

Generative AI Use Guidelines

CONTENT CREATION

VERSION 2.7 2026

Requirements for Development, Production, Marketing, and Distribution

1. ONLY USE APPROVED TOOLS

A+E requires that all GenAI tools used in connection with content creation, production, post-production, and operational workflows be reviewed and approved prior to use.

Required

- Use only GenAI tools that have been reviewed and approved by Technology and Legal for AI-assisted content generation or modification.
- Confirm tool approvals with Technology before beginning any project involving GenAI. The current list of approved tools can be found [here](#).
- Use GenAI tools only within approved enterprise-secured environments.

Escalation Needed

- Consult Technology and Legal before using any new GenAI tool, model, plugin, integration, or workflow not previously approved.

Prohibited

- Do not input A+E content or confidential materials into personal, free, trial, demo, or unapproved third-party GenAI tools.
- Approval processes cannot be circumvented through personal accounts, VPNs, off-network devices, or unauthorized environments.
- Any modification or disabling of security, retention, or governance settings established by Technology or Legal is strictly prohibited.

Unapproved GenAI tools may retain, ingest, or reuse prompts and uploaded materials, creating risks relating to confidentiality, intellectual property ownership, and licensing.

2. NEVER REFERENCE OR USE THIRD-PARTY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, BRANDS, OR SPECIFIC PEOPLE IN PROMPTS OR INPUTS

Prompts and inputs that reference third-party intellectual property, brands, or recognizable individuals may generate outputs that infringe copyright, trademark, publicity, or other legal rights.

Required

- Use generic, descriptive language in prompts and inputs, such as “1970s newsroom,” “gritty urban crime scene,” or “ancient jungle ruin at dusk.”
- Consider creative alternatives that rely on public-domain works or A+E-owned intellectual property.
- Be aware that broad stock licenses do not necessarily include GenAI-related rights, and production teams should confirm whether applicable agreements expressly permit any such uses.

Escalation Needed

- Consult Legal for sensitive recreations involving true-crime, historical/archival content, or identifiable individuals.
- Consult Legal before using prompts, inputs, or outputs that reference, evoke, or depict third-party intellectual property, real brands or companies, public figures, or recognizable individuals unless appropriate rights or permissions have been secured.

Prohibited

- Do not use prompts, inputs, images, audio, or other materials that reference content owned or controlled by others, including copyrighted or trademarked materials, likenesses of public figures, or estate-controlled likenesses, without appropriate permissions.
- Prompts should never attempt to evoke or replicate distinctive styles like shown below.
 - *“In the style of Breaking Bad”*
 - *“Make her look like Taylor Swift”*
 - *“Make her sound like Mila Kunis”*
 - *“Use Disney-style animals”*
 - *“Create a building that looks like The Empire State Building” (or any other rights-protected building or object, including sculptures or other artworks)*
 - *“Create an image inspired by Andy Warhol” (or any other identifiable work or person)*
 - *“Create a character with Owen Wilson’s nose” (or any other distinctive feature of a known performer)*

3. DO NOT SOURCE FACES OR VOICES OF REAL PEOPLE (LIVING OR DECEASED) WITHOUT SIGNED RIGHTS

Unauthorized use of real likenesses, voices, or biometric characteristics may violate privacy, publicity, contractual, labor, and biometric-data laws, and may expose A+E to legal liability and reputational harm.

Required

- Work with casting agencies to hire and film background actors, securing likeness and voice rights specifically for intended GenAI-assisted uses.
- Obtain Legal approval before beginning development, testing, or use of synthetic performers, digital replicas, recreated voices, or AI-generated likenesses of real individuals.

Escalation Needed

- Contact Legal if the proposed use involves deceased individuals, archival footage, public figures, or recreated performances.

Prohibited

- Do not use “crowd release” photos, stock footage, social media images, or publicly available content to generate synthetic performers or digital replicas for commercial use without appropriate rights and permissions.
- Do not repurpose prior A+E footage, audio, or performances without confirming that the applicable agreements expressly permit AI-assisted use.

4. SUBSTANTIALLY ALTER GENERATIVE AI OUTPUTS

Purely AI-generated outputs do not qualify for copyright protection under current legal standards, and the U.S. Copyright Office emphasizes that human contributions must be identifiable and supportable if challenged later. As such, A+E requires substantial human authorship, editorial judgment, and creative contribution in all GenAI-assisted deliverables intended for production, distribution, or commercial exploitation.

