

The Future of AI-Assisted Writing: Supporting or Stifling Creativity?

Hayao Miyazaki, co-founder of Studio Ghibli, one of the most popular animation studios from Japan, praised for its hand-drawn animation, watercolor and acrylic paints, still uses traditional methods of making animation. Miyazaki believes that true creativity comes from within, embracing intuition and problem solving. Thus, it came to no one's surprise when, in 2016, during a meeting, Miyazaki called AI-generated work 'an insult to life itself'[1]. While I, personally, would not go to such an extreme, I do agree with Miyazaki to an extent.

Creativity involves breaking barriers, finding solutions. An individual's ability to recognize ideas, present them in a coherent manner and come up with alternatives are skill sets that need to be nurtured and developed like any other aptitude. Like an artist honing on their craft hours after hours, writing papers should be treated the same way. The rise of AI-tools such as ChatGPT , QuillBot and Grammarly have made academic writing to be less frightening and more students are tempted to use them.[2] They relieve some of the stress and aid students in dealing with the rigid rules and language that entail an academic setting. At the same time, there is a strong difference between simple assistance regarding sentence structure and synonyms and AI writing full phrases.

Down to its core, writing an academic paper involves doing research on a subject then reflecting on final thoughts, research understanding and personal contribution. An AI-assisted paper will be in the structure of an academic paper, but it will lack the personal contribution. Multiple issues can result, one of them being the risk of plagiarism. As AI has a limited understanding of any subject matter, repetition can occur if multiple students require the same tool to rewrite certain phrases or to write intros.

Writing an academic paper involves doing a certain degree of research hours. An AI tool can reduce those working hours and provide with most of the information needed one click away. Still, I strongly believe that skipping on the necessary research via the internet and books in the library can hinder one's learning abilities and opportunities. By actively engaging with AI tools and reducing working hours, students can lose an active learning opportunity and thus hinder their intellectual goal which should be the main goal when writing academic papers.

The most important aspect of an academic paper is the student's personal contribution. Personal thoughts and own conclusions represent the creative aspect of academic writing and cannot be replicated with AI. AI is not able to replicate human writing styles, cannot talk about personal experiences and cannot provide a subjective opinion on the matter being written.[3] Personal contribution and free thought are different for each student and it reflects the level of understatement of the subject analyzed in the paper. AI uses static parameters and templates, it follows a specific set of rules each time and will provide similar or identical opinions each time it is asked. As most assignments require one's own thoughts on the matter, AI assisted tools cannot adapt to each student to provide nuanced answers and rewrite phrases to tailor to a student's voice.

Finally, one of the major issues with using AI to write academic papers represents inaccuracies. Studies have found that 52% of times ChatGPT provided wrong answers[4]. Writing an academic paper requires, as mentioned above, research and personal application on the matter. Using AI to write a paper can be quick, but it will allow for errors to pass through the cracks undetected, unless the needed research is done beforehand. This begs the question, if research is already done to write a paper, why use AI?

My personal opinion on using AI to perform any creative act is similar to Miyazaki's: it hinders creativity, limits knowledge gain and imposes on one's cognitive abilities. Reading a text, understanding it and drawing one's own personal conclusions are human acts and cannot be left to a machine to think in our place. The Oxford Word of the Year for 2024 was 'brain rot'[5], referring to the consumption of quick form content and being spoon fed information without it going through one's personal filter. I believe that depending on AI to write papers can be a double edged sword; it can be an assisting tool to be able to write a paper within the rigid structure of academic writing, but at the same time it can hinder academic growth and take away the personal involvement in scientific contribution.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that AI can hinder one's creativity and reduce personal engagement in the work. Reading comprehension and argumentative writing are two skills students work on when writing academic papers. I believe that the ability

to present one's opinion with arguments is a skill that can be lost if students rely on AI tools to complete their tasks.

References

- [1] <https://youtu.be/ngZ0K3lWKRC?si=dKOqanspViYXErPQ&t=84>
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