AI Book Clubs and Digital Literacy for Older Adults

Cotuit Library

Adults

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$101-250

$$

Byline

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The AI Book Club is a digital literacy book club designed for older adults that pairs frequently challenged and banned books with generative AI tools. Patrons experiment with prompt engineering, inspired by the book selection, and discussions are centrally focused on generative AI outputs.

Advanced Planning

An AI-integrated book club requires careful planning related to program outcomes, book choices, interactive activities, and communication with patrons to achieve desired learning outcomes. Incorporating books into digital literacy programming provides a common starting point, instead of a technical overload at the beginning of a traditional digital literacy program.

In starting this program, my goal was to meet in a small group setting with no more than ten to twelve individuals, and I had the following learning outcomes in mind:

- Increased knowledge of generative AI tools
- Increased confidence in the digital skills practiced
- Awareness of the types of resources available at the library

As a facilitator, it’s important to select books that will generate discussion. Challenged and banned books proved to be a particularly effective choice, as they open the door to conversations about intellectual freedom that naturally flow into ethical discussions about artificial intelligence. Once a book is chosen, deciding on the activities is the next step, which requires the facilitator to be familiar with generative AI tools.

Marketing

This program was promoted through social media and the library's weekly email newsletter. The class filled up very quickly and generated a full waitlist. I ended up adding a second session each month, which also filled up.

I would say the marketing methods were successful, but that's because I've focused on specific marketing communications since 2024. We eliminated paper program handouts and moved to a digital-first marketing initiative: all programs are listed on the library's calendar website, with registration links

Programs are promoted on social media and the email newsletter two or three weeks in advance, respectively. There is only one bulletin board at the library, so flyers are displayed there, but the majority of our patrons reference the library's website or weekly email to sign up for programs and events.

Budgeting

We needed to buy extra copies of certain books, because there weren't always enough available in the network.

Day-of-event Activity

Set up was minimal — we sat at a large conference table and had chairs for 10 + 1 for the facilitator. We also plugged in our Vibe Board to broadcast slides and the AI exercises for patrons to see.

Program Execution

The AI Book Club ran as a monthly program with attendance capped at 10, and registration consistently filled to capacity with a waitlist, prompting us to add a second monthly session. Repeat attendance was high. Many patrons came back month after month, which allowed concepts to build over time.

Each session followed a consistent structure: read, prompt, evaluate, discuss, reflect. Patrons brought their own devices or borrowed one from the library, and we worked through AI-generated prompts related to the book together.

The most powerful moments came when AI outputs failed in subtle ways. With *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, for example, the group caught oversimplified summaries, stereotypical character voice options, and non-credible sources. That became a turning point: patrons started asking "what's missing?" rather than taking AI outputs at face value.

Advice

Start simple by selecting only a few exercises. I came prepared with 5+ activities per class, but quickly realized we could only get through two or three, depending on the level of discussion. Patrons enjoyed taking these extra exercises home for practice, so they weren't a waste.

Over time, I focused the program to include one grounding activity, one more advanced activity, and a relevant news article or update in the AI field.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
AIBookClubExercisesHandout.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

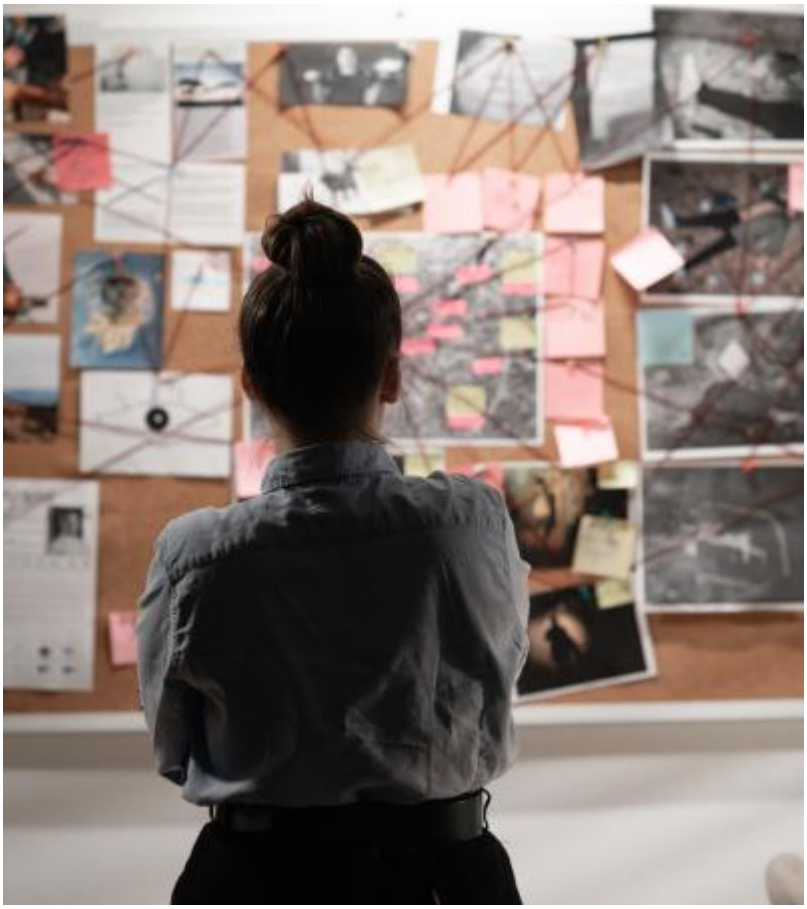
Apr 27, 2026
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$$
Image



Senior Socials

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Apr 3, 2024
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



Crime Scene Investigation: Deadly Disinformation

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Apr 8, 2026
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$$
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Teach Your Talent

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational