

# Behind the guidelines: Podcast transcript

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## Script

### Rob Lindsay

Hello. Everyone, welcome to this Centre for Innovation in Education podcast. I'm Rob Lindsay and I'm delighted to be joined by my colleague Claire Ellison and with us today is Ruby Jenkins, senior content designer, and Chris Hine, a digital analyst at the University of Liverpool, and collectively we are the generative AI in marketing guidelines project team. Ruby, can you just talk to us about what this project was about?

### Ruby Jenkins

Yes, definitely. Thanks, Rob. So, the goal of this project was to create a set of guidelines for how the University of Liverpool's marketing and communications team will or won't use generative AI in their work. So, to do that, what we really wanted to do was some research to first understand how staff are using Generative AI (because everyone's using it!), how they felt about using generative AI in their workplace and at a university, and to establish what we as a whole thought that we should or shouldn't be doing with generative AI. So, it kind of turned into a bit of a research project that we all worked on together and was really fantastic to just kind of find out the answers to those questions and then develop some guidelines around that.

### Rob Lindsay

Right, so what are the outputs from the project?

### Ruby Jenkins

The outputs from the project are going to be a set of guidelines, hopefully a flow you can go through - a thought process flow where you can sort of, if you're thinking about using AI, work through these questions to see. How you should be using it, how you should be setting yourself up for success with it and making sure that you're kind of in line with the guidelines while you're using it. And also we're going to be publishing our research and our findings in our report, which is great.

### Rob Lindsay

Excellent. And Claire, Chris, if I could ask a question. So in theory, this project sounds like it could have been quite boring on paper. It hasn't been. Why is that the case? Claire, if I could start with you.

### **Claire Ellison**

Yes. I mean, yeah, whenever anyone ever hears. Oh, we're developing some guidelines, I don't think anyone ever gets excited by that. That would be, except Ruby Jenkins, who has been an absolute power in this project and has brought so much energy and so much joy to it. So all credit to Ruby for this, but. I think this project has been non-boring because it's been concentrated on the involvement of stakeholders such as the comms team and also the students.

So our marketing and communication students and bringing all those voices together through. Those groups was just a great way of collecting that data. And then with the focus on that data, what's that's enabled is the guidelines to be is very practical and actually what are people using this software for? What do they want to use this software for? Where do they need the help? So rather than just being sort of theory, it is really, really practical and based on what people are actually doing out there.

### **Rob Lindsay**

Brilliant. And Chris, you joined the project sort of halfway through, didn't you? How have you found it? What's your experience?

### **Chris Hine**

Yes, it's been really interesting I think. It's been really non-boring just because there's always, everyone's really keen to engage with it, but also we when we just talk to people about the project, they're always bringing up new examples of of AI stories that they've seen in the news or seen on social media. And it's just the landscape of AI is evolving so rapidly and there's a real keen engagement from people outside of obviously just this team to get involved. So yeah, it's been it's just been. Really joy to be part of.

### **Rob Lindsay**

And did any of the use cases surprise you, Chris, that you saw?

### **Chris Hine**

Not, I guess in particular use cases. There's some really good examples around using AI to shorten what would usually quite arduous tasks. So one really good example is, you might even use it for this podcast, is shortening sentences getting the umms and ahhs out, and people who are using it to sort of transcribe recordings. You know, we've all, I don't know people in the past have had to write subtitles or sort of transcribed things, but using it to really shorten that process.

I think the thing that probably really surprised me the most actually, was that everyone's sort of using it. I think it was just high as 70% of the people we surveyed said they were using it and it was still seen as slightly taboo or some. I think a good quote was people thought they were cheating when using it. And actually, you know, one thing that would have would come out of this guidance, I think are the guidelines around and openness of using it and that will obviously lead to a broader and quicker engagement with the guidelines.

### **Rob Lindsay**

Yes, great. And I think, when we did our first session for the community of practise, when we asked who was using it in the room, Claire and I, not many hands went up, did they, Ruby? But now from the focus groups, from the survey, we've seen extensive use. So do you think that reflects the growing use of generative AI within marketing and communications?

### **Ruby Jenkins**

You know, I'm not sure it reflects the growing use or if people were scared to say they were or weren't using it because as soon as we did the community of practise, that initial sort of project kickoff, people came up to me and like, oh, I was, I wasn't going to try it, but now I am. And then I had the immediate panic of oh. My God, we haven't written the guidelines yet. Like, don't use it yet. But yeah, I think it was. I think it kind of more exposed to the fact that everyone was curious about it and it is a technology that is fundamentally changing content specifically and how people are generating images or words or text or just working in our field. And so I think it was an incredibly important piece of work to do, and actually when we did the survey, I think 94% of people said it was like highly important that we had guidelines. Yes. So I think it was a good project to start.

### **Rob Lindsay**

Yes. And so the guidelines we've seen how important they are in the survey data. I'm going to ask this to everyone, so if you could take away or if people could take away only one thing from those guidelines, what is the most vital piece of information that you think applies to staff?

### **Claire Ellison**

So what I really liked about these guidelines was the real explicit way it's written out in statements that start with, "we might", and "we won't". So it really does give examples of what people might be using AI for and truly clearly lays those things out. And then equally it has statements of, "we won't do this" and kind of explains why. And in terms of why they sit on either side of those lines, and I think if people just skim read it and

look at those bullet points, they will have a great basic understanding of of the guidelines and the policy and where we want to be going with this.

### **Rob Lindsay**

Yes, great Ruby, same question.

