

Do We Need Something More Than Information Literacy? Surveying Academic Librarians' Opinions and Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications in Library Instruction

Bull, Jonathan¹ & Augustine, Teresa¹

¹ Valparaiso University, Christopher Center Library

Abstract

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications' rapid adoption has caused much of academia to rethink its curriculum. This disruptive technology has impacted instruction librarians as well. This study surveyed academic librarians from the United States on their impressions of generative AI, how they might be using it in library instruction, and what the best practices and applications might be for the research process. The ninety-two valid responses (n=92) were mixed: There was no preferred app, but also no consensus on the use of AI. While no preferred research application emerged from the responses, several respondents expressed a blend of concern and usefulness for generative AI as well as a call for "AI literacy" to become a priority within the academic library profession.

Introduction

Generative Artificial Intelligence (or generative AI) has rapidly emerged as the latest disruptive technology, changing conversations in higher education. With generative AI's ability to function as a personal assistant, research support, and information creator, students have turned to these tools en masse (Baek et al., 2024; Sidoti et al., 2025). This has left institutions scrambling to understand exactly how these tools are used, to what extent students are using them efficiently and responsibly, and the consequences.

Several generative AI applications have been introduced in recent years, each claiming to make various parts of the research process more efficient. In addition to well-known generative AI tools like ChatGPT, CoPilot, and Gemini, applications like Elicit, SCITE, and Consensus claim to increase the speed of evidence discovery and summary, while Connected Papers and Research Rabbit claim to visualize papers that are related to each other. Yet, do students even use these applications? Or do students only use free-to-use general generative AI tools like ChatGPT, CoPilot, and Gemini? Who is teaching them how to use this new technology? Do librarians even know about these applications? If so, which ones are they recommending?

Regardless of the specific applications being used, information-seeking behavior is changing quickly. Because of the shift in information seeking behavior, academic librarians have been forced to address the new technology's impact on the research process, along with its limitations,

in library instruction. However, the scale of adoption and instruction of generative AI in library instruction remains unclear.

Considering generative AI's potential impact on research, this paper will survey what librarians think of generative AI, how they are adapting to the rise of generative AI within the evolving information landscape, and what impact these tools are having on library instruction.

Literature Review

Generative pre-trained transformers (GPTs) have become more than a buzzword, they have dominated conversations across institutions and industries, causing both excitement and uncertainty of the future. Generative AI applications are easy to use, and with so many designed as research assistants, students have quickly adopted them for academic work, leaving academic communities scrambling to implement policies or address concerns. Despite the mass adoption, students have received little formal instruction on how to best use these applications (Mah & Groß, 2024; McMurtie, 2023; Ojala, 2024). This includes library instruction which will need to evolve in parallel to generative AI (Andersdotter, 2023; Del Castillo & Kelly, 2025).

How library instruction evolves remains to be seen. Prior to 2022, librarians' conversations around AI in the library had been "nearly non-existent" (Wheatley & Hervieux, 2019, p. 354). The document used to guide most collegiate-level library instruction is ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016), and it does not explicitly state anything about generative AI (it should be noted an updated draft is circulating). Recognizing this lack of clarity, James and Filgo (2023) suggest how one might map AI-related instruction content onto all six frames of the existing information literacy (IL) framework. For example, they recommend students use ChatGPT to generate citations, then evaluate and discuss results. This highlights the flaws, like the inaccuracy and sometimes non-existence of citations that AI models generate. In terms of the research process, James and Filgo acknowledged the struggle some students face when getting started, so they highlighted how generative AI can help refine and narrow both the research question and the search terms jump-starting the process. However, James and Filgo did not test their ideas in an actual information literacy session.

Similarly, Boyle (2025) worked within the frames of "Information Has Value," "Research as Inquiry," and "Searching as Strategic Exploration." Creating an activity where student groups conduct a search through a library database, a search engine, and a generative AI app, like ChatGPT, Gemini, or CoPilot. Students had to record and compare their results, identifying strengths and weaknesses of each platform. Boyle suggests librarians go beyond traditional information literacy and incorporate new technology and tools. This sentiment is echoed by Johnson et al. (2024). In their study, students experience a traditional session with a follow-up where they tested generative AI in the classroom, factchecking and citation chasing ChatGPT outputs from a prompt like an in-class writing assignment, resulting in students feeling more confident in research skills, such as searching and evaluating information.

While these experiments show promise as to how generative AI could be used in library instruction, initial research shows that librarians themselves are divided and unprepared for this new challenge (Lo, 2024). Lim et al. (2023) outlines the many paradoxes generative AI has created in higher education, both on campus and in the classroom, recognizing the potential of

AI tools while also recognizing serious flaws. Broadly speaking, library scholars have expressed overwhelming concerns about the ethics and flaws of generative AI (Fister & Head, 2025; Monnier et al., 2025; Torres, 2024). At the same time, there is a call to respond to the change in information-seeking behavior (McMurtie, 2023; Ojala, 2024; Torres, 2024). By taking the initiative to create opportunities to learn, discuss, and educate at their institution, Watkins and Johnson (2024) increased their awareness and understanding of limitations and ethical implications of generative AI. Michalak (2023) underlines the librarian's experience with information literacy, their ability to collaborate with other disciplines, and their critical role in developing policies that promote ethics. Likewise, Filson and Atuase (2024) argue that librarians have a role in ensuring students understand ethical use of information; however, if librarians do not understand how generative AI works then they cannot effectively teach about its limitations or benefits.

Regardless of how this ongoing debate is resolved, librarians will have to adapt to the needs of their students and their use of generative AI. The more the profession understands how students are using these new technology tools, the better it will shape conversations, collaborations, and learning materials (Chaudhuri & Terrones, 2025). In a brief review of “Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning” originally released by the Department of Education and originally written by Cardona et al. (2023), Lo (2023) emphasizes the involvement of librarians in the planning and execution of AI at institutions of higher education. Beyond the human element, librarians are immersed in the information demands of their institutions, they are rooted in ethics, and librarians can ensure that this new technology is “integrated seamlessly with existing library services [and] can enhance the user experience and ensure that AI tools complement rather than disrupt existing services” (Lo, 2023, p. 2). Librarians have long been equipped to support and educate students, faculty, and administrators on various information topics, and their guidance on generative AI is an opportunity to lead at their institutions (Johnson et al., 2024; Ndungu, 2024; Torres, 2024).

Methodology

Since literature of generative AI's impact on library instruction has been limited so far, the authors surveyed instruction librarians on how generative AI has been incorporated into assignment design with teaching faculty and in their own instruction sessions. This survey consisted of twenty (20) questions (Appendix A), including demographic questions, that asked participants about their awareness and use of AI applications within their library instruction setting and for their opinion of AI applications that are specifically marketed for doing research tasks. Additionally, respondents were given three open-ended questions about what they find most interesting about AI research applications, what they believe is most important for students to understand about generative AI, and any overall thoughts on generative AI.

