



Wondercut



Collaboratively Exploring the Public Value of
Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Next Level Cultural Experiences

A GUIDE FOR THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS (CCS)

Practical Steps, Tools, and Reflections

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the cultural and creative sectors (CCS), offering new opportunities for collection management, audience engagement, and interpretation. Yet, many institutions face uncertainty about how to adopt AI responsibly. This guide addresses that gap by providing practical steps, tools, and reflections for museums, galleries, and cultural organisations.

What this guide offers:

- **Foundations:** Clear explanations of AI concepts (algorithms, machine learning, generative AI, LLMs) and associated risks.
- **Applications:** A structured overview of AI use cases in the CCS, from collection digitisation to visitor experience enhancement, with real-world examples.
- **Case studies:** In-depth insights from Wondercut, Bauhaus Infinity Archive, and other projects illustrating technical, ethical, and organisational lessons.
- **Implementation framework:** Guidance on strategy development, stakeholder mapping, AI literacy, and sustainability planning.
- **Ethics and governance:** Dos and don'ts for responsible AI, risk mitigation strategies, and compliance with GDPR and the EU AI Act.
- **Resources:** Curated literature, toolkits, and training opportunities to build capacity and foster sector-wide knowledge sharing.

Responsible AI use involves more than ticking boxes or following guidelines. It is about aligning technology with cultural values, public trust, and institutional missions. In our understanding, AI should serve as a facilitator to enhance cultural experiences while safeguarding privacy, fairness, and authenticity. This guide offers practical, context-sensitive support and to encourage experimentation. Its purpose is to help professionals in the CCS make informed decisions, ensuring that innovation remains ethical, sustainable, and inclusive.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
LLM	Large Language Model
CCS	Cultural and Creative Sectors
ML	Machine Learning
RAG	Retrieval-Augmented Generation
API	Application Programming Interface

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is part of our daily lives, and shapes how we work, communicate, and create. From recommendation systems and automated translations to generative tools and smart assistants, AI is increasingly present across many different sectors, including the cultural and creative sectors (CCS). Its rapid development and widespread application make it essential for institutions to understand not just what AI is, but how it can be responsibly integrated into their organisational practices.

Accordingly, AI literacy is no longer optional; it is mandatory. Article 4 of the EU AI Act, in force since 2 February 2025, requires that all AI providers and deployers ensure an appropriate level of AI literacy among their staff. While this guide does not serve as a legal advisory document, it encourages institutions to seek legal counsel where necessary (see section 6 *Additional Resources*). Our focus is on fostering responsible, reflective, and context-aware use of AI—tailored to each institution's unique mission, audience, and operational realities.

Despite AI's growing relevance, many professionals in cultural institutions (e.g., museums, galleries or archives) feel uncertain about how to engage with this emerging technology and its vast applications. There is a lack of clarity around what AI can do, how it should be used, and what ethical considerations must be taken into account. Findings from our assessment of the current use of AI in the CCS (Mehnert et al., 2025) show a widespread lack of AI literacy, leaving many institutions unsure of where to begin ([Assessment Report on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence in the Cultural and Creative Sectors \(CCS\)](#)). This guide aims to address that gap by offering practical, context-sensitive support and by encouraging experimentation.

Why AI / Why Not AI?

We take a balanced approach to AI. That is, we are neither techno-evangelists nor AI sceptics. Instead, we advocate for a hands-on, reflective, and grounded engagement with AI technologies. AI is not always needed and does not always need to be used just for the sake of engaging with a new technology. But it can become a powerful tool and an effective resource for experimentation, creativity, and problem-solving. This guide encourages institutions to experiment with the technology and explore AI thoughtfully by asking:

- What do you want to achieve?
- Can AI help you do it better, more inclusively, or more efficiently?
- When is it better to avoid AI altogether?

About this guide

This guide follows three main guide principles: practicality, self-reflection, and a process-based approach. It is designed with cultural institutions in mind (e.g. national or private museums or larger and smaller galleries) who want to engage with AI in a way that aligns with their values, audiences, and specific exhibition contexts. With a diverse readership in mind, we aim to provide practical guidance for specific contexts rather than abstract principles or generalised solutions. Therefore, we focus on existing real-world use cases, institutional processes, and bottom-up approaches that create change through practice and experimentation. Our goal is to empower professionals to make informed, responsible decisions about AI, whether they are experienced or just beginning.

As every section addresses different topics, you may navigate this guide based on your current interests and needs:

- Section 2, *What is AI?*, offers a clear, non-technical vocabulary for understanding AI concepts and risks to enable informed decisions.
- Section 3, *Examples of AI applications in the CCS*, presents concrete application areas, benefits, limitations, and examples.
- Section 4, *In-Depth Case Studies*, provides detailed accounts of real AI projects, describing the practical challenges, ethical considerations, and lessons that can inform future initiatives.
- Section 5, *How to Implement AI Applications in your Organisation?*, guides you through strategic planning, stakeholder mapping, AI literacy development, and responsible governance structures to support sustainable AI adoption.
- Section 6, *Additional Resources*, curates key literature, guidelines, toolkits, and training opportunities that help you continue to build competence and stay aligned with emerging best practices.

We hope that this document will guide you on your journey into AI and the CCS and encourage you to experiment with the many fields of applications this exciting new technology provides.

WHAT IS AI?

What does “artificial intelligence” mean? What are the differences between generative AI, algorithms, machine learning, LLM, etc.? What are risks and concerns associated with AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computational systems that perform tasks requiring human-like cognitive functions such as perception, pattern recognition, reasoning, or decision-making. In the museum world, the technology is used in powerful tools for managing collections, conducting research, and engaging visitors. These tools can do anything from recognising a face in a photo or interacting with the digital avatar of a famous painter to translating a historical text or summarising and grouping documents.

A useful definition comes from the Leslie et al. (2024) at the Alan Turing Institute, who define an AI system as any system that uses statistical or mathematical techniques to assist or replace the judgment of human decision-makers. This is a perfect way to think about the technology can be used to help curators, archivists, exhibition designers, and visitor managers.

THE KEY TERMS

In the discussion of AI, the following words are often used interchangeably. However, each has a distinct meaning:

Algorithm: An algorithm is a finite set of rules or instructions for solving a problem. It is a fixed process that follows explicit instructions and *never* learns or changes on its own. Think of it as a recipe. In the context of a museum, a simple computer algorithm would be the set of **“if-then” rules** for a ticketing system: **IF** the ‘visitor_type’ is ‘member’ OR the ‘day’ is ‘Tuesday’, **THEN** set ‘ticket_price’ to ‘free’.

Machine learning (ML): This is a more advanced approach where a system *learns from data* rather than being explicitly programmed for every task. For example, to build a tool that identifies portraits in a digital collection, you would not write rules for “what is a face.” Instead, you would “train” an ML model by providing it with thousands of images, some labelled “portrait” and others “not-portrait.” The model learns to identify the relevant patterns itself. ML is also the technology behind **image recognition** (e.g., automatically transcribing handwritten labels in an archive) and **natural language processing (NLP)** (e.g., analysing thousands of visitor surveys to identify key themes).

Generative AI (GenAI): This refers to a class of AI models designed to produce new, synthetic content (e.g., text, images, audio, video, or code) by learning statistical patterns from large training datasets (see *Machine Learning*). Unlike traditional AI systems that primarily classify, predict, or detect patterns, GenAI models generate novel outputs that resemble the data they were trained on. Examples for this technology are so-called **large language models (LLMs)** such as ChatGPT, Le Chat, or Perplexity that are trained on vast amounts of text for the generation of new texts. Similarly, **image-generation models** such as OpenAI’s DALL-E 2 or Midjourney are trained on large collections of images to produce new visuals based on **prompts**. OpenAI’s *Sora 2* or Adobe *Firefly* extend this capability by generating motion graphics and full videos.

Prompt: A prompt is an input given to a generative AI system—such as a text instruction, question, or example—that guides the GenAI application in producing a specific output.

Hallucination (in AI): A hallucination occurs when an AI system generates content that appears plausible and is statistically correct but factually incorrect. In generative models, hallucinations arise because the system only creates likely sequences of words instead of understanding the actual outcome, leading to confident but unreliable outputs.

RAG (retrieval-augmented generation): This is a critical technique for ensuring factual accuracy in institutions. An LLM trained on the public internet will invent (**hallucinate**) details about specific collections. **RAG** mitigates this by compelling the AI to “retrieve” information *only* from your own trusted, internal sources (such as a collections database or digital archive) *before* it can generate an answer. It is the foundation for developing reliably factual chatbots.

API (application programming interface): An API is a standardised interface that allows different software systems to communicate. With it, an institution can integrate a powerful, pre-built AI model (e.g., from Google, OpenAI, Aleph Alpha, Mistral AI, or other providers) into its own website or internal tools without having to build the entire model from scratch.

RISKS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CCS

While AI offers transformative new capabilities, these are accompanied by profound ethical, legal, practical, and environmental risks. As cultural institutions begin to leverage AI, they also bear direct responsibility for the outcomes. Therefore, a responsible AI strategy is a basic requirement for any institution engaging with these technologies.

The most complex and high-stakes challenge for the cultural sector is related to issues like **copyright and authorship** and can be divided into the following three problems:

- **Copyright:** Generative models are trained on vast datasets of existing text and images (terabytes of data) often scraped from the internet. In many cases, this data was used without the permission of, or compensation to, the original artists, authors, and rights-holders. For institutions like museums, which work to safeguard the copyright and provenance of artworks and objects, the use of a tool that may have relied on mass copyright infringement merits serious discussion.
- **Authorship:** The legal standing of AI-generated material remains uncertain. Since most copyright systems require a human creator, work produced by an AI—such as an exhibition poster or an educational text—may not qualify for protection. This can expose institutions to significant risk, as the ownership of such content can be challenged or may not be enforceable.
- **Transparency:** Just as a curator must be able to document an object’s history, an institution using AI should be able to document its digital lineage. While most GenAI applications come as black boxes that do not permit the reconstruction of the training data, a responsible use of GenAI would answer questions like: Which model was used? What data was it trained on (if known)? What prompts were used to create the final output?

AI models do not operate in a vacuum. Rather, they learn from the data they are given. The **quality of the training data** used directly relates to the following three problems:

- **Bias and Misrepresentation:** AI models are trained on data, and data reflects history, including its biases. If an institution's archives disproportionately represent one demographic, an AI trained on that data will learn and amplify that bias. This could lead to the reproduction of harmful stereotypes.
- **Explainability:** Complex AI models can produce a result but cannot articulate the specific reasoning behind the process or the conclusion reached. This lack of explainability can be a serious issue for any field that relies on scholarly justification and verifiable decision-making.
- **Accountability:** This refers to the problem of **trustworthiness** and whether an AI system can be relied on to act safely, transparently, fairly, and consistently with human values in real-world contexts. If an AI-powered system provides incorrect historical information to a visitor or makes a flawed recommendation for deaccessioning, where does the accountability lie? With the institution? The software vendor? This remains a complex legal and practical question that requires careful discussion and consideration.

