

Grant Writing With AI

Coffee Lecture

December 11th, 2025

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Liaison Librarian



Université de Fribourg

https://www.unifr.ch > research > grant-writing-with-ai-...

Grant writing with AI: Seven smart practices - News

26 Aug 2025 — **Generative AI tools are increasingly popular for drafting grant proposals.** Used wisely, they can help you submit a compelling application. Here are seven tips to make the most of them.



Reddit · r/nonprofit

70+ comments · 7 months ago

Is AI being used to write grants now? : r/nonprofit

This year, **100% of grant applications have been supported by AI.** It's a great tool for small orgs or groups in particular, who don't have a grant writing resource or that skill set in house, nor the money to... **71 answers** · Top answer: I only use it to polish my grammar and edit for conciseness because I can b...

Using **AI** for **grant writing**? : r/nonprofit - Reddit 8 answers 7 Jun 2024

Do you use **AI/Chat GPT** for **grant writing**? - Reddit 15 answers 20 May 2023

More results from www.reddit.com

Videos :



Using AI to Write Grants - What to Know 2025

YouTube · Learn Grant Writing 3 Feb 2025



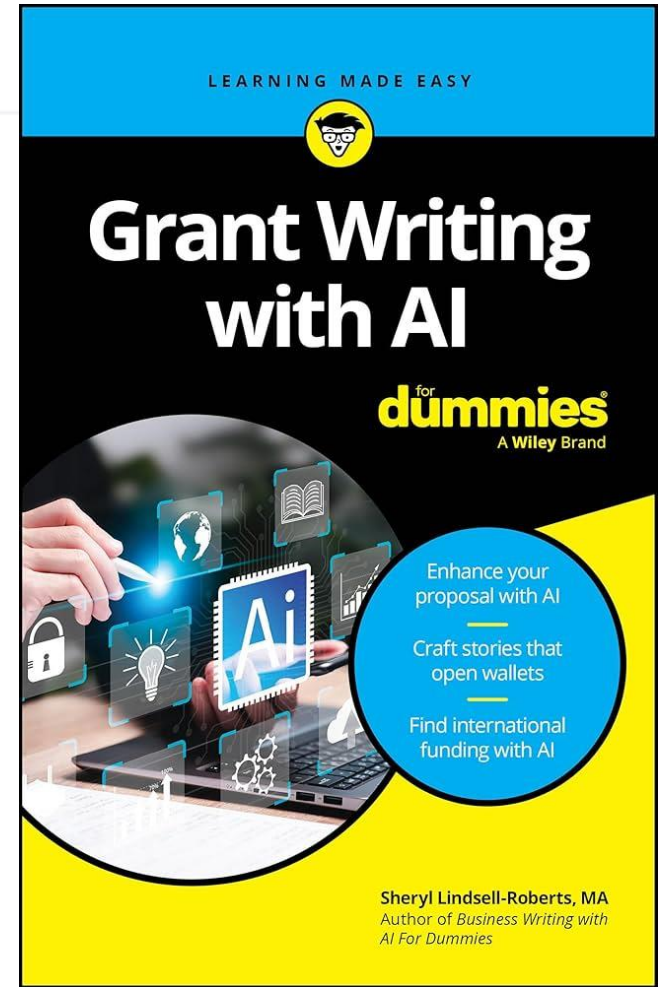
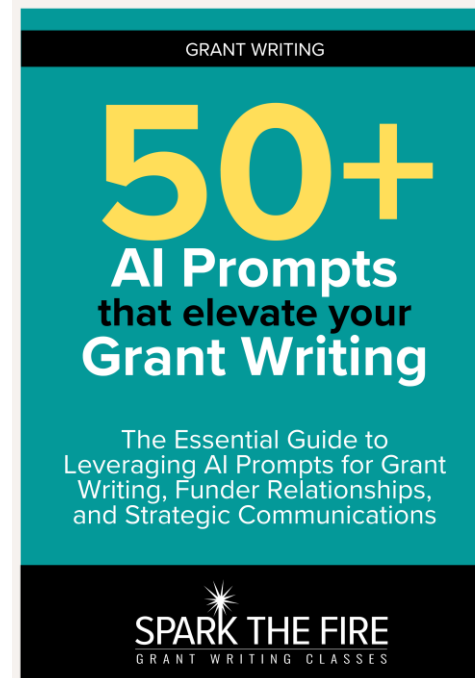
How They Made \$750K in 1 Year With No Experience Using ...

