Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG): A Framework for Prompt-Time Mitigation of LLM Harms

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Abstract

Large Language Models (LLMs) are increasingly used as tools for content creation, yet they often generate biased and toxic content, and common reactive mitigation strategies like self-correction fail to address the underlying flawed reasoning. This paper introduces Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG), a proactive, three-stage prompting framework that compels a model to perform a safety analysis before generating a response. The DGG process involves the model (1) identifying probable harm types from a prompt, (2) formulating explicit, imperative directives to avoid them, and (3) generating a final response strictly constrained by these self-generated guardrails. We evaluated DGG using GPT-3.5 on the BOLD-1.5K (bias) and RTP-High (toxicity) datasets against Base and Self-Correct baselines. Results show DGG is highly effective at mitigating societal bias (41%). While DGG also reduces toxicity (up to 60%), it does not yet match the performance of the reactive Self-Correct approach in that domain. The framework's specific contribution is that it makes safety rules dynamic and prompt-specific, which distinguishes it from related concepts like Constitutional AI where models follow a static set of rules. This provides a more tailored, context-aware safety mechanism at the moment of inference. The work's broad impact is its effort to shift the paradigm in AI safety from reactive correction to proactive self-governance. By compelling a model to analyze risks and set its own rules before generating a response, it offers a new direction for improving AI safety that doesn't require external tools or post-generation fixes.

1 Introduction

Large Language Models (LLMs) have become powerful tools for content creation, but their pre-training on vast, unfiltered web data causes them to perpetuate societal biases and produce toxic content. Many mitigation strategies are impractical for commercial black-box LLMs, as they require white-box access or costly retraining.

Existing black-box methods, such as self-correction [Madaan et al., 2023], are fundamentally **reactive**. They modify a response after it has been generated, addressing the symptom (the harmful output) rather than the root cause (the flawed reasoning process). This leads to superficial fixes that fail to generalize and can inadvertently exacerbate other harms.

To address these shortcomings, we propose the **Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG) framework**, a novel, proactive prompting schema for LLMs to self-regulate before generating a response. DGG operates in a black-box setting and requires no training. Inspired by principles of structured deliberation, it compels the model to first perform a formal, prompt-specific risk analysis and then generate its own explicit, imperative safety rules. The model's final response is then strictly constrained by these self-generated, dynamic guardrails.

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This approach shifts the paradigm from reactive correction to proactive self-governance. By forcing the model to first identify threats and then generate explicit directives, DGG aims to ensure a safe reasoning process from the outset. In this work, we detail the DGG methodology and conduct experiments to validate its efficacy in concurrently mitigating both societal bias and toxicity, demonstrating the potential for LLMs to generate safer responses on their own.

We conduct extensive experiments on the ChatGPT (gpt-3.5) model to evaluate our framework.We observe that our proactive DGG framework significantly outperforms standard baselines and reactive self-correction schemes in mitigating societal bias. Our findings demonstrate that a structured,proactive deliberation process offers a powerful method for improving AI safety at inference time, shifting the paradigm from reactive correction to proactive self-governance.

2 Related Work

Strategies for aligning Large Language Models (LLMs) are broadly divided into **training-time alignment**, which instills safety into the model's weights via methods like RLHF, and **inference-time steering**, which guides the model's behavior during generation without retraining. Our work, Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG), introduces a novel approach within the inference-time paradigm. Many existing inference-time methods operate reactively. Techniques like Perspective-Taking (PET) [Xu et al., 2024] and other self-correction approaches first generate a potentially harmful output and then revise it based on internal or external feedback. While these post-hoc corrections can be effective, they are often criticized for not addressing the flawed reasoning that produced the initial harmful response.

Inference-time methods themselves exist on a spectrum of complexity and intervention points. At one end are intensive, **training-based reasoning methods** like RSafe [Zheng et al., 2025a], which require significant computational resources to teach the model safe reasoning pathways. While powerful, these approaches lack the flexibility needed for rapid deployment or use with black-box models. At the other end are **decoding-level interventions** like Root Defence Strategies (RDS) [Zeng et al., 2024], which operate at a granular level by directly constraining the token selection process during generation.

DGG carves out a distinct and practical niche between these two extremes. We position DGG as a novel, **prompting-based reasoning framework** that is significantly more **lightweight** than training-based methods and operates at a **higher level of abstraction** than decoding-level interventions. Instead of modifying weights or logits, DGG leverages in-context learning to proactively shape the model's entire reasoning process *before* generation begins. This approach builds on the principles of Constitutional AI [Bai et al., 2022], but innovates by creating a dynamic, prompt-specific "constitution" on the fly, offering a scalable and accessible method for proactive safety alignment.

3 The Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG) Framework

The DGG framework introduces a formal, pre-generation deliberative process. Inspired by Constitutional AI[Bai et al., 2022], DGG makes its "constitution" dynamic and prompt-specific, shifting the paradigm from correcting a flawed output to ensuring a safe reasoning process. The framework is implemented via a sequence of three structured API calls that can be specialized for harms like toxicity or bias.

Stage 1: Threat Identification The process begins with a focused risk assessment. The model is instructed to analyze a given prompt and identify the most probable types of harmful or biased content (e.g., stereotyping, hate speech) that could arise if the prompt were answered directly. The output is a numbered list of specific threats.

Stage 2: Directive Formulation The threats identified in Stage 1 are transformed into explicit behavioral rules. For each threat, the model generates actionable ethical guidelines, expressed as direct imperatives that begin with "YOU MUST" or "YOU MUST NOT." The output is a structured list of mandatory directives that prevent the emergence of bias or toxicity.

Stage 3: Constrained Generation The model then revisits the original prompt, but this time responds under the constraints of the directives from Stage 2. The final output is a direct completion that is both helpful and aligned with the ethical safeguards, ensuring compliance with the generated rules.

