

Guidelines on using generative artificial intelligence to support and assist work in public administration

Public Sector ICT

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OF FINANCE

Guidelines on using generative artificial intelligence to support and assist work in public administration

Henriikka Tammes-Peters

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Abstract <p>The guidelines describe how public administration can use generative artificial intelligence. The guidelines apply to the use of generative artificial intelligence in public administration activities and management. If necessary, organisations can draw up more specific guidelines for their own use to supplement this document. The guidelines comply with the legislation on AI that was valid at the time of preparation. They primarily cover the applications of AI in public administration. However, those developing and purchasing AI systems need to explore other current regulation and any dependencies more comprehensively.</p>			
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Ohjeistus generatiivisen tekoälyn hyödyntämisestä työn tukena ja apuvälineenä julkisessa hallinnossa

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Tiivistelmä <p>Ohjeessa kuvataan, kuinka generatiivista tekoälyä voidaan käyttää julkisessa hallinnossa. Ohje koskee generatiivisen tekoälyn käyttöä julkisen hallinnon toiminnassa ja johtamisessa. Organisaatiot voivat tarvittaessa tarkentaa ohjeistusta omilla organisaatiokohtaisilla ohjeilla. Tämän ohjeen valmistelussa on huomioitu ajankohtainen tekoälyn liittyvä lainsäädäntö. Ohje kattaa ensisijaisesti tekoälyn käytön sekä hyödyntämisen julkisen hallinnon toiminnassa. Tekoälyjärjestelmiä kehitettäessä sekä niitä hankittaessa on tarkasteltava kattavammin myös muu ajankohtainen sääntely sekä mahdolliset riippuvuudet.</p>			
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Anvisningar om utnyttjande av generativ artificiell intelligens (AI) som stöd och hjälpmedel i arbetet inom den offentliga förvaltningen

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I denna anvisning beskrivs hur generativ artificiell intelligens (AI) kan användas inom den offentliga förvaltningen. Anvisningen gäller användning av generativ AI i verksamheten inom den offentliga förvaltningen och i ledningen av den. De enskilda organisationerna kan vid behov precisera anvisningarna genom egna organisationsspecifika anvisningar. Vid beredningen av denna anvisning har aktuell lagstiftning som hänför sig till AI beaktats. Anvisningen gäller i första hand användning och utnyttjande av AI i den offentliga förvaltningens verksamhet. När AI-system utvecklas och skaffas ska det även i bredare utsträckning tas hänsyn till annan aktuell reglering och eventuella beroendeförhållanden.			
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1 Background

In the digital transformation, the focus has recently shifted to technologies leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and the new opportunities they could offer. AI solutions are providing increasingly diverse functionalities that will transform organisations' operating processes, data processing and interaction. It is evident that AI and other new technological solutions have come to stay, and not only does public administration need to keep informed about the changes reshaping our world, but it also needs to exploit these opportunities safely.

AI is expected to increase the productivity of public administration in many ways. Functions where generative AI could bring productivity benefits include service provision, generation of knowledge and information, tools for sorting and summarising data, and process automation. AI could help information systems function smarter and offer more personalised services to improve user experience. AI can be programmed to work in partnership with people, and it can be developed to meet people's needs. The ability of machines to quickly process and analyse vast amounts of data complements people's ability to perceive what is significant and reflect on the context.

It is important not only to understand the opportunities AI can offer, but also to recognise the risks it poses. It is therefore crucial that AI solutions are introduced responsibly, balancing their risks and opportunities for public administration.

Generative artificial intelligence is a type of AI. The name describes AI's ability to produce new content, such as text, images, sound, videos or code. These guidelines focus on the applications of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in public administration. GenAI has in recent years become easy to use and its applications have increased significantly in society. It has massive potential, especially for specialists who generate and analyse a great deal of text and other content. Those developing and purchasing AI systems would need to examine in detail the European Union's AI Act (Regulation 2024/1689/EU) and any guidelines specifically affecting their own branch of government.

