



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

Don't Miss!



50/50 RAFFLE

Tickets are **\$1** each and can be purchased from **Conni Strittmatter** or **David Dahl!** The winner takes home half the pot.



PUB QUIZ

Thursday, May 7
8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Choptank Ballroom



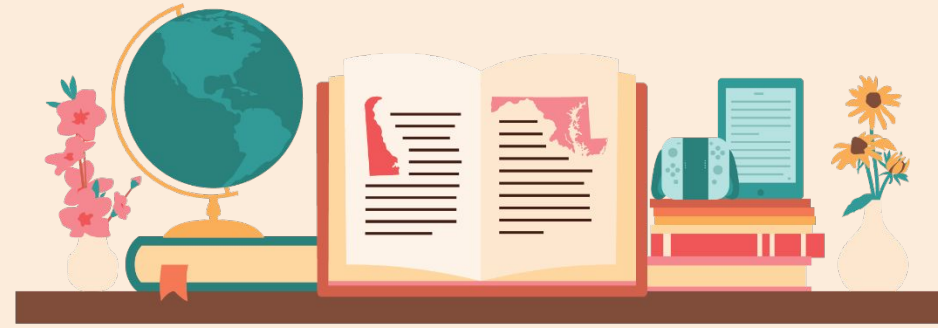
SILENT AUCTION

Visit the Silent Auction in the exhibitor hall to place your bids **before 10 a.m. on Friday, May 8th**.



KARAOKE

Thursday, May 7
6:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Windjammer



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

Using Stories from the Library Community to Build AI Policy

Tess Wilson

**Membership and Outreach Director
Library Freedom Project**

May 6-8, 2026 | Cambridge, MD

AGENDA

- Why are we talking about AI?
- Applications of AI
- What's the problem with AI?
- Responding to AI hype
- AI in libraries
- LFP AI survey
- Building AI policy
- How can LFP help?



SETTING THE STAGE

Why are we talking about AI?



The Reform-Abolition Spectrum

Reform

- The tech is too valuable to dismantle
- We can identify and fix the biases
- We just need better data sets and better representation in who creates the tech

Abolition

- AI issues are structural issues and the inherent infrastructure is problematic:
 - Algorithms
 - Datasets
 - Many of the uses
- Fixing the obvious biases means more policing and more data

Defining AI

- **AI** is an umbrella term used to describe **lots** of different technologies, some of which have been around a **long time**.
- **AI** is **mathematical formulas** that ingest **terabytes of data**, then **identify patterns or make rules** within their constraints using optimization.
- “AI” as it’s marketed today usually refers to **machine-learning** and **generative AI** - when complex algorithms are “trained” on a set of data that are used with probability models to generate new content. Most of these use **Large Language Models**.

**AI is computing, social organization,
a marketing gimmick, and a political project.**

Machine learning: the use and development of computer systems that are able to learn and adapt without following explicit instructions, by using algorithms and statistical models to analyze and draw inferences from patterns in data.

Machine learning is a subfield of AI

Deep learning: a type of machine learning based on artificial neural networks in which multiple layers of processing are used to extract progressively higher level features from data.

Deep learning is based on how the human brain works, but it is not identical to the human brain. For example, it can't "learn" context" and makes generalization errors. It is currently the dominant form of AI.

Large Language Models (LLM): a type of artificial intelligence algorithm that uses deep learning techniques and massively large data sets (terabytes upon terabytes) to understand, summarize, generate and predict new content.

Most of the training data for LLM is scraped from the open web, eg places like Reddit.

Generative AI: AI capable of generating text, images, or other media, using generative models. Generative AI models learn the patterns and structure of their input training data and then generate new data that has similar characteristics.

Some chatbots create generative AI, others are just pre-programmed with canned responses.

What is AI really?

- “Stochastic parrots” - Emily M. Bender
- AI does not learn the way humans do despite anthropomorphizing language
 - fails at complexities that can't easily be represented through proxies, eg identifying systemic racism
 - fails at identifying the unexpected, with potentially deadly consequences

Why are we talking about AI?

The last ten years, and especially the last few years, have seen enormous advances in AI technologies

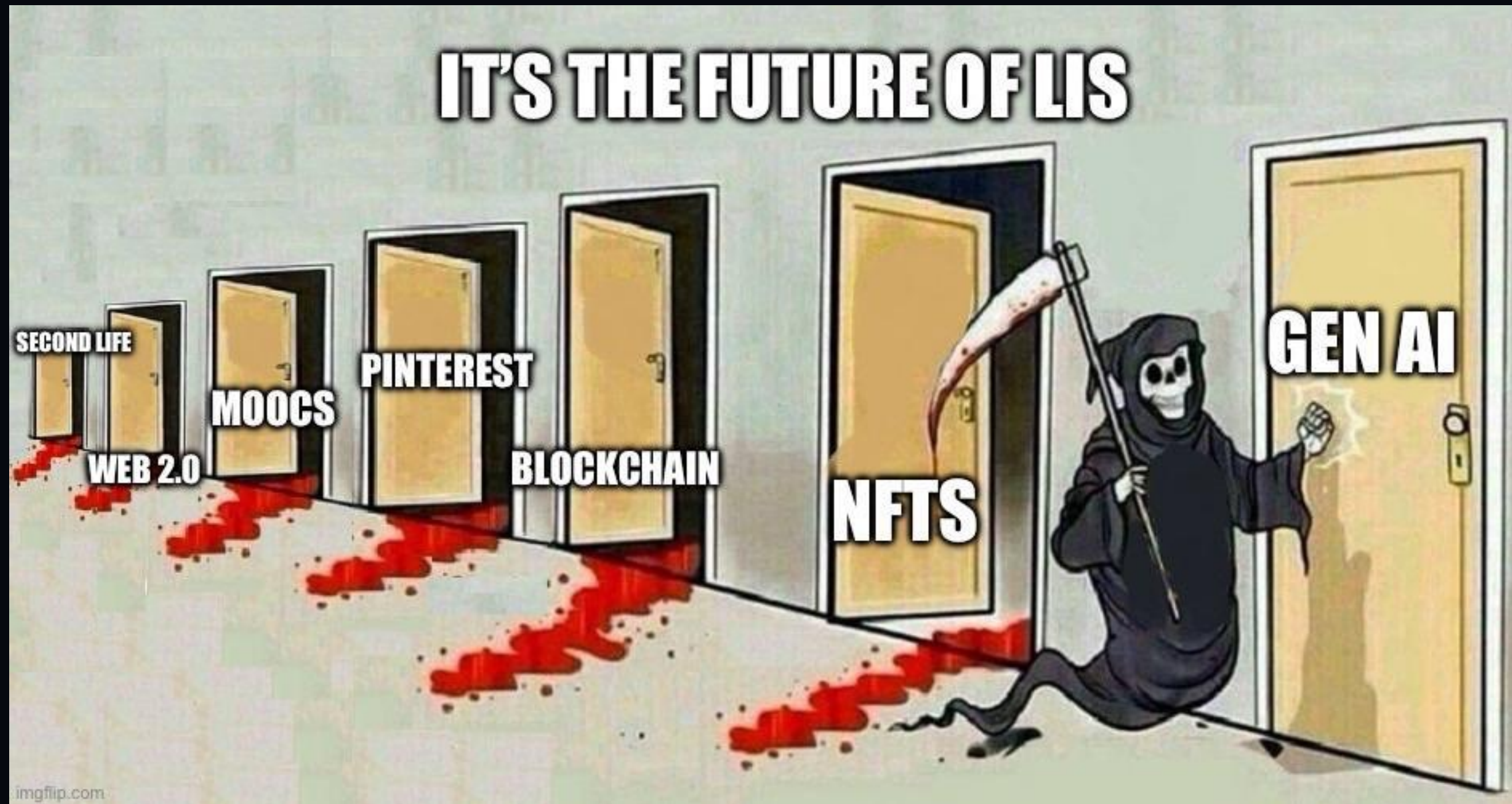
We are also currently in a well-funded AI hype cycle

Popular conceptions of AI are part of that hype and are often wrong

Libraries are being impacted by AI and are in a position to educate the public

AI represents powerful potential, but also real harms, and needs major regulatory guardrails


AI is just the latest shiny thing




Librarians Are Being Asked to Find AI-Hallucinated Books

~~404~~

AI Is Supercharging the War on Libraries, Education, and Human Knowledge

 JASON KOEBLER · NOV 6, 2025 AT 11:13 AM

AI-Generated Slop Is Already In Your Public Library

 EMANUEL MAIBERG · FEB 4, 2025 AT 9:09 AM

APPLICATIONS OF AI

Where are we seeing AI?



Out in the world

- Numerous military uses
 - Autonomous weapons and drones, robotics
 - AI arms race with China
- Non-military robotics
- Law enforcement uses
 - Facial recognition, predictive policing, other automation
- Voice assistants eg Amazon Echo
- AI agents

Out in the world

- Autonomous vehicles
- Chatbots and other synthetic text extruders
- Other facial recognition
 - Airports, employee surveillance
- Recommendation engines
 - Youtube, Netflix et al; targeted advertising
- Healthcare eg disease prediction
- New uses every day with no public oversight
- Lots of snake oil


In libraries

- Automate the boring stuff
 - metadata
 - biblio records
 - preservation
 - digitization
- Recommendation tools are marketed to us
- ChatGPT to automate text
- Chatbots for reference
- GPTZero for checking plagiarism
- Major library vendors like OCLC and Clarivate are using AI tools and their own data - lots of generative AI


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Some popular AI stuff

- **OpenAI**
 - Develops AI tools like ChatGPT, GPT-4 and DALL-E
- **ChatGPT**
 - OpenAI LLM using GPT-4 to create generative AI in a conversational way
- **Lensa**
 - AI photo editor, used to make avatars etc. Skews avatars younger, thinner, normatively pretty
- **DALL-E, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion**
 - AI image generators
- **Clearview AI**
 - Facial recognition as a service
 - Scraping photos from around the web
 - Mainly used by police departments, private companies

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH AI?

What should we consider?



Three Categories of AI Ethics Issues

(More or Less)

How it's made:

transparency, control, data privacy, labor, extraction

What it creates:

bias, reproducing existing harms, surveillance, fake information

How we approach it:

popular misunderstandings of AI, hype, and lack of regulation

How it's made

Transparency

- Most AI is not transparent about training data or models
- Often referred to as a “black box” meaning *we don't know how it gets to its conclusions*

Data privacy

- Trained on *our data* without our knowledge or consent

Control

- Most AI products are made by powerful private companies with no public oversight
- Negatively incentivized—there's so much money to be made

How it's made

Resource extraction and consumption

- AI products use enormous computing resources, GPUs and TPUs
- Computing resources burn fossil fuels
- AI industry is extremely opaque about its energy usage

Labor

- Data labeling is done by low wage Global South workers
- Professional class impacted - Writers' Strike identified AI has one of their top concerns (AI scripts, scans of actors)
- Your free labor is used to build AI tools

miyazaki of studio ghibli, upon seeing an artificial intelligence presentation- "i strongly feel that this is an insult to life itself".

ついに長編映画に復帰へ!?
独占密着! 知られざる700日

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I feel like we are nearing to the end of times.

ついに長編映画に復帰へ!?
独占密着! 知られざる700日

ついに長編映画に復帰へ!?
独占密着! 知られざる700日

We humans are losing faith in ourselves. . .

Climate and resource impacts

- AI uses enormous resources and burns fossil fuels
- **Huge energy demands all the way down the stack**
 - Training the model, using the model, data center creation and usage
- AI industry is extremely opaque about its energy usage
- Major impacts on local energy availability due to data center demand
- Chips are being used 24/7 and will degrade quickly...so **current estimates of data center resource usage are likely wrong**

What happens in the cloud...

...doesn't stay in the cloud.

What are the environmental impacts of using AI?

A year of training for **one AI model** uses **156,000 pounds of CO2**

The same as one year of electricity for **32,510 homes**

That's like burning **173,287,124 pounds of coal**

The same as **865 railcars**

The equivalent of charging **12,612,096,655 smartphones**

Like burning **17,553,730 gallons of gas**

15,324,165 gallons of diesel

Plus, just 10-50 GPT responses use **500ml of water**

So what can we do?

- Think critically about how you use AI
- Advocate for research and regulation
- Track local data center projects

Wilson | 2025

What it creates

Bias and reproducing existing harms

- Lots of AI tools create more surveillance
- Large datasets from the open web mean lots of racism, misinformation, conspiracies, stereotypes
- Many people involved have technofascist ideologies

Misinfo, bias, hallucinations

- Wild inaccuracies
- **Illusion of confidence**
- Fails at context, satire, truth
- Racism and other bias
- No author, no source, no authority



A screenshot of a social media post from Kath Barbadoro (@kathbarbadoro.bsky.social). The post features a quote from Google AI that is highly biased and inaccurate. The quote reads: "Men in New York have done countless things throughout history, from building the city to participating in major events like the Stonewall riots and the September 11 attacks. Their actions have ranged from daily life and economic hardship during the Great Depression to playing significant roles in the city's political and social landscape, such as the assassination of Malcolm X or the fight for LGBTQ+ rights." The quote is presented as a "WYOC" (What You Only See) card, which is a common feature on social media used to highlight specific, often biased, snippets of text. The post includes a "Follow" button and a "Share" icon.

