

A brief note on generative AI use

Find below a personal take on issues around generative AI use I've encountered.

For Pls and Team Leads

Problematic AI use among students is rising, particularly in terms of plagiarism. Some food for thought:

*"Plagiarism is understood as the complete or partial imitation of the work of another author without citing that work's source or author... You may not...use the exact words or ideas from another author's intellectual property (text, ideas, structure, etc.) without citing the source clearly."*¹

If AI (not the student) decides who said what, how can we be sure credit is being properly attributed? Say a statement appears first in Paper B. A student incorporates the statement into their work via an AI tool. The following can occur:

1. the AI outright hallucinates a source for the statement, robbing Paper B of its due credit and casting doubt on the veracity of the work as a whole.
2. the AI misattributes a statement to a real Paper A, again robbing Paper B of its due credit and resulting in, at the very least, an author's ideas being used without citing the source clearly (plagiarism).

Recommendations

- Encourage your students to write in a version controlled environment shared with you (e.g., a shared Overleaf project). In Overleaf, check how .bib files are coming together. If references look strange, it may simply be issues in linked literature manager entries or it may point to AI use in the literature review.
- Discuss AI use and set a norms within your group. Clearly explain that AI misuse has the potential for widespread reputational damage (to themselves and to their collaborators, instructors, supervisors, and institutions).

For Early Career Researchers

- I don't recommend integrating AI tools into your writing and coding environments (e.g., GitHub Copilot). Make the active decision to go to AI tools externally if you need something from them.

¹ From **Citation etiquette: How to handle the intellectual property of others**, itself adapted from the 'Notice on dealing with plagiarism' issued on 30 April 2007 by the Teaching Committee of the University of Zurich

- Do not enter personal, confidential, or proprietary information into an AI chat.
For example:
 - unpublished research results of your own or from someone else
 - identifying information that can be used to recognize someone, such as name, location data, physical, genetic, psychological, economic, cultural, or social attributes (e.g., religious affiliation, gender identity)
 - IT related information: usernames, passwords, paths
- Assume companies will store and reuse any information you give their AI tools, even if you take steps to prevent it.