Below you will find some concepts related to AI:

Table 1. Concepts related to artificial intelligence

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Artificial intelligence	AI	Artificial intelligence refers to the ability of information systems to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, problem solving, understanding languages and visual observation. AI systems utilise algorithms and large amounts of data to improve their performance. AI applies advanced techniques based on analysis and logic, including machine learning, to interpret events, support and automate decisions and perform tasks.
Machine learning	ML	Many technologies, such as neural networks and natural language processing, use advanced machine learning algorithms. Machine learning includes supervised, unsupervised and reinforcement learning. Supervised learning uses labels or categories that are attached to the training data. Unsupervised learning uses unlabelled data to find structures or groups hidden in the training data. Reinforcement learning enables the model to train based on rewards and punishments.
Generative artificial intelligence	GenAI	Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that can create new content, such as text, images, music or video, based on the data given to it. It applies machine learning models, such as deep neural networks, to generate creative and complex outputs resembling content which humans could create. GenAI differs from other AI because it can produce completely new content.
Foundation model	FM	Foundation models have been trained on large datasets and can handle a wide range of jobs. They are called foundation models because they are critically important and can be applied to many different downstream tasks. This broad applicability is due to their pre-training and complexity.

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Large language model	LLM	Large language models are AI models that have been trained in natural language processing and generation. Based on deep neural networks, they process vast amounts of text in order to understand and generate human languages with complexity and context. Large language models can perform a wide range of tasks, such as translating, producing text and answering questions. A generative pre-trained transformer (GPT) is a type of large language model.
Artificial intelligence agent		AI agents refer to AI that act on behalf of a person, autonomously complete tasks, and make decisions assigned to it, even when the decisions are complex and require reasoning.
Hallucination		<p>Hallucinations are situations where AI generates incorrect or misleading information. For example, hallucinations can occur when AI attempts to answer a question without sufficient data to get the correct answer. Errors in algorithms or deficiencies in data may also cause hallucinations.</p> <p>RAG-based architecture solutions can be used to manage hallucinations.</p>
Retrieval-augmented generation	RAG	RAG is an AI architecture that combines data retrieval and generation. It retrieves relevant data from given internal or external sources, such as databases or websites, and applies this data to generate answers. This helps AI models to generate more accurate and high-quality output, especially when the user needs up-to-date and specialised information.

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Bias		In the context of AI, bias refers to systematic errors or prejudices that may affect the AI system's decisions and forecasts. Biases may arise from imbalances in training data, people's choices or algorithm design. As AI biases can lead to unjust or inaccurate results, it is important to identify and correct them.
Explainability		In GenAI, explainability means humans' ability to understand how a GenAI tool or service has generated the outcomes based on the prompts it was given (input data) and on the dataset behind the model.
Artificial intelligence available to the public		For the purposes of these guidelines, 'AI available to the public' or 'publicly available AI' means GenAI tools and systems (such as ChatGPT and Copilot) which the general public can access. An organisation may officially allow its employees to access such tools or systems as part of the software it uses, but not always. With these AI tools in particular, users should make sure that they do not accidentally enter non-disclosable, non-public or personal data.
Internal AI (custom AI)		For the purposes of these guidelines, internal AI means GenAI tools and systems which an organisation has decided to deploy for performing certain tasks. Custom AI means applications that have been developed or licensed for the organisation's or its customers' exclusive use.
Prompt		A prompt is a piece of information or request which users give to GenAI for generating the content they want. Users need to organise the information so that GenAI can interpret and use the prompt. They must also ensure that when writing prompts they do not accidentally reveal non-disclosable information or non-public information in their questions.

