**Introduction to using AI for Fundraising
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In July we offered the voluntary groups in Bromley an online training session on using Artificial Intelligence in their fundraising operations.

This was the first occasion that we had offered this, and it was a bit of an experiment to determine the level of interest and what groups might make of it.

In the event we were overwhelmed with registrations. We used Eventbrite which meant that the event was public. A significant number of the registrations came from overseas and/or were not from the voluntary sector (including from the US military, Italy, parts of Africa and Asia). We had to cancel many of the registrations.

On the day we still had 18 attendees online which we were very happy with.

I split the session into 4 parts:

1. What is AI?
2. Ethical considerations
3. Showcasing what it could do and then
4. Open discussion and Q and A

At the beginning I asked if anyone had used it and those who said that they had was low.

There are several ethical considerations to consider which range from data privacy, transparency and trust, energy use and the impact on climate change and loss of jobs.

The main time of the session was taken up focusing on how AI could be used during several tasks that groups would normally undertake. These were:

* mind mapping fundraising ideas
* drafting direct emails to potential donors and supporters
* drafting thank you letters
* promotion of fundraising events
* bid writing
* summarising texts
* texts for use on social media

For each of the tasks I used Chat GPT, Co Pilot and Gemini to ask the same or similar questions. We were then able to compare the tone, usefulness etc of the various responses.

It felt risky as I was entering the requests live and then seeing how the various platforms responded, and I could not know that in advance. So, the group was seeing what I was seeing as it was generated. We were able to refine questions to get better answers.

I think that the takeaway is that AI can be used, if you are comfortable with the ethics, more effectively for those routine tasks of producing standard texts that do not require a lot of intellectual input or where you are struggling to be more concise.

But everything does need to be checked very carefully for accuracy and tone. I also learned that there is a limit to the number of free requests you can make within a given time period.

The feedback was generally very positive. In the evaluation 83 % agreed or strongly agreed that that they were more confident in using AI. 92% of respondents would recommend the session to others.