



COMMUNICATING GENERATIVE AI USE IN FEDERAL STATISTICAL PRODUCTS

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Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is increasingly being used to help create federal statistical products. GenAI systems can generate text, code, summaries, images, and other content and assist with analytical, documentation, and workflow-related tasks under human direction. GenAI-generated outputs may be difficult to distinguish from human-generated work, and they may also introduce inaccuracies, fabricated information, bias, or non-reproducible results. While transparency alone does not guarantee quality, reproducibility, or appropriate use, communicating how GenAI tools were used and the level of human oversight can help users better understand the reliability and fitness for use of the final products.

Defining Meaningful GenAI Contributions

A meaningful GenAI contribution is one that materially influences the content, methodology, analysis, interpretation, production process, or dissemination of a statistical product.

The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) is publishing this brief to provide recommendations for agencies seeking to communicate meaningful GenAI contributions in the production of federal statistical products. It is intended as a practical resource rather than a formal standard or policy. As GenAI adoption grows, federal statistical agencies have an opportunity to promote transparency, scientific integrity, and public trust by communicating clearly when there are meaningful contributions of these tools in the development and production of statistical products. These recommendations are intended to complement, not replace, any mandatory requirements for agencies to report or document their use of AI.

The brief focuses on the importance of communicating to data users when GenAI plays a meaningful role in the development and production of statistical products, rather than explicating every instance in which GenAI tools or systems are used. The appropriate level of communication depends on the nature of the contribution, its role in the statistical product or process, and the level of human oversight applied.

WHY TRANSPARENCY MATTERS

Transparency regarding GenAI use in federal statistics can help:

- Support public trust in federal statistics.
- Promote accountability for statistical products.
- Improve understanding of how statistical products are developed.
- Support documentation of GenAI use to facilitate evaluation of adoption, impacts on statistical quality and reproducibility, and future guidance and best practices.

Transparency Is the First Step

Communicating when, where, and how GenAI was used helps users understand the role AI played in producing a statistical product. Transparency does not replace evaluation, validation, or quality review, but it does provide the foundation for trust and accountability.

- Encourage consistent and responsible use of GenAI technologies across the Federal Statistical System.
- Given the rise in publicly available tools that may identify use of GenAI, proactive transparency about use of GenAI can preserve public trust.

WHEN GENAI USE SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED

Not every use of GenAI requires public communication. As GenAI becomes more integrated into routine work, some uses such as spelling, grammar, accessibility, or formatting assistance, may be considered standard productivity tools with negligible impact on fitness for use that don't need to be communicated. Rather, agencies should communicate GenAI use when it makes a meaningful contribution to the content, methodology, analysis, or dissemination of a federal statistical product. A meaningful contribution depends upon the intended and realized impact of GenAI.

Examples where GenAI may not make a meaningful contribution to the statistical product life cycle:

- Spelling, grammar, or accessibility checks.
- Minor edits to improve readability or reduce word count.
- Formatting or layout assistance that does not alter substantive content.
- Using GenAI to assist with project planning and identification of appropriate next steps.
- Assistance in understanding error messages or identifying relevant scientific resources for future review.
- Compliance checks with metadata, documentation, or data dictionary creation.

Examples where GenAI may make a meaningful contribution to the statistical product life cycle:

- Drafting substantive text, technical documentation, reports, or communication materials.
- Generating new or substantially modifying existing computer code used for statistical production, visualization, or analysis.
- Translating existing statistical code from one programming language to another, such as converting SAS, SPSS or Stata code to Python or R.
- Summarizing literature, technical information, research findings, or stakeholder feedback that informed or directly connected to various elements of the statistical product.
- Assisting with data dissemination and public communication, such as developing FAQs, explanatory content, dissemination products, or other outreach materials.
- Making substantial editorial changes to a statistical product, such as applying agency-specific stylistic rules or performing technical or copy edits across the entire product.
- Assisting with metadata, documentation, or data dictionary creation.
- Supporting questionnaire, survey instrument, or other data collection instrument development.
- Assisting with data coding, classification, or other data preparation tasks.
- Supporting exploratory analysis, brainstorming, hypothesis generation, or idea development.
- Using agentic AI systems to perform multi-step tasks, such as retrieving information, generating outputs, executing code, or interacting with other tools under human supervision as part of the statistical production process.