YouTube · Learn Grant Writing 16 Sept 2024



How ChatGPT Makes Grant Writing 10X Easier! With PROMPTS!

YouTube · Joanne Toller - Fundraising Coach 23 Apr 2025



YouTube · Grant Writing Made Easy

2.1K+ views · 2 years ago

Write Your Grant in One Hour Using AI



... AI to write stellar grants in a fraction of the time! **Grant Writing Made Easy** is a national **grant writing consulting** and online education ...

Grant Writing With AI

- **Dangers of Using AI (Some)**
 - Data Privacy and Security
 - Everything Sounds and Looks the Same
 - Ethical Considerations
- **How Can AI Help in Grant Writing?**
 - Some Thoughts on Tools
 - Some Thoughts on Prompts
- **Regulations and Recommendations**
- **Discussion**

**No genAI
was used to
create this
presentation.**

(Some) Dangers of Using AI

Data Privacy

What happens with the prompts you enter?

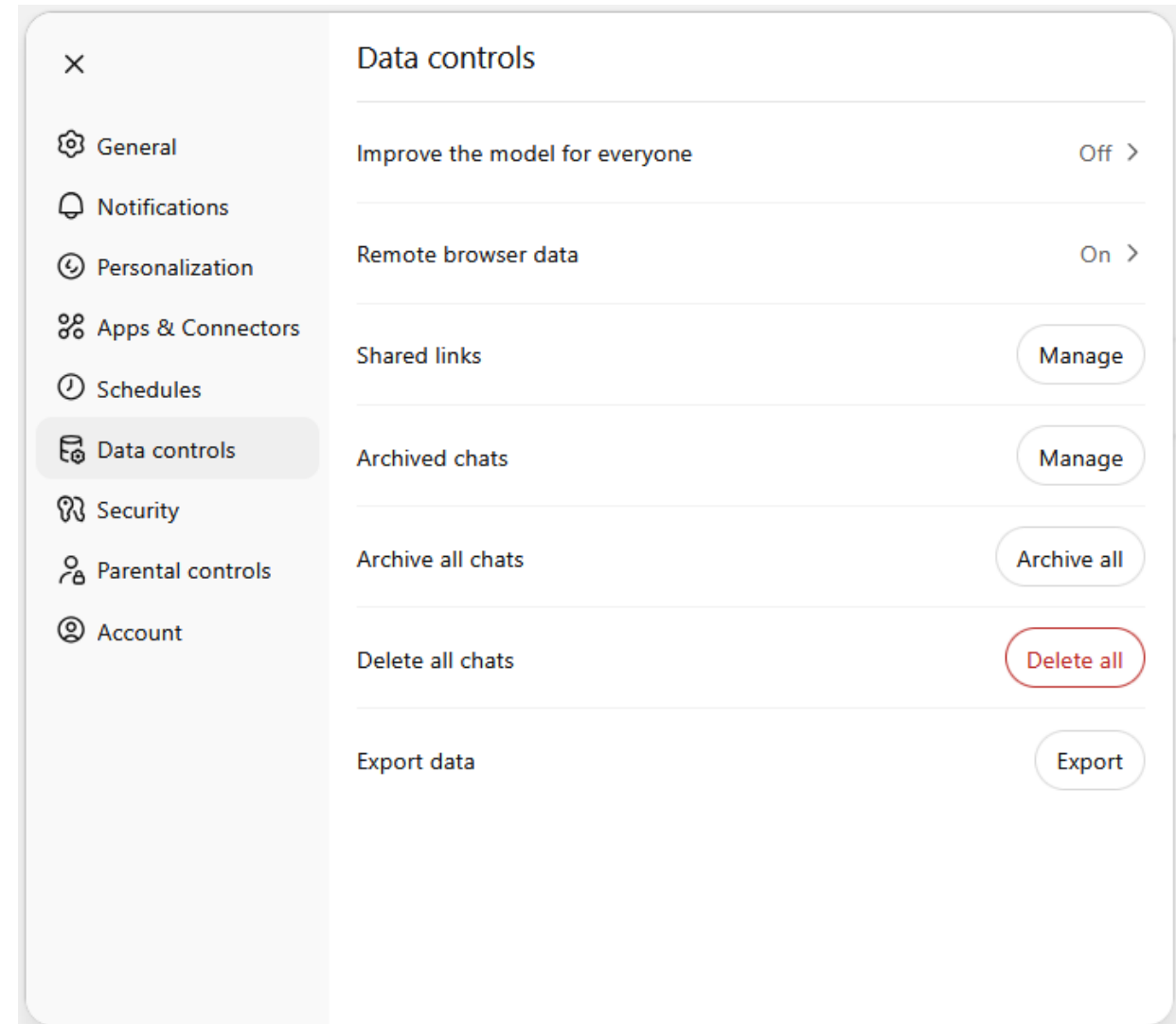
- Data are used for training of the model and may become public over time.
- ChatGPT flaws exposed user chat histories and credit card details.

