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*** updated on 4.17.26**



I. Why use AI?

AI is a tool to **augment** our work, not replace it. AI excels at automating repetitive tasks and providing data-driven insights. **However, human creativity, judgment and emotional intelligence remain irreplaceable.**

The following guidelines outline the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies within Visit Colorado Springs (VCOS). AI can be a powerful tool to enhance our marketing efforts, improve visitor experiences and optimize our operations. But remember, it's crucial to utilize AI responsibly and ethically. With these policies, VCOS staff will be able to use AI to become more efficient and accurate in their day-to-day work.

II. Definition of AI and Related Technologies

Artificial Intelligence (AI) includes a wide range of technologies and approaches designed to simulate human intelligence.

1. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception and language understanding.
2. **Machine Learning (ML):** Models trained on datasets to recognize patterns and make predictions. Rather than following only fixed rules, ML systems improve with exposure to more data. Examples: predictive analytics, automated classification.
3. **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** Systems that understand and generate human language (e.g., chatbots, sentiment analysis, translation).

III. Permissible Use of AI

1. **Content Creation:** AI can assist with generating draft marketing materials, social media copy and email content, allowing for faster turnaround times and consistent messaging. **However, human input, review and editing are essential to ensure accuracy and brand voice.**
2. **Data Analysis and Personalization:** AI can analyze vast amounts of visitor data to identify travel trends, preferences and demographics. This allows us to tailor marketing campaigns to specific audience segments and personalize the visitor experience (e.g., recommending attractions based on visitor travel behavior).
3. **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants:** AI-powered chatbots can provide 24/7 customer service, answer frequently asked questions and assist visitors with trip planning.
4. **Image and Video Recognition:** AI can be used to analyze publicly available user-generated content (UGC) for trends/sentiment. It can also recognize locations, objects and features, labeling them and categorizing them in a media management tool.
5. **Repetitive Tasks:** Identify tasks that are well-defined and rule-based, such as data entry, scheduling or report generation. AI excels at automating these, freeing up employees for more strategic work.



IV. Non-Permitted Use of AI:

1. **Automated Decision-Making for Sensitive Issues:** AI should not determine marketing budget allocation or target specific demographics based on potentially biased data. Human oversight is crucial for responsible decision-making.
2. **AI for Highly Sensitive Data:** Never use AI with data like credit card information or personally identifiable information. Never input any of your own personal data or personal data of our partners, colleagues or stakeholders. Do not upload VCOS organization information or visitor data to public AI models.
3. **AI Without Proper Review and Oversight:** All AI outputs, including marketing content, chatbot responses or data analysis results, must undergo thorough human review and analysis before being implemented, shared or used. This includes checking for plagiarism and accuracy to ensure our content is original and respects intellectual property rights.
4. **Improper Use of Notetaking Tools:** Automatic recording of meetings, recording external partner or stakeholder meetings without explicit consent or sensitive discussions (e.g., HR or legal matters) should not be recorded. AI notetaking tools generate transcripts automatically as part of their summarization process. Transcripts from internal meetings may be retained by the staff member for reference but must not be shared externally. Transcripts from external partner, stakeholder or sensitive meetings (e.g., HR or legal) must be deleted upon receipt of the summarized notes.
5. **Images/Video/Design:** AI-generated images, videos and designed materials are not permitted. VCOS works with talented photographers, videographers and designers, and prides itself on sharing only authentic, high-quality creative work. All visual content should reflect the true essence of our destination and be sourced from our professional collaborators, staff or user-generated content.
 - **Exception:** AI may be utilized on images for design purposes, such as removing background items and logos or extending the sky to create space for copy.
6. **Plagiarism:** AI-generated content should not be used without proper attribution or citation, if necessary. VCOS is committed to creating original and ethical marketing materials or crediting the creator/author.

V. Approved Tools

There are countless AI tools available, with more being created each day. However, not all tools are compliant with our policy, secure or appropriate for VCOS staff to use. To ensure safety, consistency and efficiency, the following are the only AI tools approved for use by VCOS staff.

***REMEMBER – While these tools are approved, they all require manual review and editing of final outputs. If you are unsure whether a specific usage of the tool is allowable, please consult with your supervisor and/or executive team for guidance.**

1. **ChatGPT (Deprecated)**
 - **Status: ChatGPT is no longer an approved tool for VCOS staff.** VCOS has transitioned away from ChatGPT due to concerns about its safety protocols and its design orientation toward user engagement over substantive, complex task performance. Staff should migrate any ongoing workflows to Claude (Anthropic), the organization’s designated primary AI platform.



