AI USE AMONG WIKIPEDIANS IN SCIENCE-RELATED INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings presented here come from the **project "Science Communication in the Age of AI"** (AISciComm, www.aiscicomm.ch), conducted at the Chair of Science Communication at the Department of Communication and Media Research (IKMZ) of the University of Zurich. The project examines how artificial intelligence is used, perceived, and evaluated in the context of public communication about science - including by professional communicators, scientists, journalists, content creators, Wikipedians, and citizens.

Methodologically, the following report is based on parallel **quantitative, standardized surveys across six groups in Switzerland**. The surveys were conducted in four languages (DE, FR, IT, EN). Questionnaires combined validated and tested items, some of which were adapted to the specific topic of the project, with several newly developed questions. The six surveyed groups were recruited as follows:

- **Science communicators:** recruited via curated mailing lists and professional associations; field period November 2025 to January 2026 (N = 244).
- **Scientists:** recruited via central and curated mailing lists of Swiss universities and research institutions; field period November 2025 to March 2026 (N = 788).
- **Science journalists:** recruited via curated mailing lists and the Swiss association of science journalism; field period December 2025 to March 2026 (N = 46).
- **Science content creators:** recruited via curated contact lists and snowball sampling; field period late January to March 2026 (N = 67).
- **Wikipedians:** recruited via Wikipedia banners shown to registered users in Switzerland and via Wikimedia CH communication channels; field period November 2025 to January 2026 (N = 159).
- **Citizens:** recruited via the panel provider Bilendi, 2,039 respondents with quotas for age, gender, and linguistic region; field period December 2025 to January 2026.

Overall, the survey suggests that Wikipedians in Switzerland are not generally unfamiliar with AI, but notably cautious about using it for their contributions to Wikipedia. While almost 90% of respondents say they use AI outside their Wikipedia work, 63.9% say they never use AI for their Wikipedia contributions. Compared with other surveyed groups, Wikipedians also report much lower AI use in their respective context.

When respondents do use AI for Wikipedia, they mainly use it as a support tool, especially for translation and language improvement. At the same time, they perceive the Wikipedia community as actively engaging with and reflecting on the use of AI: 94.5% report regular community discussions, 92.7% report initiatives or task forces, and 84.3% report existing procedures or guidelines.

The survey also suggests that **caution is not due to a lack of competence**. Many respondents say AI is easy to use, but they are less convinced that it is useful for Wikipedia: only 22.6% agree or strongly agree that AI is useful for their Wikipedia contributions, and only 18.8% agree or strongly agree that it improves their quality. Trust is particularly low for science-related information: only 5.9% agree or strongly agree that they trust science-related content generated by AI.

At the same time, **respondents expect AI to matter considerably for public communication about science in general**. 68.4% agree or strongly agree that AI will have a profound impact on science communication, and 77.1% agree or strongly agree that it will lead to more misinformation about science. However, they do not see AI as replacing Wikipedia: 78.7% strongly disagree that AI is making their own Wikipedia contributions obsolete.

In short, the survey does not portray Wikipedians as AI refusers, but also not as AI enthusiasts. Rather, **respondents appear to take a cautious, competent, and normatively reflective position toward AI, especially where science-related information is concerned.**

RESULTS IN DETAIL

1. Respondents report using AI much less for their contributions to Wikipedia than in other contexts

One of the clearest findings is the gap between general AI use and AI use for Wikipedia contributions. While only 12.7% of respondents say they never use AI outside their Wikipedia work, 63.9% say they never use AI for their Wikipedia contributions. This difference is also visible in the mean values. On a scale from 1 "never" to 5 "very often", reported AI use outside Wikipedia reaches a mean of 3.03. Reported AI use for Wikipedia contributions is much lower, with a mean of 1.62.

Compared with the science communicators, journalists, scientists, influencers, and citizens, Wikipedians report particularly low AI use in their respective work context: science communicators M = 3.48, scientists M = 2.38, journalists M = 3.91, influencers M = 2.88, and citizens M = 2.80.

This suggests that respondents do not generally avoid AI. Rather, they appear to be especially cautious about using AI directly for Wikipedia contributions.

Wikipedians use AI far less in Wikipedia than elsewhere

Reported AI use for Wikipedia contributions is much lower than general AI use – and lower than in other surveyed groups.

2. When respondents use AI for their contributions to Wikipedia, they mainly use it as a language and support tool

Among those respondents who have used AI for Wikipedia contributions, the most frequently reported tools are DeepL 78.9% and ChatGPT 76.4%. Other tools are also used by parts of the sample, but less frequently: Gemini 49.1%, Copilot 37.7%, Perplexity 32.1%, Claude 27.8%, DeepSeek 22.6%, and Grok 22.2%.