ChatGPT:

Turn off «Improve the model for everyone».

But: The data are still sent to OpenAI. Who can guarantee that they are not processed or stored?

There is no legal protection.



Data Privacy: Microsoft Copilot Chat?

License for all UZH staff

Contract approved by our legal department

But: According to Central IT “No particularly sensitive data may be entered in Copilot. Responsibility for compliance with data protection regulations lies with the user.”



<https://www.zi.uzh.ch/en/staff/software-elearning/microsoft/Microsoft-Copilot.html>

Data Protection of Popular AI Tools

	ChatGPT Free	ChatGPT Plus	ChatGPT Pro	ChatGPT Team	ChatGPT Enterprise	OpenAI API	Microsoft Copilot	Copilot in Microsoft 365 Family & Single	Microsoft Copilot Pro	Microsoft 365 Copilot Chat	Microsoft 365 Copilot	Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service	Google Gemini-Apps	Google Gemini Advanced	Gemini API in Google AI Studio Unpaid Services**	Gemini API in Google AI Studio Paid Services	Gemini for Google Workspace	Gemini API in Vertex AI
Notes	Offers for private users			Offers for companies		www.bing.com	Included in Microsoft 365 Family & Single	Additional subscription for Private Users	Included in Microsoft 365 for companies	Additional subscription for companies	API Service		AI Service for private users		API for hobby users, students, and developers	API for hobby users, students, and developers	Included in Google Workspace for companies	API Service for companies
Terms of Use	Europe Terms of Use			Business terms		Microsoft Services Agreement & Copilot AI Experiences Terms			Microsoft Customer Agreement (MCA) & Microsoft Product Terms			Terms of Service & Gemini Apps Privacy Hub		Google APIs Terms of Service & Gemini API Additional Terms of Service			Google Workspace Terms of Service & Google Workspace Service Specific Terms	Google Cloud Platform/SecOps Terms of Service & Service Specific Terms
Data Processing Agreement (DPA)	Not available			Data processing addendum (to be concluded separately)		Not available			Microsoft Products and Services Data Protection Addendum (DPA)			Not available		Not available The Google Controller-Controller Data Protection Terms apply	Google Data Processing Addendum for Products Where Google is a Data Processor	Cloud Data Processing Addendum (Customers)		
Use with personal data	No			Possible		No			Possible if web search is disabled*	Possible		No		No	Possible	Possible		
Use with confidential data	No			Possible		No			Possible if web search is disabled*	Possible		No		No		Possible		
Use with professional secrets	No			No		No			Possible if necessary amendments are in place and web search is disabled*	Possible if necessary amendments are in place and abuse monitoring is disabled		No		No		Possible if necessary amendments are in place and abuse review is disabled	Possible if necessary amendments are in place and abuse review is disabled	
Use for the provider's own purposes (e.g. training, service improvement)	Yes Use for training can be disabled			No		According to the information page: No According to Copilot AI Experiences Terms (Section 5): Possible			Possible with active web search*	No		Yes Use for training can be disabled		Yes	Possible when using Search Grounding (web search)	No		
Use within a company	Possible with restrictions no personal data no confidential data training disabled			Possible		Not recommended			Possible if web access is disabled. Possible with restrictions if web search is active (no personal data, no confidential data)	Possible		Limited possibility no personal data no confidential data Training disabled		Not recommended		Possible with restrictions if Search Grounding is disabled (no confidential data).	Possible	

https://www.rosenthal.ch/downloads/VISCHER_ai-tools-03-25.pdf

Everything Sounds and Looks the Same

“Imagine a world where chefs rely solely on kitchen robots to cook their meals.

