Stray Dog
INSTITUTE

AI Use Policy

DRAFT
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Review schedule: Annually in June

Stray Dog Institute recognizes that developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) offer tremendous potential benefit to the animal advocacy movement. AI tools can amplify the many efforts of our teams, automate certain time-consuming tasks, and assist us to collaborate more effectively across spatial and linguistic boundaries.

However, all new technologies come with potential downsides. The vast capabilities of AI—particularly generative AI—present animal advocates with both new uses and new risks. We believe thoughtfully incorporating AI to enhance our collective efforts for animal liberation will result in a stronger and more impactful animal advocacy movement.

In this document, Stray Dog Institute will clarify the values, practices, and areas of growing awareness that contextualize our own use and exploration of AI and suggest starting points for broader responsible use. The viewpoints shared here are based on our current knowledge of AI, which is constantly changing. We remain open to additional learning and to the ideas and viewpoints of others.

I. Our Values Related to AI

Stray Dog Institute believes…

…that to have the impact we collectively seek for animals, it's important and worthwhile for the animal advocacy movement to remain competitive and current in its use of technology. Thoughtfully embracing AI usage allows us to optimize our use of resources and maximize our efforts for animals.

…that avoidance of AI learning and use would contribute to the animal advocacy movement falling short of our potential impact and losing ground in our responses to the messaging tactics of the animal industry.

…that the most beneficial uses of AI—particularly generative AI—are to advance and resource our thinking, not to think for us. Our advocacy will be strongest when advocates retain control of intent, judgment, and decision-making.

…that people and organizations using AI within the animal advocacy movement will be best served by considering the potential impact that any particular instance of AI use may have on the full movement and its perceived social standing and legitimacy.

…that using AI to mislead or manipulate members of the advocacy movement and the general public presents ethical challenges. False flag uses of AI-generated content may harm the movement's public image. Use of AI to substitute for substantial, important, or highly visible intellectual contributions attributed to human beings, or to create work products without human review, may feel misleading for content consumers.

…that wherever AI-generated content forms a significant part of a high-profile work product, it may be appropriate to transparently disclose AI use somewhere within the final work. However, we recognize that such disclosure may not be equally appropriate in all contexts, and best practices around disclosure may evolve—or may eventually cease to be relevant—as AI use becomes increasingly commonplace.

II. Our Goals for AI within the Animal Advocacy Movement

We will continually advance our own learning about AI tools and the benefits and risks they present for animal advocates. Our viewpoints on AI will continue to evolve, as may our interaction with AI tools.

We will spread awareness and understanding of AI tools, their benefits, their limitations and risks, and furthering movement-wide discussion around how to navigate responsible use of AI. We will pay specific attention to elevating privacy and security concerns pertinent to animal advocacy and adjacent movements and broadening secure access to AI tools.

We will encourage the thoughtful use of AI tools by organizations within the animal advocacy movement. However, we believe it is important for AI adoption to be undertaken carefully and with consideration for the wellbeing of advocates and the broader movement. We do not advocate universal or unlimited AI adoption without learning and caution. We also recognize that some organizations and individuals may choose to avoid using AI, and we support a plurality of considered choices within the animal advocacy movement.

III. AI Use in our Philanthropic Activities

We may make use of AI tools to inform our own analysis, prioritize our efforts, examine our own unseen biases, and contribute to internal philanthropic decision-making. We will not use organizations' openness to using or familiarity with AI as a factor in our grantmaking decisions. Wherever we use AI tools in our philanthropic activities, we will maintain human control over information verification and final decision-making.

IV. Considerations and Our Commitments Regarding Specific AI Tools

Generative text-based AI (LLMs)

AI is capable of generating text that mimics or exceeds the quality of human-generated text, although it can make factual errors. With human oversight, AI text can be helpful for inspiration, writing refinement, translation, and creating the first draft of certain written communications.

There may be ethical considerations when AI text is used without sufficient human oversight and verification, or when undisclosed AI text is used in a setting where users may have a reasonable expectation that text will be generated by humans. We recommend caution where the use of AI text could create a sense of being misled.

Our commitment: At times, we may use AI-generated text to inspire or supplement the work of human writers and data analysts. AI text may be involved in the full process of creating our public content, from inspiration and outlining to the drafting and editing of final text. However, we will never use AI-generated content without significant human oversight, shaping, honing, and correction as needed.

Collaborative spaces for team-based interaction with LLMs

Collaborative spaces can assist advocacy teams in crafting convincing public messaging, developing research goals, and refining priorities. Privacy concerns may arise when collaborating with other organizations on shared content, or when using LLMs that use queries and materials to train global AI.