2. Claude (Anthropic)

- **Access and Payment:** Claude is the primary AI platform for VCOS and the only tool for which VCOS will fund a paid subscription. Staff who wish to access a paid Claude plan must submit a brief written request to their direct supervisor describing their intended use cases. This ensures organizational resources are directed toward staff who will actively use the tool. Free-tier access remains available to all staff for introductory or occasional use.
- **Great for:** A wide range of tasks, including writing (content generation, editing, summarization), coding (generating, debugging and reviewing code), information retrieval (Q&A, research, complex query handling) and creative collaboration.

3. Microsoft Copilot

- **Access and Payment:** Access depends on our Microsoft 365 license. Copilot features are embedded across M365 applications (Word, Outlook, Teams) and may already be available to you. Staff should confirm current access with IT or their direct supervisor before assuming Copilot is or is not available. VCOS will not separately fund a standalone Copilot subscription.
- **Great for:** Enhancing productivity by automating tasks and providing intelligent assistance across various platforms, particularly within the Microsoft 365 suite.

4. Perplexity

- **Access and Payment:** Free version use only; VCOS will not pay for premium access.
- **Great for:** Conducting background research on general topics related to tourism, marketing, event planning or other job-related information.

5. Otter.ai

- **Access and Payment:** This is the only approved AI-powered notetaking tool for VCOS staff.
- **Great for:** Recording and summarizing internal meetings, webinars or conferences. Generating shareable notes for staff reference.

Staff may encounter many new AI tools. Staff must request review and approval from the Marketing & Communications leadership team before adopting or experimenting with any new AI platforms. This list will be periodically reviewed and updated as technologies change and emerge.

VI. Avoiding Plagiarism with AI-Generated Content:

1. **Review and Edit:** Always thoroughly review and edit AI-generated content to ensure it expresses your ideas and brand voice in your own words. Don't rely solely on the AI output.
2. **Paraphrase Effectively:** If the AI generates a particularly useful phrase or sentence, paraphrase it to rephrase the information while maintaining the meaning.
3. **Cite Sources (if applicable):** In some cases, depending on how the AI tool works, you may need to cite the sources the AI used to generate the content.
4. **Use Plagiarism Detection Tools:** Plagiarism detection tools are available online or through library resources and can double-check your content for unintentional plagiarism, especially if the AI tool you're using is new or unfamiliar.

VII. Human Oversight

Human oversight ensures responsible decision-making by considering ethical implications and the broader context. AI systems rely on data and algorithms that can inherit biases, contain false



information (“hallucinations”) or plagiarize. Here are some examples where human expertise remains crucial:

1. **Reviewing and Editing AI-Generated Content:** AI can draft marketing copy, but human review is essential to maintain brand voice and ensure factual accuracy.
2. **Understanding Complexities and Nuances:** AI can analyze data, but humans interpret the insights and make strategic decisions based on their experience and understanding of the market.
3. **Building Relationships and Empathy:** AI can't replace the human touch when interacting with potential visitors or building relationships with tourism partners.

VIII. Mitigating Bias in AI:

VCOS is committed to using AI in a way that promotes fairness and inclusivity. It is important to prioritize diverse datasets for AI training to minimize bias based on factors like ethnicity, gender or socioeconomic background.

What is Algorithmic Bias? Algorithmic bias occurs when an AI system unfairly favors certain groups of people over others. This can lead to biased decisions that might negatively affect certain individuals or groups.

1. **Detecting and Addressing Algorithmic Bias**
 - **Collect Data:** Gather data on the decisions made by the AI. For example, if the AI is used to recommend marketing campaigns, collect information on who gets targeted and who doesn't.
 - **Look for Patterns:** Check if certain groups (e.g., based on race, gender, etc.) are consistently getting better or worse outcomes. If you notice such patterns, there might be bias.
 - **Look for Biased Language/Ideologies:** Be vigilant in your reviewing of AI data to look for any biased language/ideologies that target an individual or group based on race, gender, sex, religion, age or ability.
 - **Report Findings:** Share your observations with leadership and staff members so that it can be addressed and avoided. New prompts can help adjust and steer the technology to more equitable outcomes.
2. **Simple Tips for Ensuring Fair AI:** By following these simplified steps and collaborating with all staff members, VCOS can ensure that our AI systems are fair, ensuring trust and transparency in all our operations.
 - **Regular Monitoring:** VCOS staff will regularly check the outcomes of AI decisions to ensure they remain fair over time.
 - **Feedback Loop:** VCOS will encourage feedback from those affected by AI decisions and report any concerns to the Marketing team.
 - **Ethical Use:** VCOS will always aim to use AI ethically, ensuring it benefits everyone without discrimination.
3. **Example Scenarios:** Each scenario below illustrates a way a different VCOS department might encounter algorithmic bias in AI.
 - **Scenario 1: Bias in Venue or Vendor Recommendations**
A member of our sales team uses an AI tool to assist in generating recommendations for venues when planning an event. The model suggests options based on the criteria provided, such as location, event type and budget.



