

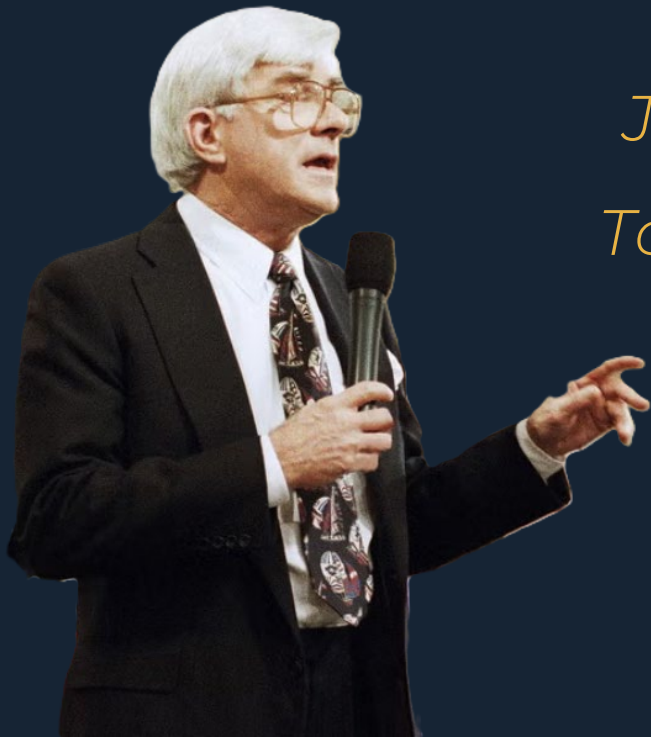


Responsible AI Starts Here: Building Policy, Culture, and Capacity in Nonprofits

Jeremy Manus, Director IT Operations

Tom Durkin, Associate Vice President IT

The Boston Foundation





The Boston Foundation

- **Mission-Driven Equity Work:** TBF is committed to closing systemic disparities in Greater Boston by promoting equity, civic engagement, and economic justice through strategic grantmaking, partnerships, and public policy advocacy
- **Community-Centered Philanthropy:** Manage nearly 1,100 charitable donor-advised funds and supports a wide range of nonprofits
- **Thought Leadership and Research:** A hub for civic dialogue, commissioning research, hosting forums, and shaping public discourse.
- **Size:** 125 full time staff



Welcome and Session Objectives

- Phase 1 – Creating the Policy
- Phase 2 – Enabling Innovation & Experimentation
- Takeaways: Frameworks, Lessons Learned, and Actionable Next Steps



Phase 1 – Creating the Policy



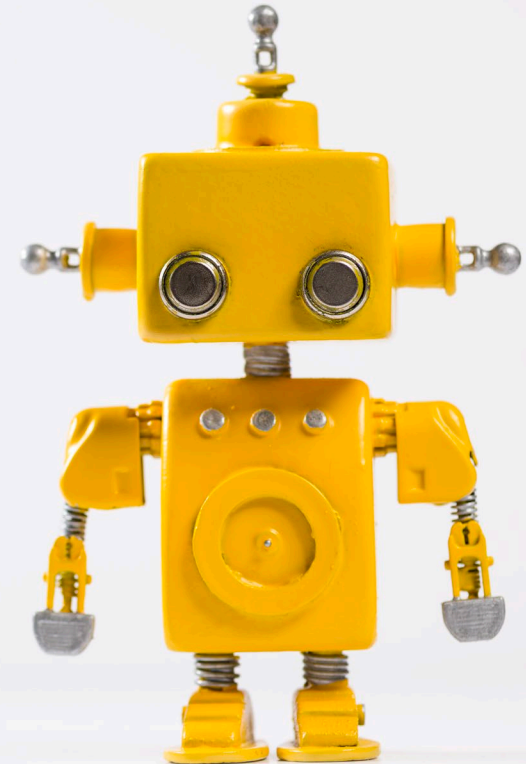
Phase 1: Creating the Policy

Why AI Policies are Needed?

