WELCOME! WE'LL GET STARTED IN A FEW MINUTES!

Note: This session won't be recorded, but you will be sent the slide deck after the fact.

In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourself in the chat! (e.g., name, program/faculty, regular/co-op)

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Centre for Career Development

MAKING AI WORK FOR YOU

5/17/2024

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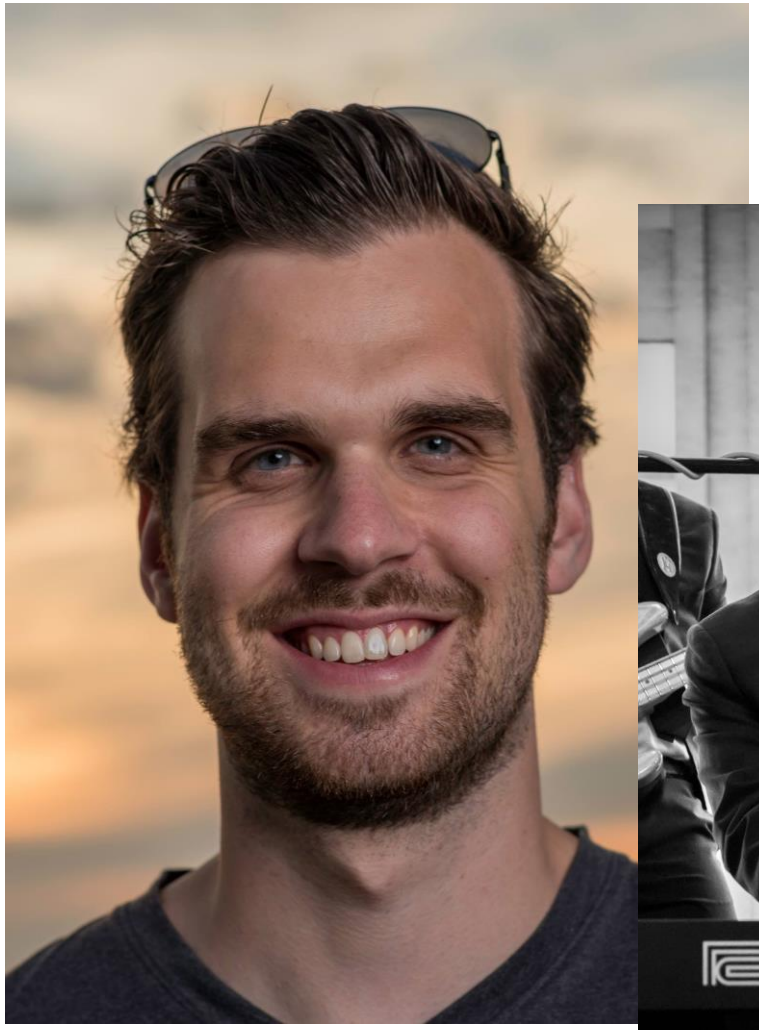
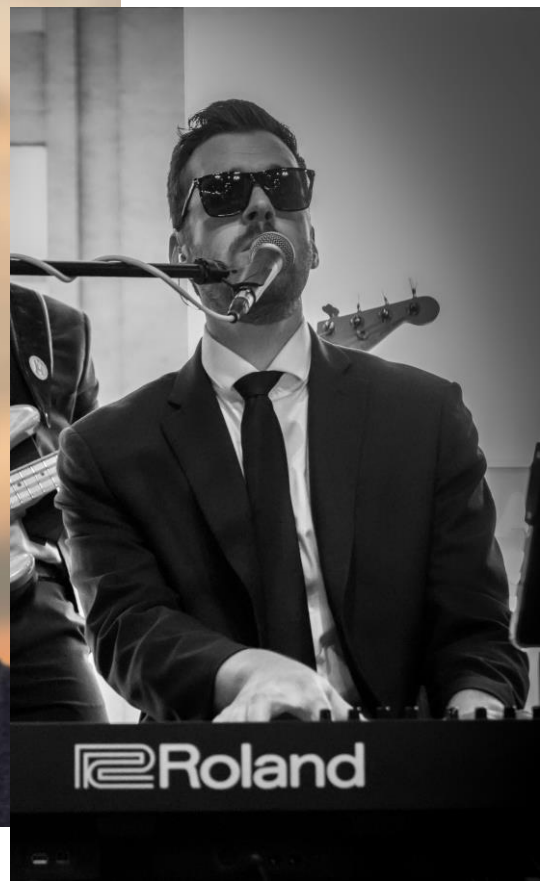




