TOPIC

A detailed referencing model for indicating the use of GenAI Tools in academic assignments.

Dónal Mulligan donal.mulligan@dcu.ie

AIMCJ | Developing and Assessing Critical Approaches to Generative AI in **Media, Communications, and Journalism**

School of Communications

DCU Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University

RATIONALE | Why use an alternate referencing model?

Generative AI tools include Large Language Models (LLMs) with chat-based interfaces, like *ChatGPT*, *Gemini*, *Claude*, etc., as well as many media-specific models capable of producing images, audio, or video. These tools may be relevant to your academic research and production and their use may be warranted in your subject areas and assignments, at the direction of your lecturer or supervisor.

GenAI tools fundamentally differ from static published knowledge sources, like books and journal articles, for which we use conventional citation and referencing models and styles like *Harvard*, *APA*, etc. A reference in this style (e.g. ChatGPT 2024) provides no useful information to a reader or evaluator on why, how, and how much you used the GenAI tool in your work.

Referencing should provide unambiguous clarity on where other content and concepts contribute to your own work, and should provide a source that the reader can consult and compare.

TOPIC

TOOLS
OUTPUTS
PROMPTS
ITERATIONS
CRITICAL REFLECTION

This model provides a basis for appending your academic work with specific structured information that allows a reader or evaluator to discern GenAI contributions from your original content, and to see how your iterative and critical use of these tools draws on and demonstrates your subject knowledge.

TOPIC TOOLS

Rationale: Generative AI tools are varied in application, scope, and function. Integrating GenAI, where it is sanctioned in your academic work context, may entail the use of one or several tools, which in turn may have different versions or model numbers, and which may change over time. **Clearly indicating the particular tool(s) you have used is helpful to peers and to those evaluating your work, as it gives an unambiguous context for the technology you used and a reference to its capabilities and limitations at that time.**

How should **TOOLS** be specified when referencing using **TOPIC**?

- Clearly indicate the **tool name** and **model** (or version) you used, and the **date of use**.
  - *E.g. ChatGPT 4o, 20 September 2024*
  - *E.g. Claude 3 Haiku, 20 November 2024*
  - *E.g. Midjourney v6.1, 20 August 2024*

- Where you are unsure of the model/version, or where this is not specified, providing the date of use helps to indicate the tool and its stage of development at that time.

- Note that where you are unsure about the tool or model you are using (usually because it is indirectly accessed via some other service), this is unlikely to be a suitable tool in an academic research or production context. *Always seek advice from your lecturer or supervisor on the GenAI tools appropriate for use in your discipline and subject area.*

TOPIC OUTPUTS

Rationale: Generative AI tools vary in the mode and extent of their output; *chat-interfaced tools may provide texts of differing lengths and structure, image generation tools may provide multiple image and size variations, audio or video generation tools may supply separate sub-elements as outputs that are later combined in your work, etc.* **Indicating the output(s) as you received them demonstrates the scope and structure of the content that you were provided, and can be used as a basis to evaluate how you integrated or developed these.**

How should **OUTPUTS** be specified when referencing using **TOPIC**?

- You should provide a copy of the outputs you generated from the tool(s) you used, exactly as they were provided by those tools.

    - *Your goal is to allow a reader to unambiguously discern what content was provided to you, especially as you may have edited or remixed it in your work.*

- The easiest and most compact way to do this is with a **sharing link,** which also satisfies the requirements for demonstrating prompts and iterations. *Most appropriate tools have this feature.*

- Where a tool's outputs cannot be linked to, you should provide an appendix to your work, copying the outputs that you received and clearly labelling these if necessary.

TOPIC   PROMPTS

Rationale: Most Generative AI tools rely on users to carefully specify the output(s) being requested - often over multiple stages of conversation or interaction (See *Iterations* on the next slide). **By indicating the prompts you used to obtain the resulting content the tool(s) provided, you can demonstrate both your original input contributions and can show others how to similarly derive resulting content like yours.**

How should **PROMPTS** be specified when referencing using **TOPIC**?

- Like your outputs, your prompts should be visible in full to someone reading or evaluating your work.

  - *Your goal is to allow a reader to discern the scope and detail of the particular request(s) you made in a GenAI tool, as well as the original input(s) you provided for the tool to work with.*

- Again, the easiest and most compact way to do this is with a **sharing link**, where your prompts will be visible. As previously, if you cannot link to your conversational interaction, reproduce it in full as an appendix.

- Where you used non plain text elements in a prompt (e.g. uploaded an image or file) you should indicate what this data comprised.

Dónal Mulligan donal.mulligan@dcu.ie

TOP**I**C   ITERATIONS

Rationale: In most cases, but especially in the case of chat-interfaced GenAI tools (like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.), your use of the tool can and should span multiple iterations of interaction. You are likely to follow up, refine, and specify - and it is useful for this to be seen and understood. **By indicating the iterations of development you went through as you used a GenAI tool, you are demonstrating your capability with it and your applied knowledge in refining its outputs.**

How should **ITERATIONS** be specified when referencing using **TOPIC**?

- For conversational interactions in chat-interfaced tools, providing the conversation as a sharing link, or reproduced as an appendix, satisfies the requirements for Outputs, Prompts and Iterations

  - *The first response of a GenAI tool will rarely be the best use of that tool for your work. Repeatedly refining your outputs with additional prompts based on your knowledge and expectations will result in better content and allowing readers to see this will demonstrate your competence.*

- For generative media tools, like image creators, providing the earlier iterations in an ongoing development as an appendix is a good way to indicate your iterative process of refinement.

TOPIC CRITICAL REFLECTION

Rationale: Critically assessing how useful, relevant, reliable, and accurate a GenAI tool's outputs have been in your work context is a crucial and constant requirement. Tools may be capable and efficient in many use cases, but all have potential shortfalls and caveats. **By always adopting a critical evaluation of your process of integrating GenAI in your work, you assist others by identifying use issues and you demonstrate your ability to judiciously assess how well the tool functioned and apply your subject knowledge.**

How should **CRITICAL REFLECTION** be included when referencing using **TOPIC**?

- Although a sharing link may satisfy most of the TOPIC requirements, **your use of a GenAI tool in an academic context always requires you to supplement this with some reflection on the process.**

- Your lecturer or assignment briefing may specify the expected length of your notes on critical reflection, but at minimum you should provide particular detail on how the tool's functionality and outputs met your expectations in this context.

- You should clearly identify shortfalls, poor performance, and especially inaccuracies in content.

- **Your goal is to be clear about how the GenAI tool(s) contributed to your work and to be distinct about your own competence and capability in these areas of knowledge, which AI is not and should not be a substitute for.**

ADVICE

This seems like a lot of work!
How do I manage it?

This approach **is** much more detailed than a typical citation for a static knowledge source, but this shouldn't be surprising. *You want your referencing to be clear and useful.*

Using a dynamic generative source of content in your work requires a more involved accounting process. Your readers and evaluators need to see exactly where your working knowledge and your GenAI outputs combine, in order to understand what you know and what you have achieved in synthesising these outputs.

Showing your work with prompts, refinement of outputs through different iterations, and critical reflection on the process helps others to learn from you and to see your applied learning.

- Choose recommended tools that can generate a **sharing link** to allow others to see your process of interaction. *ChatGPT, Gemini, etc., have this functionality.*

- Plan your use of GenAI as thoroughly as you would plan a review of static literature. Set goals, create specific targeted inquiries that you refine as you learn, and document your process from the start so that you can refer clearly later to the knowledge you found.

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