

Investigating Librarian Perspectives on Generative AI

A Mixed-Methods R&D Initiative

Background

Generative AI (gen AI) technology, such as ChatGPT, has made significant inroads into academia in 2023. To investigate the potential of incorporating generative AI, and specifically Large Language Models (LLMs) into Keenious, we invited information specialists to **share their opinions, concerns, and ethical assessments** on practical applications of generative AI technology in libraries.

What did we do?

Information specialists (n = 52) from 21 different institutions across 9 countries attended. The participants were spread across five identical **2-hour-long workshops** conducted in May and June 2023.

We used the collaborative platform Mural to facilitate interaction through **three different sections**:

1. Discussed gen AI in libraries through a few individual and group exercises
2. Rated ethicality of 8 hypothetical use cases of LLM technology
3. Tested and created prompts in an LLM-based prototype*

**This poster focuses on product-agnostic insights and will not go into details on the 3rd step.*

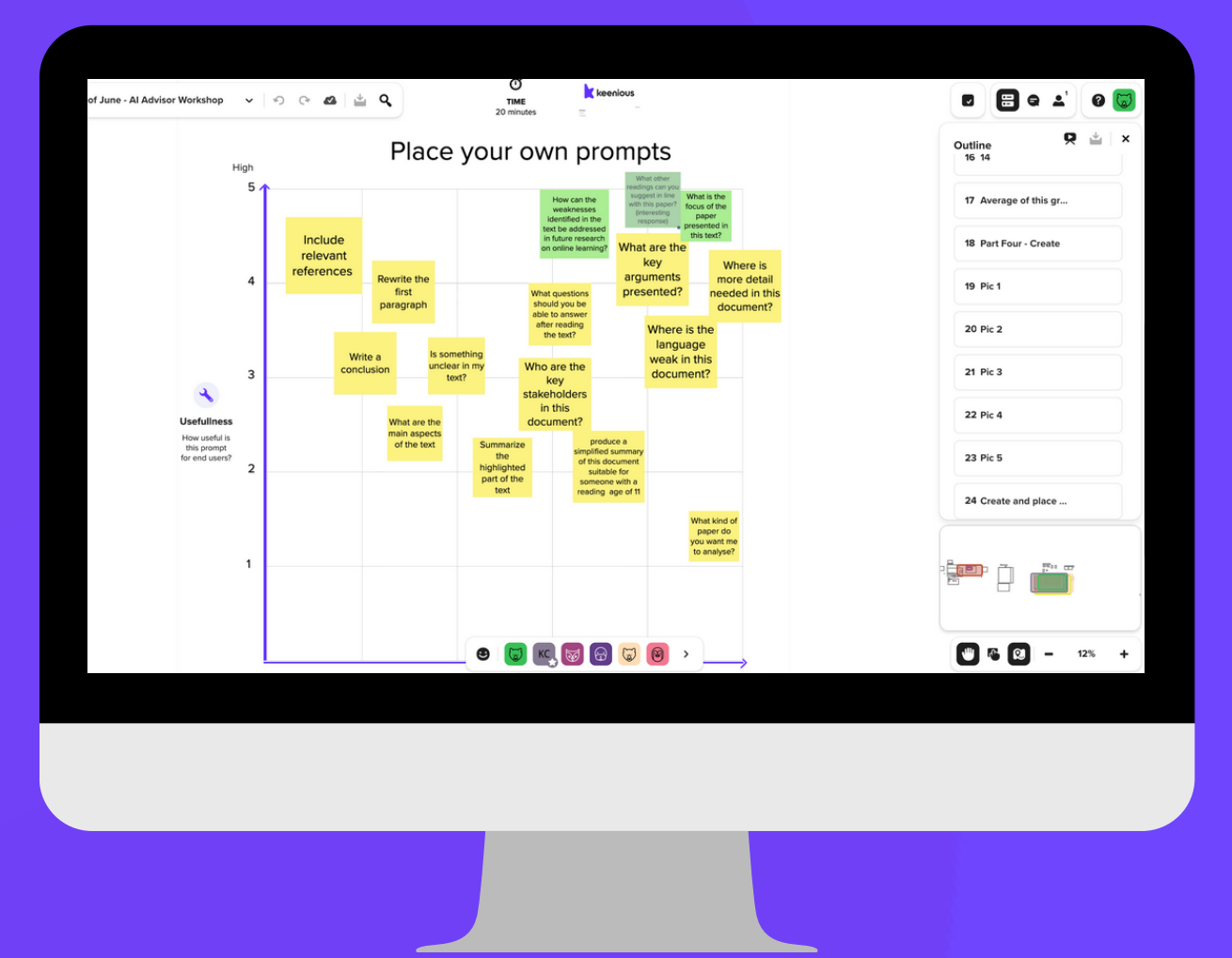


Illustration of how the Mural software allowed participants to share written feedback through digital post-it notes.

