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EDITORIAL

AI under editorial scrutiny: how do scientific journals control its use?

The emergence of artificial intelligence in scientific production is forcing publishers and journals to redefine the rules of the game. Oscillating between fascination with its potential and concern for academic integrity, publishers and journals have begun to establish specific policies to ensure that these tools are used as a support—not a substitute—for human work. Today, understanding how each publisher regulates the use of AI is not a technical detail: it is a requirement for publishing rigorously and avoiding ethical or authorship issues in a rapidly evolving scientific ecosystem.

Some common rules from various scientific publishers regarding the use of AI in scientific publications:

1. AI cannot be listed as an author: Generative tools such as Large Language Models (LLMs) do not meet the requirements for authorship, cannot be held responsible for the work, nor approve the final version. Only humans receive author credit [1, 2].
2. Declaration of the use of AI in writing, analysis, or figure generation: In some cases, the name of the model, version, and role played are requested.
3. Human authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and ethics of the content: Authors must review, correct, and validate everything produced by AI. If the AI introduces errors, fabricated references, or biases, the authors are to be held responsible [2, 3].
4. If AI is part of the experimental design or method (e.g., models for data analysis or image generation as part of the study), its use must be described in a reproducible manner in Methods. If it is used only to improve writing, many journals require only a statement and human verification.
5. Manipulating images (including/hiding features) with AI may be considered scientific misconduct. Several publishers prohibit creating or altering images with AI unless it is an explicit and documented part of the method [3].
6. Reviewers/editors should not upload unpublished manuscripts to AI services (risk of data leakage); if a reviewer uses AI as an aid (e.g., translation), they must declare it [4].
7. Journals can use tools to detect AI-generated text and, if authorship or use was not declared, they can initiate proceedings for malpractice (correction, article retraction, sanctions against authors, among others) [5].
8. Journals in the NATURE group require authors to declare the use of LLMs and often restrict certain uses, such as generated images, or require permission [6].

Risks that turn the use of AI into fraud or authorship issues

- Not declaring the significant use of AI when the journal requires it [3].
- Presenting the entire generation of ideas, results, or texts as one's own when AI produced most of it without human supervision [6].
- Using AI to fabricate data, references, or manipulate figures without transparency and without a reproducible methodology [3].

AI can be used as a tool to improve clarity, support writing, process data, format references, improve English grammar, edit, and enhance entire articles. ChatGPT and other chatbots can assist with various tasks because they have the potential to improve research efficiency, but it is necessary to clearly state their use (tool + version + role) and assume full human responsibility for all content. Clearly stating the use of AI keeps the author out of the realm of fraud and protects human authorship [3, 6].

Restrictions on the use of AI for publishers and reviewers

Both reviewers and editors should be extremely cautious when copying unpublished manuscripts to commercial AI services; several publishers prohibit or require reviewers to declare their use of LLMs due to the risk of data leakage. The use of manuscripts by publishers and reviewers in generative AI systems may pose a risk to confidentiality, property rights, and data, including personally identifiable information. Therefore, publishers and reviewers should not upload files, images, or information from unpublished manuscripts to generative AI tools. Failure to comply with this policy may infringe on the intellectual property of the rights holder [7].

Editors are the guardians of quality and responsible research content. Therefore, editors must maintain confidentiality regarding the details of submissions and peer review. The use of manuscripts in generative AI systems may carry risks related to confidentiality, infringement of rights and proprietary data, as well

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as other risks. Thus, publishers should not upload unpublished manuscripts, including files, images, or associated information, to generative AI tools.

Reviewers are chosen experts in their fields and should not use generative AI for analysis or to summarize submitted articles or parts thereof in the creation of their reviews. Therefore, reviewers should not upload unpublished manuscripts or project proposals, including associated files, images, or data, to generative AI tools. Generative AI may be used only to help improve the language of reviews, but reviewers will always be responsible for ensuring the accuracy and integrity of their reviews [7].

In general, scientific journal publishers warn of measures such as article retraction, correction notices, and sanctions for misconduct in cases where the use of AI is concealed or if AI is used to fabricate data, references, etc. COPE recommends transparency and supports the position that AI is not an author [3].

Wiley specifies the following points regarding its position on AI [2]:

Developers and AI companies must obtain authorization before using Wiley content, or content we publish for our partners, for AI development, training, or deployment.

Wiley has consistently and publicly reserved all rights to our copyrighted materials; there is no implied permission without an appropriate license.

Transparent attribution and data provenance are essential components of ethical AI development.

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