4 Experimental Setup

To evaluate the efficacy of the DGG framework, we conducted a comparative study using the following setup.

4.1 Model

All evaluations were conducted on the ChatGPT (gpt-3.5) model. Our hyperparameter configuration follows Yang et al. [2022], with top-p = 0.9, and temperature $\tau = 0.7$. For each prompt, we let the models generate 5 completions for assessing toxicity and 5 completions for assessing bias.

4.2 Datasets

We evaluated our framework on two benchmark datasets focused on detoxification and debiasing. For toxicity assessment, we curated a challenging test set of 2,088 prompts from the RealToxicityPrompts (RTP) dataset [Gehman et al., 2020], which were filtered to more effectively elicit toxic completions from modern LLMs. For bias assessment, we created our test set by uniformly sampling 803 prompts from the gender domain and 1,404 from the race domain of the BOLD dataset[Dhamala et al., 2021]. The complete methodology for filtering and creating these specialized subsets is detailed in Appendix A.1.

4.3 Baselines

The performance of the DGG method was directly compared against three baseline conditions:

Base [Krishna, 2023] , **Pre-hoc**[Si et al., 2022] ,**Self-Correct** [Krishna, 2023]

4.4 Evaluation Metrics

A comprehensive set of metrics was used to evaluate model performance in three key areas:

Toxicity. We report three metrics calculated using the Perspective API: Expected Maximum Toxicity (E.M.T.), Toxicity Probability (T.P.), and Toxic Fraction (T.F.).

Bias. We adopt two prevalent measures. For sentiment, we report Mean Sentiment (S.-μ), Standard Deviation of Sentiment (S-σ), and Group Fairness (G.F.). For regard, we report Regard Difference (R.D.).

Generation Quality. To assess output quality, we evaluate fluency via Perplexity (PPL), relevance via semantic similarity (Sim.), and diversity (Dist.-n).

5 Results

This section presents the empirical results of our evaluation.

5.1 Toxicity Evaluation

5.1.1 Main results

As detailed in Table 1, all intervention methods reduce toxicity metrics compared to the Base baseline. However, the Self-Correct method demonstrates the most potent effect on the RTP-High dataset, achieving the lowest scores in Expected Maximum Toxicity (EMT = 0.0101), Toxicity Probability (TP = 0.0058), and Toxic Fraction (TF = 0.0018). This suggests that for the specific task of excising overtly toxic content, a reactive, post-generation refinement strategy is exceptionally effective. In contrast, the proactive DGG method provides a more moderate but still significant reduction (e.g., TF = 0.0060, a 60% reduction from Base), acting as a preventive filter rather than a corrective one. Notably, DGG achieves this while maintaining higher semantic similarity (Sim. = 0.8661) than Self-Correct (Sim. = 0.8417), as seen in Table 1, indicating better preservation of the original prompt's intent.

Table 1: Automatic evaluation results for language detoxification on RTP-High.

Method	E.M.T.↓	T.P.↓	T.F.↓	σ^1 ↓	PPL↓	Sim.↑	Dist.-1↑	Dist.-2↑	Dist.-3↑
Base	.0528	.0409	.0150	.0205	99.856		.9369	.9330	.8696
Pre-hoc	.0421	.0310	.0106	.0165	64.6536	.8451	.9146	.9434	.8918
Self-Correct	**.0101**	**.0058**	**.0018**	**.0039**	43.207	.8417	.9230	.9452	.8935
DGG	.0337	.0213	.0060	.0148	83.707	**.8661**	.9313	.9307	.8678

5.1.2 Bootstrapping Analysis for Detoxification Results

To assess the statistical significance of our results, we performed a bootstrapping analysis with 10,000 iterations on Expected Maximum Toxicity (E.M.T), Toxic Proportion (T.P), Toxic Fraction

Table 2: Toxicity Metrics on the RTP Dataset

Metric	Method	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval
EMT	Base	.0528	.0038	[.0455, .0605]
	Pre-hoc	.0421	.0049	[.0330, .0521]
	Self-Correct	**.0101**	.0015	[.0074, .0132]
	DGG	.0377	.0034	[.0312, .0449]
TP	Base	.0409	.0043	[.0327, .0496]
	Pre-hoc	.0310	.0055	[.0210, .0420]
	Self-Correct	**.0058**	.0017	[.0029, .0091]
	DGG	.0213	.0037	[.0147, .0287]
TF	Base	.0150	.0018	[.0115, .0188]
	Pre-hoc	.0106	.0021	[.0066, .0150]
	Self-Correct	**.0018**	.0006	[.0008, .0033]
	DGG	.0060	.0013	[.0037, .0087]

(T.F). This analysis confirmed that DGG achieves a significant reduction in toxicity. As shown in Table 2, the Self-Correct method produced the lowest toxicity metrics, with a Toxic Fraction (TF) of 0.0018 (95% CI [0.0008, 0.0033]). While DGG also significantly reduced toxicity (TF = 0.0060, 95% CI [0.0037, 0.0087]), its performance did not surpass the reactive Self-Correct approach, whose confidence intervals are distinctly lower and non-overlapping. This indicates that for the specific task of excising overtly toxic content, a post-hoc correction strategy is exceptionally effective. The proactive nature of DGG, while beneficial, acts as a preventive filter that is less potent than removing harmful content after it occurs.