STEPS FOR COMMUNICATING GENAI CONTRIBUTIONS

1) Did GenAI Make a Meaningful Contribution?

- Identify whether GenAI contributed meaningfully to the product or process.
- Consider whether the contribution was substantive enough to warrant communication.

2) How Was GenAI Used?

- Identify the specific task or activity supported by GenAI and the level of contribution.
- Identify the stage(s) of the statistical product life cycle where GenAI was applied.
- Explain whether GenAI was used for drafting, coding, classification, summarization, analysis support, or another function.

Consider the Full Statistical Lifecycle

GenAI may be used in many stages of statistical production, including questionnaire design, coding, documentation, analysis, dissemination, and communication. Transparency considerations extend beyond published reports and journal articles.

3) What GenAI Tool or System Was Used?

- Identify the GenAI system, model, or tool.
- Include version information and date used when appropriate, available, and relevant.
- Indicate whether the system was internally developed or commercially obtained.

4) What Human Oversight Was Applied?

- Describe review, editing, validation, or testing performed by staff.
- Explain how subject matter expertise informed final decisions.
- Clarify that humans remain responsible for the final product.

5) Where Can Users Find Additional Information (when available and applicable)?

- Provide links to methodology reports, technical or model documentation, or other resources available.
- Identify points of contact or sources of additional information for interested users.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES FOR COMMUNICATING GENAI USE

Agencies should communicate uses of GenAI in a manner that is appropriate for the statistical product and intended audience. Documentation may appear in a methodology section, technical documentation, metadata, acknowledgements, or other accompanying materials.

A useful approach is to explain: (1) if GenAI made a meaningful contribution, (2) how GenAI was used, (3) the GenAI tool or system used (when appropriate), (4) the human oversight or validation performed, and (5) where additional information can be found.

The examples below are adapted from the CDC's

[Considerations for Disclosing Generative AI Use in Scientific Work](#) and expanded for application to the

Cite Sources, Not AI Outputs

GenAI tools should not be treated as authors or authoritative sources for statistical facts, methodologies or interpretations.

production of federal statistical products. They are intended to illustrate possible approaches and are not intended to be comprehensive or prescriptive.

If GenAI was used to...	Consider documenting...	Example language
Draft narrative text	Tool Used, purpose, human review	Portions of this report were drafted using [GenAI Tool]. [Agency] staff reviewed, edited, verified, and approved all content prior to publication.
Generate computer code	Tool used, purpose, validation	[GenAI Tool] was used to assist in generating portions of computer code used during analysis. The resulting code was reviewed, tested, and validated by [Agency] staff before implementation. Additional information about the methods and validation procedures is available in [technical documentation/methodology report] or from [point of contact].
Summarize literature or background materials	Purpose and human verification	[GenAI Tool] was used to assist in summarizing background literature. All summaries and referenced materials were independently verified by [Agency] staff.
Assist with data coding or classification	Task and quality review	[GenAI Tool] was used to assist with coding [or classifying] data. Coding decisions were reviewed using established quality assurance procedures.
Develop documentation or metadata	Scope of use and review	[GenAI Tool] assisted in preparing technical documentation. [Agency] staff reviewed and revised the documentation for accuracy and completeness before release. Additional information is available in the associated methodology report, technical documentation, or metadata documentation, or by contacting [point of contact].

Agentic workflows	Scope of automation and oversight	[Agentic GenAI system] was used to perform portions of the production workflow, including [tasks]. The system actions and interactions with other tools were tested under defined human oversight with outputs reviewed and approved by [Agency] staff. Additional information about the workflow and oversight procedures is available in [technical documentation/model documentation] or from [point of contact].
Image Generation and Editing	Tool used, purpose, human verification	[GenAI Tool] was used to generate this image. Images were reviewed and approved by [Agency] staff.