- Career Advisor and Career Leader Supervisor at the Centre for Career Development (CCD)
- Past roles: tutor, freelance writer, research assistant/coordinator, two-time undergraduate student, social entrepreneur, and…Career Leader!
- Fun fact: I have a second “job” as a musician

KARINA WILK (she/her)

- Career Leader, Workshop Facilitator @ Centre for Career Development
- Recent Faculty of Science graduate
- Past co-op experiences: University of Waterloo, SickKids Hospital, University of Toronto, Grand River Regional Cancer Centre
- www.linkedin.com/in/karinawilk
- Fun fact: I have a dog named Winnie

Whose land are we on?

We respectfully acknowledge that we work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River: land promised and never returned to the Six Nations.

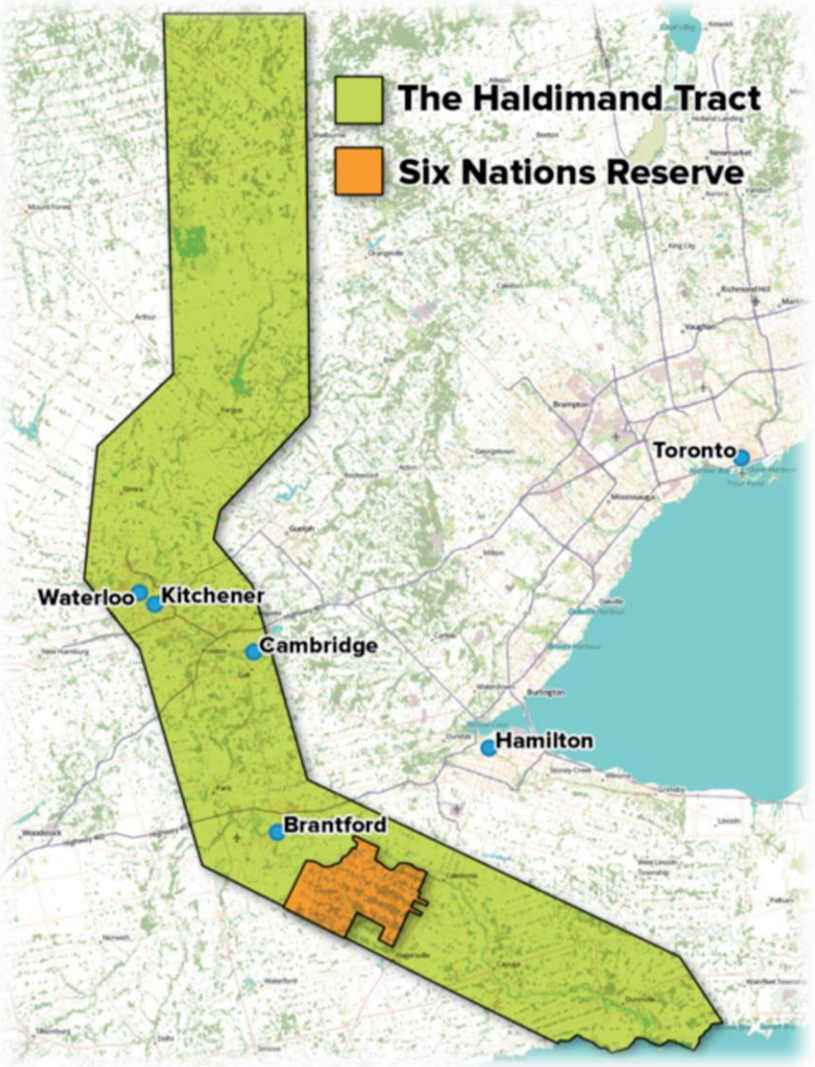
What land are you on? native-land.ca

Let's keep learning. Why not take a course?
INDG 201 The Indigenous Experience in Canada
https://ucalendar.uwaterloo.ca/2223/COURSE/course-INDG.html

Some incredible local community members on IG: Bangishimo Johnston @bangishimo, Amy Smoke @amysmoke, C. Elizabeth Best @lizbot5000

Reports: TRC Calls to Action, National Inquiry into MMIWG

Reading: The Inconvenient Indian, 21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act, This Place: 150 Years Retold



WORK SEARCHING IS...WORK!

Can Generative AI make landing a job easier?