The survey was approved by Valparaíso University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was administered online using SurveyMonkey. The authors targeted instruction librarians at academic institutions within the United States. This survey was accessible from April 28 to June 9, 2025, and it was sent to the following email list-servs and roundtables: Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Instruction, ACRL University Libraries, ACRL College Libraries, Library Instruction Roundtable (LIRT), ACRL AI, ACRL Community and Junior Colleges. The authors chose these list-servs as they represent a significant sampling of

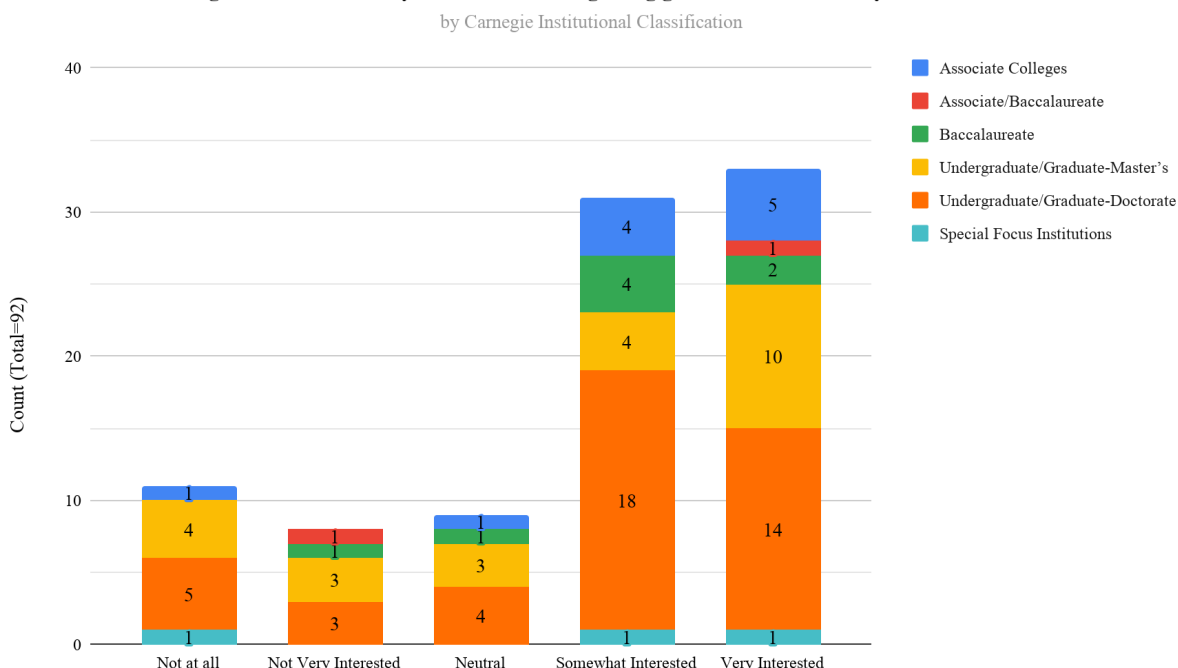
instruction librarians within the United States (U.S.). Survey participants were notified that the survey was voluntary and confidential, and they were asked for informed consent. Some personal identifiable information was collected to de-duplicate the data as well as remove any non-U.S. librarians since this was outside the scope of the survey. Once that was done, all identifiable information was destroyed.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions about generative AI and its impact on library instruction. Questions included: Levels of interest in AI in general; awareness of AI applications marketed for academic/research use; communication and documentation about AI from the subject/teaching faculty members; which AI topics to cover in library instruction; the volume of overall instruction since AI adoption (circa 2022); and finally, their perception of the future of library instruction in light of AI applications.

Results

The survey received 92 valid responses. Of those 92 responses, the majority were from librarians, determined by Carnegie Classification, at Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate (47.8 %, n=44) and Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's (26.1%, n=24) institutions (Figure 1). Other institutions represented were Associate Colleges (11.9%, n=11), Associate/Baccalaureate (2.2%, n=2), Baccalaureate (8.7%, n=8), and Special Focus Institutions (2.2%, n=2). Nineteen respondents did not indicate their classification. Of those responding, 64 (69.6%) indicated either a strong or mild interest in integrating the technology into library instruction. Another 19 responses (20.7%) indicated no or little interest (Figure 1).

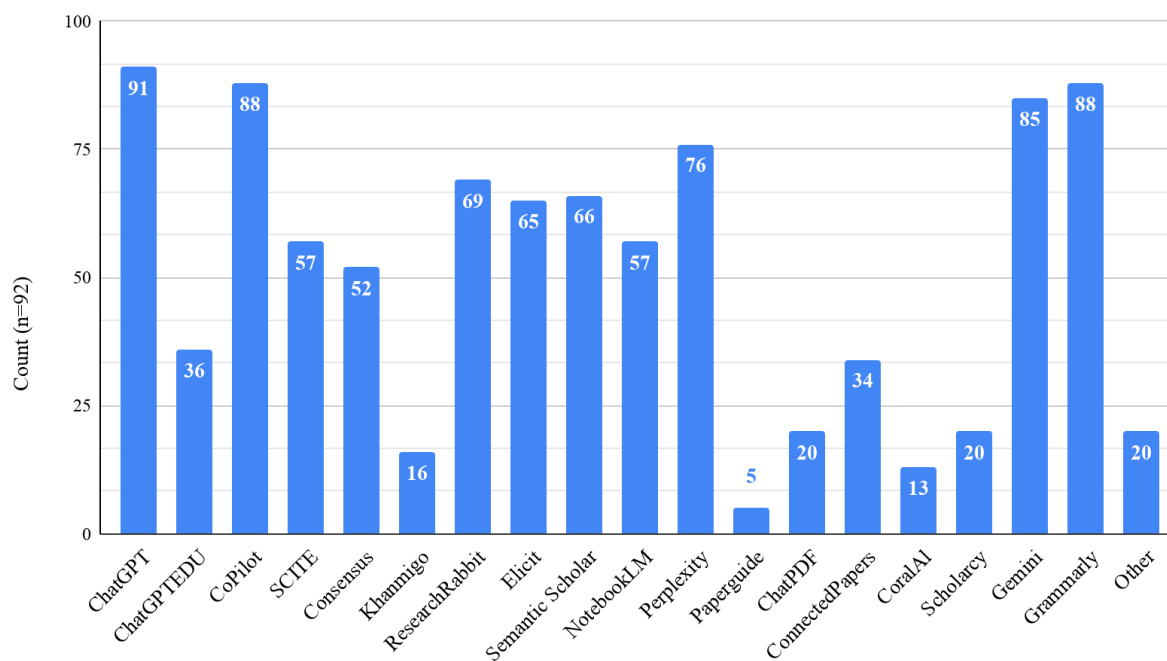
Figure 1 - Please rank your interest in integrating generative AI in library instruction



Respondents were also asked about their awareness of various AI applications related to academic use that the authors had compiled. Awareness of the listed applications was

widespread, but not universal. The applications that had the most reported awareness were ChatGPT (98.9%, n=91), CoPilot (95.7%, n=88), Grammarly (95.7%, n=88), and Gemini (92.4%, n=85). Conversely, Paperguide (5%, n=5), Coral AI (14.1%, n=13), and Khanmigo (17.4%, n=16) were the least well-known (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Which of the following AI apps had you heard of? (Check all that apply)



Respondents also reported additional applications as part of an “Other” option. They included Claude (9.8% n=9), DuckAI (6.5%, n=6), AnyStyle (2.2%, n=2), UndermindAI (2.2%, n=2), and several vendor AI applications.

The survey asked how AI was communicated in conversations and in documents.

