

Teen reading in the digital era

Deakin University, 2024. Teen reading in the digital era

Reviewed by Joy Whiteside, Library Resource Manager, Christian College Geelong.

This succinct but comprehensive report presents the findings from the survey component of the Discovering a 'Good Read': Pathways to Reading for Australian Teens (DAGR) project funded by the Australian Research Council. The report begins with a foreword that recognizes the benefits of reading, and the background to the project that notes that sustained reading is associated with better school achievement and wellbeing. There is also information about the survey participants and the survey design.

Throughout the report there are colourful infographics that present the survey data. The data includes information about teen use of leisure time and their reading and other recreation patterns; the reading for pleasure habits of Australian Secondary School Students; and the use of eBook readers. One of the graphs presents seven different types of teen readers with the key characteristics of each reading type. Two additional graphs present this information broken down into gender, and age. What is significant is that the survey information demonstrates that reading for pleasure is low on the hierarchy of leisure activities for Australian teens.

The report includes information about how teen readers find and choose the books they want to read, and about teens who don't read books for pleasure. An interesting question that is addressed is how difficult it is for teen readers to find their next read, and the difference that gender makes to this. Also included in the report is a section on genres and titles popular with teen readers, with a list of the ten most popular reads.

This informative report will challenge your practice as an enabler of teen reading and reading for pleasure. It is detailed, but short enough to be highly accessible, and an essential read for library practitioners working with teens.

Some additional reading:

Webber and Others (2023). '[Approaches for Supplementing Adolescents' Reading Motivation](#)', in *Frontiers in Education*. Vol 8, September.

This article synthesizes 38 peer-reviewed articles and research reports.

Editor's Note: An article related to this research, entitled 'The books Australian teens enjoyed reading most in 2022 and 2023: Findings from the Discovering a Good Read (DAGR) survey' is published in this edition of *Synergy*.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Reviewed by Dr Rosemary Abbott, Synergy Reviews Editor.

Victorian Department of Education, Digital Learning Policy and Practice Unit (2024). Generative Artificial Intelligence. <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/generative-artificial-intelligence/policy>

The document is important for those in government schools but is likely to be useful for those in the non-government sector.

This comprehensive and well-structured document provides advice and requirements for government schools wishing to use generative artificial intelligence. The website is well laid out and informative. Key documents are found in a number of locations within the site with clear links, under the headings of Policy, Guidance and Resources.

In brief, the Policy section focuses on the following key areas;

- consent and privacy
- appropriate use of generative AI tools, safely and responsibly, and in an “accessible and inclusive way”
- academic integrity, ensuring that it is used “in ways that undermine authentic learning relationships or replacing the unique voice and professional judgement of teachers and school leaders”
- there are links to related policies

The Guidance section is succinct but still contains useful detail and contains chapters on:

- Introduction to generative AI tools
- Protecting privacy and personal data
- Using tools appropriately

The Resources section provides:

- An overview of generative AI
- Templates for collection notices of personal data
- Further information from external sources, including a position paper from the eSafety Commissioner

Some of the content requires a sign in, but it is still well worth a look for all library professionals. The document is both informative and practical.

Bauld, Andrew, (2023). '[Librarians Can Play a Key Role Implementing Artificial Intelligence in Schools](#)', in *School Library Journal*, August 31, 2023.

I found this article very readable and comprehensive. It includes a useful list of related reading from other sources within the journal. It commences by documenting some reactions to and concerns about Generative AI.

There is a section devoted to "Clearing Up Misconceptions" which looks at how AI developed and considering the possibilities which are described as "exciting and overwhelming". This is followed by "Developing AI Literacy" which describes what is being done by a number of school library professionals and how they view AI. Joni Gilman is a media specialist using AI in a K-12 setting. She sees AI tools as "collaborative partners". Teaching of AI Literacy is seen as a logical inclusion in the suite of literacies already being taught. Not all those quoted in the article are so certain, believing information literacies "teach students how to investigate sources, trace claims and quotes and that's really hard to do with generative AI, especially because it feels so authoritative".

