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Policy on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for writing and reviewing articles published in the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals

Approved by the UOC Executive Board

UOC

Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya

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1. Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has undergone exponential growth, transforming various sectors, including academia and publishing. Generative AI tools have opened up new opportunities for writing and reviewing scientific and general-interest articles. However, this new technology also brings with it new legal and ethical challenges that require appropriate regulation to ensure transparency, ethical standards, and the integrity and quality of published content.

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), as an academic publisher, is aware of the need to establish criteria and guidelines for the responsible use of AI tools by the authors and reviewers of the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals, thus guaranteeing the integrity of research and the quality of the articles published.

2. Principles

The use of artificial intelligence tools in the writing and reviewing of articles published in the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals must comply with the following principles:

1. **Principle of transparency:** ensure that the use of artificial intelligence tools in creating and reviewing content is clearly documented and indicated, in both manuscripts and review reports.

2. **Principle of integrity and ethics:** promote good practice in the ethics of publications, avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism and data manipulation, ensuring that authors meet established authorship criteria.

3. **Principle of equity and non-discrimination:** use artificial intelligence systems fairly and equitably, avoiding any type of discrimination or bias towards specific individuals or groups.

4. **Principle of human supervision**: AI must be supervised, ensuring that human beings maintain control of its use, avoiding autonomous decisions that could negatively affect society.

5. **Principle of human compatibility:** the use of artificial intelligence tools must be compatible with human values and dignity, respecting people's autonomy, freedom and privacy.

6. **Principle of quality:** ensure that content generated by AI tools is carefully checked and edited by authors or reviewers to avoid errors, incompleteness or bias, and ensure the validity and rigour of any research published.

7. **Principle of legality:** ensure that its use complies with the following:
   a. Applicable legislation on AI (EU Regulation 2024/1689, of 13 June 2024, laying down harmonized rules on artificial intelligence).
   b. The General Data Protection Regulation (EU Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data), ensuring that personal data used to train AI models is processed lawfully and securely.
   c. Intellectual property regulations, ensuring that AI-generated content does not infringe the copyright of third parties, and that authors have the necessary rights of use for publication.
   d. Regulations on image rights, ensuring that the input and output do not infringe the image rights of third parties, while respecting Organic Law 1/1982, of 5 May 1982, on the civil protection of the right to honour, personal and family privacy, and one's own image.

3. Object of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence:

(i) in the generation of content and images published in the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals, and

(ii) in the review of content and images published in the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals.

This policy is intended to guarantee the transparency, ethical standards and quality of published content, providing clear guidelines for the responsible use of AI tools by authors and reviewers.

4. Parties subject to the Policy

The Policy applies to authors and reviewers of content published in the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals.

5. Use of AI in the creation of content and images

The use of AI in the generation and review of content (including images) published in the UOC's scientific and general-interest journals must conform to the following guidelines:

A. Declaration of use: the authors of scientific and general-interest content must explicitly declare the use of any artificial intelligence tool in their manuscript. They are recommended to include this statement in a "Methods" section, providing information on the type of AI tool used, and a brief description of how it has been used. They are also recommended to include a declaration that AI has been used in the message accompanying the manuscript when it is submitted to the journal.

If artificial intelligence tools are used to manipulate, combine or enhance existing images or figures, their use should be declared in the guide to images.

B. Citations: authors must appropriately cite any artificial intelligence tool used in the relevant section, applying the journal's standard citation format:

Algorithm provider. (Year). Model name (Version) [Language model]. https://…

For example: *OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (May 2023 version) [Language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat*

C. Description of and reason for the use of AI for articles: authors must explicitly declare and identify any use of AI for the following purposes (criteria for use) and the reason for such use:

- assistance with writing;
- generation of text from other formats (e.g. diagrams, tables, images, audio or video);
- transformation of text into other formats (e.g. diagrams, tables, images, audio or video);
- producing proposals, comparisons, lists, verifying data, systematizing arguments or other analyses;

- extracting descriptors or glossaries from the text;
- other uses or actions.