At first it seems ideal — perfectly cooked dishes every time, with no risk of burning or under-seasoning.

But soon, the charm of human creativity in the kitchen begins to fade. The robots churn out dishes according to pre-programmed recipes, lacking the flair and personal touch that human chefs bring to their craft. Each plate looks identical, tasting fine but lacking that special spark that makes a meal memorable.”



S. L. -Roberts, [Grant Writing with AI for Dummies](#) (John Wiley and Sons, Indianapolis, 2024).

Warner, J. [The Science of Creativity](#). Hongkiat (2010).

You want your grant proposal to be something innovative, something «new» and not a piece of text that drowns in the masses...

Grant Writing with AI Workflow

Stage	How AI Helps	Example Prompts	Tools
1. Find Funders 🔍	Summarize calls, check fit, extract requirements	"Summarize this RFP in 5 bullets."	ChatGPT, Scite.ai
2. Brainstorming & Idea Shaping 💡	Generate concepts, explore alternatives, soundboard ideas	"Challenge my idea and suggest new angles."	ChatGPT, Claude
3. Outline the Proposal 🌿	Create structure, define aims, build logic flow	"Draft an outline with 3 narrative options."	ChatGPT, Notion AI
4. Draft Core Sections 📝	Write first drafts, refine arguments	"Create a concise significance section (150 words)."	ChatGPT, Jasper
5. Edit & Polish ✂️	Improve clarity, tone, length	"Make this clearer without changing meaning."	Grammarly, Wordtune
6. Simulate Reviewers 🗣️	Identify weaknesses, anticipate critique	"Act as a skeptical reviewer—list 5 concerns."	ChatGPT

A boring, generic table generated by ChatGPT, GPT 5.1

Plagiarism Risk

- LLMs do not (reliably) identify verbatim or content-based quotations
- Even if just used for rephrasing and revision, **the result can closely resemble other work present in the training data.**
- **Check your work for (unintentional) plagiarism:**
<https://turnitin.uzh.ch/>

Turnitin Similarity


Comprehensive and efficient similarity reporting to quickly identify collusion.

