AI & Machine Learning Project FAQ

Project: ACE Remediation

As part of the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) AI and Machine Learning Initiative, this project evaluates whether AI-enabled tools can be integrated into the existing Accessible Content ePortal (ACE) workflow to improve the accessibility and usability of digitized library books.

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What is the goal of the ACE Remediation project?

The primary goal is to improve the accessibility of content in the ACE portal by integrating AI and machine learning technologies into the scanning and loading workflow. This will allow for a greater diversity of formats, and for better structured text and alt-text for books in the corpus.

How is AI being used in the project?

AI and machine learning tools will be tested at specific stages of the ACE workflow, particularly during pre-processing and remediation for example, to identify and tag document structure and to tag and describe images and tables. The project assesses strengths, limitations, quality, accuracy, and sustainability of these tools within ACE's operational context.

How are intellectual property, copyright, and privacy being considered and preserved?

Accessible format remediation for books is an allowed exception within Canadian copyright legislation, with the ACE portal existing as a longstanding service. To ensure privacy and compliance, the AI models and tools being used for this project are in a closed, 'walled garden' environment where materials are processed on centrally-supported Scholars Portal infrastructure and nothing is fed back to a commercial AI model as training data.

How is evaluation conducted and what materials are included?

Evaluation will be conducted using a set of validated rubrics developed by the project team to assess key quality dimensions, including OCR accuracy, document structure and hierarchy, Table of Contents accuracy, the quality of image extraction, and the quality and appropriateness of alt text. These criteria will be consolidated into a comprehensive "mega-rubric," which will be applied across the test corpus during a larger evaluation-athon held near the end of the project. The evaluation process will involve individuals from a range of stakeholder groups, including Scholars Portal and OCUL staff, ACE Coordinators, members of the OCUL Accessibility Community, and other relevant contributors, ensuring that the assessment reflects diverse expertise and perspectives.

How will this project change the ACE service?

While the project is ongoing, there will be no changes to ACE workflows or outputs. It is anticipated that improvements to ACE will be implemented starting in spring 2027. These may include changes to the ACE request form, to the ACE download interface, and, most importantly, to the formats available for users.

No changes will be made without communication to the ACE Coordinators group.

Have questions or project feedback?

Reach out to Program Manager Kari D. Weaver:
kari.weaver@ocul.on.ca.

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