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THE JEWISH AI ETHICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION TOOLKIT

A practical framework for Jewish nonprofit leaders to use AI responsibly, ethically, and effectively.



CONSIDERING AI IN OUR DECISIONS



Artificial intelligence is advancing quickly – and for many Jewish organizations, it's no longer a question of if to engage, but how.

In my work with schools and mission-driven Jewish nonprofits I'm hearing a common set of questions:

- How do we use AI responsibly?
- What are the ethical implications?
- What about the environmental impact?
- How do we balance innovation with our values?

This toolkit was created to help navigate those questions.

Rather than offering a single answer, it provides a practical framework for thoughtful decision-making – one that holds complexity instead of oversimplifying it.

AI is not inherently good or bad. It is a tool. And like any tool, its impact depends on how we choose to use it.

Jewish tradition offers a powerful lens for this moment. It invites us to consider not only what is possible, but what is right; not only what is efficient, but what is responsible.

My hope is that this resource supports you (and your organization) in approaching AI with clarity, intention, and confidence, grounded in both your mission and your values.

Warmly,
Sarah Rubinson Levy



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WHY AI? WHY NOW?

Artificial intelligence is no longer emerging; it is already embedded in the tools we use every day.

Across schools and other mission-driven nonprofits, leaders are beginning to explore how AI can help them work more effectively – freeing time for the human work that matters most: connection, creativity, and care.

AI can:

- Save time by automating repetitive tasks
- Support clearer, more consistent communication
- Enhance learning, accessibility, and engagement
- Strengthen decision-making through better use of data

But this moment is not just about opportunity; it is also about responsibility.

AI raises real questions about ethics, environmental impact, and the role of human judgment in an increasingly automated world.

And perhaps most importantly:

- AI cannot replace relationships.
- It cannot replace wisdom.
- It cannot replace values.

Which is why this moment calls for thoughtful leadership.

Not to resist AI. Not to rush toward it.

But to engage with it intentionally – grounded in mission, guided by ethics, and aware of its broader impact.

EVALUATE AI THROUGH THREE LENSES

At the heart of this toolkit is a simple but powerful idea:
good decisions require multiple perspectives.

When considering the use of AI, it can be tempting to focus on a single factor – efficiency, cost, or innovation. But responsible leadership requires a broader view.

This framework invites you to evaluate each decision through three critical lenses: mission impact, ethical alignment, and environmental responsibility.

These lenses are not meant to compete with one another, but to work together.

Strong decisions are those that thoughtfully balance all three. As you review potential AI uses, return to these questions consistently; they provide an anchor for intentional, values-aligned leadership.

Lens	Guiding Question	Key Consideration
Mission Impact	Will this AI tool help us fulfill our purpose more effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improves learning, engagement, or community impact?Saves staff time for relational work?Expands accessibility?
Ethical Alignment	Does this tool align with Jewish values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respects privacy, dignity, fairness?Avoids bias and misinformation?Enhances human care rather than replacing it?
Environmental Responsibility	Are we mindful of the energy, water, and carbon costs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How energy-intensive is this AI use?Are sustainable alternatives available?Do the benefits justify the environmental footprint?

Think of these lenses as the three legs of a stool. Weakness in any leg makes the decision unstable.

STEP BY STEP DECISION FRAMEWORK

While the three lenses provide a way of thinking, this section offers a process for action.

AI decisions can feel abstract or overwhelming. This step-by-step framework is designed to break that complexity into manageable parts. It walks you through identifying an opportunity, evaluating its impact, and making a decision that reflects both your goals and your values.

This is not a one-time exercise. It is a repeatable process that can be used across your organization – whether evaluating a new tool, piloting a small initiative, or setting broader policy. Over time, it can help create a shared language and approach to AI decision-making across teams.

1

Identify the Opportunity

- Define the goal or task the AI tool is intended to serve.
- Example: Automating weekly emails vs drafting pastoral notes.

2

Assess Mission Impact

- High / Medium / Low
- Does it strengthen your organization's purpose?

3

Assess Ethical Alignment

- High / Medium / Low
- Consider bias, fairness, privacy, and dignity.

4

Assess Environmental Responsibility

- Low / Medium / High
- Use per-query or per-model energy/water data when available.

5

Make a Values-Based Decision

- Prioritize High Mission + High Ethical Alignment.
- Accept environmental cost only if justified; consider mitigation strategies (batch processing, off-peak use, green-powered servers).

6

Monitor & Adjust

- Track outcomes and unintended consequences.
- Iterate and refine policies.

QUICK CHECKLIST

Sometimes, what leaders need most is not more theory, but quick, practical prompts.

These checklists are designed to support real-time decision-making. Whether you are considering a new tool, reviewing an AI-generated output, or guiding a team conversation, they offer a set of focused questions to ensure that key considerations are not overlooked.

They can be used individually or in team settings and are especially helpful for building consistency across roles, from marketing and communications to education and programming.

Mission Checklist

- Does this save staff time or improve outcomes?
- Does it expand access for students, congregants, or community members?
- Does it strengthen relationships or community engagement?

