AI Assignment Library   Schools, Colleges, and Departments

9-12-2023

Generative Text AI: towards a personal ethics of use

Merie Kirby
University of North Dakota, merie.kirby@und.edu

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.und.edu/ai-assignment-library

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Recommended Citation

Generative Text AI: towards a personal ethics of use

Recently, when I was uploading a letter of recommendation for a student applying to med school, I was asked to verify (by checkbox) that "I did not use a generative AI platform to write or modify any of the contents of my evaluation." This was a new addition to the process, one which made me think about times when I'd heard people identify letters of recommendation as a case where using such a platform would make our lives easier. In fact, I had not used such a platform and could check the box with a clear conscience.

This incident has become part of my larger thinking about generative text platforms (ChatGPT, Bard, all the others), and whether there are cases where I would use it, or would consider it, and would not find the use of such a thing in violation of my personal ethics. Deciding these questions required learning more about ChatGPT and its cohort, much the way we have been learning about and discussing this technology. While recognizing that we have really just scratched the surface, I think you've learned enough to start forming your own informed opinions, which is what this assignment asks you to do.

Purpose: Begin to develop your own framework for decision-making around generative text AI and generative art AI. Create a document, similar to the "Good Science Writing Manifesto" you developed in the beginning of the semester, that captures your knowledge and opinion at this moment.

This assignment does not, obviously, constitute your final word on the matter! Generative text platforms are continuing to "learn" and to be modified, perception of technology changes over time, demands on both technology and people change over time. You may have a different opinion next semester, in a year, in five years. But thinking through your understanding and ideas now, articulating your position at this point, is a valuable exercise, and will help you further articulate your thoughts as time and technology go forward. The goal here is not a line in the sand, but a document that shows your thought process, points of uncertainty, questions, understanding, and current evaluation of your options.

Skills: Through this assignment, including the readings and discussions leading up to it, you will

- Use skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, metacognitive reflection, and information literacy to navigate multiple sources
- Synthesize your findings and your personal ideas into a working personal position statement

Knowledge: Through this assignment, including the readings and discussions leading up to it, you will gain

- Better understanding of how generative AI works
- Better understanding of gains/losses in using/not using this technology

- Better understanding of public perception of the use of this technology, as well as perception within your field
- Better understanding of why one might use it (under what conditions or for what purposes)
- Personal position on what/when/why/how/who would make it a good choice, a bad choice, a neutral choice

Task: Write a personal position statement on the use of generative text AI. Your statement should be one page, single-spaced. You do not need to rehash the mechanics of generative text or art platforms, but you do need to engage with the question of how use of this technology is perceived (in general, by fellow students, by academia, by your professors, by you, etc. – be specific about which groups you choose to talk about), and your own (current) parameters for your own use of generative AI platforms. A bibliography of sources that particularly helped you in your thinking should follow your statement, in MLA format, particularly if this includes articles you found outside of those the class read together.