5.2 Bias Evaluation

5.2.1 Main Results

The results on the BOLD-1.5K dataset, presented in Table 3, tell a different story. Here, DGG establishes itself as the most effective strategy. It produces a substantial increase in Mean Sentiment (S-μ = 0.5219 for gender, 0.4397 for race) compared to all other methods, indicating a shift toward more positive and equitable portrayals of demographic groups. Crucially, DGG achieves the largest reduction in Regard Difference (RD), a core metric for bias. As shown in Table 3, DGG's RD for gender (0.1892) is 42% lower than the Base model's, and its RD for race (0.2496) is 31% lower. This sharp reduction indicates that DGG's proactive generation of context-specific guardrails fundamentally alters the model's reasoning to produce more equitable outputs, rather than applying a superficial patch to a biased response.

The generation quality metrics in Table 4 further illuminate the trade-offs. DGG achieves the lowest perplexity (PPL = 138.876), signifying superior fluency, and the highest semantic similarity (Sim. = 0.8670), confirming its ability to stay on-topic. This contrasts with Pre-hoc and Self-Correct, which,

Table 3: Automatic evaluation results for gender and racial debiasing on BOLD-1.5K (Bias metrics).

	GENDER					RACE				
Method	S.-μ ↑	S.-σ ↓	G.F.↓	R.D.↓	σ ↓	S.-μ ↑	S.-σ ↓	G.F.↓	R.D.↓	σ ↓
Base	.2897	.3464	.2392	.3246	.1315	.3045	.3806	.2725	.3624	**.1529**
Pre-hoc	.2564	**.3313**	.2445	.3121	.1334	.3004	**.3554**	.2549	.3590	.1535
Self-Correct	.3466	.3648	.2511	.3308	.1850	.3204	.3916	.2548	.3368	.2084
DGG	**.5219**	.3409	**.2227**	**.1892**	**.1188**	**.4397**	.3807	**.2350**	**.2496**	.1704

Table 4: Automatic evaluation results for gender and racial debiasing on BOLD-1.5K (Generation Quality Metrics).

Method	PPL↓	Sim.↑	Dist.-1↑	Dist.-2↑	Dist.-3↑
Base	271.533		.9282	.9189	.8528
Pre-hoc	274.406	.8488	.9303	.9166	.8490
Self-Correct	265.352	.8348	.9071	.9454	.9002
DGG	138.876	**.8670**	.8995	.9422	.8959

while effective in their respective domains, result in lower fluency or greater semantic drift. This positions DGG as a well-rounded solution that successfully balances the dual objectives of harm reduction and output quality.

5.2.2 Bootstrapping Analysis for Debiasing Results

Similarly, we also perform bootstrapping analysis with 10,000 iterations on Bias metrics for both gender and race categories. The bootstrapping analysis for gender debiasing, detailed in Table 5, provides statistically robust evidence of DGG's superior performance. The results are clearest when examining the Regard Difference (RD) metric, our primary measure for biased associations. DGG achieved a markedly lower RD (0.2057, 95% CI [0.1889, 0.2225]) compared to all baselines. This represents a 43% reduction from the Base model (RD = 0.3599, 95% CI [0.3465, 0.3730]) and a 45% reduction from the reactive Self-Correct method (RD = 0.3765, 95% CI [0.3532, 0.4005]). The fact that the confidence intervals for DGG do not overlap with those of any other method confirms that this improvement is not due to chance but is a statistically significant effect. Furthermore, DGG also produced the most positive and equitable portrayals, as indicated by the highest Mean Sentiment (S-μ = 0.5218, 95% CI [0.5078, 0.5359]). This suggests its responses are not only less biased but also more positively framed. In terms of fairness, DGG achieved the best Group Fairness (G.F) score (0.2760, 95% CI [0.2671, 0.2846]), indicating the smallest average divergence in sentiment distributions between any gender subgroup and the overall population. The Standard Deviation of Sentiment (S.-σ) for DGG (0.3408) was also competitive, showing it maintains consistent sentiment without introducing excessive variability.

The results for racial debiasing, presented in Table 6, strongly corroborate the trends observed with gender, demonstrating the consistency of DGG's effectiveness across different social biases. Once again, DGG yielded the most significant reduction in Regard Difference, achieving an RD of 0.2723 (95% CI [0.2594, 0.2854]). This is a 31% reduction from the Base model (RD = 0.3953) and the Self-Correct method (RD = 0.3939). The clear separation of confidence intervals reinforces the statistical significance of this finding. Similarly, DGG generated outputs with the highest Mean Sentiment (S-μ = 0.4396, 95% CI [0.4296, 0.4499]), affirming its ability to produce more positive content across racial subgroups. It also delivered the best Group Fairness, with a GF of 0.2892 (95% CI [0.2816, 0.2967]), signifying the most uniform and equitable treatment of all racial groups in its generated text.

Table 5: Bootstrapping Results for Gender Debiasing (n=10,000).

Metric	Method	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval
Mean Sentiment (S.-μ)	Base	.2897	.0069	[.2763, .3029]
	Pre-hoc	.2564	.0070	[.2426, .2700]
	Self-Correct	.3465	.0111	[.3248, .3679]
	DGG	**.5218**	.0072	[.5078, .5359]
Standard Deviation of Sentiment (S.-σ)	Base	.3462	.0037	[.3389, .3536]
	Pre-hoc	**.3311**	.0040	[.3235, .3389]
	Self-Correct	.3645	.0065	[.3519, .3775]
	DGG	.3408	.0049	[.3315, .3506]
Group Fairness (G.F)	Base	.2828	.0043	[.2742, .2913]
	Pre-hoc	.2789	.0049	[.2693, .2887]
	Self-Correct	.3121	.0071	[.2984, .3261]
	DGG	**.2760**	.0045	[.2671, .2846]
Regard Difference (R.D)	Base	.3599	.0067	[.3465, .3730]
	Pre-hoc	.3389	.0067	[.3258, .3523]
	Self-Correct	.3765	.0120	[.3532, .4005]
	DGG	**.2057**	.0084	[.1889, .2225]

Table 6: Bootstrapping Results for Race Debiasing (n=10,000).

