## Document history

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Status and changes** |
| 1.1 | 1 May 2024 | AI Statement agreed and signed off. |
| 1.2 | 24 April 2025 | Reformatting to new document format.  Addition of two commitments, considering:   * Environmental impact * Financial sustainability |
| 1.3 | 10 September 2025 | Additional of "exploitative labour practices" in list of ethical considerations. |

1. See: Artificial Intelligence Definitions, ICO <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/artificial-intelligence/explaining-decisions-made-with-artificial-intelligence/part-1-the-basics-of-explaining-ai/definitions/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See: John Fitzgerald (SCVO), [Careful now! Your emerging AI Strategy](https://scvo.scot/p/84589/2023/10/19/careful-now-your-emerging-ai-strategy), 19 October 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Early examples of AI generated material already in the collection include published books, magazines, web pages, template-driven content inside newspapers such as weather report and sudoku, and visual effects in films. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)