

Assessing the Impact of AI on Political Science Information Literacy Instruction

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Abstract

With artificial intelligence (AI) technologies quickly advancing and supplanting traditional research tools and techniques, “AI literacy” has been touted in higher education circles as a new, necessary skill for programs to teach and for students to master. For political science instructors and librarians, information literacy education has long been a primary learning objective to support students’ comprehension of all types of media and research material. Incorporating AI along with other “literacies” will require additional support and learning for instructors and librarians, who are adapting simultaneously to technological advances. In order to understand the impact of AI on librarians working with political science degree programs, the authors conducted a survey in Spring 2026 followed by interviews to ascertain their self-assessed competency with AI concepts and tools, as well as their experience and confidence in teaching on AI literacy.

This paper, shares the findings from this survey of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Policy, Politics, and International Relations Section (PPIRS) membership on this subject. This data offers insight to political science teaching faculty about the landscape of “AI literacy” pedagogy nationwide, and about the professional librarians who work primarily with political science classes. We found that administrative interest in adding GAI to the curriculum does not necessarily correspond to what instructors and librarians feel willing and able to teach. There has not been clear AI policy guidance at most academic institutions, leaving those who teach struggling with the best way forward—meanwhile many librarians do not feel they have a seat at the table where discussions are happening. At a time when many staff and faculty are stretched thin with increasing obligations, GAI tools are presented as a boon to productivity, while their learning curve is high and they are prone to errors.

Political science librarians share concerns expressed in the political science education literature about cognitive offloading, and they are acutely aware of the functional and ethical limitations of GAI. Given their extensive expertise in locating accurate, reputable, relevant information, librarians see AI literacy as an extension of traditional information literacy skills, and worthy of dedicated time to cultivate these skills in the classroom.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has rapidly changed the landscape of education and society at large in the last several years, as generative AI (GAI) chatbots have quickly risen to public prominence. Pew reports that over 60 percent of Americans under 50 years of age have used AI chatbots, and 30 percent of young adults aged 18-29 claim to use them daily (Gottfried et. al., 2026). Higher education is awash in

research on the ongoing impact and effects of these new—and constantly changing—AI tools on pedagogy and learning (Holmes et al. 2025; Hampson & De Soete 2026; Yusuf, Pervin & Marcos Román-González 2024; Zuber & Gogoll 2024). Yet educators are themselves struggling to understand and adapt to the same AI technology in teaching their students, “AI literacy” is a multidimensional concept with technical, evaluative, practical, and ethical components that requires sustained effort to develop (EDUCAUSE 2024).

AI literacy, defined succinctly as “the ability to understand, use, and think critically about AI technologies and their impact on society, ethics, and everyday life” (Lo 2025), is a recent adaptation of the concept of “information literacy” (IL), first conceptualized by Paul Zurkowski in 1974 (Badke 2010; Eisenberg et al. 2004). IL is a term that academic librarians reference to encapsulate “the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning” (ACRL 2015). These threshold abilities and dispositions are not innate, and we understand that they must be inculcated alongside subject matter knowledge in the college classroom (Hardesty 1995). But how are instructors becoming “AI literate” at a time of significant technological change and disruption in higher education?

This paper attempts to answer this question through several avenues of research into the perspectives of academic librarians who professionally support the disciplines of political science, public policy, and international affairs. The authors conducted a survey of librarians in the Politics, Policy, and International Relations Section (PPIRS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in spring 2026 to assess their AI literacy and perceptions of the impact of AI on their work instructing students. The survey instrument was adapted from a survey of all U.S. academic librarians on a similar theme in 2023 (Lo 2024). The authors subsequently interviewed several political science librarians from a variety of institutions nationwide who completed the survey and were willing to offer extended comments on their experiences with AI.

This study’s findings were found to be consistent with many of the themes that surfaced in conversations held monthly by the PPIRS AI Literacy Discussion Group (PALDG), in the academic years from 2024-2026. The co-authors have been leading this monthly discussion group as a community of practice (Baker & Beames 2016) for members of the PPIRS section of ACRL and have been struck by the similarities as well differences in the way librarians from a range of types of institutions are confronting the use of AI tools. This study provides an overview of how a broader swath of librarians in this same subject area are dealing with this topic in their work as well as how their impressions and the way they are dealing with AI literacy might have shifted since 2023 when Lo’s earlier study was conducted.

As pointed out in a recent APSA Teaching and Learning Conference paper by MacVaugh (2025), “faculty and academic librarians may view generative AI services and other tools with trepidation, concerned about the ways in which they will change political science education and teaching. As with all new technologies, there are significant challenges that we will confront as we consider their affordances.” This study provides librarians and their faculty further data on understanding the impressions of librarian professionals on this new disruption to our work.

The results offer novel insights into the rapidly evolving landscape of AI in higher education with specific focus on the unique elements of political science education, from the vantage of academic librarians. Their work bridges the skill-content gap through specialized support for political science research. These

professionals are actively engaged in the AI literacy conversation and have much to offer their colleagues in the respective disciplines they support.

Literature Review and Significance of Study

For several years now, political science educators have grappled with the effects of emerging technologies known generically as “generative AI” (GAI) on the pedagogical process and learning outcomes for students of political science (e.g. Ardoin & Hicks 2024; Kehlenbach 2025; Michels 2024; Spindel & Ackerman 2025). Academic librarians, too, have been wrestling with the ways in which generative AI is similar yet different than other challenges we face in developing students’ information literacy and research skills (Baer 2026; Guest et al. 2025; Hervieux & Wheatley 2024; Lo 2025; MacVaugh 2025). Although there are decades of research linking information literacy skill building to improved outcomes in political science education (e.g. Ackerman & Arbour 2016; Harden & Harden 2020; Marfleet, Dille, & Dille 2005; Siver & Haeg 2021; Thornton 2016), the connection to promoting AI literacy—and librarians’ roles as crucial partners—has yet to be explored by the field (MacVaugh, 2025).

Political science literature has long acknowledged the importance of information literacy as a core skill for students to develop, and APSA has cited it as a key learning outcome in their seminal report on “Rethinking Political Science Education” (2024, 20). Yet it has also been “everywhere and nowhere” in the political science curriculum, because of ambiguity over when and where to include explicit skill training as part of content-heavy courses (Thornton & Atkinson 2022). Librarians who liaise with political science departments or are subject specialists in related disciplines are experts in teaching the information literacy competencies that students need to develop for proficiency in political science research but are rarely given time in the curriculum to offer more than guest lectures or “one-shot” lessons in research intensive courses (Reed 2021). The rise of generative AI has prompted a renewed concern about whether students are adequately information literate in general, and academic librarians are confronted with the need to provide specific “AI literacy” training on top of the already recognized needs for information, media, and data literacy, especially for undergraduates (Flaherty 2026).

Political scientist Rodehau-Noack recently observed, “in a world where everyone can generate text that looks coherent but is devoid of reasoning and original insight, real expertise and critical thinking become even *more* important, not less” ((2026), emphasis original). MacVaugh (2025) has elaborated the ways in which the intervention of information literacy specialists, i.e. academic librarians, is essential to the development of critical thinking and strong analytical skills in political science students. She notes that the involvement of political science librarians is especially critical at a time when generative AI tools advertise themselves as enticingly convenient alternatives to the laborious and sometimes tedious intellectual efforts involved in academic writing and research (Lindebaum & Ramirez 2024; Walsh 2025). Librarians have already begun to identify the issues that arise from students starting out with the “answer” after using generative AI chatbots as a primary entry point in their information seeking and search behavior, which necessitates a flipped approach from traditional IL training (Lo 2026).

For political science, public policy, and related disciplines, the information environment is exceptionally diverse and tricky to navigate for novice learners. From historical documents to white papers to GIS data, our students are learning to evaluate and synthesize disparate information into a coherent argument or analysis. Prior to that, they must master skills of articulating a cogent research question and developing their methodological approach, discerning which sources will satisfy their needs and understanding the limits and gaps in their knowledge and how they might be addressed. These “transferable skills” are substantial educational objectives that, once achieved, result in not only the conferral of a degree but

also the lifelong ability to confront challenges and solve problems (Rethinking Political Science Education 2024). Michels argues that information literacy training for political science students will be “much of the same” though “more complicated” with the advent of AI. He advocates for instructor-led, in-class AI literacy lessons but does not include in his recommendation the value that collaboration with librarians can bring to this mission (2024, 514).

