

Nordic AI Meet 2026

P1: AI, Society, Governance, Education & Working Life

8. The Ordinarity of Technopower: The social work of normalising generative AI in public administration.

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Abstract: When GenAI tools are introduced into everyday systems used in government, public sector workers encounter outputs produced through processes they cannot inspect and whose provenance they cannot establish. This creates an epistemic tension for workers who must provide accountable, defensible advice (Larsson et al., 2025). It engenders risks to established norms about reliability, traceability, and the basis on which government knowledge is assembled.

This paper examines how workers navigate these tensions as GenAI becomes part of their daily work. I analyse how they make sense of GenAI's role, how they enrol themselves in its use, and how they adjust existing routines as they encounter its outputs. I use the concepts from science and technology studies (STS) and sociology to focus on the practical and interpretive work required to render GenAI usable, legitimate, and safe within a public sector environment (May et al., 2025).

The analysis shows that integration of GenAI depends on continuous, situated effort. Workers develop new norms for judging the trustworthiness of outputs, negotiate expectations about the acceptability of generated text, and recalibrate practices for justifying advice. These continuous small adjustments illustrate how normalisation proceeds not through seamless adoption but through ongoing labour to manage uncertainty (Larsson et al., 2025).

I argue that the early normalisation of GenAI is reshaping assumptions about what counts as knowledge and how credibility is assigned within public sector work. The case contributes to STS scholarship by showing how the social work of normalising new technologies reflects the redistribution of epistemic authority within public administration.