



Generative Artificial Intelligence for Churches: Managing Risks and Policy Development

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GenAI: What Is It?

- ***Artificial intelligence (AI)***: machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments.
- ***AI model***: component of an information system that implements AI technology and uses computational, statistical, or machine-learning techniques to produce outputs from a given set of inputs.
- ***Generative AI***: the class of AI models that emulate the structure and characteristics of input data in order to generate derived synthetic content. This can include images, videos, audio, text, and other digital content.

GenAI: How Does It Work?

- Training: existing digitized works like books, websites, music, and images
- Programming: create similar content in response to prompts
- Input, or “prompt”: queries from users
- Output: “new” content based on prompt

GenAI: What Can You Do With It?

- Conduct research
- Draft documents and communications
- Analyze data
- Produce royalty-free music and graphics
- Produce artificial video footage
- Emulate appearance/voice of human beings

GenAI: What Can Churches Do With It?

- Write content for newsletters, blogs, and websites
- Generate music or images that can be used for streaming/church online publications without a license
- Manage donor/member/user data
- Develop educational materials
- . . . Write sermons . . .

Legal and Ethical Risks for Churches

- Copyright Protection and Infringement
- Data Security and Privacy
- Discrimination
- Plagiarism
- Transparency
- Replacement of Human Workers

But First . . . The #1 Risk:

GenAI outputs can be, and often are, wrong.

Copyright Protection and Infringement

- Are works a church produces using genAI copyrightable and registrable?
- Are a church's rights in its own works infringed by a genAI company using the works to train its model?
- Does a church's use of text, images, or music produced by a genAI model infringe on others' copyrights?

Copyright Protection and Infringement

- GenAI-created works will not be registered by the U.S. Copyright Office.
- Consider:
 - Publishing houses
 - Religious texts
 - Artwork
 - Collections of music
 - Educational materials

Copyright Protection and Infringement

- Whether a church's rights in its works are infringed in training genAI models is an open legal question currently being litigated.
- Consider:
 - Diminishment of value of works
 - Output “in the style” of a religious leader, musician, church theology

Copyright Protection and Infringement

- Whether a church's use of genAI output (music, images, text) infringes on others' copyrights is an open legal question.
- Consider:
 - Similarity of output to copyrighted works
 - Portions of copyrighted works may be included

Data Security and Privacy

- GenAI companies have gathered vast amounts of data from the internet, including any data your church posts.
- Data uploaded by your church may be used by the model in response to others' prompts.
- Consider:
 - Member data
 - Donor data
 - Outreach ministry user data

Discrimination

- Data on which genAI model is trained includes biased data, historical texts and images that perpetuate discrimination, and data sets that over- or under-represent groups of people.
- Consider:
 - Discrimination against protected categories
 - Laws in church's jurisdiction that may apply
 - Theological beliefs and public statements/policies against discrimination

Plagiarism and Transparency

- GenAI models can produce outputs similar to existing works, which may lead to plagiarism claims.
- GenAI use without disclosure can lead to lack of transparency claims, distrust/division.
- GenAI use may violate a church's theological beliefs that works should be created/stewarded by human minds/hearts and guided by divine spirit.

Mitigating Risk Through Policy

- Determine policy direction and purpose statement.
- Assess state/local laws in context of church activities.
- Survey employees.
- Develop a review and approval process for genAI tools.
- Review genAI tools already in use to assess current risk.
- Develop prohibitions: genAI tools, employee conduct, use of output.

Mitigating Risk Through Policy

- Train employees on copyright registration challenges.
- Require careful human review/responsibility for output.
- Determine disclosure obligations.
- Provide prompt engineering training.
- Train employees on policy.
- Update regularly as law and regulations develop.

Questions?

