

From the Editor

De Ethica is published by Linköping University Electronic Press, and we are currently participating in a project to develop ethical guidelines for this publisher. This work is, of course, both interesting and important, especially since the world of scientific writing and publishing has recently perhaps transformed. Chat-GPT not only changed how we approach examinations in education but also opened up new opportunities and risks in the research process.

Large language models (LLMs) promise to be of tremendous help in the work of research. An often-used example is how AI helped solve the protein folding problem that biochemists have worked on for over 50 years. However, using AI also comes with risks that can put rather severe stress on standard approaches to publishing ethics.¹ Examples could range from publishing AI hallucinations as scientific facts via new forms of plagiarism to an even stronger pressure to publish or perish, with attendant so-called salami publishing as a result.²

Indeed, recently, the Vancouver Principles for publishing ethics were revised to take these developments into account. The following are now the principles for regulating who will count as an author:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.³

It might seem that some forms of AI could satisfy several of these criteria; however, ICMJE continues to add that “[a]uthors should not list AI and AI-assisted technologies as an author or co-author, nor cite AI as an author.” This principle implies that using an LLM to generate an article does not give one the status of author and, hence, no claim to the merit that authorship entails. However, it also implies that there may exist articles that do not have any authors. This seems to be the proper implication for publishing ethics, but it may seem puzzling.

1 Resnik, D., & Hosseini, M. (2023, October 27). The Ethics of Using Artificial Intelligence in Scientific Research: New Guidance Needed for a New Tool. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/rbg9z>

2 Helgesson, Gert. (Forthcoming) Ethical Aspects of the Use of AI in Research. In *Research Ethics: Ethical Review and Beyond*, Elin Palm & Lars Lindblom (eds). Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press.

3 ICMJE. 2024. Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals. <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>

These guidelines also give instructions on how to quote and use AI in the publication process: “The journal should require authors to disclose whether they used Artificial Intelligence (AI)–assisted technologies (such as Large Language Models [LLMs], chatbots, or image creators) in the production of submitted work.”⁴ These emerging guidelines on AI use are helpful. But, of course, there will, for the foreseeable future, be borderline cases and unforeseen developments. At De Ethica, we are at present spending quite some time thinking about such possible puzzles and problems at present.

However, luckily, we are spending much more time thinking about new and exciting work in ethics broadly construed. In this issue, we are happy to publish part 2 of our special issue on vulnerability and integrity, expertly guest-edited by Michael Coors and Lea Chilian. They will present the articles on this issue in their introduction, which follows this brief note from the editors.

Lars Lindblom, *Executive Editor*

Bibliography

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⁴ ICMJE. 2024. Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals. <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>