Required

- Add meaningful human creative input by rewriting, reordering, combining, compositing, editing, or otherwise transforming GenAI outputs in a manner that demonstrates substantial human authorship and creative judgment, and document those contributions through ordinary production and editorial practices (e.g., editorial notes, design layers, script revisions, or version histories). We recommend creating a project folder that contains the initial output, various saved iterations, and the final asset all in one place.
- Use GenAI tools to ideate, iterate, and support creative development — not to produce final deliverables without human involvement.
- Ensure that AI-assisted scripts, imagery, dialogue, and other creative assets contain substantial human authorship to support intended ownership, licensing, and distribution uses.

Escalation Needed

- Consult Legal before using AI-generated content in key art, title sequences, recurring characters, synthetic performances, music deliverables, or other commercially significant assets.

Prohibited

- Do not deliver “raw” or minimally modified GenAI outputs (including scripts, images, dialogue, music, or performances) as final production assets without substantial human involvement.
- Do not rely solely on prompting as evidence of creative authorship. The U.S. Copyright Office explicitly notes prompting alone is insufficient to establish substantial human authorship, even if iterative or highly detailed.

5. DOCUMENT GENERATIVE AI USE IN RIGHTS BIBLE DELIVERABLES

When GenAI tools are used to develop key creative elements that are part of final and/or public-facing deliverables, certain records must be kept to show how they were made. At minimum, as described below, you must document that GenAI was used, the tool(s) used, and identify their general role in the creative process. Key creative assets are those that meet one or more of the following criteria:

Brand/Story Defining

- Appears in main titles or key art; depicts main or significant recurring characters; establishes signature locations or visual style; or builds a fictional setting central to the story.

High-Visibility/Long-Term Use

- Featured in major marketing, trailers, or materials reused across seasons, campaigns, or merchandise.

Legal/Financial Value

- Intended for registered copyright or trademark protection, has high infringement risk, or is tied to significant production or marketing spend.

Minor or incidental GenAI uses that do not appear recognizably in a public-facing creative element generally do not require further documentation in shot sheets. These uses might include colorization, upscaling, noise reduction, image restoration, transcription, or other technical and operational enhancements.

Temporary or exploratory GenAI uses that do not appear recognizably in a final deliverable do not require documentation. However, internal ideation can still involve rights-protected materials, publicity rights, estate-controlled likenesses, or unapproved inputs. Be mindful that some uses are restricted regardless of whether they ultimately appear in a final deliverable.

If there is uncertainty as to whether GenAI has resulted in key assets that must be disclosed and documented, consult with production's creative lead and, if needed, Legal.

Deliverable Requirements

- GenAI uses must be time-coded on the episode shot sheet. Source information should include the vendor and AI tool that was used. If GEMS was used, please also indicate the model(s) that were used.
- Maintain prompt logs for key GenAI assets. These logs may be requested by Legal during the approval process for recurring synthetic performers or other key GenAI assets. Logs are automatically saved in GEMS and can be exported from the system.
- Any on-screen disclosures should be included in time-coded lower thirds paperwork.
- Please upload this signed Acknowledgment into the 'PAC Documents' tab in Debut.
- Please complete the GenAI Use Declaration Form for each episode and upload into the 'Program Documents' tab in Debut.

Acknowledgment Requirements

- A+E employees accessing approved GenAI tool environments such as GEMS are required to acknowledge these Guidelines electronically. Such acknowledgements may be retained by A+E for compliance and audit purposes.
- A signed copy of this Acknowledgment must be uploaded to the 'PAC Documents' tab in Debut as part of the production rights bible. The showrunner or lead producer should be the signatory on the final copy uploaded into the system.

GenAI-related documentation must be retained for the duration required under the applicable production agreement, and in no case less than five (5) years following final delivery, unless otherwise directed by A+E. This includes prompt logs, tool records, approval records, and human review documentation, which will be made available to A+E upon reasonable request for purposes relating to legal review, rights verification, distribution, audit, compliance obligations, or other legal reasons.