The first question was “While planning for an instruction session, how often does the use of AI come up with teaching faculty?” The most reported response was “Sometimes,” 49% (n=45). Only 22.8% (n=21) indicated “always” or “usually” in receiving AI-related communication. A total of 28.3% (n=26) of responses indicated little to no AI-related communication ahead of time (Figure 3). The next question asked, “How often have you seen the inclusion of AI-related language within course materials relevant to the instruction session(s) (i.e. research assignments, syllabi)?” Like the previous question, the most reported response was as “Sometimes,” 52% (n=48). Of those respondents, 26% (n=25) indicated “always” or “usually” in receiving AI-related communication and 21.7% (n=19) reported the same about documentation ahead of instruction sessions (Figure 4).

Figure 3 - While planning for an instruction session, how often does the use of AI come up with the teaching faculty? (n=92)

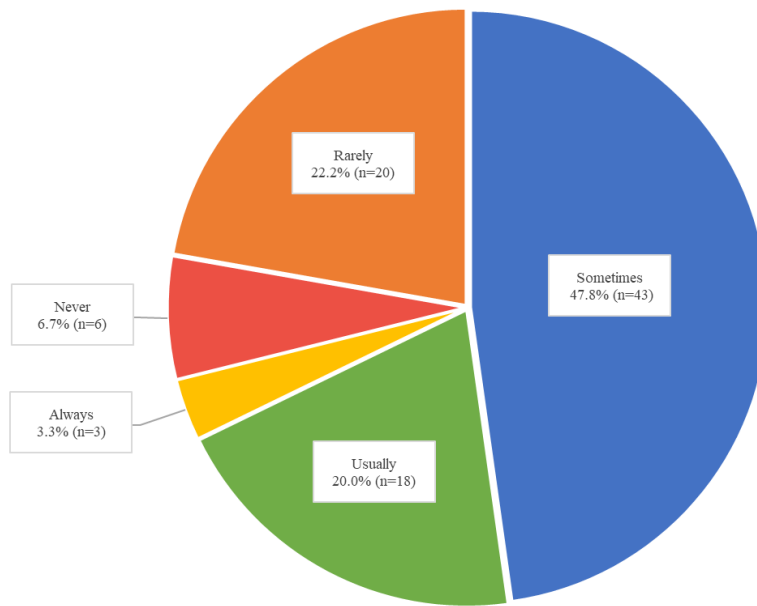
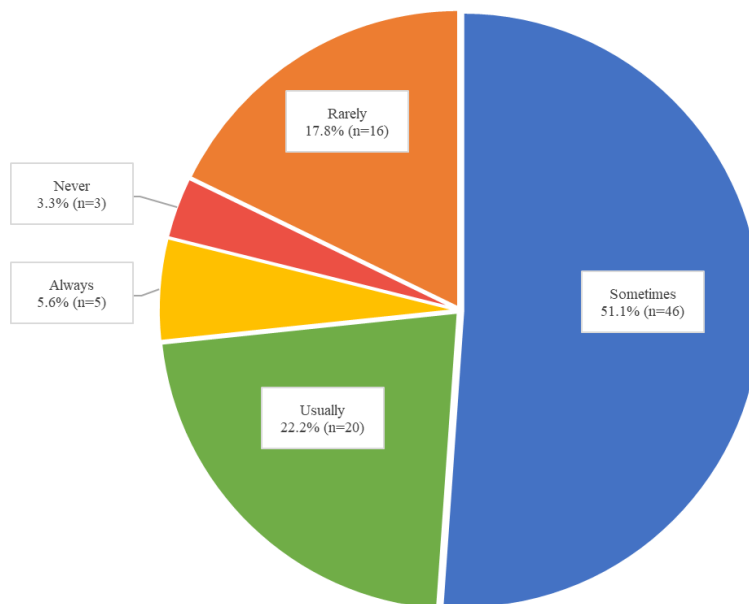


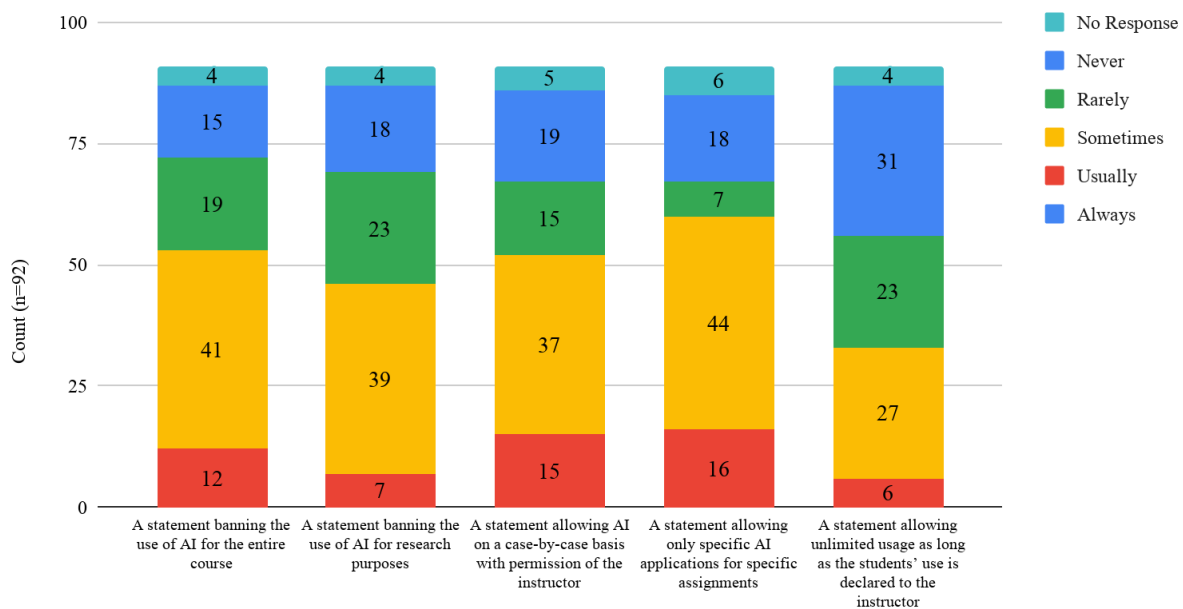
Figure 4 - How often have you seen the inclusion of AI-related language within course materials relevant to the instruction session(s) (i.e. research assignments, syllabi)? (n=92)



When provided instructional materials from teaching faculty, respondents were asked if they had seen versions of the following statements in the course materials they had received, (Figure 5):

- A statement banning the use of AI for the entire course (Never/Rarely, 37.0%, n=34; Sometimes, 44.6%, n=41; Usually, 13%, n=12; No Response, 4.3%, n=4)
- A statement banning the use of AI for research purposes (Never/Rarely, 44.6%, n=4; Sometimes, 42.4%, n=39; Usually, 7.6%, n=7; No Response, 4.3%, n=4)
- A statement allowing generative AI on a case-by-case basis with permission of the instructor (Never/Rarely, 37%, n=34; Sometimes, 40.2%, n=37; Usually, 16.3%, n=15; No Response, 5.4%, n=5)
- A statement allowing only specific AI applications for specific assignments (Never/Rarely, 27.2%, n=25; Sometimes, 47.8%, n=44; Usually, 17.4%, n=16; No Response, 6.5%, n=6)
- A statement allowing unlimited usage if the students' use is declared to the instructor (Never/Rarely, 58.7%, n=54; Sometimes, 29.3%, n=27; Usually, 6.5%, n=6; No Response, 4.3%, n=4)

Figure 5 - Please indicate how often variations of the following AI statement are in the course materials you have seen:

