Mission + Machine: Designing a Values-Led Toolkit for Organisational AI Deliberation

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Generative AI (genAI) is increasingly entering the everyday work of charitable organisations, yet decisions about its use are often made without policy, guidance, or structured opportunities to consider how it aligns with organisational values. Building on prior work, we present *Mission + Machine*, a values-led deliberation toolkit that supports collective reflection on appropriate uses of genAI in value-driven organisations. Through prompts, value and scenario cards, and discussion mechanics, participants explore everyday organisational tasks and negotiate appropriate AI involvement levels in relation to their mission and values. We describe the toolkit's design rationale and show how it was developed to support accessible, repeatable conversations about AI adoption. We argue that deliberative toolkits offer a practical alternative to static guidance documents, enabling organisations to continually reflect on and renegotiate their relationship with genAI as technologies, practices, and organisational priorities evolve.

Human-centred AI; design toolkit; responsible AI; values; charities and non-profit.

1. INTRODUCTION

GenAI is increasingly embedded in the everyday work of charitable organisations. From producing communications and drafting funding bids, to summarising documents and supporting admin work, staff are adopting AI tools in response to increasing workload pressures, limited resources, and concern about being left behind (Charity Digital Skills Report, 2025). Like for other sectors, charities are experiencing growing pressure to understand where these technologies can create value, yet their relationship with AI is distinctive. Charities derive their legitimacy from the outcomes they achieve, as well as from the *values* that shape how they achieve them. Decisions about whether, where, and how genAI should be used therefore extend beyond questions of efficiency to organisational identity, public trust, and accountability (Colborn-Clark, Cecchinato & Dow, 2026).

Alongside this rapid adoption, an expanding ecosystem of AI policies (CAST, 2025), disclosure frameworks (Ahmetoglu, Constantinides and Cox, 2026), and governance guidance (European Union, 2024) has emerged in response to regulatory change and growing expectations of transparency. While these developments are necessary, they often assume individuals within those organisations already possess a shared understanding of what AI is, how it is being used, and where its use is considered appropriate. Existing work suggests otherwise. AI literacy varies considerably across workplaces, AI use is frequently informal or individually driven (Clark, Cecchinato and Dow, 2025) and staff may be reluctant to disclose their use because of uncertainty or concerns about how it will be perceived (Zhang et al., 2025; Xia et al., 2026). In resource-constrained organisations, like charities, creating opportunities for collective reflection can feel like another demand on already stretched staff. As a result, governance risks becoming something organisations produce top-down, rather than something they develop through discussion bottom-up. Before policies mature and sector-wide standards become routine, organisations need practical ways to surface conversations about AI use that are grounded in their own work, values, and experiences.

To address this need, we designed *Mission + Machine*, a values-led deliberation toolkit that supports collective reflection on the role of genAI in everyday organisational practice, specifically for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. Through physical prompts, scenario cards, and discussion mechanics, participants explore familiar work tasks and negotiate appropriate levels of AI involvement in relation to their organisation's mission and values. Designed to be lightweight and reusable, the toolkit encourages organisations to revisit these discussions as technologies, practices, and expectations evolve,

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rather than treating AI governance as a one-off policy exercise.

This paper makes three contributions. We present the design of *Mission + Machine*, a deliberation toolkit supporting organisational reflection on genAI use in value-driven contexts. Second, we articulate the design rationale underpinning the toolkit, showing how organisational values, everyday work tasks, and graduated levels of AI involvement can be combined to scaffold collective deliberation. Finally, we discuss how toolkit-based approaches can support emerging AI governance within resource-constrained organisations.

2. BACKGROUND + MOTIVATION

2.1 AI adoption in value-driven organisations

GenAI has been adopted rapidly across the UK charity sector. The 2025 Charity Digital Skills Report (2025) found that 76% of charities are engaging with genAI in some form, up from 61% in 2024, with organisations reporting routine use of genAI for communications, fundraising, administration, and service delivery. Yet adoption has outpaced organisational preparedness: 64% of staff feel they cannot use these tools confidently, and only 39% of workers are actively checking whether their AI use aligns with their organisational values. While many charities recognise the potential benefits of AI, substantially fewer report having organisational strategies, formal guidance, or sufficient confidence to support its use (Charity Digital Skills Report, 2025). This uneven landscape leaves individual staff to experiment with new technologies while navigating uncertainty about appropriate practice.

