NZSL +AI

A checklist for developers

NZSL is a full human language and an important part of Deaf culture, identity and community. How AI uses NZSL can affect the language's integrity, use and future.

Before using AI with NZSL, you should be able to answer these seven questions.

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1 Are Deaf people leading or sharing the main decisions?

- Involve Deaf people throughout and make sure they are decision-makers.
- Turi Māori (Māori Deaf) must lead decisions on Māori concepts, culture, knowledge and data.

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2 Does the work use NZSL correctly?

- Treat NZSL as a full language, with its own grammar, culture and variation.
- Ask Deaf NZSL experts to check the language. You cannot make up signs. Errors can change the meaning and cause harm.

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3 Is NZSL data protected and well-controlled?

- Check where the data came from and get permission to use it.
- Work with Deaf people and organisations responsible for the data to agree how it will be stored and controlled, including if it will be stored overseas.
- NZSL data should be stored in Aotearoa New Zealand wherever possible.

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4 Have you explored the need and possible solutions together?

- Work with Deaf people to understand the problem, need or opportunity.
- Explore a range of options before deciding whether AI is the right approach.
- Test ideas with Deaf people before making major decisions.

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5 Does AI help people and services rather than replace them?

- Tell people when they are using AI and how to reach a qualified person if they need to.
- Prioritise AI for low-risk tasks or immediate communication, including when it provides access that would not otherwise be available.

6 Has the AI been tested properly?

- Ask a range of Deaf NZSL users and experts to test as well as advise.

7 Is it clear who is responsible?

- Name who is responsible and explain how to report a problem.
- Let Deaf decision-makers challenge or stop the work. Let people withdraw their data.

Read the NZSL Board's position statement on the use of NZSL and AI here: www.NZSL.govt.nz/AI

Need help or advice? Contact the NZSL Board or Te Rōpū Kaitiaki at nzsl@whaikaha.govt.nz. It's okay to ask questions if the NZSL looks wrong, something feels unclear, or Deaf people seem to have been left out.