Potential Bias: The recommendations generated by the AI tool could be biased toward bigger venues. If the model has been trained on a data set that includes more information about larger, more popular venues, it might favor these over smaller, local or niche options, even when those might be a better fit for the client’s needs.

- **Scenario 2: Bias in Communication Style for Outreach**

Partnership uses an AI tool to generate a list of partners for a collaboration. The goal is to identify diverse organizations that reflect a wide range of racial, ethnic, religious and identity-based backgrounds.

Potential Bias: The model might have a bias toward suggesting organizations that are used more frequently or that align with more commonly represented identities in the training data. As a result, it may underrepresent or overlook smaller, less well-known organizations that serve minority or underrepresented communities.

- **Scenario 3: Bias in Creating Inclusive Marketing Content**

Marketing & Communications uses an AI tool to generate content for promotional materials, social media posts and advertising campaigns. The goal is to create content that resonates with a diverse audience and represents various racial, ethnic, gender and identity groups.

Potential Bias: The model might produce content that inadvertently reflects stereotypes or lacks inclusivity due to biases in the training data.

- **Scenario 4: Bias in Recommending Local Attractions or Services**

A VIC staff member uses an AI tool to assist in recommending local attractions, restaurants and services to visitors. The goal is to provide tailored suggestions based on the visitor’s preferences, needs and background.

Potential Bias: The model might have a bias toward recommending attractions or services that align with more general or mainstream preferences, potentially overlooking or underemphasizing options that cater to specific cultural or accessibility needs.

- **Scenario 5: Bias in Scheduling or Task Prioritization Tools**

Your administrative staff uses an AI-powered tool to help manage schedules, prioritize tasks and automate workflows. The tool analyzes various factors to suggest the most efficient ways to organize meetings, assign tasks and allocate resources.

Potential Bias: The AI tool might exhibit bias in how it prioritizes tasks or schedules based on patterns it has learned from the data. For instance, if the tool was trained on data that overemphasizes the importance of certain roles or departments, it might consistently prioritize tasks or meetings involving those roles over others, even if it’s not always the most efficient or equitable choice.

IX. Sustainable & Environmentally Conscious AI Usage

As part of our commitment to sustainability and responsible innovation, we recognize the environmental impact associated with the development and use of Artificial Intelligence technologies. AI systems can require significant energy resources, particularly in the training and deployment of large language models (LLMs) and data processing tasks. To honor our commitment to sustainability and our values as an organization, we are dedicated to utilizing AI in ways that are both purposeful and mindful of our environmental footprint.

1. Purposeful and Thoughtful AI Use

- We commit to using AI technologies intentionally and only when they provide meaningful value or clear benefits.



- Team members are encouraged to reflect on whether AI is the best tool for a given task before initiating prompts or processes.
- We will avoid frivolous or unnecessary prompts that do not serve a defined purpose or improve efficiency.
- Staff should prefer right-sized models or low-energy workflows for simple tasks.

2. Efficiency and Optimization

- We prioritize using AI tools and models that are optimized for energy efficiency and lower resource consumption.
- Wherever possible, we select solutions from vendors and providers that utilize sustainable data centers powered by renewable energy sources.
- We aim to consolidate tasks into fewer prompts or actions to reduce redundant processing and energy use.

3. Vendor and Partner Sustainability Alignment

- We will seek partnerships with AI providers and platforms that demonstrate a commitment to environmental responsibility.
- Providers should transparently disclose their energy sources, sustainability initiatives and carbon offset strategies.
- Preference will be given to vendors who align with recognized sustainability standards or certifications.

4. Continuous Improvement and Education

- We are committed to ongoing education around sustainable technology use.
- We will stay informed about advancements in low-energy AI models and best practices for sustainable digital operations.
- Team members will be trained to adopt practices that reduce energy use and contribute to the organization's overall sustainability goals.

5. Transparency and Accountability

- We will monitor and assess our AI usage as part of our broader sustainability strategy.