Metric	Method	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval
Mean Sentiment(S.-μ)	Base	.3045	.0044	[.2958, .3132]
	Pre-hoc	.3004	.0056	[.2894, .3112]
	Self-Correct	.3217	.0093	[.3034, .3398]
	DGG	**.4396**	.0052	[.4296, .4499]
Standard Deviation of Sentiment (S-σ)	Base	.3805	.0029	[.3746, .3859]
	Pre-hoc	**.3552**	.0034	[.3485, .3620]
	Self-Correct	.3915	.0061	[.3784, .4023]
	DGG	.3803	.0036	[.3736, .3876]
Group Fairness (G.F)	Base	.3098	.0032	[.3035, .3161]
	Pre-hoc	.2896	.0039	[.2820, .2972]
	Self-Correct	.3080	.0067	[.2951, .3210]
	DGG	**.2892**	.0039	[.2816, .2967]
Regard Difference (R.D)	Base	.3953	.0047	[.3861, .4045]
	Pre-hoc	.3865	.0064	[.3743, .3989]
	Self-Correct	.3939	.0099	[.3749, .4138]
	DGG	**.2723**	.0066	[.2594, .2854]

5.3 Impacts of Number

The importance of the multi-step API call structure was analyzed by comparing it to a variant that combined all three stages into a single, complex prompt. Table 7 indicates that splitting prompts into

Table 7: Experiment on the effect of using a single API call instead of three stages.

Method	E.M.T.↓	T.P.↓	T.F.↓	PPL↓	Sim.↑	Dist.-1↑	Dist.-2↑	Dist.-3↑
DGG (single API)	.0834	.0600	.0280	94.923	.8636	.9412	.9334	.8687

multiple API calls is significantly more effective in reducing toxic content. This indicates that **the language model finds it challenging to internally execute these separate cognitive steps when**

given a single, convoluted instruction. Because this single-prompt variant performed unexpectedly poorly in toxicity reduction, we did not proceed with evaluating its ability to mitigate bias.

5.4 Alternative Components

To better understand the mechanisms of the DGG framework, we conducted ablation studies comparing a component against its alternative approach on detoxification.

This experiment evaluated the effectiveness of DGG's imperative "Directives" (Stage 2) against a variant that generated abstract "ethical deliberations." on detoxification aspect. In this variant, Stage 2's explicit "YOU MUST/NOT" rules were replaced with free-form ethical reflections, where the model explains why and how the identified harms or biases might occur, helping the model understand and avoid them.

Table 8: Ablation study comparing DGG with the deliberation framework.

Method	E.M.T.↓	T.P.↓	T.F.↓	PPL↓	Sim.↑	Dist.-1↑	Dist.-2↑	Dist.-3↑
Deliberation	.0442	.0400	.0120	108.7951	.8624	.9429	.9293	.8600

helping the model understand and avoid them. Evaluation (Table 8) shows that this deliberation-based approach underperformed, confirming that LLMs follow concrete, imperative instructions more reliably than abstract reasoning.

This study affirm that explicit imperative directives is one of the factor that contribute to DGG's effectiveness on detoxification task.

6 Qualitative results

To provide a more nuanced understanding of the different methods, we qualitatively analyze their outputs. The key findings are summarized below.

Failure Case: Repeating the User's Prompt. A notable failure case for DGG was the verbatim repetition of a user's toxic prompt before providing a safe completion. We hypothesize this is a failure mode caused by context overload, where extensive directives cause the model to lose track of the final instruction. This behavior is less common for the Base model, which often completes the harmful prompt, and the Self-Correct model, which revises an initial harmful completion.

Declining on user prompts.. While all models can refuse to answer extremely toxic prompts, DGG's internally generated guardrails often steer it toward producing a safe, alternative response that engages with the harmless parts of a request, rather than merely rejecting it.

Ignoring Sensitive Vocabulary. Occasionally, the LLM overlooks sensitive words (e.g., offensive and sexual). DGG's proactive search for potential harms increases the likelihood that the model will recognize and appropriately handle sensitive or offensive words from the outset, provided it is not affected by context overload.

Semantic Incoherence. The multi-step revision process of the Self-Correct method can cause the model to lose track of the initial prompt's meaning, leading to a safe but incoherent answer. While DGG is generally more effective at maintaining coherence, it can also drift from the original request when its focus on adhering to guardrails becomes excessive.

7 Discussion

Our results demonstrate that **Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG)** is a potent framework for proactively steering LLMs towards safer outputs, particularly for nuanced harms like social bias and stereotype propagation. However, it is important to acknowledge its limitations and contextualize its performance.

One key area for consideration is the framework's effectiveness against **long-horizon harms**. As DGG operates on a per-prompt basis, its ability to mitigate harms that emerge over longer, multi-turn conversations is currently unexplored. A sophisticated harmful actor could potentially circumvent

static, single-turn guardrails through a series of seemingly benign prompts. We view the extension of DGG to maintain conversational state as a promising area for future research.

Additionally, our experiments offer a nuanced perspective on performance across different harm types. DGG's strength lies in forcing a pre-mortem safety analysis that translates abstract goals into a structured, three-stage process. We hypothesize that this is due to the nature of the steering mechanism. DGG's abstract, process-level intervention is better suited for complex issues requiring forethought, whereas the direct, post-hoc revision of a concrete output is highly effective for expunging clear-cut violations like toxic language. This suggests a potential trade-off between proactive, reasoning-based safety and reactive content filtering.

The efficacy of DGG can be attributed to its proactive design. Instead of correcting a flawed output, DGG forces the model to engage in a "pre-mortem" safety analysis. The three-stage process transforms an abstract goal of "being unbiased" into a concrete, sequential task. DGG aims to correct the reasoning path from the outset.

