ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

Top Tips on how to integrate AI use into your organisation

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Recommendations

To foster responsible and effective AI adoption in your non-profit organisation, consider the following steps

1. Start with small, practical applications

Focus first on simple, high-impact tasks like automating scheduling, drafting reports, or enhancing outreach content. Tools like ChatGPT, Canva AI, and Microsoft Copilot can demonstrate quick value with minimal risk.

2. Upskill Staff and Volunteers

Invest in accessible training through platforms such as Google Skillshop, DataCamp Donates, and Fast Forward. Emphasise both technical usage and ethical considerations to build digital confidence across teams

3. Develop Internal AI policies

Establish clear guidelines covering approved tools, usage boundaries, human oversight, and data protection. These policies should reflect your organisation's values and mission.

4. Use AI to Strengthen Communication

Leverage AI to improve content creation, translation, and engagement, particularly in marketing, donor updates, and volunteer materials. AI can streamline efforts while maintaining message quality and consistency.

5. Enhance Fundraising and Donor Relations

Apply AI to personalise outreach, write grant proposals, segment donor lists, and analyse giving behaviour. These tools can deepen relationships and expand funding opportunities

6. Streamline Event and Volunteer Management

Use AI for logistics planning, volunteer matching, and engagement tracking. Automating these processes reduces administrative burden and enhances volunteer satisfaction.

7. Build a Shared Prompt and Resource Library

Create a centralised internal hub for prompts, tool guides, and best practices. This helps standardise usage and makes AI accessible across the organisation.

8. Join Peer Learning Networks

Engage with communities like TechSoup and NTEN for peer insights, case studies, and shared resources. Collaborative learning accelerates implementation and builds sector-wide resilience.

9. Prioritise Responsible and Transparent AI Use

Always maintain human oversight, especially in sensitive contexts. Clearly communicate when AI is used and regularly audit systems for unintended outcomes. Ethical AI builds trust and supports long-term impact.

Prompts

A prompt is a question you ask, or instructions you provide to your AI assistant to generate a desired output. This prompt library is a collection of example prompts related to common work streams at nonprofits. Here are some best practice guidelines before you begin:

- Use natural language
- Be clear and concise
- Provide context
- Use specific and relevant keywords
- Break down complex tasks into separate prompts
- Have a conversation
- Drive the conversation with data

Fundraising Sample Prompts

- "Identify relevant grants that align with our nonprofit's mission to [your mission]."
- "Summarise this grant description to focus on the funder's specific interests and priorities." Now copy/paste the language from the grant description into the chat, include the link to the website, or upload the relevant file.
- "Draft a short, non-intrusive email template to re-engage donors who haven't given to a nonprofit in the past year."
- "Outline a social media campaign to promote a matching gift challenge grant for a [your organisation] nonprofit. Emphasise how donations will be doubled."
- "List different ways to thank nonprofit donors, including personalised letters and creative social media shout-outs".
- "Share creative, low-cost grassroots fundraising ideas for our small nonprofit that helps [your demographic]."

Programme Management Sample Prompts

- "Create a pitch for the program coordinator to persuade them to use the last idea."
- "Suggest some strategies for nonprofits to find and utilise volunteers with specialised skills (graphic design, legal, etc.)."
- "List factors our [your organisation] nonprofit should consider when evaluating a potential partnership with another organisation or business."
- "Provide tips for effective time management for our small nonprofit team with many competing priorities."
- "Explain some best practices for transforming data on our nonprofit program's impact on [your demographic] into clear and compelling visuals to share with donors."
- "List the essential sections of an annual report for a nonprofit that focuses on [your mission]."

Marketing Sample Prompts

- "Generate attention-grabbing hooks for a nonprofit social media campaign about [your campaign]."
- "Suggest a good balance of content types (updates, impact stories, calls to action, etc.) for our nonprofit's monthly donor newsletter supporting funding for [your initiative]."
- "Draft 5 engaging interview questions to use in the volunteer spotlight feature for our nonprofit's website."
- "Suggest visually compelling ways to represent our [your sector] nonprofit in social media posts or campaign videos.

Ethical Considerations

1. Human Oversight and Accountability
Risk of AI systems making critical decisions without human judgment, leading to ethical oversights or harm.

2. Transparency and Explainability
Many AI systems operate as "black boxes," making it hard for nonprofits and their stakeholders to understand or trust decisions.

3. Bias in AI systems
AI models can unintentionally replicate or amplify biases present in training data, resulting in unfair outcomes, especially for marginalised groups.

4. Data Protection and Privacy:
Nonprofits often handle sensitive data, and poor AI data management can lead to breaches of confidentiality and trust.

5. Sustainability and Environmental Impact:
The energy demand of AI systems can conflict with nonprofits' environmental and social missions.

6. Regulatory Compliance
Evolving legal frameworks (like GDPR) require careful management of AI systems to avoid legal risks and protect stakeholders.

Combating Ethical Issues

1. Strengthen Human Oversight
- Implement mandatory human review of AI outputs, especially for critical decisions.
- Develop clear accountability frameworks within your organisation

2. Promote Transparency and Explainability:
- Use explainable AI models when possible
- Keep detailed records of AI decision-making processes and share them with stakeholders when appropriate.

3. Address Bias Proactively
- Train AI systems with diverse, representative datasets.
- Regularly audit AI outputs for bias using fairness monitoring tools.

4. Enhance Data Protection:
- Anonymise sensitive data and encrypt it both at rest and in transit.
- Establish strict access controls and provide ongoing data protection training for staff.

5. Prioritise Sustainable AI Practices:

- Choose energy-efficient AI tools and vendors committed to sustainability.
- Regularly assess the environmental footprint of AI usage.

6. Ensure Regulatory Compliance

- Assign compliance officers to monitor AI legal developments.
- Develop policies aligned with frameworks like GDPR and the EU AI Act