



Using AI With Care: How the Fiji TRC Is Using AI Responsibly

by Maria V, COMMS

In recent years, artificial intelligence has become part of everyday life in Fiji. It appears on phones, banking systems, workplaces, and schools. Yet when AI is mentioned alongside sensitive national processes, particularly those involving pain, memory, and accountability, it understandably raises questions. Can technology be trusted with human stories? Does efficiency risk replacing empathy?

For the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission (FTRC), these questions sit at the centre of its approach.

Established under the FTRC Act 2024, the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission is mandated to facilitate truth-telling for healing and reconciliation, with the overarching aim of strengthening social cohesion. In carrying out this responsibility, the Commission has chosen to integrate artificial intelligence in a deliberate, limited, and carefully governed way, not to lead reconciliation, but to support it.

The scale of the Commission's work makes this necessary. Testimonies span nearly four decades of political upheaval and human rights violations since 1987. They come from different regions, communities, and generations, and increasingly from Fijians living abroad. Managing these records responsibly is not only an administrative task. It is a matter of trust. Survivors must know their stories are protected, handled consistently, and preserved accurately.

AI is used by the Commission to support these practical needs. It assists with organising large volumes of information, strengthening documentation processes, and identifying patterns across testimonies that may otherwise be missed. It helps ensure records are securely stored and retrievable, reducing the risk of loss, duplication, or error. In this sense, AI supports memory. It helps ensure that what is shared is not forgotten, misfiled, or misunderstood.

What AI does not do is just as important. Survivors do not speak to machines. They speak to trained statement-takers, counsellors, and Commissioners. AI does not assess credibility, determine truth, or make recommendations. It does not replace human judgment, cultural understanding, or ethical responsibility. All decisions remain firmly with people, guided by the law and by professional and cultural standards.

The Commission's approach to AI is human-led, ethical, and transparent. Consent remains central. Survivor and witness identities are protected. Technology is used only where it strengthens care and safeguards, not where it risks harm. In a country where silence and fear have shaped many lives, these assurances matter.

AI also supports the Commission's trauma-informed approach. By improving record-keeping and reducing administrative repetition, it helps limit the need for survivors to retell painful experiences multiple times. By strengthening data security, it reduces the risk of exposure or misuse. In these ways, AI is used not for speed, but for protection. Fiji's social and cultural context has shaped this integration. Truth-telling here is deeply relational. It is influenced by faith, tradition, and community ties. Reconciliation does not happen only in formal settings. It happens in villages, churches, and families. The Commission works closely with community and religious leaders to ensure that its processes remain culturally attuned and respectful.

Technology, including AI-supported systems, is used to widen access rather than standardise experience. This includes enabling participation for survivors within the Fijian diaspora who may be unable to return home, yet continue to carry unresolved experiences. AI helps manage this inclusion without diluting the personal nature of testimony.

Internationally, the use of AI in transitional justice is still emerging. The Fiji TRC has drawn on global experience and guidance while remaining cautious. Innovation has been introduced only where it aligns with the Commission's mandate and values. This balance reflects an understanding that technology must serve justice, not reshape it.

At its core, the Commission's use of AI is about stewardship. Survivor and witness stories are not data points. They are lived experiences entrusted to a national institution. AI is used to honour that trust by strengthening accuracy, consistency, and long-term preservation.

The Commission's final report, to be presented to the President, will reflect this approach. It will be grounded in human testimony, supported by careful analysis, and focused on recommendations aimed at preventing recurrence and strengthening social cohesion. AI will have assisted the process, but it will not define its conclusions.

For Fijians today, the responsible use of AI by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is about reassurance. It signals that modern tools can be used without losing humanity. For future generations, it ensures there will be a credible, accessible record of how Fiji chose to confront its past.

By placing AI firmly in a supporting role, guided by ethics, culture, and care, the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission is demonstrating that technology, when governed wisely, can strengthen truth rather than overshadow it.

About FTRC:

The FTRC is an independent entity set up for truth-telling, reconciliation, and national healing. The mandate of the FTRC is to examine past political upheavals and their impact on people's lives. The Commission is looking at the physical and emotional harm, loss of life and property, and systemic injustices on people.

The purpose of this work is to foster unity and social cohesion in a society where everyone feels safe, equal, included and able to thrive. The Commission seeks to honour the lived experiences of survivors by providing a platform for voices to be heard, validated, and acknowledged.

The Commission emphasises that truth-telling is not about retribution. It is about recognition, healing, to ensure that history is not repeated. Through reconciliation, the Commission aims to build a stronger, more just, and peaceful Fiji for future generations.

Note: The Commission is encouraging members of the public to contact us in relation to any of the above. We look forward to hearing from you. Reach us by phone, email, or through our Facebook page, where a contact form is also available.

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