Kath Barbadoro
@kathbarbadoro.bsky.social

+ Follow

Google AI is like an Eric Adams quote generator

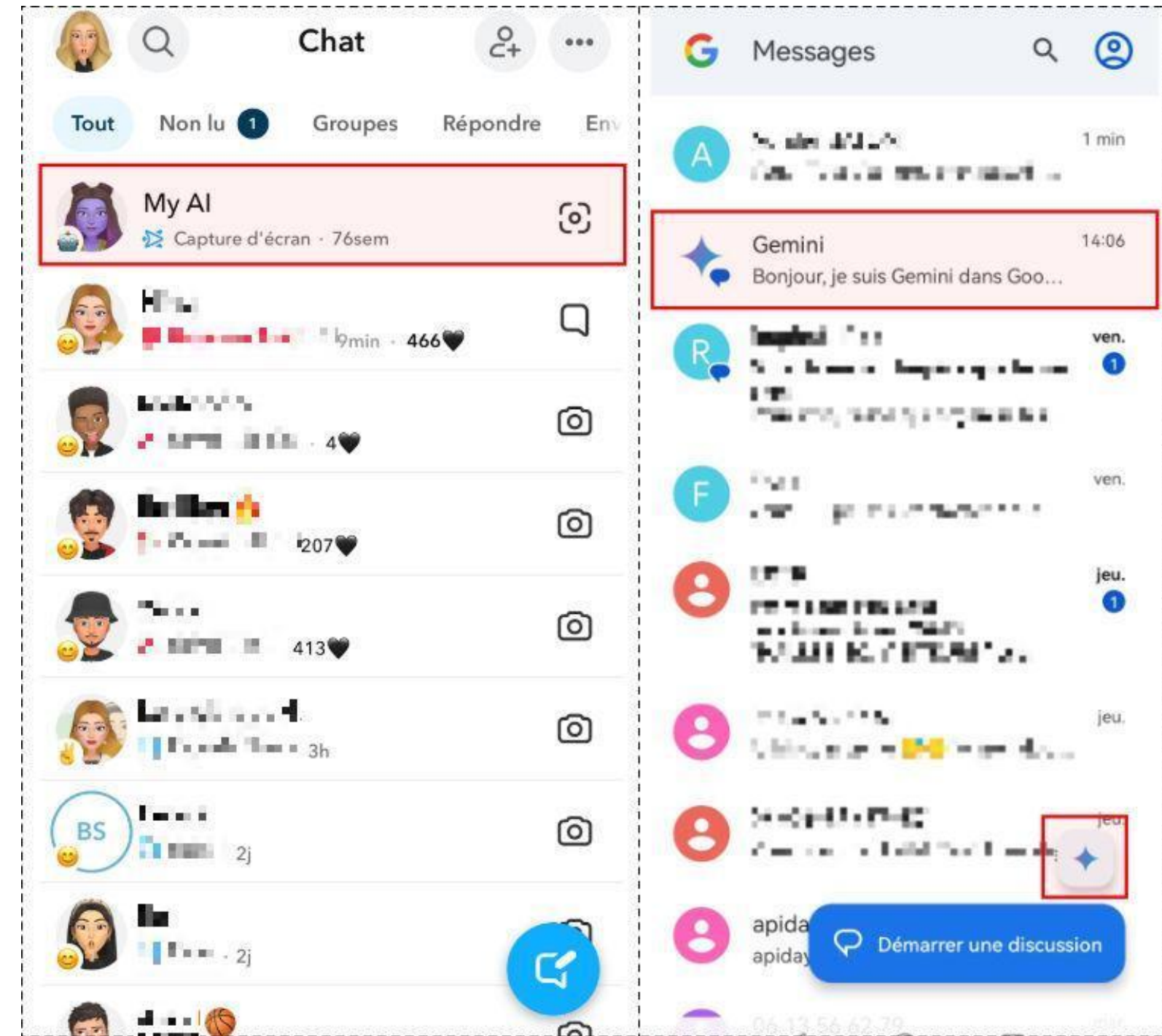
✦ AI Overview  +6

Men in New York have done countless things throughout history, from building the city to participating in major events like the Stonewall riots and the September 11 attacks. Their actions have ranged from daily life and economic hardship during the Great Depression to playing significant roles in the city's political and social landscape, such as the assassination of Malcolm X or the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

ALT



Forced adoption and dark patterns

- New AI features across platforms, few options to opt out or disable
- Take up lots of space, can be confusing to low literacy users
- **Dark patterns** are a manipulative design tactic long employed by tech companies to addict users
 - Infinite scroll, autoplay, excessive notifications, etc
 - Chatbots designed to **tell you what you want to hear** use this tactic



There is a growing mental health crisis surrounding generative AI usage, psychosis, and suicide.



Sam Altman  

@sama

We made ChatGPT pretty restrictive to make sure we were being careful with mental health issues. We realize this made it less useful/enjoyable to many users who had no mental health problems, but given the seriousness of the issue we wanted to get this right.

Now that we have been able to mitigate the serious mental health issues and have new tools, we are going to be able to safely relax the restrictions in most cases.

In a few weeks, we plan to put out a new version of ChatGPT that allows people to have a personality that behaves more like what people liked about 4o (we hope it will be better!). If you want your ChatGPT to respond in a very human-like way, or use a ton of emoji, or act like a friend, ChatGPT should do it (but only if you want it, not because we are usage-maxxing).

In December, as we roll out age-gating more fully and as part of our “treat adult users like adults” principle, we will allow even more, like erotica for verified adults.

12:02 PM · Oct 14, 2025 · **10.6M** Views

Academic impacts

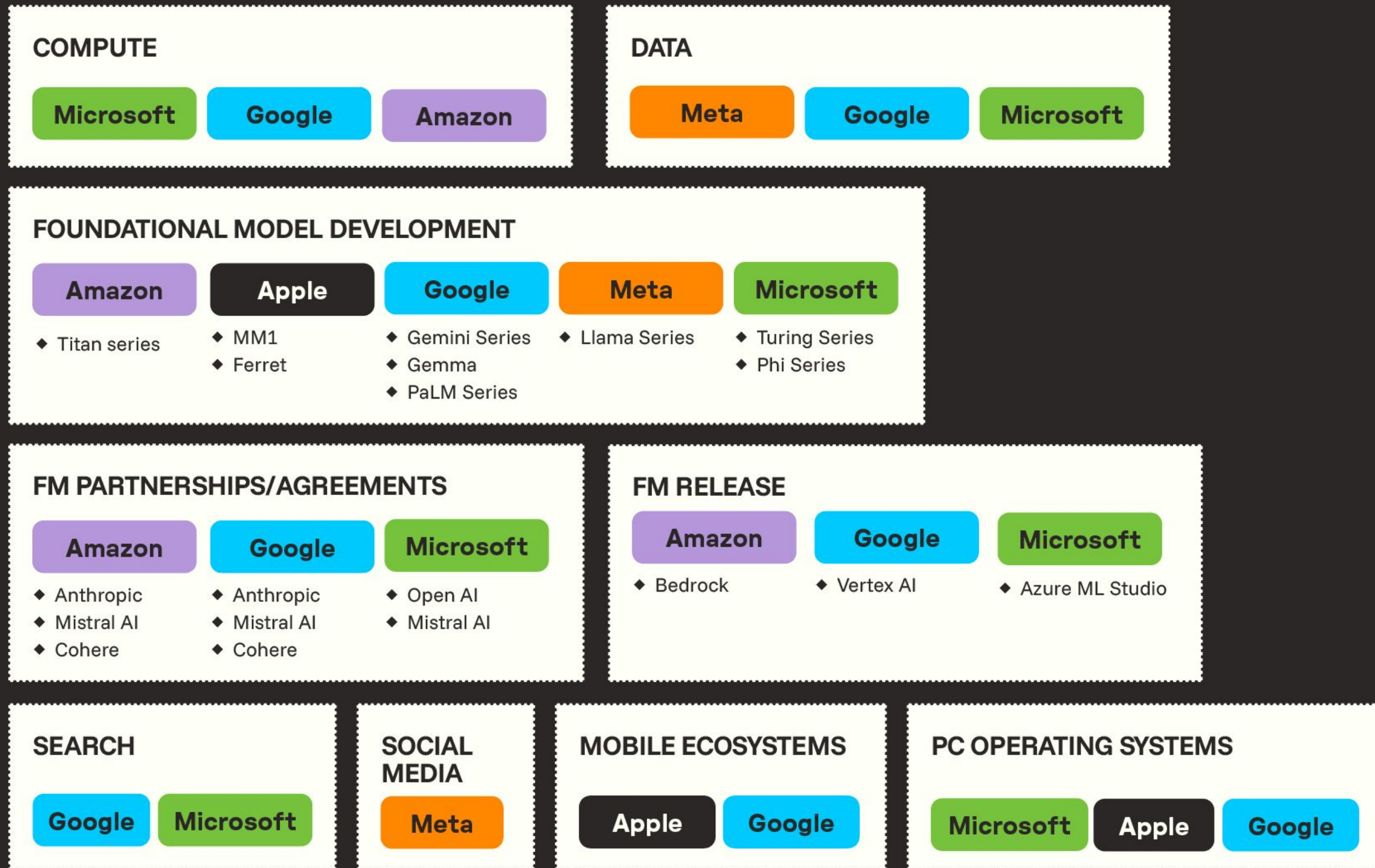
- Summarization that no one asked for, that is usually wrong
- **Expensive new vendor products pushed hard**
- Serious academic integrity issues
- **Exploitation of intellectual labor**
- Intellectual and creative decline
- **AI for AI's sake in workflows**
- Admin obsessions with efficiency, relevance, FOMO
- **Pushing towards an academic future that consists of AI curriculum taught by AI chatbots with student submissions generated by AI**

How we approach it

Almost no regulatory environment

- This is on purpose
- It's the Wild West out there
- Anyone can make these tools
- Very few checks and balances
- Tech giants say they want regulation
 - What they want is self-governance

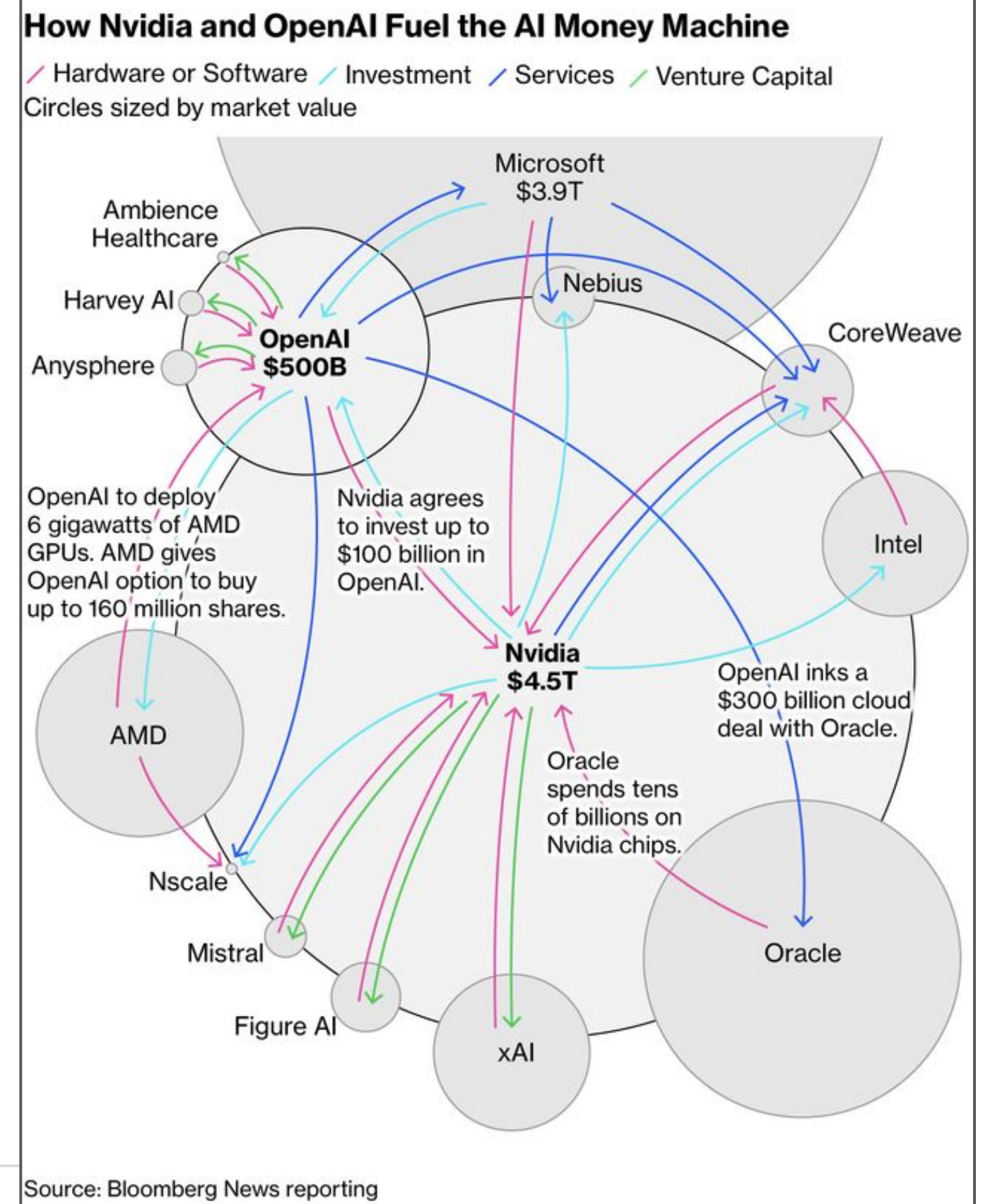
Big Tech Dominates AI Value Chain



AI Now Institute
AI landscape
report 2025

Why is AI everywhere?

- Tech companies have invested **billions** of dollars in AI
- Many of these companies use **circular financing** ->
- In the first half of 2025, capex on AI added more to the growth of the US economy than **all consumer spending combined**



About that bubble...

- It's been called a **metabubble**
 - Real estate
 - Technology
 - Abundant credit
- Spending with impunity on anything AI, but **not many profitable use cases** despite very high revenue projections

They're doing 2008 again!

- **Collateralized debt obligations**
 - Collateral = depreciating GPUs
- Tenancy rollover risk
 - Data centers are commercial landlords

Plus...nobody wants this

FORTUNE

Gen Z workers are so fearful AI will take their job they're intentionally sabotaging their company's AI rollout



Image designating no AI-generated content, by Catmachine, under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license](#).

Nearly a third of workers admit to sabotaging their company's AI strategy

FASTCOMPANY

White-collar workers are quietly rebelling against AI as 80% outright refuse adoption mandates

FORTUNE

RESPONDING TO AI HYPE

In the library and

beyond



**“But what about...
[hypothetical positive future use case]?”**

**The Purpose of a System is What it Does
(POSIWID)**



wint 

@dril



drunk driving may kill a lot of people, but it also helps a lot of people get to work on time, so, it;s impossible to say if its bad or not,

12:20 PM · May 9, 2014 · Twitter Web Client

Things to keep in mind

- People take this issue personally in a deep and unique way
- Small steps like leaning away from anthropomorphizing language can be impactful
 - AI doesn't "think" or "create," it computes
- Tech is not all or nothing, and it is constantly evolving
- Another opportunity to flex our digital info credibility muscles
 - We might not be able to solve the problem, but we can present the problem in the right way

A note about opting out!

- Lots of reasons someone might want to opt out:
 - Data collection and use concerns
 - Doubtful quality and accuracy of AI outputs
 - Social impacts - labor, copyright, energy use
 - You're thoughtful (picky even!) about tech use
 - Unclear about how or why AI is being used
 - Waiting for big tech to iron the kinks out (Meredith Broussard)
 - You just don't want to use it

Remember that opting out and being skeptical are legitimate responses to new tech!