8 Limitations

While promising, DGG has several current limitations.

Computational Cost and Efficiency. DGG requires three sequential API calls, making it slower and more resource-intensive than single-pass methods. Improving efficiency, for example by condensing analytical context, is an important future direction.

Model and Dataset Generalizability. Our evaluation was limited to GPT-3.5 and a narrow set of datasets and tasks. The extent to which DGG's effectiveness transfers to more advanced, architecturally different, or open-source models remains untested. Bias assessment was further restricted to only gender and race subsets of the BOLD dataset. Moreover, the statistical reliability of our results is constrained by the only 5 number of completions sampled per prompt, which limits the robustness of the aggregate metrics. Despite limitations, DGG shows clear and repeatable benefits in reducing toxicity and bias, demonstrating visible effectiveness even at small scale.

Prompt and Threat Scope. The prompts powering the DGG's analytical stages were manually crafted and have not undergone extensive systematic optimization. Their effectiveness suggests promise, but the exploration of optimal prompt structures, potentially through automated prompt generation or optimization and guidelines overlap verification techniques, is a significant area for future improvement. Moreover, our focus was confined to toxicity and social bias; other ethical risks such as misinformation or morally complex content remain unexplored.

Scope and Scale of Ablation Studies. The ablation experiments conducted were limited in scope and do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of the framework's individual components. Additionally, all studies were restricted to the RTP (toxicity) dataset due to computational constraints, leaving their generalizability to bias mitigation untested.

Scope of Comparative Baselines. We compared DGG only against basic prompting and one self-correction strategy, leaving out more advanced inference-time steering techniques such as contrastive decoding, PET, or alternative sampling methods.

9 Conclusion

This study introduces Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG), a proactive three-stage prompting framework for LLM self-regulation. Our results show that structured prompting can effectively reduce harmful content, making DGG a promising safeguard for responsible AI.

DGG entails trade-offs, including added latency, computational cost, and occasional failures from context overload. Evaluation was limited to GPT-3.5, small-scale sampling, and only gender and race bias, constraining generalizability.

Nevertheless, DGG consistently reduced toxicity and bias across all tested settings, demonstrating clear effectiveness even at small scale. Future work should focus on improving design efficiency, scaling evaluation, and extending the framework to broader ethical risks and models.

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A Technical Appendices and Supplementary Material

A.1 Datasets

A. Justification for Using Subsets. We adopt filtered subsets of the RealToxicityPrompts (RTP) and BOLD datasets for our evaluations. Direct use of the full datasets proves suboptimal due to two reasons. First, the toxicity levels of completions from state-of-the-art (SOTA) LLMs on the unfiltered RTP dataset are exceedingly low, limiting evaluation effectiveness. To better stress-test models, we curated RTP-High, a subset of prompts with high likelihood of eliciting toxic responses. Second, time and computational constraints demand careful dataset selection. Each toxicity evaluation requires 5 completions per prompt, while bias assessments require 5 completions per prompt. Some methods (e.g., PET, CRITIC) involve multi-turn re-prompting and external tool calls, resulting in thousands of tokens per evaluation. Running these across the full datasets is impractical.

RTP-High. For toxicity assessment, we select the RealToxicityPrompts (RTP) dataset [Gehman et al., 2020], which contains approximately 100,000 prompts that can elicit potentially toxic completions. As noted by Huang et al. [2023] and [Zhuo et al., 2023], content generated by modern LLMs often exhibits very low toxicity on existing datasets. Therefore, following the methodology of Leong et al. [2023] and [Xu et al., 2024], we first filter for a subset of 33,536 prompts with toxicity scores for completions greater than 0.5 to facilitate clearer observations. We then used ChatGPT to generate completions for these prompts and measured their toxicity with the PERSPECTIVE API. This process resulted in a final set of 2,088 prompts with a toxicity score of 0.3 or higher.

BOLD-1.5K. For bias assessment, we focus on global bias, which is evaluated on sentence-level semantics rather than at a specific generation step [Liang et al., 2021]. We use the BOLD dataset [Dhamala et al., 2021], containing approximately 23,000 text generation prompts that mention specified demographic groups across five domains. Following Yang et al. [2022] and [Xu et al., 2024], we consider two domains: gender (male and female subgroups) and race (European, Asian, and African subgroups). In line with Xiong et al. [2023], we dropped the Hispanic subgroup from the race domain due to its limited size (103 prompts). Subsequently, we uniformly sampled 803 prompts from the gender domain and 1,404 from the race domain to form our test set. To ensure representativeness, we compare sentiment polarity distributions (using VADER) before and after sampling. Mann–Whitney U tests confirm no significant distributional difference ($p > 0.2$ across domains), validating our test set as a fair representative subset.

A.2 Model Selection

Experiments were conducted using ChatGPT (gpt-3.5-turbo)

A.3 Implementation Details of Baselines

We implemented the following baselines, using prompt templates listed in Table 17:

- **Base ([Krishna, 2023]).** A minimal regulatory prefix is prepended to the user prompt to discourage harmful outputs. We employ the prompts `BASE_REGULATION`, `BASE_REPLY`, and `BASE_COMPLETION`.
- **Pre-hoc[Si et al., 2022].** A systematic pre-hoc prompting intervention, originally for bias mitigation, adapted here for detoxification. Inserted before `BASE_REGULATION`.
- **Self-Correct ([Krishna, 2023]).** A reactive correction approach where the LLM evaluates and revises its own initial output using prompts `SC_EVALUATE` and `SC_CORRECT`.
- **Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG).** Our proposed method. Involves three sequential stages: Threat Identification, Directive Formulation, and Constrained Generation. Directives are imperative ("YOU MUST/NOT...") to enforce compliance.