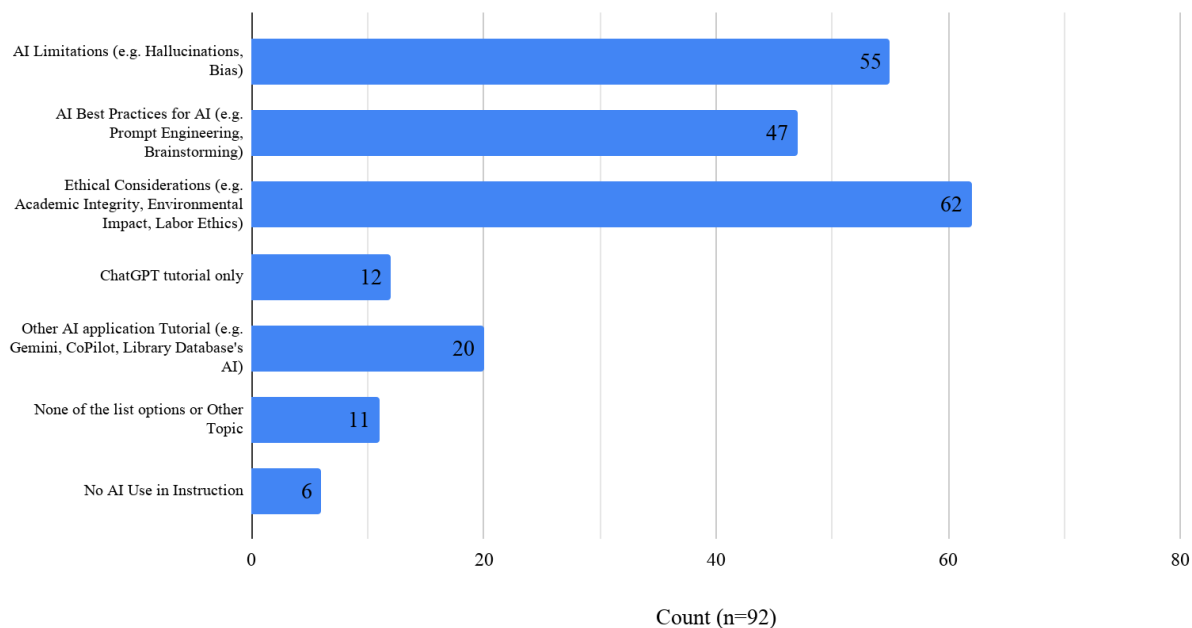


Note: "Always" was not selected for any responses in this section of the survey.

Asked if generative AI is included in library instruction, respondents (n=92) had a variety of topics that teaching faculty requested to cover (Figure 6). Respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

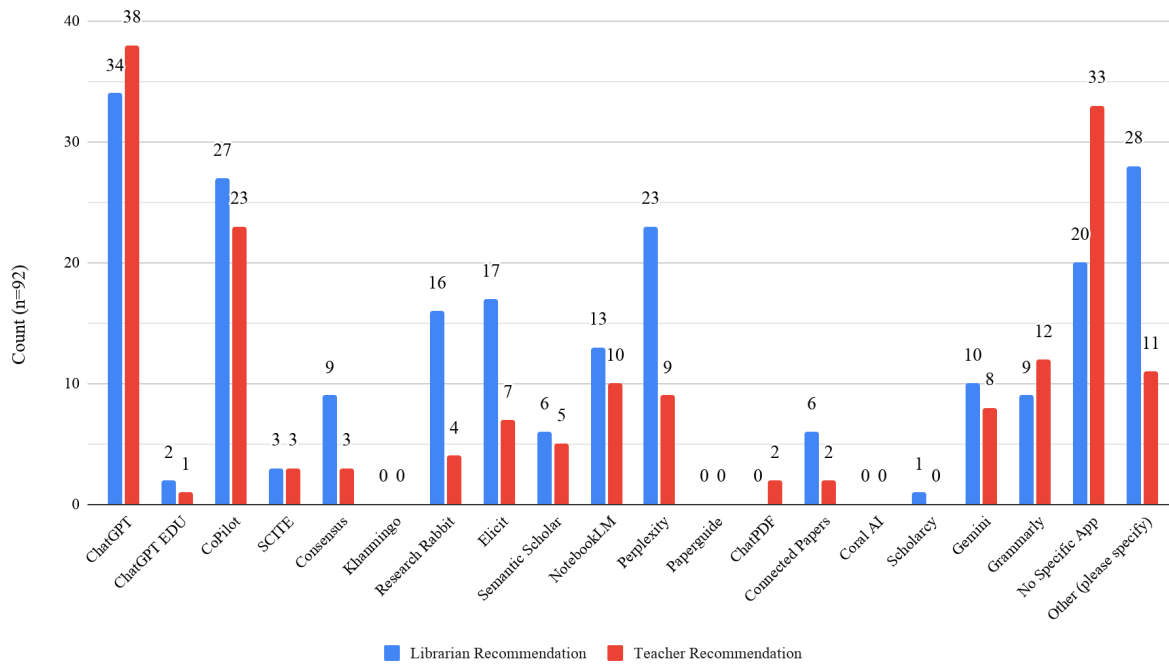
- Ethical Considerations (e.g. academic integrity, environmental impact, labor ethics)" was the most reported topic (67.4%, n=62) with
- "AI limitations (e.g. hallucinations, bias)" being the second most reported topic (59.8%, n=55), followed by
- "AI Best Practices (e.g. prompt engineering, brainstorming)" (51.1%, n=47).
- According to respondents, specific AI application tutorial requests were limited with "ChatGPT tutorial only" (13%, n=12) or "Other AI Application Tutorial" (21.7%, n=20).

Figure 6 - If generative AI is included in library instruction, please indicate if you have received any of the following requests for what to cover in library instruction: (select all that apply)