Much of what we know so far about political science educators’ experience with GAI comes from surveys of the discipline, and they indicate that the field remains highly uncertain as to the impact of these tools on teaching and learning (Cahill & McCabe 2024; Wu & Wu 2024). Some scholars have identified assignments or activities that can be adapted or enhanced with the incorporation of GAI components (Dilling & Owen 2025; Jackson & Philips 2026; Peters 2025; Turner, Thao, & Adorador 2026). Yet writing remains a sticking point, as the struggle to translate and organize one’s own thoughts and ideas into a written product is still understood to be a core element of the learning process (Green 2025; Hellstrom 2024; Zebrowski 2025). Students can now more easily miss acquiring this essential skill. Studies show that GAI chatbots can replicate undergraduate level writing to the extent that political science professors cannot tell it has been generated by AI (Spindel & Ackerman 2025).

While tech companies and agile businesses may laud “building the car while driving it,” academics are understandably wary of such a concept in their own classrooms, as we find ourselves tasked with becoming AI literate while simultaneously teaching AI literacy to students (Reich 2025). In this effort, librarians and instructors are natural collaborators. The academic librarians that are the focus of this study have the professional responsibility (our “day job,” if you will) to remain aware of developments in the information landscape. Many have been engaged with GAI issues for years and have insight into its ongoing impact on pedagogy. For example, as mentioned earlier, the Politics, Policy, and International Relations Section (PPIRS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has had an active monthly discussion group on the topic of AI literacy since 2024. This forum has revealed that political science librarians have faced numerous challenges dealing with generative AI which would doubtless be familiar to their instructor counterparts. The authors have undertaken a survey of our librarian colleagues to assess their perspectives on AI literacy and their role addressing it to provide a better understanding of their experiences with this fast-evolving dynamic impacting political science educators and education.

Methodology

Our survey is built upon a foundational survey of all U.S. academic librarians on a similar theme in 2023 (Lo 2024) to assess how impressions of librarians might have shifted since that time, given the rapid rate of new innovations with AI. Although Lo surveyed all varieties of academic library workers, the target respondents for our survey were specifically librarians supporting the political science, public policy and international relations academic disciplines. Since various scholarly fields interact with information in different ways (Case & Given 2016), there is a value in examining AI literacy in the context of the work of political science librarians.

Our study differed from Dr. Lo’s study in several ways. It aimed to understand perceptions of this topic regarding respondents’ current interaction with AI tools, while Dr. Lo’s study was ultimately aimed at identifying librarian AI training needs given the recent appearance of LLM tools like ChatGPT at the time his survey was conducted. An area that has arisen as a concern in academia since then is concern about heavy use of AI by students as an intense form of “cognitive offloading” (Richmond & Taylor 2025) and its impact on the critical thinking and cognitive development of students (Gerlich 2025; Green 2025;

Walsh 2025). In addition, concerns about the fallibility of AI tools are not new (Broussard 2018), however our study broached the topic of “model collapse” (Shumailov et. al. 2023) and GAI “hallucinations” which were not substantially addressed in Lo’s survey. While Lo covered concerns about “ethics” from a broad view, we added more specific questions breaking down different types of ethical concerns in our survey.

In Dr. Lo’s study’s recommendations for “Future Research” he supports further “comparative studies”. As he states, “such studies provide insights into the factors that influence AI literacy and the strategies that are effective in different contexts” (Lo 2024). To adequately compare impressions with Lo’s study, the majority of the survey questions matched that study with only a few adjustments to accommodate differing objectives. Consequently, for example, all questions about training needs were removed. The deployment, evaluation and use of AI tools is a dominant theme in the academy today and were the focus of the survey’s assessment.

The data collection for this study commenced with sending out an online survey using the Qualtrics software. It was distributed in February 2026 to subscribers to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Policy, Politics, and International Relations Section (PPIRS) listserv (see Appendix A). PPIRS altogether has 597 members. All responses were received by March 2026. While there was some drop off, 32 individuals completed most of the survey.

Survey respondents had the following demographic characteristics. Most respondents were from R1 research universities (17 – 52%). For those not from R1 institutions, eight were from those with graduate programs and five from those primarily serving undergraduates. The remaining respondents were from research institutes or state libraries. 18 of the respondents came from large institutions with over 10,000 students enrolled. About a third of respondents were in middle or senior management positions at their libraries and two-thirds indicated that their primary job responsibilities were in reference and research services and/or library instruction and information literacy work. Most respondents (67%) had over 15 years of experience in library-related work and were over 44 years old (75%). In addition to supporting the subjects of Political Science (23), Public Policy (13) and International Affairs (14), some also supported Law (4), as well as Social Sciences in general (16), with several mentioning additional unrelated disciplines such as Humanities, Finance and Theater. Many respondents indicated that they are liaisons to three or more subject areas. Four of the respondents indicated they had also taken the aforementioned AI Literacy in Academic Libraries survey (Lo, 2024).

At the end of the survey we solicited for volunteers willing to provide follow up interviews for further insights on their use and experience with GAI tools. Twelve individuals acknowledged an interest and nine were eventually confirmed for interviews, which were conducted in May 2026 via Zoom using an interview guide (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). A semi-structured protocol for interviewing was followed with a guide used as an anchor for the “conversational partnership” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed through Zoom. The interviews ranged from 18 minutes to 42 minutes in length. For a copy of the interview guide used, see Appendix B.

The interviewees represented a balance of larger universities and smaller colleges. They were from a mix of private and public institutions with student populations of varying sizes. Most were subject liaison reference librarians, but some had directorial and managerial responsibilities as well. For more details, see Table 1. Any of their comments included in this paper have been anonymized in respect of stipulations made regarding their agreement to participate in these interviews.

Table 1 Characteristics of Interviewees

<i>Interviewee Identifier</i>	<i>School Size</i>	<i>College or Univ?</i>	<i>Public or Private?</i>	<i>Length of Interview</i>
Librarian 1	larger	University	Public	19 min.
Librarian 2	smaller	College	Private	18 min.
Librarian 3	larger	University	Public	27 min.
Librarian 4	medium	University	Private	31 min.
Librarian 5	medium	University	Private	18 min.
Librarian 6	medium	University	Private	34 min.
Librarian 7	smaller	College	Private	24 min.
Librarian 8	medium	University	Public	29 min.
Librarian 9	larger	University	Public	42 min.

Qualitative and mixed method techniques (Creswell 2007; Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014) were used in reviewing and analyzing the online survey responses and interview transcripts to determine general themes and commonalities. To facilitate greater in-depth analysis, the interview transcripts were loaded into the computer assisted qualitative data analysis Nvivo software for coding. Codes were established following the recommended procedures of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Appendix C provides a listing of these codes and the number of times the codes matched text in the transcripts. All stages of this research, including the literature review, data collection and analysis, and the writing and editing of this paper, were completed exclusively by human intelligence without the use of any GAI tools.