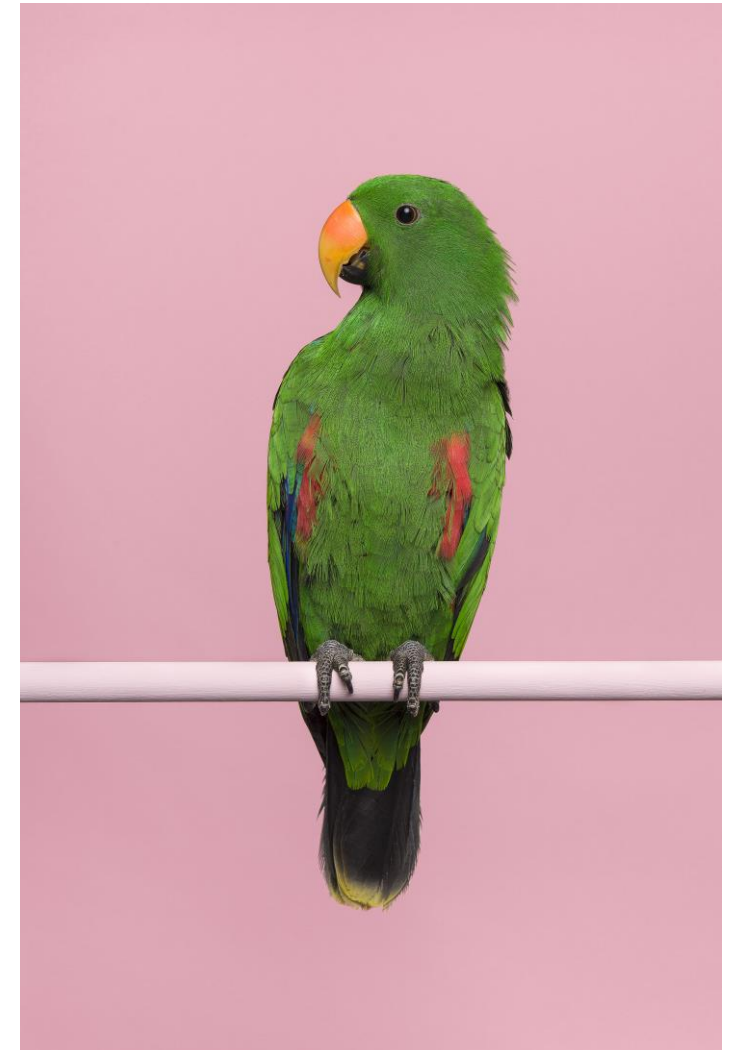
Launch



Incorrect Information

- Lack of semantic understanding of human language
- Hallucinations: false or misleading information presented as fact.

Bender, E. M., Gebru, T., McMillan-Major, A. & Shmitchell, S. [On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big?](#) . in *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* 610–623 (ACM, Virtual Event Canada, 2021).




Ethical Considerations


There are many more AI risks!

ai-impact-risk.com/

AI IMPACT RISK

Infowar 


Disinformation and
propaganda

Reality
Distortion 

Fabricating falsehoods and
undermining trust

Monopoly 


Power concentrated in a
few companies

Injustice 


Digital divide and
worker exploitation

Plagiarism
& Privacy 


Unauthorized use of art,
code, text, or data

Automated
Labor 


Loss of human jobs and
control over society

Stereotyping 


Averaging that produces
clichéd results

Climate
Impact 

Carbon and water use

Knockoff
Experiences 

Shortcuts that replace real
learning or relationships

Tainted
Data 

Bias and voids in training data

How Can AI Help in Grant Writing?