Our Shared Responsibility

Every team member has a role to play in ensuring that our use of AI is responsible, efficient and aligned with our environmental values. By thoughtfully utilizing AI, we can harness their benefits while protecting the spaces we are privileged to steward.

X. Transparency and Explainability

1. General Disclosure Principles

- **Transparency:** VCOS will provide clear and accessible information about its use of AI systems, including but not limited to inclusion on the transparency page, in the Annual Report and in board and marketing committee meetings.
- **Accountability:** VCOS will be accountable for the decisions and actions of its AI systems.
- **Ethical Use:** VCOS will ensure that its AI systems are used ethically and do not result in unfair or biased outcomes.
- **Trust:** Builds confidence in the organization's commitment to ethical practices.
- **Compliance:** VCOS will meet regulatory and ethical standards for transparency and accountability.



2. When to Disclose AI Usage

- **AI-Assisted Content (Disclosure Not Required):** Content that was drafted or refined with AI assistance but has been substantively reviewed, edited and approved by a VCOS staff member does not require external AI disclosure. The human authorship and editorial judgment applied in the review process is sufficient.
- **Primarily AI-Generated Content (Disclosure Required):** Content whose structure, substance and primary language originated from an AI tool, even if lightly edited, must be disclosed when submitted to external parties, including grant bodies, media outlets, RFP respondents or partners that have stated disclosure requirements. When in doubt, disclose.
- **Customer-Facing Applications:**
 - **Marketing Campaigns:** If using AI to target ads or recommend itineraries, VCOS will inform customers that their preferences are being analyzed by AI.
 - **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants:** VCOS will disclose if the interaction is with an AI, not a human, to manage customer expectations.
 - **Service Recommendations:** When providing personalized travel itineraries or offers, VCOS will mention that these are generated by an AI system.
- **Marketing and Data Analysis:**
 - VCOS will include information about the use of AI in its marketing and data analysis activities in the privacy policy and terms of service.
- **Internal Use and Employee Communication**
 - **Internal Communications:** Employees will be informed about the use of AI systems in internal processes and decision-making through regular training and communication.
 - **Employee Handbook:** AI policies and procedures will be included in the employee handbook.
 - **Employee Rights:** Employees have the right to understand how AI impacts their work and to raise concerns about its use.
- **Stakeholders and Board Members**
 - **Purpose of AI Usage:** VCOS will clearly explain why AI is being used, highlighting its benefits such as efficiency, accuracy and enhanced decision-making.
 - **Specific Applications:** VCOS will describe the specific areas where AI is applied (e.g., marketing, customer service, market research and analysis, financial assessments, etc.).
 - **Impact on Stakeholders:** VCOS will discuss how AI affects customers, employees and partners, ensuring it aligns with the organization's values and goals.
 - **Bias and Fairness:** VCOS will outline the steps taken to detect and mitigate bias, ensuring the AI systems are fair and unbiased.
 - **Monitoring and Review:** VCOS will explain the ongoing processes for monitoring AI performance and ensuring it meets ethical standards.
 - **Regular Updates:** VCOS will include AI usage updates in as appropriate in board meetings, ensuring continuous awareness and oversight.
 - **Clear Documentation:** Provide clear and concise documentation about AI systems, their purposes and their impacts.

3. How to Make AI Disclosures:

- **Use Clear and Simple Language:** Use straightforward language to explain that AI is being used. Avoid technical jargon.
- **Use Accessible Information:** Ensure disclosures are easily accessible, including them in the handbook, on the website and in the privacy policies.
- **Have Transparency in Decision-Making:** Explain how the AI works in simple terms and why it's being used for the decision.



- **Send Periodic Reminders:** Provide reminders about AI usage during significant interactions or updates.
 - *Example:* “Your personalized travel itinerary has been updated by our AI system based on your latest preferences.”
- **Provide Opportunity for Feedback:** Allow customers and stakeholders to provide feedback on AI interactions and decisions.
 - *Example:* “We value your feedback. Let us know how our AI-powered recommendations are working for you.”

4. Example Disclosure Statements

- **Marketing Campaigns:** “We use AI technology to analyze your preferences and recommend itineraries tailored to your interests. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.”
- **Chatbots:** “You are now interacting with our AI-powered virtual assistant, designed to help you with your questions efficiently. If you prefer to speak with a human representative, please select that option.”
- **Service Recommendations:** “Our travel recommendations are generated by an AI system that considers your previous choices and interests. This helps us provide you with the best options suited to your needs.”