Review of Results

Survey

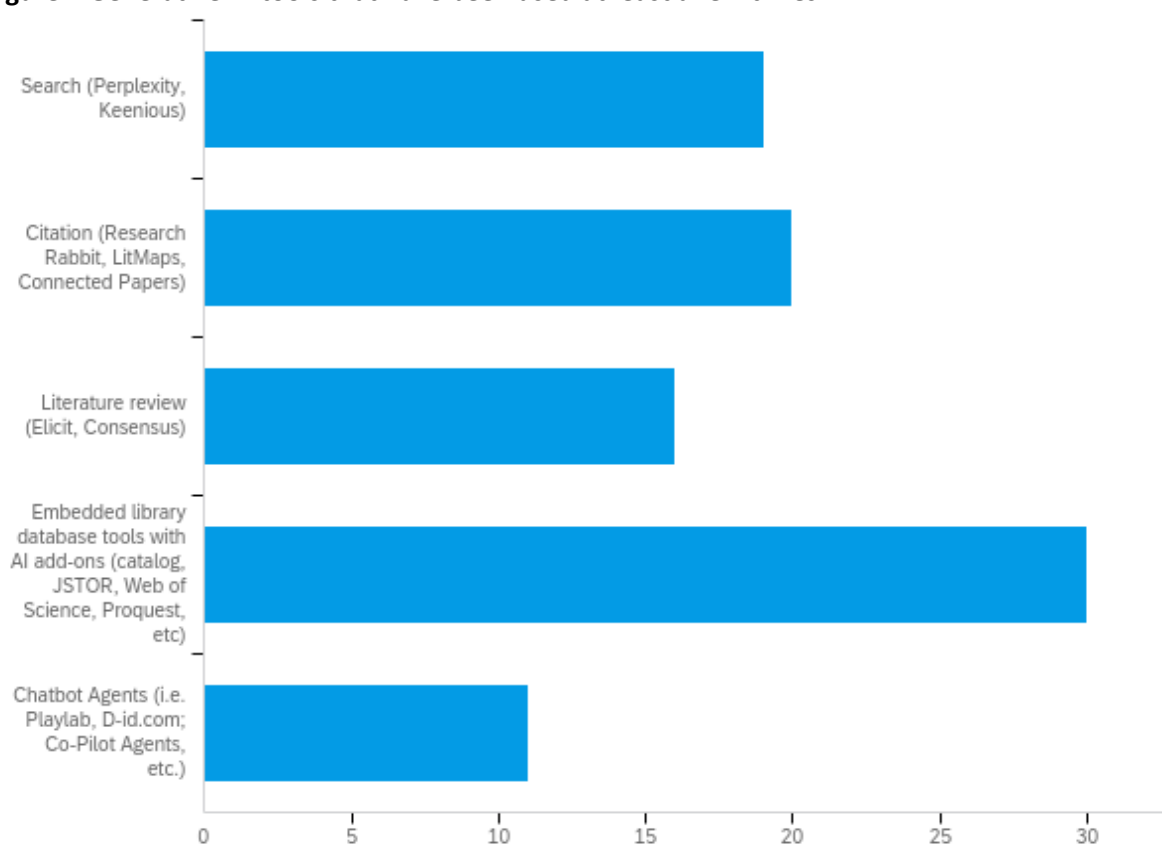
We sent out our survey in February 2026, hewing closely to the validated questionnaire of Lo's 2024 study "Evaluating AI Literacy in Academic Libraries." (For the list of survey questions, see Appendix A.) Like Lo, we organized the questions according to facets of AI literacy, starting with basic familiarity with concepts and tools, then self-assessment of confidence in personally engaging with AI, and finally their perceptions of the utility and value of AI and their institution's stance towards generative AI adoption.

Most respondents indicated they were moderately or very familiar with GAI concepts and tools. They also were familiar with how algorithms work and the concept of "cognitive offloading," which is an increasingly discussed pedagogical concern in higher education, especially in academic librarianship (Richmond & Taylor 2025; Gerlich 2025). However, most were unfamiliar with more technical terms and concepts from computer science, such as the theory of "model collapse," the phenomenon where GAI models deteriorate over time as they train on AI generated content (Shumailov et al. 2023). This is likely

to impact the evaluation by librarians of subscriptions to GAI tools making them question the continued reliability, effectiveness, and accuracy of these expensive products which lack the transparent functionality and reproducibility of existing library resources.

Almost all respondents have used text generation “chatbots” such as ChatGPT, CoPilot, or Claude at least a few times, with some indicating they have tried image generation, data synthesis for research purposes and presentation generation. Almost all acknowledged they have used research database tools with AI functionalities added in, at least a few times, which is likely due to the increasing introduction of such features in all major library vendor databases (Tay 2025). Approximately two-thirds have used specialized GAI tools for search (e.g. Perplexity, Keenious), Citations (e.g. Research Rabbit, Lit Maps, Connected Papers) and literature review generation (e.g. Elicit, Consensus). Fewer indicated use of chatbot agents (See Figure 1, Q1.4).

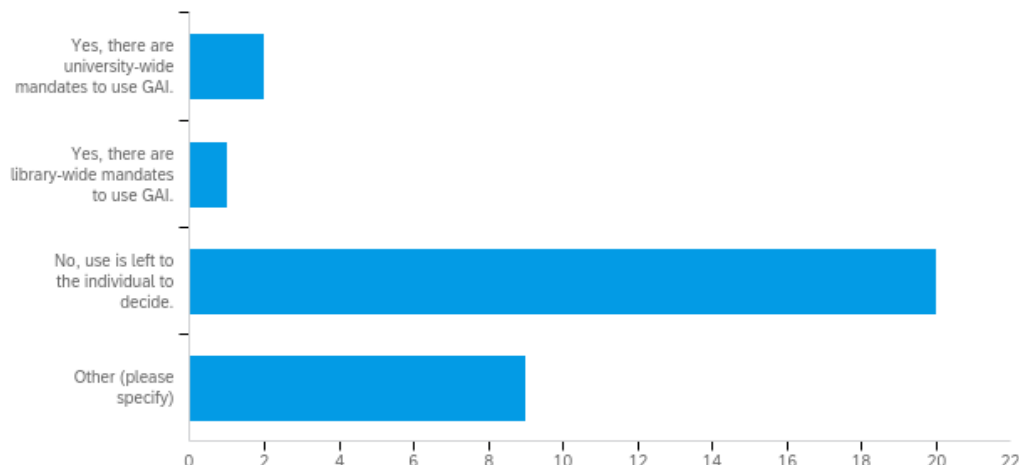
Figure 1 Generative AI tools that have been used at least a few times



Despite the proliferation of GAI tools purporting to perform research tasks, two-thirds of respondents indicated their institution does not have a subscription to any such specialized GAI research tools (Q 1.5). Tools such as Elicit, Keenious, and Research Rabbit also operate on a “freemium” model allowing individuals to access limited functionality at no charge, and it appears most libraries represented in this survey are still opting not to use their collective funds for such subscriptions. Slightly under half (14) of respondents indicated they use GAI tools at least once a week as part of their professional work. A majority indicated that their professional use of AI was not impacted by institutional policies (See Figure 2, Q 3.10). Open-ended comments connected to this question indicated that institutions diverge considerably in their GAI approach, from one response that “we have institutional policies forbidding us

from using AI in many circumstances” to another stating that “employees are strongly encouraged to use AI.” It is not clear whether these policies correspond with the institutions’ level of funding and technological support for GAI tools.

Figure 2 Whether professional use of AI is impacted by institutional policies



When asked about how GAI tools were used in their professional work, the highest use case was “instruction”, with slightly fewer than half (15) of respondents, followed by “research assistance” (13) with all other uses indicated only by a quarter or fewer respondents (See Table 2, Q 1.8). These results are consistent with survey participants’ primary professional responsibilities providing research support and information literacy instruction. There were a few comments in the open response option that highlighted the difficulty in organizing chatbot functions by discrete category and also the creativity of respondents in engaging with GAI. One respondent described GAI as an “Instruction Sounding Board”, where they stated that they use LLMs for “(brainstorming, lesson plan evaluation, thinking partner work), assistance revising draft text for conciseness and clarity, and to jumpstart lateral reading when I am introduced to new topics (i.e. relevant keyword and potential stakeholder concept development)”.