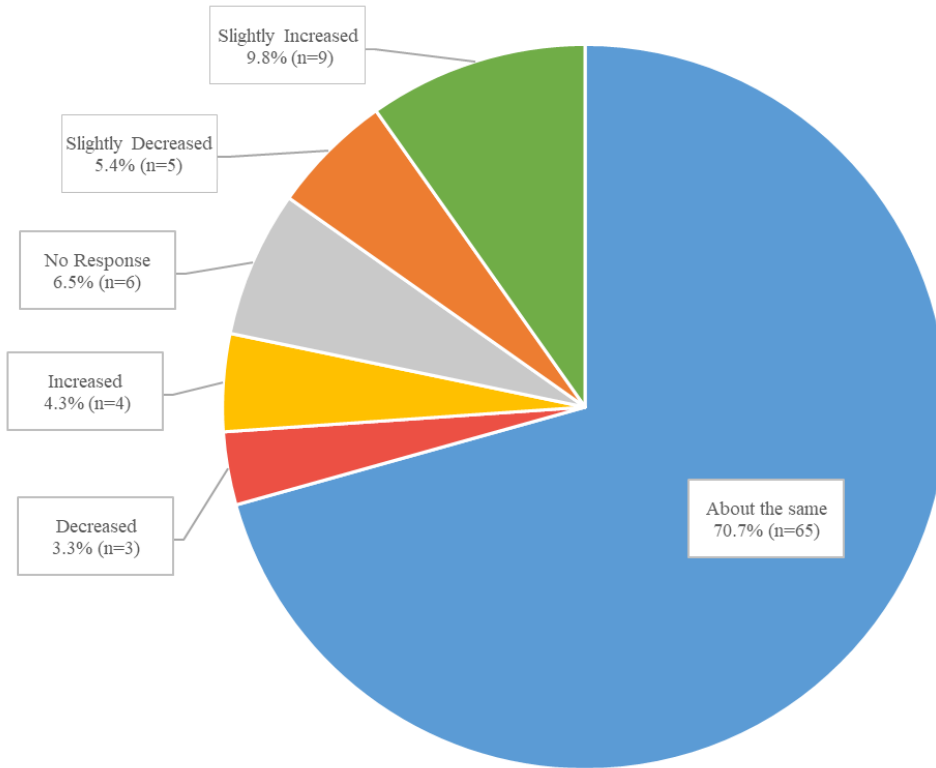
Respondents were asked about which AI applications they would recommend to teaching faculty versus which AI applications teaching faculty recommended to them for inclusion in library instruction, and they were then given a variety of choices (respondents were allowed to select more than one application for each question). Given the option of which application they would choose for library instruction, thirty-four respondents (37%) reported that they would recommend ChatGPT; comparably, librarians reported that 38 (41.3%) of their teaching faculty requested ChatGPT. For the rest of the specific applications listed, no choice received more than 30% of responses. Additionally, librarians recommended other AI applications not listed on the survey, including Claude (5.4%, n=5), DuckAI (2.2%, n=2), ScopusAI (2.2%, n=2), EBSCO Insights (2.2%, n=2), AnyStyle (1.1%, n=1), Primo Research Assistant (1.1%, n=1), and Gamma (1.1%, n=1). According to respondents, some teaching faculty requested AI applications not on the survey, including Claude (3.3%, n=3), ScopusAI (2.2%, n=2), DuckAI (1.1%, n=1), and Dall-E (1.1%, n=1) (Figure 7). Finally, 20 respondents (21.7%) prefer to focus on AI usage in theory only and not to focus on specific applications, even when asked. Respondents also indicated that a significant portion of teaching faculty (35.9%, n=33) did not specify an AI application, only to cover the topic as they saw fit.

Figure 7 - Which generative AI applications have been recommended for library instruction?



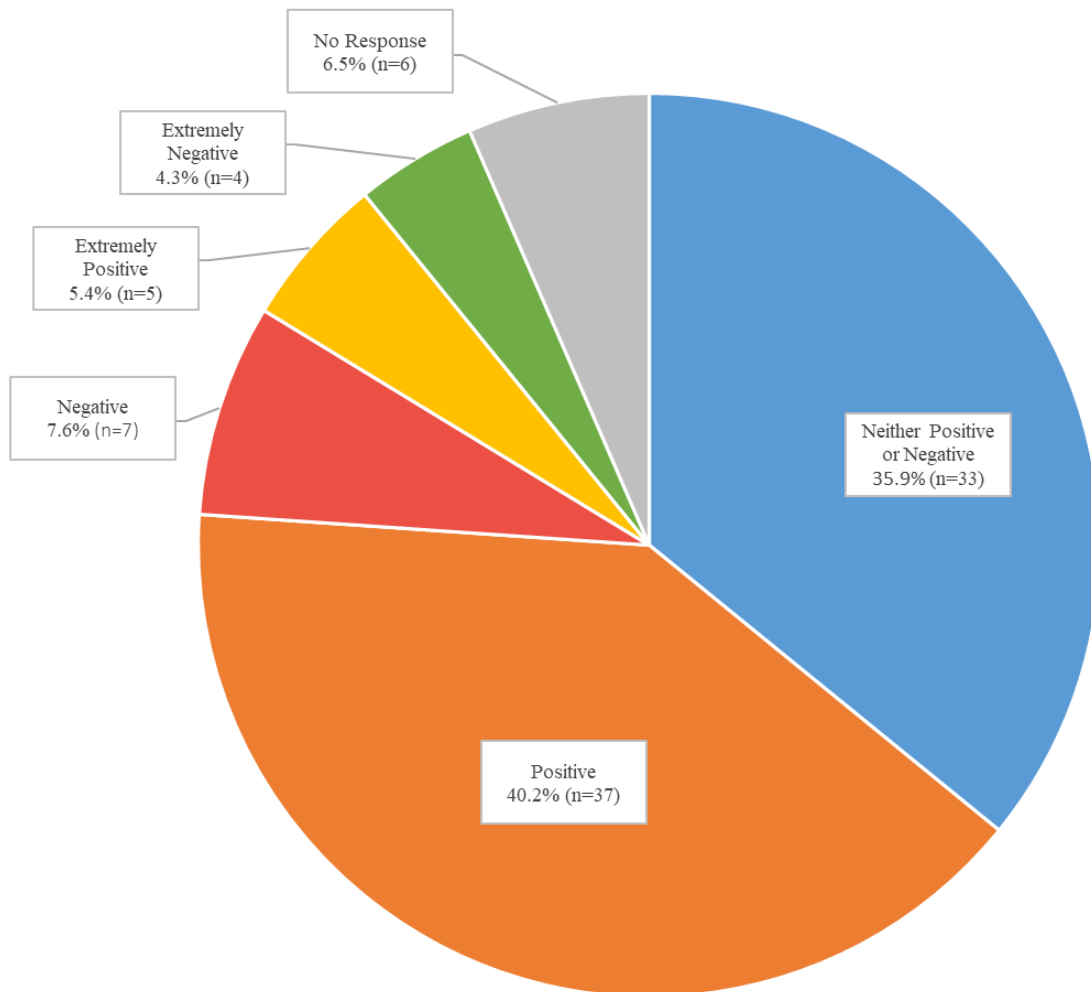
Respondents were also asked about generative AI's impact on overall load of instruction as well as their perception of the future of library instruction. Most respondents perceived the same amount of instruction sessions (70.7%, n=65) and 14.1% (n=13) perceived an increase in requests. Only 8.7% (n=8) of respondents perceived a decrease in instruction load (Figure 8).

Figure 8 - Q: How has the volume of your instruction requests changed due to adoption of AI research applications (since Fall 2022)? (n=92)



The perception of the future of library instruction was largely neutral or positive with 41 responses (47.7%) reporting a positive or extremely positive outlook with another 33 (38.4%) reporting a neutral outlook. Only 11 responses (12.8%) reported a negative response.

Figure 9 - Q: Considering everything that you have heard and seen about AI research applications in the past three years, how do you feel about the future of library instruction? (n=92)



The remaining questions on the survey were open-ended, starting with “What has been the most interesting thing you have learned about AI research applications (since Fall 2022)?” This question was not required and was answered by 77.1% of respondents (n=71). Out of those, just over half found specific functions of generative AI most interesting. Some responses included:

- “Timesaver in preparing teaching materials”
- “Different AI tools appeal to different people. For now, AI can be another helpful tool in a larger box of research techniques.”
- “Learning more about Perplexity and Google NotebookLM - specifically, how P helps users shape/narrow their research focus/topic, and how GNLM can help users interact/converse with a specific set of documents.”

