

AI / Automation Readiness Checklist

For Cultural Institutions & Small Museums

This checklist is designed to help museums and cultural organizations assess their readiness to adopt AI and automation tools in a thoughtful, mission-aligned way. Use it to identify strengths, gaps, and next steps before implementing new technologies.

Work through each section with your team. There are no wrong answers—this is about understanding where you are and what support you need.

1. Organizational Readiness

Goals & Problem Definition

- ☐ We have identified a specific problem or need that AI/automation could address
- ☐ This problem aligns with our institutional mission and strategic priorities
- ☐ We have considered non-AI solutions and determined AI is appropriate
- ☐ Leadership understands and supports AI exploration

Notes / Specific use case:

Capacity & Resources

- ☐ We have staff time available to test, learn, and implement new tools
- ☐ We have budget for training, subscriptions, or consulting support if needed
- ☐ Someone on our team can serve as the AI/automation point person
- ☐ We are prepared for a learning curve and iterative process

Notes:

2. Data & Content Sensitivity

What Information Will Be Involved?

- ☐ We have identified what types of content or data will be entered into AI tools
- ☐ We understand that free AI tools may use input data for training purposes
- ☐ The content we plan to use is appropriate for external/public tools
- ☐ We have documented what information should NEVER be entered into AI

Content types we will use AI for:

Prohibited content (never to be entered):

Collections & Community Considerations

- ☐ Our collections/archives do not contain highly sensitive provenance issues
- ☐ Community stories or oral histories will not be entered into AI without explicit consent
- ☐ We have considered how AI use might impact trust with source communities
- ☐ Repatriation discussions or sensitive cultural contexts will remain human-led

Specific sensitivities to consider:

3. Staff Readiness & Support

Understanding & Comfort Levels

- ☐ Staff understand what AI is and how it works at a basic level
- ☐ Staff have been consulted about AI adoption and their concerns have been heard
- ☐ Training will be provided before staff are expected to use AI tools
- ☐ Staff who are uncomfortable with AI will not be pressured to use it

Staff concerns or questions:

Training & Guidelines

- ☐ We will provide clear written guidelines on appropriate AI use
- ☐ Staff will receive hands-on training, not just access to tools
- ☐ We have identified who staff can go to with AI-related questions
- ☐ Ongoing support will be available as staff learn and experiment

Training plan:

4. Quality Control & Review

Review Processes

- ☐ All AI-generated content will be reviewed by a human expert before publication
- ☐ We have identified who is responsible for fact-checking AI outputs
- ☐ Historical or curatorial content will be verified against primary sources
- ☐ We will track where AI is used so we can audit if issues arise

Review workflow:

Accuracy Standards

- ☐ We understand that AI can 'hallucinate' false information
- ☐ We have a plan for correcting errors if they reach the public
- ☐ Public-facing content has a higher review standard than internal drafts
- ☐ We will monitor for patterns of bias or misrepresentation in AI outputs

Error response plan:

5. Ethical Alignment

Representation & Voice

- ☐ We have considered how AI use might affect representation of marginalized communities
- ☐ AI will not be used to summarize or paraphrase community stories without consent
- ☐ We will preserve our institutional voice and not let AI flatten our unique perspective
- ☐ Interpretation and curatorial judgment will remain human-led

Representation considerations:

Accessibility

- ☐ AI-generated content will be reviewed for accessibility (screen reader compatibility, plain language)
- ☐ We will ensure AI outputs meet our accessibility standards

- ☐ Alt text, captions, and descriptive content will be human-reviewed
- ☐ We will not rely on AI for content requiring cultural nuance or lived experience

Accessibility requirements:

Transparency

- ☐ We are prepared to disclose AI use when appropriate (e.g., exhibit credits, internal documentation)
- ☐ We have considered when and how to communicate AI use to the public
- ☐ We will not hide AI involvement in ways that could damage trust

Transparency plan:

6. Risk Assessment

What Could Go Wrong?

- ☐ We have identified what risks are most relevant to our organization
- ☐ We understand the reputational risk of publishing inaccurate information
- ☐ We have considered copyright and intellectual property concerns
- ☐ We know how we will respond if an error reaches visitors or the public

Biggest risks for our organization:

Risk mitigation strategies:

Pilot Approach

- ☐ We plan to start with low-risk use cases before expanding
- ☐ We will evaluate results before scaling AI use
- ☐ Internal content will be tested before public-facing materials
- ☐ We are prepared to adjust or stop if AI doesn't meet our needs

Pilot use cases (low-risk starting points):

7. Policy & Documentation

Written Guidelines

- ☐ We will create a simple written AI policy or guidelines document
- ☐ The policy will include permitted uses, prohibited uses, and review requirements
- ☐ Staff will have access to the policy and understand how to follow it
- ☐ The policy will be reviewed and updated as we learn

Policy development timeline:

8. Tool Selection

Choosing the Right Tools

- ☐ We understand the difference between free and paid AI tools
- ☐ We have considered data privacy implications of different tools
- ☐ We will select tools that align with our budget and technical capacity
- ☐ We have a process for evaluating new tools before adopting them

Tools we are considering:

Readiness Summary

Based on this checklist, we are:

- ☐ Ready to pilot AI with clear guidelines and support in place
- ☐ Nearly ready, but need to address a few gaps first (list below)
- ☐ Not yet ready; we need more time, training, or resources

Key gaps or concerns to address before adoption:

Next steps:

This checklist was developed for the Kane-DuPage Regional Museum Association

Marissa Garza | MGTV Systems Studio