6. LABEL GENERATIVE AI CONTENT CLEARLY

Many platforms mandate AI disclosure. Failure to disclose GenAI content clearly and consistently can result in takedowns, claims, regulatory violations, loss of distribution opportunities in certain markets, and reputational harm if audiences feel misled.

Disclosure Requirements

- Include an on-screen disclosure at the top of each show stating, "The following program contains select AI-generated or AI-assisted visual elements." or comparable language approved by Legal, depending on the types of GenAI elements used.
- Include additional per-instance disclosures in the bottom left corner when each GenAI visual element appears.

- On-screen disclosure must be clearly visible to viewers and should remain onscreen for four (4) seconds. For marketing/promotional materials, disclosure can be less than four seconds per instance. Refer to the GenAI Disclosure Style Guide for further information on specifications.
- Texted files must include these disclosures. Textless files are not required to include the AI bug to offer flexibility for downstream clients to include comparable disclosure (e.g., LATAM may need to revise “AI” to “IA”).
- Disclosure is not required on-screen for scripted content.

Escalation Needed

- Consult Legal for appropriate on-screen disclosures for audio elements (e.g., audio recreations of a 911 call or historical speech).
- Consult Legal if a platform forbids an on-screen bug, as alternative disclosures (e.g., metadata, credits, delivery documents) may be required depending on the circumstances.

Prohibited

- Do not publish GenAI content without making required disclosures to platforms or international distributors, as advised by Legal.
- Do not use GenAI to fabricate or materially alter documentary-style, archival, or factual content in a manner that could reasonably mislead audiences regarding authenticity.
- Ensure that internal-facing GenAI uses or temporary synthetic media do not appear in final deliverables.

7. RESPECT GUILD AND UNION BOUNDARIES

Digital replication, synthetic performances, voice recreation, and AI-assisted performance modification are increasingly treated as new exploitations or uses of a performer's labor and may trigger additional consent, compensation, credit, residual, or approval obligations. Production teams should involve Legal early when these technologies are being considered, even where the intended creative outcome appears similar to traditional production techniques.

Required

- Assume WGA, SAG-AFTRA, DGA, and IATSE rules might be applicable, even if you're not working in a union shop.
- In order to remain in compliance with potential guild and union rules, involve Legal if using GenAI tools for:
 - Dialogue or any type of script writing
 - Likeness/digital replicas/synthetic performers
 - Voice synthesis or dubbing
 - Post-production editing that affects an actor's appearance or performance (e.g., de-aging, age progression, etc.)
 - Script editing or expansion

Escalation Needed

- Consult Legal before using archival footage, historical performances, or previously recorded talent materials in connection with GenAI-assisted workflows.
- Consult Legal if GenAI may create new consent, compensation, credit, residual, or approval obligations.
- Consult Legal whenever guild, union, talent, or contractual applicability is unclear.

Prohibited

- Do not use GenAI tools to replace, undermine, or materially impact roles or work typically done by union-represented individuals, including actors, writers, or crew members, without proper approvals or agreements.
- Do not create digital replicas, synthetic performers, voices, or likenesses of real talent without contractual permissions or Legal approval.
- Do not create performances in post-production and VFX without the performer's consent, except for customary industry practices (e.g., adjustments where the photograph and soundtrack remain substantially as scripted, performed, or recorded; or post-production changes for cosmetics, wardrobe, noise reduction, continuity, pitch, clarity, or similar purposes).

Even the perception of replacing or undermining union-covered work may create legal exposure, trigger costly disputes, cause production delays, and damage A+E's reputation and relationships with talent and industry partners.

8. RESPECT CULTURAL NORMS AND SENSITIVITIES

A+E's content is viewed by audiences across cultures, countries, and communities. GenAI-assisted content that ignores cultural context, reinforces harmful stereotypes, or misrepresents traditions, identities, or lived experiences may undermine audience trust, damage A+E's brands, and create legal, regulatory, or distribution risk.

Required

- Be culturally aware and respectful of regional norms and sensitivities regarding tone, imagery, characterization, and messaging when creating content for global audiences.
- Consider how GenAI-assisted content may be perceived by audiences in different cultural, geographic, and historical contexts.
- Apply heightened care when using GenAI to depict cultural practices, traditions, religious subject matter, or historically significant communities.