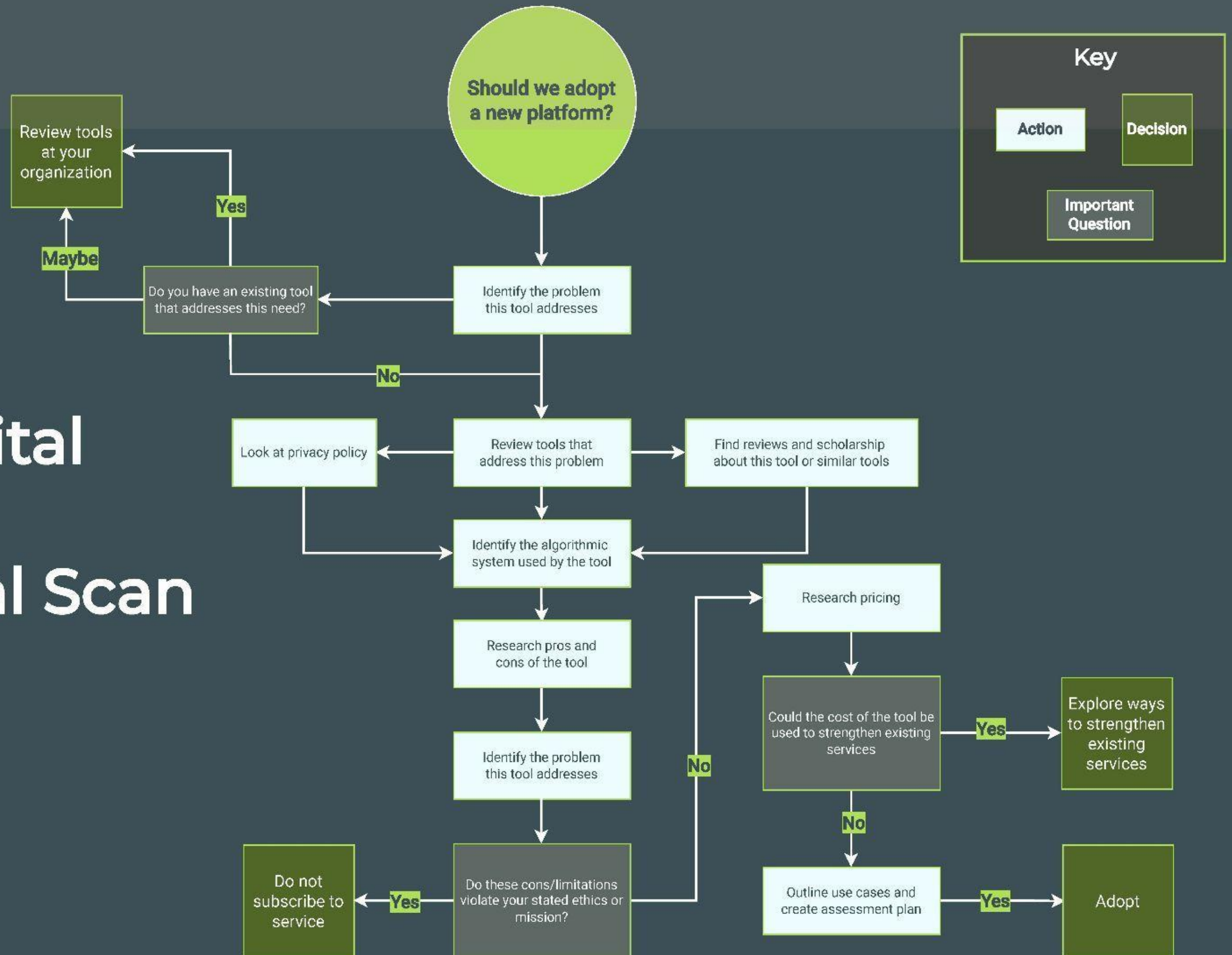
Resist hype narratives

- AI skepticism is growing
 - This correlates with how much people know about it
 - Lower Artificial Intelligence Literacy Predicts Greater AI Receptivity - Journal of Marketing, 2025, cited in HBR
- Take a public critical stance when possible
- Come to the conversation with your own talking points
 - Know your audience, understand their priorities
 - Young people are often moved by climate arguments
 - “It makes my job easier” - no, your boss is exploiting you and demanding more productivity for no increase in wages
 - POSIWID - when was the last time AI really worked?

Resist hype narratives

- Demand comprehensive implementation of new regulation
 - Transparency, accountability, environmental controls
- Approach AI critically
 - Talk to colleagues and decision makers
 - Offer educational programs to discuss AI ethics
 - Library Freedom Project offers continual trainings, resources, and community building on issues of tech ethics in libraries
- Push AI tools until they break
 - Helps you understand their limitations
 - Share these limitations with colleagues

Exploring Digital Tools: Basic Environmental Scan



Do not subscribe to service

Explore ways to strengthen existing services

Adopt

Educate yourself and follow critics

ALL OF THIS AND MORE IS LINKED IN THE RESOURCE LIST!

Books

- Blood in the Machine - Brian Merchant
- The AI Con - Emily M. Bender and Alex Hanna
- Empire of AI - Karen Hao
- Resisting AI: An Anti-Fascist Approach to Artificial Intelligence - Dan McQuillan
- The Mechanic and the Luddite: A ruthless criticism of technology and capitalism - Jathan Sadowski

Podcasts

- Podcast: Mystery AI Hype Theater 3000
- Tech Won't Save Us
- Episode of Millennials are Killing Capitalism, a materialist approach to AI

Media, journals, and newsletters

- Newsletter: Mystery AI Hype Theater 3000
- Where's Your Ed At?
- 404 Media - frequent critical AI coverage
- Critical AI (academic, peer-reviewed journal)
- Media Justice's Tech Broligarchy series

Create strong policy

- ALA AI Policy Working Group just released their draft of “Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Libraries”
 - Thorough and attempts to resist FOMO and hype
 - Prioritizes human skills and perspectives
 - Could be great for small libraries that need support as they build these policies, as well as libraries that exist within municipalities or larger institutions
 - Provides a foundation for talking points and conversation
 - Feedback period is open!

Create strong policy

- Use informational justice principles
 - Distributive: Information goods and information services should be **equitably distributed** among all members of the society.
 - Participatory: All members of the society should have opportunities to **communicate their point of view** alone or in concert with others, to have that point of view taken into account, and to **take part in shared decision making** about the provision of information resources.
 - Recognitional: Contents of information available within the information environment should include **fair and accurate representations** of all members of the society.

Roadmap for Action (AI Now)

- Target how the AI industry works against the interests of everyday people
 - Environmental and community health impacts
- Advance worker organizing to protect the public and our institutions from AI capture
 - Numerous labor campaigns about AI impacts
 - Athena Coalition
- Enact a “zero-trust” policy agenda for AI
 - AI cannot be used for emotion-detection systems, insurance claims, replacing teachers, and so on
 - Entire lifecycle regulation
- Bridge networks of expertise, policy, and narrative to strengthen AI advocacy
 - Library workers have entered the chat
- Reclaim a positive agenda for public-centered innovation without AI at the center
 - Defend the public sector and public interest

Offer critical programming

- Effective resistance needs organized people, and our patrons want to know about this stuff!
- Community organizing resources we like:
 - AI Now Institute Roadmap for Action
 - Kairos resource on fighting data centers
 - LittleSis powermapping toolkit
 - Workersdecide.tech (we'll talk about this!)
- New LFP resources will focus on patron education

WORKPLACE AI IMPLEMENTATION

B I N G O

AI increases efficiency & productivity	This is not deskilling, it's upskilling	It frees time for more valuable work	AI is here to stay	It's early tech, but will get better soon
AI is already helping me in my job	You must align with company values	Everyone else is using AI, we can't fall behind	There are ways to use AI ethically	Are you some sort of Luddite?
Its workers job to review bad AI output	If you don't learn AI, you won't grow your career		AI is what we need to excite investors	Funders/ the board are asking us to use it
You're just not using it right	This is the wave of the future	Customers are clamoring for it!	AI is just a tool	AI does the grunt work, you can be creative!
You used an early version, it's much better now!	You're not being mentally curious	We'll ensure data safety and privacy	We're not paid to worry about social harms	It's a fad, play along and let it blow over

[HTTPS://WORKERSDECIDE.TECH](https://workersdecide.tech)

Support a Luddite Club in your community

Flip the phone: Columbia's new Luddite chapter calls on students to turn off smartphones and dial up human connection

Students founded the club, which recently assembled to join an anti-tech rally downtown, last month.

They're Trying to Ditch Their Phones. Their Methods Are Unorthodox.

A student at the New School started a group to change her and her peers' relationship to technology.

[Learn more](#)

rose Milligan
3, 2025

On a recent Saturday, a group of about 100 people in conical gnome hats made of brightly colored manila envelopes gathered



Luddite group Lamp
3 smartphones.

Vassar Luddites rethink relationships with phones

UMN Luddite club builds community offline

The group aims to engage in conversations about technology use and foster connections face-to-face.

Use our critical AI talking points

AI TALKING POINTS FOR LIBRARY WORKERS




WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT AI?

Right now, thanks to enormous venture capital funding and a lot of hype about AI are influenced by this hype. There is some potential in AI for jobs, and other serious ethical concerns.

Who is most likely to be impacted by AI and are in a position to educate the public.

AI TALKING POINTS FOR LIBRARY WORKERS




HOW SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT IT?

Consider who you're talking to, and what their concerns or priorities might be:

Administration or Board Members	IT Departments	Staff or Faculty	Patrons and Community Members
<p>What liability concerns exist if we incorporate AI into our operations?</p> <p>The data collection practices employed by most AI companies go against the Library Code of Ethics, specifically regarding intellectual property and privacy.</p> <p>With library funding already at risk, can we afford this tool?</p>	<p>What amount of double-checking or training might this add to someone's workload?</p> <p>How does this model's data usage and privacy practices align with ours?</p> <p>Would training others to use this tool add extra labor or additional duties to your existing work?</p>	<p>Is this tool actually making your work easier, or is it a way to demand more productivity from you without additional training or compensation?</p> <p>Have you been given time/space to provide feedback on these tools?</p>	<p>Using AI has a significant environmental impact, the extent of which is still unknown.</p> <p>It will soon become hard to identify what is real and what is AI.</p> <p>Should we let a computer perform creative work, or should we pay artists for their labor?</p>

WHAT ARE SOME ETHICAL ISSUES OF AI?

What it creates:	How we approach it:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI is used in predatory surveillance systems and military applications AI reproduces existing human bias due to training on human-created content AI regurgitates fake information while sounding authoritative It perpetuates an "If AI can create it for free, why do we need to pay a person?" approach to labor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very little regulation or oversight around the creation and use of AI AI is part of a well-funded hype cycle that continues to grow These tools are advertised as a fix-all to enhance every aspect of work and play Reliance on AI is already shown to negatively impact our cognitive abilities There is a swift and uncritical adoption of AI across sectors

LFP is mapping library vendors and AI

Library Freedom Project AI in Library Vendor Tools Database : Vendor Tools with AI

This database is an ongoing list of artificial intelligence integrations into vendor tools typically used in higher education settings.

Edits or additions? Please complete [this form](#) and we'll review your contributions shortly.

Created and maintained by Library Freedom Project. Questions? Email: info@libraryfreedomproject.org.

PRODUCT NAME	VENDOR	UPDATE TO TOOL or NEW FUNCTION	TOOL/FUNCTION	FUNCTION	TYPE OF DATA STORED?	LANGUAGE MODEL USED
ACM Digital Library	Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)	Update to search results		AI-generated summaries that appear at results level and record level; AI-generated audio summaries ("podcasts")		"Gemini 1.5 Pro, Google"
Alma	Ex Libris/Clarivate	Update to metadata workflows	AI: metadata assistant	metadata creation		
Alma Specto	Ex Libris/Clarivate	Update to metadata workflows	AI: metadata assistant	metadata creation		

Alma Specto	Ex Libris/Clarivate					
Atypon Experience Platform	Wiley					
Axielle Collections	Axiell	Update to metadata				
BCC Research	BCC Research	Update to search				
Bibliovation discovery layer module	LibLime					
	Beegees Computers					

LANGUAGE MODEL USED	CAN AI BE TURNED OFF?	HOW DO YOU TURN AI OFF?	DISCLAIMERS: statements from the vendors themselves regarding data collection, accuracy, etc.
Gemini 1.5 Pro, Google	Yes	Don't subscribe to it.	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools on the ACM Digital Library
	Yes	administrator must disable it within the configuration menu	
	Yes	administrator must disable it within the configuration menu	
	Yes	Don't subscribe to it.	
	Yes	Don't subscribe to it.	

<http://tiny.cc/lfp-ai-in-vendor-tools>

Ask questions, be annoying about it

LIBRARY FREEDOM PROJECT

Questions to Ask Vendors About AI

Many vendors providing services to libraries and archives have recently started offering “AI” products. This frenzy to offer AI services doesn’t engage with the substantive ethical critiques against using AI, and there are serious possibilities that adopting AI tools may undermine library operations. These questions can help you critically engage when encountering someone trying to market you an “AI product.”

1. Start here: Basic and technical functions of the tool

- What type of “AI” tool is this, and what aspect of my
- How is this product different from other pieces of yo
- Did your company build this tool?
- If this tool uses an existing API, what is the value ad
- What tech support do we get with this?
- How is this product licensed? What is the pricing mo
- How long has this product been on the market, how
- Who owns this product in your organization (e.g. Eng
- What’s your quality control procedure for this produ
- How long has this product been on the market, how development, and what environments has it been te
- Who owns this product in your organization (e.g. Eng
- What’s your quality control procedure for this produ reconciled in your model? (e.g. how does your produ mechanical errors?)
 - Rather than saying “I don’t know”, instead provid answers to a query are null/nonexistent
 - Providing answers that confirm the assumed bia

2. Environmental considerations

- Are you familiar with the [ALA Core Value of Sustainability](#)? How does the energy usage of this product integrate with libraries’ commitment to curtail our resource consumption?
- What are your plans for projected growth in terms of energy and data usage?
- Can you explain in plain language the energy costs per query?
- Who from the organization is responsible for sustainability? Where do you publish ESG (environmental social governance) information? Is this different in the U.S. than it is for other North American, European, or world-wide consumers?

3. Labor expectations

- How does your company foresee its own use of generative AI? Has it replaced any of its workforce with AI?
- What evidence can you share about how this tool will make my work more efficient without adding more to my workflow (learning new tools and troubleshooting)?
- For training and prompting, what kinds of content were/are human data workers enlisted to reinforce and under what conditions did/do they labor?

New LFP resources on the way

- Analysis of survey results
- Flyers for all AI opt-out guidance
- Adapted AI vendor questions for other audiences
- AI and labor resources
- AI and mental health resources

Checking in...

do we need a break?



AI AND LIBRARIES

What are library workers
seeing?