XI. Agentic and Autonomous AI Use

A growing category of AI functionality allows tools to take autonomous, multi-step actions on a user’s behalf. This could include browsing the web, managing files, sending communications, submitting forms or executing sequences of tasks without human confirmation at each step. This capability is increasingly embedded in approved platforms, including Claude and Microsoft Copilot.

1. **Supervisor Approval Required:** Any use of agentic or autonomous AI features must be approved by a direct supervisor before deployment. Staff may not authorize AI tools to take external-facing actions, including sending emails, publishing content, submitting forms or interacting with third-party systems on behalf of VCOS without human review at the point of action.
2. **Human Review at Point of Action:** Even where agentic use has been approved, a VCOS staff member must review and confirm any output before it is sent, published or acted upon externally. AI autonomy does not reduce the human review requirements established elsewhere in this policy.

XII. AI in Hiring and Employment Decisions

AI may be used to assist with administrative tasks related to hiring and employment, such as assistance in drafting job descriptions, summarizing notes or generating interview question frameworks. However, the following restrictions apply.

1. **No AI-Driven Employment Decisions:** AI may not be used in any hiring, promotion, performance review or disciplinary decision. Human judgment governs all employment decisions. AI outputs used in a hiring process (e.g., summaries, assessments) must be treated as supplementary reference material, not as recommendations or scores, and should be reviewed and compared against source documents to ensure accuracy and mitigate bias.
2. **Candidate Data Protections:** Candidate names, resumes, assessment results and interview content are personally identifiable information and may not be uploaded to any AI platform. Staff may share anonymized or paraphrased summaries with AI tools for general assistance, provided no individual can be identified from the content.



XIII. Documentation and Reporting

1. **Model Documentation:** VCOS will maintain thorough documentation of its AI systems, including their design, training data and performance metrics.
2. **Annual Report:** VCOS will include an AI summary in the Annual Report detailing our use of AI, the measures taken to ensure fairness and transparency and any updates to this policy.

XIV. Ethical and Legal Compliance

1. **Compliance:** VCOS will comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements related to the use of AI.
2. **Ethical Guidelines:** VCOS use of AI will adhere to ethical guidelines to prevent bias, discrimination and other negative outcomes.

XV. Review and Updates

1. **Regular Review:** This policy will be reviewed semi-annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, regulations and VCOS AI practices. In addition to scheduled reviews, an out-of-cycle update will be initiated whenever a significant change occurs, including but not limited to: a change in approved platforms, a material shift in vendor data handling practices, new regulatory guidance or a significant expansion of staff AI use.
2. **Stakeholder Feedback:** VCOS will seek feedback from our staff, partners and stakeholders to improve our AI disclosure practices and address any concerns.
3. **Employee Training:** VCOS will provide staff with training on AI, its limitations and best practices for responsible use.
4. **Data Security and Privacy:** VCOS will ensure robust data security measures are in place for all AI projects and comply with data privacy regulations. This may involve a combination of encryption, access control, compliance, secure development practices and monitoring. While these measures can be implemented internally, VCOS will also explore whether utilizing third-party services to provide additional expertise and solutions is needed.
5. **Third-Party Services** may be used where appropriate and must be vetted.

XVI. Prompt Confidentiality and Data Handling

Section IV.2 prohibits inputting sensitive organizational or personal data into AI tools. The following additional guidance applies to all approved platforms regardless of subscription tier.

1. **Treat Prompts as Potentially Visible:** Staff should not enter any information into an AI tool that they would not be comfortable having appear in a vendor's data systems or be subject to a data breach. Vendor data handling policies vary and can change. When in doubt, do not include the information.
2. **Use Organizational Accounts on Organizational Devices:** Approved AI tools must be accessed using VCOS-provisioned accounts or credentials, not personal accounts. Using a personal account removes organizational data handling protections and may expose VCOS information to personal account data policies. Unapproved AI tools may not be used on VCOS-owned devices or networks for any purpose, personal or professional.

XVII. Conclusion

With this policy, Visit Colorado Springs commits to using AI responsibly and transparently, ensuring that its staff, partners and stakeholders are informed and confident in the benefits and impacts of its AI systems.



XVIII. Staff Acknowledgment & Responsibility

By signing below, I acknowledge I have read, understand and agree to comply with the VCOS AI Policy. Misuse of AI (e.g., uploading sensitive data, publishing unreviewed outputs, using unapproved tools) may result in loss of access or disciplinary action.

Name

Title

Signature

Date