Ethics Checklist

- Are privacy and consent protected?
- Have bias or misinformation risks been evaluated?
- Does it enhance, not replace, human care?

Environment Checklist

- Energy and water consumption considered?
- Mitigation strategies in place?
- Is the benefit proportional to the environmental cost?

QUICK EXAMPLE

Frameworks are most useful when they can be applied in real situations.

This example demonstrates how the three lenses and decision-making process can be used in practice. It walks through a common, everyday use case and models how to weigh mission benefit, ethical considerations, and environmental impact.

You can use this as a template for your own scenarios. Consider adapting it to reflect your organization's specific context and needs.

Scenario: Generating weekly newsletter with AI

Lens	Rating	Notes
Mission	High	Saves staff time, strengthens engagement
Ethics	Medium	Review for factual accuracy before sending
Environment	Low	100 queries/day is negligible

Decision: Use AI with review and batching strategy.

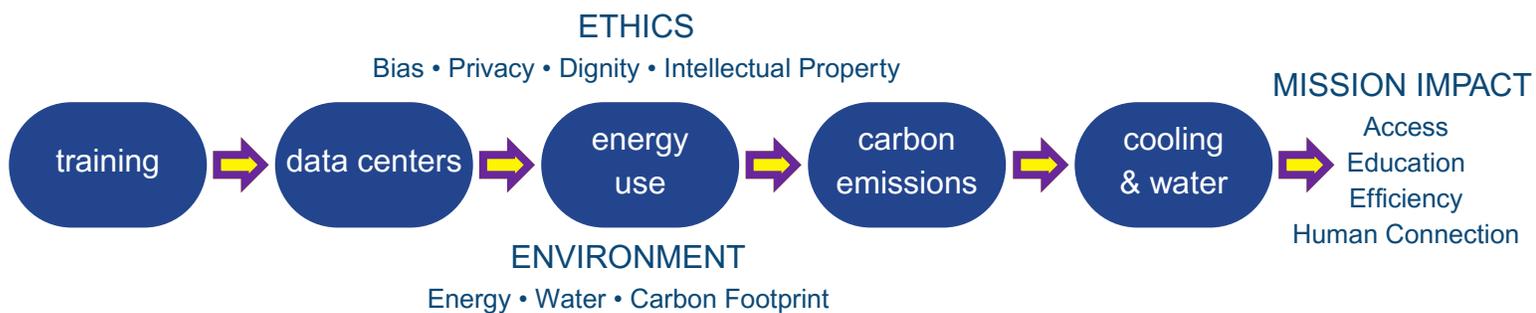


AI IMPACT AT A GLANCE

AI can feel invisible. The systems behind it are complex, and much of its impact happens out of sight.

This visual is designed to make that impact more tangible. It illustrates the broader ecosystem behind a single AI interaction – from training to data centers to energy use and environmental impact – while also highlighting where ethical and mission-driven considerations come into play.

Use this as a conversation starter within your organization. It can help teams better understand not just how AI works, but why thoughtful use matters.





KEY TAKEAWAYS

AI is evolving rapidly, but the responsibility for how it is used remains firmly in our hands.

You don't need to have all the answers. But you do need a way to approach the questions.

By leading with mission, anchoring in ethics, measuring impact, and iterating responsibly, organizations can engage with AI in a way that is both forward-looking and deeply grounded.

Remember:

- AI is a multiplier of both opportunity and responsibility.
- Use a structured framework to make consistent, values-aligned decisions.
- Small decisions add up; tracking and iteration are essential.
- Mitigation matters: intentional choices can reduce environmental and ethical harm.

And, you don't have to figure it out alone. I invite you to reach out so we can schedule a time to connect and discuss how to approach AI within your camp. Together, we can:

- Talk about what you are already experiencing with AI and where guidance is needed.
- Identify challenges or concerns you might have around values-driven AI usage.
- Map out simple, actionable steps you can take to lead your staff through your AI journey.

We're all learning as we go, and you don't have to navigate this alone. Let's take the next step together.

Reach me at: Sarah@SarahRubinsonCC.com

About Sarah

Dr. Sarah Rubinson Levy empowers excellence and innovation in education, partnering with clients to achieve the level of quality and distinction they desire for their Jewish organizations - serving as a strategic project manager, thought partner, and/or content expert.

With over 20 years of experience, including a master's and a doctorate as well as certificates in Day School Education, Jewish Leadership Studies, Jewish Educational Leadership, and Executive Coaching, Sarah helps leaders look towards the future, elevating their in-house teams and resources to foster effective, joyful, future-ready environments through a process that focuses on clarity, strategy, and execution. Her focus on AI includes certificates in Elements of AI and Responsible AI as well as a TEDx talk titled "Why AI is the Catalyst We Need to Change Education Forever."

She is a proud Colorado native and currently lives in Denver, CO with her four (Jewish camping) kids, beta fish, and leopard gecko and is always more than happy to weigh in on the best place to ski.



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