The dominant use case is clearly language-related. For translation and language improvement, 15.5% of respondents report daily use, 36.2% weekly use, and 22.4% monthly use. Taken together, almost three quarters of respondents answering this item report using AI for translation and language improvement at least monthly.

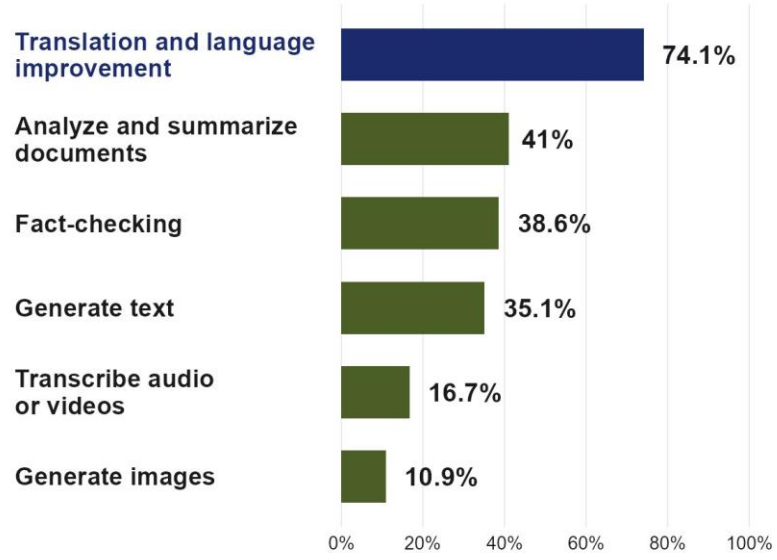
Other use cases are much less common. For text generation, 12.3% report daily use and 8.8% weekly use. For document analysis and summarization, 8.9% report daily use and 8.9% weekly use. Fact-checking is also reported, but less intensively: 8.8% daily, 12.3% weekly, and 17.5% monthly. By contrast, image generation is rarely a regular use case, with only 1.8% reporting daily use and 3.6% weekly use.

This indicates that, among respondents, AI is mostly used as an auxiliary tool – especially for language support – rather than as a tool for automatically producing substantive Wikipedia content.

AI is mainly used as a language and support tool

Translation and language improvement clearly dominate other AI use cases for Wikipedia contributions.

SHARE OF RESPONDENTS USING AI FOR EACH TASK AT LEAST MONTHLY (DAILY + WEEKLY + MONTHLY)



MOST-USED TOOLS AMONG USERS

1	DeepL	78.9%
2	ChatGPT	76.4%
3	Gemini	49.1%

3. Respondents perceive the Wikipedia community as actively discussing and governing AI

The survey suggests that AI is already an important topic within the Wikipedia community. A large majority of respondents report that there are regular discussions about AI use in the community: 94.5% answer yes. Most also report that there are community initiatives or task forces dealing with AI (92.7%) and that the community has established its own procedures or guidelines for AI use (84.3%).

