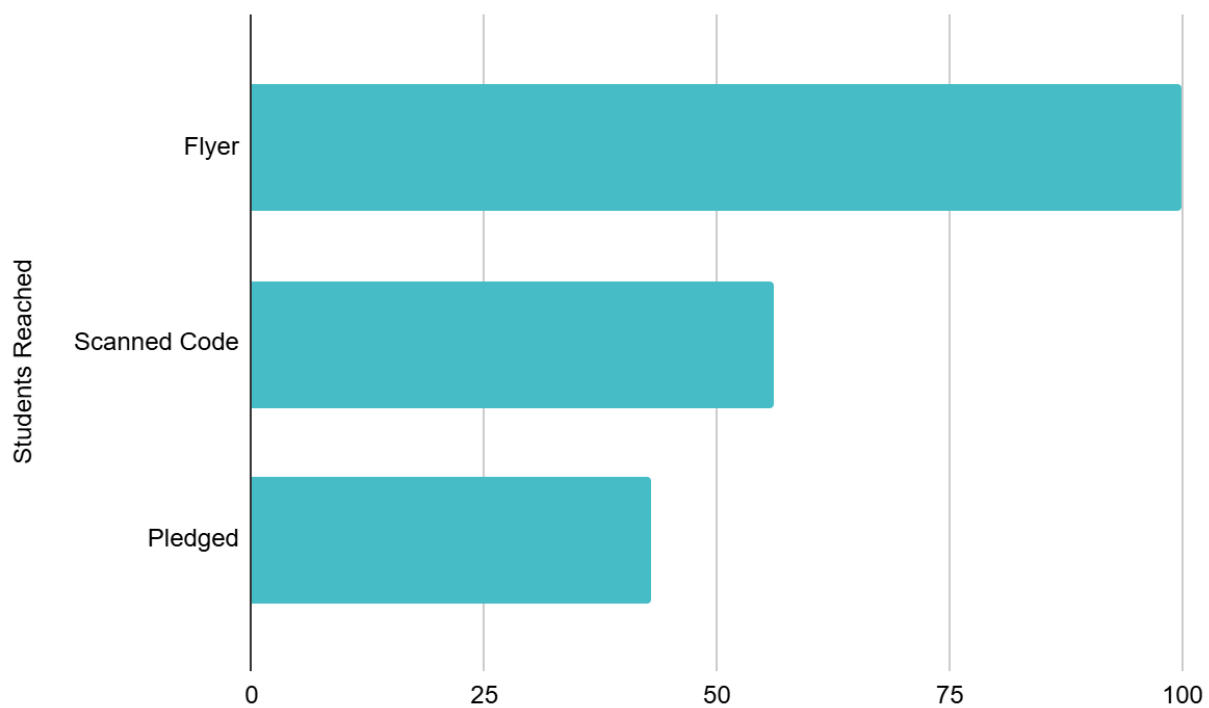


Criteria

With all of that in mind, your blog posts can be creative and personal, but should meet the following criteria:

- Written for the lay-audience, as well as your fellow classmates
- Should make specific reference to course concepts and ideas, with explanations of what they are and how you incorporated them into your work
- References should be included at the end of the post with links to anything on the internet. Use that hypermediacy!
- Links to your work, images of your work or of your process, plus the work itself (a video if you made one, for example) should all be included (REMEDIATION!). Think of this as both a way for me to see and grade your project, but also further attention and press for your piece! You want people who come to the website to be able to find and use everything you've done.
- Explanation of exactly what you did, why you did it, what choices you made, what changes in direction you had to take given issues you ran into, etc.
- Still brief enough that people will actually read it
- EDITED – This is public! Make sure you check for typos and grammar errors!

Figures



Blog Post

Campus Outreach on Responsible AI Usage: An Analysis of On-Campus Resources

Ella Blackstock and Ava Cashdollar

Professor Huxster

Environmental Communication

Artificial intelligence tools are rapidly expanding, increasingly being used as educational resources, such as the implementation of chatbots in college websites to provide resources for prospective students. Eckerd College has recently developed an AI tool, 'Ecky', that is available to the student body at any time to answer questions and provide links to on-campus resources. This was developed to assist the student body during hours that the college campus is closed or as an outreach for those not comfortable with reaching out themselves. In addition to being a tool students can access, Ecky texts the student body with various 'check-ins' regarding mental health, financial stressors, and other common issues among college students. This provides the administration with various insights into the struggles facing the student body, such as higher stress levels reported in athletes, which could be utilized in on-campus mental health initiatives.

This tool faced substantial backlash among the student body, with many holding the belief that it didn't align with the environmental values engraved in Eckerd College's culture. Artificial intelligence poses great threats to the environment; a single AI model, specifically the GPT-3 training model, can use up to 80,000 households' worth of CO₂, not accounting for the ecological damage involved in mining, deforestation, and water usage (Hosseini, M., Gao, P., & Vivas-Valencia, C., 2024). Many students hold the belief that Eckerd should be combating the expanding use and reliance on AI tools, due to their potential harm to the environment, rather than promoting new developments. However, Ecky is not generative AI; rather, it pulls pre-determined information from a series of over 300 common inquiries, and does not pose the same ecological impacts. We set out to inform the student body of Ecky's intention, ability, and impact while also warning against reliance on AI applications.