AI in libraries

- Automates the “boring” stuff
- Recommendation tools are marketed to us
- ChatGPT to automate text
- Chatbots for reference
- GPTZero for checking plagiarism
- Major library vendors like OCLC and Clarivate are using AI tools and their own data - lots of generative AI

Messaging - what we're told

- Inevitability
- FOMO
- Revolutionary potential/future benefit justifies current reality
- Makes my job/school/life easier
 - Those things *are* hard

Issues with AI and library vendor tools

- Reproducibility
 - These are models that learn and change as they go
- Search transparency and user autonomy
- Bias and inaccuracies
- UX and instruction
 - Students passively accepting outputs
 - Summarization is superficial
- Energy and sustainability

LFP'S AI IN LIBRARIES

SURVEY

Some preliminary findings



LFP AI in libraries survey

- Conducted September - October 2025
- 555 responses in 3 weeks, library workers in all types of libraries
- Examining attitudes about AI in libraries, worker impacts, patron impacts, vendor products
- Responses were overwhelmingly negative, skeptical, concerned
- Admin approach is mostly hype-driven, uncritical adoption
- Huge desire for resources around critical programming, policy, and talking points against AI adoption

What we asked...

Do you have concerns about AI? If so, what are your concerns?

AI hype and uncritical adoption

Bias and reproduction of existing harms

Cognitive and mental health impacts

Data privacy

Deprofessionalization/deskilling

Inaccuracy and hallucinations

Intellectual property and copyright

Lack of regulatory environment

Lack of transparency

Labor exploitation

Military and policing applications

Misinfo, disinfo, fakes

Political ideology linked to AI

Pressure to outsource labor to AI

Quality control

Resource extraction and climate impacts

Other?

What respondents said...

Do you have concerns about AI? If so, what are your concerns?	
AI Hype and uncritical adoption	81.5%
Bias and reproduction of existing harms	82.8%
Cognitive and mental health impacts of AI usage	74.5%
Data privacy	84.2%
Inaccuracy and hallucinations	85.9%
Misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, and fakes	90.8%

More respondents AI concerns

- Climate impacts and energy usage of data centers
- **Low quality content**
- Devaluation of knowledge and creativity
- **Long term impacts on cognitive skills**
- Further consolidation of power and capital
- **Use of these machines to create plausible deniability and avoid accountability from those in positions of power**
- Conflicts with the values of the profession of librarianship, yet admin and professional orgs are seemingly on board with adoptions

What we asked...

How do you see AI impacting your day-to-day work?

How do you see AI impacting your field/specialty?

What respondents said...

- Patrons asking about AI citations or books, AI research, other misinfo
- **Student plagiarism**
- Patrons complaining about AI tools in search engines and library resources
- **Time wasted trying to find ways to make AI efficiency**
- Many people explicitly avoiding using it - moral, ethical, environmental concerns
- **Forced to attend AI workshops that are useless**
- Staff submitting AI-generated content
- **Less interaction with patrons, learned helplessness from patrons**
- Necessity of creating AI literacy programs
- **Lots of pressure to adopt AI for AI's sake**
- Labor implications - devaluing library work, taking jobs, forced adoption
- **Push for efficiency above all else, adding to workloads to make up for these AI efficiencies, taking creative labor away**

What we asked...

How do you see AI impacting your patrons?

What respondents said...

- Less personal relationships
- **Less learning by searching, losing research abilities**
- Unquestioning belief in AI summaries
- **Hallucinated materials**
- Mental health impacts
- **Literacy impacts**
- Less likely to use librarians for assistance
- **Confusion, alarm, overwhelm**
- More likely to disregard library reference chat as AI
- **Widening the digital literacy gap**
- Plagiarism
- **Less attention span**
- Critical thinking sidelined in favor of “prompt engineering”

What we asked...

Have you come across or been asked to purchase AI products at work from vendors? What have your experiences been?

Has AI been implemented by vendors without your library's consent?

What respondents said...

Answer	Responses
yes	45.12%
unsure	31.93%
no	20.65%
with management consent	0.96%
optional features	0.76%

Does your library have an AI policy?

Yes we do	17.9%
No we do not	57.9%
Working on it	24.4%

More issues with library vendor issues...

- Reproducibility, no search transparency
- UX and instruction issues
 - Students passively accepting outputs
 - Summarization is superficial
- High costs for the library
- Forced adoption and aggressive salesmanship
- Confused patrons
- Horrible products that no one asked for, like the EnvisionWare AI librarian



It's heartening to see others as concerned as I am.

I feel like I'm going crazy. It seems like everyone loves AI but me.

...glad that (at least some) folks in the library world are vocal about their concerns around AI.

I know of others with similar experiences and wish we had more guidance on how to handle this conundrum.

AI does not have to be inevitable.

**How do we feel
about another break?**



BUILDING AI POLICY

**What do we need to keep in
mind?**



Considerations

- Organizational hierarchy or infrastructure
 - What policies already exist?
 - Are there policies you *must* adhere to?
 - Is there flexibility within those policies?
 - Can the library create its own policy?

Considerations

- Where are the pressure points?
 - What aspects, tools, or services within the library should this policy cover?
 - Internal and external
 - How can we craft this policy to cover our bases?
 - What vendors have integrated AI already and can we turn it off?
 - Worth tracking this!

Considerations

- Definitions and justification
 - Why does the library care about AI?
 - Core values of librarianship
 - What do we *mean* when we say AI?
 - How does AI impact the privacy of our community members?
 - Threat modeling!
 - Include the “Guideline” and the “Why”

Considerations

- Abolition versus reform
 - Where does your library fall on that spectrum?
 - Where are you drawing the line? What is acceptable use and what is not?

Considerations

- Who do you need on your side?
 - How does admin feel about AI?
 - Who do you need to convince in order to create or change policy?

What we asked...

How would you describe the attitude around AI at your workplace?
And where are these attitudes coming from?

AI is an inevitability

AI is generally harmless fun

AI is a neutral tool, we should focus on ethical use

AI doesn't work, so it won't replace library workers anytime soon

AI will make workloads heavier

AI will make workloads lighter

Apathy/disinterest

Curiosity (interest in trying it out)

Don't know enough to take a position

Don't want to fall behind

Frustration about forceful adoption of AI

It's just a fad/trend

Manufacturing consent to compel adoption

Overwhelmed/alienated

Skepticism towards use value

Waiting out the hype

Other?

How people responded...

How would you describe the attitude around AI at your workplace?
And where are these attitudes coming from?

63.1% - AI is an inevitability

59.6% - Skepticism towards use value

54.2% - Curiosity

- Worry from staff who work with marginalized patrons
- Teachers concerned about cheating and brain rot
- People who spend more time using it or dealing with it from patrons are more frustrated and skeptical
- Lots of places are not talking about it or hearing about it at all; some are stifled by the amount it's being discussed or demanded
- Many workplaces are divided
- Lots of burnout from AI conversations

Influencing stakeholders



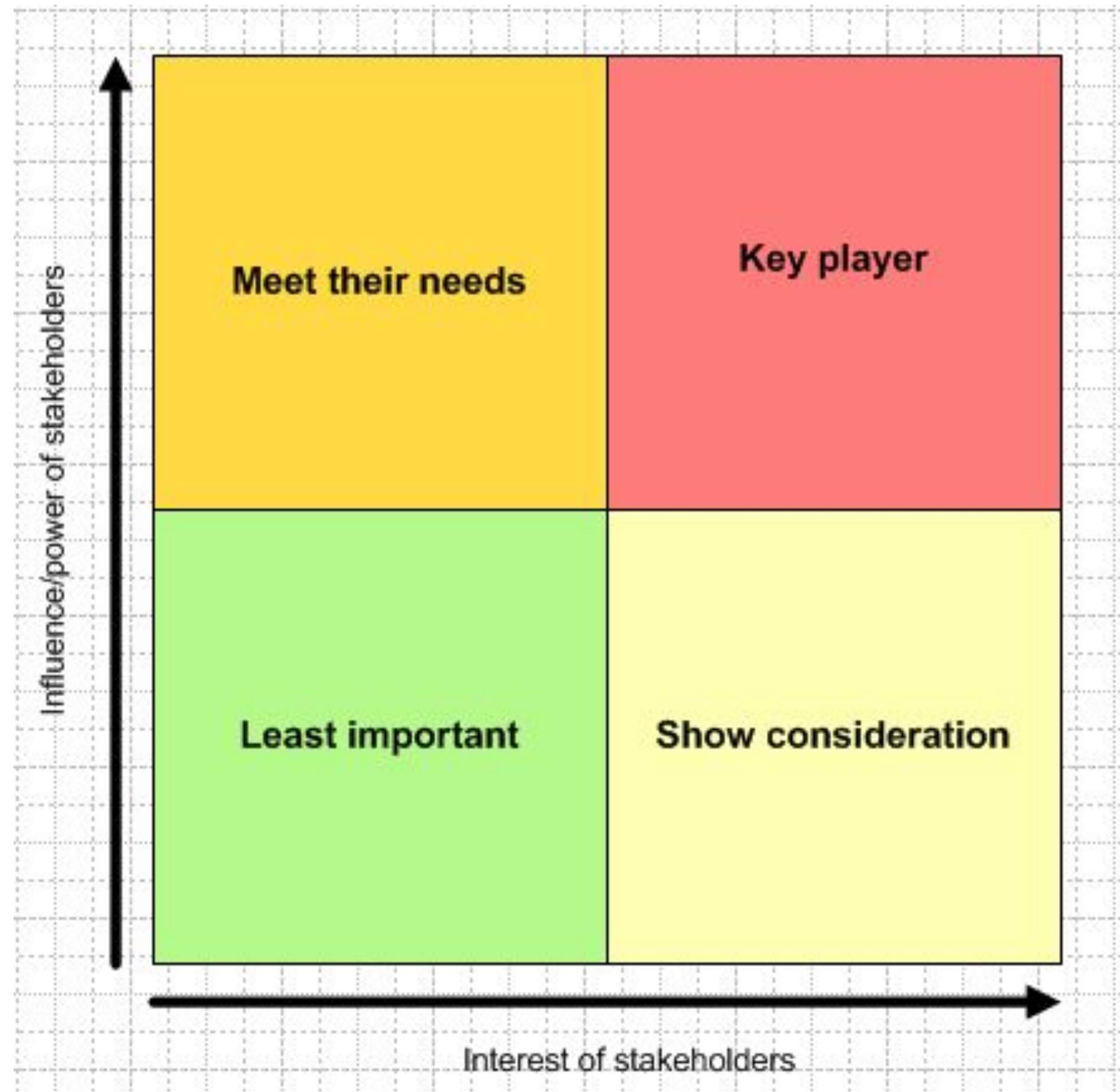
What do you want to accomplish?

- Programs? Policy change? New infrastructure?
- What is your (realistic) action plan?
- What commitments do you need from others?
- Are your supporters already on board?
- What's your organizational culture like?

How to prepare your argument

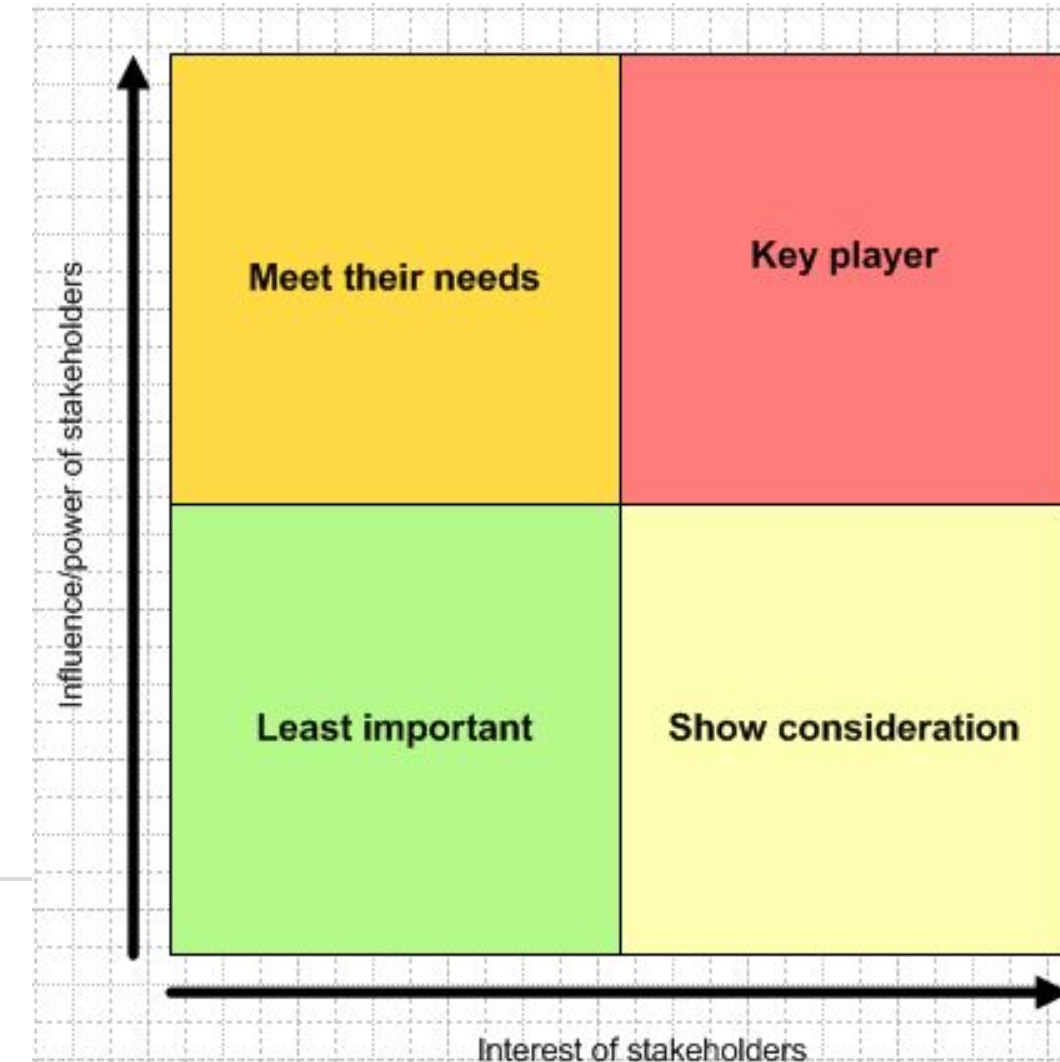
- What's the influence level of your audience?
- What do they already care about?
- How important is it to convince them in order to get what you want (or get them on your side)?
- Think about the reasons they might say no
- When/where will you start the conversation?
- Who are your supporters?
- What personal stories are you bringing with you?
 - What threat models are you considering?