Table 2 What purposes were generative AI tools used for in professional work

<i>Profession Work Uses</i>	<i>Count n=32</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Content creation (e.g., blog posts, social media updates)	8	25%
Research assistance (e.g., literature reviews, data synthesis)	13	41%
Data analysis or visualization	6	19%
Cataloging or metadata generation	1	3%
User support or assistance (e.g., chatbots, virtual reference)	4	13%
Instruction about AI tools	15	47%
Other	12	38%

Only three of the respondents indicated they considered GAI tools “very” or “extremely reliable”. The vast majority are skeptical about the reliability of these tools. This could explain why so few indicated that their institutions are subscribing to GAI tools, and why only a quarter of the respondents (8) indicated they use these tools at least once a week in their personal life. While a third of respondents (13) consider themselves tech early adopters, more than two thirds (26) indicated that they see GAI as somewhat, if not totally, different from digital tools that have been introduced in the past. Most felt moderately to very confident in their ability to provide guidance to users about AI resources and tools (Q2.5). However more than half (21) indicated they were only “slightly confident” or “not confident at

all” in their abilities to troubleshoot issues related to AI tools and applications used by their library patrons.

A high proportion of respondents were very or extremely concerned about implementing GAI technologies in libraries for several reasons including risks to accuracy, privacy, learning, fairness, and copyright. (See Table 3, Q. 1.10) Despite these significant challenges, all but one respondent indicated some confidence in their ability to evaluate the ethical implications of the use of AI in their library (32) though only one third were very or extremely confident. More than half (17) felt it is very or extremely urgent to address potential ethical and privacy concerns in using GAI (Q 3.4), a reflection of a broader trend of GAI technological innovation and adoption outpacing governance and deliberative processes (Alba, Mcilwain & An 2026; Hou 2025). Ultimately, two-thirds of respondents see GAI tools as a potential benefit to library services and operations, but a third remain ambivalent or slightly disagree.

Table 3 Potential Issues and Ethical Challenges in Implementing GAI Technologies with Librarians’ Work

<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Count n=32</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Quality and accuracy of generated content	26	81%
Data privacy and security	26	81%
Impact of students’ heavy AI use on their cognitive development	25	78%
Ethical concerns such as bias and fairness	23	72%
Intellectual property and copyright issues	22	69%

In regard to incorporating AI tools in their classrooms, librarians felt the majority of faculty at their schools were only “a little” or “somewhat” enthusiastic about doing so (Q. 3.6). However, in open-ended remarks at the end of the survey one person shared that the question “doesn’t capture the range of feelings our faculty have about AI; there is a wide spectrum of attitudes about AI usage,” while another remarked: “while the majority of the faculty I speak with are not enthusiastic, and a few are somewhat enthusiastic, the majority of administrators are extremely enthusiastic. They are not at all in alignment.” This institutional ambivalence also emerged as a theme in the qualitative interviews we conducted following the survey (see next section).

Institutional consensus around AI’s place on campus remains ambiguous—many librarians report that their libraries have increased focus on external facing initiatives such as AI tool launches, integrations or experimental research uses, though some identified that they had “pulled back from some initiatives” and others have not undertaken these efforts (See Figure 3, Q 3.9). However, most respondents indicated that their AI literacy instruction has increased (See Figure 4, Q 3.8). We probed this tension, which also emerged in short answer comments at the conclusion of the survey, further in our interviews and found that librarians, like other instructors, are attempting to address this rapidly changing phenomenon in the absence of a clear vision or policy guidance from their organizations.

Figure 3 The library’s focus on external-facing AI initiatives such as tool launches, integrations, or experimental research uses

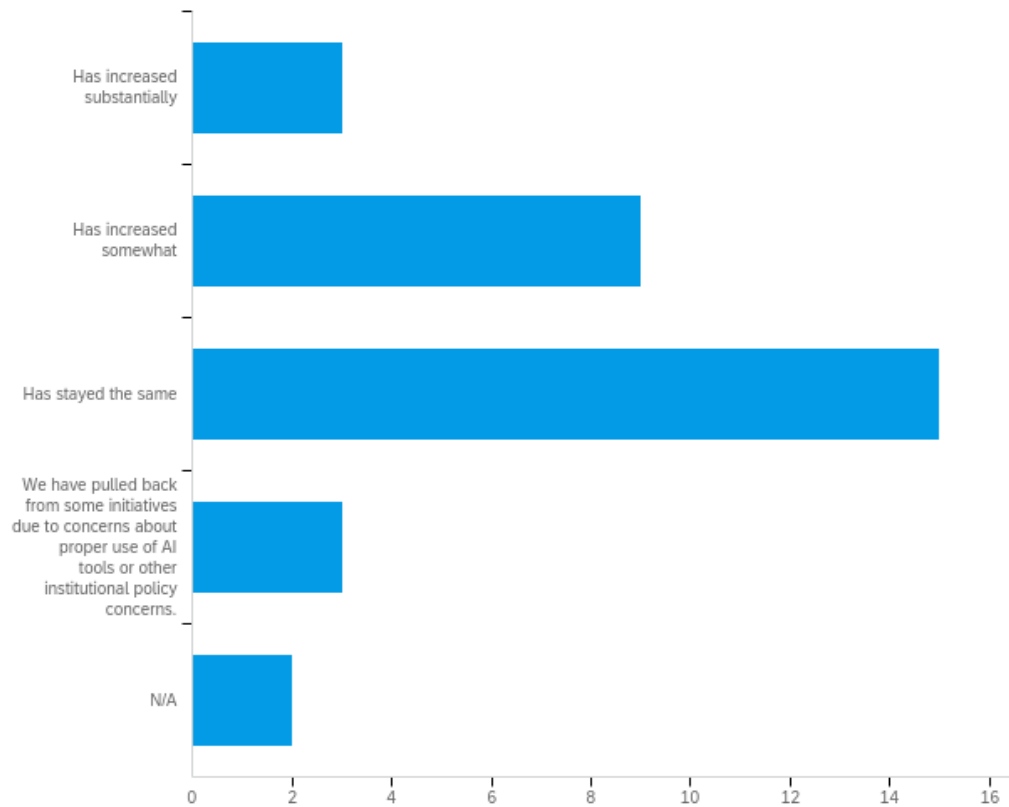
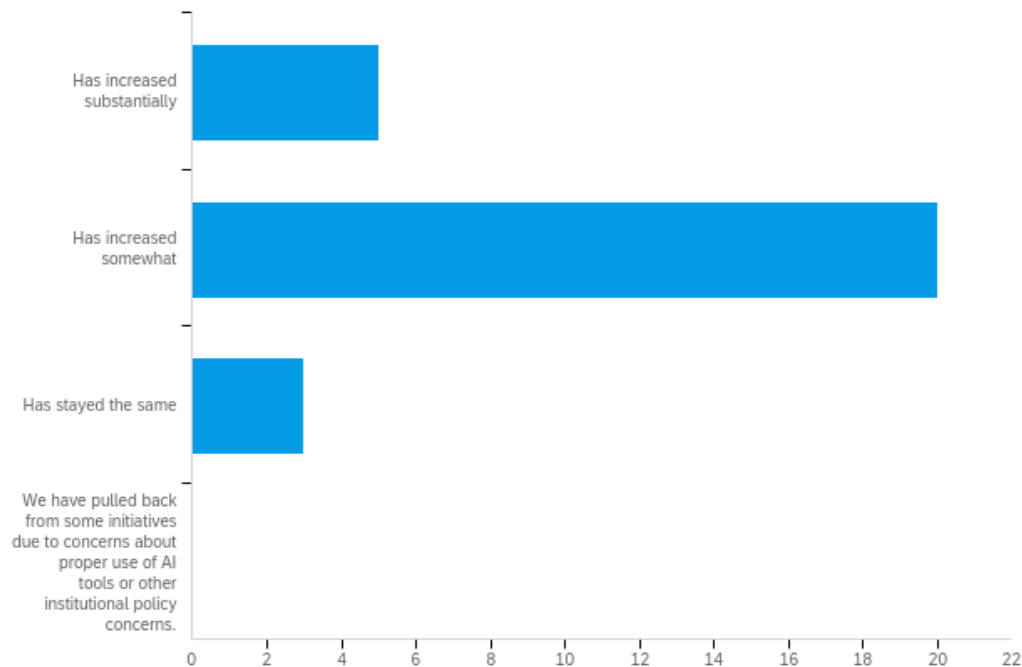


Figure 4 The library's focus on AI Literacy Instruction for faculty or students



Open-ended comments at the end of the survey revealed that many librarians are grappling with the rise of GAI tools in higher education without adequate professional development opportunities or formal training. ACRL has advocated for such support, releasing a framework of "AI Competencies for Academic

Library Workers" in the fall of 2025, outlining the types of professional training and skill-building librarians need in the age of AI (ACRL 2025). One respondent mentioned that they look to chatbots for assistance in handling their expanding scope of work in absence of institutional support.