This challenge is compounded by the structural realities of the VCSE sector. Charities operate under persistent constraints on time, funding, and specialist expertise, leaving limited capacity to develop governance alongside day-to-day service delivery (Kendal et al., 2018). Rather than reducing work, previous research found that genAI frequently creates new forms of organisational labour as workers make sense of unfamiliar technologies, evaluate their suitability, and assume responsibility for governing their use without formal support (van den Broek, 2025). GenAI therefore becomes a form of compensatory infrastructure (Colborn-Clark, Cecchinato and Dow, 2026), filling gaps in organisational capacity while simultaneously creating new work that organisations are often ill-equipped to recognise or support.

Collectively, these findings suggested *a need for a practical mechanism through which organisations could explore appropriate AI use* before attempting to formalise governance.

2.2 Building shared understanding

The rapid uptake of AI has been accompanied by an expanding ecosystem of governance initiatives. Organisations are increasingly expected to produce AI policies, disclosure statements, and responsible use guidance in response to regulation, funder expectations, and public scrutiny. Responsible AI frameworks have also converged around broad principles such as fairness, transparency, accountability, and privacy (Jobin, Ienca and Vayena, 2019), offering organisations useful high-level guardrails for adoption. These forms of governance matter, particularly where AI use may affect public trust, service quality, and relationships with vulnerable communities.

However, governance does not become meaningful through documentation alone. Policies and guidance need to be interpreted in relation to situated AI-use: analysing service user responses, crafting a difficult email, or deciding whether AI-generated text still carries the organisation's voice. These decisions are rarely guided by principles alone. They depend on how staff understand the task, risks involved, the people affected, and the values their organisation is trying to uphold.

This is particularly important in the VCSE sector, where AI adoption is often informal, uneven, and shaped by immediate workload pressures. Staff may use AI experimentally before organisational policy exists, while others may avoid it or feel uncertain about whether disclosure is expected (Bright et al., 2024). Prior work suggests that people may conceal genAI use because of perceived stigma, uncertainty, or concerns about professional judgement (Zhang et al., 2025), while work on AI disclosure shows that transparency depends on organisational norms and workplace culture as much as reporting mechanisms (Schilke and Reimann, 2025). In such contexts, top-down guidance may provide necessary boundaries, but it cannot substitute for shared organisational understanding.

This points to a missing step in current approaches to AI governance, especially in VCSEs. Before any locally meaningful policies can be developed, staff need opportunities to surface existing practices, compare assumptions and collectively negotiate what appropriate AI use looks like in relation to everyday work. This is a participatory task, but not merely in the sense of consulting staff on policies after they have been drafted. *It requires creating collective spaces where workers can shape the reasoning that informs governance from the outset.*

2.3 Designing for collective reflection

Many of the questions surrounding genAI cannot be resolved through technical expertise alone. They require people with different roles, experiences, and perspectives to interpret uncertain situations

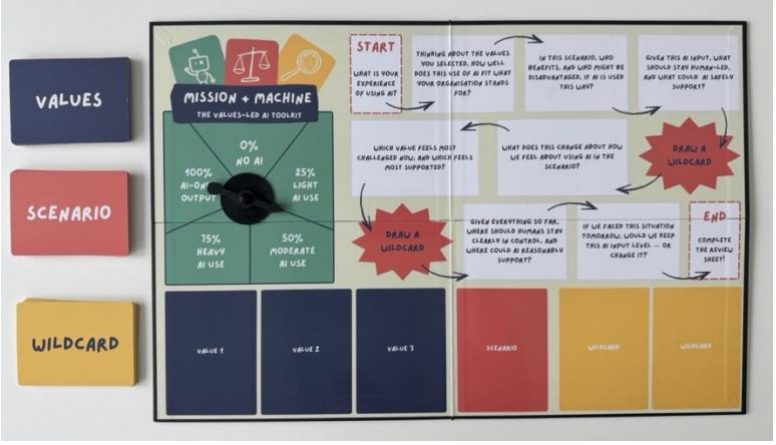


Figure 1. The Mission + Machine toolkit board

together, negotiate competing priorities, and arrive at contextually appropriate decisions. Designing for these types of conversations has long been a concern within HCI (Kensing and Blomberg, 1998), particularly where issues are complex, value-laden, or socially sensitive.

Early HCI work on reflection primarily focused on how technology can support *individual* reflection, helping people examine their own experiences, behaviours, and decision making through interactive systems (Sengers et al., 2005; Baumer, 2015). Scholarship beyond HCI has recognised that reflection is often a collaborative process, emerging through discussion, negotiation, and the sharing of different perspectives rather than occurring solely within individuals (Chan and Lee, 2021). Collective reflection allows participants to articulate their own reasoning and encounter alternative viewpoints and construct shared understanding through dialogue.