These problems underscore the need for **AI literacy** within institutions. This does not mean all staff must learn to code. It means developing the critical capacity to evaluate a vendor's claims, understand a tool's fundamental limitations, and determine whether its use aligns with the institution's public mission and ethical standards.

THE GLOBAL AI LANDSCAPE AND THE EUROPEAN APPROACH

The AI field is currently receiving massive investment from "Big Tech" corporations. These entities are advancing the foundational models that power many applications today (e.g., ChatGPT). The development of these applications is led by US-based companies such as Google (Gemini models), OpenAI/Microsoft (ChatGPT models), Meta (Llama models), and IBM. Similarly, China is building their own AI infrastructure with entities such as Baidu (Ernie Bot) and DeepSeek.

The European approach is distinct from the two examples by pursuing a "twin strategy" of both sovereign innovation *and* comprehensive regulation (European Commission, 2020). This includes a robust and specialised European ecosystem consisting of three key components:

- **European foundational models:** Key actors include **Mistral AI** (France), which builds powerful open-source models directly competing with US leaders, and **Aleph Alpha** (Germany), which focuses on explainable and sovereign AI solutions for industry and government.
- **Specialised and linguistic innovation:** Crucially, this ecosystem includes specialised companies such as **Tilde** (Latvia), which develops high-performance models specifically for Europe's less-resourced languages. This work is vital for preserving cultural and linguistic diversity in an AI-dominated field.
- **Infrastructure and community:** The European innovation ecosystem is supported by hybrid communities such as **Hugging Face** (France/US), which acts as a central hub for model-sharing, and by pan-European infrastructure projects such as **LUMI** (Finland) and **Jülich** (Germany), which provide the computational power needed for training.

This technological development is guided by a **Trustworthy AI** philosophy (European Commission, 2019), which is being formalised by the **EU's AI Act** (European Commission, 2024). The AI Act is a landmark piece of legislation that regulates AI based on its potential risks. An AI tool for low-stakes tasks (e.g. drafting social media posts) will go largely unregulated. However, high-risk systems (e.g., those used in employment, or public surveillance) will be subject to strict requirements for transparency, data quality, and human oversight. This risk-based framework is the cornerstone of the European strategy, and is designed to foster innovation that is both commercially competitive and aligned with public values and human rights.

EXAMPLES OF AI APPLICATIONS IN THE CCS

For what purposes can you use AI in the CCS? What are the potentials of AI in the CCS? How have CCS organisations been using AI?

Artificial intelligence is increasingly being adopted across the CCS, offering new ways to manage collections, engage audiences, and interpret cultural heritage. But what exactly can AI do for CCS institutions? This section provides a structured overview of current AI applications allowing you to explore the potentials, limitations, and real-world examples of how AI is being used today.

To guide this exploration, we have included a table (Table 1: AI applications in the CCS) that outlines key areas of AI application in the CCS. Each entry includes:

- **Application area:** Examples include collection management and digitisation, visitor analysis and management, or artistic creation and interpretation.
- **Potential benefit:** What AI can help achieve, from automating repetitive tasks to enhancing accessibility and enabling new forms of creative expression.
- **Limitations and risks:** These can involve ethical concerns, technical constraints, and unintended consequences.
- **Examples:** The cases show how museums, galleries, and other institutions are already using AI in practice.

Please note that this table is not exhaustive, and some categories may overlap. For instance, a virtual museum platform might contribute to both *audience engagement* and *visitor experience enhancement*. The aim is not to provide a definitive list, but to offer inspiration and a flexible framework for thinking about AI in your own context.

A key resource for exploring these applications is the [AI4Culture platform](#), which offers a growing collection of open-source and open-access tools, datasets, upskilling materials, and implementation strategies tailored to cultural institutions. Whether you're just starting out or looking to deepen your AI practice, AI4Culture.eu provides practical support for experimentation and learning.

This section invites you to explore these opportunities with a critical and creative mindset. Use the table and resources to identify what's relevant to your institution and to consider not just what AI can do but what it should do in your specific context.

TABLE 1: AI APPLICATIONS IN THE CCS

Application Area	Potential Benefit	Limitations and Risks	Examples
Collection Management and Digitisation	Machine learning accelerates cataloguing and annotation of vast collections. Automated tagging and categorisation make collections more searchable and accessible for curators and the audience. Digital preservation creates permanent records of fragile or endangered cultural heritage. AI can also be used to trace provenance and analyse artwork relationships across collections.	Using AI applications becomes a <i>Make or buy</i> decision: Either to make an individual solution that fits the purpose of the institutions or to work with existing tools that will need to be adapted. Either way, the following risks need to be considered: – AI requires large, high-quality datasets that may not exist for all collections; creating internal datasets by digitalising the collection can prevent models trained on incomplete data. – Implementation costs for hardware, software, and training can be a burden for smaller institutions. – When using external applications, the costs of ongoing maintenance and system updates need to be continuously allocated – Furthermore, dependence on technology vendors raises concerns about long-term data accessibility and sovereignty.	Smithsonian Open Access Initiative: machine-learning algorithms for digitisation and collection management Metropolitan Museum of Art: AI systems for predictive analytics and collection management Ludwig Forum Archive Digitization: “Training the Archive” project (2020–2023) The Bauhaus Infinity Archive: AI-powered installation; ML models for visual clustering of 15,000+ digitised items (Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung, 2022) Remixing the Archives: Generative AI remixing iconic design objects; experimental use of digitalised archive (Wolany, 2025) Getty Provenance Index: AI-augmented retrieval tools (e.g., retrieval-augmented generation, NLP) applied to auction catalogues, dealer records, inventories (Henrickson, 2025)

Application Area	Potential Benefit	Limitations and Risks	Examples
Research and Historical Analysis	AI processes millions of historical documents rapidly, uncovering previously hidden connections. Natural language processing makes archival texts searchable across languages and time periods. Machine learning identifies patterns in historical data too complex for manual analysis. AI assists in reconstructing damaged or lost artworks with historical accuracy.	AI cannot understand historical context or interpret documents with cultural sensitivity. Black-box algorithms provide results without explaining reasoning, limiting scholarly trust. Training data biases can distort historical narratives and perpetuate colonial perspectives. Automated analysis risks missing nuance, irony, or culturally specific meanings in texts.	Rijksmuseum: AI reconstruction of Rembrandt's <i>The Night Watch</i> Masakhane: A grassroots NLP community for presenting African languages and culture Nora Al-Badri Babylonian Vision: Uses AI image generation to reconstruct or speculate from fragmentary artifacts; explores de/colonial contexts
Virtual Museums and Online Collections	Digital twins allow the global exploration of museums without travel costs or time constraints. Virtual access proved essential during COVID-19, maintaining cultural engagement during lockdowns. Online collections reach audiences who cannot physically visit due to distance or disability.	Virtual experiences cannot replicate the aura and authenticity of encountering original artifacts. Digital representations may oversimplify complex objects, losing crucial details. Screen-based interaction creates distance rather than intimacy with cultural heritage. Virtual museums risk becoming mere databases rather than meaningful cultural experiences.	Världskulturmuseerna: manages and makes accessible over 500,000 objects, a million images, and hundreds of meters of archival materials. Google's Arts and Culture programme provides virtual tours to museums all over the world

Application Area	Potential Benefit	Limitations and Risks	Examples
Visitor Analysis and Management	Data analytics optimise exhibition layouts based on visitor flow patterns. AI predicts peak visiting times, enabling better resource allocation and crowd management. Behavioural insights inform programming decisions and improve visitor satisfaction. Heat mapping identifies underutilised galleries, guiding collection presentation strategies.	Surveillance concerns arise when tracking visitor movements throughout museum spaces. Data collection without explicit consent violates visitor privacy expectations. Commercial exploitation of visitor data conflicts with museums' public service mission. Focus on metrics risks reducing cultural value to quantifiable engagement statistics.	Science Museum Group: using digital tracking to analyse visitor movements. Schönbrunn Palace: using simulation to identify optimisation measures that reduce congestion and waiting times.
Artistic Creation and Interpretation	AI uncovers hidden patterns in artworks invisible to human eyes, revealing new insights. Machine learning analyses brushstrokes, materials, and techniques to support attribution research. AI-generated art exhibitions spark discussions about creativity, authorship, and the role of technology.	Algorithms cannot grasp subtle artistic nuances that characterise individual styles. AI interpretation may be technically accurate but miss deeper meaning and intention. Bias in training data can lead to skewed or discriminatory analysis of certain artists or cultures. Over-reliance on AI risks devaluing human expertise in art historical interpretation.	Refik Anadol: Unsupervised – Machine Hallucinations MoMA Prado Museum's Aracne program: using frequency analysis and deep learning to analyse canvas fabrics, helping with artwork attribution and dating Claudia Larcher: AI and the Art of Historical Reinterpretation Wayne McGregor: Living Archive: An AI Performance Experiment

Application Area	Potential Benefit	Limitations and Risks	Examples
AI Curation	AI identifies unexpected connections between artworks, suggesting novel curatorial themes. Algorithms process entire collections simultaneously, revealing patterns humans might miss. Machine learning offers data-driven insights to complement curatorial intuition.	Algorithms lack the intentionality and narrative vision central to meaningful curation. AI cannot understand artworks' cultural significance or emotional resonance. Automated curation risks homogenising exhibitions by following predictable patterns. Algorithmic bias may exclude marginalised artists or non-Western perspectives.	Duke University's Nasher Museum of Art experiment The AI Art Magazine: featuring an AI jury for AI arts
Audience Engagement and Education	Interactive AI-powered exhibits transform passive viewing into active learning experiences. Educational games and applications make cultural content engaging for younger audiences. AI tailors educational content to different age groups and learning styles. Real-time feedback systems allow museums to adapt programming based on visitor preferences.	Gamification risks trivialising serious historical or cultural narratives. Technology may become the focus rather than the cultural content itself. Digital fatigue from constant screen interaction reduces immersive quality. AI cannot replicate the tactile and emotional resonance of encountering authentic physical objects. Educational AI may homogenise knowledge if trained on narrow datasets.	The House Museums of Milan: implemented Museum Chatbot Game in four museums to engage with young audiences Hello Vincent: Chatbot avatar of Vincent van Gogh (trained on letters and stylistic cues) (Musée d'Orsay, 2024)

Application Area	Potential Benefit	Limitations and Risks	Examples
Accessibility and Inclusion	AI-driven translation tools make content accessible across 100+ languages in real-time. Text-to-speech and image recognition assist visually and hearing-impaired visitors. Personalised navigation helps visitors with mobility challenges plan optimal routes.	AI systems can perpetuate biases if trained on non-diverse or stereotypical datasets. Algorithms may inadvertently reinforce colonial perspectives present in historical collection data. Privacy concerns arise when collecting visitor data for personalisation.	Louvre: AI tools for real-time translations to provide real-time exhibit details in over 30 languages Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam: AI-powered natural language processing to analyse visitor feedback in multiple languages, processing 1,500 monthly comments.
Visitor Experience Enhancement	Personalised experiences adapt to individual visitor interests, language preferences, and time constraints. AR and VR reconstruct historical artifacts and sites digitally, making inaccessible heritage visible. Chatbots provide instant answers to visitor questions without waiting for staff. Interactive storytelling increases visitor engagement and educational outcomes.	AI tools may distract visitors from direct engagement with artworks, acting as barriers rather than bridges. Chatbots can generate inaccurate information (hallucinations), requiring constant human verification. Over-reliance on AI may reduce meaningful human interactions between visitors and museum educators. Complex AI interfaces may not align with visitor expectations for straightforward museum experiences.	WONDERCUT: Face-insertion app placing users into historical paintings Dalí Lives: AI-generated avatar of Salvador Dalí (trained on images, letters, texts) (The Dalí Museum, 2019) LeDiT Project: Interactive 3D testimonies with motion capture + NLP; curated response database (Friebel & Sanchez-Stockhammer, 2024)

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES

What can we learn from existing case studies about implementing AI in the CCS?

