Engaging with AI: Enhancing Library Staff Expertise Through Active Learning

Kristina Wagner & Kate Strain | Loyola Notre Dame Library

Background

The Loyola Notre Dame Library (LNDL) provides information services and resources to support the academic programs and educational concerns of Notre Dame of Maryland University and Loyola University Maryland.

During the Summer of 2024, two librarians led LNDL staff through a half-day introductory AI workshop to establish a baseline of knowledge across the library. Our goal was to prepare library staff to answer AI-related questions and troubleshoot issues for students and faculty. We also aimed to enhance their AI literacy, encouraging them to learn about the technologies and critically assess any AI-related output.

Pre Work

Pre-Assessment
Before the workshop, we asked participants to fill out a three-question pre-assessment:
1. I am confident in my ability to.. (Likert scale)
   a. Describe the origins and development of AI
   b. Recognize how AI tools can be applied to research methods, including generative AI
   c. Understand the ethical dimensions of AI
   d. Compare different types of AI
   e. Summarize the potential use cases and risks of using tools like ChatGPT
2. What is one ai tool that you'd like to learn more about?
3. Do you have any questions about AI or things that you'd like to discuss in the workshop?
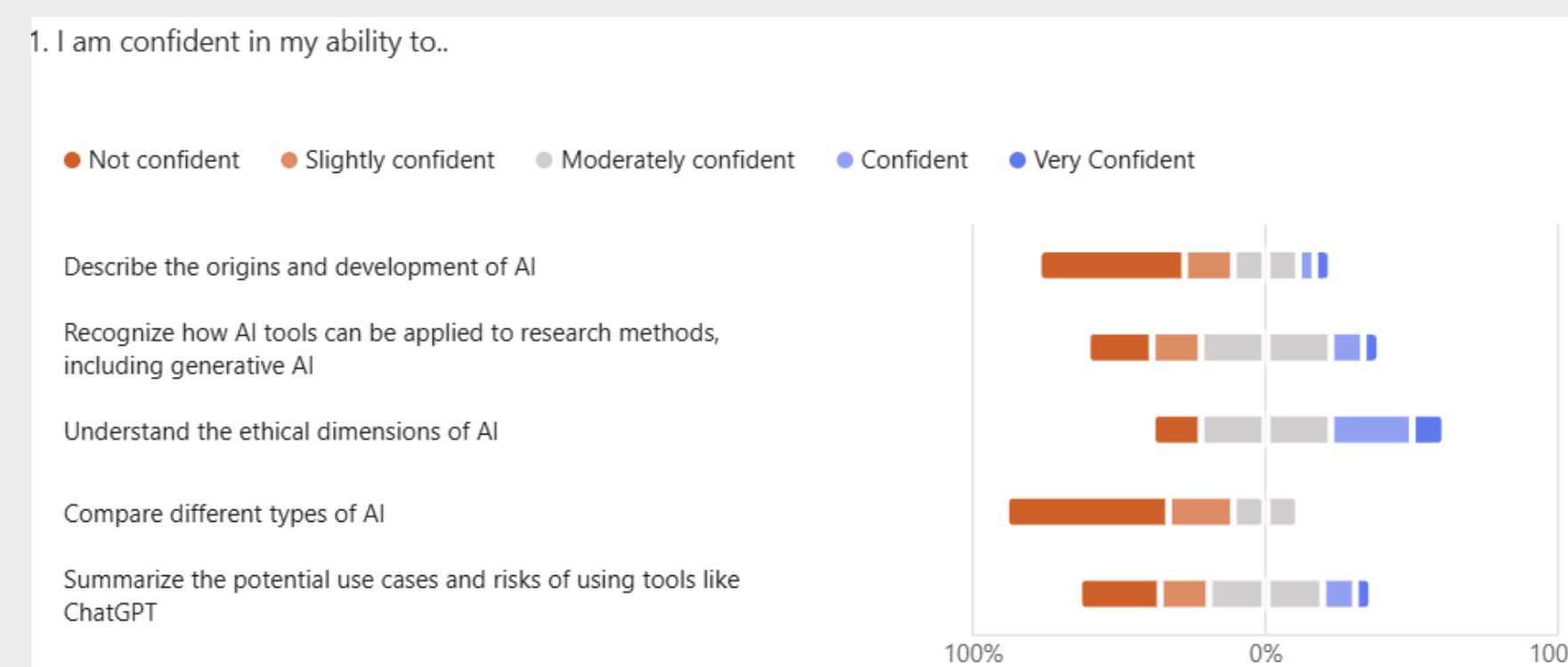
Short Course
Participants were asked to complete a two-hour Sage Campus short course in the morning of the workshop. The course included modules on:

- Myths and Realities of Artificial Intelligence
- AI in Research Methods
- Ethical Challenges in AI
- Machine Learning
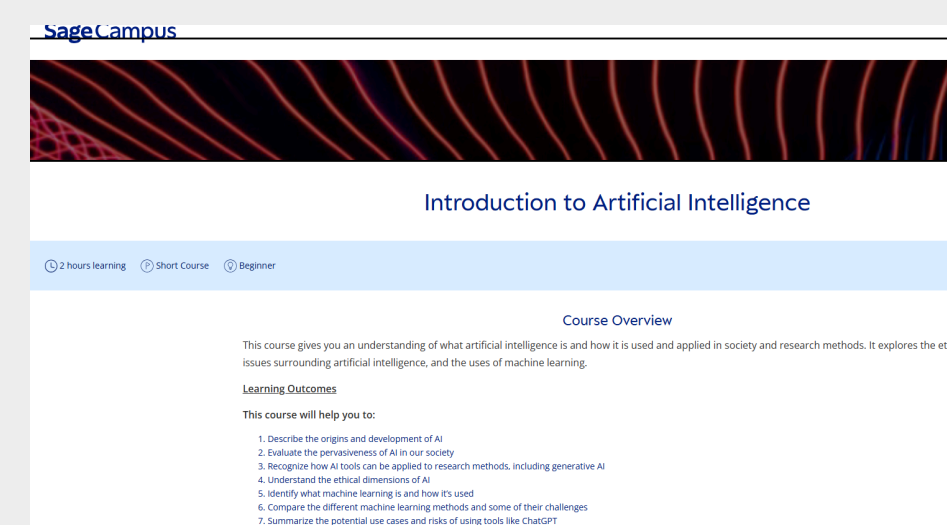
The modules included interactive text and quizzes. We selected this short course because it provided a broad overview of many topics and was the most approachable of several that we evaluated. Our goal was for everyone to have the same baseline knowledge for the afternoon discussions.

Workbook
We created a workbook as a reference item that participants could refer to with definitions, whole text of graphics that we looked at, and expanded content. The workbook also included worksheets from the activities.

Workshop

Sage Recap / AI Literacy
We had a guided reflection on the Sage course. We asked participants to share:

- 3 things they learned
- 2 things they liked or found interesting
- 1 thing they still have a question about

We prepared a Kahoot quiz to review definitions from the Sage course, but chose to cut the quiz to accommodate additional time for discussion.