Some Application Scenarios

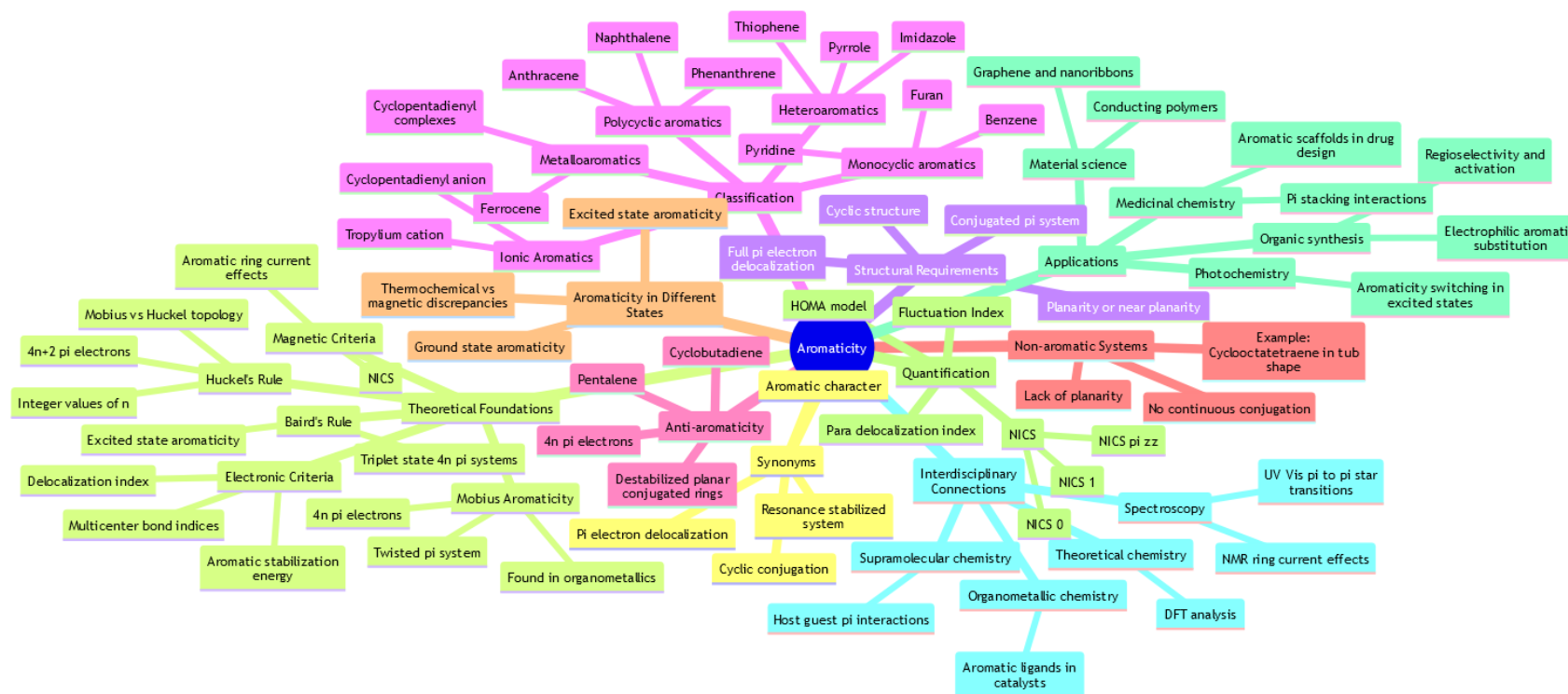
Brainstorming

Creating Mindmaps

Finding Funders

Reviewer Simulation

Formatting



<https://mermaid.ai>

Brainstorming / Using AI as a Sounding Board



My AI chatbot thinks my idea is fundable

A dialogue with artificial intelligence has changed how Angela Steinauer thinks through her ideas. The trick is staying sceptical and asking better questions.

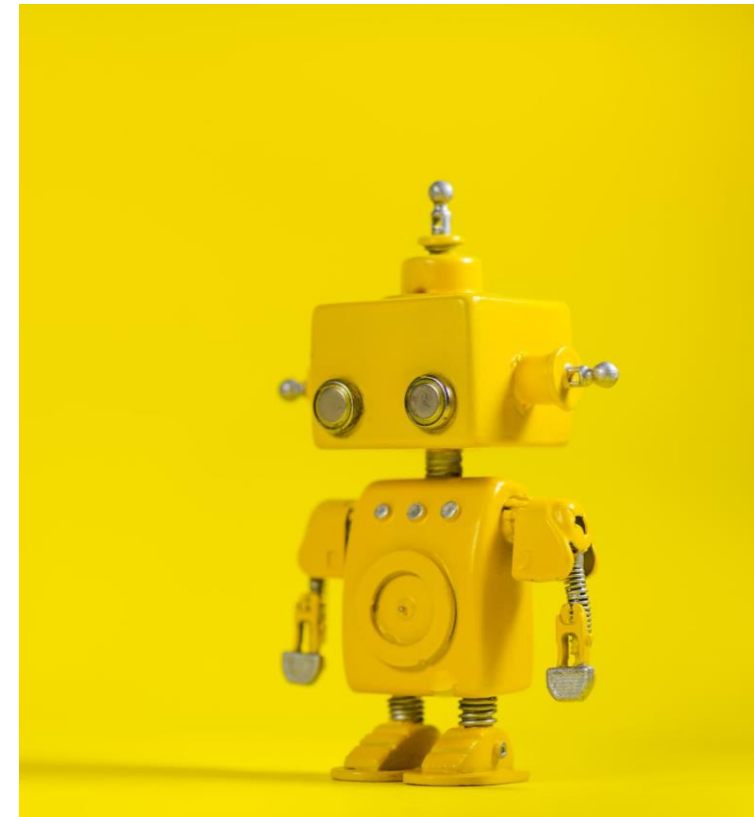
By [Angela Steinauer](#) 

Steinauer, A. [My AI chatbot thinks my idea is fundable.](#) *Nature* (2025)

“I’ve been thinking about X and Y, and how they connect to Z. I wonder if there’s something novel here, something that hasn’t been done before.”

Some Thoughts on Tools

- Check which model (LLM) is behind a tool
- Compare models: [LMArena.ai Leaderboard](#)
- Consider hosting a local LLM (no data leaves your machine!)
→ Hutson, M. [Forget ChatGPT: why researchers now run small AIs on their laptops.](#) *Nature* **633**, 728–729 (2024).



