Library

Copyright and Generative AI (GenAI): a guide for researchers

GenAI can offer valuable opportunities for research, including assisting with literature reviews, mapping relationships between sources, analysing and visualising data, drafting grant applications and reports, generating code and supporting project planning, provided its use complies with relevant funder and institutional policies. It is important, however, to consider copyright when using such tools.

Uploading or copying material in GenAI tools may infringe on the copyright of others. It is also important that personal or confidential material is not shared within AI systems that use inputs to train their systems.

The table below provides you with a guide on what you need to consider before uploading or sharing copyright material in both 'public' or 'private' GenAI tools (inputs).

"**Public"** AI models refer to GenAI tools that are often available and free. These models tend to be trained on content added or uploaded by users.

"**Private**" GenAI models are those that run in a secure and protected environment. Often these models involve an additional subscription and/or settings that ensure shared material is not being used for model training or platform improvements

This guide should be read in conjunction with Copyright and Generative AI webpage.

Type of content	Public AI	Private AI	Description/Conditions
Public Domain (no copyright)			Public domain material includes: • Materials where copyright has expired • Works that creators have explicitly released into the public domain • Uncopyrightable works such as facts, ideas and certain types of data
Copyright materials where you have permission to use			Any material where the copyright owner has provided written permission allowing the use of GenAI. Any material in which you have written permission to use from the copyright owner.
Materials that you have created			This covers all materials which you have created, with some exceptions. The following should not be uploaded to any AI tools: • Where you have included 'third party' copyright material within your own work (e.g. an image created by someone else) • Materials you have published (e.g. article) where copyright is owned by the publisher and uploading to AI is not permitted • Other contractual agreements e.g. from industry or funding where ownership is shared. Check your agreement/s.
UTS owned materials			This covers materials created by UTS staff in the course of their employment, such as course materials and lecture slides, documents, website content, and research data and findings. Any generated content from UTS owned materials should not be publicly shared, and only used for UTS purposes, or for personal study and resarch.
Open licences such as Creative Commons (CC) licencing			Creative Commons materials can be used for certain purposes with GenAI tools; however, some uses may be limited depending on the licensing elements involved. To determine whether and when you need to comply with Creative Commons license terms when using CC lienced content for AI use, see the Creative Commons Flowchart CC Licensed materials incorporated into GenAI outputs will require attribution.

Type of content	Public AI	Private AI	Description/Conditions
Digital material available from the UTS Library subscription platforms (e.g. e-journals, e-books etc.)			This includes any materials accessed via UTS's Library catalogue or databases. In general, publishers do not allow their content to be used by AI.
Freely available web content or scans of print material such as digital copies made from print/physical books or journals			This includes: • a scanned copy from a print/physical material such as book chapters and articles. • Uploading content from freely available web content such as webpages or images. Only a reasonable amount (1 chapter or 1 article) can be used in Private AI systems for your own personal research or study purposes. See Manage Your Content for limits and conditions.

Additional information

Always remember to acknowledge and/or reference your use of AI

Refer to UTS Use of AI in Research Guidelines for guidance on Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) throughout the key research stages.