Stakeholder mapping



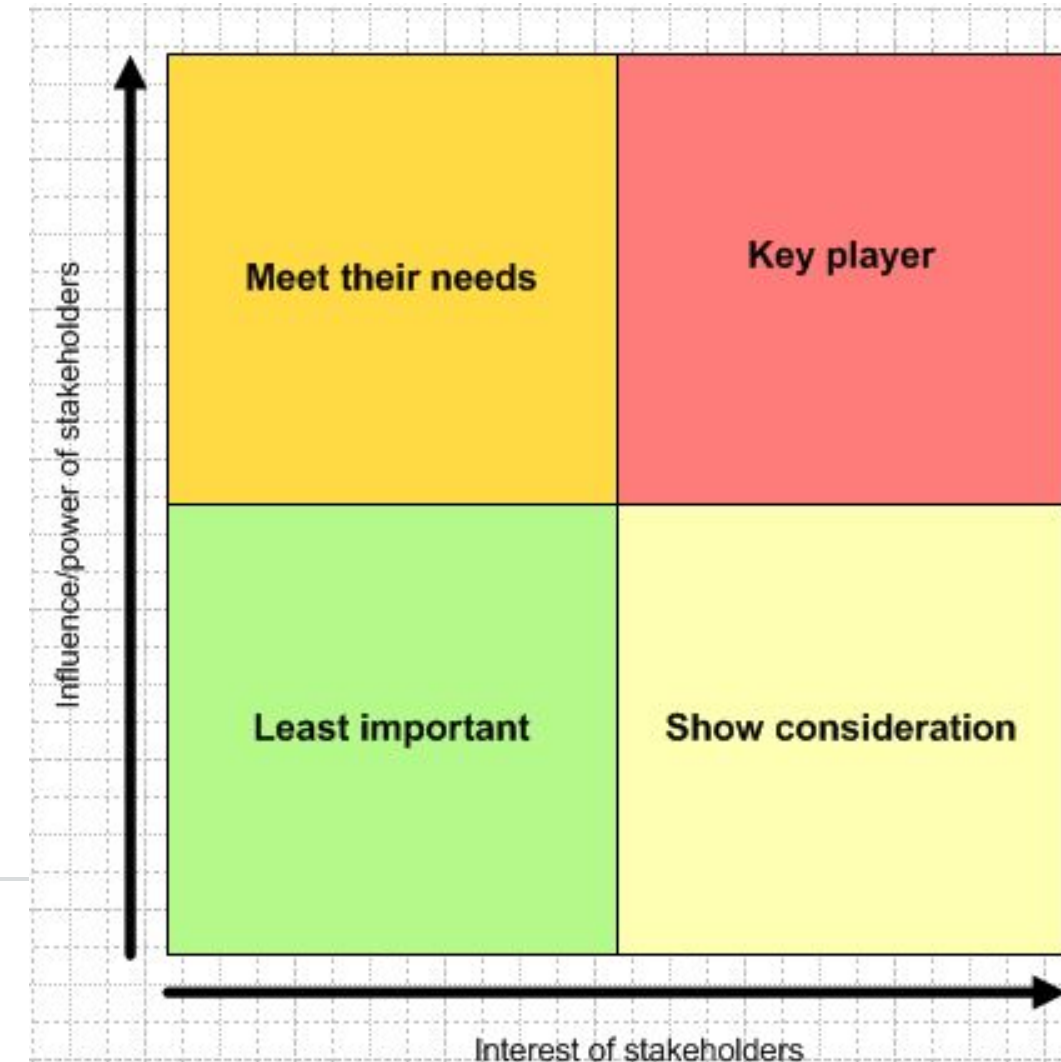
Stakeholders: Admin and boards

- Reputation of org
- Regulatory compliance
- Policy compliance
- Strategic plan
- Professional accolades
- Power
- Financial responsibility
- Liability
- Unwilling to take big risks
- What else?



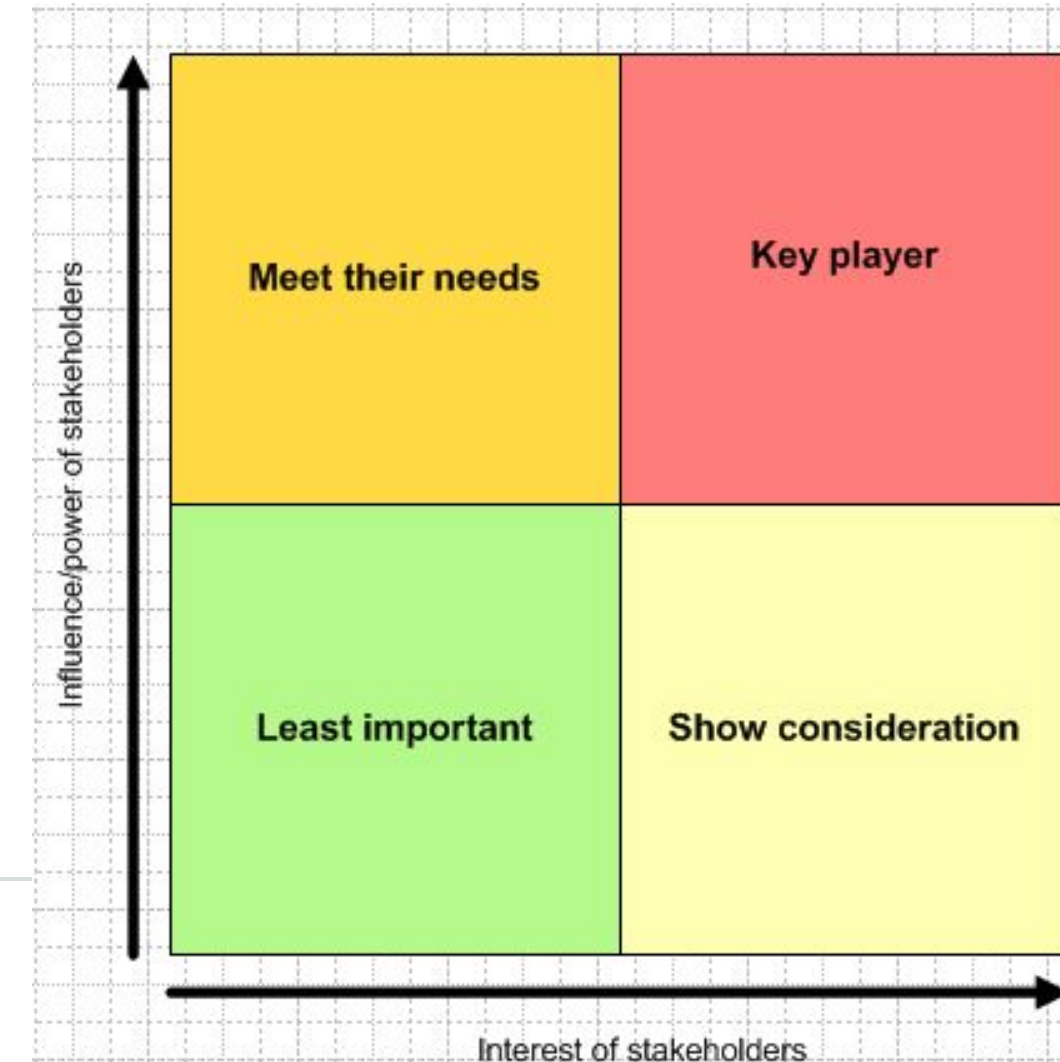
Stakeholders: IT departments

- Security
- Things “just working”
- Liability
- Compliance
- Not having to teach staff something new
- Not having to learn something new
- Not adding to their existing workload
- What else?



Stakeholders: Other staff/faculty

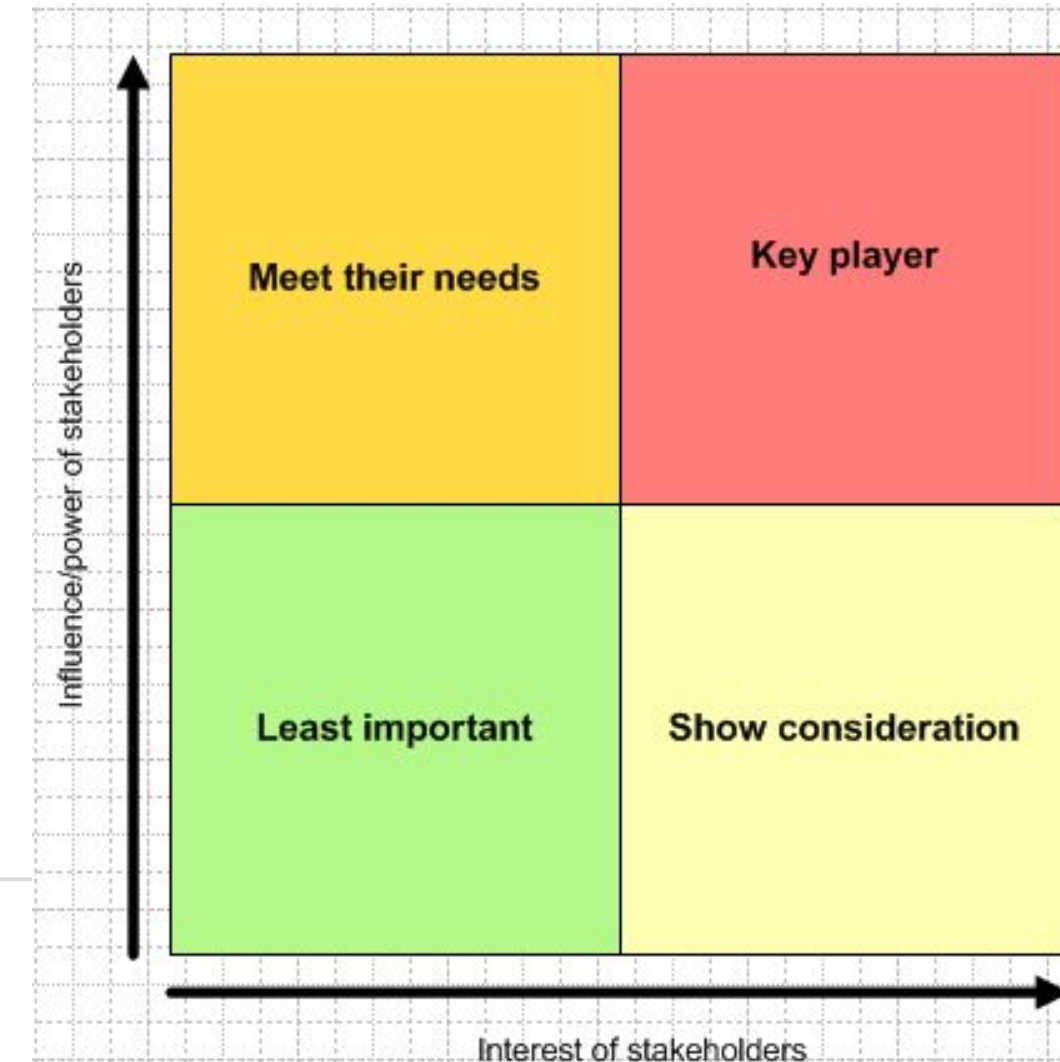
- Fear of change
- Limited capacity
- Professional accolades
- Professional development/credit
- Personal or professional curiosity
- Institutional compliance
- Personal stake
- Ethics, library values, DEI
- What else?



Vendors

- Compliance with internal policies
- Money/renewed contracts
- Wanting to seem innovative

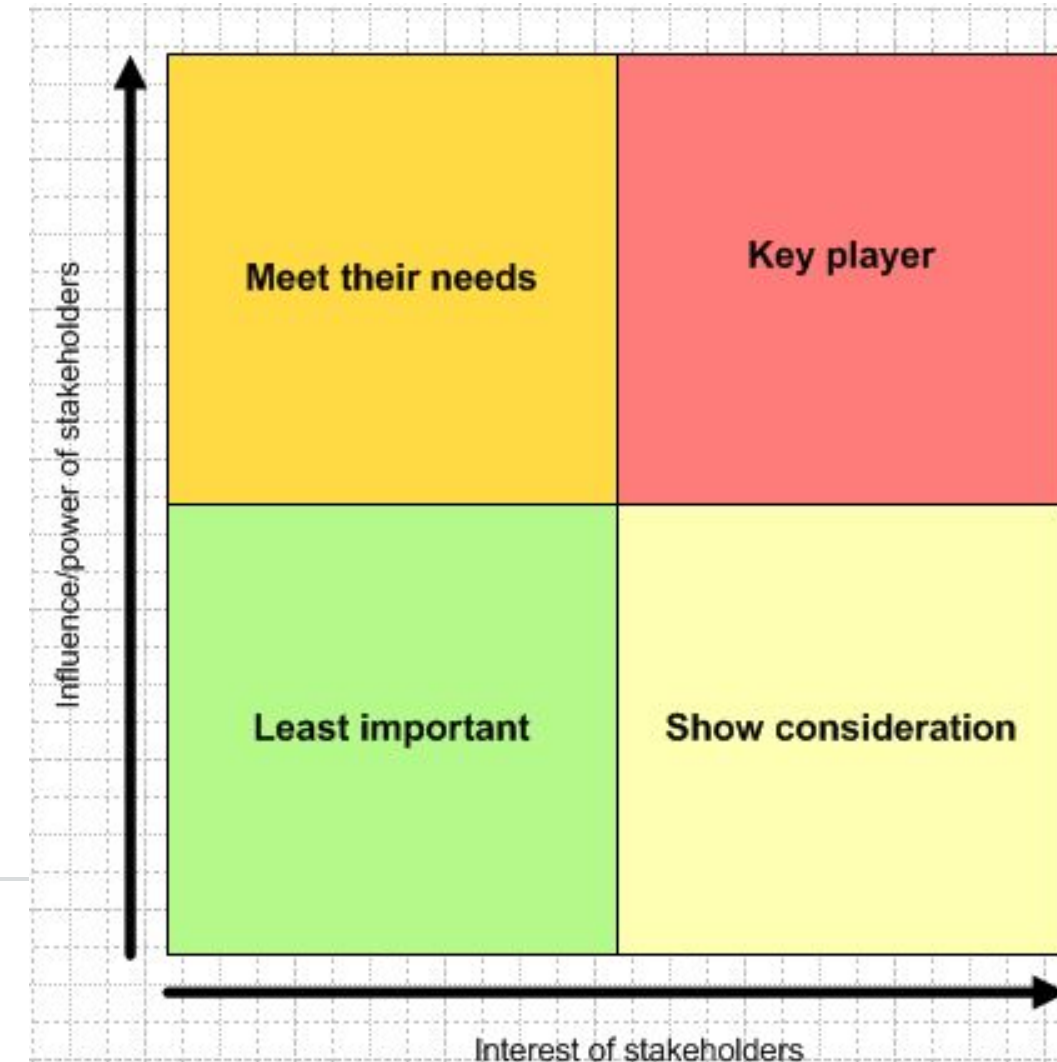
- Liability
- Desire for data
- What else?



Patrons

- Technology fears/
digital literacy issues
- Financial concerns
- Not sure it's "for them"
- Skeptical of new tech

- Personal curiosity
- Personal stake
- What else?