LM Studio

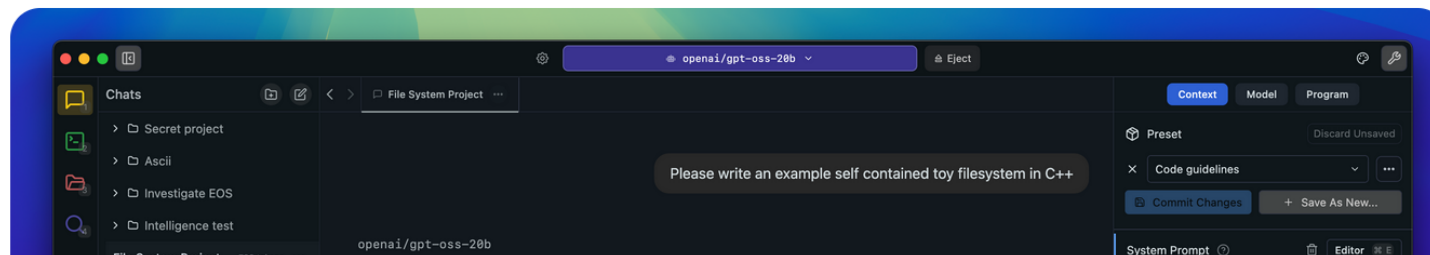


Local AI, on Your Computer.

Run local LLMs like `gpt-oss`, `Qwen3`, `Gemma3`, `DeepSeek` and many more on your computer, privately and for free.

 Download for Windows 0.3.34

LM Studio is free for home and work use • [terms](#)



<https://lmstudio.ai/>


**Open Source
Models:**










gpt-oss
deepseek-r1
Qwen3
gemma-3
Mistral
Magistral


etc.










Compare Models: LMArena.ai Leaderboard

<https://lmarena.ai/leaderboard/>

 Text 🕒 4 days ago

Rank ↑↓	Model ↑↓	Score ↓	Votes ↑↓
1	 gemini-3-pro	1491	13'801
2	 grok-4.1-thinking	1481	14'412
3	 claude-opus-4-5-20251101-thi...	1471	7'980
4	 grok-4.1	1463	14'324
5	 claude-opus-4-5-20251101	1462	8'733
6	 gpt-5.1-high	1457	11'949
7	 gemini-2.5-pro	1451	74'939
8	 claude-sonnet-4-5-20250929-t...	1448	25'961
9	 claude-opus-4-1-20250805-thi...	1448	41'812

 Search 🕒 6 days ago

Rank ↑↓	Model ↑↓	Score ↓	Votes ↑↓
1	 gemini-3-pro-grounding	1210	2'537
2	 gpt-5.1-search	1201	2'430
3	 grok-4-fast-search	1164	19'686
4	 gemini-2.5-pro-grounding	1142	24'708
5	 o3-search	1139	21'009
6	 grok-4-search	1138	19'302
7	 ppl-sonar-reasoning-pro-high	1138	24'218
8	 claude-opus-4-1-search	1130	24'186
9	 gpt-5-search	1130	20'755

AI Tools Specifically for Grant Writing

Not tested, try at your own risk!



amplifund.com

Grantable

grantable.co/



fluxx.io



grantboost.io/



fundwriter.ai



smartygrants.com/



grant.io



ercgrant.ai/

Some Thoughts on Prompts

- Give **precise instructions**.
- **Provide relevant context** to avoid hallucinations and inaccurate information.
- Assign a **role to adjust tone and increase depth of output** (e.g. «You are a researcher in field XY.»)
- Make use of the **chatbots memory** by building prompts in several steps.
- **Use a new chat** when you change topics.

Further resources on prompting

- This lecture incorporated elements from the Prompt Engineering Guide at <https://learnprompting.org/docs/introduction>
- S. Schulhoff et al., [*The Prompt Report: A Systematic Survey of Prompt Engineering Techniques*](#), arXiv:2406.06608.

Context vs. Privacy Risks

Very detailed prompt
More accurate AI output

No details given
Less accurate AI output

Context given to LLM

High privacy risk

Avoid privacy risk

Privacy Risk

→ To avoid this dilemma: Run LLM locally on your machine!

Some Prompt Ideas

Describe how the research objectives align with the goals and priorities of the funding organization.

Provide a detailed timeline for the project, including key milestones and deliverables.