Opinions amongst survey respondents remain divided with some predicting AI will be a transformational change to research like Google, while others call it "slop" and compare it to disinformation or spam. These differing perspectives manifest in divergent approaches to teaching AI literacy, which, unlike information literacy, has yet to coalesce around a common understanding. This is evidenced by the drawn-out revision process of the 2015 ACRL Framework for Information Literacy which began in 2023 with an intended completion in 2025 (ACRL n.d.). Faced with the rapid pace of change in AI Literacy, the drafting process remains ongoing to date, over a year later than anticipated (Conahan, 2026). Appendix D includes excerpts of some of our respondents' insightful open-ended comments revealing diverse views among PPIRS librarians concerning the impact of the emergence of GAI tools in their work and at their institutions.

Interviews

In the online survey, we included a request for volunteers to provide follow up interviews to get further insights on their use and experience with GAI tools as librarians in the area of Political Science and International Affairs education. Nine Zoom interviews were subsequently conducted. Based on data from the survey and coding of interviews, four major themes emerged: institutional dynamics, GAI tools, their use in instruction, and personal opinions and concerns about GAI.

Institutional Dynamics

The interviewees clearly described the dynamic within their academic environments as volatile, with more pervasive use of GAI tools by many but not all students, and administrators generally pushing for increased integration of AI tool use at the course, research, and operational levels. Meanwhile many faculty and librarians are cautious or reluctant. One respondent said "the administrative side is...all in on AI, while the academic side is not," and others report that their faculty "run the gamut" and they feel their campus is a "bifurcated world," where some are enthusiastic, and others are "no AI ever." We coded 20 mentions of this conflicting point of view (POV) at the institutional level, making it one of the most frequent refrains from our nine participants (see Appendix C). Also on an institutional level, many librarians and faculty are feeling stretched, as shared by one interviewee who found that in the many years they have worked at their university, the student population has almost doubled:

And our student body has been growing.... And, you know, the faculty and the library's gotten smaller, and I think... I don't think the faculty's gotten significantly bigger. So classes are bigger, and faculty have significantly less TA support, and so that was already driving most instructors away from written papers, because they just couldn't grade a paper. ...So that was one piece that was happening, and then AI came in on top of that. (Librarian 9)

The campus dynamics around GAI implementation, are, in a word, dynamic. Messaging from university and library leaders is generally either absent or falls short of a mandate, with interviewees describing an attitude of "experimentation" with use cases and encouragement to pursue potential GAI efficiencies. One librarian mentioned being required to engage with AI in some way as an annual performance goal, but most indicate there is not an "across-the-board" approach in their colleges or universities. Official institutional policies and directives for GAI use are not widespread, with most institutions taking a "decentralized" approach that allows faculty to specify their own guidelines in their syllabi. For librarians who are not instructors of record, this ambiguity in AI literacy instruction feels like the "Wild West."

Tools

A number of librarians mentioned that their institutions had or were in the process of adopting institution-wide GAI tools, either offerings from major chatbots like ChatGPT.edu, Google Gemini, or Microsoft Copilot, or local models built out for them specifically. Some mentioned that their schools had determined not to adopt such institution-wide subscriptions. Where campus-wide tools exist, there is pressure to use and teach to those, despite with the wide variety of GAI tools available, that they are often not the most popular amongst students and faculty. Few schools have purchased research-specific GAI subscriptions as noted above in the survey results, but librarians are actively investigating and teaching “freemium” tools because they offer advanced functionalities of academic scholarship such as literature mapping and citation searching. Interviewees expressed frustration with AI “add-ons” to traditional library databases which tend to be launched without their input and so far, are not perceived to provide significant enhancements to the search process. Some libraries have enabled AI features in their catalog discovery systems, while others have turned off those generative summaries.

Instruction

Despite ambiguous or absent institution-wide direction and policies on AI use, the librarians indicated that they feel obligated to provide AI literacy instruction in accordance with individual faculty wishes. If faculty request that they provide training or instruction on GAI tools they will, but if it is forbidden, they refrain. The emergence of GAI tools has added a strain on the agency of political science librarians as the increasing demands on AI literacy upend their traditional instructional approach built on extensive subject area and information literacy expertise. Besides not having much formal training in GAI (see survey above), adding AI literacy learning objectives is a new burden on librarians’ limited facetime with students in the classroom. Also, the lack of consistent frameworks to follow for instruction could also be an issue as shared by one librarian:

And that's certainly the case across the board with librarians who are teaching information literacy classes. There's not an across-the-board, like, here's how it's going to fold in, and here's how we're going to use it. You know, here are some of the dispositions of AI literacy that we should include. (Librarian 5)

Despite any personal reservations, our interviewees generally felt professional resistance was futile for numerous reasons: they perceive a “gap” on campus for who is taking on the teaching of fundamentals of AI and information literacy; they feel administrative pressures to utilize GAI tools that are being acquired at the campus level; and they know that students are already relying on these tools regardless of policies. They would like to be a part of the important conversation about ethics and power surrounding the adoption and implementation of these tools at their institutions. One respondent poignantly remarked, “I feel like this sort of, like, doubly deep responsibility” as “both a political scientist and a librarian” who “cares a lot about interests of power and interests of...ethics and, you know, truth and credibility” (Librarian 4).

Beyond broad institutional campus debates, the interviewees offered specifics on their political science departments’ use of GAI. They shared many examples of faculty who are leading initiatives or using AI tools in their research workflows or course assignments—some of whom are cognizant of its limitations and others who do not seem to recognize potential pitfalls and issues (Clinton et al. 2026). Faculty understand that their students will use AI in their future workplaces, and they themselves can see the efficiencies in their own research programs, but pedagogy has not caught up to the technology. One librarian described how students seem to struggle with basic skills like reading long form academic

content and writing in formats typical to the discipline like policy briefs. Some students have an awareness that their overreliance on technology is part of a more expansive societal shift with political implications. One librarian mentioned that their students are responsive to entreaties to consider the motivations of the AI technology sector, and that a conversation about their economic and political interests is a successful entry point to discussing AI literacy in political science courses.

Opinions about GAI Tools and IL Instruction

Although librarianship is a profession which, according to some, is at risk of obsolescence from GAI (Against the Grain 2025), only one person interviewed felt their job had completely changed and was at risk from this technology. Concerns were primarily expressed about the quality and accuracy of GAI tools, ethical issues around the entire LLM infrastructure and its impact on intellectual property, academic integrity, biases, privacy infringement, and pedagogical concerns such as cognitive offloading and deskilling. Numerous interviewees expressed their personal fears over the societal impact and the effect on climate and environment from building the infrastructure to support GAI technology, noting that the risks may not be apparent until too late. These concerns factor in their decisions not to use GAI regularly in their personal lives.

Librarians have seen improvements in GAI output accuracy, but noted several examples of hallucinations and inadequate responses that could dupe novice learners without subject expertise and training in evaluating the information they receive. One interviewee said “most people don’t want it to replace the thinking that needs to be done and the learning that needs to be done” (Librarian 6) but they do not perceive the danger of students using it for steps such as brainstorming and outlining. Another said they “want students to think and write and not outsource that to a machine” (Librarian 2). A third explained that students and faculty are sometimes unaware of when they have used GAI, due to the embedded features in research databases. Source evaluation—a key information literacy skill—is severely impaired by GAI tools, as one interviewee explained well:

You can't evaluate the quality of the response you're getting in a chatbot if you don't know the context and aren't already an expert, you can't evaluate, like, okay, is this slop, or is this, like, actually relevant? So that's something that I would love... to push back against. I haven't really had the opportunity to do that yet. (Librarian 7)

Librarians are eager to be partners to faculty in their efforts to promote AI literacy, and information literacy in general. At a time when many Americans are for example accepting Google’s AI or ChatGPT’s responses at face value without clicking any further (Chapekis & Lieb 2025), strong skills in locating and evaluating quality information will become even more valuable. Higher education is grappling with its relevance, and some disciplines fear obsolescence in the face of GAI tools (Sarofian-Butin 2025), yet critical thinking is at the core of political science education, and librarians see it as worth fighting for.