- “The most interesting capability is in some models' ability to generate charts, graphs, etc. I am most interested in how there are still swaths of library professionals and teaching faculty who do not use/have not used these applications.”
- “The usefulness for generating Boolean searches for databases. It often comes up with better search terms than I can think of.”
- “That the key to effective use is taking the time to learn what the Tool is based on and how it works and focusing on prompt engineering - that a conversation back and forth works best and can reduce/correct hallucinations. Never just ask and take the answer.”
- “It's very helpful for brainstorming, occasionally useful for finding sources”

Many respondents found ways to work generative AI into the research process or daily workflows, some even into niche areas like “LGBTQ holiday movie plots” or podcast content. Several respondents also expressed concerns, mistrust, or outright dismissed the use of generative AI. One stated “...There's a general agreement that we not promote AI tools and concentrate on the tools (databases) we have. A pushback against AI is a consensus among librarians [at my institution]”.

The next open-ended question was “As a library instructor, what do you think is most important for students to understand about AI research applications?” This question was not required and answered by 96.7% of respondents (n=89). Some respondents emphasized the need for students to understand how generative AI works and how to evaluate the output. Beyond that, most respondents overwhelmingly expressed concerns over ethics, limitations, and the impact on the user, society, and environment. As an example, some of the responses included:

- “the incredible environmental impact of training and using AI”
- “Ethical implications of where the training data is coming from. Does the AI's company get consent or consider copyright when building the AI?”
- “That is predictive and not guaranteed; if you don't like doing the work once, are you planning to verify the generated outputs? If not, you shouldn't use it. Also, the environmental impacts of a single usage and how that may or may align with your personal values including morals, ethics, or religious values.”
- “risks to academic achievement and ability to develop critical thinking skills”
- “That AI cannot replace actual engagement with materials.”
- “ethical and environmental implications and the fact that they are still very much in development and do not "just work." they are taking away from our critical thinking skills if we are not engaging deeply in designing and correcting the prompts.”
- “There is a loss of skill inherent in any reliance on artificial intelligence, and the tools are still biased by nature.”

Finally, the last open-ended question was “Do you have any final thoughts on AI in library instruction you would like to share?” This question was not required and was answered by 59.8% of respondents (n=55). Out of the respondents, some do not see a place for generative AI in library instruction, especially when considering some of the serious drawbacks. One respondent stated, “It is imperative for all academic librarians to proceed with a consensus that we must put the brakes on use of AI in any form until we know how to preserve academic integrity”.

However, the majority that offered a final thought saw opportunity for librarians to guide and lead, especially in AI literacy.

- “I think that librarians shoulder the hope for getting AI right in academia, but we must act quickly as information scientists.”
- “Learning AI isn't optional. We need to become experts in its use in order to lead the way in this new form of information literacy.”
- “Librarians have an opportunity to be leaders in this space. Faculty are more reluctant to talk about it, and that gives us an opening to leverage our skill sets to place ourselves as experts. We need to be in the policy-making room, and we need to be using it to engage students--because they are eager to engage on this.”
- “It's not something we should ignore. We are information professionals, and AI is changing how a lot of people are searching for (and creating) information, so as challenging as it is, it's in our wheelhouse.”
- [In response to survey question 19] “Re: the future of library instruction - That question was really hard to answer. I think whether or not the future is positive or negative depends on how effectively librarians are able to communicate to faculty and other campus leaders the importance of AI Literacy...and how well (or not) that message is received. AI Literacy is the new Information Literacy.”
- “I think it's more critical now than ever before that librarians are teaching students and faculty information literacy skills, to include proper and ethical use of AI”
- “AI is here, whether librarians and educators like it or not. We need to figure out how to help students use it effectively.”
- “AI literacy is very important and schools should pay a lot of attention to developing AI literate students.”

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand how librarians are using, experiencing, and perceiving generative AI in library instruction. Comprehensive analysis of the demographic data was not conducted due to the small sample size; however, the authors believe that insight could be gleaned from the descriptive statistics. For instance, respondents reported exploring and experimenting with various generative AI tools (Figure 1), yet despite awareness of these applications, there was no consistency in common tools for instruction (Figures 2 & 7). Respondents also reported that conversations with teaching faculty were not universal either (Figure 3).

Some survey respondents saw generative AI's potential to assist students, the research process, or their personal work. Others expressed their overwhelming concern related to ethics and limitations. There was a mixture of both sentiments within the responses, indicating that one can incorporate generative AI into library instruction while also being critical of it. These mixed answers of nuanced use reflect several recent publications, like Ojala (2024) and Lo (2023), for how to use generative AI in a balanced manner. Like in the literature, many respondents specifically cited a need for “AI literacy”, despite the authors of this study not explicitly including “AI literacy” in any of the survey instructions or questions. Possibly as a result from the conflicted viewpoint, this call for “AI literacy” may be an acknowledgement that the profession's guidelines (i.e. ARCL Framework) are not matching the current need.

If new or updated professional guidelines are needed, what might this look like? In reaction to the rapidly changing information landscape of the internet, in 2013 the ACRL Task Force on Information Literacy Standards was given a charge that included “expanding [the] definition of information literacy to include multiple literacies, for example, transliteracy, media literacy, digital literacy, etc.” (ACRL 2016). As a result of this Task Force, the ACRL Framework replaced the ACRL Standards in 2016. In the years following, this adoption resulted in many librarians integrating the Framework into their instruction (Hsieh et al. 2021). However, is this definition of information literacy from 2016 still accurate and does it encompass all relevant literacies affecting information users today? For example, the ACRL Framework does not mention environmental impact of information, social media literacy, algorithmic bias, as well as anything about the synthetic information that generative AI produces. Indeed, the recently released draft update to the ACRL Framework (2026) recontextualizes each of the information literacy concepts with an AI lens. While many of the previous information literacy (IL) definitions remain, the addition of AI language to each concept seems to follow the same logic as James and Filgo (2023), who suggest that the existing ACRL Framework is flexible enough to encompass AI literacy.

Lo (2025), on the other hand, defines AI literacy separately from the ACRL Framework. His definition includes areas such as technical knowledge, ethical awareness, critical thinking, practical skills, and societal impact. While some of these overlap with the current version of the ACRL Framework, these concepts are in direct response to generative AI applications and their massive impact. Regardless of which path is taken, a major revision to professional guidelines is needed and is likely to come soon as ACRL has recently released a draft update (ACRL, 2026) to its Information Literacy Framework, which includes additional language on how Artificial Intelligence might fit into the larger information literacy concepts. This new Framework, however, is still in draft form and has not been adopted by ACRL at the time of this writing.

Library instruction is meant to “meet the needs of a diverse student body with varying levels of exposure to research practices” (Johnson et al., 2024, p. 2) and generative AI only increases that diversity. Librarians need to familiarize themselves with these new tools *and* larger, theoretical concepts related to generative AI if they are to understand their users’ behavior. The conflicted responses to the survey’s open-ended questions confirm that more understanding and nuance is needed to successfully and ethically integrate this technology into library instruction.

A shift *is* happening and happening quickly. This new literacy is needed because AI has moved forward regardless of values and ethics and many of this survey’s respondents expressed concerns about values and ethics related to AI. Adding AI literacy to professional guidelines will help librarians in having needed conversations with faculty, administrators, and students, whether they are pro-AI or not, around how best to use generative AI or how best to discuss ethical concerns related to its use. In short, there was no consensus on best practices for using generative AI in library instruction among the respondents and professional guidelines might help to alleviate that.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations to this survey and its responses. As mentioned earlier, the sample size was small with 92 responses being used for this analysis and cannot be generalized to the

entire academic librarian population. Additionally, respondents from a variety of institution sizes were included in this study, but the sample sizes were also too small to find any statistical significance based on institution size. This survey was also sent out to six email lists at the ALA/ACRL level, but it is likely that these email lists are not subscribed to by all academic librarians in the U.S. A larger sample size could lead to more generalizable insight as well as reflect any changes over time from findings in this survey.