Identify any potential challenges or risks that may impact the project timeline and how to mitigate them.

Describe the potential impact of the research findings on the field and any broader societal implications.

Provide a detailed budget breakdown for the project, including personnel, equipment, supplies, and other expenses.

Explain how the project contributes to advancing knowledge or addressing critical issues in [field].

Explain how to ensure the sustainability of the project beyond the grant period.

Regulations & Recommendations by Funders



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

“The ERC Scientific Council recognises that researchers regularly seek input from AI technologies or human third parties, for example to brainstorm or generate ideas, to search the literature, and to revise, translate or summarise text.

The Scientific Council emphasises that use of external help in preparing a proposal does not relieve the author from taking full and sole authorship responsibilities with regard to acknowledgements, plagiarism and the practice of good scientific and professional conduct.”

<https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/current-position-erc-scientific-council-ai>



“Anyone wishing to exploit the potential of AI applications in research must be aware of the associated risks and consequences. Ethical and legal implications must be taken into account – for example in areas such as intellectual property or in the handling of sensitive and confidential data.

Thus, all users should carefully consider the implications of using AI tools.”

“Researchers must ensure that the principles of scientific integrity are observed at all times. This also applies to data protection and confidentiality.”

<https://www.snf.ch/en/Gz1VrJlkLyay4H7z/news/the-snsfs-approach-to-the-use-of-artificial-intelligence-in-funding-applications>

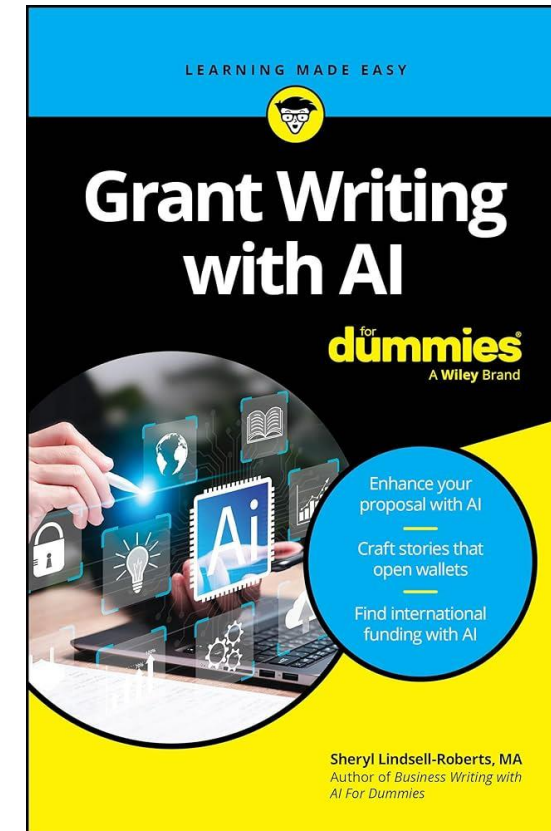
Summary: Grant Writing With AI

Risks

- Data protection and confidentiality
- Lack of originality / creativity
- Violation of intellectual property, plagiarism
- Reinforcement of existing biases
- Incorrect information, loss of scientific integrity

Opportunities

- Brainstorming, creating mindmaps, sounding board for ideas
- Simulate reviewers comments
- Help with formatting, proofreading & editing
- **Run an LLM locally on your machine** (avoid data privacy risks!)



S. L. -Roberts, *Grant Writing with AI for Dummies* (John Wiley and Sons, Indianapolis, 2024).

**Any
questions?**

Feedback



<https://forms.office.com/e/dCjyuGTjVX>

Contact

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An Interesting Talk by Central IT

AI risks: From hallucinations to automated hacking

Kaju Bujanja, Full Stack Software Engineer, complete electronic systems AG und Kursleiter, Zentrale Informatik UZH

This talk explores how AI systems can mislead, be manipulated, or even weaponized—from hallucinated facts and hidden prompt injections to large-scale automated attacks.

By looking at real incidents and a practical demonstration, we'll uncover how thin the line can be between innovation and exploitation.

Watch the recording:

https://uzh.mediaspace.cast.switch.ch/media/AI+risksA+From+hallucinations+to+automated+hacking/0_cualkd24