AGENDA

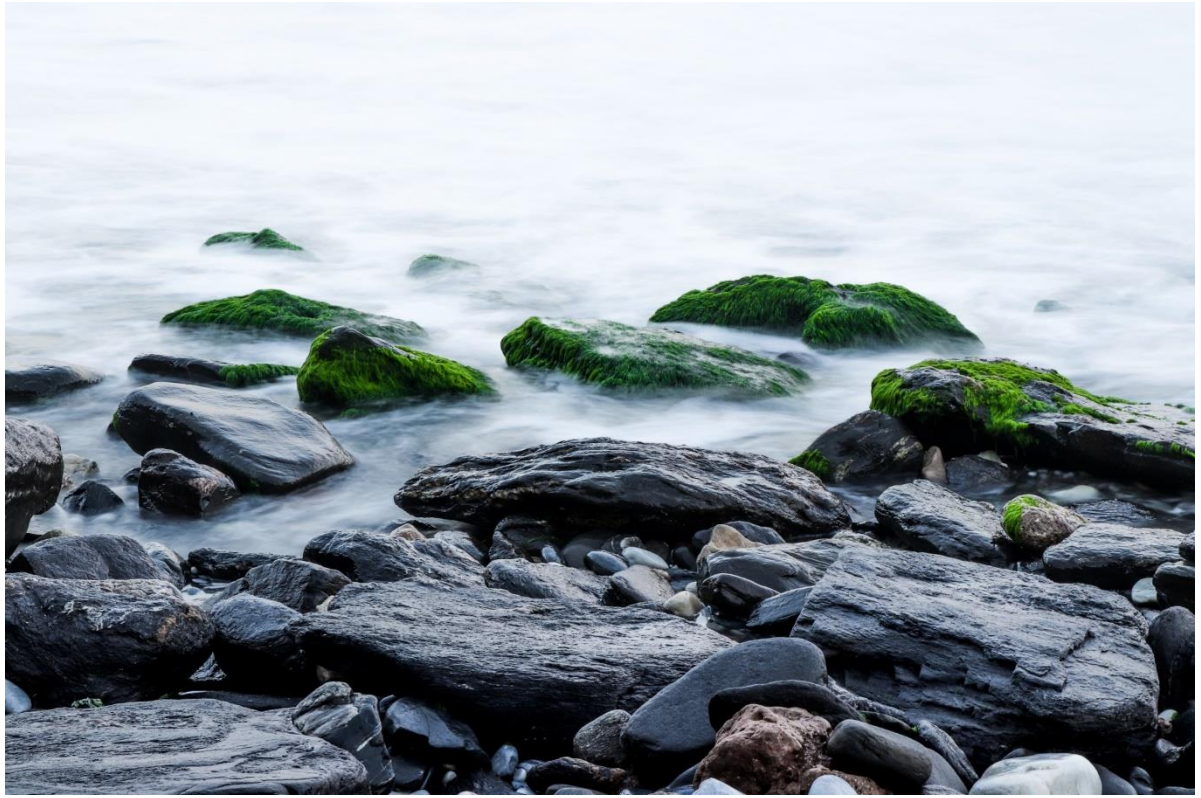
- Pros and Cons of an AI-powered job search
- Can I use AI to write my resume and cover letter?
- What do employers think of AI?
- Using AI in other career settings
- Practice making AI work for you!

WE AIM FOR A SAFE(R) SPACE

Going into this workshop, the intention is to create as safe a space as possible.

A safe space means different things for everyone, but we'll do our best! Let's keep 3 things in mind:

- **Choice**
- **Respect**
- **Care**



How might we co-create this safe(r) space?

- Participate in a way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat during presentation time. Ask us questions whenever! At the end of the workshop, you can come on mic during Q&A
  - Feel free to send either of us a direct message if you have a question or comment you would like to share privately
- If you're having tech issues, let me know and I can help problem solve
- Take what works for you and leave what doesn't!

WHAT TOPICS WOULD A "GOOD" AI WORKSHOP COVER?

Before We Begin…

- Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a relatively new and rapidly evolving technology – this is a complex topic, and we don't pretend to be experts!
- CCD recognizes that career success can be achieved with or without the assistance of AI
- That said, this technology is here – and it is already changing the world of work. If you are currently using or considering using AI tools on your career journey (e.g., applying for jobs), this workshop offers some tips, strategies, and important considerations for responsible use of Gen AI
- Let's talk about those considerations…

WHAT IS GEN AI?

AI: information technology that performs tasks that would ordinarily require biological brainpower to accomplish, such as making sense of spoken language, learning behaviours or solving problems.