This section presents two of in-depth case studies that walk you through the process of implementing AI in museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions. Each case highlights the technical and operational journey, as well as the ethical considerations, institutional goals, and unexpected challenges encountered along the way.

These examples are designed to help you reflect on the potentials and risks of AI in practice. By seeing how different organisations approached AI from the initial idea to deployment and evaluation, you can better understand what responsible AI use looks like in diverse contexts.

Whether you're considering AI for collection digitisation, audience engagement, or curatorial support, these case studies offer grounded insights to inform your own path forward.

CASE STUDY 1 – WONDERCUT

Contribution from Aljosa Zidan (Wondercut project Technical Lead)

How was the Wondercut app developed? What is the design and implementation process? What can other institutions learn from this process?

- Inspiration** The idea for Wondercut was born from a simple observation: museum visitors love taking photos and selfies near artworks. The development team saw an opportunity to turn this habit into something deeper—an interactive, reflective experience that connects people personally with portrait art. Instead of just snapping a picture, visitors could engage with history in a creative and meaningful way.
- AI solution** To achieve this, the team turned to AI technology. Unlike conventional filters or augmented reality overlays, AI offered the ability to blend a visitor's facial features with historical portraits in a way that felt authentic and stylistically coherent. This approach transformed casual photography into an educational moment, making art feel alive and relevant.
- Funding** The project was funded and developed by Shape d.o.o., which designed a scalable system that museums could adopt through a yearly subscription model. This strategy made advanced AI engagement affordable and sustainable, allowing multiple institutions to access cutting-edge technology without the burden of custom development costs.
- Ethics** From the start, accessibility and ethics guided every decision. A web-based interface was chosen to eliminate app downloads and reduce screen time inside the museum. Visitors simply scanned a QR code to access Wondercut, view selected artworks, and try the face-swap feature—all within their browser. The AI processing happened securely on Shape's servers, ensuring real-time results while maintaining strict data protection standards. Personal images were processed only during the interaction and deleted immediately afterward.



FIGURE 1: WONDERCUT APPLICATION (WONDERCUT, 2024)

Co-Creation	Collaboration was key. Curators and educators tested the experience and provided feedback on interpretive framing and visual integrity, legal experts ensured compliance with copyright and privacy regulations, and visitor focus groups shaped usability and consent communication. Clear notices explained how the system worked, and every AI-generated image was transparently labelled. Ethical safeguards included temporary data use, automatic deletion, and compatibility with standard mobile browsers.
Launch	When Wondercut launched, the guiding principle was clear: “digital as facilitator, not destination”. The experience complemented the physical encounter with art rather than overshadowing it. Museums monitored performance through anonymised usage data and visitor feedback, receiving regular reports on engagement and popular artworks. This evidence-based approach allowed continuous improvement and demonstrated the cultural value of the installation.
Evaluation	Months after rollout, evaluations confirmed the project’s success. Visitors described Wondercut as entertaining and thought-provoking. Lessons learned emphasised simplicity, transparency, and collaboration over technical complexity. By embedding ethical reflection throughout the design process, Wondercut proved that shared digital infrastructure can make responsible AI accessible to museums—preserving sustainability, privacy, and artistic integrity.

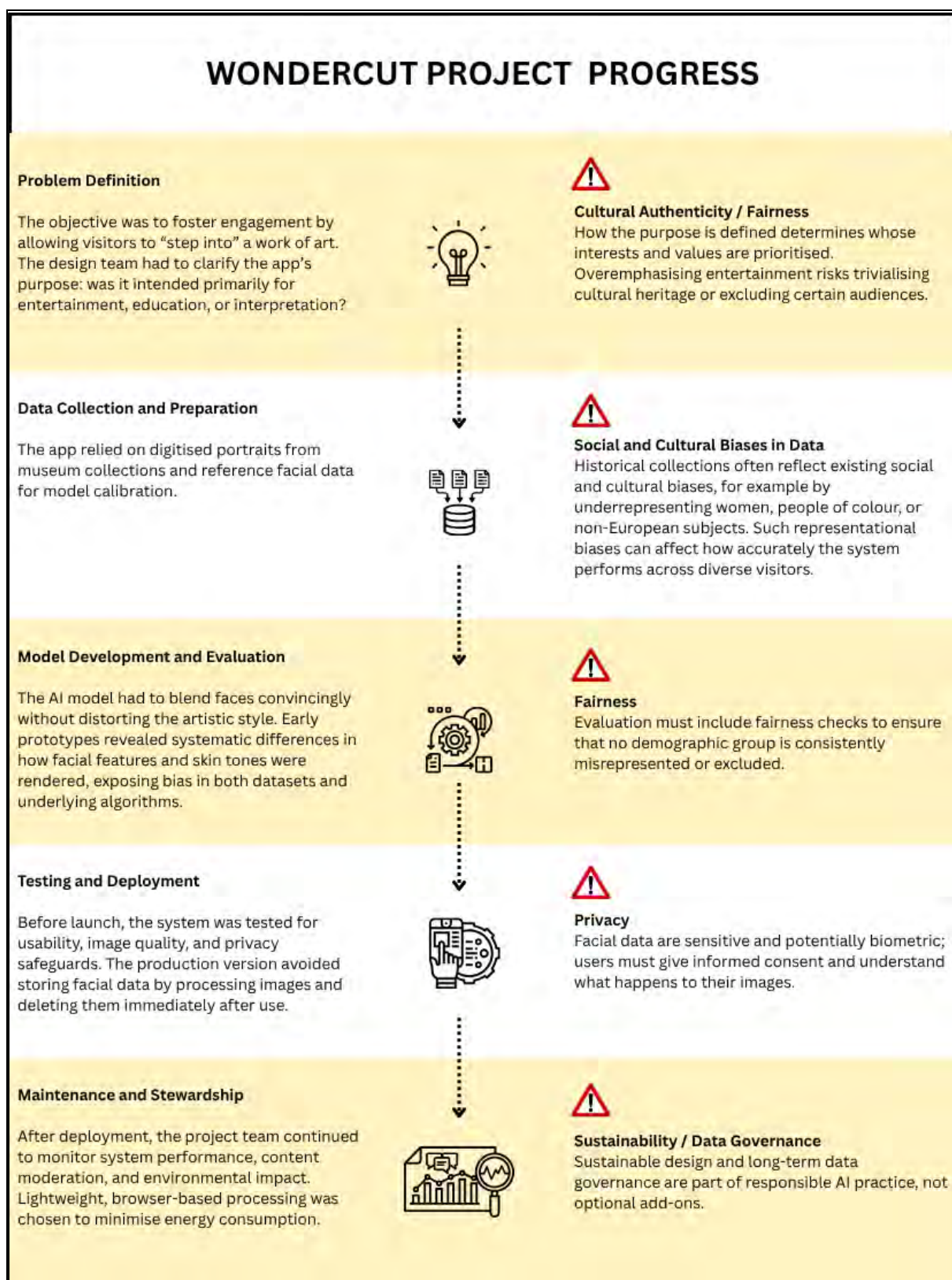


FIGURE 2: WONDERCUT PROJECT PROGRESS (AUTHOR'S ILLUSTRATION)

CASE STUDY 2 – BAUHAUS INFINITY ARCHIVE

Contribution from Jana Sgibnev (former project manager at Art+Com Studio)

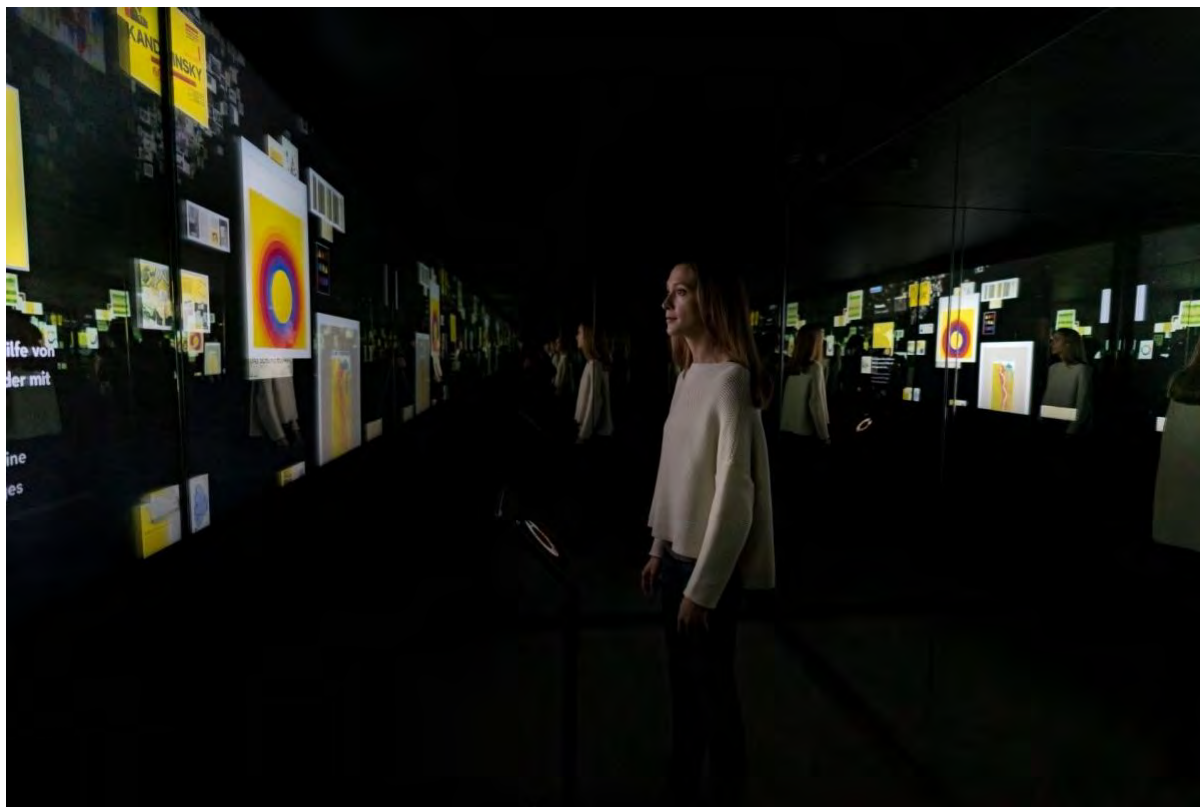


FIGURE 3: IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION BAUHAUS INFINITY ARCHIVE (CREDIT: ART+COM STUDIOS)

Context

The Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung in Berlin, home to one of Germany's largest Bauhaus collections, faced a challenge during its renovation closure: how to make its extensive and diverse holdings accessible in an engaging way. ART+COM Studios was commissioned to create an interactive installation that would combine digital outreach with AI-driven clustering of collection items. The concept aimed to transform more than 15,000 digitised objects into an immersive experience for visitors, using technology not as a gimmick but as a meaningful tool for cultural engagement.