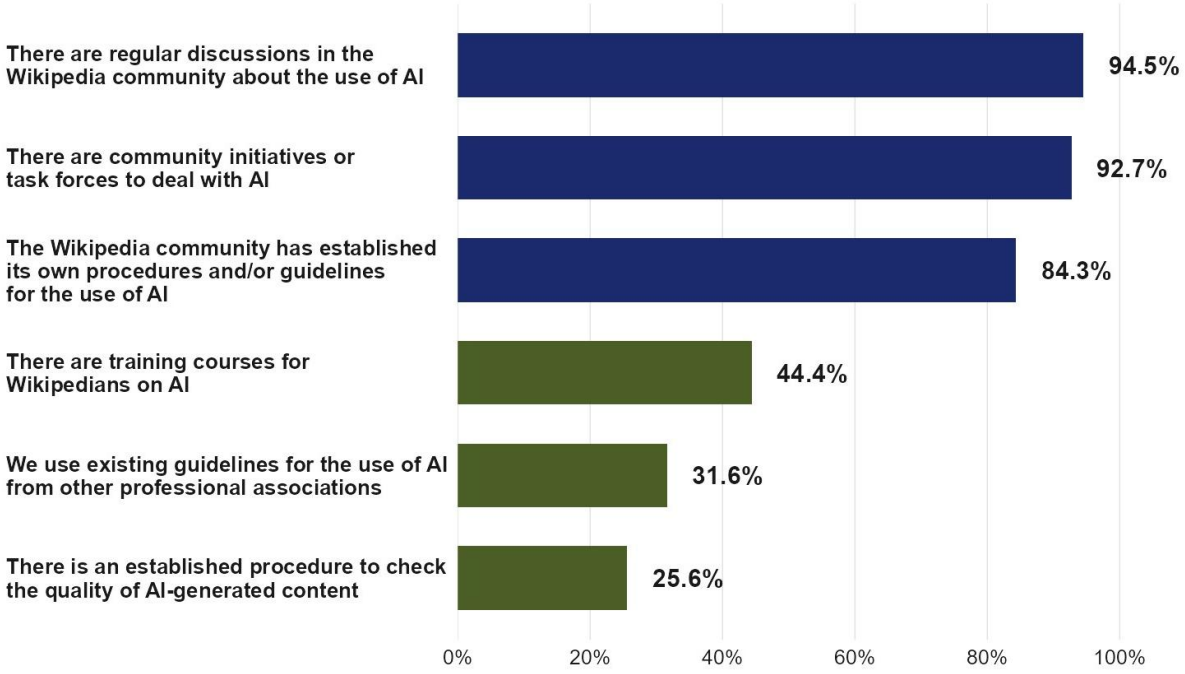
At the same time, respondents report less developed structures when it comes to practical training and quality assurance. Less than half report that there are training courses for Wikipedians on AI (44.4%). Only about a quarter say that there is an established procedure to check the quality of AI-generated content (25.6%). In addition, the vast majority (90.7%) of respondents report that they have not received any training on the use of AI in Wikipedia contributions.

This suggests that, while respondents perceive the community as being highly engaged in discussing and regulating AI, they also see room for further development in terms of practical support, training, and quality-control procedures.

The community is actively discussing AI – but training is less common

Respondents report strong community discussion and governance, but more limited training and quality control routines.

SHARE ANSWERING "YES" FOR EACH STATEMENT



➔ **90.7% report not having completed any training on the use of AI for their Wikipedia contributions.**

4. Wikipedians report little social pressure to use AI

The survey provides little evidence that respondents feel socially pressured to use AI for Wikipedia contributions. 71.8% strongly disagree with the statement that other Wikipedians think they should use AI in their contributions, and another 18.3% disagree.

A similar pattern appears for the wider social environment. 72.4% strongly disagree that people whose opinions they value think they should use AI in their contributions, and 14.3% disagree.

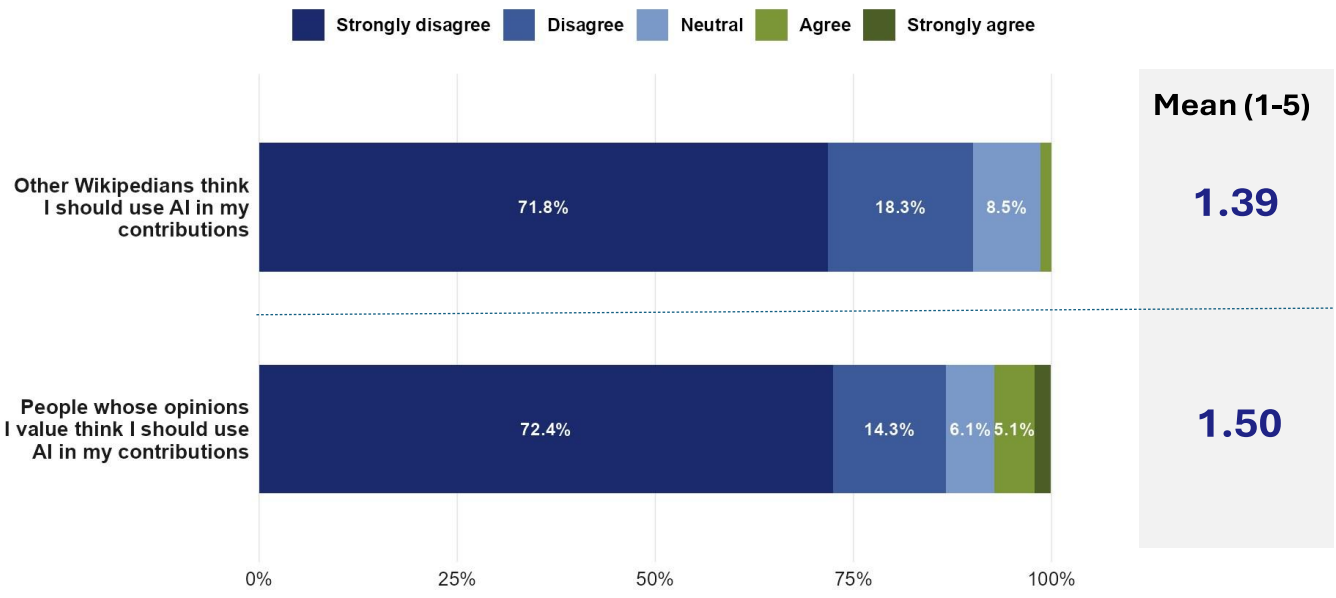
Thus, Wikipedians do not appear to perceive AI use as a strong social norm within their community. In other words, respondents do not seem to feel that they "should" use AI simply because others expect them to do so.

Wikipedians report little social pressure to use AI

Most respondents reject the idea that others expect them to use AI in their Wikipedia contributions.

SOCIAL PRESSURE TO USE AI IN WIKIPEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS

Percent of respondents



5. Respondents do not mainly report a lack of competence when it comes to AI - rather, they question usefulness and quality

Many respondents report that AI is relatively easy to use. 66.2% agree or strongly agree that they find AI easy to use, and 74.8% agree or strongly agree that learning how to use AI is easy for them. Respondents also tend to report that they have the resources and knowledge needed to apply AI to Wikipedia contributions: 62.2% agree or strongly agree that they have the resources, and 58.8% agree or strongly agree that they have the knowledge.

However, perceived usefulness is much lower. Only 22.6% agree or strongly agree that they find AI useful for their Wikipedia contributions, while 65.5% disagree or strongly disagree. Similarly, only 18.8% agree or strongly agree that using AI improves the quality of their Wikipedia contributions, while 65.2% disagree or strongly disagree.

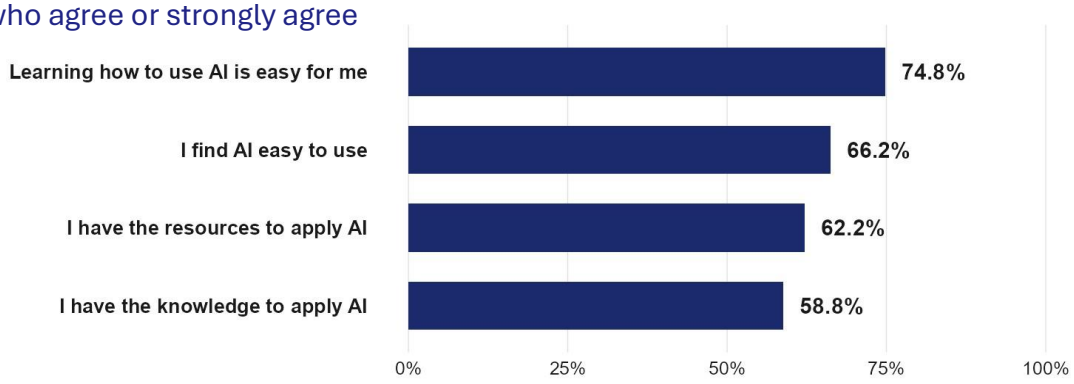
This suggests that limited AI use in Wikipedia work is not primarily a matter of missing technical skills. Instead, respondents appear to be cautious because they are not convinced that AI improves the quality of Wikipedia contributions. Their reservations may therefore be linked to epistemic concerns: reliability, verifiability, source quality, transparency, and compatibility with Wikipedia's standards.

Caution is not mainly about skills – it is about usefulness and quality

Respondents generally feel capable of using AI but are far less convinced that is helpful for their Wikipedia contributions.

