



The AI Ethics Tile at ACU

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A quick environmental scan shows that most, if not all Gen AI guides have ethics guides in them.

Why does it matter? Ethics matter when vast amounts of information are shared online, often with little control over who sees, uses, or manipulates it.

Remember the early days of chat GPT when artists were getting annoyed with their songs being ripped off?

These echoes of the past are not a great start, but they have definitely created stories for the future.

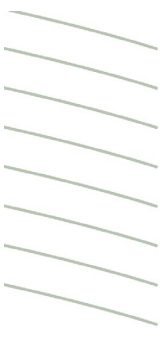
Then there are the issues with Copyright that I think many of us are still battling with (Cue the familiar student refrain: “It’s so much easier to pop the document into GPT than read all 40 pages!”)

ACU’s ethics tile was designed to address these challenges head-on as well as protecting authors and other groups while encouraging users to think about the environment, Indigenous perspectives, and privacy.

At Australian Catholic University, as with many of our institutions, we live through our mission, this in turn is supported by the values of truth, excellence and service alongside commitments to equity, diversity, accessibility, wellbeing and sustainability.

My supervisor floated the idea that a tile on our Gen AI guide could be devoted to ethics keeping in line with the mission and the key themes around that mission and so the journey began... we wanted to go beyond standard ethics topics like DEI and copyright, focusing on human flourishing and social impact. Our goal is to make the ethics tile impactful and aligned with the university’s values.

We borrowed it from our colleagues at Deakin to use as a template for ours, it consisted of four tiles to explain GenAI but,



1. A student could go through the guide and learn about using Gen AI in the basics tile they would get an overview including using it and referencing it responsibly.
2. Prompting essentials as we all know your output is only as good as your prompt.
3. With this knowledge, a student could explore further tools, where
4. Researchers could explore the role AI takes in the research lifecycle.

As a Catholic institution we needed to have an Ethics tile as well.

In the development of the final tile in the guide, we wanted to emphasise Catholic social teaching, student-centred design and ethical literacy.

The ethical framework for the tile included disclosure and transparency, risk-appropriate explainability, tailored messaging for public, affected individuals and show truth and transparency as expressions of human dignity in keeping with Catholic moral imperatives.

Originally the plan was to update the entire AIHUB and to discuss ethics, humanity and the environment together but after a bit of user testing, we decided on a separate tile instead.

Before we started, the team created personas: an undergrad, a research student, an academic and a researcher. This helped us understand what each group needed when exploring AI ethics.

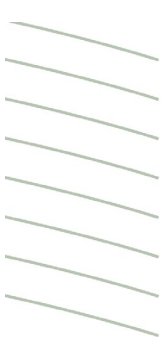
The team drafted content under set subheadings, focusing on ethics broadly rather than ACU-specific rules.

Key terms we included were the values embedded in Catholic Social teaching:

- Explainability: understanding how AI produces outcomes
- Common good: conditions that allow all to flourish
- Human dignity: the inherent worth of every person
- Data minimisation: collecting only what's necessary
- Integral ecology: linking human and environmental well-being

These first three concepts were central in Pope Frances' Laudato Si encyclical, while the last two are not discussed, technological dominance and ethical gaps in innovation are critiqued which is where these last two concepts could fit in.

Team members wrote out their parts in a template, the theory behind this was that we could write in the template and critique everything before it went live. This was a built-in peer-review process and discussion before finally sending it out to several academics to get their feedback.



The template had most of the work done, with sub-headings of what we wanted covered in the tile and there was a lot!

I won't go through the whole thing, but we first needed an introduction to the guide and what we were looking at here, weaving in the Catholic view on ethics (mainly Catholic Social Teaching – human dignity, common good, solidarity, subsidiarity and care for creation) but also throwing it bits on our own mission: pursuit of truth etc.

For the introduction we tackled big principles:

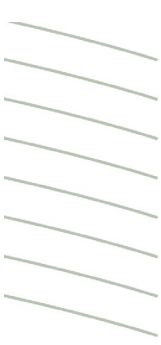
Basically, avoiding bias, having someone responsible for outcomes, systems are explainable etc.

Our goal was to create a guide that goes beyond compliance, reflecting our mission and value and helping all users use AI responsibly for the common good.

After creating this as a table (and almost falling asleep) I decided on a different approach – to use these principles as points on a compass²⁷.



²⁷ <http://bit.ly/48gsZbM>



The points represent ethical directions shaped by past experiences and future directions. I liked the idea of using an object that is seemingly obsolete but can be used in a guide about something timeless. I figured this would add that little bit of interactivity. I replaced the cardinal points with Dignity, Accountability, Fairness, and Transparency & Privacy.

North: Dignity

This is our true north. It asks if AI respects the fundamental worth of every person. Does the technology uplift humanity or reduce us to mere data points?

East: Sustainability

This reminds us of our responsibility to the planet. What is the environmental cost of AI development and use? We must ensure our technological progress is not at the expense of our world.

South: Transparency & Privacy

This point represents our path forward into the unknown, asking for clear visibility. We must be able to understand how an AI reaches its decisions and know that our personal data is being respected.

I also added flourishing and sustainability as intercardinal points

West: Equity (Fairness)

This is the direction of a new day, reminding us to build a more just future. It guides us to examine if AI is free from bias and ensures it doesn't perpetuate existing inequalities.

The compass is a work in progress; I also envision inter-cardinal points as well.

Accountability

This point grounds us. It forces the question of who is responsible when AI makes a mistake. As AI systems become more autonomous, accountability must remain firmly in human hands.



Flourishing

This point points toward our ultimate goal. Does AI help us live more fulfilled, healthier, and better lives? The journey is not just about development but about true human flourishing.

Comments From Academics

I am not too sure that the academics really understood what we were after... we sent the guide out for comments and one academic while liking it, made grammatical corrections on the first page of the draft. We sent it to the Associate Dean of Theology and while he thought it was an excellent resource he thought we should add videos as in his experience students will not read if possible (being time-poor and the flipped classrooms). He continued on with an example of having a “bottom line video” so that students could have a place to go to where they would learn in 30 seconds or less what you can and should do, what you can and should avoid doing with AI. His second suggestion was that these should be embedded into first year units.

When I read over the document, I was hoping for something a bit more interactive, and I think that the views say that as well. What we have is a document but not a lot of interaction. This is good as it leaves room for a lot of improvement!

Reviewing the finished product, we sent it off to the library’s design services to turn our ideas into images. The final of our AIEthics Tile was launched 10th of October 2025 in the hopes that this will help students and staff navigate ethical principles discussed above.

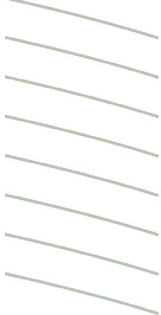
While the first month shows that the guide got 467 views, I tried to drill down to where those views were. I think most started on the first page and from there the views become less enthusiastic.

We do know that one subject embedded the guide into their unit perhaps to study or as a focus but otherwise these are single hits.

There is more work to be done: the guide needs to be more interactive so that students will use it more and they will retain information from it.

We also need to find a way to make the important parts, linking AI ethics and the Laudate Si, more interesting for readers.

This is very much a work in progress and not a static document.



Every comment and suggestion from our students and academics become a part of this story that we can write together. We will look at this guide as a living narrative shaped by echoes of past experiences and the needs of tomorrow's learners.

As librarians we have always wrestled with questions of truth, authority and access ...more in some parts of the world than in others.

Gen AI has just given us a new chapter that we are creating now to become an echo that will guide future generations.