PPIRS AI Discussion Group

The PPIRS AI Literacy Discussion Group (PALDG) formed in the fall of 2024 with the mission to: “facilitate knowledge sharing and advance awareness among members about the emerging technologies known as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and their impact on our work and profession.” Since its inception PALDG has covered a diverse range of themes in the area of AI and librarianship in our field, from examples of how our librarian colleagues are actually using and presenting these tools in their instruction, to broader university-wide initiatives and impacts on the future of higher education writ large. We have also touched on our many concerns about these tools, discussing issues of copyright, ethics, high energy use and environmental impact, and of course, their potential detriment to the cognitive development of our

students. This group's insightful monthly conversations inspired the authors to undertake the survey and interviews that are the core of this study.

A theme that reoccurred often in our discussions is that the pervasive adoption of GAI tools makes information literacy (IL) instruction more essential than ever. The increase in faculty asking librarians to come to their classes as the "AI Expert" provides an opportunity to promote IL instruction in general as well. And outside of class instruction, when some students realize that use of GAI tools could have a negative impact on their research skills, they may seek out librarians more for guidance. Once again providing an opportunity for the librarian to point out information literacy core concepts.

Another theme that continued to emerge is how retrieval-augmented GAI tools like Consensus, Elicit, and Research Rabbit, compete against library catalog and database search services—heavily impacting the instruction and research support work of these librarians. Some points about this that the group has discussed include: that many of our students and faculty find these AI tools easier to use compared to our traditional research tools which they perceive as cumbersome and confusing to use. They like that they are always able to retrieve seemingly relevant results with GAI search tools. However, results from GAI tools can be quite inaccurate or incomplete. And AI tools are not always linked with the school's online catalog so a second search or additional work is necessary to see if your institution actually has the article or the book, which is time consuming. Increasingly, even with research products and databases the library already subscribes to, vendors are forcing AI add-ons to their products. In some cases, the IT departments authorize this without telling the librarians or vendors simply turn on AI features. One discussion participant demonstrated their library catalog's "AI Assistant" which produced inaccuracies in its summary and could not retrieve many books by a prominent and prolific professor at her university, all of whose works are in the library.

Alongside their many other job demands, political science librarians seek out professional development opportunities like this discussion group and more structured outside trainings by library organizations in order to try to stay abreast of this fast-moving GAI technology. Their expertise in information literacy and academic research make them invaluable human resources and allies for political science instructors confronting GAI.

Limitations of this Study and Recommendations for Further Research

Our study used convenience sampling, whereby the survey was shared with members of one professional association listserv, and we recruited self-selected volunteers from the respondents to partake in a longer discussion about AI. The opinions and observations shared undoubtedly reflect the perspectives of a more-motivated-than-average group of librarians who were willing and able to spend time on this uncompensated research effort. People who complete online surveys tend to be highly engaged and more opinionated than the general populace, which can affect the representativeness of the responses (Cavari & Freedman 2018). Because of this, we expected a certain degree of polarization where respondents were either especially "pro" or "anti" AI, yet our findings evidenced nuanced consideration and perhaps a surprising ambivalence from most participants.

We would be very interested in seeing such a survey on AI and information literacy run for political scientists in APSA or beyond to compare instructors' perspectives to our findings from librarians. Given the fast pace of technological change, it is difficult to compare results over time, though it would enrich

our understanding of how the situation is evolving. Additionally, the breadth of tool choices makes comparisons challenging. While we observe that many institutions are now subscribing to generative AI chatbot tools at the campus level, these are as varied in function and capacity as the institutions that use them. We look forward to further research and experimentation on the use cases of generative AI tools in the political science classroom, especially in teaching information literacy skills.

Conclusion

Through insight from monthly ongoing discussions, semi-structured interviews, and an online survey, the authors have comprehensively engaged with many political science librarians who are actively involved with AI literacy and GAI technology and who seek to share their expertise and experience with information literacy education. They are working to identify the risks and limits of GAI tools and their use in teaching and research, as well as potential use cases, to provide the best possible service to students and faculty.

The study provides ample evidence of institutional ambivalence surrounding AI adoption; we found that administrative interest in adding GAI to the curriculum does not necessarily correspond to what instructors and librarians feel willing and able to teach. There has not been clear AI policy guidance at most academic institutions, leaving those who teach struggling with the best way forward—meanwhile many librarians do not feel they have a seat at the table where discussions are happening. At a time when many staff and faculty are stretched thin with increasing obligations, GAI tools are presented as a boon to productivity, while their learning curve is high and they are prone to errors.

Political science librarians share concerns expressed in the political science education literature about cognitive offloading, and the long-term impact to learning, thinking, and memory which may result from frequent GAI tool use. They acutely understand the functional and ethical limitations of GAI, based on their extensive expertise in locating accurate, reputable, relevant information, and see AI literacy as an extension of traditional information literacy skills.

AI literacy—separating the hype from reality and critically evaluating information—is not just a buzzword, but is a life skill that people can hone with training and support. Even though we are all living through unprecedented technological change, the disposition towards critical thinking that information literacy provides offers the necessary foundation for our students to adapt and thrive in their post-graduation pursuits.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Experience with AI Tools and AI Literacy Instruction Survey (PPIRS)

Introduction

Dr. Ann Cullen, The Fletcher School, Tufts University and Kim MacVaugh, Georgetown University are conducting a research project. You are invited to participate in this study aiming to assess AI literacy among librarians supporting the political science and international relations disciplines and to understand their perceptions of the evolving role of AI in their libraries.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems and software that can perform tasks that would typically require human intelligence. These tasks may include problem-solving, learning, understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, perception, and decision-making.

You are being asked to participate based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria: Currently employed as a librarian or library worker in a college or university library setting or research institute or nonprofit whose work pertains at least in part to the subject matter of politics, policy and international relations. Active membership in PPIRS is not required.

Exclusion Criteria: Library employees not working in academic or advanced research library settings (e.g., public libraries, school libraries). Individuals who are not currently library employees or who are employed in non-library roles within academic institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and understand evolving perceptions of AI literacy among librarians supporting the political science and international relations disciplines. This survey will build on a survey of all U.S. academic librarians on a similar theme by Dr. Leo Lo in 2023¹ ([Lo, 2024](#)). This survey includes and adapts some questions from that survey. The findings will provide an overview of how librarians in this same subject area are dealing with this topic in their work as well as how the impressions and the way they are dealing with AI literacy might have shifted since 2023 when Lo's study was conducted.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your AI knowledge, familiarity with AI tools, perceived competence in using AI, and experience with AI literacy at your institution.

¹ Lo, L. (2024). Evaluating AI Literacy in Academic Libraries: A Survey Study with a Focus on U.S. Employees. *College & Research Libraries*, 85(5), 635. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.5.635>

Potential Risks and Discomforts

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. Some questions might cause minor discomfort due to self-reflection, but you are free to skip any questions you prefer not to answer. While there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, your responses will help contribute to a better understanding of AI literacy and evolving perceptions of the AI tools landscape among librarians in the political science and international relations fields.

Confidentiality

Your responses will be anonymous, and no personally identifiable information will be collected. Data will be stored securely on password-protected devices or encrypted cloud storage services, with access limited to the research team. The results of this study will be reported in aggregate form, and no individual responses will be identifiable.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Please note that if you decide to withdraw from the study, the data that has already been collected from you will be kept and used. This is necessary to maintain the integrity of the study and ensure that the data collected is reliable and valid.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal investigators, Ann Cullen at ann.cullen@tufts.edu or Kimberly MacVaugh at kimberly.macvaugh@georgetown.edu.