A.4 Details on Metrics

A.4.1 Toxicity.

Following [Gehman et al., 2020], We report:

- **Expected Maximum Toxicity (E.M.T.):** Mean of max toxicity scores across 5 samples per prompt.
- **Toxicity Probability (T.P.):** Fraction of prompts eliciting toxicity ≥ 0.5 in at least one sample.
- **Toxic Fraction (T.F.):** Proportion of all completions with toxicity ≥ 0.5.

Measured by sentiments. For sentiment, following [Dhamala et al., 2021], we report the Mean Sentiment (S-μ), the Standard Deviation of Sentiment (S-σ). For $a \in A$, let P_a^S be the sentiments distribution of all generated samples w.r.t. the prompts from A, and P_*^S to be the sentiments distribution of all generated samples w.r.t. prompts from all subgroups inside a domain. The Mean Sentiments (S-μ) is calculated as the mean of P_*^S, and the Deviation of Sentiments (S-σ) is calculated as the standard deviation of P_*^S. Sentiment scores were computed using VADER [Hutto and Gilbert, 2014] The Average Group Fairness (G.F.) as defined by [Huang et al., 2019] and used by [Yang et al., 2022], is defined as the average of all subgroup's Wasserstein-1 distances on the sentiments distribution P_a^S:

$$\text{G.F.} := \frac{1}{|A|} \sum_{a \in A} W_1(P_a^S, P_*^S). \tag{1}$$

Intuitively, similar sentiment distributions across subgroups get a lower G.F. score, which suggests less bias in generated languages.

Measured by regards. For regard, following [Liang et al., 2021, Yang et al., 2022], we report the Regard Difference (R.D.) between demographic subgroups. For regards measures, let P_a^R be the regards distribution of all generated samples w.r.t. the prompts from A. The Average Regards Difference (R.D.) is defined as the average of pairwise differences in regards scores across all subgroups. Since the original regards are ternary, we compute the L_2 distance when considering the difference:

$$\text{R.D.} := \frac{2}{|A|(|A|-1)} \sum_{a,b \in A} \|P_a^R - P_b^R\|_2. \tag{2}$$

A.4.3 Generation Quality.

We measure fluency (perplexity via GPT-2), relevance (semantic similarity via BERTScore) [Zhang et al., 2020], and diversity (Distinct-n as per [Li et al., 2015].).

Fluency. We assess the grammatical correctness and naturalness of generated text using perplexity. For each completion, the perplexity score is computed using a pre-trained GPT-2 model. A lower perplexity score signifies that the sequence of tokens is more predictable and probable according to the language model, which corresponds to higher fluency.

Relevance. To measure how semantically aligned a generated completion is with the original prompt, we use BERTScore. This metric computes a similarity score by aligning contextual embeddings of tokens from the prompt and the completion. A higher BERTScore indicates greater semantic overlap, suggesting that the model's output is a more relevant response to the given prompt.

Diversity. Given a sentence s, we denote $N_{n,s}$ as the number of distinct n-grams, and $|s|$ as the number of tokens in the sentence. Diversity (Dist.-n) is defined as the mean of $\frac{N_{n,s}}{|s|}$ across all generated completions s w.r.t. prompts from all subgroups.

A.5 Automatic Evaluation Supplements

A.5.1 Computational Cost.

The experiments were conducted using a cloud provider, specifically by making API calls to the OpenAI API for the 'gpt-3.5-turbo' model. The API requests were managed from a local machine with 16GB of RAM. The total compute time for all reported experimental runs, including baselines and ablations, and bootstrapping analyses, is estimated to be approximately 50 hours with two parallel processes; however, this could be reduced with a higher degree of parallelization. It should be noted

that due to time and resource constraints, this study was small-scale; more extensive ablation studies or preliminary experiments would require additional compute resources beyond what is reported here.

A.5.2 Bootstrapping Analysis

To robustly quantify the uncertainty of our evaluation metrics and ensure the statistical reliability of our findings, we employed a non-parametric bootstrapping analysis. This technique allows us to estimate the stability of our results and the significance of the differences observed between methods.

Methodology Our bootstrapping procedure was conducted as follows:

- **Resampling.** We generated 10,000 bootstrap samples by randomly selecting prompts from our original dataset with replacement. This means each prompt could be selected multiple times in a single sample, simulating the process of collecting new data from the same underlying distribution.
- **Recalculation.** For each of the 10,000 bootstrap samples, we recalculated all evaluation metrics
- **Estimation.** From the resulting distribution of 10,000 values for each metric, we derived two key statistics:
  - **Mean:** Mean: The average of the 10,000 bootstrapped values. This provides a consistent estimate of the metric's expected value and is reported as the central value in our bootstrapping results tables (e.g., Table 5 and Table 6). The difference between this mean and the original point estimate for G.F. and R.D. arises from their higher variance. These metrics are sensitive to resampling because they are difference-based rather than linear. For other metrics, the mean and the original point estimate remain relatively the same, as expected.
  - **Standard Error (SE):** The standard deviation of the bootstrap distribution, which measures the variability of the metric.
  - **95% Confidence Interval (CI)**: The range between the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of the bootstrap distribution. We can be 95% confident that this interval contains the true value of the metric.

Interpretation and Contribution

- **Confidence Intervals Indicate Reliability.** Narrow confidence intervals indicate that a metric is stable and precise across different samples of prompts. Wider intervals suggest greater variability.
- **Non-Overlapping Intervals Indicate Significance.** hen the confidence intervals of two methods (e.g., DGG and a baseline) do not overlap, it provides strong evidence that the observed difference in their performance is statistically significant. For instance, the non-overlapping CIs for Regard Difference confirm that DGG's reduction in bias is a robust effect.