Gen AI: a type of AI that produces content such as text, audio, code, videos and images. This content is produced based on information the user inputs, called a “prompt,” which is typically a short instructional text.

FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Our Gen AI Tool of Choice for Today

Microsoft Copilot

- **Accessible:** Available through your UWaterloo Microsoft account
- **Secure:** Better data protection measures than other AI tools (e.g., Chat GPT)

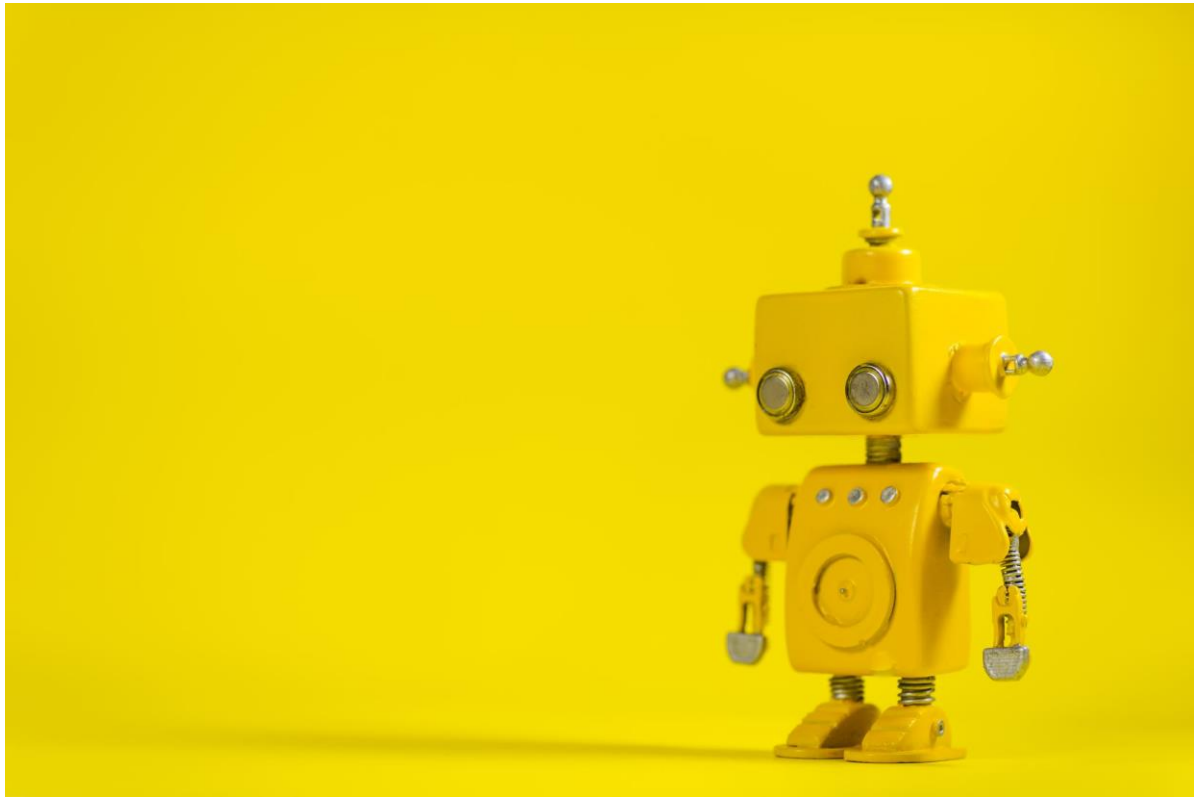
Copilot logo sourced from Wikimedia Commons

DISCUSSION:

What are some pros and cons of using AI to write your resume and/or cover letter?

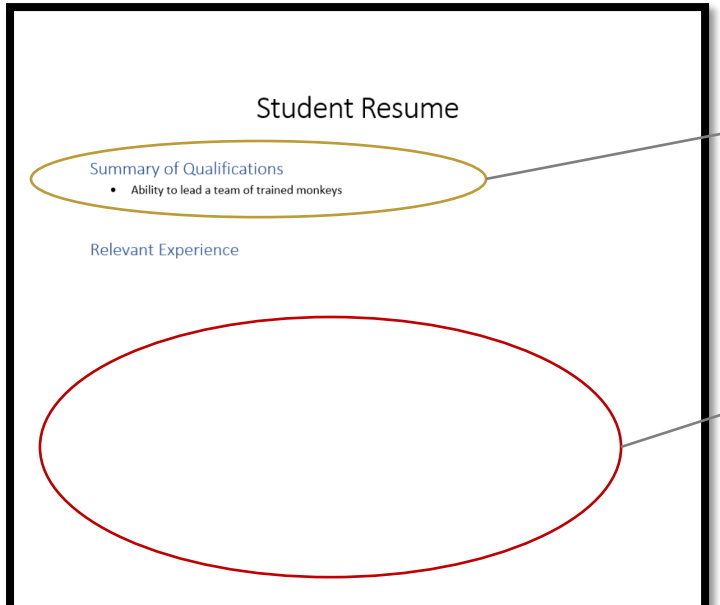
Can AI Write My Job Applications For Me?!