**RESPONDING TO
COMMON PRO-AI
ARGUMENTS**

At work and in the world



WORKPLACE AI IMPLEMENTATION

B I N G O

AI increases efficiency & productivity	This is not deskilling, it's upskilling	It frees time for more valuable work	AI is here to stay	It's early tech, but will get better soon
AI is already helping me in my job	You must align with company values	Everyone else is using AI, we can't fall behind	There are ways to use AI ethically	Are you some sort of Luddite?
Its workers job to review bad AI output	If you don't learn AI, you won't grow your career		AI is what we need to excite investors	Funders/ the board are asking us to use it
You're just not using it right	This is the wave of the future	Customers are clamoring for it!	AI is just a tool	AI does the grunt work, you can be creative!
You used an early version, it's much better now!	You're not being mentally curious	We'll ensure data safety and privacy	We're not paid to worry about social harms	It's a fad, play along and let it blow over

[HTTPS://WORKERSDECIDE.TECH](https://workersdecide.tech)

Let's use the WorkersDecide.Tech BINGO card!

[www.workersdecide.tech/resources/2025-09-18-bingo](https://workersdecide.tech/resources/2025-09-18-bingo)

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AI is here to stay.

AI is inevitable.

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AI is just a tool.

It's a fad—play along and let it blow over.

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If you don't learn AI, you won't grow your career.

Everyone else is using AI, we can't fall behind.

What other pro-AI arguments do you hear?

WHAT IS LFP

AND HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?



What is LFP?

We provide libraries with skills focused on privacy, intellectual freedom, and information democracy.

We work collaboratively to drive policy, teach stakeholders, and enact change.

We are informed by a social justice, feminist, anti-racist approach.

We believe in the combined power of long-term organizing and short-term harm reduction.

We believe a better world is possible! We teach toward optimism, not fear.

A Brief Timeline of LFP

LFP is put on the map for its advocacy related to libraries serving as Tor relays

Offering trainings with a focus on privacy and anti-surveillance in libraries

Library Freedom Institutes bring together groups of library advocates for six-month intensives

LFI evolves into Crash Courses, short-form institutes

Increasing resources with help from member volunteers

LFP Camp in New Jersey

LFP earns Mellon and IMLS funding

LFP hires staff and increases capacity

Regional hubs in Philly, Portland, Iowa City, Atlanta, Appalachia

Offering regularly scheduled virtual trainings

Awarded EFF recognition for information democracy!



OUR MISSION

Library Freedom Project is rethinking the library professional organization by creating a network of values-driven librarians taking action together to build information democracy.



INFORMATION DEMOCRACY

Intellectual freedom is achieved when there is equity of access to information; when people can seek information without threats of surveillance; and when people are informed about the power dynamics of who controls information.





OUR CORE VALUES

A people-first community

An ethic of care

Solidarity with oppressed peoples

Librarianship is political

A better world is possible

THE TECH ISSUES WE FACE

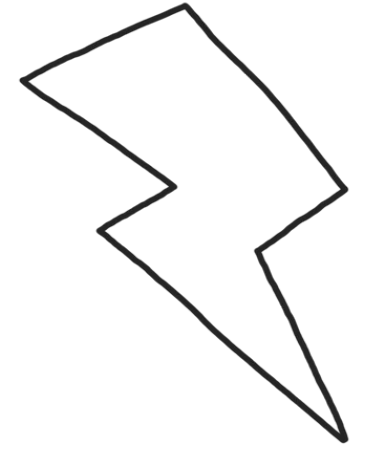
- Surveillance
- Resource extraction and waste
- Racism and bias
- Addiction and depression by design
- Increasingly impossible to opt out
- Made by people who care about money, not people



**Many people in this room have the knowledge and skills to resist -
most people do not**

We can use the library as a site of resistance against bad tech

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



Libraries...

- ...are trusted spaces
- ...are one of the last truly public spaces
- ...serve all walks of life
- ...provide some of the only tech education available in many communities
- ...help people be smarter about technology
- ...are free 99% of the time

We train librarians about technology

They influence the public at a broad scale and share with local communities

Resulting in more self-determination for the public

WHAT WE

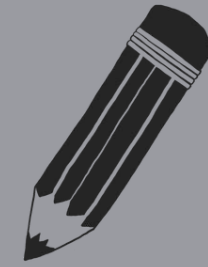
DO



Community of practice



Collaborations with civil rights and tech orgs



Resources to download and print



Intensive and one-off trainings



Community events

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- Collaborative
- Supportive
- Intentional
- 160+ members in 30+ states
 - Plus Canada and Mexico



Library Freedom Institute

- LFP's intensive critical tech and privacy training
 - Ideas from this talk in practice
 - 15 weeks plus in-person weekend
 - Sliding scale to zero
 - Meet other library workers, learn and build resistance strategies together
- Next LFI
 - Application period will open later this year!
 - info@libraryfreedom.org to join our newsletter list for updates



LFI Cohorts



SOME LFI WEEKLY TOPICS

SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

THE GLOBAL POWER OF TECH COMPANIES

THE LIFECYCLE OF DATA

ALGORITHMS AND IDEOLOGY

SURVEILLANCE OF WORKERS

CONSUMER SURVEILLANCE TECH

TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCE EXTRACTION

SURVEILLANCE AND THE CARCERAL STATE

Library Freedom Project is **a community of learning and action**. We come together to learn—about surveillance and technology, about our rights to privacy and autonomy, about all of this within our social context of racism, sexism, and capitalism—and then **we implement our learning, in our local library communities, across our profession**. And we do all of that in an ongoing cycle, because there's always more to learn and more to do.

Kelly McElroy

I'm always on the lookout for paths to **professional development beyond higher education**—LFP has been just that (and so much more), supporting me through privacy education and opportunities to collaborate on projects in my field alongside folks I'm deeply aligned with. Library Freedom Project is a **necessary space where library workers with shared values can come together, share resources, and get real stuff done.**

Miranda Pratt

My LFI experience was phenomenal. Not only is it a patron-centered curriculum that focuses on the importance of privacy, it **places an emphasis on the connection between anti-racist and anti-oppression values with that of library labor**. The community continues to thrive in both online and offline spaces, where librarians share resources, news, and updates, as we continue this important advocacy work.

Junior Tidal

Trainings

Privacy 101

Privacy and Security for Reproductive Information Seekers

Terms of Service

Intellectual Freedom Talking Points

Powermapping and Open-Source Intelligence

Anti-Doxxing

...and more!

All available at **vimeo.com/libraryfreedominstitute**

COMMUNITY EVENTS



LFP Camp
Regional Meetings
Conferences
Social Hours
Book Buzzes
Book Club



LFP at Conferences



Membership

Dues are based on a sliding scale from \$0 up

Welcoming to early-career or non-MLIS library workers

Free access to toolkits, resources, and trainings

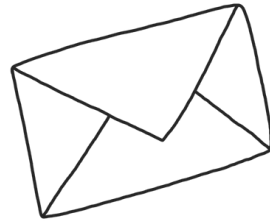
Member-access to our Discord server and community of practice

Regular meetings with other members across the country

Member listserv where job openings, calls for proposals, and other opportunities are shared

RESOURCES

libraryfreedom.org/resources



Presentations, bookmarks, posters, fliers, zines, and talking points

Passive resources and teaching tools for librarians to use 1:1 or in library programs



Actionable privacy tips and accessible privacy education

Examples:

- Guide to Protecting Yourself from Online Harassment
- Vendor Privacy Scorecard and Audit for Libraries
- AI Talking Points and AI Questions to Ask Vendors
- Printable bookmarks and fliers with privacy tips
- Privacy Policy Template for Your Library
- One-pagers: Facial Recognition, Stalkerware, Cookies
- Trauma-informed Practice: A Guide
- Privacy 101 info sheets
- Privacy Micro Modules
- More!!!



RESPONDING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE LIBRARY

NOTE: This is not meant to convey legal advice.

Imagine a police/parole officer, federal/state agent, or other law enforcement has entered your library and requested patron data.

What should you expect? How can you respond? How can state laws and library policy support you in this interaction?

KNOW YOUR STATE LIBRARY LAWS

Some states have additional laws that can support you, for example:

- Illinois' Biometric Privacy Act
- California Consumer Privacy Act
- New York SHIELD Act

Patron privacy is an integral part of library privacy laws, as well as the codes that govern library services. US state library privacy laws usually cover:

- Any record that is used to ID the library patron—including name, address, telephone number, or email address
- Any transaction that can identify a patron's borrowing information or use of library information resources—often this includes e-books and e-readers

REMEMBER

Your job is to keep patron information confidential.

Their job is to prove that accessing this information is necessary

WHAT IS A WARRANT?

A written court order—issued by a court and signed by a state or federal judge—authorizing a law enforcement officer to make an arrest, a seizure, or a search of some private area.

An arrest warrant that does not have a name

on it may still be validly used for an arrest if it describes an individual with enough detail to identify them, and a search warrant that does not have a name on it may still be valid if it gives the correct address and description of the place the officers will be searching.

A warrant must contain:

- Judge's name
- Name/address of person
- Address of place
- Items being searched for
- Agency conducting search/arrest

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF AN OFFICER COMES TO MY LIBRARY?

Ask them if they have a warrant.

If NO: you do not need to answer any questions about patrons.

If YES: ask to see the warrant.

If it does not contain the required information, say you do not consent to the search, but do not interfere if they search anyway.

If you are allowed to watch the search, you should.

Take notes and call your library's lawyer as soon as possible.



libraryfreedom.org



info@libraryfreedom.org

DIGITAL SCAMS AND FRAUD

Scamming is a growth industry. Advances in technology, as well as the widespread availability of personal data online, have created an explosion in online scamming and fraud. Know how to spot these scams and what to do if you become victim to them.



SOME TYPES OF SCAMS

Imposter scams

- You get a call about a fake insurance claim, warranty, health care issue, tech support, etc
- The scammer wants you to believe there's an issue you need to address immediately
- These scams intend to make you reveal personal info (also known as "phishing")
- Some use AI voice cloning to mimic the voice of a friend or loved one in trouble

Invoice, bill, debt, or advanced fee fraud

- These email scams want you to think you owe money and are in danger if you don't pay up
- Something about these messages is usually "off" - the email address is strange, the body of the message has typos or other errors, or it looks copy/pasted
- Often, any links or attachments are malware that can infect your computer - DONT CLICK!

Fallout from data breaches

- If your personal info was compromised in a data breach, scammers may take advantage of that with fake emails from companies impacted by the breach, or use your compromised data to initiate one of these other scams

Scareware

- Urgent messages that appear as pop-up ads on a user's computer
- Intended to make the user think their computer is infected with malware or a virus

IF YOU GET SCAMMED: FTC CONSUMER PROTECTION

- **Report fraud:** [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov)
- **Report identity theft:** www.identitytheft.gov
- **More resources:** consumer.ftc.gov/scams

PROTECT YOURSELF

Remember that **scammers use emotion as a tactic**

- Stay calm
- Hang up the phone, leave the computer
- Call someone you trust
 - Do you know someone savvy with tech?
 - Try calling your local librarian!

Use **strong, complex passwords**

- Store passwords in a password manager
- Use 2-factor authentication for more safety

Run **software updates** for the latest security

Use an **ad-blocker** to avoid malware

Make sure websites you visit use **HTTPS**

Check to see if you've been caught up in a **data breach** at: haveibeenpwned.com

Be cautious when opening emailed links or attachments, or when answering calls from unknown numbers

Use a safety phrase with family, friends, healthcare providers, etc

- If they call you, **ask for the safety phrase**

WHAT IS STALKERWARE?

Stalkerware is an app that runs on a computer or smartphone and sends all of your information to another person without your permission or knowledge.

Do you have a stalker or abuser that consistently seems to know everything about you? Have they referenced something you'd only shared privately?

You might be a victim of stalkerware.

HOW CAN THIS HAPPEN?

- Open knowledge of your passwords
- Physical access to your devices
- Opening malicious email attachments

Use different, complex passwords for each service (Instagram, Facebook, etc), encrypt your devices (and PIN-lock your phones) and don't click on links or attachments in email unless you're completely confident in the sender.

HOW CAN I FIX THIS?

WARNING

An attacker will immediately know if you've removed Stalkware from your device. Make a safety plan (domestic violence shelter, friends, etc) before you continue.

- Reset your passwords (use a password manager) and enable 2-Factor Authentication
- Back-up your device and reset it to the factory settings. Restore your photos and contacts but **don't** restore your apps.
- Always keep your apps and operating system updated.



What is a Cookie?



FUNCTION

Cookies are data files that allow smooth navigation between websites, return to previous site activities, save site user preferences, and connect user's browser with the web server.

THREAT

Cookies have access to user data that can be used by third parties and other organizations to track users and collect sensitive data without their knowledge and permission.

SOLUTIONS

- Disable third-party cookies in your browser's settings.
- Use an Ad-blocker.
- Use your browser's "Incognito Mode".
- Ask a Librarian!

IF YOU: 

use personal information (e.g. addresses, pet's name)
 create a password for multiple accounts
 reuse your password
 that can weaken your protection.

STRONG?
 Your password protect your account and information. So, what makes a password

long, unique, hard to guess, complex, random

is it ?

You may have passwords for the following:

- mail
- online dating
- social media
- bank website
- student account
- online shopping
- store apps
- posting
- credit card website
- library account
- ...and more?

A PASSWORD is a secret string of characters you use to login to your account.



Luckily, it isn't hard to come up with a password using...

Dice!

Roll 5 dice.
 Write down the numbers.
 Repeat 5 more times.



Now, each of these randomly-generated rolls can be translated to a word. Use the list linked from www.eff.org/dice

56216	secretary
77645	angolar
63375	unleash
43627	postnet
63372	unlens
25365	enjoying

String these words together for a password.

This kind of password is very hard for people or computers to guess.

NEXT steps!

make up a story to help you remember all the words

consider a password manager like Lastpass!

CC BY NC



to help others

PASS WORD 1234

How to use dice to build a safer password





THE COMPANIES CONVERTING YOUR DATA INTO THEIR CAPITAL

WHAT ARE DATA BROKERS?

Data brokers are private companies that generate capital through licensing and selling our sensitive information.