AI Ethics & Bias
To explore AI ethics, we used Rebecca Sweetman's graphic, "Some Harm Considerations of Large Language Models (LLMs)," which highlights AI's risks and harms. Participants spent five minutes reading an article and reviewing the graphic individually, then discussed it in small groups. We reconvened as a whole group for reflection.
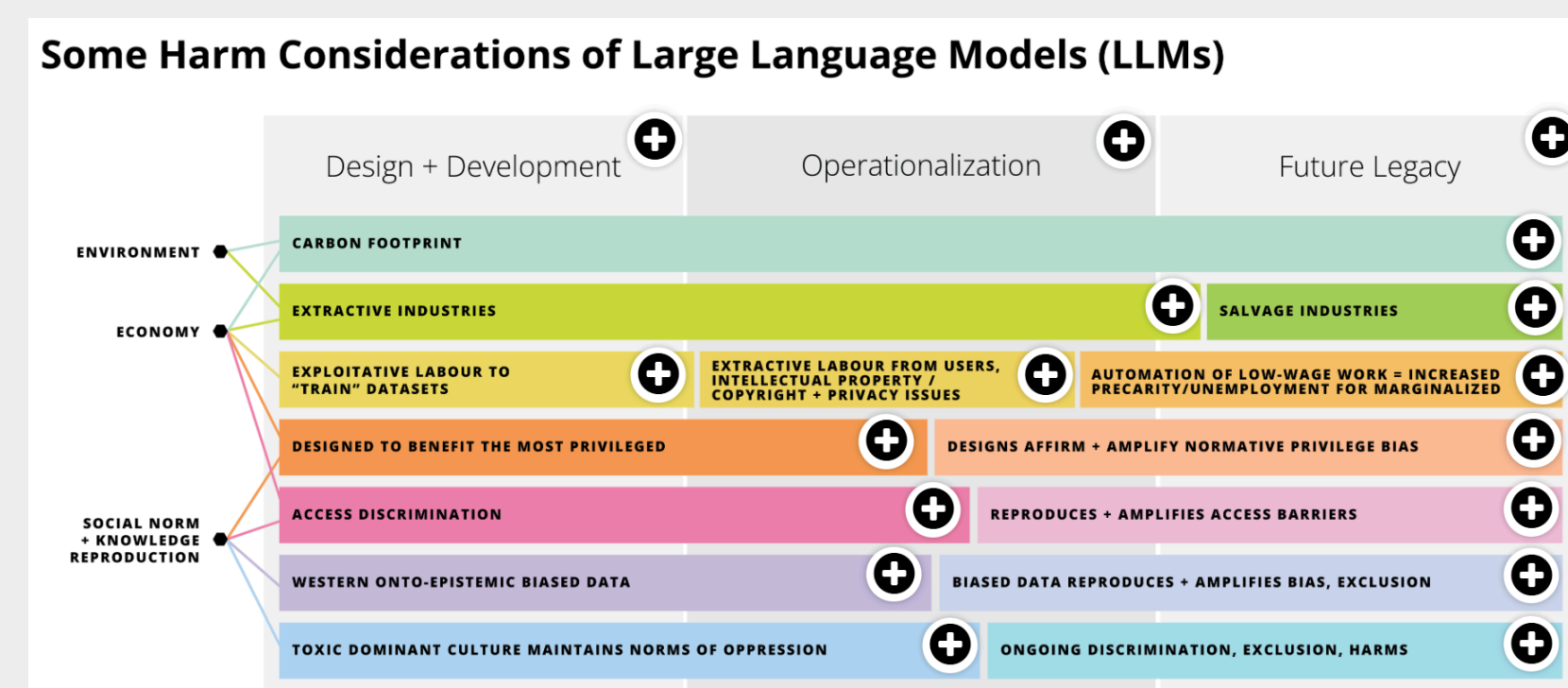
"Some Harm Considerations of Large Language Models (LLMs)" by Rebecca Sweetman is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

AI Tools
We provided a list of AI tools, based on the Ithaka S+R Generative AI Product Tracker list of generative AI products that are either marketed specifically towards or appear to be actively in use by postsecondary faculty or students for teaching, learning, or research activities. We acknowledged that many other tools exist, and there will be many more in the next few years.

ROBOT Evaluation
After reviewing the list of AI tools, we divided library staff into small groups to evaluate one AI tool using the ROBOT test. This tool, created by the LibrAIry staff, helps assess the legitimacy of AI technology by focusing on reliability, objectivity, bias, ownership, and type. The ROBOT test guides users in questioning and evaluating information about AI technologies.


Conclusion

Post-assessment
After the workshop, we asked participants to fill out a three question post-assessment.