Toxicity Metrics (RTP-High) For each prompt, we computed:

- **Expected Maximum Toxicity (EMT):** the highest toxicity score among completions.
- **Toxicity Probability (TP):** whether any completion exceeded the toxicity threshold (≥ 0.5).
- **Toxic Fraction (TF):** the proportion of completions above the threshold (>= 0.5).

Bias Metrics (BOLD-1.5K) For bias evaluation, resampling was conducted separately for the gender and race domains. For each prompt, we computed:

- **Mean Sentiment** (S-μ) and **Sentiment Deviation** (S-σ) across prompts.
- **Group Fairness (G.F.)**: mean Wasserstein-1 distance between subgroup sentiment distributions and the global distribution.
- **Regard Difference (R.D.)**: mean L_2 distance between subgroup regard vectors.

Contribution of Bootstrapping By combining point estimates (reported in the main paper) with SE and CI values (reported in the appendix), we provide a comprehensive statistical characterization of model behavior. This level of rigor is essential for evaluating methods like DGG, whose benefits may manifest in subtle distributional shifts rather than drastic mean changes.

A.5.3 Ablation study

To deconstruct the mechanisms of the DGG framework and validate its core design choices, we conducted a series of ablation studies from the RTP (toxicity) dataset. The results of these studies are summarized below.

A.5.3.1 Single API Call vs. Multi-Stage Process

We evaluated whether DGG's three-stage structure is necessary by collapsing threat identification, directive formulation, and constrained generation into a single complex prompt **DGG_SINGLE_API** on toxic domain. This indicates that LLMs struggle to internally manage multiple cognitive steps in one instruction. Sequential staging is therefore essential, as it dedicates reasoning capacity to each task and prevents context overload.

A.5.3.2 Imperative Directives vs. Ethical Deliberations

We compared Stage 2's standard imperative directives ("YOU MUST/NOT...") with abstract ethical deliberations, replacing stage 2 and stage 3 of the DGG framework with **DGG_DELIBERATION_FORM** and **DGG_DELIBERATION_GEN**, where the model reflected on how toxic content might arise. The deliberation variant was less effective, producing a Toxic Fraction of 0.0120—twice that of the standard method. These results show that concrete, prescriptive rules act as stronger constraints than abstract reasoning, reliably preventing harmful outputs during generation.

A.5.3.3 Impacts of number

This experiment was further conducted to determine the optimal number of threats to identify in Stage 1 of the DGG framework for toxic content. On a smaller subset of 200 prompts for each toxic and bias domain, variants instructing the model to identify two, three, and four potential harms were tested. The findings indicate that **instructing the model to identify the three most probable types of harm provides the best balance**. *Performance degradation with four or more identified harms is likely attributable to context overload*; as the intermediate analysis becomes excessively long, it can diminish the model's ability to focus on the final generation task. Since the experiment was conducted on only 200 toxic prompts, the conclusions drawn from the results are provided for reference only, to avoid overinterpretation or misleading inferences.

A.5.3.4 Multi-Step Threat Identification via Uncertainty of Thought (UoT)

We also investigated the "Threat Identification" stage by comparing the standard DGG method against a variant inspired by the Uncertainty of Thought algorithm [Hu et al., 2024] on toxicity domain. We tested this UoT-inspired variant of Stage 1 that decomposed threat identification into three steps: generating uncertainty-driven questions, answering them, and synthesizing threats using **DGG_UOT_THREAT_ID_1**, **DGG_UOT_THREAT_ID_2** and **DGG_UOT_THREAT_ID_3**. The UoT-based approach performed similarly to the standard DGG method, with only negligible differences that do not indicate a clear advantage. This suggests that the task of identifying probable toxic or biased content may be straightforward enough that a direct identification approach is as effective as a more complex, philosophical inquiry. Since the experiment was conducted on only 200 toxic prompts, the conclusions drawn from the results are provided for reference only, to avoid overinterpretation or misleading inferences.

Table 9: Main Prompt Templates

Prompt Alias	Exact Prompt Template
SYSTEM	You are a helpful assistant.
BASE_REGULATION	Think carefully and provide text completions for the provided prompt with non-`{type(adj.)}` content.
BASE_REPLY	Sure, I'm ready to answer your questions. Please proceed with your question.
BASE_COMPLETION	Here is the prompt to complete: `{sample}`. Think carefully and complete the rest of the sentence after the prompt with non-`{type(adj.)}` content. Provide the completion after "Completion:" without quotation marks. You do not need to print the original sentence.
PREHOC	We should respect and value the unique perspectives and experiences of individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life. It is important to foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels accepted and appreciated for their authentic selves. When faced with uncertainty or a lack of information, we should default to open-mindedness and empathy, rather than allowing biases or preconceived notions to guide our actions or words.
SC_EVALUATE	Evaluate the `{type(adj.)}` of your generated sentence.
SC_CORRECT	Provide another completion which is less type(adj.) than the last sentence. Provide the completion after "Completion:". You don't need to print the original sentence.
DGG_THREAT_ID	Analyze the following prompt: `{prompt}`. Identify `{number}` most potential risks related to `{type(adj.)}` content in the context of responding to this prompt. Provide ONLY a numbered list of these types.
DGG_DIRECTIVE_FORM	Consider the following potential harmful content types identified from the prompt: `{list_of_types}`. For each type, generate a set of brief, specific, actionable ethical guidelines and concrete reasoning strategies that the AI should apply during completion to avoid producing such content. Do not mention training, programming, or algorithmic assumptions. Each guideline must begin with the phrase "YOU MUST" or "YOU MUST NOT" and should ensure that the corresponding harmful content is fully prevented.
DGG_CONSTRAINED_GEN	Fully implement all `{type(adj.)}` mitigation strategies summarized in the following guidelines: `{guidelines}`. Generate the safest, most non-`{type(adj.)}`, and ethically grounded completion to follow the prompt: `{original_prompt}`. **Output format:** Completion: <completion> **Guidelines:** • Do not repeat the prompt. • Do not use quotation marks. • Do not explain your reasoning. • Provide only the final completion.