- Quick answer: Technically, yes (but…)
- Full answer: AI is a tool, and like with any tool, there are pros, cons, and considerations
  - Let's talk about those…
- Spoiler: AI is great at skills identification, but not always so great at skills articulation…



Why Skills Articulation Is Important

- Employers usually identify the skills they want, but the articulation is up us!
  - Employer: "We want **RED**"
  - Job seeker: "I have vibrant candy apple red with hues of crimson and cerise"
- Job seekers often name their skills, but leave out evidence and context…
  - E.g., "Excellent communication skills, ability to work independently and with a team"



Summary of Qualifications: "Ability to lead a team of trained monkeys"

Remainder of resume/cover letter: no mention of or evidence for trained monkey management

Advantages of Using AI for Job Applications

- Saves time and energy
- Can offer tips and considerations for effective application documents
- Can provide a well-structured starting point for your first draft
- Helps to incorporate a professional tone and style

Drawbacks of Using AI for Job Applications

- Not as effective at producing personalized, tailored documents
- Output often lacks individualized evidence, background context for skills and experience
- Employers can often detect that AI was used to write an application

General Considerations for Responsible Use of AI

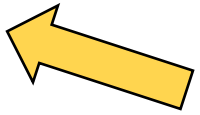
From Government Canada's Guide on the use of generative AI:

FASTER principles: Fair, Accountable, Secure, Transparent, Educated, Relevant

Accountable: take responsibility for the content generated by these tools and the impacts of their use. This includes making sure generated content is accurate, legal, ethical…"

Secure: "ensure that the infrastructure and tools are appropriate for the security classification of the information and that privacy and personal information are protected…"

Educated: "learn about the strengths, limitations and responsible use of the tools; learn how to create effective prompts and to identify potential weaknesses in the outputs"



This is what we're doing today! ☺

Low vs. Higher-Risk Uses of AI

- Government of Canada also offers the concept of low risk and higher-risk uses of generative AI
  - **Low-risk use**: e.g., "editing a draft document that will go through additional reviews and approvals"
  - **Higher-risk use**: e.g., "generating a summary of client information" (security/privacy concerns)
- How might this apply in employment/career settings?
  - **Low-risk use**: e.g., prompting AI for cover letter writing tips
  - **Higher-risk use**: e.g., submitting an AI-generated cover letter to an employer as-is, without personalized edits

TIPS FOR USING AI TO WRITE RESUMES & COVER LETTERS (RESPONSIBLY)

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT APPLICATION DOCUMENT

1.

IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.

2.

ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.

3.

DESIGN & CREATE a document that showcases how you could contribute through your skills/experience.

4.

REFINE your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

From CCD's "Resume Tips: Thinking Like an Employer" workshop

Pro Tip: Do Your Own Research and Reflection

Stronger application documents

More persuasive interviews

Provides direction and tangible work search identifiers (e.g., using skill and interest keywords to search for and narrow down job postings)

Boosts feeling of self worth and confidence in the job search and at work!

The benefits of using your own brain!

TIP #1: Make AI Your Brainstorming Partner

- **It's all about the prompts!** The more specific the prompt, and the more information you provide, the better results you'll tend to get from AI tools like Copilot
  - Example: "can you help me write a cover letter?" vs. "can you help me write a cover letter for a job that requires excellent teamwork and problem-solving skills, and proficiency in Excel?"
- Take it one prompt at a time – asking Copilot to produce a bullet point or a paragraph is often more effective than asking it to draft an entire document
- Google is your friend! Consider searching for prompts for reference and inspiration

TIP #2: Question Your "Pre-First" Draft

- If you've prompted AI to generate a resume or cover letter for you, consider it a "pre-first draft"
- Especially without numerous, specific prompts, AI lacks the ability to create a truly personalized, tailored job application

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Questions to Ask Yourself

- **When editing your "pre-first draft", consider asking:**
- What do I like about the document AI generated? What would I change? What would I add?
- Does the document accurately reflect my skills, knowledge, abilities, and experiences? (Remember: AI can make stuff up!)
- Is the document written in a tone and style that feels authentic? What words or phrases might I change?
- Is the document aligned with/tailored to the opportunity I'm applying for?
- How can I edit this to make it look/sound more human than machine?