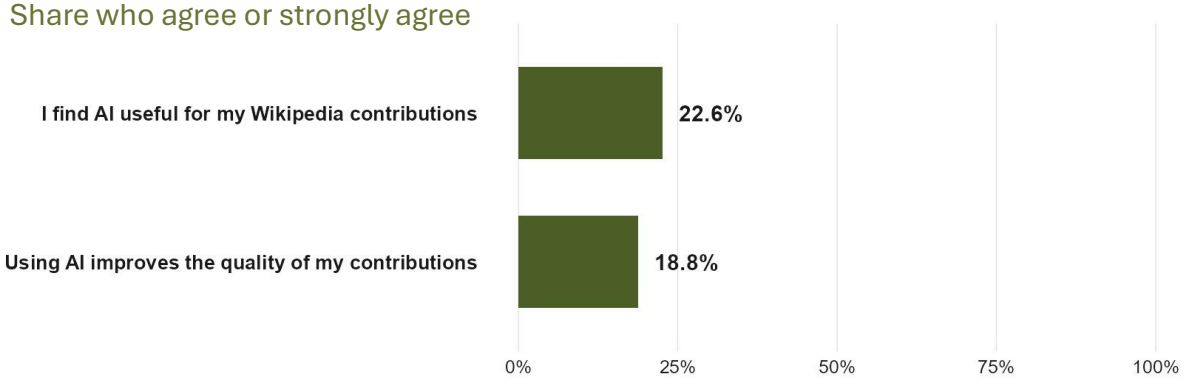
CAPABILITY

Share who agree or strongly agree



PERCEIVED VALUE

Share who agree or strongly agree

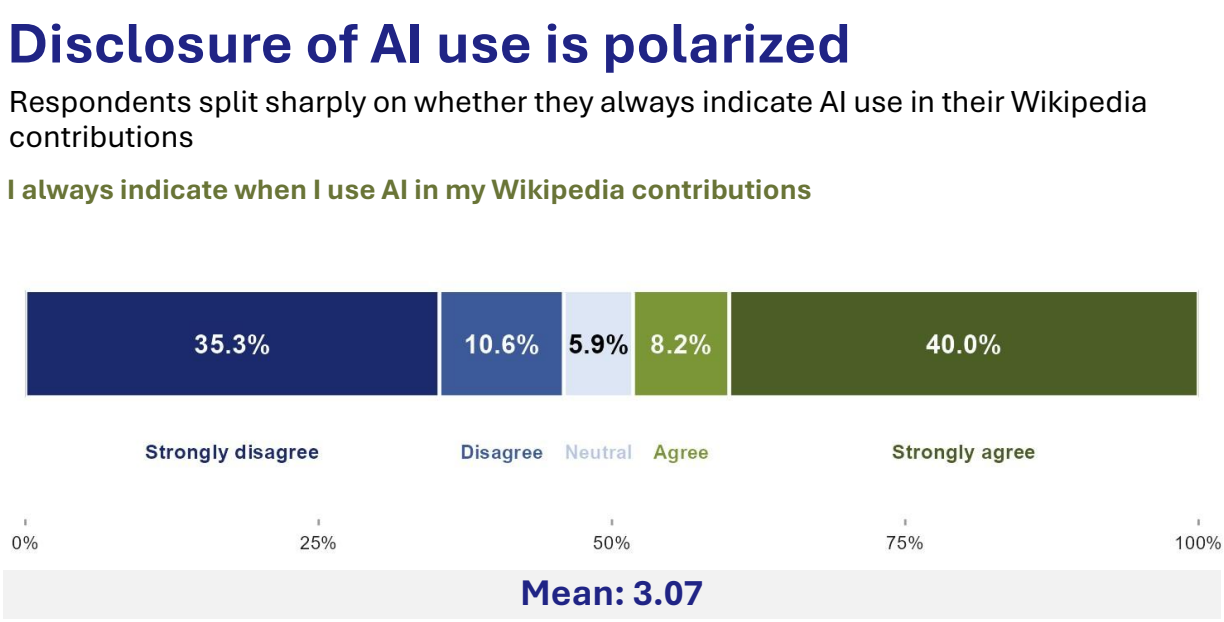


6. Disclosure practices around the use of AI appear polarized

The survey shows a striking split regarding disclosure of AI use. When asked whether they always indicate when they use AI in their Wikipedia contributions, 35.3% strongly disagree, while 40.0% strongly agree. The mean value, 3.07, hides this polarization rather than fully capturing it.

This polarization is important. It may indicate that there is not yet a fully shared norm among respondents about when and how AI use should be disclosed. It may also reflect that respondents have different types of AI use in mind. For example, they may evaluate AI-supported translation, language correction, text generation, summarization, and fact-checking differently.

For the Wikipedia community, this could be one of the most relevant discussion points: Which types of AI use should be disclosed, under what conditions, and in what form?



7. Respondents are more cautious about the future use of AI than the other surveyed groups

The survey also suggests that Wikipedians are comparatively reserved about future AI use. 42.9% strongly disagree that they intend to use, or continue using, AI in the future, while 21.1% strongly agree. The mean value is 2.52.