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Prompt engineering		<p>Prompt engineering is a skill and profession that focuses on developing highly effective prompts to optimise GenAI performance.</p> <p>Some of them have been compiled into prompt libraries that help users find fast and effective prompts.</p>
Personally identifiable information (PII)		<p>PII covers all data related to an identified or identifiable person. PII includes direct identifiers that can reveal a person's identity without additional information, and indirect identifiers that enable identification when combined with other data. Examples of PII include the person's name, personal identity code, or any other piece of information that is unique to them.</p> <p>To find out more about PII, go to https://tietosuoja.fi/en/what-is-personal-data</p>
Sensitive personal data		<p>This is special category data or data that is sensitive from the perspective of constitutional law.</p> <p>Such personal data may reveal racial or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, use of social welfare services, etc.</p> <p>Article 9 of the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU), Constitutional Law Committee statements PeVL 14/2018 vp and PeVL 48/2018 vp.</p>

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Special categories of personal data		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • racial or ethnic origin • political opinions • religious or philosophical beliefs • trade union membership • health-related data • data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation • processing of genetic data and biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person <p>To find out more about processing special category data, go to https://tietosuoja.fi/en/processing-of-special-categories-of-personal-data</p>

2 Applying the guidelines

The guidelines describe how public administration in Finland can make use of generative artificial intelligence. The guidelines apply to the use of generative artificial intelligence in the activities and management of public administration. Organisations can draw up more specific guidelines for their own use to supplement this document.

3 Legislation and guidelines on using AI

The guidelines comply with the legislation on AI that was valid at the time of preparation. They primarily cover the applications of AI in public administration. However, those developing and purchasing AI systems need to explore other current regulation and any dependencies more comprehensively.

The European Union [Artificial Intelligence Act \(2024/1689/EU\)](#) entered into force on 1 August 2024. Some AI solutions in public administration are high-risk use cases referred to in the AI Act. High-risk AI systems are subject to special requirements, which the system providers (developers) must fulfil. Deployers of high-risk systems must also comply with certain obligations, and assess whether a system is classified high-risk or not against the derogations provided in Article 6, paragraph 3 of the AI Act. For example, using an AI system to help in text drafting is not a high-risk activity, irrespective of the use case.

Finally, previously provided regulation also sets out conditions on using AI. Key regulations controlling data, information and the use of AI include:

- EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU),
- Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999),
- EU Law Enforcement Directive (2016/680/EU),
- Act on the Processing of Personal Data in Criminal Matters and in Connection with Maintaining National Security (1054/2018),
- Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003),
- Act on Information Management in Public Administration (906/2019),
- Government Decree on Security Classification of Documents in Central Government (1101/2019) and
- Data Protection Act (1050/2018).

As most AI solutions use cloud computing, deployers need to consider cloud service policies in addition to legislation ([Ministry of Finance publications 2024:49](#), abstract available in English). Finally, AI development and management should take into account the ISO standard ISO/IEC 42001:2023 - Artificial intelligence — Management system.

National regulation on implementing the AI Act is being drafted at the time of writing these guidelines. The [project](#) was set up by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Deployers will need to check that they comply with the national regulation once it is published.

4 Points to remember when using generative AI

Public officials are without exception responsible for the decisions and documents they have drafted. Tasks where AI may be useful include preparing matters, searching for information, finding new perspectives, and other similar tasks related to drafting. Note that the outputs of applications and services that use GenAI may not be included in final documents without the review and approval of the public official accountable for the matter.

The closer the public official's work is to the activities or decisions affecting individuals' rights and obligations, and the more independently AI operates, the stricter the restrictions and prohibitions which the standards of official activities place on the use of AI. In contrast, the further away the public official's work is from the above, for example performing simple support or background tasks, the more freely they can apply AI to improve the efficiency of official activities. Finally, public officials need to pay special attention to compliance with the rules on processing personal data and non-disclosable information.

4.1 Using GenAI responsibly

Public administration must use AI openly, transparently and responsibly. Public officials must observe the principles of good governance without exceptions, including when they use AI. The public-service ethical code and legislation on public officials apply to the use of AI as they do to any performance of official duties. The Ministry of Finance has issued guidelines to public administration on the [ethical use of artificial intelligence](#).