Generative AI tools use 2.6 more watt-hours than a Google search query, and have the potential to create a dependence for gaining direct information, without understanding or retaining it (Goldman Sachs, 2024). A recent study found that students more commonly use AI for ‘executive help,’ gaining quick and immediate information, rather than ‘instrumental help’ to break down concepts and assist in developing knowledge (McQuiston, 2025). Assuming these results apply to Eckerd College, a major goal of our communication project was to educate students on the difference between generative and non-generative AI, in addition to the potential social and ecological effects.

To facilitate this communication, we held an educational tabling event on campus outside Triton’s Pub, a popular dining hall, during lunch hours. Our event featured an educational flyer integrated with a QR code, utilizing hypermediacy (Pezzullo and Cox, 2022).

WHAT IS ECKY?
ECKERD'S NEW AI CHATBOT

1 WHY WAS ECKY CREATED?

The AI chatbot was designed to answer any questions students may have when campus is closed. This is a necessary step in innovation to help new students by making resources more accessible.

2 WHAT DOES IT DO?

Ecky is a tool to answer questions or help students locate specific resources on campus. Additionally, the results of Ecky 'check-ins' provides insight to common struggles facing the student body, that can then be targeted through on campus programs and resources.

3 WHATS THE IMPACT?

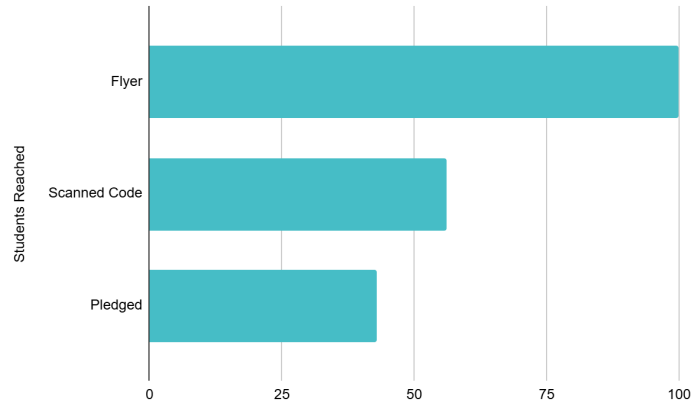
Ecky is not generative AI and does not require the energy or capacity of other AI tools, instead pulling responses from a human-created database of over 300 commonly asked questions, comparable to Siri.

4 PLEDGE RESPONSIBLE USAGE

While Ecky is a helpful tool and not environmentally damaging, it is important to know and understand the different forms of AI and the impact each application has. We are asking YOU to pledge to use AI responsibly with respect towards the environmental impacts and future generations.

For more information on responsible AI usage:
Email: egblackstock@eckerd.edu or akcashedollar@eckerd.edu
For recommendations on Ecky's expanding database:
Email: wallaceaj@eckerd.edu

The QR code featured took the user to a Google Form, collecting data on how many students utilize Ecky and how many found it to be effective, with a signature box at the end asking students to pledge to responsible AI usage. The goal of the tabling event was to distribute 100 flyers and receive 100 pledges; out of 100 distributed flyers, 56 scanned the code, and 43 signed the pledge. While this is not a significant portion of the Eckerd



population, 1,986 undergraduate students, to be generalized, 81% of students who pledged reportedly didn't engage with Ecky or any AI applications. This does not mean responsible usage equates to no usage, but rather signifies a need for educational outreach regarding appropriate usage among college students.

Continuation of on-campus educational efforts requires public participation and student autonomy within campus decision-making. This requires three major elements: right to knowledge, comment, and standing, all of which were considered in the development of our campaign (Pezzullo and Cox, 2022). The first and most prominent, knowledge, is vital to fostering responsible AI habits via information regarding benefits, applications, and consequences. In future iterations of this project, one could run a pressure campaign, potentially creating a petition for students to sign either in support or against Ecky's use. This would provide the student body with the right to comment or participate in decision-making. Lastly, the right to standing in this context would involve presenting the results of communication efforts to administrators, lobbying on

behalf of the public interest. Overall, this project provided helpful insight into the student bodies' perception of AI applications, and specifically Eckerd College's Ecky chatbot, as well as educating the population on Ecky's ecological impacts, differing from generative methods. The results of this study implicate the need for further communication efforts and potentially a directional change, advocating for the elimination of AI tools within Eckerd's facilities.

References

Goldman Sachs. (2024, May 14). AI is poised to drive 160% increase in data center power demand.

goldmansachs.com.

<https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/articles/AI-poised-to-drive-160-increase-in-power-demand>.

Hosseini, M., Gao, P., & Vivas-Valencia, C. (2024). A social-environmental impact perspective of generative artificial intelligence. *Environmental Science and Ecotechnology*, 23, 100520.

<https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S2666498424001340>.

Pezzullo, P. C., & Cox, J. R. (2022). *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere* (6th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

McQuiston, P. (2025). AI is changing how students learn — or avoid learning. *University of Southern California*. [*AI is changing how students learn — or avoid learning.*](#)