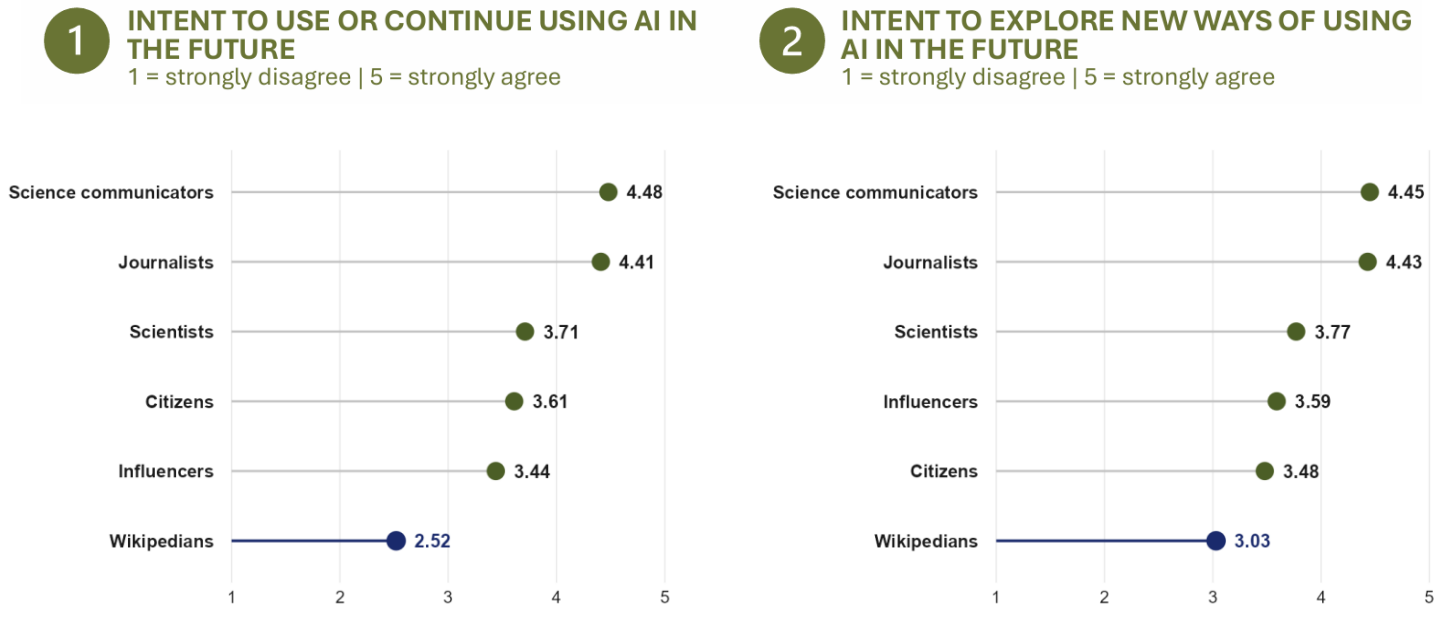
This is substantially lower than in the comparison groups: science communicators M = 4.48, scientists M = 3.71, journalists M = 4.41, influencers M = 3.44, and citizens M = 3.61.

A similar pattern appears for the intention to explore new ways of using AI. Among Wikipedians, the mean is 3.03, compared with 4.45 among science communicators, 3.77 among scientists, 4.43 among journalists, 3.59 among influencers, and 3.48 among citizens.

This suggests that the Wikipedia community occupies a distinct position in the broader field of public knowledge and science communication. While many other actors seem to approach AI primarily as a tool for efficiency or innovation, Wikipedian respondents report a more cautious and deliberative stance.

Compared with other groups, Wikipedians are more cautious about future AI use

Wikipedians report the lowest intention to keep using AI, and the lowest intention to explore new uses.



8. Respondents show relatively high AI literacy, but low trust in AI

The survey results suggest that respondents have comparatively high AI literacy. On the objective AI literacy items, Wikipedians score 2.99 out of 4 on average. This is similar to science communicators (M = 2.99) and scientists (M = 3.04), and clearly higher than citizens (M = 1.96).

In particular, 94.8% correctly identify that applications such as ChatGPT generate answers based on probabilities. 84.8% correctly answer that humans cannot easily recognize AI-generated speech as artificial speech. 73.0% correctly answer that AI does not provide responses of comparable quality across different languages. However, only 37.0% correctly answer the item stating that the quality of AI-generated texts does not depend entirely on the training data set used.

At the same time, trust in AI is low. Only 9.3% agree or strongly agree that they generally trust AI, while 74.3% disagree or strongly disagree. Trust is even lower when it comes to science-related information: only 5.9% agree or strongly agree that they trust scientific content generated by AI, and only 6.0% agree or strongly agree that they are willing to rely on scientific information provided by AI.