Consent

By clicking “I agree” below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided above, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agree to participate.

I agree (1)

I do not agree (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Q1.1 = I do not agree

Survey Sub-sections:

1. Knowledge and Familiarity (12 Questions)
2. Standard: Perceived Competence and Gaps in AI Literacy (5 Questions)
3. Standard: Desired Use of Generative AI in Libraries (11 Questions)
4. Standard: Demographic (9 Questions)

1. Knowledge and Familiarity

1.1 Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that creates new, original content like text, images, music, or code by learning patterns from vast datasets, producing unique outputs that resemble but are not identical to its training data when given a prompt. Rate your familiarity with Generative AI tools in general (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) (using a Likert scale, 1 = not familiar, 5 = very familiar)

1.2 For each of the following AI concepts, indicate your understanding of the concept by selecting the appropriate response.

I don't know what it is (1); I know what it is but can't explain it (2); I can explain it at a basic level (3); I can explain it in detail (4)

- Machine Learning
- Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- Neural Network
- Deep Learning
- Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs)
- How algorithms work
- Computer Science concept of "model collapse"
- Cognitive Offloading and its impact on critical thinking abilities with heavy AI tool reliance

1.3 Which of the following generative AI tools have you used at least a few times? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Text generation (e.g., ChatGPT)
- ☐ Image generation (e.g., DALL-E, Mid Journey)
- ☐ Music generation (e.g., OpenAI's MuseNet)
- ☐ Video generation (e.g., Synthesia, Character ai)
- ☐ Presentation generation (e.g. Tome)
- ☐ Voice generation (e.g. Murf)
- ☐ Data synthesis for research purposes
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

1.4 Which of the following research AI tools have you used at least a few times? (Select all that apply)

- Search (Perplexity, Keenious)
- Citation (Research Rabbit, LitMaps, Connected Papers)
- Literature review (Elicit, Consensus)
- Embedded library database tools with AI add-ons (catalog, JSTOR, Web of Science, Proquest, etc)
- Chatbot Agents (i.e. Playlab, D-id.com; Co-Pilot Agents, etc.)

1.5 Does your institution/Library have a subscription to any standalone AI research tools (not add-ons) (i.e. Scite.ai, ChatGPT edu, Elicit, Keenious, Perplexity, Consensus, etc.)?

Yes

No

1.6 How frequently do you use generative AI tools in your professional work? (Select one)

Daily

Several times per week

Weekly

A few times per month

Monthly

Less than once a month

Never

1.7 How frequently do you use generative AI tools in your personal life? (Select one)

Daily

Several times per week

Weekly

A few times per month

Monthly

Less than once a month

Never

1.8 For what purposes do you use generative AI tools in your professional work? (Select all that apply)

- Content creation (e.g., blog posts, social media updates)
- Research assistance (e.g., literature reviews, data synthesis)
- Data analysis or visualization
- Cataloging or metadata generation
- User support or assistance (e.g., chatbots, virtual reference)
- Instruction about AI tools
- Other (please specify) _____

1.9 On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate how reliable generative AI tools have been in fulfilling your professional needs? (1 = not at all reliable, 5 = extremely reliable)
Please explain your choice.

1.10 What level of concern do you have for the following potential challenges in implementing generative AI technologies in academic libraries? (Rate each challenge on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = not at all concerned and 5 = extremely concerned)

- Obtaining adequate funding and resources for AI implementation
- Ethical concerns, such as bias and fairness
- Intellectual property and copyright issues
- Staff resistance or lack of buy-in
- Quality and accuracy of generated content
- Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity of AI tools for all users
- Potential job displacement due to automation
- Data privacy and security
- Technical expertise and resource requirements
- Impact of students' heavy AI usage on their cognitive development and critical thinking
- Other (please specify) _____

1.11 On the following scale, how would you rate your typical experience with new technology and digital tools?

- I'm always an early adopter; I love new tech!
- Somewhat early adopter
- Average – I take advantage of tech tools if I find them useful to address a specific need.
- Tend to wait and see before adopting new technologies. I wait to learn from others' failures and only adopt tools that look like they'll have more staying power and/or be around for the long run.
- I rarely or never adopt new tech tools.

1.12 Do you view the new generative AI tools from the perspective of just another new digital tool as you have in the past, or do you view them differently?

- Yes, I just see generative AI as another new digital tool
- I see generative AI somewhat differently from other digital tools I have been introduced to in the past.
- No, I consider generative AI tools as completely new type of phenomena.

2. Perceived Competence and Gaps in AI Literacy

2.1 On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to evaluate the ethical implications of using AI in your library? (1 = not at all confident, 5 = extremely confident)

2.2 On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to participate in discussions about AI integration within your library? (1 = not at all confident, 5 = extremely confident)

2.3 On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to collaborate with colleagues on AI-related projects in your library? (1 = not at all confident, 5 = extremely confident)

2.4 On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to troubleshoot issues related to AI tools and applications used in your library? (1 = not at all confident, 5 = extremely confident)

2.5 On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to provide guidance to library users about AI resources and tools? (1 = not at all confident, 5 = extremely confident)

3. Desired Use of Generative AI in Libraries

3.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I believe generative AI tools have the potential to benefit library services and operations.” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

3.2 Which of your library’s functions do you think generative AI tools would enhance? (check ALL that apply)

- Collection Development
- Acquisitions
- Cataloging
- Access/Discovery/ILS
- Reference Services
- Information Literacy Instruction
- Digital Scholarship
- Other, please specify

3.3 If you have any additional thoughts or suggestions on how your library could or should use (or not use) generative AI tools, please share them here.

3.4 How urgent do you feel it is for your library to address the potential ethical and privacy concerns related to the use of generative AI tools and applications? (1 = not at all urgent, 5 = extremely urgent)

3.5 How much is your library partnering in AI tool instruction and outreach initiatives with your organization’s training or “teaching and learning” (SOTL) department?
(1 = not at all, 5 = extremely integrated as a partner in most of what we do)

3.6 From your perspective, how enthusiastic are the majority of faculty and administrators at your institution about incorporating AI tools into the classroom? (Likert: 1= Not at all; 5 = Very Enthusiastic)

3.7 Please identify which of the following describes your library's focus on internal staff training and development on AI in the past year.

- Has increased substantially
- Has increased somewhat
- Has stayed the same
- We have pulled back from some initiatives due to concerns about proper use of AI tools or other institutional policy concerns.

3.8 Please identify which of the following describes your library's focus on external-facing AI literacy education or instruction for faculty and/or students.

- Has increased substantially
- Has increased somewhat
- Has stayed the same
- We have pulled back from some initiatives due to concerns about proper use of AI tools or other institutional policy concerns.

3.9 Please identify which of the following describes your library's focus on external-facing AI initiatives such as tool launches, integrations, or experimental research uses.

- Has increased substantially
- Has increased somewhat
- Has stayed the same
- We have pulled back from some initiatives due to concerns about proper use of AI tools or other institutional policy concerns.

3.10 Is your professional use of AI impacted by institutional policies?

- Yes, there are university-wide mandates to use GAI.
- Yes, there are library-wide mandates to use GAI.
- No, use is left to the individual to decide.
- Other (please specify).

3.11 Are there any other comments regarding AI use at your library and institution that you would like to share? Also, are there any questions that you wish this survey had included?