HOW DATA BECOMES CAPITAL

1. **Collect** data from a wide range of sources
2. **Create** comprehensive profiles on most people
3. **License** profiles as Intellectual Property (IP) to maintain legal ownership over the data
4. **Extract** rent on access to data in perpetuity

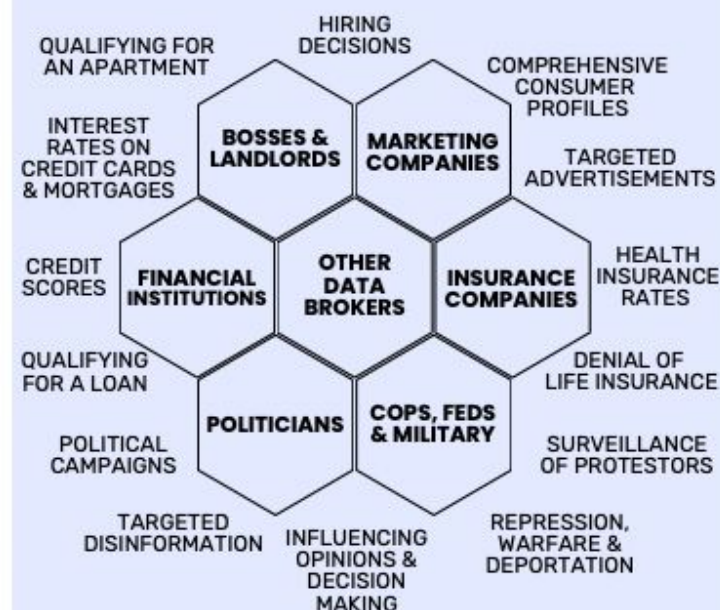
COLLECTION METHODS

- **Apps and software** that harvest data
 - directly from user devices (e.g. location tracking & behavioral data)
 - embedded tracking technologies (e.g. cookies, beacons, pixel tags)
- **Web scraping** (automated programs sift through web pages to collect data)
- **Purchasing datasets** from other data brokers

DATA SOURCES:

- **Internet**
 - Browsing histories
 - Website analytics
 - Interactions on social media
 - Internet of Things (IoT) device data
- **Commercial**
 - Credit card purchase history
 - Loyalty card information
- **Public**
 - Property transactions
 - Bankruptcy records
 - Voter information
 - Census data
 - Birth certificates
 - Motor vehicle records
 - Marriage licenses
 - Divorce records
 - Court records

DATA BROKER CUSTOMERS



IMPACT

Data brokers impact our privacy by:

- Collecting swaths of our data without our knowledge or consent
- Using our data to make secret decisions that greatly impact our lives (see diagram above)
- Using opaque algorithms which make it nearly impossible to understand if we are being discriminated against
- Enabling information to be abused:
 - Doxing (the publication of someone's personal information without consent)
 - Scams and fraud
 - Influencing opinions & decision-making

INDUSTRY

Data Brokers continue to grow in number and profit because of how much data we generate daily and because of the extremely limited regulatory environment.

- Global industry valued at +280 billion USD in 2023 (Maximize Market Research)
- +5K data broker sites operating in 2024 (Gartner estimation)

For the most up to date information about who they are, and the extent of their political and lobbying power, check out our friends at: [TechInquiry.org](https://www.techinquiry.org)

WHAT CAN WE DO?


Data brokers must be reined in with regulatory power. To stay up to date on the status of proposed regulations on data brokers, follow our friends at [fightforthefuture.org](https://www.fightforthefuture.org)

- Many data broker sites offer the option to "opt-out" of collection (this can be difficult and does not seem to remove all data)
- Paid opt-out services like Mozilla Monitor, Canary, Incogni, and Deleteme, who search through data brokers and remove data (They also cannot guarantee total removal)
- Tor Browser for stronger browser privacy
- Installing ad-blockers
- Limiting the use of social media

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM TALKING POINTS

THE L.E.A.R.N. APPROACH

Listen – Many people just want to be heard
Empathize – Do not apologize or appear to agree
Advocate – For what libraries are and what they stand for
Redirect – Show them we have something for them too
Notify others – You're not in this alone; find support in/outside your institution



WHAT DOES "NEUTRALITY" MEAN?

The popular understanding of neutrality dictates that libraries must show all sides at all times, and must not take a position on anything.

- However, this viewpoint doesn't consider:
- Targeting of library materials and workers.
 - A long history of attempted censorship.
 - The uneven power dynamics of speech.
 - Whose speech is being silenced.
 - Bad faith arguments that manipulate free speech.

The First Amendment defines the following terms:
Viewpoint Neutrality: when government actions implicate the speech rights of groups and individuals, those actions must be done in an evenhanded way.
Viewpoint Discrimination: singling out a particular opinion or perspective on that subject matter for treatment unlike that given to other viewpoints.

WHO ARE WE TALKING TO AND HOW DO WE TALK TO THEM?

How can we tell the difference between well-meaning people captured by bad ideology and hostile people who wish us harm? And what draws the line at harassment? Remember, **you don't have to engage** if the person is abusive and harassing.

- Reminders:
- Many people are motivated by emotions, not facts.
 - Some automatically think we are the enemy.

- Questions to consider:
- What motivates these people?
 - What goals do we have in talking to them?
 - How do we talk about library values in a way that is meaningful to them?

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM TALKING POINTS

TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians are responsible for deciding what they want their own children to read; libraries cannot play that role for them for many reasons, including the fact that every family is different in what they will decide.

Materials, programs, or services that are not right for your family might be right for another family.

Children and teens as well as adults have First Amendment rights to seek and receive information.

TO OUR COMMUNITIES

"Choice" is an essential concept in libraries; no one is forced to read or check out anything.

Librarians choose materials using professional judgment and following criteria outlined in policy. We don't necessarily agree with everything we buy, but we do make sure the materials we choose have been recommended for the diverse patrons we serve.

TO LEGISLATORS

The First Amendment prohibits libraries from discriminating against people or groups based on views. It does not prevent libraries from having their own values.

Publicly-funded libraries have a responsibility to follow board-approved policies in selecting materials to meet the wide-ranging needs, interests, identities and experiences of everyone in the communities they serve.

RESPONDING TO FIRST AMENDMENT AUDITS

NOTE: This is not meant to convey legal advice.

PRINT THIS!
KEEP IT AT THE
REF DESK!
USE THE BACK
FOR NOTES!

WHAT IS A "FIRST AMENDMENT AUDIT"?

"Auditors" are private parties interested in increased access to go approach public employees with suspicion and hostility. "Auditor employees and officials at work. These are not real audits, and no

WHAT'S THE POINT?

- Recording interactions with public employees and posting them online in an attempt to show institutional bias.
- Provoking employees in hopes that they violate the First Amendment.

HOW CAN WE I

- Staff should be aware of
 - Have a plan of action in
 - Designate "Staff/Employ
 - Review local "Public Sp
- Keep these common requ
- Bylaws and Policies
 - Budget/Appropriation C
 - Board Meeting Minutes

IS IT LEGAL? HOW CAN WE RESPOND WITHIN THE LAW?

It is legal in many states to film in a public place. The Supreme Court has ruled that if a local government restricts filming or other forms of "speech" in a "limited public forum" (like the public library), those restrictions must be viewpoint-neutral and reasonable in light of the purpose of the forum. Courts have determined reasonable restrictions to include:

- Preventing disruption of a government property's intended function;
- Protecting the safety and convenience of those using a public forum;
- Avoiding disruption and maintaining the peace in a government workplace.

GET TO
KNOW THE
LAW AND
TALK TO
YOUR LEGAL
COUNSEL

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF AN "AUDITOR" IS IN MY LIBRARY?

- Engage them as you would any patron. Treat this interaction as you would others.
- Avoid immediately bringing in your supervisor. "Auditors" are hoping for escalation.
- If their request is reasonable, fulfill it. If you need help with this, reach out to your supervisor!
- If their request is burdensome, offer to contact them at a later date with the information.
- If other patrons are uncomfortable, bring in other staff as backup.
- Above all else, stay calm. After all, if an interaction is unremarkable, it isn't good content!

WHEN DOES IT BECOME HARASSMENT?

Bear in mind the Supreme Court's reasonableness standard. This interaction **should not prevent you from performing your work nor disrupt other patrons' use of the library.**

Take notes after the interaction and then discuss with staff and legal counsel.



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info@libraryfreedom.org

From the Ocean to Your Computer



Fiber Optic Cables

Underwater fiber optic cables are made of plastic and glass and can transmit terabytes of data per second. Your internet speed may be shaped by the



Internet Service Provider (ISP)

ISPs are typically commercial companies that provide internet access for a fee. Major ISPs include Verizon, Comcast, and Time Warner Cable. In some places, there



Data Center

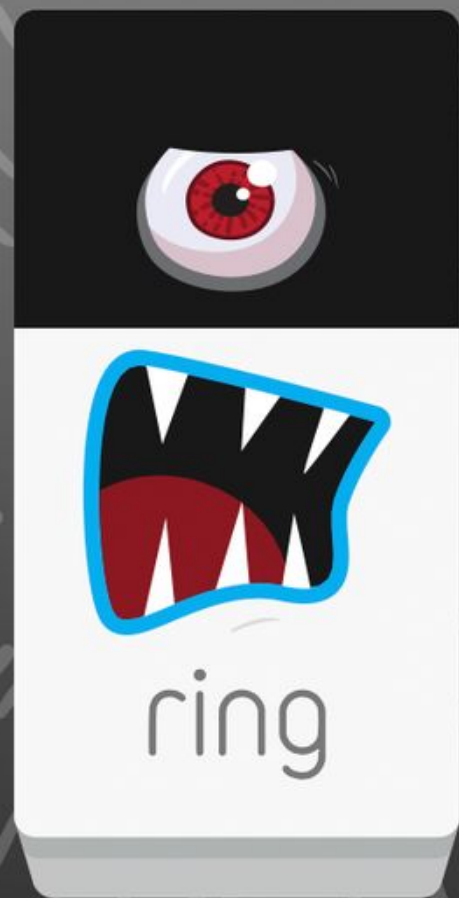
Data produced by everyday use of the Internet requires lots of storage on servers located in data centers. Data centers have a high environmental impact, requiring a



Servers

When you use the Internet, the client (your computer) queries a server (the website) to perform an action. The location of a server impacts the freedom you have to

be subject to censorship.



WHO IS WATCHING YOU?

AMAZON'S ALL-SEEING EYE

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD IS BEING SURVEILLED.

AMAZON RING ALLOWS POLICE TO ACQUIRE FOOTAGE FROM RESIDENTS FOR WARRANTLESS SURVEILLANCE.

OVER 30 CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS HAVE CALLED ON LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS TO END POLICE PARTNERSHIPS WITH RING.

RING FOOTAGE IS USED AGAINST PEOPLE EXERCISING FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS OF PROTEST.

RING FOOTAGE IS USED IN FACIAL RECOGNITION SEARCHES.

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT RING DETERS OR REDUCES CRIME.



What is AI?

Artificial intelligence consists of **mathematical formulas** that ingest **terabytes of data**, then **identify patterns** or **make rules** within their constraints using **cycles of optimization**

AI is computing, **knowledge production**, social organization, a **marketing gimmick**, and a political project

[libraryfreedom.org](https://www.libraryfreedom.org)



AI presents big opportunities, but also serious ethical concerns...

AI is a "Black Box"

- Not transparent about training data or models
- We don't know how it gets to its conclusions

AI violates privacy and creates new surveillance models

- Trained on our data without our consent
- Many AI products are used to control and surveil the poor

AI is made by powerful private companies

- Little to no public oversight

AI consumes tons of resources

- Industry is opaque about its energy usage - hard to know its carbon footprint, but estimates are very high

AI reproduces bias and harm

- Trained on datasets containing stereotypes, conspiracies, etc
- Encodes existing human bias

AI produces fake information

- "Deep fakes" erode public trust and put people at risk

AI needs comprehensive regulation

- Biden Executive Order aims to regulate use and oversight of AI
- Efficacy will largely depend on the federal agencies tasked with carrying it out

We must continue to demand AI transparency, accountability, environmental controls, and anti-trust from our lawmakers.

Contact us to learn more about AI and ethics: info@libraryfreedom.org

GUIDANCE FOR LIBRARY DEFENSE

- **Messaging**
- **Policy**
- **Coalition building**
- **Staff support**
- **Training**
- **Board**
- **Legislative**

This guidance is based on hundreds of conversations with library workers around country.

It reflects both what we know works, and what we wish we had.

LFP BOARD PACKET

For people currently on a library board

Intended to help board members:

- Understand the current environment of challenges to intellectual freedom**
- What responsibilities board members have in defending libraries in this moment**

UNDERSTANDING LIBRARY VALUES

Libraries operate according to a set of principles articulated by the ALA Core Values of Librarianship. This resource is to help our board members better understand library core values so that they may better support the work of librarians. The core values are reproduced below in italics, with our own interpretation of them below the italic text.

ACCESS

Access provides opportunities for everyone in the community to obtain library resources and services with minimal disruption. Library workers create systems that ensure members of their community can freely access the information they need for learning, growth, and empowerment regardless of technology, format, or delivery methods.

This core value motivates library workers to create welcoming libraries, support the accessibility needs of patrons such as magnification tools and accessible buildings, offer evening and weekend open hours, and provide a diverse array of materials, programs, and services. This core value is why many library workers oppose things like late fines for overdue materials, labeling of LGBTQ material (labeling may be a deterrent to access because it has the possibility to “out” someone), and codes of conduct which are overly punitive.

EQUITY

Library workers play a crucial role in fostering equity by actively working to dismantle barriers and create spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and beneficial for all. This is accomplished by recognizing and addressing systemic barriers, biases, and inequalities to create inclusive library environments where everyone can benefit from the library's offerings and services.

This core value is related to the value of access, but more explicitly recognizing the systemic injustices that create barriers to accessibility. This core value reminds us to lift up those patrons who have been excluded in society, and create library services that support them directly. At their best, libraries offer diverse collections relevant to all walks of life, and are particularly supportive of the information needs of marginalized people.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND PRIVACY

Intellectual freedom empowers people to think for themselves and to make informed decisions while respecting each individual's dignity and independence. Library workers encourage people to cultivate curiosity and form ideas by questioning the world and accessing information from diverse viewpoints and formats without restrictions or censorship. The right to privacy is a crucial safeguard to this freedom, ensuring everyone has the right to develop their thoughts and opinions free of surveillance.

When libraries are under attack, intellectual freedom is seriously threatened. Library workers and our boards must therefore be ready to defend those materials, services, and programs most threatened – those related to LGBTQ, Black, Brown, and immigrant experiences, climate change, and other ideas deemed threatening to the vocal minority who wish to dismantle libraries.

We must also recognize that privacy is essential for intellectual freedom – without privacy, there can be chilling effects on speech and expression; people will self-censor if they fear they are being watched. The library should work to protect the privacy of patrons within the library, and offer resources and programming to support their privacy outside of the library.

PUBLIC GOOD

Public good is working to improve society and protect the rights to education, literacy, and intellectual freedom. Libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies. Library workers provide the highest service levels to create informed, connected, educated, and empowered communities.

In this environment of hate against LGBTQ and BIPOC community members, we have a social responsibility to stand up for them and ensure that our libraries are welcoming to all marginalized people. Libraries are also a haven for the unhoused people in our communities; we should take care that our policies are not punitive towards those carrying large bags, needing to use the library space all day, sleeping, and so on.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability means making choices that are good for the environment, make sense economically, and treat everyone equitably. Sustainable choices preserve physical and digital resources and keep services useful now and into the future. By supporting climate resiliency, library workers create thriving communities and care for our common good for a better tomorrow.

