



The GAI Revolution

How professionals are using
generative AI in the workplace and the
copyright implications this creates



2025

Executive Summary

Recent research conducted by CLA, in collaboration with Fiftyfive5 (Accenture), offers an insightful overview of the extensive use of generative AI (GAI) within both the private and public sectors. Our survey, which included nearly 4,000 professionals in the UK, confirmed the widespread use of GAI to enhance innovation and efficiency. Additionally, the survey revealed an increasing trend of professionals using third-party content in prompts and the frequent sharing of GAI outputs both internally, within their organisations, and externally.

The survey also highlighted the growing risks associated with the rising use of GAI in the workplace. Risks include the necessity for improved internal governance and training on the responsible use of GAI tools. Organisations and their employees also require better guidance to navigate potential copyright infringements when using third-party material in prompts.

These risks can be reduced by implementing clear internal policies on the use of GAI tools, educating employees on the responsible and safe use of such tools, and ensuring that the appropriate copyright permissions are in place when using third party content.

Widespread adoption of generative AI

61% are currently using GAI at work, a figure higher than the 55% usage reported by Freshworks in 2024. Among these users, 83% interact with GAI on a weekly basis and 82% include third party content in their prompts. Looking ahead, the adoption of GAI is expected to grow, with over two-thirds of professionals projected to incorporate GAI into their work by the end of 2025. Furthermore, more than three-quarters of respondents plan to increase their GAI usage over the next year.

Benefits and use cases of GAI

Those using GAI report that it significantly enhances their efficiency, creativity, and innovation at work. Key applications include summarisation, analysis, critique, editing, and improvement. Tasks GAI is frequently employed for text generation (77%), image creation (56%), and crafting presentation slides (55%).

Associated risks and governance concerns

While 61% believe their organisation has a policy regarding the use of GAI at work, only 38% think that policy covers copyright issues. Although 76% agree that GAI users should seek permission before using copyright protected materials in prompts, actual concern is muted in practice. Notably, 45% of respondents are not worried about potential copyright issues connected to GAI use at work, and only 38% expressed concerns about including third-party material in AI prompts. The risks to employees and organisations are heightened when these outputs are used externally. Less than 20% understand the terms and conditions of the tools they are using, and 15% of those surveyed might be using GAI without their employer's permission.

GAI is widely used in private sector workplaces and its adoption is set to rise. While it fosters creativity and enhances efficiency, inconsistent guidance and education for employees pose risks to both the employee and the employer.

The findings indicate a clear need for companies to:

- Establish a comprehensive GAI policy for employees, including guidelines on the use of third-party content in prompts and outputs.
- Educate employees about the GAI tools available, key terms of use, and specific risks involved.
- Implement targeted training and continuous professional development (CPD) for key staff on copyright matters.
- Ensure appropriate permissions are in place to legally use third-party content, potentially through direct permissions from rightsholders and business licenses from entities like the CLA.

Research from CLA shows that the use of generative AI in the private sector workplace is widespread and set to increase



63%

of employees have used GAI for work purposes

52%

of employees use GAI at least weekly

78%

of users expect to increase their usage in the next 12 months

Those in IT, Marketing, Communication Services and Retail most likely to be using GAI

On average professionals use 2.5 different GAI tools



79%

use ChatGPT



55%

use Microsoft 365 Copilot



51%

use Gemini (Google)



39%

have an in-house tool



65%

use a paid version of a GAI tool



By end of 2025,

71%

of professionals expect to be using GAI for work

Research was conducted in December 2024 by Fiftyfive5, an independent market research agency, and consisted of a 10-minute online survey with 1,973 professionals in the private sector (excl. government and education) who have ever used generative AI tools for work purposes, across a range of industries and business sizes.

Increasingly habitual GAI usage is driving creativity and efficiency, and it's beginning to replace search engines

84%

believe GAI tools improve efficiency and have helped them be more creative and innovative at work

71%

often use GAI tools instead of traditional search engines (such as Google) for work

51%

believe they would be negatively impacted if they lost the ability to use GAI tools for work

How is GAI being used at work?



80%

use weekly for text generation



59%

use weekly for image generation



56%

use weekly for generating slides or presentations

Text generation is used for...