- The urgency of AI in the nonprofit sector
- Adoption of the tool so widespread and fast
- Can't put "head-in-sand" (Shadow IT)
- Balancing innovation, risk, equity, and trust

Why AI is Different?

- Proliferation of AI features across platforms
- Use of AI for personal and professional





“

To create a policy that provides guidance for using artificial intelligence tools in a responsible manner and identifies basic principles to influence the adoption of future tools.

”



Phase 1: Creating the Policy

The Policy Development Journey

10 months





Phase 1: Creating the Policy

AI Leaders

- Started January 2025
- Mix of cross department staff
- Teams channel to share articles and ideas
- Discuss pilot projects, experiences, opinions on AI technology
- Review current AI policy



Phase 1: Creating the Policy

1

Be Aware

Understand how the system works

Consider the energy required to power AI systems

2

Be Cautious

Ensure that confidential information is not entered in public AI tools

You are responsible for AI generated content

Consider the potential of biased results

3

Be Transparent

Consider how much AI was used and who is the audience

Lean towards acknowledging use of AI

Phase 1: Creating the Policy

SIDEBAR: Real world implications of AI expansion

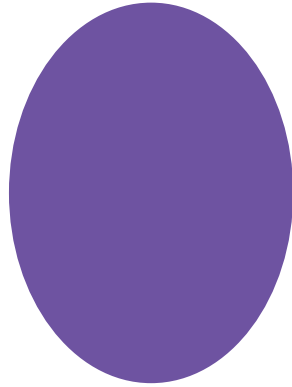
- Estimates are that in 3 years, data centers will consume as much electricity as 22% of all US homes.
- Data centers are already impacting local residents
 - Roxbury neighborhood in Boston
 - Newton County Georgia



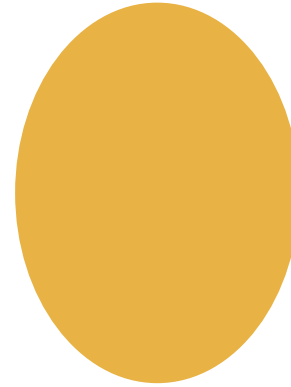
[MIT Technology Review, We did the math on AI's energy footprint. Here's the story you haven't heard.](#)
[CommonWealth Beacon, The dark side of AI: Climate chaos, pollution, and injustice](#)
[New York Times, Their Water Taps Ran Dry When Meta Built Next Door](#)



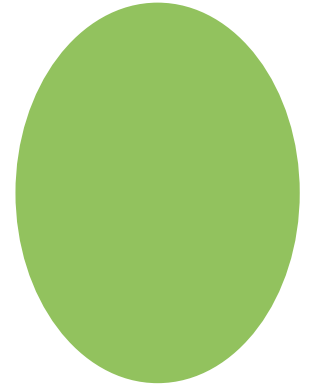
Policy Process/Roll Out Discussion



No Policy



**In
Progress**

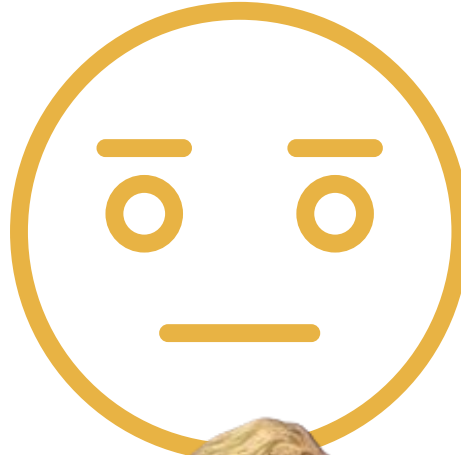


**Adopted
Policy**





Policy Discussion





Phase 1: Creating the Policy

1

Be Aware

Understand how the system works

Consider the energy required to power AI systems

2

Be Cautious

Ensure that confidential information is not entered in public AI tools

You are responsible for AI generated content

Consider the potential of biased results

3

Be Transparent

Consider how much AI was used and who is the audience

Lean towards acknowledging use of AI



Phase 2: Creating a Culture of Innovation & Experimentation



Phase 2: Creating a Culture of Innovation & Experimentation

From Policy to Practice

- Building trust & enthusiasm
(IT mantra)
- Framing AI as a tool to
explore, not fear
- How do we use these tools to
build capacity