The sustainability of the library is being threatened in this environment of extreme hostility. Many of the organizations and individual actors who are attempting to ban books and programming are also working to defund libraries or wrest control from professional librarians. How we choose to respond in this moment will determine whether libraries will exist in the future.



LFP AI resources

LIBRARY FREEDOM PROJECT

CRITICAL AI LITERACY (CAIL) PROGRAMS

- Are your patrons confused, alarmed, or skeptical of all the new “AI” tools popping up across their tech platforms?
- Have they heard about the impact of AI on their energy bills or local water use?
- Are they feeling like if they don’t adopt AI tools, they’ll be “left behind”?
- Can they tell the difference between what’s real and what’s fake online?

LFP’s **Critical AI Literacy (CAIL) programs** are accessible public education designed to cut through AI’s hype and marketing and address these real world concerns, and teach our communities the vital knowledge and skills they need to resist Big Tech’s overreach.

WHAT WE OFFER These programs can be delivered alone, in combination, or as part of a series.

A Skeptic’s Guide to AI

- Cutting through the hype to understand what these technologies are, how they work, and what they can and cannot do
- Clarifying terminology, use cases, ethical concerns, and critical responses
- Addressing common concerns like impacts on labor, mental health, cognition, climate, privacy, misinformation, and more

AI and the Climate

- How AI uses water and energy, and how this impacts consumers, our environment, and our health
- How AI demands require enormous land acquisition and resources

Understanding Local AI Use

- What’s happening with technology and data centers in your community
- Get plugged into local efforts to resist and shape AI use or data center construction

That’s a Lot of Money: The AI Bubble

- Understanding the gaslighting of AI economics, Big Tech debt, and what might happen when that bubble pops

More topics available!

We can also train your library staff!

GET IN TOUCH!

For more information and rates email us: info@libraryfreedom.org

WHO ARE WE?

Library Freedom Project is a network of librarians helping our communities understand and resist exploitative technologies.

In-person or virtual trainings!



LIBRARY FREEDOM PROJECT

WHAT’S THE DEAL WITH AI?

Feeling overwhelmed, confused, wary, or alarmed about the sudden prevalence of AI products in all of your tech platforms? You’re not alone.

WHAT EXACTLY IS AI?

- “AI” is a marketing term and political project that refers to a number of technologies new and old, including:
 - **Pattern recognition algorithms** that produce “new” text, videos, or images based on copies of existing, human-created materials.
 - **Applications (apps)** like chatbots, image generators, virtual assistants.
- **These technologies are not actually intelligent:** the AI project is about increasing the value of these technologies by marketing them as having human qualities, while cutting costs to devalue real human labor & skill.
- Human interaction is replaced by a fantasy one-stop answer shop.

WHY IS AI SEEMINGLY EVERYWHERE?

- We are currently in a well-funded AI hype cycle. AI companies have become increasingly valuable because investors are gambling on AI.
- AI companies are trying to make a return on these high investments, so AI apps are now popping up in all kinds of tech platforms in order to increase adoption.
- Returns on investment for AI apps are zero or negative, and skepticism about these technologies is growing among the general populace.

DOES AI KNOW THINGS?

- **AI apps are often wrong.** Some have disclaimers that say that their answers cannot be verified (you may have heard of “hallucinations”) and therefore should not be trusted.
- AI apps cannot evaluate information on their own. Responses are based on statistical relationships of words and phrases rather than knowledge.
- AI apps reflect the bias of the material they are trained on and the motives and values of the companies creating the technology.
- AI is a main driver of the ongoing crisis of mis- and disinformation.
- Identifying and verifying AI-generated content is difficult and time consuming.

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I DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS AI

A VERY POPULAR SEARCH ENGINE NOW HAS AN AUTOMATIC AI-GENERATED SEARCH RESULT AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE
AI CAN CONTAIN FALSE, MISLEADING, OR JUST PLAIN WEIRD INFORMATION



HOW DO I GET RID OF IT?

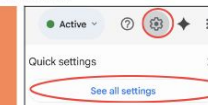
TYPE “-AI” AFTER YOUR QUERY THAT’S IT!

LIBRARY FREEDOM PROJECT

AVOIDING AI: GMAIL

Gmail tries to integrate Google’s **Gemini** AI tool, along with other “smart” features that invade your privacy. To disable:

In Gmail’s webmail, click the **Gear icon** at upper right and select **See all settings**



Or on mobile, tap the menu icon on top left and the gear icon at the bottom of the list.

Scroll down and select **Manage Workspace smart feature settings**

Toggle off **both switches** and click **Save**

Optional: Find **Smart features** in the settings list and uncheck the box

This disables all “smart” features in Gmail, including categorizing mail, autogenerated suggested responses, autocorrect, & “nudges.” You can uncheck these individually if you prefer.

Optional: To remove the **Gemini logo** from Gmail’s webmail, you can use an extension like **uBlock Origin**

Visit uBlockOrigin.com to download & install

Click the **logo** at top right, then the **eye dropper**

Highlight the Gemini icon and click to block, selecting **Create** on the pop-up (you may have to repeat several times for it to fully disappear)

WHY AVOID AI?

Generative AI is a source of misinformation, and is rife with labor, environmental, and social concerns. It’s being pushed by big technology companies through forced adoption by design.

Check out the other side of this sheet for organizing resources.

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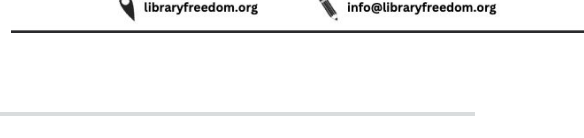
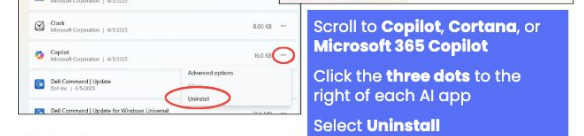
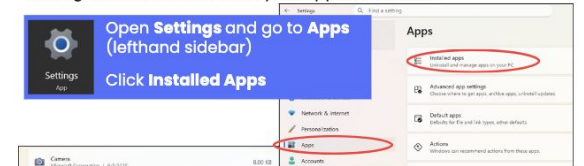
libraryfreedom.org info@libraryfreedom.org

Visit uBlockOrigin.com to download & install

LIBRARY FREEDOM PROJECT

AVOIDING AI: WINDOWS 11

Windows 11 comes with **Copilot** and **Microsoft 365 Copilot** installed. Older computers may still have **Cortana**. Security permissions may allow generative AI access to your apps. To remove:



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[://libraryfreedom.org](http://libraryfreedom.org)

USING LFP RESOURCES

Use our resources to supplement existing programs

- Pass out our worksheets at your tech workshops
- Keep our one-pagers by your public computers
- Pass out our bookmarks at the ref desk

Passive programming

- Handouts at public computers and ref desk
- Zine station in teen section
- "Most common passwords" and PSAs on whiteboards

Use our workshops as models for your own

- Zine workshops and health privacy workshops

Use LFP resources/programs as PD

- Encourage staff to attend or watch an LFP webinar
- Participate in our book club



How else can you engage with LFP?

Sign up for our mailing list!

- **lists.riseup.net/www/subscribe/lfp-news**
- News, jobs, articles, community, research, RFPs, and more

Work with us!

- Is there a project or resource you'd like to co-create?
- Are there trainings you'd like us to bring to your organization?
- Invite us to your library or consortium or association (or whatever)!
- We are happy to do virtual OR in-person workshops

Use our stuff!

- Free to use, print, and share from our website
- All webinars are free and (most are) recorded for our Vimeo/YouTube

Participate!

- At least one LFI per year
- Get in touch about joining our public Discord or one of our working groups!



SEEDS OF HOPE

“Refusing is actually the more hopeful, expansive vision of the future than the one that is telling us that the future is already settled and decided.”

Tressie McMillan Cottom

THE FUTURE IS NOT WRITTEN

- They can't come for us all
- Their policies are unpopular and that makes them weak
- Building with your community is healing
- It's also the only way we get through this
- Do one small thing each day
- "No one let go of anyone's hand"



Critical AI resources



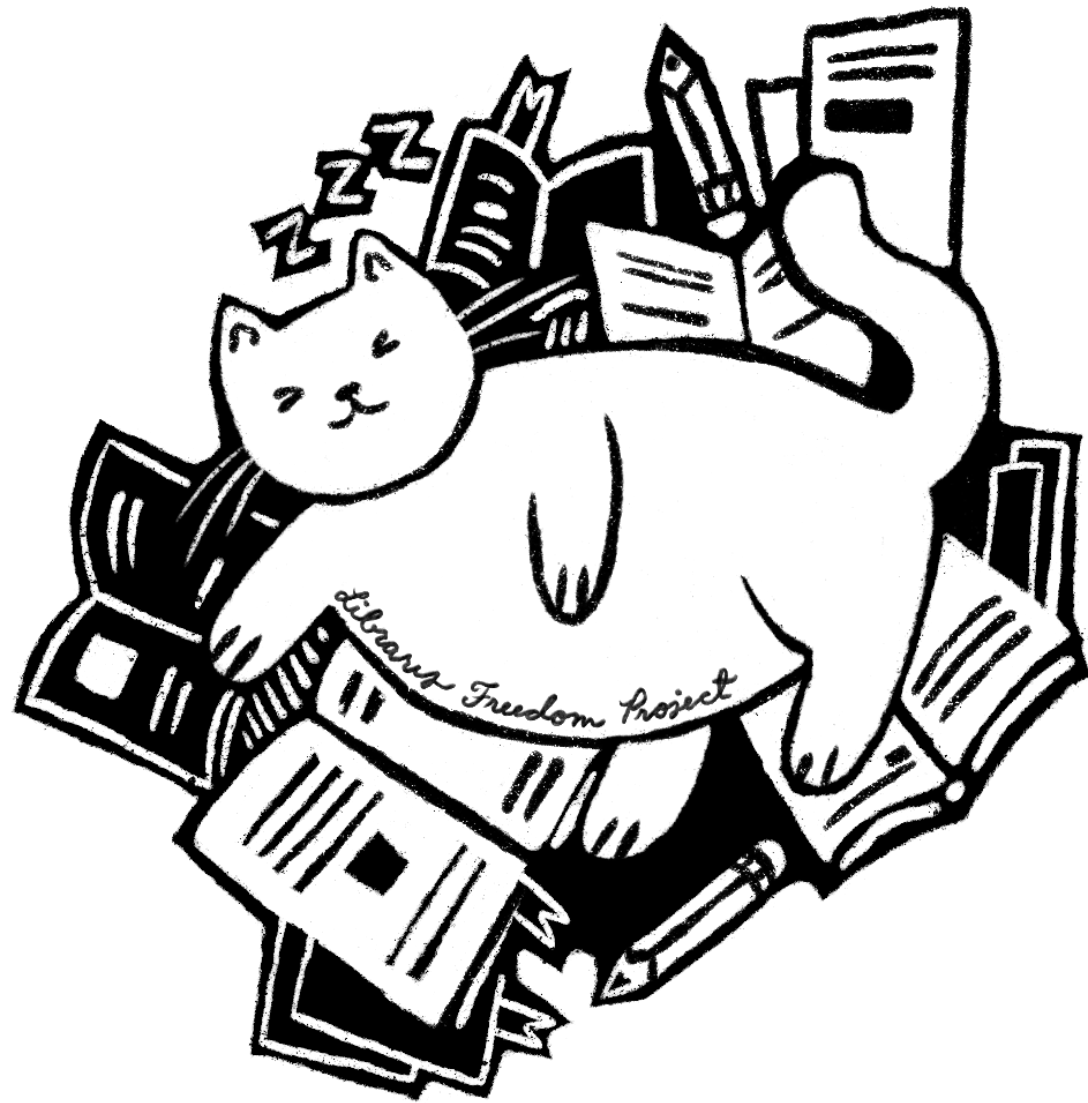
THANK YOU

Check out our work at

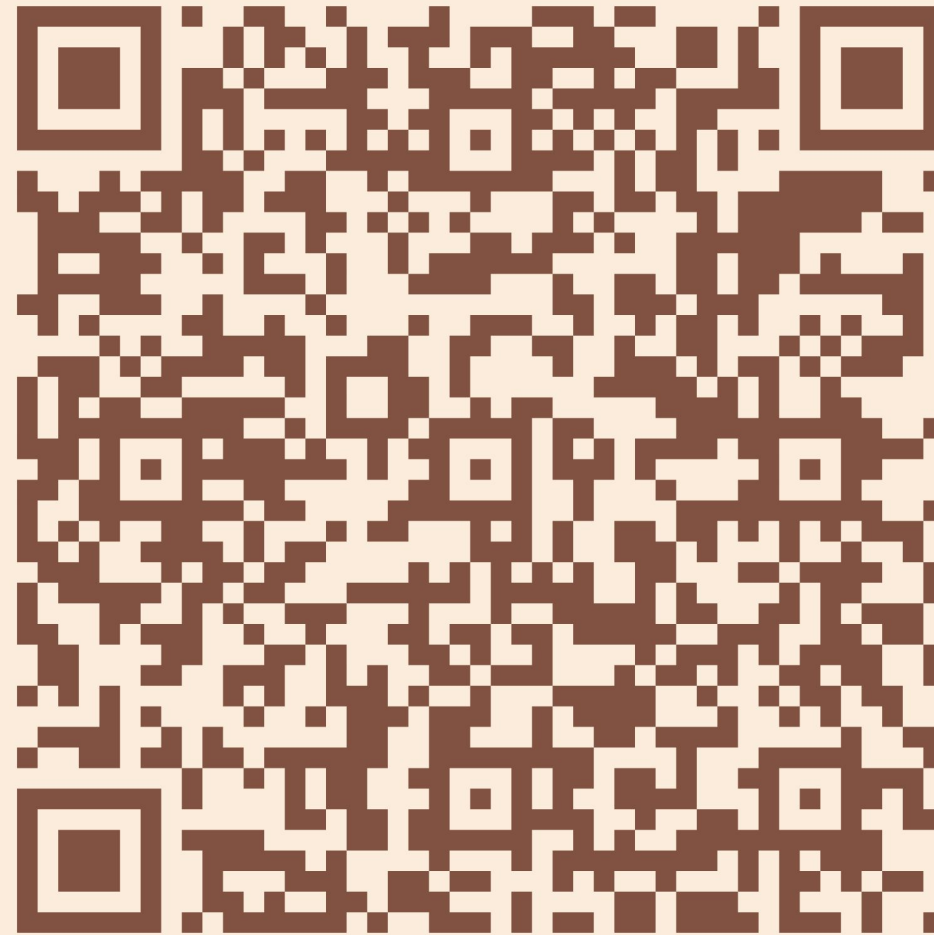
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Email us at **info@libraryfreedom.org**
to join our mailing list or work with us

Email **tess@libraryfreedom.org**
to chat with me!



**Please take a moment to
complete the program survey.**



SCAN ME!



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026