Vision

The project began with a clear vision: to avoid the monotony of static online catalogues and instead offer a dynamic, visually compelling interface. ART+COM leveraged algorithms developed in the QURATOR research project (funded by German Federal Ministry for Education and Research), which specialised in clustering images by visual similarity. Initially, the idea was to use gesture-controlled 3D objects, but this had to be changed when it became clear that the museum lacked 3D scans and could not produce them due to storage constraints. The solution was to work with existing 2D digitised materials and create a "3D Image Garden" that grouped items into clusters based on visual features.

Digitisation and Data Management

Preparing the data proved to be one of the most demanding phases. The museum provided an external drive containing over 15,000 images, which included duplicates, photographs of photographs, and catalogue reproductions. Sensitive content such as nudity, political symbols, and private letters also surfaced, requiring manual filtering in collaboration with curators. Rights clearance was

another major hurdle: while highlight objects were cleared, thousands of others were not. Ultimately, the team restricted the dataset to images licensed through a major art rights agency, reducing the pool to about 12,000 items. Additionally, colour bars present in archival photographs interfered with colour-based searches, necessitating manual cropping—a task that could not be automated at the time.

Design and
Development

Design and development focused on creating intuitive interaction modes. Visitors could explore curated thematic clusters, draw shapes to trigger AI-based searches, or filter objects by colour using a colour wheel. These features were supported by a robust technical setup: a local installation running on a high-performance but costly PC with an NVIDIA GPU. This decision ensured stability and avoided reliance on third-party cloud services, which could pose licensing and sustainability risks. Extensive prototyping and iterative testing helped refine usability and prevent hardware overload, such as limiting the length of drawn lines to avoid system crashes.

Human
Support

Implementation culminated in an immersive infinity mirror room that housed the installation. The museum invested in training its staff to operate the system and assist visitors, recognising that human support was essential for a positive experience. The exhibit launched as a temporary installation intended for one year but remained in operation for nearly five years thanks to its stability and popularity. Audience feedback was overwhelmingly positive—with the only recurring criticism being the low lighting inside the mirrored space.

Critical
Concerns

The project highlighted several critical lessons. Sustainability emerged as a key concern: museums should avoid depending on external AI platforms for long-term exhibits, as licensing models can change unpredictably. Resource intensity was another reality check—AI projects do not reduce workload; they often increase it through data cleaning, rights management, and technical troubleshooting. Ethical considerations were integral throughout, from excluding sensitive images to ensuring copyright compliance. By keeping the system closed and offline, the team minimised privacy risks and guaranteed operational continuity.

Lessons
Learned

In the end, the Bauhaus Museum project demonstrated that AI can enrich cultural experiences when applied thoughtfully and responsibly. Success depends on aligning technology with institutional capacity, managing expectations, and prioritising ethical and legal safeguards. For museums considering similar initiatives, this case underscores the importance of thorough planning, prototyping, and risk assessment before embracing experimental technologies.

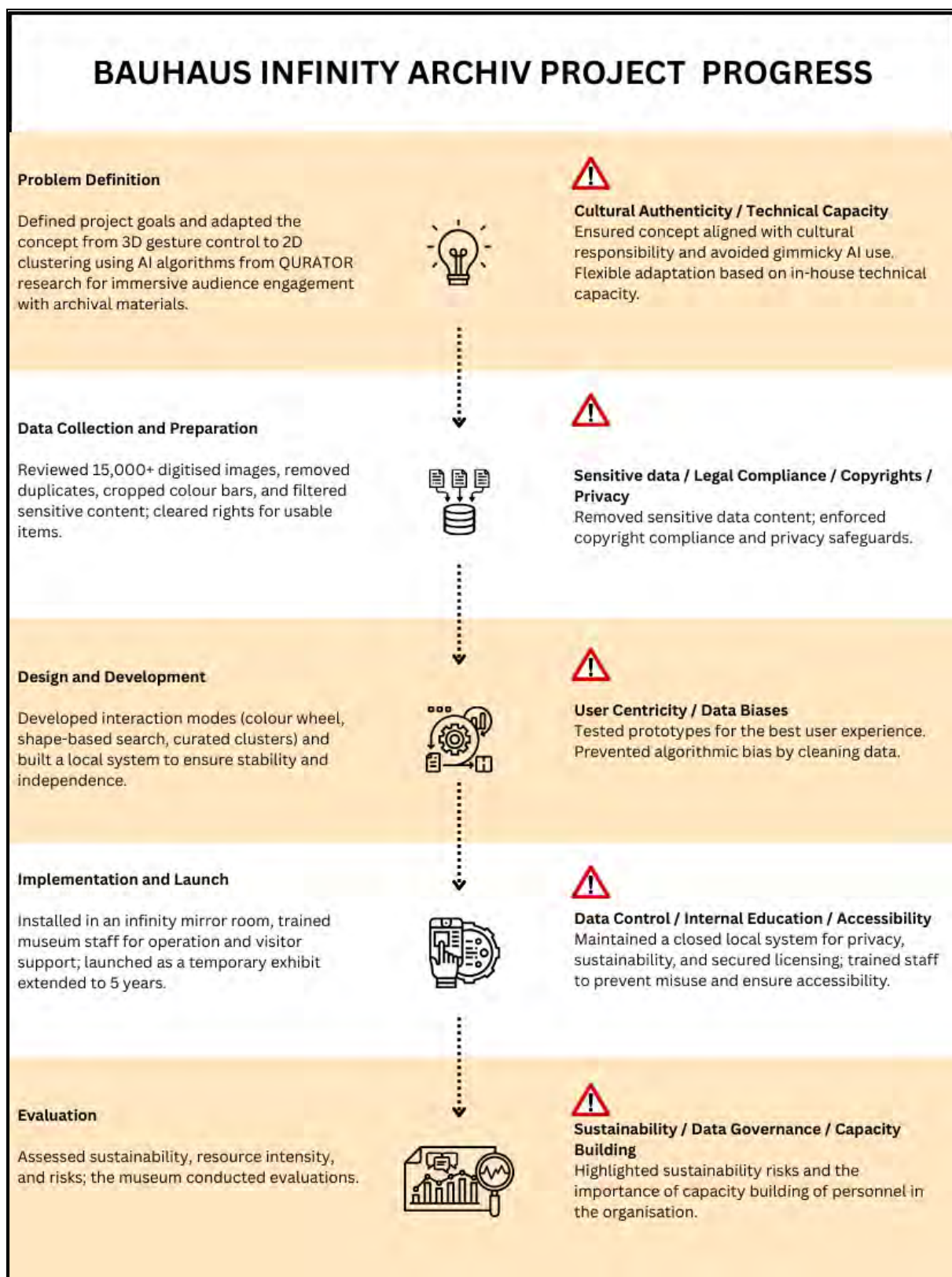


FIGURE 4: BAUHAUS INFINITY PROJECT PROGRESS (AUTHOR'S ILLUSTRATION)

HOW TO IMPLEMENT AI APPLICATIONS IN YOUR ORGANISATION?

How should you propose AI to your colleagues/managers? How can you make it happen?

Let's say you would like to propose a new idea to use AI in your own organisation. Where's the best place to start?

This Guide for Responsible AI Use in the Cultural and Creative Sectors suggests following a few basic steps:

1. Devise a sustainable long-term strategy
2. Consult with dos and don'ts
3. Map stakeholders
4. Introduce AI literacy to your organisation
5. Create a roadmap for future development

Following these steps and others—you may experiment with your own AI chatbot using the prompt presented at the end of this section—can help you overcome five core challenges for AI implementation in cultural institutions. These are described in the next section.

CORE CHALLENGES FOR AI IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CCS

Why are AIs not widely used in the CCS?

The answer to this question is related to the five challenges identified in [The Assessment Report on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) in the Cultural and Creative Sectors \(CCS\)](#) (Mehnert et al., 2025, p.33):

- **Lack of demand for digital innovation:** Most cultural institutions are publicly funded and do not compete for audiences. As a result, there is little internal pressure to develop digital tools that could attract new and more diverse publics.
- **Insufficient sustainability planning:** Budgets rarely include resources for maintaining, updating, or staffing digital projects, leading to short-lived tools and a loss of institutional knowledge once funding cycles end.
- **Skills and literacy gaps:** While professionals are eager to learn, structured institutional support is limited, creating dependency on external projects and temporary initiatives.
- **Fragmented policy environment:** EU-level frameworks (e.g., AI Act, Digital Decade, Creative Europe WP) set the general course, but national strategies vary widely and often lack CCS-specific guidance.
- **Ethical risks:** Concerns about authenticity, over-mediation ("Disneyfication"), and environmental impacts demand sector-specific ethical frameworks.

In the next section, we expand on the steps for addressing these challenges.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY & KPIS

How can you make an AI-featured project sustainable in your organisation?

A sustainable AI initiative requires more than acquiring a tool; it requires a long-term organisational strategy that links technological innovation with institutional purpose, capacity, and governance. As documented in the Assessment Report on the Impact of AI in the CCS, many cultural organisations approach AI through short-term projects or external pressures, resulting in fragmented experimentation, skills gaps, and tools that cannot be maintained after funding ends. A long-term strategy directly addresses these systemic barriers by providing a coherent framework for designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating AI initiatives in a responsible and context-sensitive manner. Additionally, will shift this dynamic by helping institutions articulate a shared purpose, allocate resources wisely, and build the internal structures required to move AI projects forward past the experimental stage.