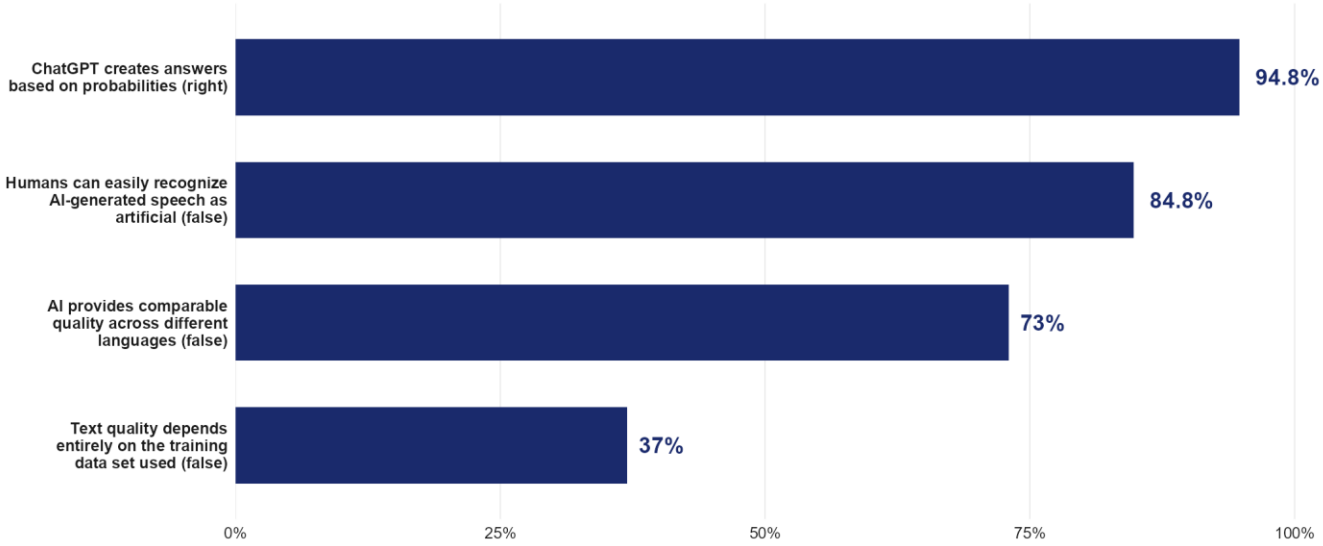
This is a central finding: respondents are not cautious because they know little about AI. Rather, relatively high AI literacy coincides with low trust, especially regarding AI-generated scientific information.

AI Literacy is relatively high, but trust in AI is low

Respondents show solid AI knowledge, yet very little trust in AI-generated scientific information.

