

St. Joseph County AI Task Force Meeting Summary - June 12, 2024

Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Time: 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Location: MSU Extension Conference Room

The St. Joseph County AI Task Force convened on June 12th to discuss advancements and future directions in AI integration within the county. Here's a summary of the key points and discussions from the meeting:

Welcome and Recap

The meeting kicked off with introductions and a brief overview of the task force's goals. Members reflected on the progress made since the last meeting.

Old Business

A review of the BOC AI Steering Committee Presentation highlighted the need for clear governance and oversight in implementing AI technologies. The discussion underscored the importance of defining the steering committee's role in shaping county AI policies.

New Business

The task force delved into policy recommendations for the county's AI strategy. A significant focus was placed on ensuring privacy and data protection as core components of any AI policy. The members agreed on the need for robust guidelines to govern AI use in the county.

AI Presentation: Future Topics

The main presentation covered various AI tools and their potential applications:

- **Current AI Options:** Members discussed enhancing staff capabilities through AI and reducing workload. The introduction of custom GPTs and chatbots was particularly noteworthy, offering innovative ways to improve efficiency in different departments.
- **Licensing and Costs:**
 - **Custom GPTs and Chatbots:** The task force discussed the cost implications of using AI tools like custom GPTs and chatbots. It was noted that creating a custom GPT requires a paid plan (ChatGPT Plus) which costs \$20 per month per user. For chatbots, a \$19 per month plan allows the creation of two chatbots with 11,000 characters of data.
 - **Team Plans:** The possibility of using team plans was considered. Team plans, costing between \$25 to \$30 per month, offer higher access levels and additional features compared to individual plans.
 - **Copilot for Local Governments:** Mention was made of Microsoft's Copilot, which integrates AI with Microsoft products. The cost and feasibility of integrating Copilot into the county's systems were discussed, noting that it would likely be more expensive than other options.

- **Funding:** The task force debated who should bear the cost of these licenses—whether it should be the responsibility of the county, IT department, or individual departments.
- **Privacy and Data Protection:** On paid plans, there is an option to exclude data from training, ensuring that the data remains private and is not used for further AI model training.
- **Future Training Sessions:** Proposed training sessions will cover essential topics like Prompt Engineering, Customizing AI, Creating Chatbots, and Automation/AI Agents. These sessions aim to equip county staff with the skills needed to leverage AI effectively.
- **Demonstrations:** A live demonstration showcased the creation of custom GPTs and chatbots, emphasizing their ease of use and powerful capabilities. The task force explored the benefits of using chatbots for broader accessibility without the need for individual licenses.
- **Tools and Resources:** The meeting highlighted various resources for learning more about AI, including YouTube channels like Skill AI and online courses on platforms like Coursera.

Homework and Next Steps

Task force members were assigned the task of brainstorming potential AI projects and identifying areas for improvement within their departments. This exercise aims to generate ideas for practical AI applications that can be implemented in the near future.

Open Discussion

The meeting concluded with an open floor for questions and additional comments. Members discussed the integration of AI with current county systems and outlined future steps. The consensus was to start with small, manageable projects and gradually scale up to more complex implementations. The task force also decided to look into purchasing team plans to provide broader access to AI tools for county staff and to coordinate with IT and relevant departments to finalize licensing decisions.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM, with members looking forward to the next session where they will delve deeper into specific AI topics and training.