Opportunities and Challenges are presented, with the areas of concern being privacy, bias and cheating. These are not new issues for educational professionals. Richard Culatta, CEO of ISTE, on the subject of cheating, believes the ways in which students work is assessed can be problematic whether AI tools are involved or not.

A number of those quoted in the article are of the view that bringing generative AI out into the open. When students document the investigative process, they should acknowledge sources of inspiration and help including AI, to explicate "the steps in getting there"

The article concludes with a brief statement of the perceived benefits of generative AI, ending with a quote from ChatGPT. Worth a look, particularly as there are links to related resources on the topic.

IFLA Resources

The IFLA website contains a substantial amount of material on the topic of Generative AI. It has been produced by the [Special Interest Group on AI](#). This group consists of members from around the world (mainly library professionals). Its work provides an extensive array of resources through a number of ongoing projects and associated documentation.

This review contains brief outlines of key documents and related links. Interested readers may wish to subscribe to the mailing list or become involved through membership or volunteering.

1. [IFLA Statement on Libraries and AI](#) (2020)

Updated from a previous statement, and includes issues for consideration and possible ways for library professionals to use AI

2. [Developing a Library Strategic Response to Artificial Intelligence](#) (2023)

The purpose of this working document is to prompt reflection and action.

It looks at the potential for AI to have wide and deep impacts on library work. The section on Strategic Context and SWOT analysis provides a framework for libraries to develop a strategic position on AI, considering current practice and future possibilities. The following section, Strategic Responses, covers a broad list:

- staff (existing and potential)
- engaging with users
- best practice, allowing readers to benefit from the work of others
- running proof of concept projects – “providing validation [of a project] before full implementation”
- important role of communication with suppliers
- introducing a new tool, such as AI, must factor in organisational goals, people and culture
- communication with others using AI is valuable (brief list of organisations provided)

This part of the document concludes with the comment that a ‘wait and see’ approach is okay but not for long. It is essential to find “the right balance between cautious evaluation and timely adoption”

The final section presents three important strategies:

- Using library AI capabilities to model responsible and explainable applications of descriptive AI
- Using librarians’ data competencies to enhance organisational AI capability
- Promoting AI literacy to enhance organisational and societal AI capabilities

I believe the value in this well-structured and detailed document is that it provides possibilities for dipping into the topic of AI or diving deep.

3. [Generative AI for Library and Information Professionals](#) (2024)

This document is well set out and contains authoritative sources. It begins with a definition, examples of generative AI (including ChatGPT) and a list of image generators. The section on ethical and information issues points out that ethical matters, including bias, privacy and copyright, should be considered first. There is an extensive list of relevant resources for this purpose.

Under the heading Potential Uses, there is guidance for the information professional for how to approach generative AI tools. A substantial list of questions effectively provides this guidance.

Finally, there is a brief list of wider AI resources for the reader to consider

This document is logically structured, raising critical issues and providing the means of making informed decisions about the potential value and concerns of generative AI through an extensive number of questions.

4. [23 Resources to Get Up to Speed on AI in 2023](#) (2023)

This guide may be useful for those wishing to expand their knowledge and expertise on many aspects of AI. There are links to resources that

- define AI
- suggest how it might be incorporated into library work
- suggest approaches to “hands on”
- look at ethical issues
- consider the ways in which libraries may contribute to AI literacy
- consider strategic context

The document was updated in December 2023 and provides links to a wide range of authoritative resources.

AT A GLANCE

School Library Journal, (2024) [AI Toolbox for Librarians](#)

This provides context and very practical suggestions for the use of AI. It links to a wide variety of tools for this purpose

Softlink (2023). [Impact of AI on School Libraries](#)

The data presented here is gleaned from the Softlink 2023 Report. Survey participants, all library professionals, responded in both positive and negative ways regarding implementation of AI. Downloadable in full on the [Softlink Resources page](#).

University of Leeds (2024). [Looking Towards a Brighter Future: The Potentiality of AI and Digital Transformations to Library Spaces](#).

This research report “provides insights and practical guidance for libraries looking to harness the power of AI to meet the evolving needs of their users”. It unpacks the strategies in the University’s quest to “become an exemplar across the sector”. [Downloadable here](#)