2024 AI CONFERENCE

AI and the Future of Education

Conference Report

August 1–2, 2024 | Online

FEATURED PRESENTATION

U.S. Congressman Jay Obernolte on AI governance

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Policy Studies Organization

Prepared by Kinjo Liu | November 2026

Conference Overview

At our first AI and the Future of Education conference, educators, researchers, practitioners, and students shared how they were using generative AI in higher education. They discussed what these tools could do, where they fell short, and how institutions could respond.

Why we held the conference

We convened the conference to share practical approaches to teaching, assessment, and research, and to discuss how institutions could address questions of ethics and access as AI use expanded.

Journal of Online Learning Research and Practice and International Journal of Open Educational Resources jointly developed the conference, with sponsorship from PSO and American Public University System. Our editors, Kathleen Tate, Ronald Johnson, and Linda Ashar, are the main creators of the conference.

Three conference themes

Using AI: Teaching, assessment, curriculum, research, and professional practice.

Ethics: Authorship, bias, reliable evidence, and responsible use.

Access: Open resources, inclusive course design, and the digital divide.

At a glance

August 1–2, 2024
Two-day online conference

Open to the Public
Open-access materials

1,048
Conference registrations

24
Agenda items

POLICY · SPECIAL GUEST SESSION

Governing AI

U.S. Congressman Jay Obernolte
Co-chair of the 2024 bipartisan House Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

Obernolte contrasted two uses of AI: deciding who qualifies for a mortgage and running a computer game. He argued that oversight should reflect what's at stake in each use. He also discussed how shared computing resources could help researchers outside large technology companies study and test AI. [1]

CREATE AI Act

Creating Resources for Every American To Experiment with Artificial Intelligence

In July 2023, Rep. Jay Obernolte was an original cosponsor of the bipartisan CREATE AI Act (H.R. 5077). The bill proposed establishing the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR) to give eligible researchers, educators, and students access to shared tools and resources for developing and testing AI. [2]

Examples of shared AI research resources

Computing power
Run AI experiments

Data
Find datasets for research and testing

Learning and support
Access training and technical help

Testing environments
Evaluate how AI systems perform

- **Risk depends on use.** A mortgage decision and a computer game raise different concerns. Oversight should account for the setting in which AI is used.
- **Build regulatory capacity.** A central source of technical expertise could support existing agencies responsible for particular industries.
- **Broaden access to research.** Computing costs can concentrate opportunity in large companies. Shared resources could help universities and smaller innovators participate.

Key takeaway: Governing AI requires both the ability to assess risks and access to the resources needed for research.

Watch the session on YouTube

KEYNOTE

Understanding Responsible AI

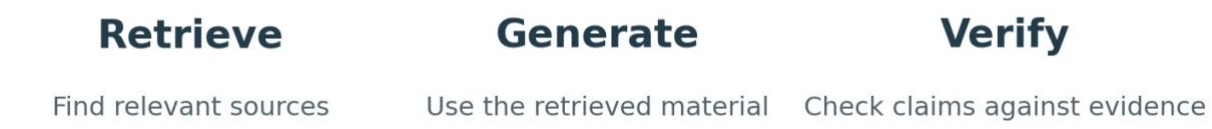
Generative and Responsible AI in 2024

Matthew Lease
Professor at the University of Texas at Austin and a leader of its Good Systems responsible AI initiative.

Plausible language does not guarantee reliable information. Lease explained how generative AI can produce fluent answers containing invented or incorrect details, often called hallucinations.

How retrieval can help

Retrieval-augmented generation, or RAG, finds relevant documents and uses them to help compose an answer. It can bring newer information into a response and make the evidence easier to inspect.



The retrieved material must actually support the claim. A source link alone does not make an answer reliable.

The task and the people matter

Unexpected invention may help with brainstorming but create problems in a factual explanation. Lease also described how judgments about toxic language can vary with familiarity with a community's dialect.

Key takeaway: Check the evidence behind an important claim and consider whose language and experience the evaluation represents.

Watch the session on YouTube

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

Learning and Student Authorship

From Disruption to Assessment: Reimagining Teaching and Learning in the Era of AI

Barbara Cliff, Tim White, and Meagan Wilson

APUS health sciences educators. Moderated by Kelsey Hotaling, Director of Research Experiences at APUS.

Make students' reasoning visible

When AI can help produce an assignment, the finished submission may reveal only part of what a student understands. The panel explored oral and video presentations, realistic scenarios, group work, and case-based discussion.



Pair the product with an explanation

One example combined a single-slide infographic with a spoken explanation. Students had to communicate information in a form relevant to professional practice.

The panel also described smaller weekly discussions and revised rubrics—the criteria used to grade work—with attention to analysis, original thought, and accurate conclusions.

Key takeaway: Include moments when students explain a choice, apply a concept, or respond to others. These provide evidence of understanding alongside the final work.

Watch the session on YouTube

OPEN EDUCATION

Publishing Student Work

Generative AI Meets Open Pedagogy: An EdTech Books Project

Israt Jahan Oeeshi and Sima Ahmadi
Student contributors to an Asian University for Women course project developed with Stefanie Panke.

Student work with a public audience

Open pedagogy involves learners in creating knowledge that other people can use. The Strong Schools course developed an open book through topic selection, research, interviews, and writing.



Use AI while retaining authorship

AI tools supported elements such as illustrations, video, and research. Students were producing a resource beyond the classroom while learning to retain their own ideas and voice.

The example shows how AI can support a collaborative publishing project while students remain the authors of the resource.