This study also did not track usage by discipline. Additional research could focus on discipline specific generative AI integration into library instruction, giving better insight into what works best for different parts of academia. Those who did reply to the survey may indicate a self-selection bias for those interested in generative AI, excluding other instruction librarians.

The list of AI applications included in answer options of the survey is not exhaustive and reflects what the authors saw marketed in the first half of 2025. This could lead to an underreporting of generative AI usage for applications not listed in these questions. Likewise, due to the rapid adoption and use of AI applications, it may be difficult to maintain an up-to-date list of applications in use and thus complicate the establishment of which applications are best suited for specific assignments/disciplines as well as best practices.

In short, more investigation is needed when examining which generative AI applications are best to use in research and library instruction. Future research could include narrower surveys among librarians in a specific discipline, case studies for specific disciplines and their best practices for generative AI as well as the impact of any guidelines adopted after this study related to AI literacy.

Conclusion

Since late 2022, there has been much discussion about generative AI and its impact on universities and colleges, including academic libraries. Generative AI has disrupted much higher education, making instructors and librarians rethink curriculum comprehensively. Much of this discussion has been in the form of commentary and other similar formats, but with little research on adoption, usage, and best practices. Indeed, what has been published has focused on specific case studies and not necessarily on broad adoption of generative AI.

This study attempted to ascertain what adoption, usage, and best practices for generative AI might look like in the library instruction session from a representative sample of academic librarians. The study also asked what application(s) was best to use for library instruction and research use. There was no clear indication of any of this from the data received. Most of the respondents in this survey noted experimentation with generative AI in instruction, yet there was little agreement on which application was best for research use. Most respondents did report generative AI-related language in course and assignment materials, but to varying degrees and it was far from universal. Similarly, most respondents also reported that communications with faculty about acceptable AI usage were sporadic.

While the sample size was limited, this study does offer insight into how adoption might be progressing as well as highlighting a need, by some at least, for new professional guidelines related to AI literacy. Academic library instruction guidance would normally come from ACRL

(i.e. ACRL IL Framework), yet a unifying definition of AI literacy for instruction librarians is still lacking, as well as any related documentation that would better guide both instructors and librarians in creating a more resilient curriculum. After this survey was distributed, ACRL did focus on AI adoption in academic libraries in their 2025 trends report and survey. While the ACRL draft focuses on expanding information literacy to include AI, specific generative AI applications are not addressed in the draft as of June 2026.

Overall, librarians' use of generative AI in library instruction has begun but is far from well-defined. More dialogue and documentation are needed before AI best practices in library instruction can be established, including which applications are best to use.

References

- Andersdotter, K. (2023). Artificial Intelligence skills and knowledge in libraries: Experiences and critical impressions from a learning circle. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 17(2), 108–130. <https://doi.org/10.11645/17.2.14>
- Association of College and Research Libraries. (2016). *Framework for information literacy for higher education*. American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>
- Association of College and Research Libraries. (2026). ACRL framework for information literacy for higher education: 2026 revision (Draft). <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dAiqVltx3qeD0o-2avGwhw3sfctyWVQHh1m7cmfMkuI/edit?tab=t.r923xvnjjwmk#heading=h.mea8h16xbklt>
- Baek, C., Tate, T., & Warschauer, M. (2024). “ChatGPT seems too good to be true”: College students’ use and perceptions of generative AI. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 7, 100294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100294>
- Boyle, C. (2025) ChatGPT, Gemini, & Copilot: Using generative AI as a tool for information literacy instruction. *The Reference Librarian*, 66:(1-2), 13-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02763877.2025.2465416>
- Cardona, M. A., Rodríguez, R. J., & Ishmael, K. (2023, May). Artificial Intelligence and the future of teaching and learning. <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/ai-report/ai-report.pdf>
- Chaudhuri, J., & Terrones, L. (2025). Reshaping academic library information literacy programs in the advent of ChatGPT and other generative AI technologies. *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, 29(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875301.2024.2400132>
- Del Castillo, M., & Kelly, H. (2025). Can AI become an information literacy ally? A survey of library instructor perspectives on ChatGPT. *College & Research Libraries*, 86(5), 797. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.86.5.797>

- Filson, C. K., & Atuase, D. (2025). Artificial Intelligence and academic integrity: The role of academic librarians. *Information Development*, 41(3), 781–793. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02666669241284230>
- Fister, B., & Head, A. J. (May 4, 2023). *Getting a grip on ChatGPT*. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/views/2023/05/04/chatgpt-reshaping-information-infrastructures-opinion>
- Hsieh, M. L., Dawson, P. H., & Yang, S. Q. (2021). The *ACRL framework* successes and challenges since 2016: A survey. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 47(2), 102306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102306>
- James, A., & Filgo, E. (2023). Where does ChatGPT fit into the Framework for Information Literacy? The possibilities and problems of AI in library instruction. *College & Research Libraries News*, 84(9), 334. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.84.9.334>
- Johnson, S., Owens, E., Menendez, H., & Kim, D. (2024). Using ChatGPT-generated essays in library instruction. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 50(2), 102863. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2024.102863>
- Lim, W. M., Gunasekara, A., Pallant, J. L., Pallant, J. I., & Pechenkina, E. (2023). Generative AI and the future of education: Ragnarök or reformation? A paradoxical perspective from management educators. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 21(2), 100790. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2023.100790>
- Lo, L. S. (2023). An initial interpretation of the U.S. Department of Education’s AI report: Implications and recommendations for academic libraries. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 49(5), 102761. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2023.102761>
- Lo, L. (2024). Evaluating AI literacy in academic libraries: A survey study with a focus on U.S. employees. *College & Research Libraries*, 85(5). <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.5.635>
- Lo, L. (2025). AI literacy: A guide for academic libraries. *College & Research Libraries News*, 86(3), 120. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.86.3.120>
- Mah, D. K., & Groß, N. (2024). Artificial Intelligence in higher education: Exploring faculty use, self-efficacy, distinct profiles, and professional development needs. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 21(1), 58. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-024-00490-1>
- McMurtie, B. (2023, March 26). *ChatGPT Is already upending campus practices. Colleges are rushing to respond*. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/chatgpt-is-already-upending-campus-practices-colleges-are-rushing-to-respond>

- Michalak, R. (2023). From ethics to execution: The role of academic librarians in Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy-making at colleges and universities. *Journal of Library Administration*, 63(7), 928–938.
- Monnier, R., Noe, M., & Gibson, E. (2025). AI in academic libraries, part one: Concerns and commodification. *College & Research Libraries News*, 86(4), 173.
<https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.86.4.173>
- Ndungu, M. W. (2024). Integrating basic Artificial Intelligence literacy with media and information literacy in higher education. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 18(2), 122–139. <https://doi.org/10.11645/18.2.641>
- Ojala, M. (2024). The disruptive technologies of search. *Computers in Libraries*, 44(3), 36–40.
- Sidoti, O., Park, E., & Gottfried, J. (2025, January 15). *About a quarter of U.S. teens have used ChatGPT for schoolwork – Double the share in 2023*. Pew Research Center.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/01/15/about-a-quarter-of-us-teens-have-used-chatgpt-for-schoolwork-double-the-share-in-2023/>
- Torres, J. M. (2024). Leveraging ChatGPT and Bard for academic librarians and information professionals: A case study of developing pedagogical strategies using generative AI models. *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship*, 29(3), 169–182.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08963568.2024.2321729>
- Watkins, T., & Johnson, Q. (2024). AI and machine learning: What to know and how to talk about it to researchers and patrons. *Information Services & Use*, 44(4), 327–332.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/18758789241298501>
- Wheatley, A., & Hervieux, S. (2019). Artificial Intelligence in academic libraries: An environmental scan. *Information Services and Use*, 39(4), 347–356.
<https://doi.org/10.3233/ISU-190065>

Appendix A

Surveying the Use of AI applications in Library Instruction

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR

Jonathan Bull

Teresa Augustine

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study related to understanding AI's role in library instruction. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to find out how much generative artificial intelligence (AI) has been incorporated into academic library research instruction and if so, what aspects of generative AI. During this study, you will be asked questions about your use of AI in library instruction, what you think of AI applications, and your knowledge of the AI applications related to library instruction.