D. Description of requests, queries, instructions and prompts used: authors must specify the points considered relevant for the formulation of the initial and secondary prompts.

E. Description of actions to mitigate risks: authors must indicate what action has been taken to avoid bias, misinformation, plagiarism or bad practice during the use of AI, and any action taken to protect sensitive data, such as anonymization.

F. Limits to use:

1. Authors must not designate AI itself, AI-assisted technologies or AI-based products as an author or co-author.

2. The use of artificial intelligence does not exonerate the authors from their responsibility for the content of the manuscript. Authors must assume moral and legal responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the content, and are legally and ethically answerable for the content generated.

3. Authors must carefully review any text generated by artificial intelligence tools to ensure its accuracy and relevance, especially in view of the risk that it may generate results that seem convincing, but are incorrect, incomplete or biased ("hallucinations"), or discriminatory towards certain people or groups, and ensure the validity of the methods of analysis and ethical handling of the data.

4. As far as possible, reviewers should avoid sharing with AI tools any manuscripts that they have access to until secure tools are available from the UOC.

G. Intellectual property and the right to one's own image:

1. Before using an AI tool, authors must:
   - Make sure that they have sufficient rights to use it, in accordance with the relevant user licences.
   - Verify whether on using the tool the inputs and outputs will be exploited for other purposes, such as training the algorithm engine. In this case, if possible, they should opt

not to feed the tool's training engine with their inputs and outputs.

- Avoid using content over which they do not have sufficient rights, and information that is restricted, confidential or of strategic importance for the UOC.
- Review the intellectual property rights for the content they want to include in the tool. Prioritize the use of open-access content over content subject to copyright restrictions.

2. Authors must ensure the use by the UOC of material produced by an artificial intelligence tool is not subject to any constraints. In other words, they must be able to ensure that their rights to use material generated by the tool are sufficient for the use that the UOC will make of it in the publication of journals.

3. Authors must therefore review the terms and conditions governing artificial intelligence tools to ensure that they grant ownership of the content generated or provide a licence that is sufficient for the use and purposes intended.

4. Authors must similarly ensure that content generated by the AI tool does not infringe third-party copyright. In particular, copyright must be respected when fragments of works by third parties are reproduced, and in all cases the source and authorship must be mentioned.

5. Authors must ensure compliance with the general principles of respect for the right to honour, personal and family privacy, and one's own image.

H. Personal data protection

Authors and reviewers of content must comply with legislation on the protection of personal data. To this end, they must ensure that:

1. The content being published does not include any personal data or details that may make a person identifiable.
2. They avoid entering into AI systems content that may include personal data or any information that may make an individual identifiable.
3. They configure the AI systems they intend to use with the settings that provide the greatest guarantees of privacy.

6. Use of AI in the review of content in scientific and general-interest journals

Peer reviewers play a fundamental role in scientific publishing. Their reviews and recommendations guide editorial staff in their decisions and ensure that the research published is valid, rigorous and credible.

Journal editors select peer reviewers mainly on the basis of their knowledge of the subject or methods used for the work they are asked to review. Reviewers are responsible for the accuracy of their reports and the opinions expressed in them, and the review process operates on a principle of mutual trust between authors, reviewers and editors.

Although they have made rapid progress, generative AI tools have considerable limitations: they may lack up-to-date knowledge and can produce meaningless, biased or false information. Manuscripts may also include sensitive information or material for which third parties hold copyright that should not be shared outside the peer review process.

For these reasons, until reviewers have access to secure AI tools, they should not, as far as possible, submit manuscripts to generative AI tools.

If secure tools do become available for the review of manuscripts, reviewers must specify the points considered relevant for the formulation of the initial and secondary prompts used with these tools.

7. Approval of the Policy

This Policy has been approved in accordance with the provisions of the UOC's internal regulations.

8. Policy reviews and updates

This Policy on the use of artificial intelligence is conceived as a starting point in providing guidance for the responsible management of AI technologies. Given that the AI sector is in a state of constant evolution, in both the technological and regulatory fields, the UOC reserves the right to periodically review the Policy and make any necessary modifications to adapt it to technological, legal and social advances and changes.