INTERNAL DOCUMENTATION OF GENAI USE

To effectively communicate the use of GenAI in final statistical products, agencies should consider documenting the use of GenAI across the entire product development process. This documentation may be broader than information communicated publicly. For example, GenAI may be used by different offices or individuals across the agency to improve readability of survey questions, develop or streamline code for imputation or data linkage, identify potential duplicate or falsified records, design statistical analysis, develop analytical code, and so on. Agencies may need to internally document all of these uses and establish internal processes to ensure that final report authors and reviewers are aware of all uses. Agencies should maintain sufficient documentation to support in the identification of meaningful contributions which may affect a statistical product.

HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY REMAINS ESSENTIAL

GenAI tools can assist with statistical work, but responsibility for federal statistical products remains with people.

Agencies ensure that:

- Human review is conducted before dissemination.
- GenAI outputs are evaluated for accuracy, completeness, and appropriateness.
- Statistical and methodological decisions remain under human control.
- Existing quality standards continue to be applied regardless of whether GenAI tools are used.

Humans Remain Responsible

GenAI can assist with statistical work, but responsibility for the accuracy, quality, and integrity of federal statistical products remains with agency staff. AI outputs should be reviewed, validated, and approved by humans before dissemination.

GenAI should augment, not replace, professional judgment, subject matter expertise, and statistical expertise.

LOOKING AHEAD

This brief focuses on transparency and communication practices for GenAI use. Additional topics may warrant future consideration as GenAI adoption continues to evolve, including:

- Validation and testing of GenAI-assisted workflows.
- Reproducibility challenges associated with evolving GenAI models.
- Documentation standards and model cards.
- Human-in-the-loop best practices.
- Quality implications of GenAI use in statistical production.
- Research on effective approaches for communicating GenAI use to the public and other stakeholders.

Transparency about how, when, and where GenAI is used is an important first step. As GenAI technologies continue to evolve, so too will public awareness, understanding, and expectations regarding their use. Guidance and communication practices should be revisited periodically to ensure they remain clear, meaningful, and responsive to users' evolving information needs. Future work may also include research across the Federal Statistical System to better understand how information about GenAI use can be communicated effectively to the public and other stakeholders, helping inform future guidance and communication practices while addressing broader questions related to evaluation, quality, reproducibility, and governance.

AI USAGE IN THIS DOCUMENT

OpenAI GPT 5.6 Pro accessed via (Department of Health and Human Services) HHS ChatGPT was used to review a draft of this document and suggest revisions. All revisions incorporated into the document were reviewed and approved by the authors, and the document underwent review by the FCSM.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information on the responsible and transparent use of Generative AI in statistical and research settings:

FCSM Artificial Intelligence Resources Page [\[Link\]](#)

Central repository of FCSM resources, guidance, and activities related to AI in federal statistics.

CDC: Considerations for Disclosing Generative AI Use in Scientific Work [\[Link\]](#)

Practical guidance on documenting and communicating GenAI use in scientific products.

AAPOR: Responsible AI Integration in Survey Research [\[Link\]](#)

Guidance on transparency, governance, risk management, and responsible use of AI throughout the survey research life cycle.

ASA Statement on Ethical AI Principles for Statistical Practitioners [\[Link\]](#)

Principles for ethical and responsible use of AI in statistical practice, including accountability, transparency, and fairness.

NIST AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF) [\[Link\]](#)

Voluntary framework for managing risks associated with AI systems, including governance, transparency, and trustworthiness.

OMB Guidance on Federal Agency Use of Artificial Intelligence [\[Link\]](#)

Federal policy and governance guidance related to the use of AI within government agencies.

APA Journals Policy on Generative AI [\[Link\]](#)

Guidance on use of GenAI in scholarly materials.

MLA Guidance on How to Cite Generative AI [\[Link\]](#)

Guidance on how to cite use of GenAI using the MLA template.

The Chicago Manual of Style Guidance on How to Cite GenAI [\[Link\]](#)

Guidance on how to cite use of GenAI using the Chicago Manual of Style format.

C2PA: Verifying Media Content Sources [\[Link\]](#)

Technical standard and guidance for establishing the provenance and authenticity of digital media, including information about how content was created or modified.