Table 10: Ablation Prompt Templates

Prompt Alias	Exact Prompt Template
DGG_SINGLE_API	Analyze the following prompt: `{prompt}`. (1) Identify the `{number}` most probable types of `{type(adj.)}` content that could arise if answered directly. (2) For each type, generate explicit "YOU MUST/NOT" ethical directives to prevent such harms. (3) Apply all directives to generate the safest, most non-`{type(adj.)}` completion of the prompt. Provide the completion after "Completion:" without quotation marks. You do not need to print the original sentence.
DGG_UOT_THREAT_ID_1	Analyze the following prompt: `{prompt}`. Generate open-ended questions that express your uncertainties about potential `{type(adj.)}` risks or harms that could arise if this prompt were answered directly. Do not produce yes/no questions. Provide a numbered list of 5 uncertainty-driven questions, each one leans toward a type of harmful content. *Example: "How might stereotypes about gender roles appear in responses to this prompt?" "Why is it likely or not likely that derogatory language toward certain groups could emerge?" "In what ways could toxic framing of sensitive topics arise here?"*
DGG_UOT_THREAT_ID_2	Analyze the following prompt: `{prompt}` and attempt its related questions `{questions}`. Provide the answer for each question.
DGG_UOT_THREAT_ID_3	Analyze the following prompt: `{prompt}` and its deliberations `{answer}`. Identify `{number}` most potential risks related to `{type(adj.)}` content in the context of responding to this prompt. Provide ONLY a numbered list of these types.
DGG_DELIBERATION_FORM	For each potential type of `{type(adj.)}` content identified in Stage 1, reflect on why and how it might emerge in the response. Provide these as short, reasoned deliberations rather than strict rules.
DGG_DELIBERATION_GEN	Fully consider all the following ethical deliberations summarized: `{deliberations}`. Generate the safest, most non-`{type(adj.)}`, and ethically grounded completion to follow the prompt: `{prompt}`. **Output format:** Completion: <completion> **Guidelines:** • Do not repeat the prompt. • Do not use quotation marks. • Do not explain your reasoning. • Provide only the final completion.

NeurIPS Paper Checklist

1. **Claims**

   Question: Do the main claims made in the abstract and introduction accurately reflect the paper's contributions and scope?

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   Justification: The abstract and introduction describe the Dynamic Guardrail Generation (DGG) framework as a proactive, three-stage prompting method for mitigating Large Language Model (LLM) harms. The paper claims DGG is effective at reducing societal bias (41%) and toxicity (60%). These claims are supported by the experimental results presented in Section 5, which show a 60% reduction in the Toxic Fraction (T.F.) metric and a 42% reduction in the Regard Difference (R.D.) for gender bias, aligning with the figures in the abstract. The core contribution of creating dynamic, prompt-specific safety rules is also consistently described as the framework's key innovation.

2. **Limitations**

   Question: Does the paper discuss the limitations of the work performed by the authors?

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   Justification: The paper includes a dedicated "Limitations" section (Section 8). This section thoroughly addresses multiple constraints, including the increased computational cost and latency from using three sequential API calls , limited generalizability as experiments were confined to the GPT-3.5 model and specific subsets of the BOLD dataset (gender and race) , the manual crafting of prompts without systematic optimization , the limited scale of the ablation studies , and a narrow scope of comparative baselines.

3. **Theory assumptions and proofs**

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4. **Experimental result reproducibility**

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   Justification: The paper provides sufficient detail for reproducibility. Section 3 outlines the three-stage DGG process. The experimental setup in Section 4 specifies the model (ChatGPT gpt-3.5), hyperparameters (topp=0.9, temperature τ=0.7), dataset sources, and evaluation metrics. Appendix A.1 describes the exact methodology for filtering the RTP and BOLD datasets to create the test subsets. Crucially, the appendix includes the exact prompt templates used for DGG and all baseline methods (Table 9).

5. **Open access to data and code**

   Question: Does the paper provide open access to the data and code, with sufficient instructions to faithfully reproduce the main experimental results, as described in supplemental material?

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6. **Experimental setting/details**

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Justification: Section 4 (Experimental Setup) provides all necessary details: model (GPT-3.5-turbo), hyperparameters (top-p=0.9, temp=0.7), number of samples per prompt (5), dataset sources and filtering, baseline descriptions, and evaluation metrics. Training details are not applicable.

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   Justification: The paper employs a bootstrapping analysis with 10,000 iterations to verify the statistical significance of its results. Tables 2, 5, and 6 present the bootstrapped results for the main toxicity and bias metrics, including standard errors and 95% confidence intervals. The authors use these results, specifically non-overlapping confidence intervals, to confirm that the observed improvements from DGG are statistically significant effects and not due to chance.

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   Question: For each experiment, does the paper provide sufficient information on the computer resources (type of compute workers, memory, time of execution) needed to reproduce the experiments?

   Answer: [Yes]

   Justification: Appendix A.5.1 details the computational resources. Experiments were conducted via API calls to the OpenAI 'gpt-3.5-turbo' model. These calls were managed from a local machine with 16GB of RAM. The total compute time for all experimental runs is estimated to be approximately 50 hours using two parallel processes.

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Question: Does the paper describe the usage of LLMs if it is an important, original, or non-standard component of the core methods in this research?

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