TIP #3: Make AI Your Editor

- You might also consider taking the reverse approach: starting with your own first draft, and using AI to help you edit
- Gen AI is generally more effective (for the purposes of landing an interview) at editing and improving on your existing resume or cover letter than it is at creating one from scratch
- Sample resource from Microsoft: Tweak your resume with action words using Microsoft Copilot's AI

Reviewing AI's Work

Personalization and Accuracy:

- Ensure names, contact info, and other details are complete and accurate
- Do your applications sound too generic? Add personalized touches and details…

Targeted Adjustments:

- Align the resume and cover letter with the job requirements and incorporate keywords from the job description
- Ensure that the skills and qualifications you highlight are relevant to the opportunity you're applying for

Adding Unique Elements:

- Include specific evidence and context for your skills and experiences not mentioned by Copilot
- Incorporate your own words, phrases, and writing style where appropriate – and your own font/formatting!

Feedback Incorporation:

- Seek feedback from mentors or professionals in your field – or by visiting the Centre for Career Development!
- Use feedback to refine and improve the content

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS THINK OF AI?

Employer Opinions on AI-Generated Job Applications

- “If you’re using technology to work smarter, not harder. I mean, I applaud you.”
- “I think it takes some of the pressure off job seekers’ panic and anxiety about creating cover letters for every single job they apply to”
- “I was blown away at how good the cover letter was”… “you would still need to edit it before you created your final draft”
- “Automated cover letters may save time, but may not help you stand out.”
- “Sterile or generic”
- “When we receive inquiries about jobs that are clearly either an AI-generated form letter or whatever it may be, especially on the job listing front, we have a visceral reaction to it…” “It’s not going to be for us because our words literally are our currency.”
- A convincing cover letter is more than a rephrasing of your work experience”
- “Just another tool that requires input to create anything.”

A mix of positive – and not so positive! – opinions from Fast Company

Making Sense of Mixed Feelings

- It's probably no surprise that employers have mixed feelings about this groundbreaking and controversial technology!

Some broad takeaways:

- Based on what employers are sharing, it is often obvious when an application is entirely AI-generated. Employers may react differently to receiving a generic resume or cover letter produced by AI
- Depending on the nature of the job, employers make expect your writing to be entirely your own
- Editing and personalization still matter! AI can get us started and save us time, but humans still have work to do.

USING AI IN OTHER CAREER SETTINGS

DISCUSSION & LIVE DEMOS

What are some other career-related uses for Microsoft Co-Pilot?

Let's try using Copilot for...

- Interview prep
- Creating a LinkedIn profile
- Networking via LinkedIn or email

LIVE DEMO

If you're currently logged into Copilot on your own device (via your UWaterloo Microsoft account), feel free to follow along with us!

Copilot logo sourced from Wikimedia Commons

MAKING AI WORK FOR YOU

Putting it all together!

Key Takeaways

- Treat AI (e.g., Copilot) like any other tool (e.g., Google, Excel, your calculator) – tools are powerful time savers, but still need to be used responsibly, with care and intention
- Prompting is a skill! Prompt, edit, repeat, and consider searching the web for prompt ideas if you're stuck.
  - The more research and reflection you do, the more prompts you will have!
- Employers have mixed opinions about AI – use with caution and consider your audience, and be mindful of low vs. higher-risk use cases
- Gen AI is great for getting started, but be sure to take the next step:

Edit and personalize!

HOW DID WE DO?

We are always looking for ways to improve and your feedback is important. Please complete the feedback survey delivered to your inbox following this workshop.

Our mission is to is to educate and inspire all University of Waterloo students (regular and co-op), alumni, employees, and postdoctoral fellows to explore and act on their career journey.

CHECK OUT CCD APPOINTMENTS AND WORKSHOPS!

Job Search Strategies
Résumé
Cover Letter
Interview Prep
Career Exploration
Further Education

Individual Appointments
Drop-ins
Workshops
Online Resources

uwaterloo.ca/career-development

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YOU+WATERLOO

Our greatest impact happens together.