Escalation Needed

- Check with your creative lead or Legal if you're unsure whether a GenAI element could be seen as culturally insensitive in a target market.
- If a recurring synthetic performer is created, Standards & Practices should be provided prompt logs to review how this performer was created.

Prohibited

- Do not use GenAI to reinforce harmful stereotypes or create inaccurate or insensitive depictions of individuals, cultures, communities, or traditions.
- Do not use GenAI to generate culturally significant symbols, attire, language, rituals, or identities without appropriate context, research, or review.

9. RESTRICT AUTONOMOUS AI WORKFLOWS AND AI-ASSISTED CODING

GenAI tools are increasingly being used to assist with production workflows such as metadata tagging, media organization, search, transcription, scripting, automations, or editing support. While these tools may improve efficiency, they can also create security, confidentiality, operational, and rights-management risks if used without appropriate oversight.

Required

- Use only approved multi-modal or agentic workflow tools within authorized A+E production environments.
- Notify IT if AI-assisted tools are being used to automate production workflows or operational processes, but you're unsure if they're approved.

Escalation Needed

- Consult Technology and Legal before implementing AI-assisted tools that connect to editing systems, shared storage environments, asset-management systems, archives, cloud platforms, or third-party services.
- Consult Technology before allowing any vendors to provide demos of their AI tools or other services.

Prohibited

- Do not install or run autonomous AI agents, locally deployed AI models, or unapproved AI workflow tools on production, post-production, or editing systems. This includes connecting to shared drives, cloud environments, or production infrastructure.
- Do not use AI-generated scripts, plugins, macros, automations, or "vibe coding" techniques to modify editing systems, production software, or operational workflows.
- Do not permit AI-assisted systems to independently publish, modify, delete, distribute, or otherwise act upon production assets without substantial human oversight.

10. VERIFY ACCURACY OF GENERATIVE AI OUTPUTS

The use of GenAI must not compromise the integrity of the historical record, distort factual information, or undermine the trust audiences place in our brands. Production teams have a responsibility to ensure that AI-assisted content is independently verified, appropriately contextualized, and presented with editorial integrity.

Required

- Independently verify any AI-assisted factual claim, quotation, translation, archival description, date, or historical reference against authoritative sources prior to publication or distribution.
- Apply heightened review to GenAI content involving true crime, military history, political events, religion, public health, or other sensitive topics where factual inaccuracies may cause reputational or legal risk.

Escalation Needed

- Consult Legal before using GenAI to recreate, restore, or otherwise modify archival materials in a manner that could affect audience interpretation.

Prohibited

- Do not use GenAI content without appropriate human review and fact-checking.
- Do not use GenAI to fabricate, alter, or mischaracterize historical events, quotations, archival materials, or factual records in a manner that could reasonably mislead audiences.
- Do not recreate material using GenAI when unable to license the original, or to avoid obtaining a license.

11. FOLLOW A+E'S GUIDING VALUES & PRINCIPLES, AND THIRD-PARTY PLATFORM PRINCIPLES

Required

- Always follow A+E's Guiding Values and Principles—we commit to deploying AI ethically, with an approach that amplifies human creativity and judgment, ensuring it delivers meaningful artistic and operational value.
- Share intended GenAI use with your third-party platform contact early if delivering to a platform that requires prior notice or approval of GenAI use.

Escalation Needed

- If any questions arise regarding the above guidelines, please reach out to your creative lead or Legal for clarification.
- Consult Legal and Technology before using new GenAI capabilities, products, or workflows that were not contemplated when these Guidelines were issued.
- Consult Legal before delivering GenAI-assisted content to a platform, territory, or distribution partner that imposes AI-related requirements that differ from A+E standards.

Prohibited

- Do not use GenAI in a manner that prioritizes speed, convenience, or cost savings over legal compliance, creative integrity, audience trust, or applicable platform requirements.
- Do not structure, segment, or characterize a GenAI use in a manner intended to avoid required review, approval, disclosure, documentation, or compliance obligations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the above Generative AI Guidelines for Content Creation ("Guidelines"). I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, I am currently in compliance with these Guidelines and agree to comply with them going forward.

If I have any questions regarding the content or interpretation of the Guidelines, I agree to bring them to the attention of my supervisor, creative lead, Legal, and/or Technology, as appropriate, given these Guidelines and the nature of my question.

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____