

AI Literacy 101

How to check what an AI tool tells you, what you should never type into one, and why a person still has to sign off at the end. For school students, older adults and founders.

1 THE PROBLEM

Tools that write text or make pictures sound just as sure of themselves when they are wrong. They will not say “I am not certain” the way a person would. A quote, a date or a source can look completely ordinary and still be wrong, and sometimes the source does not exist at all.

What you type into a free public tool may not stay private. Hong Kong’s Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data publishes guidance on using AI and generative AI at work. One reason is that staff and students keep pasting other people’s details into chatbots.

These tools are built from old data. If that data treated one group of people badly — when sorting job applicants, say — the tool can do the same thing today. Nobody has to set out to be unfair for that to happen.

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competencies across four dimensions in UNESCO’s AI competency framework for students: a human-centred mindset, ethics of AI, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design.

UNESCO, *AI competency framework for students*, 2024. Each competency runs across three levels: understand, apply, create.

2 WHY IT MATTERS

Students

Your name goes on the work, so the mistakes are yours as well. Check anything a tool gives you before you hand it in. Teachers usually spot the made-up references first, and those are hard to talk your way out of.

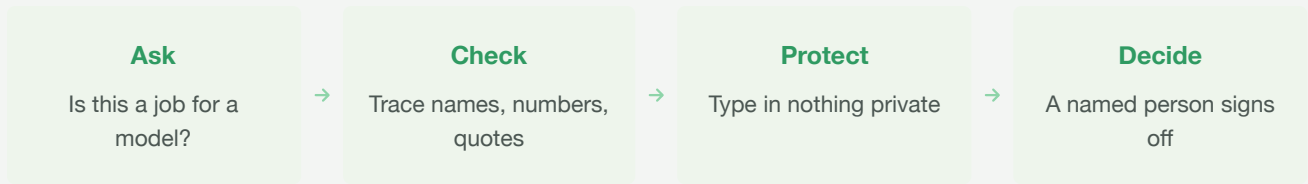
Older adults

Fake voices and fake video are cheap to make now, and a recording can be made to sound like someone in your family. If a call or a message asks you for money, hang up. Then ring the person back on the number already saved in your phone.

Founders and staff

Put customer or member data through an AI tool and the data protection law still holds you and your organisation responsible for it. Buying the tool from someone else does not hand them the responsibility.

3 WHAT CAN BE DONE



Four habits, in this order. Do not skip the last one when the decision affects a person.

1 Match the tool to the job

First drafts, summaries, translations, a list of options to pick from — all fine. The final call on somebody's money, health, safety or grades is for a person to make.

2 Check it somewhere else

Take every name, number, date, law and quote and find it in a source you can open yourself. If you cannot find it, cut the sentence. Do not just make the wording vaguer and leave it in.

3 Do not type in anything private

Keep out ID and account numbers, addresses, medical details and anything that belongs to another person. The Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data publishes checklists for generative AI use at work.

4 Keep a person responsible

The OECD AI Principles, adopted in 2019 and updated in May 2024, put transparency, robustness and accountability on the people and organisations running a system. You cannot pass the blame to the software.

A framework worth borrowing. The US NIST *AI Risk Management Framework* (version 1.0, January 2023) is voluntary. It splits the work into four jobs: **govern, map, measure, manage**. A project run by two people can still work through all four on one page.

4 LEARN MORE AND TAKE PART

- UNESCO — AI competency framework for students
unesco.org/en/articles/ai-competency-framework-students
- HK PCPD — AI Privacy Protection
pcpd.org.hk/english/artificial_intelligence/index.html
- NIST — AI Risk Management Framework
nist.gov/itl/ai-risk-management-framework
- OECD — The OECD AI Principles
oecd.ai/en/ai-principles
- Alan Turing Institute — Understanding AI ethics and safety
turing.ac.uk/news/publications/understanding-artificial-intelligence-ethics-and-safety
- Our World in Data — Artificial Intelligence
ourworldindata.org/artificial-intelligence

4 TAKE PART WITH SUSTAINIFY

Sustainify is a youth-led organisation in Hong Kong. **AI literacy and usage is one of our three workshop themes** — this explainer is the material behind it. We plan each session around who is in the room. School students get guided activities and time afterwards to think about what they did. With older adults we go slower, show things on a real phone, and leave plenty of room for questions. Founders work on whatever their next step actually is.

MENTORSHIP

We help you work out where a tool saves time, and where a person has to stay responsible.

NETWORKS

Introductions to schools and community groups that want a session, or can host one.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Guides, worksheets and explainers like this one, ready for you to adapt.

FROM ENQUIRY TO A FIRST ACTIVITY

1. **Bring the idea.** The need you have seen, who would benefit, and what help you want.
2. **Talk it over.** What it would change, why you want to do it, and whether we can actually help.
3. **Agree one small first activity.** Usually a single session. Settle who it is for, what they should get out of it, and a date.
4. **Prepare and deliver.** Run through it once beforehand, then change the pace and the examples to suit the room.
5. **Learn and decide what comes next.** Ask one question before and the same question after. Then run it again, change it, or stop.

WHAT TO TELL US WHEN YOU WRITE

- What idea would you like to explore?
- What have you tried so far, if anything?
- How much time can you contribute?
- Who could benefit, and what need have you noticed?
- What help would make the biggest difference?
- How would you like us to get in touch?

Every session covers why building and using these tools carefully is part of a sustainable future.

You can run one yourself, run one with our volunteers, or just ask us for one and tell us about your learners. Write to info@sustainifysdg.com