What did we learn?

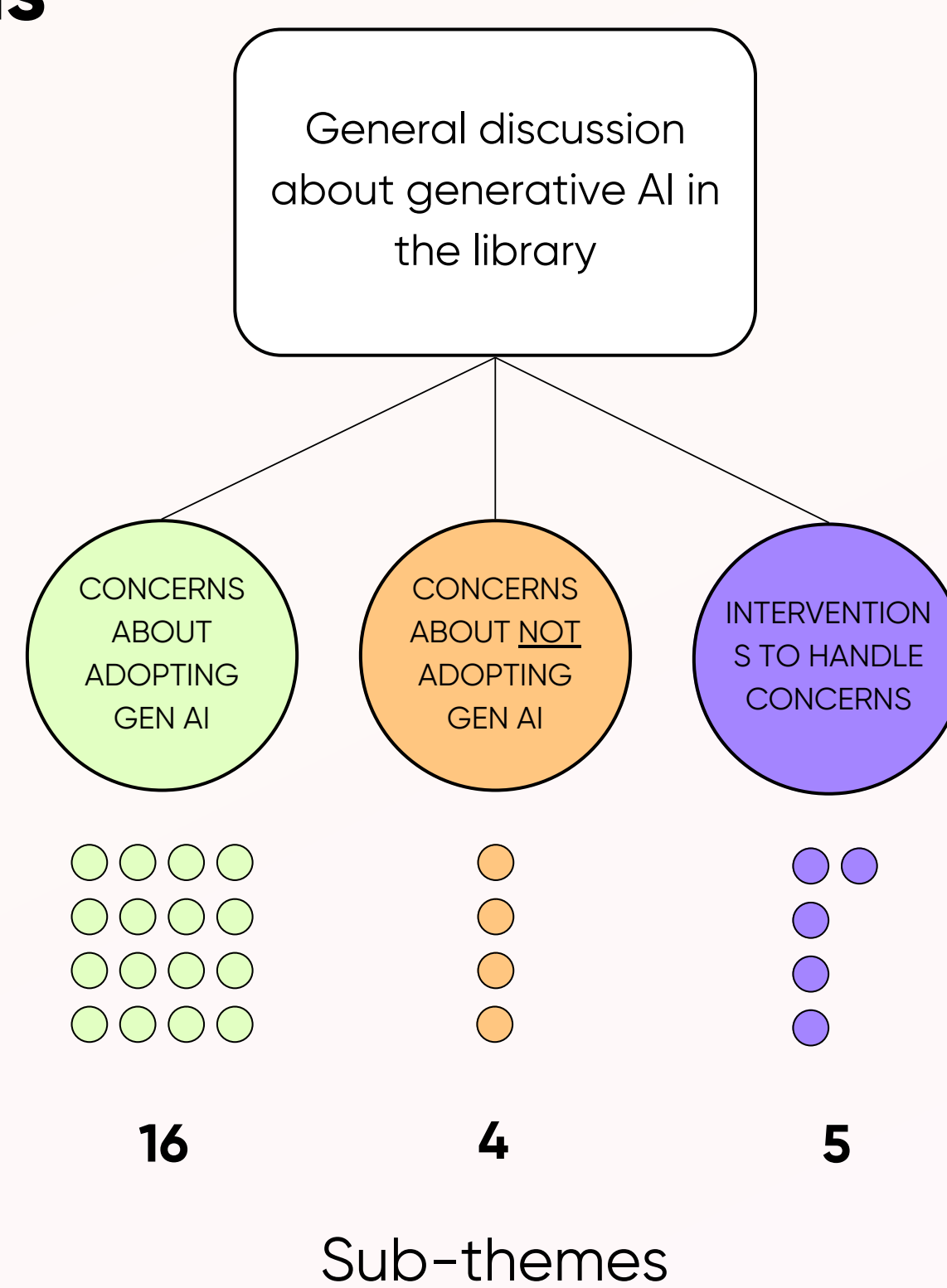


1

Welcoming AI with Reservations

In section 1, the participants wrote sticky notes about their concerns regarding embracing and conversely not embracing gen AI in the library, as well as potential interventions to tackle these concerns.

A qualitative analysis identified 25 unique themes that came up during this exercise. The distribution of the themes across the three topics is illustrated to the right. **Scan the QR code for details.** Overall it was recognized that gen AI will most likely impact the future library, and concerns related to embracing it were the most discussed (16 unique themes) across the workshops.