One way HCI has supported these conversations is through physical artefacts such as card decks, design toolkits, and games. Rather than prescribing solutions, these artefacts externalise complex questions through prompts, scenarios, and tangible objects that participants can discuss together. This has proven particularly valuable when addressing difficult or sensitive topics, where shared artefacts reduce the interpersonal risk associated with disagreement and make abstract issues easier to explore (Brandt, 2006; Scott, Warner and Cecchinato, 2026). Similar approaches have been used to support ethical deliberation around emerging technologies (Hanschke et al., 2024). Judgment Call uses fictional product reviews, stakeholder perspectives, and structured discussion to help teams interrogate the societal implications of AI systems during product development (Ballard, Chappell and Kennedy, 2019). Similarly, Wong et al. (2023) argue that AI ethics toolkits do more than support discussion; they shape how organisations come to understand the work of responsible AI itself. Together, this work demonstrates that carefully designed artefacts can actively scaffold discussion and collaborative sensemaking around complex technologies, providing forms of support that extend beyond static guidance documents (Kawakami et al., 2024; Kaji et al., 2025).

However, much of this work has focused on technology design teams or the ethical implications of AI systems under development. Less attention has been paid to organisations attempting to negotiate the role of AI within existing work practices, particularly in resource-constrained settings where governance capacity is limited and adoption is already underway. *There remains an opportunity to explore how tangible, values-led artefacts can support collective reflection around everyday organisational practice, helping organisations build the shared understanding from which locally meaningful governance can emerge.*

3. MISSION + MACHINE TOOLKIT

Mission + Machine is a values-led deliberation toolkit designed to support conversations about the role of generative AI within value-driven organisations. Rather than producing organisational policy or prescribing appropriate AI use, it provides a structured process through which staff collectively examine familiar work practices, consider how AI intersects with their organisation's mission and values, and negotiate appropriate levels of AI involvement. Designed as a lightweight, reusable resource, the toolkit is intended to support repeated deliberation as technologies, organisational practices, and governance continue to evolve.

The toolkit emerged from a broader programme of research examining generative AI adoption within the VCSE sector. Building on empirical studies of how charities navigate AI-related labour, responsibility, and organisational uncertainty, we developed the toolkit through sustained engagement with local and regional VCSE organisations. Development was informed by discussions with charity staff, iterative prototyping and two pilot workshops that refined both the physical artefacts and facilitation process.

Existing challenge	Design objective	Toolkit implementation
GenAI can be informal & unevenly understood across organisations.	*DO1. Build shared organisational understanding.*	*Scenario cards centred on everyday work and facilitated group discussion.*
Org values are difficult to translate into decisions about genAI use.	*DO2. Ground discussion in organisational values.*	*Organisation-specific value cards that frame each discussion.*
Appropriate genAI use is rarely binary.	*DO3. Support negotiated AI involvement.*	*AI involvement spinner to foster discussions on un/acceptable use.*
GenAI, organisational practices, and governance keep evolving.	*DO4. Design for ongoing organisational learning.*	*Review sheet capturing collective reasoning for future revisiting.*

Table 1. Summary of the organisational challenges, design objectives, and toolkit features

These longstanding relationships also provided insight into organisational culture beyond AI adoption itself. For example, one collaborating organisation regularly holds games evenings as a means of bringing colleagues together. This suggested that a playful format would feel familiar rather than artificial, reinforcing our aim of creating a lightweight space for collective discussion.

Throughout development, four design objectives guided decisions about the toolkit's structure and individual components. Table 1 summarises how the organisational challenges identified in Section 2 informed the design objectives and the corresponding toolkit components.

DO1. Build shared organisational understanding. Support staff in surfacing existing AI practices, assumptions, and uncertainties, establishing a common understanding before governance decisions are formalised.

DO2. Ground AI discussions in organisational values. Anchor deliberation in the organisation's own mission and values, allowing participants to interpret AI use within their existing practices rather than through generic ethical principles alone.

DO3. Support negotiated AI involvement. Recognise that AI adoption is rarely a binary decision by enabling participants to explore different levels of AI involvement across familiar organisational tasks.

DO4. Design for ongoing organisational learning. Create a process that organisations can revisit as technologies, practices, and priorities evolve, supporting governance as an ongoing organisational capability rather than a one-off exercise. These objectives informed the design of the toolkit, from the selection of scenarios and values through to the mechanisms used to stimulate discussion and capture organisational reasoning.

3.1 Toolkit components

Mission + Machine consists of a set of physical artefacts that guide participants through structured discussion around everyday organisational work (Figure 1). Each session combines organisational values, task-based scenarios, graduated levels of AI involvement, and reflective prompts to support collective deliberation. Rather than leading participants towards predefined answers, the toolkit is designed to surface different perspectives and make organisational reasoning visible. Below we describe each component of the toolkit and the design decisions behind them (Figure 2).

Organisational Values Each session begins with participants identifying three organisational values to underpin their discussions. The values card deck includes 10 pre-defined value cards, selected based on common values we see across the VCSE sector and the organisations we work with, as well as 9 blank reusable values cards that allow participants to define the values that best represent their work. These remain visible throughout the session and provide a shared point of reference as participants consider different uses of genAI.

Grounding discussion in organisational values reflects the observation that charities rarely evaluate technology solely in terms of efficiency or capability. Instead, decisions are often framed around maintaining trust, preserving organisational voice, supporting equity, or protecting relationships with the communities they serve. Beginning with values encourages participants to interpret genAI use through principles that already shape their practice, rather than introducing external ethical frameworks.

Scenario Cards. The second step is for individuals to select one scenario card. This deck includes 10 pre-defined cards that present everyday organisational activities drawn from previous empirical research with VCSE organisations, including preparing funding applications, producing communications, responding to service users, summarising documents, and administrative work. The scenarios intentionally focus on familiar work rather than hypothetical AI systems or future technologies. There are 10 blank reusable scenario



Fig 2. *Mission + Machine* toolkit components: value cards, scenario cards, Wild Cards, and Review Pad

cards, to allow participants to define others more relevant to them.

Using everyday tasks shifts discussion away from abstract questions about AI towards situations participants already recognise. This enables people with different roles and levels of AI experience to contribute from their own expertise, while revealing how apparently similar tasks may carry different expectations regarding trust, accountability, human judgement, or organisational voice.

AI Involvement. Once a scenario has been selected, participants spin the AI involvement wheel, which is divided into five levels representing increasing degrees of AI contribution, from no AI use, through AI-assisted and AI-supported work, to predominantly AI-generated and fully AI-led outputs. The randomly selected level provides a starting point for discussion rather than a prescribed answer. Participants are encouraged to consider whether that level of AI involvement is appropriate for the scenario and, if not, to explain why.

The spinner introduces an initial level of AI involvement that participants are invited to discuss, defend, or challenge. Randomisation deliberately disrupts immediate consensus, encouraging participants to articulate why a particular level of AI involvement does or does not align with the task and the organisational values under discussion.

Reflective Prompts, Wild Cards, and Review Pad. Once organisational values, the scenario, and the initial level of AI involvement have been established, participants work through a series of prompts on the board that structure the discussion. The prompts are intentionally sequenced to deepen reflection over the course of each round.

At two points during each round, participants draw one of 15 Wild Cards. These introduce new organisational circumstances, such as how would the organisation explain AI use to beneficiaries if asked, or the impact of a staff member losing confidence in AI outputs? Other cards require participants to reconsider the proposed level of AI involvement by re-spinning the AI involvement wheel. Rather than testing whether participants reached the “correct” decision, Wild Cards introduce the uncertainty characteristic of organisational life. Participants are encouraged to revisit earlier reasoning in light of new information, recognising that appropriate AI use often depends on changing organisational contexts rather than fixed rules.

Each round concludes by recording areas of agreement, disagreement, and questions for further consideration in the Review Pad. Rather than documenting decisions alone, the Review Pad captures the reasoning behind them, creating an organisational record that can inform future conversations and the gradual development of locally grounded AI governance. Revisiting these records enables organisations to reflect on how their thinking evolves alongside changing technologies, organisational priorities, and external expectations, supporting governance as an ongoing organisational process rather than a one-off exercise.