Key takeaway: An open chapter or shared guide can give student work a public purpose. Students remain responsible for their evidence and contributions.

Watch the session | Read the open book

MARINE CONSERVATION

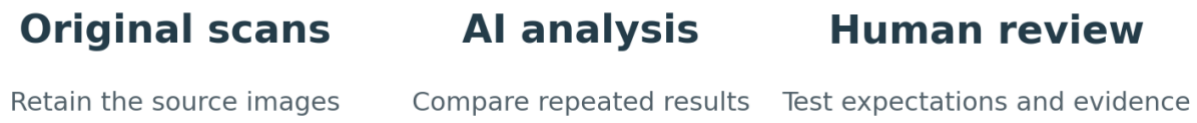
AI in Student Research

Leveraging AI to Conserve Seagrass in a Changing Ocean

Baylen Ratliff
Student speaker in marine biology, University of Washington (2024).

When an automated result needs review

Ratliff used the Eelgrass Lesion Image Segmentation Application (EeLISA) to examine disease in samples from the San Juan Islands. The application analyzes images to help measure affected areas.



Check the tool and the expectations

Repeated analyses produced inconsistent results. The team compared the outputs with the scans and their own expertise.

In the Q&A, Ratliff also recognized that his initial expectations about where disease should appear could influence his judgment. Reviewing the result meant examining both the technology and the researcher's assumptions.

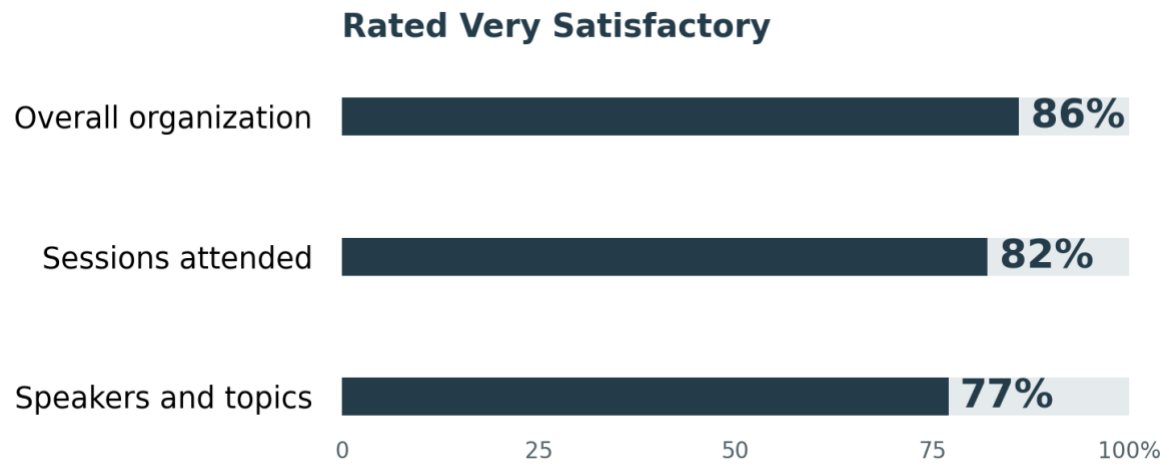
Key takeaway: Retain the original evidence. An automated result should not be accepted or rejected simply because it matches what someone expected.

Watch the session | Watch the Q and A

Conference Feedback

99%

of survey respondents were likely or very likely to recommend the conference to a colleague.



77 survey respondents. The bars show the share who selected the highest satisfaction rating.

Continue Learning

Use the direct recordings throughout this report in teaching or discussion. Our YouTube channel offers further recordings, and LinkedIn shares research and program updates.

PSO on YouTube | PSO on LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/the-policy-studies-organization

Work with PSO

We are seeking funding and project partners for conferences, research discussions, and public learning resources.

Fund a conversation

Bring researchers, educators, editors, students, and practitioners together around a defined question. We can discuss an online conference, a panel series, or a smaller dialogue, with a clear audience and a plan for sharing the material afterward.

Support the administration behind it

Funding supports program development, speaker coordination, participant communications, technical delivery, and follow-up. A project budget can include editorial work and contributor stipends where appropriate.

Administration connects every stage—from arranging the event and helping people participate to organizing the recordings and making the results available.

Keep the learning available

Support can fund staff time to review recordings, prepare reports, organize presentation materials, and share summaries through social media. This makes a live discussion useful to new audiences.

Volunteer with PSO

Let us know what you're good at and how you'd like to help. We're looking for volunteers to help with web design, video editing, fundraising, outreach, conference reporting, editorial work, and research.

Fill out the volunteer interest form

Make a donation

Your donation helps bring back PSO's AI Conference and keep the recording and brief free to the public.

Support the AI Conference on Zeffy

Acknowledgements and Sources

Acknowledgements

We thank our conference creators and co-chairs, Kathleen Tate, Ronald Johnson, and Linda Ashar; our co-sponsor, American Public University System; and all speakers, session chairs, and participants who contributed their time, questions, and ideas.

About this report

This public report summarizes our 2024 conference, shares learning materials, and reports participant feedback. Session summaries reflect the 2024 discussions; the CREATE AI diagram adds context from the cited bill text.

Public Sources

[1] U.S. Congressman Jay Obernolte. Special Guest Session, August 2024. Watch the session on YouTube

[2] U.S. House of Representatives. H.R. 5077, CREATE AI Act of 2023, introduced July 28, 2023. Sections 2–3.

Read the CREATE AI bill text