### **Ruby Jenkins**

I think for me the most vital piece of information would be human oversight and accountability, because I think what we found when we talked to people is that people were using it but had vastly different education levels with what AI is and what it was and different uses for it as well. So, I think if you're taking one thing away from the guidelines, it should be that whatever you are putting out as a content designer or content writer content creator like you are responsible for it being accurate and truthful and up to the standards of the university and the standards that we set for ourselves. And that can be tricky with AI because you're not sure sometimes. What's true, what's not true? What's potentially plagiarised. So, I think that's the biggest one for me, what I want people to take away is make sure that you are always involving humans in the process of using AI and that you are barely accountable for what you put out.

### **Rob Lindsay**

Yes, I think that human oversight element really came through, didn't it? In the discussions with staff, people were not just apprehensive about the use of it replacing jobs, which is something we don't want to see here, but it's us having that control and aligning with the brand. And Chris, I wondered if you had any, you know, thoughts around that one vital piece of information.

### **Chris Hine**

Yes. I mean Ruby sort of gazumped me a bit there. So, I was going to say same thing. I think when I was reading through the guidelines that what really stood out was staff members who published content are accountable for the information they're sharing. And I just wanted to give the example that came up through the focus groups, which was that, you know, a lot of the more technical roles really thought it was great at all the creative stuff and all the creative processes, but then they sort of seem to disregard it to be able to do sort of more the technical stuff like coding or data analysis. But then on the flip side of that a lot of the more creative marketing-led roles in the in the group thought it wasn't as good for creative purposes, but actually it was really great for that technical work and not so much the creativity.

So, it's just that example of ultimately, we are accountable for, for the content that we put out. Obviously, it can help us do that, but it's just knowing what you don't know –

that can be really useful. And I think to highlight a really interesting statement made in one of the workshops, which was that AI is very knowledgeable, but it has no common sense. So, it can know vast amounts more information than we will ever know. But actually, it has no common sense and we need to build in that ownership of what we're using it for to put out content, to do our work.

### **Rob Lindsay**

I think also with the idea of common sense of the “what's coming out of it”, it's also understanding what's going into it, isn't it? We saw a lot of well, awareness around the data considerations in the focus groups, which is which was great to see actually - considerations for what content we're putting into it, what information and the nature of that. So that's all bundled up within it as well.

We've got the lovely guidelines that Ruby is going to be polishing off over the next two days, but then obviously they'll be fed back through colleagues. We've also got an extensive strategic report, which comes in at a very mere 29 pages long. We don't expect everyone to be reading that, do we? We would like to drum down, actually, we have found some use in different elements of it in drafting the guidelines.

So when do you think people should take time to read the document, engage with the guidelines, use the process tools? Ruby. If I go to you with that one.

### **Ruby Jenkins**

Yes. I mean, I think that the report is really interesting. I read through it and it's like if you want to get a sense of like how people are using it around, I think that's a really good thing to read through and kind of understand the atmosphere of what's happening with AI and marketing at the moment, especially in like our workplace.

For the guidelines, I'd say, they're not that long. They're like a 4 1/2 pages. They're pretty short. I tried to make them as concise as possible, so I would read that if you work with AI in your role, I would read that as soon as possible.

### **Rob Lindsay**

And as you said, it's not going to take too long and you get a better understanding just from going through those of where your own sort of reasoning and thinking may come. So that's great.

I think that sort of covers everything we wanted to talk about. Are there any final closing thoughts on the project before we sign off today? Claire, if I could start with you.

### **Claire Ellison**

I think this project really has sort of outlined a great method for creating guidelines with with AI in many areas. We've had to start from nothing because it was brand new two

years ago. No one knew what they were doing. And we've approached this project to grow from nothing. Where can we go from here?

Well, the first place we need to go is, we need to find data and we found that and built on that and it's led to some guidelines that I think we can all be proud of and that I hope people do engage with. As we said, they're not long. There are only 4 1/2 pages and they're really laid out in a way where people can dip in and out of them. You know, you don't have to read the whole thing. You can dip in them out, take the information you need, get on with your day. So yeah.

**Rob Lindsay**

Chris, any final thoughts?

**Chris Hine**

Yes, just to say that I have read through the larger report and actually it was really reassuring and obviously really strengthening as well. You can see exactly how these guidelines have been formed and how each other points to the guidelines. Ruby's made it really nice and concise. You can trace each point back to a real strong foundation in that report and you can see obviously the data and the comments that people made in the focus groups.

So as a piece of work, it feels really, really strong just to quickly touch on the last question asked. But I think a really good time for people to dip in to this would be if you're engaging with a new tool. I think new tools are coming out daily, weekly. This document has highlighted the uses of AI that I perhaps hadn't been aware of, so actually referring back to this as you engage with the new tool to see how that tool might be able to help you, but also the document covers lots of different ideas and concepts of when to when and how to use AI, so I think. That would be a really useful time to dip into this, yeah.

**Rob Lindsay**

And I think we've seen how the document itself, both the guidelines and the report are leading to further resources that will support staff. So we'll continue to develop those. And I guess it's only right Ruby. you brought the project and the team together, and you're off for an exciting new chapter - so, the final word.

**Ruby Jenkins**

If I could, I mean my final word on the project would just be an incredible amount of gratitude for everyone on this call and also everyone who participated in the focus groups and the study itself and for all of your openness and support. It has been an incredible project to be a part of. I really enjoyed it. Creating guidelines isn't always fun, but this has been absolutely great to learn more about the process and generative AI in

general and just learn more about my colleagues and how they feel about everything. And so yeah, I just want to say thank you guys, so much for everything

**Rob Lindsay**

Thank you too! And yeah, a real good case of collaboration here across the university, but we will probably feedback more on the guidelines and everything from that at a later date through the communities of practice. It has been a pleasure. And just to say thanks to everyone today and we'll speak to you again soon.