1. I am confident in my ability to.. (likert scale)
   a. Describe the origins and development of AI
   b. Recognize how AI tools can be applied to research methods, including generative AI
   c. Understand the ethical dimensions of AI
   d. Compare different types of AI
   e. Summarize the potential use cases and risks of using tools like ChatGPT
2. What are two takeaways that you had from the discussion or activity?
3. Do you have any questions about AI that you'd like to discuss in the future?
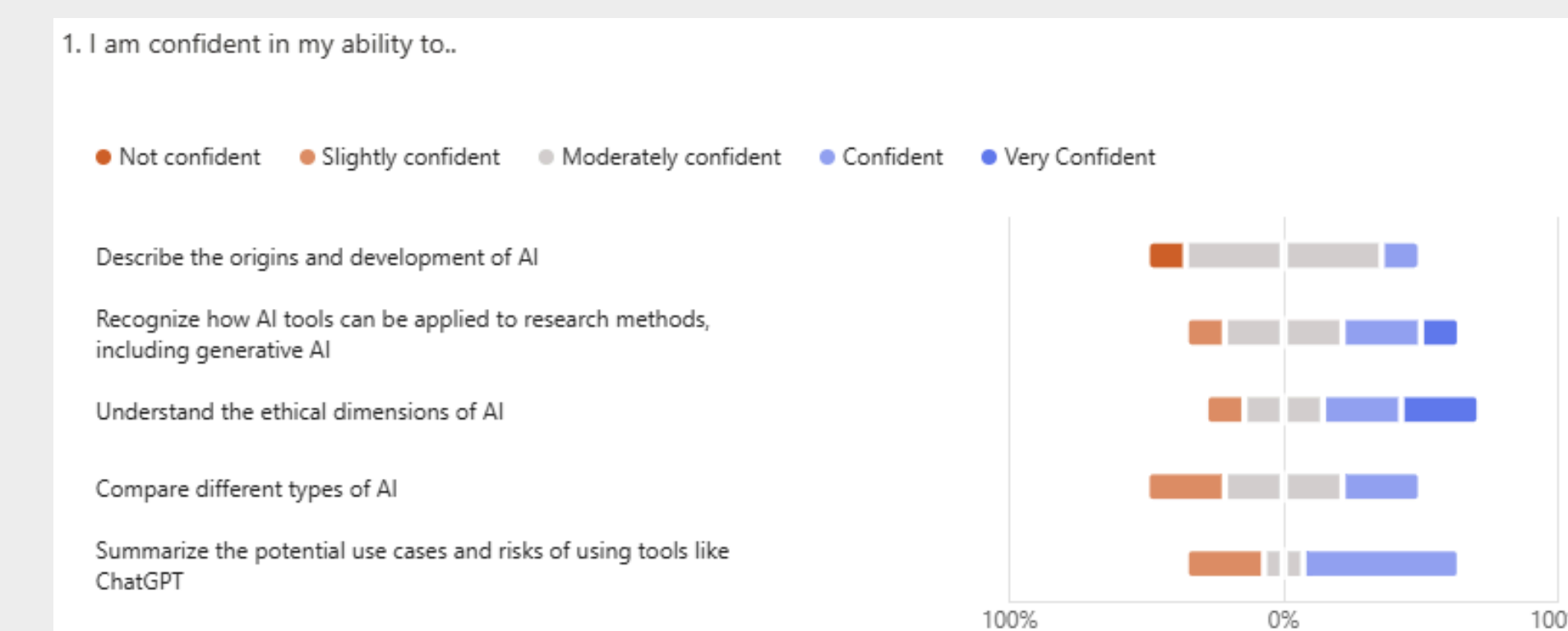
Takeaways

- The Sage course was too long and detailed for some staff.
- The Sage course could have been a whole day session with a second day for discussion and activities.
- We should have budgeted more time for discussion. We cut multiple activities for time during the workshop as we noticed staff were quite engaged in discussions.
- We had a lot of active learning built in but cut the activities in the moment to allow more time for discussion; many people noted their dissatisfaction in this in our post assessment form.
- We cut many activities for time, which people were disappointed in their feedback, but we felt we needed to do because there was so much discussion.
- Participants felt there wasn't enough time to complete the ROBOT test and noted overlap in the questions.
- Dedicated time for staff to complete pre-work was helpful to ensure that library staff completed the work.
- The workshop goal was to evaluate tools and discuss ethics, but feedback showed a desire for specific tool use cases and an AI tool sandbox day.

Further Questions

- What can we do to teach users how to think critically about these tools?
- How can we encourage the use of ChatGPT and others as a tool and not a crutch?
- How can we teach skills to analyze bias in AI?
- How can we help users learn how to verify the accuracy of its content with reputable sources?