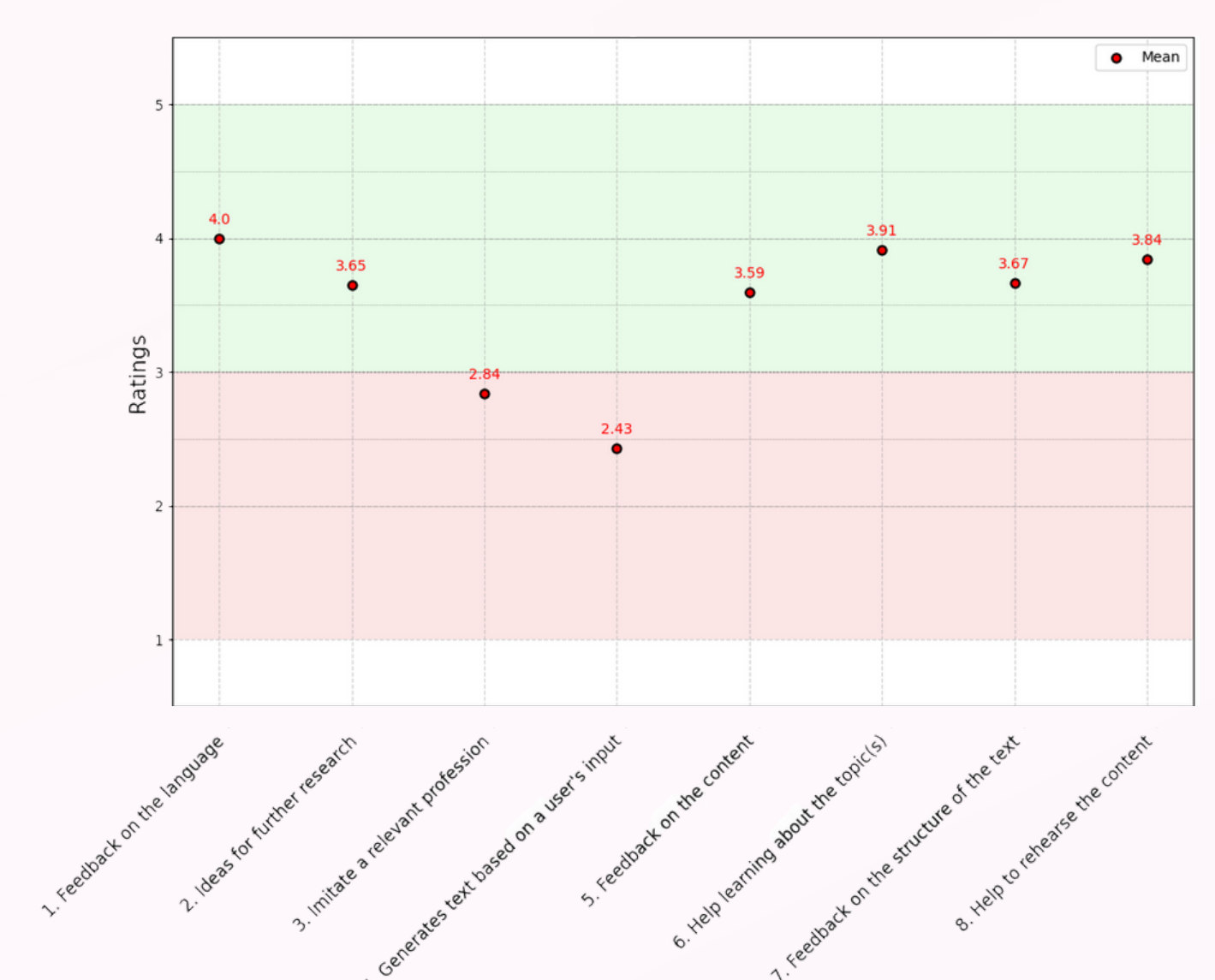


2

Rating Ethicality of Use Cases

The results from the hypothetical LLM use case rating yielded interesting insights into the participants' (n = 37) views on the ethics of AI. Each of the 8 use cases were shown with 2 to 3 examples. The ethicality of each use case was then rated on a 5-point scale (1 = highly unethical, 5 = highly ethical).

The results revealed that using LLMs for "feedback on language" (4.0/5.0), and "to help learn about a topic" (3.91/5.0) were rated the most ethical on average, while LLMs "imitating a relevant profession" (2.84/5) and "generating text based on user's input" (2.43/5) was rated the lowest".



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Conclusion

Generative AI will continue to be a critical subject of interest in the library field. This project is a preliminary exploration of the current perspectives of library and information specialists toward gen AI. Through several exercises, we discovered 25 interesting themes that were discussed, ranging from skeptical to optimistic views. The ethical assessment of use cases for large language models in the library will be used to navigate future developments of the Keenious research recommendation tool.