64%

research/
background intel



58%

refinement of
internal text (written
by self or colleagues)



57%

creation of new text

GAI is generating a wide range of outputs

Email 60%

Report 56%

Article 46%

Social media post 40%

Speech 36%

Policy 21%

Blog 20%

As the use of GAI grows, so do the associated risks and governance concerns relating to copyright



Use of third-party materials in GAI prompts



Sharing of GAI outputs



'Shadow' usage of GAI tools



Lack of understanding

On a weekly basis, 82% of employees engage in multiple methods of third-party material inclusion

Input Methods

66%

Include a link to a webpage

63%

Copy and paste

63%

Upload a file / document

61%

Include a reference (e.g book title)

Input Materials

Image or photo 64%

News article 55%

Report or business paper 53%

Journal article 48%

Book or eBook (whole book, pages, extracts) 46%

Magazine article 45%

Among those who have used GAI for text-generation...



62%

for analysis or review of third-party text

Analysis or Review:

summarise

critique

analyse



43%

for refinement of third-party text

Refinement:

edit

refine

simplify

improve

Users are sharing their GAI outputs both internally and externally

79%

share outputs internally with colleagues

43%

share outputs with people outside their organisation (e.g. clients, suppliers)

28%

share with the general public (e.g. uploading online to the public domain)

...and there is widespread sharing of GAI outputs created with third-party material

53%

have shared the text or images generated by GAI tools externally

90%

of these have shared content that they believe included third-party material in the prompt more than once in the last year



"We analysed a Gartner report about supply chain logistics. This involved uploading part of the report, and generating a further report to show our suppliers"

Manufacturing

"While drafting content for a marketing campaign, I included specific brand guidelines, tone of voice instructions, and excerpts from product descriptions provided by the client"

Banking, Financial and Insurance

"We own a real estate company, we advertise heavily on social media and we use GAI to generate posts including new advice for landlords regulation changes etc."

Property Services

While employees are aware of proper behaviour around GAI use, levels of concern are mixed as responsibility for use is deemed to sit with roles like Leadership and IT

77%

Believe that using third-party content to prompt or train a GAI tool without permission puts organisations and users at risk of copyright breach

77%

Believe GAI users should seek permission before using third-party content to prompt a GAI tool

73%

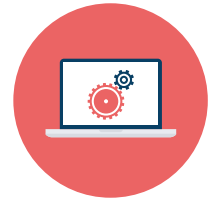
Believe rightsholders should be compensated for the use of their materials when third-party content is used to prompt a GAI tool

55%

Are concerned about copyright issues related to their use of GAI tools at work

Only
24%

say they have a strong understand the copyright terms and conditions of the GAI tools they use



Not surprisingly the most concerned groups are in IT and Leadership roles

Concern with including third-party material in GAI prompts...

34%

are concerned

52%

are not concerned

14%

are not sure

Those who use GAI for work more often have higher concern than those who use it less often, but it doesn't hold them back from using it

There is an educational opportunity for organisations like CLA to play to raise awareness of possible infringement in the GAI usage

Does your organisation have a GAI policy?

Does it cover ethical use and address the potential risks of copyright infringement?

73%

believe management at their organisation **encourages** the use of GAI tools



Many organisations encourage the use of GAI but not all employees believe they have a policy that covers copyright policy in place

...and
61%

think their organisation has a **policy** about use of GAI at work



Who is responsible for policy development?

43%

senior management

37%

legal team

...and only
38%

think their organisation has a GAI policy which covers **copyright**



Who is responsible for policy implementation?

44%

senior management

30%

legal team

30%

operations

Only 3% claimed to have not read the T&Cs of GAI tools they use (from a copyright perspective) but we'd suggest that that number may be higher due to underclaim



What you need to know

01

The research reveals that 63% of employees use GAI tools, helping them be more creative and innovative at work and improving their efficiency.

02

On average professionals use 2.5 different GAI tools but most users (76%) don't understand these tools' terms of use nor licensing requirements around use of third-party material. This raises ethical concerns and increases the risk of copyright infringement.

03

82% of GAI users are using third-party material in inputs or prompts at least weekly, but only 34% are concerned about the copyright implications.

04

53% of GAI users have shared text or images generated by GAI tools externally, and 90% of these have shared content that they believe included third-party material in the prompt more than once in the last year. There's a clear gap in knowledge which provides an opportunity for organisations such as CLA to raise awareness of best practice when employees are utilising GAI tools in the private sector.

05

Compliance and risk are key concerns cited by 77% of GAI users but only 38% think their organisation has a GAI policy which covers copyright. This provides an opportunity for entities such as CLA to support organisations through updated licence permissions and in developing GAI policies and disseminating them throughout organisations.

Find out more

This research was conducted by Fiftyfive5 on behalf of the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited. For more information contact email, or visit cla.co.uk

Fiftyfive5, part of Accenture Song is a customer insight-led strategy consultancy founded in 2010