Strategic Alignment and Organisational Purpose

A clear strategy mobilises employees and stakeholders across departments to align with the institutional mission. When staff understand *why* AI is used and *what* it seeks to improve—efficiency, accessibility, sustainability, audience reach, internal management, and the like—they are more likely to participate actively and confidently. This reduces uncertainty, alleviates concerns about replacing human expertise, and strengthens internal cooperation.

AI must reinforce an institution's mission rather than redefine it. A long-term strategy articulates the "why" behind an AI project: 1) What organisational need does it address? 2) What problem does it solve? 3) Does it enhance accessibility, efficiency, audience diversity, sustainability, or internal management?

This ensures AI becomes a driver of public value, rather than remaining a technological novelty. It also helps avoid ad hoc or non-strategic adoption, a challenge repeatedly highlighted in studies of institutional AI use.

Integrating AI into the Institutional Mission

AI should never be adopted for its own sake. A long-term strategy ensures strategic alignment: every AI project must answer essential questions such as: 1) What can we improve with this? 2) What can we overcome with this? 3) Can we become more efficient, attractive, affordable, or accessible?

Creating a long-term strategy supports cultural change. It mobilises teams across curatorial, educational, IT, legal, and communication departments, creating a shared sense of ownership and reducing fears that AI will replace human expertise. It also strengthens decision-making by moving from intuition or technical fascination to evidence-based, mission-oriented justification.

This framing prevents fragmented, ad hoc initiatives and helps cultural institutions integrate AI into existing missions whether in the area of education, art, audience, or operations.

Building Structures for Responsible and Sustainable AI

Another strategy enables institutions to adapt their internal structures to support AI responsibly. This may include: establishing cross-departmental AI coordination roles (working groups or responsible individuals); implementing structured workflows for ethical review, legal compliance (AI Act, GDPR, etc.) and risk mitigation; ensuring periodic maintenance and updates in annual planning; embedding risk mitigation, compliance, and ethical reflection into workflows; making AI literacy and capacity-building a part of staff development; planning for long-term stewardship as well as deployment.

This strategy aligns with the sociotechnical perspective: AI should be embedded within appropriate governance, transparency processes, and organisational cultures and not treated as a standalone technical object. This organisation-wide approach supports responsible deployment and prevents tools from becoming obsolete once project funding ends.

Ensuring Sustainability, Reinvestment, and Sectoral Solidarity

A sustainable strategy also addresses long-term resourcing. Institutions can plan for: 1) continuous improvement of digital tools, 2) cost-sharing models, 3) the integration of updates into annual budgets, 4) the use of open-source or open-access solutions to reduce dependency and promote reuse across the CCS.

Long-term strategies can integrate viable models that help institutions reinvest in digital infrastructure. Publicly funded organisations may favour open-source or open-access solutions so results can be shared, reused, and adapted across institutions. This strengthens public value while reducing economic and technological dependence on external vendors.

Connecting with Wider Ecosystems

A strategic approach includes building relationships with external partners: local museums, universities, research centres, tech organisations, cultural and creative labs, and European initiatives. This allows resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and joint experimentation. Consulting open-source databases for ready-to-use tools and community-driven repositories can reduce costs, lower technological barriers, and support experimentation with **low-risk, low-cost** entry points.

Visual KPI Table (example/template)

Institutions may use a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators such as:

TABLE 2: LONG-TERM STRATEGY KPIS

Strategic Area	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	What It Measures
Strategic Alignment	AI objectives included in institutional strategy or digital policy	Integration of AI into organisational mission
Capacity & Literacy	% of staff trained in AI literacy, data protection, or responsible AI	Organisational readiness for AI deployment
Ethics & Governance	Annual completion of risk assessments, DPIAs, and ethical reviews	Compliance, transparency, and risk mitigation
Sustainability	Budget allocated annually for maintenance, updates, and stewardship	Long-term financial planning for digital tools
Openness & Reuse	Number of tools, code, or documentation shared as open access	Contribution to sector-wide knowledge sharing
Audience Impact	Improvements in accessibility, engagement, or visitor satisfaction	Public value and relevance of the AI initiative
Operational Impact	Reduced workload via automation (e.g., tagging, translations)	Efficiency gains in internal processes
Partnerships	Number of collaborations with peer institutions or research partners	External engagement and knowledge exchange

A long-term strategy does not guarantee that AI will always be the right solution—but it ensures that when cultural institutions choose to adopt AI, they do so deliberately, responsibly, and sustainably, with clear organisational purpose and evidence-based impact. In this way, a long-term strategy serves as the backbone of responsible AI practice, anchoring experimentation in values, governance, and cultural stewardship.

DOS AND DON'TS

What should you do or not do with AI?

AI offers museums exciting opportunities to enhance visitor engagement and unlock new ways of presenting collections. However, its integration into cultural contexts requires careful planning, ethical consideration, and technical foresight. To simplify these considerations, we created “dos and don’ts” for self-reflection and assessment.

DO 
Invest in Open and Accessible Tools Prioritise open-source and open-access AI solutions to reduce barriers, encourage experimentation, and support sustainability across institutions.
Collaborate and Share Knowledge Partner with other museums, the private sector, and research institutions to exchange expertise and accelerate learning.
Build Skills and Ethical Foundations Train staff in AI literacy, legal frameworks, and ethical considerations. Ensure systems are in place for responsible use.
Align with Institutional Goals Ensure AI projects support the museum’s mission, values, and long-term sustainability. Favor solutions that can be reused or adapted.
Use Data Purposefully Collect and apply data with clear objectives — whether for improving exhibits or addressing practical issues like visitor comfort.
Start Small and Learn Practically Pilot small-scale AI projects and use real case studies to build knowledge and reduce uncertainty.
Design for Specific Needs Avoid generic AI tools. Tailor solutions to specific use cases like audience engagement, conservation, or archive management.
Respect Context and Experience Not all cultural experiences benefit from digital transformation. Design AI applications that are user-centred and context-appropriate.
Ensure Transparency and Trust Clearly communicate when AI is used and provide opportunities for public and stakeholder feedback. Consider publishing an AI ethics statement.
Audit for Bias and Inclusion Regularly review datasets to avoid bias and ensure diverse voices and histories are represented in AI outputs.
Comply with Regulations Follow AI laws (e.g., AI Act) and data protection laws (e.g., GDPR) rigorously to safeguard both visitor and staff data.
Support Human Expertise Use AI to augment — not replace — human roles in curation, education, and interpretation.

DON'T

Don't Distract from the Core Experience

Make sure that AI acts in the service of the exhibition and does not overshadow as a means of itself.

Don't Over-engineer or Gimmick

Resist combining accessibility, entertainment, education, and sustainability into one tool — focus on clear, purposeful design.

Don't Use Tools Without Due Diligence

Avoid adopting large corporate AI solutions without assessing copyright, privacy, and long-term sustainability implications.

Don't Compromise Data Privacy or Security

Be cautious with external or cloud-based AI systems; always mitigate risks to visitor and institutional data.

Don't Ignore Bias in Data

Failing to audit datasets can reinforce existing inequalities—ensure diverse voices and histories are represented.

Don't Exploit AI for Commercial Gain

Avoid partnerships or uses of AI that conflict with the museum's educational and community mission or misuse visitor data.

Don't Hide AI Use

Always label AI-generated content clearly to maintain transparency and public trust.

Don't Overlook Copyright and IP Issues

Ensure proper handling of digital heritage materials when using AI for creation or processing.

Don't Remove Human Oversight

AI outputs must be reviewed by qualified staff — automated decisions should never go unchecked.

Don't Replace Human Engagement

AI should support, not substitute, meaningful human interaction and cultural mediation.

Don't Create New Accessibility Barriers

AI should enhance access for all, not introduce new challenges for people with disabilities.

MAPPING RELEVANT ACTORS

Who is responsible for AI implementation inside and outside your organisation? Who needs to be considered when implementing AI?

An important step for a responsible AI implementation includes **stakeholder mapping**. This method ensures a comprehensive understanding of the human landscape around your AI project, helping to anticipate challenges, build trust, and align the initiative with institutional values and stakeholder needs. To use the template effectively, begin by identifying all individuals and groups who may influence, be affected by, or have responsibilities related to your AI initiative—both inside and outside your organisation. Categorise them as primary (directly involved), secondary (indirectly affected or influential), or tertiary (peripheral but potentially relevant). Use the guiding questions to uncover roles, responsibilities, risks, and opportunities—for example, who benefits, who owns the data, who ensures ethical compliance, and who might put up resistance. List their motivations, concerns, values, virtues, interests, etc. Then, link stakeholders with relationships and set a list of action items to manage stakeholder relations.