STUDY PROCEDURES OR STEPS

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a brief survey with questions about your use of AI in library instruction, what you think of AI applications, and your knowledge of the AI applications related to library instruction. You will also be asked several general information questions about your institution. If you are over 18 years old and a faculty or staff member at a post-secondary institution in the United States, you are eligible to participate in this research study. The questionnaire is expected to take you approximately 10 minutes to complete.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Your participation in the study should not involve any substantial or noticeable risks. There is currently no foreseeable cause of distress related to this study.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study can be used to learn more about AI applications being used in library instruction.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researchers will remove all participant identifiers (e.g., email) and will assign each participant a random number identifier before it is entered into the dataset. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being of this project. Group-level data may be provided in online data sharing networks such as an institutional repository and will not be linked to individual participants.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided at the top of this page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise that you do not feel you can discuss with the principal investigator, please contact the Valparaíso University Institutional Review Board at valpoirb@valpo.edu or 219-464-5798.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect your relationship with the researcher, if any. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

1. CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Select one of the following boxes to indicate whether you would like to participate in the study:

I have read and I understand the information provided. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

I do not agree to participate in this study.

Introduction

This survey seeks to find out how much generative artificial intelligence (AI) has been incorporated into academic library research instruction and if so, what aspects of generative AI. This survey has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Valparaíso University. Any identifying information will be used to de-duplicate responses and will be removed before publication.

2. Carnegie Institutional Classification

To search for your institution's classification, you can search here:

<https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/>

This survey uses new Carnegie Classification, released in April 2025.

Associate Colleges
Associate/Baccalaureate
Baccalaureate
Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's
Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate
Special Focus Institutions

3. Number of instruction librarians at your institution (FTE)
4. Years of Experience in Library Instruction?
5. What disciplines do you personally support for library instruction? (Please list all)
6. For what level(s) of course have you integrated the most AI adoption within library instruction?

Introductory (Freshman-level)
Intermediate (Sophomore-level)
Advanced (Junior-level)
Capstone/Seminar (Senior-level or Graduate-level)
Equally across all levels
Other (please specify)

7. Select how often you do these types of library instruction:

Reference Interview (unscheduled walk-ins)

Never
Rarely/Infrequently (Less Than Once Per Academic Term)
Once or Twice Per Academic Term
Monthly
Weekly
Daily

Reference Interview (unscheduled walk-ins)

Never
Rarely/Infrequently (Less Than Once Per Academic Term)
Once or Twice Per Academic Term
Monthly
Weekly
Daily

Research Consultation (student appointments, scheduled in advance)

Never
Rarely/Infrequently (Less Than Once Per Academic Term)
Once or Twice Per Academic Term
Monthly
Weekly
Daily

Information Literacy/Bibliographic Instruction (i.e. one-shot class)

Never

Rarely/Infrequently (Less Than Once Per Academic Term)
Once or Twice Per Academic Term
Monthly
Weekly
Daily

Open Lab/Dedicated Office Hours for a specific class

Never
Rarely/Infrequently (Less Than Once Per Academic Term)
Once or Twice Per Academic Term
Monthly
Weekly
Daily

Embedded Librarianship (four or more instruction sessions for a single class)

Never
Rarely/Infrequently (Less Than Once Per Academic Term)
Once or Twice Per Academic Term
Monthly
Weekly
Daily

8. Please rank your interest in integrating generative AI in library instruction:

Not at all
Not Very Interested
Neutral
Somewhat Interested
Very Interested

9. Which of the following AI apps had you heard of? (Check all that apply)

ChatGPT
ChatGPT EDU
CoPilot
SCITE
Consensus
Khanmigo
Research Rabbit
Elicit
Semantic Scholar
NotebookLM
Perplexity
Paperguide
ChatPDF

Connected Papers
Coral AI
Scholarcy
Gemini
Grammarly
Other (please specify)

10. While planning for an instruction session, how often does the use of AI come up with the teaching faculty?

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Rarely
Never

11. How often have you seen the inclusion of AI-related language within course materials relevant to the instruction session(s) (i.e. research assignments, syllabi)?

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Rarely
Never

12. Please indicate how often variations of the following AI statement are in the course materials you have seen:

A statement banning the use of AI for the entire course (Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

A statement banning the use of AI for research purposes (Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

A statement allowing AI on a case-by-case basis with permission of the instructor (Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

A statement allowing only specific AI applications for specific assignments (Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

A statement allowing unlimited usage as long as the students' use is declared to the instructor (Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

13. If generative AI is included in library instruction, please indicate if you have received any of the following requests for what to cover in library instruction: (select all that apply)

AI Limitations (e.g. hallucinations)

Best practices for AI (e.g. prompt engineering)
Ethical considerations of using AI (e.g. academic integrity)
ChatGPT tutorial
Other AI application tutorial
Other (please specify)

14. If generative AI instruction is requested from teaching faculty, but they give little to no guidance/preference on specific AI applications, which *specific* AI application(s) would you recommend in library instruction?

ChatGPT
ChatGPT EDU
CoPilot
SCITE
Consensus
Khanmigo
Research Rabbit
Elicit
Semantic Scholar
NotebookLM
Perplexity
Paperguide
ChatPDF
Connected Papers
Coral AI
Scholarcy
Gemini
Grammarly
I would not cover any AI applications; focus on theoretical concepts like academic integrity, hallucinations, etc.
Other (please specify)
None of the above

15. If research assignments allow generative AI use, which specific AI applications have you seen recommended by the teaching faculty? (check all that apply)

ChatGPT
ChatGPT EDU
CoPilot
SCITE
Consensus
Khanmigo
Research Rabbit
Elicit
Semantic Scholar
NotebookLM

Perplexity
Paperguide
ChatPDF
Connected Papers
Coral AI
Scholarcy
Gemini
Grammarly
No Specific Application
Other (please specify)

16. How has the volume of your instruction requests changed due to adoption of AI research applications (since Fall 2022)?

Decreased
Slightly Decreased
About the same
Slightly Increased
Increased

17. What has been the most interesting thing that you have learned about AI research applications (since Fall 2022)?

18. As a library instructor, what do you think is most important for students to understand about AI research applications?

19. Considering everything that you have heard and seen about AI research applications in the past three years, how do you feel about the future of library instruction?

Extremely Positive
Positive
Neither Positive or Negative
Negative
Extremely Negative

20. Do you have any final thoughts on AI in library instruction you would like to share?