Ethical considerations relevant to the use of team spaces that feature interaction with LLMs mirror ethical best practices guiding responsible conduct in other public forums and collaborative workspaces. We recommend that groups engaging collaboratively with AI in shared workspaces follow best practices such as group agreement of values and rules prior to engaging in text-based collaboration or the creation of shared materials and intellectual property. Depending on the setting, Chatham House rules may be appropriate, or another set of mutually agreed rules and guidelines.

Social norms around the expectation of privacy are unlikely to be monolithic or universally applicable and may change from setting to setting as well as over time. We recommend that advocates and organizations communicate clearly and err on the side of caution, for example,

defaulting to assuming that content is not shareable or to asking permission before using content developed by or with another user.

Additionally, because of the particular risk of exposure of sensitive, strategic, or embargoed information crucial to the success of our movement, we also recommend that advocates avoid introducing important or identifiable information to LLMs unless interacting with a secure, closed API instance of the LLM not used for training global, public LLMs. We believe it is of paramount importance for all LLM workspaces to disclose what information is gathered and kept, for how long, for what purposes, and for whose access.

Our commitment: We will use and facilitate others to use shared team workspaces with built-in AI tools, with a preference for closed APIs that ensure the privacy of materials and queries. When hosting AI collaboration spaces for the broader movement, we will communicate clearly with potential users about whether or not the spaces are private/closed APIs and what privacy or security features a space offers. We will prioritize clear communication with collaborators about practices and boundaries, and will default to asking permission before using content, queries, or ideas developed by or with others.

Generative AI image tools (image generators)

AI-generated images are useful for increasing visual appeal, clarity, and comprehension. AI imagery may or may not be photorealistic.

AI images that are not photorealistic can provide benefits with few risks when used for illustration of ideas or decoration of communication materials, making highly specific imagery accessible to a larger range of organizations and advocates. Non-photorealistic AI images can also be useful as part of the design brainstorming process when seeking or commissioning original art content. It may be beneficial for advocates exploring use of AI imagery to explore and consider the availability and accessibility of human-generated artistic content prior to opting to use AI-generated images.

Photorealistic AI images come with certain additional potential risks. Photorealist AI imagery can be most useful and least risky when used for decoration and enhancing viewer engagement. We recommend strong caution where photorealistic images are presented—or may be interpreted—as documentary evidence, for example, images of abuse or poor living conditions experienced by farmed animals. Where the purpose of an image is to bear witness to the truth, we recommend against using photorealistic AI-generated imagery. Use of AI-generated images in these cases may be seen as disingenuous, potentially calling into question the veracity of the problems animal advocacy seeks to solve and the moral standard of the methods advocates use to solve them. This can erode and undermine crucial public trust in pro-animal messaging.

To help the movement to have its full impact, it may be preferable to use genuine photographic images where available and accessible. Many such genuine undercover images currently exist, obtained by advocates at great personal risk on behalf of the advocacy movement. We recommend that advocates consider where and how a genuine image could be found before considering using AI to create photorealistic content.

Our commitment: We will use and support others' use of AI imagery, including photorealistic imagery. However, we will avoid using and strongly recommend that others also avoid using photorealistic AI imagery in contexts where the veracity of imagery is of critical importance for public trust, and/or where viewers have a reasonable expectation of seeing genuine photographic content.

Video and avatars

AI-generated video presents benefits and potential risks similar to those of AI-generated imagery. AI video content can be helpful for making complex concepts easier to understand and presenting information in a way that can be customized to the needs of a user. Certain uses of AI video in animal advocacy may present ethical challenges if video has the effect—intentional or accidental—of misleading users or undermining public trust.

Some AI-generated video may use realistic human-like avatars as presenters of information. We believe that using AI avatars that mimic human appearances and gestures can be helpful for making information more accessible and inviting, and for customizing information delivery to an individual's preferences and needs. For example, an AI avatar could conduct a training video, or summarize a webpage tailored to a visitor's specific interests. However, it may be unwise to use an undisclosed AI video avatar to pass as human in any situation where a user may have a reasonable expectation that the video features a human being.

Ethical concerns may arise whenever the intent of AI video generation—with or without human-like avatars—is to deceive or mislead. To protect society's regard for the advocacy movement, we caution animal advocates to be thoughtful when considering creating AI video with deliberate intent to deceive, or using undisclosed AI-generated video or avatars where they could be perceived as intentionally misleading.

Our commitment: We will use clearly marked AI-generated video and/or human-like avatars where they present clear benefits for enhancing our communication. Because we value transparency, we will not use undisclosed human-like avatars in contexts where they could mislead a viewer who has reasonable expectations of viewing a record of actual events or interacting with a human being.