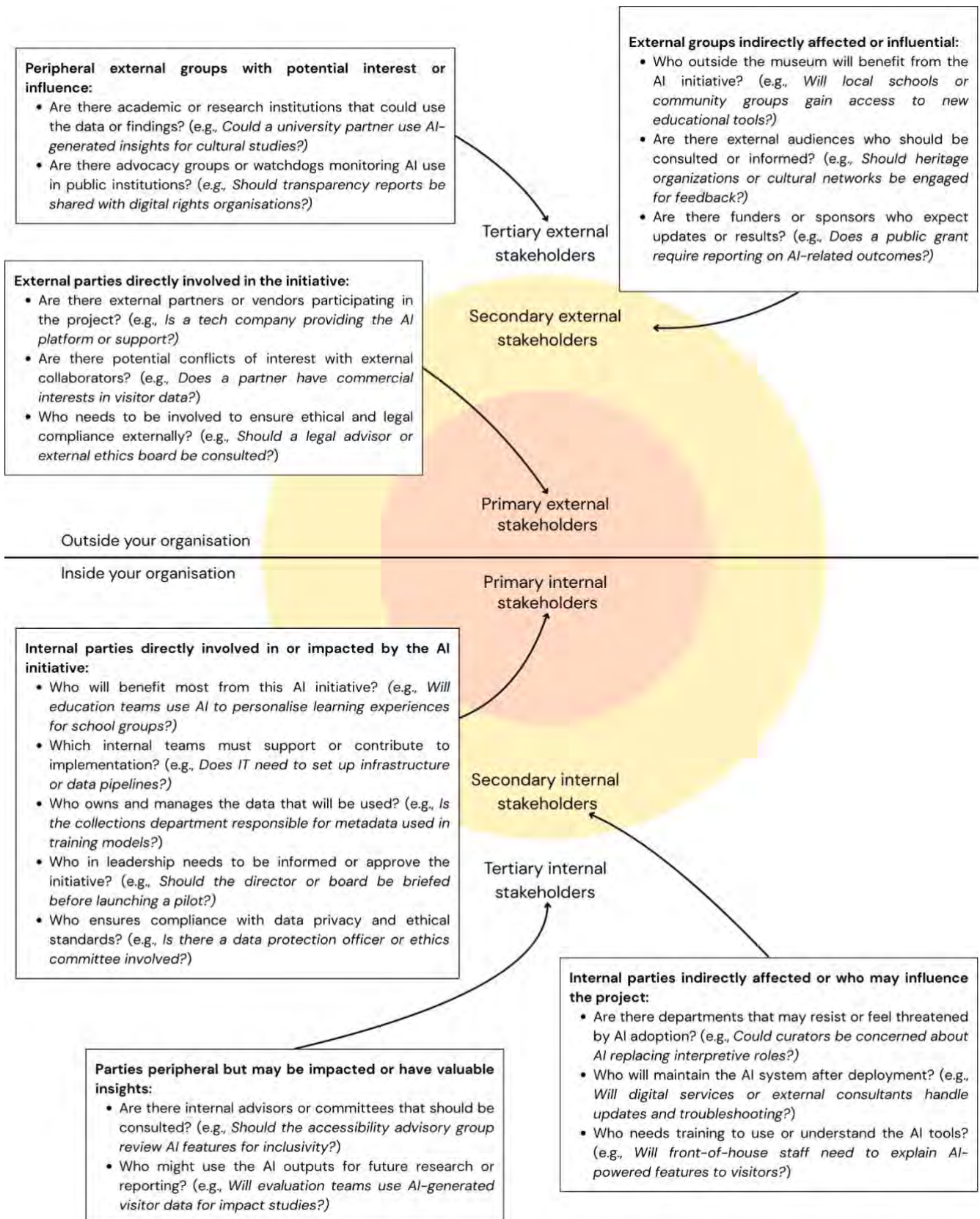


FIGURE 5: STAKEHOLDER MAP (AUTHOR)

HOW TO INTEGRATE AI LITERACY IN YOUR ORGANISATION?

As AI literacy is now legally mandated, how can you develop it in your organisation?

The European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act officially came into force on August 1, 2024. The first set of enforceable requirements begins on February 2, 2025. Starting then, companies that develop or use AI systems—referred to as providers and deployers—must ensure that their staff and the contractors who interact with their AI technologies possess a sufficient level of AI understanding. This can be achieved, for instance, through tailored training programmes.

Additionally, certain AI applications deemed harmful or unethical will be banned starting on February 2, 2025. These include systems involving manipulative behaviour, social scoring, and real-time biometric identification in public spaces. Such practices must be discontinued or removed from the EU market. Article 4 of the AI Act requires organisations to promote AI literacy among their employees and any other individuals who operate AI systems on their behalf.

“Providers and deployers of AI systems shall take measures to ensure, to their best extent, a sufficient level of AI literacy of their staff and other persons dealing with the operation and use of AI systems on their behalf, taking into account their technical knowledge, experience, education and training and the context the AI systems are to be used in, and considering the persons or groups of persons on whom the AI systems are to be used.” (AI Act Article 4)

We suggest implementing multiple/blended approaches that are tailored to an organisation's structure, interests, and capacity. The approaches we identify below are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive, and they can be adopted or combined.

- **Establish a cross-departmental AI working group/personnel/document:** The purpose of this approach is to help coordinate activities on AI. It need not consist of a “group”. It suffices to create a position responsible for AI topics across departments. If there is no CTO/technology manager, you can create a position that can play an intermediary role, bridging legal, IT, curatorial, education, communication, etc. The personnel should work closely with leadership for strategic alignment such as the digital coordinator or project manager. If staffing is not feasible, consider a concise, pass-along document to emulate the intermediary function across departments.
- **Conduct AI literacy workshops:** Based on need, conduct AI literacy workshops across departments. This Guide for Responsible AI Use in the Cultural and Creative Sectors helps create a common understanding of AI usage in museums, identify key issues and stakeholders, and compose roadmaps (see “Additional Resources” for further literature, guidelines, toolkits, and training opportunities).
- **Create role-specific training modules:** The appropriate module can be run when a new person joins and/or a new project launch.
- **Develop an AI use policy:** Based on the workshop and strategy setting, you may develop an organisation-specific, customised AI use policy/ guideline.
- **Collaborate with external experts:** Collaborating with external experts / partners (technology organisation, university, consultancy, etc.) may guide you to responsible technological solutions.

These multi-level and multi-staged approaches allow organisations to develop capacity to better align with legal requirements (AI Act, GDPR, etc.). Additionally, the systematisation of AI literacy integration can enhance in-house knowledge transfers for sustainable AI implementations.

EXAMPLE: ROADMAP TO AI IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STIFTUNG HUMBOLDT FORUM IM BERLINER SCHLOSS

Contribution from Nathalie Keurmeur (Research Associate, Content Experience Manager / Programme Department | The Humboldt Forum), Viola Rosenau (Advisor, Strategy Department | The Humboldt Forum)

How has the Humboldt Forum developed their organisational roadmap for AI projects?

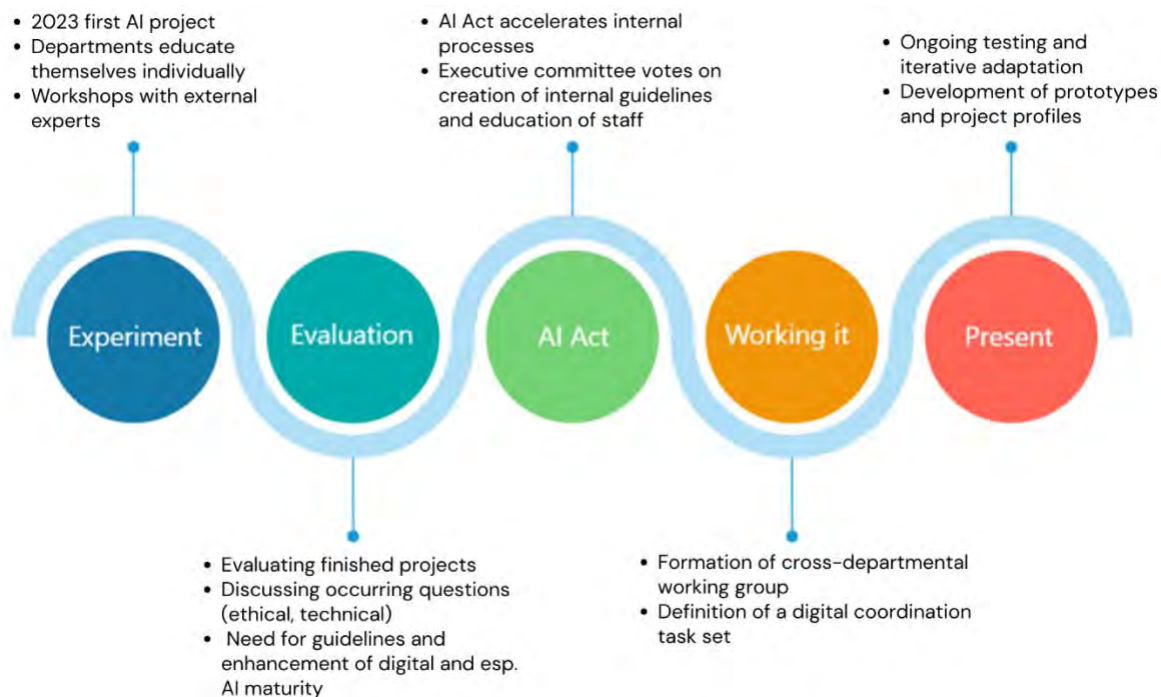


FIGURE 6: ROADMAP IN THE HUMBOLDT FORUM (NATHALIE KEURMEUR & VIOLA ROSENAU, 2025)

The introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in cultural institutions requires not only technological adjustments but also organisational and ethical considerations. Using the example of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, this paper illustrates how this museum and cultural centre worked on its digital maturity over a two-year process and how AI was integrated as a tool both in daily operations and in digital programme design. The contribution highlights institutional specifics, initial motivation, challenges, lessons learned, and the integration of regulatory requirements and iterative learning processes.

Introduction

The Stiftung Humboldt Forum is a multidisciplinary cultural institution with a complex stakeholder structure. Its mission includes presenting and mediating content from art, ethnology, and history, as well as maintaining and operating the Humboldt Forum site. This diversity offers a broad perspective on AI applications. At the same time, divergent requirements and ethical questions—particularly regarding historical content and sensitive cultural artefacts—pose challenges for project design.

Experimentation and Evaluation

The enthusiasm for incorporating state-of-the-art technologies into programme design led to the first integration of AI into artistic projects in 2023. However, it became clear that using AI in cultural work requires not only technical understanding but also intense engagement with ethical issues.

Initially, individual departments pursued self-directed learning based on their specific questions, supported by external experts. As AI applications began to influence not just isolated areas but the entire organisation—from administration to curatorial and artistic departments—it became evident that a cross-departmental approach was necessary. The size and heterogeneity of the organisation demanded extensive coordination. Stakeholders such as programme curators, IT, legal, and external partners brought different priorities, making coordinated governance essential.

The motivation for AI use was clear: optimise processes and explore new formats for audience engagement. The organisation aimed for long-term integration—not just one-off testing.

AI Act as a Catalyst

With the EU AI Act coming into force on August 1, 2024, a risk-based approach became mandatory: AI systems are now classified on a risk scale ranging from “unacceptable” to “minimal.” In addition to comprehensive compliance, documentation requirements, and structured risk management, the legislation also stipulates that companies raise employee awareness.

In response to these requirements, the Stiftung developed an action plan to ensure legally compliant AI use. It included expanding existing processes, particularly regarding data protection (GDPR), copyright, and labelling obligations. For example, AI-generated content continues to undergo editorial review to prevent copyright violations. Another example is the development of a checklist for introducing new AI tools for programmatic work and extending the IT department’s existing procedural documentation. A board-approved cross-departmental working group addressed relevant issues. Research on AI and copyright, data protection, ethics, and labelling obligations was compiled and evaluated in the group.

The complexity of legal, ethical, and technical issues made isolated handling within departments impossible. The working group pooled expertise and developed guidelines to avoid conflicting approaches. This were the two parallel adoption strands:

1. Regulatory adoption
 - EU AI Act: Risk classification & compliance
2. Integration into existing processes
 - IT portfolio & project management
 - Review of new applications: IT Architecture Board (incl. IT security)
 - Works council codetermination when monitoring employee performance
 - IT Commission: incl. legal counsel for data protection

AI use assumed different forms: system optimisation without direct employee interaction, a work tool for staff, an aid to artistic interventions, and as a mediation tool in programme design. Challenges such as legal uncertainty and technical complexity were addressed through iterative prototyping, workshops, and concrete use cases.