Public officials need to report openly on their information sources, including on using GenAI. Since GenAI may hallucinate or have biases, you have to be particularly careful to check that the output is correct. It is essential to ensure privacy protection, fairness and non-discrimination. Negligent use of AI may also harm an organisation's image or reputation. Public officials should take this into account especially when they draft content that has social significance or is of interest to the general public (press releases, speeches, news, etc.).

GenAI may not be integrated into automated systems without adequate risk management and appropriate safeguards. Using AI responsibly includes complying with copyright laws.

Works, databases and other content protected by copyright may be stored in an AI system for data mining as provided in [section 13b of the Copyright Act \(404/1961\)](#) and in compliance with the provisions of the [EU Artificial Intelligence Act 2024/1689/EU](#) on the responsibility of the providers of AI models.

However, the above-mentioned provision of the Copyright Act does not apply to the end result generated by AI. The end result, which the prompts have generated, may therefore infringe the copyright of another party if it contains copyright-protected material belonging to that party. You should assess copyright individually in each case.

With regard to the output generated with AI, you should consider whether there is an obvious risk of the output violating another party's copyright, and exercise special caution when the output is intended for wide release. You may also use prompts in risk assessment to ask AI for information on the sources of the output.

It is important that you check the AI application's terms of use and, in particular, whether the AI application's provider assumes the risk that the results achieved with prompts violate copyright, and whether a Creative Commons licence or another licence that was applied to the AI training data permits the use of the resulting output. A risk assessment should also take account of the use permitted by the Copyright Act. An example of permitted use is the right to quote, which means that a work made public may be quoted in accordance with proper usage to the extent necessary for the purpose.

4.2 Using AI safely and protecting your data

AI applications differ in terms of how they process and store data. These differences may have a major impact on the information security and data protection of the data you give to the AI system to process. Such significant differences may exist even within an individual service or between its licence types.

Ensure that you do not enter non-disclosable information, non-public information or personal data in a GenAI service unless your organisation has approved the service for this purpose. You also need to consider this when you write prompts.

As most GenAI systems use cloud computing, the guidelines on cloud services also apply to the use of such systems. For the cloud service guidelines and decisions for central government, go to the [publications of the Ministry of Finance 2024:49](#) (abstract available in English).

4.3 Managing GenAI data processing

Entering data into a GenAI application can involve asking questions or entering text, audio or images either through a user interface or a data repository. It is important to note that by entering prompts, you may accidentally give AI your organisation's internal information. Ensure that you do not enter non-disclosable information, non-public information or personal data in a GenAI service unless your organisation has approved the service for this purpose. Check which services your organisation has approved. You can remove personal data from the input data before processing it with AI.

When using AI applications to process video conferences, such as Teams meetings, you should take special care and only use the meeting tools your organisation has approved. External participants may use AI applications in their work and try to bring one to the meeting for note taking. Ensure that each AI application is approved by your organisation. If you are not sure, do not allow the AI application to join the meeting.

AI-generated data is based on the AI training data, application logic, algorithms, input data, formulation of questions, and context. GenAI applications and services are not actual information search tools, and you cannot use AI-generated content as an expert source unless a human expert verifies it. However, you may use AI to gather and summarise information and for tasks such as finding new perspectives and brainstorming.

GenAI solutions are based on interactive language models that may hallucinate, for example generate false, misleading or fabricated results. In addition, a biased, distorted or discriminatory AI model may lead to discrimination, sometimes without anybody realising it. Discrimination in the AI context is particularly problematic because the algorithms are often not transparent for the users.

4.4 Productive GenAI use cases in public administration

GenAI helps you work more efficiently and offers many opportunities to enhance and improve tasks across sectors. It can help create high-quality content, such as news, blog posts, reports and training material, and suggest ideas and headlines that speed up the writing process. GenAI enables fast translations into foreign languages.