The toolkit can be used in either Curated or Chaos mode. In Curated mode, participants select values and scenarios relevant to particular organisational questions or policy discussions. Chaos mode randomises these elements, encouraging participants to explore unexpected combinations and challenge assumptions that might otherwise remain unexamined. Sessions typically involve two to six participants and last between 20 and 60 minutes.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Deliberation before governance

Since the explosion in popularity of AI, there has been a race to support responsible AI through policies, principles, and disclosure mechanisms across all types of organisations. These are important and necessary developments, but they largely assume organisations have already established a shared understanding of where AI is used, how it should be used, and how those decisions relate to organisational values. As uptake of genAI has been uneven across organisations such as VCSEs, policies and guidelines cannot be based on such assumption. Furthermore, recent work has questioned whether AI governance can be reduced to principles or static guidance documents, noting considerable variation in how organisations interpret and operationalise responsible AI (Jobin,

Ienca and Vayena, 2019; Wong, Madaio and Merrill, 2023). Thus, researchers have argued there are opportunities to design for an earlier stage of governance that allows organisations to collectively examine existing practices before they become formalised through policy (Colborn-Clark, Cecchinato and Dow, 2026).

Mission + Machine was designed to support this stage by structuring discussion around familiar organisational work, rather than compliance requirements. Rather than positioning governance as a document to be produced, the toolkit treats it as an organisational process in which staff negotiate emerging norms, articulate uncertainties, and make visible the reasoning that underpins decisions about genAI use. This perspective aligns with calls for more situated and participatory approaches to responsible AI that recognise governance as something enacted within organisations rather than imposed upon them (Kawakami et al., 2024).

4.2 Grounding AI governance in everyday work

Responsible AI frameworks frequently foreground concepts like fairness, transparency, accountability, and privacy (Jobin, Ienca and Vayena, 2019). While these principles provide important guidance, they remain intentionally broad and can be difficult to interpret in relation to everyday organisational practice.

Mission + Machine instead begins with familiar work, and we argue that grounding deliberation in everyday work offers two advantages. First, it situates abstract values within concrete organisational contexts, making them easier to interpret and negotiate collectively. Second, it enables participants to contribute from lived experience rather than technical expertise. This is particularly important in value-driven organisations, where staff often possess deep understanding of organisational mission but varying levels of AI literacy. The toolkit therefore treats organisational values not as fixed principles to be applied, but as resources that participants actively interpret and negotiate through discussion.

More broadly, this suggests that values-led AI governance may benefit from beginning with the practices organisations already recognise, rather than asking participants to reason from abstract ethical frameworks. This resonates with wider HCI traditions that seek to make values visible through design activities situated within people's own contexts rather than external prescriptions (Friedman and Hendry, 2012; Scott, Warner and Cecchinato, 2026).

4.3 Designing governance as an evolving process

As AI develops and organisations try to keep up, governance is unlikely to be resolved through a single policy or workshop. This was one of the main motivations underpinning *Mission + Machine*: genAI technologies, organisational practices, and societal expectations will continue to change rapidly. Guidance produced today may require revision within months as capabilities, regulation, or organisational priorities evolve. Instead, organisations require mechanisms that allow decisions to be revisited as circumstances change. Rather than producing a definitive organisational position on AI use, the toolkit was designed as a repeatable process that organisations can revisit over time and can inform and live alongside broader policies and guidelines.

Although developed with the VCSE sector, this toolkit likely extends beyond charities. Public and third sector organisations are similarly negotiating genAI adoption while balancing limited resources, professional values, organisational responsibilities, and diverse stakeholder expectations (Michel et al., 2026; Hou et al., 2026). Designing lightweight, repeatable processes for collective reflection offers a way of supporting locally grounded AI governance across a wider range of organisational settings.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This paper introduces *Mission + Machine*, a values-led deliberation toolkit designed to support collective reflection on the role of genAI within value-driven organisations. Rather than beginning with policy or compliance, the toolkit encourages organisations to explore AI through the lens of their own values and everyday work, providing a structured process through which shared organisational understanding can develop. In doing so, we argue that deliberative artefacts can complement emerging approaches to AI governance by creating opportunities for organisations to collectively negotiate appropriate practice before those decisions become formalised.

Our focus here has been on presenting the design of the toolkit and the rationale underpinning its development. Evaluating how Mission + Machine shapes organisational discussion, supports decision-making, and informs the development of locally grounded governance remains an important next step. We are currently deploying the toolkit with VCSE organisations to explore its use in practice, examining both the deliberative process it supports and how discussions evolve as genAI technologies, organisational priorities and governance expectations continue to change.

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APPENDIX

A. USE OF AI

The authors used generative AI tools (ChatGPT Auto) to improve language and readability across the manuscript, based on author provided instructions. All AI-generated outputs were reviewed and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final content. This disclosure statement was created using DAISY (available at: https://dryoanaahmetoglu.github.io/daisy-disclosure/