Communications in Information Literacy

Volume 18 | Issue 1 Article 1

6-2024

CIL's New Generative AI Policy

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Recommended Citation

Hollister, C. V., Schweikhard, A., Hosier, A., & Williams, J. A. (2024). CIL's New Generative AI Policy. *Communications in Information Literacy, 18* (1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2024.18.1.1

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Abstract

The Editors-in-Chief of *Communications in Information Literacy* discuss the development of the journal's new generative artificial intelligence (AI) policy.

Keywords: authorship, generative artificial intelligence, AI, ChatGPT, ethics, policy

Hollister, C. V., Schweikhard, A., Hosier, A., & Williams, J. A. (2024). CIL's new generative AI policy. *Communications in Information Literacy, 18*(1), 1–4.

CIL's New Generative AI Policy

CIL readers know this story: In November 2022, OpenAI released the chatbot named ChatGPT to the public, prompting what is likely to be a permanent shift in scholarly publishing. Lucey and Dowling (2023) were among the first researchers to show that, among other things, ChatGPT could generate manuscripts of sufficient caliber for publication in academic journals. Soon thereafter came a flood of anecdotes from the scholarly publishing community about fully AI-generated manuscripts, "hallucinated" sources, and even AI-attributed authorship. This created a general sense of urgency among scholarly publishers who sought to gain a measure of control over the situation as quickly as possible. We felt that urgency here on CIL's Editorial Team, too. So, we set about developing a generative AI policy that would be in the best interests of our authors, while also remaining true to the journal's *Statement of Values*, and more generally to the standards of academic integrity.

Early in our discussions, the CIL Editorial Team consulted the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, 2023) position statement regarding authorship and AI tools. COPE asserts that AI tools do not possess the capacity to be listed as authors and recommends authors identify any use of AI in manuscript preparation within their methodologies. Although we unanimously agreed with COPE's position on authorship, we soon recognized that members of the Editorial Team had differing views on the use of AI tools for manuscript preparation. There were tensions between the myriad unknown implications of using AI tools in the writing of scholarly papers and the reality that those technologies were already in use. What is the threshold, for example, that distinguishes between an author's original work and an artificially generated product? Given the pool of data from which AI tools draw, does their generated text constitute a form of plagiarism? What are the copyright or privacy implications of adding one's work to that pool of data for the purpose of developing or improving a manuscript? What should we require of CIL authors in terms of generative AI use and disclosure?

These and many other questions were confounding in nature, and they stymied the progress of our policy development. It was therefore agreed that we would step back, take our time, and begin by exploring how other library and information (LIS) science journal editors were thinking about AI tools and what policies were already in place. CIL co-editor April Schweikhard contacted several LIS journal editors and learned of pervasively similar states

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/comminfolit/vol18/iss1/1
DOI: 10.15760/comminfolit.2024.18.1.1

of quandary among them. While some editors of journals in the commercial sector could conveniently point to their publishers' umbrella policies, those policies varied in how they asked authors to disclose use of AI. Other editors of independently published journals were just beginning to explore the matter with their boards.

During the spring and summer of 2023, members of CIL's Editorial Team worked through several drafts of an AI policy. Given our differing viewpoints, we established a protocol of having team members identify any unacceptable elements of the draft policies, leaving the remaining text as material from which to build the next draft. Then, in November 2023, CIL co-editor Allison Hosier convened an online panel of leading LIS journal editors to discuss generative AI. The panelists, including CIL co-editor Jacqulyn Williams, discussed where they were in the process of addressing generative AI and what they hoped to accomplish in terms of developing relevant guidelines and policies. At the conclusion of the event, panelists expressed a desire to establish an ongoing, communal dialogue about generative AI policies and other issues of common concern.

Ultimately, our research and our deliberations, complemented by input from CIL's constituencies, informed the development of our new policy. We agreed that an AI tool cannot be an author and that the use of such tools for research aspects of manuscripts should be documented in the methods sections of those works. In our view, authors may use AI tools to improve a paper's grammar, syntax, and readability, and such use should be disclosed in a cover letter upon manuscript submission. However, we agreed that this information would not be shared with our manuscript reviewers or indicated in the published version. These elements represent a basic structure of CIL's generative AI policy.

Above all, we view authorship as a distinctly human endeavor; that is the leading principle behind the establishment of CIL's policy. We recognize that the generative AI environment is dynamic and rapidly evolving, which is why our policy is subject to change. Our exploration of this space has prompted deeper examinations of AI in other functional areas of the journal as well. We revised the *About this Journal* page on the CIL site to assert that we do not use AI technology in any part of the editorial process, and we are updating the guidelines for manuscript reviewers. Additionally, consistent with CIL being a community-owned and operated journal, our generative AI policy invites members of the information literacy community to submit feedback on the policy.

We thank the community of LIS journal editors for helping to advance this discussion in a reasoned and thoughtful manner, and as ever, we thank CIL's many stakeholders for their ongoing and enthusiastic support.

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DOI: 10.15760/comminfolit.2024.18.1.1