AI LITERACY

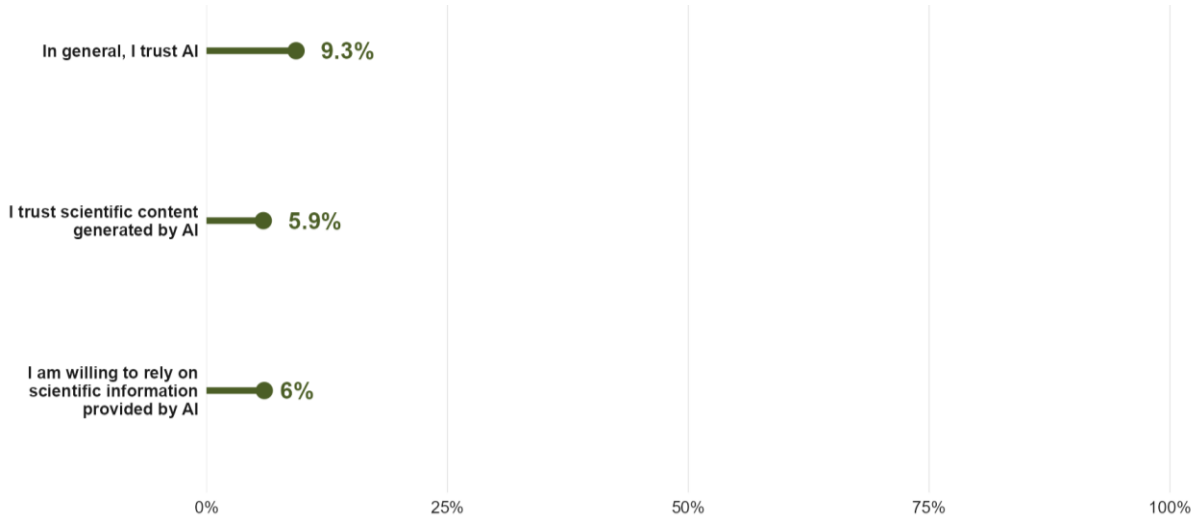
Share of correct answers



Objective Literacy Score: 2.99 / 4

TRUST IN AI

Share who agree or strongly agree

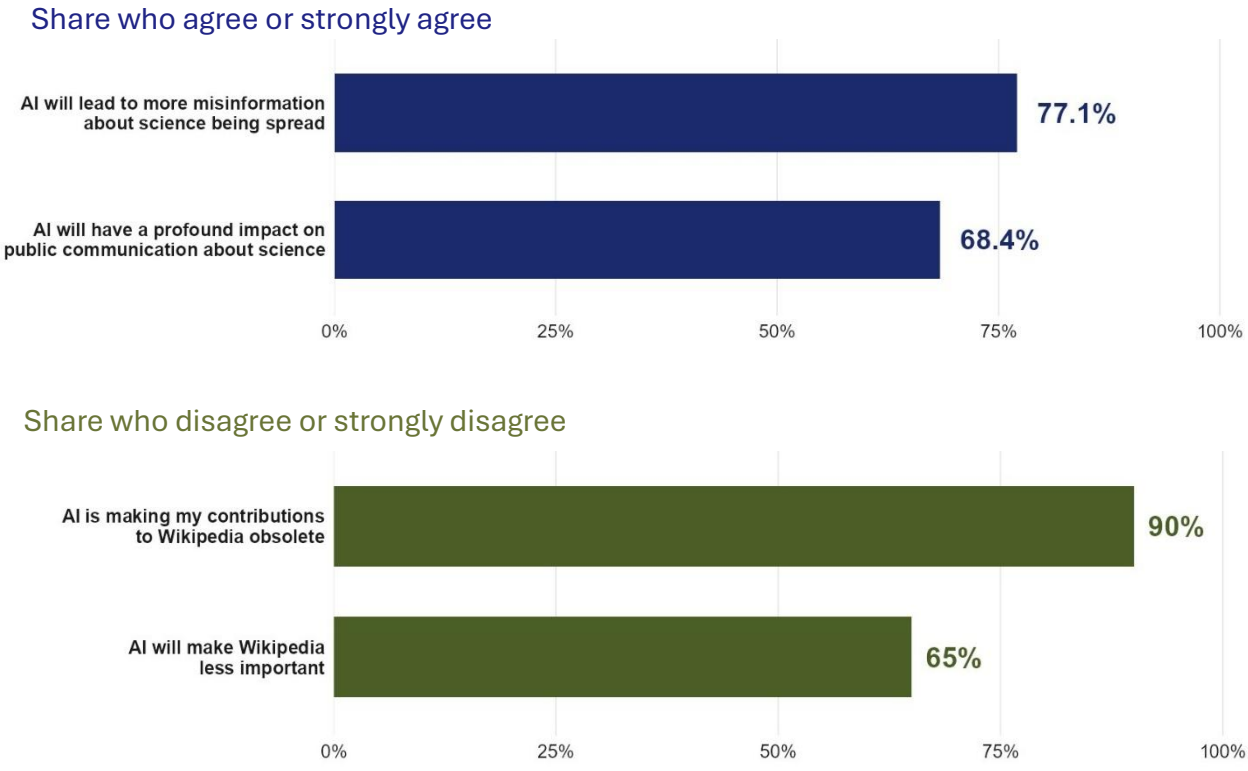


9. Respondents expect AI to matter for science communication, but not to replace Wikipedia

Respondents expect AI to have important consequences for public communication about science. 68.4% agree or strongly agree that AI will have a profound impact on public communication about science. An even larger share, 77.1%, agrees or strongly agrees that AI will lead to more misinformation about science being spread.

At the same time, respondents do not see AI as making Wikipedia or their own contributions obsolete. 78.7% strongly disagree that AI is making their contributions to Wikipedia obsolete, and another 11.3% disagree. Only 6.4% agree or strongly agree with this statement. A majority also disagrees that AI will make Wikipedia less important: 41.6% strongly disagree and 23.4% disagree.

This creates a differentiated picture. Respondents see AI as highly impactful for the wider science-related information environment, especially because of misinformation risks. But they do not perceive AI as a replacement for Wikipedia or for the contributions of Wikipedians.

AI is seen as consequential for science communication – but not as a replacement for Wikipedia

Respondents expect AI to shape the information environment, especially through misinformation, while still seeing Wikipedia as being important.