3 Demographic Information

4.1 In which type of academic institution is your library or library position is located? (Select one)

- Community college
- College or university (primarily undergraduate)
- College or university (graduate and undergraduate)
- Research university (R1)
- Specialized or professional school (e.g., law, medical)
- Research Institute
- Other (please specify) _____

4.2 Approximately how many students are enrolled at your institution? (Select one)

- Fewer than 1,000
- 1,000–4,999
- 5,000–9,999
- 10,000–19,999
- 20,000–29,999
- 30,000 or more
- N/A

4.3 What is your current role or position in your organization? (Select one)

- Senior management (e.g. Director, Dean, associate dean/director)
- Middle management (e.g. department head, supervisor, coordinator)
- Specialist or professional (e.g., librarian, analyst, consultant)
- Support staff or administrative
- Other (please specify) _____

4.4 In which area of academic librarianship do you primarily work? (Select One)

- Administration or management
- Reference and research services
- Technical services (e.g., acquisitions, cataloging, metadata)
- Collection development and management
- Library instruction and information literacy
- Electronic resources and digital services
- Systems and IT services
- Archives and special collections
- Outreach, marketing, and communications
- Other (please specify) _____

4.5 How many years of experience do you have as a library employee?

- Less than 1 year
- 1–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–15 years
- 16–20 years

- More than 20 years

4.6 What is your age range?

- Under 25
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55–64
- 65 and above

4.7 What subject area do you primarily liaise or affiliate with? (check all that apply)

- Political Science
- Public Policy
- International Relations/Affairs
- Law
- Social Sciences generally
- Don't liaise with a specific subject area
- Other: _____

4.8 Were you a respondent to the following survey by Dr. Lo that resulted in the following article?

Lo, L. (2024). Evaluating AI Literacy in Academic Libraries: A Survey Study with a Focus on U.S. Employees. *College & Research Libraries*, 85(5), 635. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.5.635>

Yes/No

4.9

The investigators might want to do follow up interviews collect more qualitative data on this topic. Would you be interested in participating if they choose to do so? If so, please share you name and email. below: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey!

Your input is incredibly valuable to us and will contribute to our understanding of AI literacy among librarians supporting the political science and international relations fields of study. We appreciate the time and effort you have taken to share your experiences and opinions.

If you have any further comments or questions about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact us (ann.cullen@tufts.edu or kimberly.macvaugh@georgetown.edu).

Appendix B: Interview Guide

1. Were there any questions you wish the survey had addressed?
2. What do you think Political Science and International Relations faculty at APSA should be hearing about the appearance of generative AI tools in the library-related work of students and researchers at their institutions?
3. What are your perceptions of what the faculty at your program are thinking about generative AI tools versus the activities of the library with AI research tools?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about AI research tools and AI literacy instruction related to the work you currently do at your library?

Appendix C: Codes used to Analyze Interview Transcripts in Nvivo and number of times applied

Category	Coding	Number of coding references
Institutional Dynamics	AI Policy - Institution	13
	AI Policy - Library	12
	AI Policy - Other	7
	Conflicting Point of View (POV)	20
	GAI Teaching-Learning Dept. Response	10
	GAI-Admin. Response	18
	GAI-Faculty Reponse	35
	GAI-IT Dept. Response	4
	GAI-Library Response	39
	GAI-TL Dept. Response	4
	Institution Mandate-GAI	11
	Institutional Dynamics	1
	Institution-wide Other	4
	Job Change	8
	Library Mandate-GAI	14
	No AI Campus Policy	6
	Student Use of AI	31
	Student Use of GAI tools	3
Instruction	Adaptation Needed	13
	AI Alternatives	13
	AI Literacy Instruction	39
	AI Policy - Institution	2
	Faculty Instruction	22

	GAI use in PPIRS disciplines	27
	Librarian Instruction	13
	Librarian Res-Reference Support	6
Tools	Add-ons-Catalog	7
	Add-ons-Databases	18
	GAI Tool Use - All the time	2
	GAI Tool Use - Never	5
	GAI Tool Use - Sometimes	6
	Institution-wide ChatGPT.edu	6
	Institution-wide Copilot	8
	Institution-wide Gemini	4
	Institution-wide Other	8
	Lit Review AI Tool	10
	Tools	9
Interviewee Opinions	GAI - Accuracy Concerns	11
	GAI - Environ-Discrimination Concerns	7
	GAI - Ethical Concerns	14
	GAI - Learning Concerns	7
	GAI - Positive	19
	GAI-Negative	20
	Interviewee Opinions	3
	Job Security-Not Threat	1
	Job Security-Threat	3
	Resistance-Futile	9

Appendix D: Excerpts from end of Survey Open-Ended Comments

Regarding Institutional AI Policy

Comment 1: We have university guidelines for how GAI can be used with varying kinds of institutional and student data. As a library, there's been mild encouragement to engage with GAI, but no formal training, instruction, or tools.

Comment 2: My biggest worry is that administrators at the top who really don't understand the technology are going to make disastrous decisions that impact library staff and services based on hype or a need to keep up with peers."

On Evaluation and Student Learning

Comment 1: Are we going to create communities that look at how our information ecosystem is being affected by AI slop? We need better information in our world.

Comment 2: It is okay to use generative AI tools to find potential information and data resources, but humans are incapable of absorbing or understanding the vast amounts of information generated by such searches.

Comment 3: Absolutely inappropriate for applications in undergraduate learning and growth. More complicated and nuanced for graduate/faculty research support.

Comments that were for and against the use of GAI Tools

Comment 1: It's a pretty delicate balance to strike with a technology that's evolving very rapidly. The growth of LLMs seems very similar to Google's ascendancy 20 years ago. It's a notable and long-term change for academic librarianship, and it requires us to learn new skills, but it doesn't inherently make us obsolete. However, if we don't keep up due to some sense of principle or resistance to a new tech, that will make us obsolete. Also, this gives us a good entry point for discussing topics like data privacy and intellectual property.

Comment 2: We are being told that AI is the best thing since sliced bread and that we have to use it or we will become irrelevant, which is rhetoric that is not backed up with evidence. The reality is that some of us will use AI for specific tasks, but the majority of us should not be using AI for research (hallucinations, biases, sycophancy, errors), as a review tool (because contracts with vendors prohibit use of their materials in LLMs), as an accurate summary (numerous errors with tools in vendor platforms), or for any usage that involves personally identifiable information. We need to educate people about the dangers of AI in the same way that we educate people about web security or spam.

Comment 3: I wish more people at large institutions realized that those of us at liberal arts colleges are actively being discouraged, if not outright forbidden, by our administration from using AI tools. It's a completely different world from the R1s with institutional licenses and a top-down mandate to use AI!

Comment 4: I feel like I am one of the few people talking about AI at my library.

Comment 5: I continue to be shocked that my librarian and faculty colleagues are resisting AI and learning about AI instead of prioritizing AI as an information literacy skill/opportunity.

Comment 6: The institution and the head of the library are very pro-AI, while the majority of faculty, students, and staff have significant ethical concerns.

Comment 7: Overall among librarians and other library staff here, there is a mix of feelings. A few are interested in experimentation with these tools. Many others are very much against the use of these tools for a variety of reasons including academic integrity and cheating, effects on the environment and concerns of negative impact on learning, in general. University faculty share this range of feelings with some wanting to experiment in their teaching and research, while many others do not allow AI use at all in their classes.

GAI as New Librarian Mentor

I noted a concern [in the survey], "Impact of AI usage on my professional development." I'd like to explain further. Google Gemini has essentially replaced a mentor to my day to day, "unofficial" liaison work. I am an early career *generalist* focused on IL instruction. We are no longer trained to be liaisons. We are not trained on collection development, acquisitions, or advanced research reference support ... I am an IL librarian. However, the faculty, whom I work with to teach IL in their classes, expect to engage in dialogue with a liaison (specialized) librarian. To prepare for these discussions, I mine their syllabi and I use AI to facilitate self-guided preparation with summaries of their learning outcomes and topics from the course. However, as an early career librarian, I do not have the expertise to holistically be able to evaluate the AI responses for bias in PPIRS topics. However, as a trained librarian (even early career) I endeavor to employ ACRL framework mindsets and SIFT to evaluate the generated responses. That being said, "I don't know what I don't know." This is very much a trial and error part of my career. Overall, this work has proven moderately effective for getting me into new classes to teach IL. I'm nonetheless very concerned that without the traditional guidance a new librarian would receive for training, that I may have gaps in my knowledge. I try to compensate by networking with ACRL PPIPRs, and following organizations such as APSA. Either way, my knowledge base is developing at a unique rate, but I attribute using AI as a positive, if not the most accessible, support mechanism to help me learn the IL landscape for PPIRS topics.