Phase 2: Creating a Culture of Innovation & Experimentation

Structures to Support Responsible Experimentation

- Be a champion or find a champion
- Create "safe spaces" for ideas
- Start with internal use cases / steal from the big guys
- Pilot project framework
 - MS Copilot
 - Claude
 - Internal chatbot (Chatbase)
 - Notebook LM (AI podcasts for published reports)
- Create processes for feedback and iteration





Phase 2: Creating a Culture of Innovation & Experimentation


Current Status Report

- Early examples of impact
 - AI Notetaking (Teams Premium, Fireflies, Zoom AI Companion)
 - Content generation (all staff messages, policy documents, project briefs, etc.)
 - Product rubrics when searching for new solutions
- Address varying levels of adoption and utilization (AI in Action)
- Evolving the policy and with the tech landscape
- Narrow the focus on which AI projects to initiate



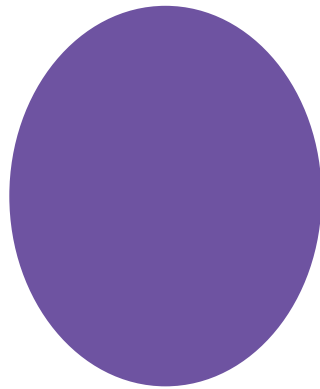
Phase 2: Creating a Culture of Innovation & Experimentation

Internal Chatbot (Barbara)

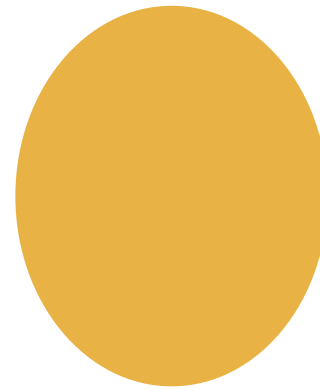
- **Goal:** Improve access to internal policy documents (Employee Handbook, IT docs, etc.) and information about the foundation.
- **Solution:**  Chatbase
- **Price:** \$40 per month or \$384 annually
- 1 Agent
- 2,000 message credits/month



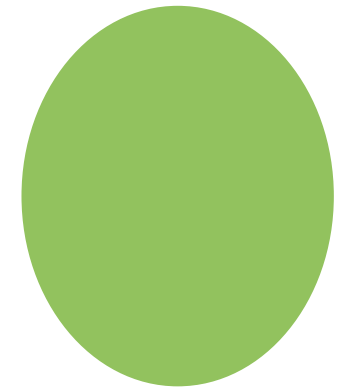
Culture of Experimentation Discussion



Let's Go!



AI Curious



**No F-ing
Way**



Action Plan

1. Meet with interested stakeholders
2. Research AI policies
3. Rinse and repeat
4. Launch policy and training
5. Convene AI steering committee
6. Start small go BIG
7. Iterate

Resources

- [TAG Responsible AI Adoption in Philanthropy](#)
- [Fill-in-the-blank AI Policy Builder](#) (Chantal Forster)
- [The 2025 Annual Work Trend Index: The Frontier Firm is born](#)
- [The State of AI in Nonprofits 2025](#)
- [TLDR Newsletter](#)
- [AI for Nonprofits Resource Hub](#)
- Hard Fork podcast at NYT

Jeremy Manus (jeremy.manus@tbf.org)

Tom Durkin (thomas.durkin@tbf.org)