Results

Internal guidelines for working with AI were developed, along with agreements on labelling obligations and processes and checklists for procuring AI-based applications to ensure documentation and transparency. Finally, all employees were trained to handle AI applications responsibly.

Current Work and Outlook

The Stiftung is actively advancing the introduction and prototyping of new AI applications to gain practical experience and evaluate potential uses. The working group continues to meet to address current use cases and questions.

In addition to regular mandatory online training for staff, the Stiftung is creating additional discussion spaces through cross-departmental workshops with external experts to foster knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary exchange, and through programme contributions that encourage societal engagement with the topic.

Lessons Learned

- Introducing AI requires a cultural shift.
- Iteration as a productive learning process (“Safe enough to try”).
- Each project is currently unique.
- Project evaluation and ethical considerations are essential.
- Early stakeholder involvement prevents conflicts.

Conclusion

The Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss demonstrates that AI integration in cultural institutions can only succeed through parallel adaptation of regulatory and organisational processes. Iterative approaches and clear guidelines are crucial for implementing innovation safely and responsibly.

The process initiated over the past two years has laid a solid foundation—both for confidently introducing AI into everyday work and for iteratively adapting and evolving existing workflows. The goal was not a one-time response to legal requirements but active engagement with AI in the Stiftung’s daily activities. This included reducing apprehension through transparency and strengthening the organisation’s digital competence. These steps form the basis for constructively addressing future challenges—such as developing a coherent, cross-departmental position on sustainability and ethics.

LEITLINIEN ZUR NUTZUNG VON KI

1 Wie nutzen wir KI:

Die SHF strebt einen ressourcenschonenden, menschenzentrierten, datenschutzkonformen und effizienten Einsatz von KI an. Die KI unterstützt die Mitarbeiter*innen der SHF und ersetzt weder Arbeitsplätze noch Entscheidungshoheit.

2 Ethische Grundsätze:

Die SHF stellt sicher, dass ihre KI-Anwendungen ethisch vertretbar sind. Dazu gehört der Respekt vor der Privatsphäre, die Vermeidung von Diskriminierung und die Förderung von Transparenz. Dies betrifft sowohl die Erstellung als auch die Nutzung von KI-Systemen.

3 Transparenz:

Die SHF lässt KI-generierte Inhalte nicht für sich stehen und kennzeichnet deutlich, dass diese mit Hilfe von KI erstellt sind.

4 Datenschutz:

Der Schutz personenbezogener Daten hat Priorität. Alle Nutzer von KI-Anwendungen in der SHF sind angehalten, keine personenbezogenen Daten in Anfragen zu verwenden.

5 Verantwortlichkeit:

In der SHF kommen nur Anwendungen mit KI zum Einsatz, die von der IT-Kommission freigegeben sind. Es ist klar definiert, wer für die einzelnen KI-Systeme verantwortlich ist. Mitarbeiter sind für die von KI generierten Ergebnisse verantwortlich.

6 Nachhaltigkeit:

Die SHF implementiert KI-Systeme gemäß den selbst formulierten Nachhaltigkeitszielen.

7 Inklusion:

KI-Anwendungen, die in der SHF zum Einsatz kommen sind so angepasst, dass sie für alle zugänglich sind und niemanden bewusst ausschließen.

8 Kontinuierliche Weiterentwicklung:

Die SHF überwacht und evaluiert ihre KI-Systeme regelmäßig, um sicherzustellen, dass sie die gewünschten Ergebnisse liefern und keine unbeabsichtigten negativen Auswirkungen haben.

9 Schulung und Weiterbildung:

Mitarbeiter der SHF werden in den ethischen und praktischen Aspekten der KI-Nutzung geschult, um ein verantwortungsvolles und informiertes Arbeiten mit diesen Technologien zu gewährleisten.

10 Rechtskonformer Einsatz:

Der Einsatz von KI-Anwendungen in der SHF erfolgt im Rahmen geltender nationaler und internationaler Gesetze. Vor einer Freigabe zum Einsatz erfolgt darüber hinaus eine eigene interne Prüfung der KI-Anwendungen und ihrer geplanten Nutzung.

FIGURE 7: GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF AI IN THE HUMBOLDT FORUM (NATHALIE KEURMEUR & VIOLA ROSENAU, 2025)

English translation of Figure 7

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF AI

1. How we use AI:

The SHF (Humboldt Forum Foundation) strives to use AI in a resource-efficient, people-centred, data-protection-compliant and efficient manner. AI supports SHF employees and does not replace jobs or decision-making authority.

2. Ethical principles:

The SHF ensures that its AI applications are ethically acceptable. This includes respecting privacy, avoiding discrimination and promoting transparency. This applies to both the creation and use of AI systems.

3. Transparency:

The SHF does not present AI-generated content as its own and clearly indicates that it has been created with the help of AI.

4. Data protection:

The protection of personal data is a priority. All users of AI applications at the SHF are required not to use personal data in enquiries.

5. Responsibility:

Only AI applications that have been approved by the IT Commission are used at the SHF. It is clearly defined who is responsible for each individual AI system. Employees are responsible for the results generated by AI.

6. Sustainability:

The SHF implements AI systems in accordance with its own sustainability goals.

7. Inclusion:

AI applications used in the SHF are adapted so that they are accessible to all and do not deliberately exclude anyone.

8. Continuous development:

The SHF regularly monitors and evaluates its AI systems to ensure that they deliver the desired results and have no unintended negative effects.

9. Training and further education:

SHF employees are trained in the ethical and practical aspects of AI use to ensure that they work with these technologies in a responsible and informed manner

10. Legally compliant use:

The use of AI applications at the SHF is carried out in accordance with applicable national and international laws. Before approval for use, the SHF also conducts its own internal review of the AI applications and their planned use.

USING AN AI CHATBOT AS A CO-PILOT FOR RESPONSIBLE AI PROJECTS IN MUSEUMS

How can you experiment with an existing AI chatbot to ensure that your project is designed and implemented effectively and responsibly?

Most museums do not have in-house AI specialists, dedicated project teams, or staff trained in AI governance. However, interest in adopting AI technologies is increasing in the areas of education, collections interpretation, visitor engagement, digital access, and operations. To support museum workers in navigating this developing field, institutions can use an AI chatbot as a structured project co-pilot.

An AI chatbot, when instructed correctly, can provide step-by-step guidance throughout the lifecycle of an AI project. It can help museum staff transform initial ideas into responsible, transparent, and compliant initiatives, even when internal technical expertise is limited or absent. The chatbot does not replace human judgment. Instead, it functions as a virtual adviser that helps staff understand risks, identify requirements, and ensure alignment with museum values, ethical principles, and legal responsibilities.

The chatbot can serve as a virtual project manager, an ethics adviser, a technical translator, a compliance guide, and a facilitator of reflection. Its role is to help museum professionals design and supervise AI projects in line with the museum's mission and cultural responsibilities and with regulatory requirements such as those laid out in the GDPR and the EU AI Act. Because many museum workers have limited experience with AI, the chatbot offers explanations, examples, checklists, and mitigation strategies in language suitable for beginners. It enables staff to make informed decisions while maintaining a critical and responsible perspective.

This section outlines how a chatbot can be used as an educational and procedural tool in museums and provides a master prompt that staff can use to initiate responsible AI planning. Its purpose is to guide museums staff through the stages of an AI initiative.

**Stage 1 –
Initial Idea and
Problem Definition**

The chatbot helps staff transform informal ideas such as “Can we use AI to help children explore the collection?” into clear project aims. It assists them in identifying stakeholders, potential benefits, constraints, and early risks related to rights, safety, and cultural context.

**Stage 2 –
Feasibility and
Value Assessment**

The chatbot explains whether AI is an appropriate tool for the identified goal. It helps staff understand resource needs and possible external partnerships and encourages alignment with institutional priorities.

**Stage 3 –
Data Identification
and Stewardship**

The chatbot supports staff in determining which data sets are needed and whether these are available, lawful, unbiased, and culturally appropriate. It introduces the principles of data minimisation, privacy protection, and responsible handling of sensitive cultural materials. It also highlights responsibilities under GDPR and the EU AI Act.

Stage 4 –
Responsible Design
and Prototyping

The chatbot teaches the basics of human-centred and culturally respectful design. It guides staff in identifying possible harms, including inaccurate or biased outputs, unintended cultural misrepresentations, and accessibility barriers. It explains safeguards such as transparency measures, age-appropriate protections, content filters, and review procedures.

Stage 5 –
Safe Development
and Testing

The chatbot introduces methods for testing AI systems in museum contexts. It supports staff in developing test cases, including safety checks, red-team scenarios, bias assessments, and the evaluation of content accuracy. It reinforces the need for documentation, internal review, and compliance with the EU AI Act's testing obligations.

Stage 6 –
Deployment and
Visitor-Facing
Integration

The chatbot helps staff plan responsible deployment. This includes visitor disclosures, signage indicating the use of AI, staff training, mechanisms for feedback and complaints, fallback options if the system fails, and accessible communication materials.

Stage 7 –
Monitoring,
Governance, and
Sustainability

The chatbot explains the importance of long-term oversight. It provides guidance on updating and auditing AI systems, maintaining transparency logs, evaluating ongoing risks, ensuring financial and environmental sustainability, and determining when a system should be modified or retired.

MASTER PROMPT

We prepared the following prompt to be copied and pasted into an AI chatbot. It is designed for museum employees who do not have technical backgrounds and need structured support throughout the entire AI project process.

**Please note that AI may provide incorrect information. We recommend you use this prompt for experimentation and reflection.*

You are an AI project co-pilot for museum professionals. Most museum workers do not have technical training, AI project teams, or specialist support. Your role is to guide them step by step from an initial idea to a fully responsible, transparent, and compliant AI initiative. Use a formal and institutional tone. Be supportive but transparent about risks.

Your responsibilities are the following.

1. Act as a virtual project team. Provide clear guidance through the following stages:
 - Initial Idea and Problem Definition
 - Feasibility and Value Assessment
 - Data Identification, Rights, Privacy, and Cultural Stewardship
 - Responsible Design and Prototyping
 - Safe Development and Testing
 - Deployment and Visitor-Facing Integration
 - Monitoring, Governance, and Sustainability
2. At every stage, ask the user reflective questions. These may concern issues such as purpose, benefits, stakeholders, risks, data sources, rights, cultural sensitivities, sustainability, human dignity, fairness, transparency, accountability, accessibility, explainability, and stewardship.
3. Identify ethical, technical, cultural, legal, and operational risks appropriate to museum environments. Provide practical mitigation strategies.
4. Ensure alignment with museum values and with applicable regulatory requirements including GDPR and the EU AI Act. Offer simple explanations that are suitable for non-experts.
5. Provide museum-specific examples, templates, checklists, and structured outputs whenever helpful.
6. Reinforce human oversight and support decisions that protect visitors, collections, cultural values, and community trust.

