

AI: Initial Responses, More Questions

Rachel E. Scott and Michael Fernandez

Librarians working in technical services have long had opportunities to automate portions of their work.¹ Attitudes about doing so, however, have been mixed.² Automation comes with enhanced needs for human-mediated quality control. With this long-standing and somewhat fraught relationship in mind, we began discussing the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and large language model (LLM) tools and their implications for writing and reviewing in *Library Resources & Technical Services (LRTS)* back in 2023. The editorial teams of the American Library Association Core journals had several frank conversations about the potential roles for and our concerns about AI and LLM tools. We drafted a policy that has now been reviewed and approved by the Core Board of Directors and implemented across all three journals. It is our hope to provide guidance that is deliberate and human-centered. The policy, printed below and available on the *LRTS* site, outlines expectations from the perspective of authors, reviewers, and editors.³

Use of Generative AI by Authors and Reviewers

Summary: This policy limits the use of Generative AI tools by authors and prohibits use of Generative AI tools by peer reviewers for work under consideration by Core's journals. The limitation on the use of AI tools to author articles is not meant to restrict research into potential uses of LLMs and/or Gen AI tools in libraries.

Authors: Articles submitted to Core's journals must be written by human authors. The use of Large Language Models (LLMs), generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI), or other AI tools to write an article is not allowed. In cases where such tools are used to support a human author's writing or research, those uses **MUST** be acknowledged explicitly in the manuscript, including the specific tool(s) used, the prompts given, and the section(s) of the article that were enhanced in this manner.

Reviewers: Peer review is a human process in which the peer reviewer synthesizes the author's submission and the reviewer's knowledge and experience. It is uniquely valuable for that reason. Reviewers therefore may not use Generative AI technologies to assist with conducting or writing review reports. By using such tools, reviewers risk breaching confidentiality and giving away the author's unpublished work to AI models.

Editors: The editors of Core's journals reserve the right to investigate and verify that text is human-authored. If you have questions about whether your planned use of AI tools to author an article is acceptable, please contact the editors for clarification.

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The content of this issue also engages with the theme of automation versus human mediation. In addition to a study of AI tools in subject cataloging, articles explore, for example, the limits of vendor-provided approval plans and the American Library Association’s “Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries” and the “Freedom to Read Statement.” When do librarians adopt these as-is and when do they intervene to customize policies, services, and practices—or even walk away—on behalf of their local constituents? How do we balance the efficiencies of automation and the protections of national guidance with the quality, values, and user-centered focus that drive our profession? Pieces throughout the issue provide valuable insights into the approaches adopted by librarians who leverage evidence to forge a path forward.

Communications on Practice

1. In “Digitizing Pre-1978 Dissertations at Binghamton University Libraries,” Erin E. Rushton, Caitlin Holton, and Jamey McDermott walk readers through the key considerations, challenges encountered, and workflow devised for this project that highlights local scholarship.

Features

1. In “Preparing for the Worst but Hoping for the Best: Censorship, Academic Libraries, and Reconsideration Policies,” Blair Solon, Margie Montañez, Liz Cooper, Amy Jankowski, Glenn Koelling, and Laura Soito investigate reconsideration policies at US-based Association of Research Libraries. Although academic libraries in the United States receive very few book challenges or removal requests as of this writing, having clear guidelines may provide some protection to library employees. The authors provide a template reconsideration policy that can be tailored to academic library settings.
2. Brian Dobreski and Christopher Hastings approach the topic of “AI Chatbots and Subject Cataloging: A Performance Test” with clear and replicable methodology and professional cataloging experience. The authors evaluated the effectiveness of three chatbots in assigning classification numbers and subject headings. They found that the overall performance of these tools was poor, particularly in assigning classification numbers, but may nonetheless hold promise in saving catalogers time with subject analysis in the future.

Notes on Operations

1. Kelly A. McCusker and Molly W. Rainard discuss their library’s use and ultimate discontinuation of approval plans in “Too Broad and Too Narrow: One Library’s Experience with Approval Plans.” Approval plans were implemented at the authors’ library because of the potential efficiencies they offer to selectors and technical services personnel over single-title monographic purchasing. However, the authors found that approval plans took as much or even more time to manage, led to overspending, and kept them from purchasing titles specifically requested by their community.

2. In “Coping and COVID: Developing a Pandemic-Related Mental Health Micro-Collection,” Dee Anna Phares documents the development of a “Coping and COVID-19” micro-collection at Northern Illinois University Libraries using a trauma-informed approach. Phares demonstrates that college and university libraries are well-positioned to promote well-being and belonging through collections and services that are responsive to student needs.

Book Reviews

1. *Predatory Publishing and Global Scholarly Communications* by Monica Berger.
2. *Cataloging Library Resources: An Introduction* by Marie Keen Shaw.

Notes

1. See, for example, Karen Horny, “Automation of Technical Services: Northwestern’s Experience,” *College & Research Libraries* 35, no. 5 (1974): 364–69; Michael Gorman, “Technical Services in an Automated Library,” *Proceedings of the 16th Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing* (University of Illinois, 1979), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/4811495.pdf>.
2. Bradford Lee Eden, “The New User Environment: The End of Technical Services?” *Information Technology and Libraries* 29, no. 2 (2010): 93–100, <https://doi.org/10.6017/ital.v29i2.3148>.
3. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, “Author Guidelines,” <https://journals.ala.org/index.php/lrts/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.