You can use GenAI to analyse vast amounts of data and then generate reports and forecasts that assist in decision-making and strategic planning. GenAI can offer inspiration for performing tasks and generate drafts that you can develop further. It can create learning materials, exercises and interactive learning environments that adapt to the learner's needs and facilitate efficient learning. You can use it to plan workshops and their content or exercises specifically adapted to the workshop's topic. Then use GenAI to review the workshop and its materials to sort and summarise the outcomes.

GenAI is a powerful tool that can improve productivity and creativity in many fields. However, to make use of GenAI you need to understand its possibilities and limitations and take ethical considerations into account. GenAI will not be the best solution every time; instead, your task determines whether it will help you or not. When choosing a tool for your task, consider whether other AI or automation could be of more use.

In addition to improving the performance of individual tasks, organisations can find more extensive applications for GenAI. Internal chatbots and virtual assistants using GenAI can answer questions from customers or employees, provide support, and solve problems quickly and efficiently. For example, GenAI can be applied comprehensively to examining the organisation's internal guidelines, from human resources management to objectives guiding the organisation's work.

Another example of a GenAI application is converting voice to text, which may improve efficiency in many organisations. It can involve creating client and patient records in healthcare and social welfare or generating data from customer service encounters. The data can be later processed to benefit analysis, more efficient operations or decision-making. Organisations can also increase efficiency by providing subtitles for videos and recordings in many languages.

GenAI enables rota planning on a large scale, and other schedule planning that takes individual preferences into account. This is a good example of how GenAI can save supervisors' time, improve efficiency and offer new options for rota planners.

Whether it is a question of improving the efficiency of your personal work or reorganising your organisation's work, GenAI provides opportunities for introducing innovative solutions and new operating practices. The opportunities are many, and these guidelines should encourage a change in the mindset. However, you should keep in mind that GenAI is not suited to every task, and whether it brings efficiencies depends on the existing practices. It is therefore important to understand what GenAI can and cannot do. Depending on your task, you could also look into machine learning, process automation, robotic process automation (RPA) or other types of automation to achieve better results.

Table 2. Use cases for improving the efficiency of individual work

Use case	Example	Benefits
Document creation (summaries, draft decisions and other draft documents)	Automatically generating reports, memorandum templates, etc. to provide a basis for drafting documents.	Save time, reduce human errors.
Brainstorming and work planning	Planning a workshop, content or exercises for a workshop topic you have selected, which the participants can discuss and work on.	Save time and generate new ideas.
Data analysis	Analysing large amounts of data and providing insights to support decision-making.	Improve the quality and pace of decision-making.
Information retrieval from documents	Retrieving information from public data, such as the organisation's internal HR guidelines, induction documents, court decisions, etc.	Speed up information retrieval.
Training and induction	Creating customised learning materials and exercises.	Improve learning efficiency and provide individual support.
Translations	Providing an answer or text in another language.	Save time and enable quick communication in a foreign language. Speed up document generation in English, Swedish and other languages.
Workshop output summary and analysis	Summarising workshop results and analysing them for further processing.	Speed up the analysis of summaries and ideas.

Table 3. Wider GenAI benefits and use cases

Use case	Example	Benefits
Subtitling videos and seminars	Creating subtitles for seminars, instructional videos, training, etc.	Save time and reduce costs. Provide subtitles for videos that would not normally be published due to lack of subtitles.
Recording events in healthcare and social welfare	Using AI automation to help care staff record events during patient visits.	Save time and create efficiency benefits in healthcare and social welfare and other sectors.
Customer service	Answering customers' questions, advising, guiding.	Provide 24-hour customer service. Improve response times. Save customer service resources. Use several languages. Identify bottlenecks in customer service and help staff respond to contacts.
Advice	Quickly finding organisation's internal practices, documents and instructions.	Improve data retrieval times.
Rota planning	Creating work rotas quickly, flexibly and without errors, and making it easier to take employee preferences into account.	Prevent errors and speed up and automate rota planning.



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