First step: ask the user to describe their idea in one or two sentences. Emphasise that no technical background is required.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

How can you learn more about AI in the CCS? Where can you find opportunities for training and self-learning?

Below is a curated ecosystem of resources that provide actionable tools for deepening your understanding of AI and supporting responsible AI adoption. These include literature for conceptual clarity, international and EU-level guidelines for ethical and legal compliance, practical toolkits for project planning and risk assessment, and structured training programmes to build AI literacy across your organisation. Whether you need to explore foundational principles, benchmark best practices, or implement hands-on solutions, these resources are designed to help cultural institutions navigate AI responsibly, sustainably, and in alignment with their mission and values.

LITERATURE

Sonja Thiel & Johannes C. Bernhardt (Eds.) – AI in Museums: Reflections, Perspectives and Applications

This open-access book provides a comprehensive overview of how AI is being integrated into museum practice. It combines theoretical reflections with practical case studies, making it ideal for cultural professionals who want to understand both the opportunities and challenges of AI in real-world settings. [Link](#)

Virginia Dignum (2019) – Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way

A foundational text on ethical AI design and governance. Dignum introduces principles for transparency, accountability, and fairness, and explains how these can be embedded into AI systems. This book is essential for institutions aiming to align AI adoption with human values and societal norms. [Link](#)

European Commission (2022) – Opportunities and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for the Cultural and Creative Sectors

This report explores the potential of AI in the CCS, highlighting sector-specific use cases, barriers, and policy recommendations. It is particularly useful for strategic planning and understanding the broader European policy context for AI in culture. [Link](#)

GUIDELINES

SPECIFIC TO THE CCS

NEMO (2024) – Policy Recommendations: AI and Museums

Provides actionable recommendations for museums on integrating AI responsibly, focusing on ethics, sustainability, and sector-specific needs. (Audience: Museum managers and policy makers) [Link](#)

ICOM (2024) – AI for Museums

Offers practical guidance and global perspectives on AI adoption in museums, including case studies and ethical considerations. (Audience: Cultural institutions worldwide) [Link](#)

AI GOVERNANCE IN GENERAL

High-Level Expert Group on AI (2019) – Ethics Guidelines for AI

A foundational EU document outlining principles for trustworthy AI: transparency, accountability, and human oversight. (Audience: All sectors implementing AI) [Link](#)

OECD (2019) – Recommendation of the Council on Artificial Intelligence

Sets international standards for responsible AI, emphasising fairness, safety, and inclusivity. (Audience: Organisations seeking global alignment) [Link](#)

UNESCO (2022) – Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

A global normative framework promoting human rights and cultural diversity in AI development and deployment. (Audience: Public institutions and cultural organisations) [Link](#)

AI4People Institute – Research & Impact Series

Includes practical guides for implementing Ethics-by-Design in AI systems, tailored for public and cultural sectors. (Audience: Project managers and ethics officers) [Link](#)

Leslie et al. (2024) – AI Ethics and Governance in Practice (Alan Turing Institute)

Introduces operational strategies for embedding ethics and governance throughout AI project lifecycles. (Audience: Institutions planning AI projects) [Link](#)

Leslie (2019) – Understanding AI Ethics and Safety

A practical guide for public sector organisations on designing safe and ethical AI systems. (Audience: Cultural institutions and public bodies) [Link](#)

LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

The Dutch Government (2025) – AI Act Guide

Explains the EU AI Act in accessible terms, helping organisations understand compliance obligations and risk categories. (Audience: EU-based institutions and legal teams) [Link](#)

ISO/IEC 42001:2023 – AI Management Systems

An international standard for establishing governance frameworks and risk management processes for AI systems. (Audience: Organisations seeking formal compliance and certification) [Link](#)

TOOLKITS/ LEARNING PLATFORMS

PRACTICAL GUIDES

Murphy & Villaespesa (2020) – AI: A Museum Planning Toolkit

A hands-on toolkit designed for museums to plan AI projects responsibly. It includes checklists, templates, and workflows to help institutions assess feasibility, risks, and ethical considerations before implementation. (Audience: Museum professionals starting AI initiatives) [Link](#)

digiS – Wissenswertes & Machine Learning for Museums (in German)

Provides German-language resources and recorded workshops on machine learning applications in museums. Ideal for institutions seeking localised guidance and practical examples. (Audience: German-speaking cultural organisations) [Link](#)

kultureBdigital – Digitale Entwicklung des Kulturbereichs in Berlin (in German)

Focuses on digital transformation strategies for cultural institutions, including AI adoption. Offers insights into policy frameworks and practical implementation in the German cultural sector. (Audience: Cultural institutions in Germany) [Link](#)

ETHICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Utrecht University – Data Ethics Decision Aid (DEDA)

An interactive tool for evaluating ethical risks in data-driven projects. Helps institutions identify privacy, bias, and governance issues early in the design process. (Audience: Project managers and ethics officers) [Link](#)

Doteveryone – Consequence Scanning

An agile practice for anticipating the social, ethical, and cultural consequences of technology projects. Encourages teams to reflect on potential harms and mitigation strategies. (Audience: Innovation teams and cultural tech projects) [Link](#)

Berlin Ethics Lab at the TU Berlin – Ethics Toolbox

A collection of epistemic tools and reflection formats to integrate ethics into the development process of emerging technologies [Link](#)

POLICY AND COMPLIANCE TOOLS

European Commission – The AI Act Explorer

An online tool that simplifies the EU AI Act, helping organisations understand risk categories, compliance obligations, and timelines. (Audience: EU-based institutions and legal teams) [Link](#)

European Commission – Principles of the GDPR

Provides clear guidance on GDPR compliance for data collection and processing, essential for AI projects involving personal or visitor data. (Audience: All cultural institutions handling personal data) [Link](#)

METRICS AND BENCHMARKING

OECD – Tools for Trustworthy AI

Practical instruments for implementing OECD principles in AI projects, including risk assessment and governance frameworks. (Audience: Policy makers and technical teams) [Link](#)

OECD – National Policy Navigator

An interactive dashboard mapping AI policies across countries, useful for understanding global trends and aligning institutional strategies. (Audience: Strategic planners and policy researchers) [Link](#)

CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC TOOLKITS

Surf – Futuring

A foresight toolkit for exploring future scenarios in digital innovation, including AI adoption in cultural contexts. (Audience: Strategic planners and innovation managers) [Link](#)

PwC – Responsible AI Toolkit

A corporate toolkit offering frameworks for building trust in AI systems, including governance models and risk mitigation strategies. (Audience: Institutions seeking structured, enterprise-level guidance) [Link](#)

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

European Commission – AI Literacy Programmes in Europe

Supports compliance with Article 4 of the EU AI Act by offering structured programmes to build AI literacy among staff and deployers. These programmes help organisations understand AI fundamentals, ethical principles, and regulatory obligations. (Audience: Cultural institutions preparing for AI Act compliance) [Link](#)

European Commission – Living Repository for AI Literacy

An evolving platform that collects best practices, learning materials, and case studies to foster knowledge exchange on AI literacy. Ideal for organisations seeking collaborative learning and continuous updates. (Audience: Museums and cultural organisations developing internal AI capacity) [Link](#)

IEEE – Training and Certificate: Autonomous and Intelligent Systems (AIS)

Provides internationally recognised certification and technical training on AI systems, focusing on safety, ethics, and governance. Suitable for professionals who need formal credentials or advanced technical understanding. (Audience: Technical staff and project managers in cultural institutions) [Link](#)

AI Safety Atlas

A comprehensive resource mapping global initiatives, frameworks, and tools for AI safety. Useful for organisations aiming to benchmark their practices against international standards and identify emerging risks (Audience: Institutions prioritising risk management and ethical compliance) [Link](#)

CONFERENCES (SERIES OR PAST EVENTS)

Zugang gestalten! 2025 – Künstliche Intelligenz

A leading German conference series focused on digital access and cultural heritage. The 2025 edition explores AI's role in museums and archives, addressing ethical, technical, and policy challenges.

(Audience: Cultural heritage professionals and digital strategists) [Link](#)

Belvedere Museum Wien – Das Kunstmuseum im digitalen Zeitalter

An annual event examining how digital technologies, including AI, reshape museum practices. Offers insights into audience engagement, digital curation, and sustainability in cultural institutions. (Audience: Museum directors, curators, and digital innovation teams) [Link](#)

AI4Culture – Final Conference

A European platform showcasing results from AI4Culture initiatives, including open-source tools, implementation recipes, and best practices for AI adoption in the CCS. (Audience: Cultural institutions seeking practical AI solutions and collaboration opportunities) [Link](#)

TRANSFORM 2025 – Conference on AI, Art, Design and Society

An interdisciplinary event exploring the intersection of AI with art, design, and societal values. Highlights experimental projects and critical debates on creativity and ethics in AI-driven cultural production. (Audience: Artists, designers, researchers, and cultural technologists) [Link](#)

AT A GLANCE

What are the key takeaways?

This A Guide for Responsible AI Use in the CCS is more than a technical manual—it is a roadmap for cultural institutions navigating the complex intersection of AI, ethics, and public value. Across its sections, we have explored what AI is, how it can be applied in cultural and creative sectors, and what responsible implementation looks like in practice. From foundational concepts and risk awareness to real-world case studies like Wondercut and Bauhaus Infinity Archive, the guide demonstrates that AI adoption is not a one-size-fits-all process. It requires context-sensitive strategies, ethical reflection, and collaboration across disciplines.

The implementation framework outlined here—covering long-term strategy, stakeholder mapping, AI literacy, and risk governance—underscores that sustainability and responsibility must be embedded from the start. Practical tools such as roadmaps and dos and don'ts help institutions move beyond ad hoc experimentation toward structured, mission-aligned innovation. Meanwhile, curated resources—spanning literature, guidelines, toolkits, training programmes, and conferences—equip professionals with the knowledge and networks needed to stay informed and compliant under evolving regulations like the EU AI Act.

The key message is clear: responsible AI is about enabling it in ways that respect cultural heritage, human dignity, and societal trust. By approaching AI as a facilitator rather than a spectacle, cultural institutions can harness its potential to enhance accessibility, foster engagement, and create meaningful experiences for diverse audiences.

As the cultural sector steps into an AI-driven future, let this guide serve as both a compass and a catalyst—helping organisations innovate with integrity, adapt with foresight, and uphold their role as stewards of culture in the digital age.

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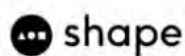
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● A Guide for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS)

A Guide for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) is available in English, German, and Slovenian on the WONDERCUT website at www.wondercut.io. The website also provides other deliverables and resources produced by the WONDERCUT project to foster dialogue and capacity building around responsible and inclusive uses of AI in culture.



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