Moving Past AI Shame: A Discussion Guide

Practical resources for navigating AI use in academic settings

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Understanding AI Shame - Two Perspectives

Academic Perspective: "AI Shaming in Academia"

Summary of Louis Jere's article on AI stigma in higher education

Definition: AI shaming is the stigma or criticism directed at academics who use AI tools, seen as undermining the ideal that scholarship should be entirely "human intellect-driven."

Real Examples from Academia: - Researchers rejected from journals after editors discovered AI use for brainstorming - Junior academics accused of cheating for using AI to polish writing - Faculty hiding their AI use from tenure committees

Types of AI Shamers Identified: - **Traditionalists** – Value established methods, resist change - **Technophobes** – Fear technology and AI generally - **Elitists** – See AI as threat to status or expertise - **Luddites** – Fear disruption to academic livelihoods - **Misunderstanders** – Don't grasp AI capabilities, default to sci-fi fears

Consequences of AI Shaming: - Stifles innovation in research methods - Wastes effort on repetitive tasks - Creates underground usage without best practices - Disadvantages early-career researchers

The Bold Transparency Approach: Louis Jere openly used ChatGPT while writing about AI shaming, advocating for normalising disclosure as a path forward.

Workplace Perspective: Fortune/Canva Study (2025)

How AI shame manifests in professional settings

Key Findings: - 70% of knowledge workers use AI weekly - 63% fear being seen as incompetent or lazy - Most hide their AI use from colleagues - Creates "readiness gap" between expectation and support

The Pattern Across Sectors: Both academia and industry show similar patterns of shame, secrecy, and missed opportunities for collaborative learning.

Reframing Our Relationship with AI

From Shame to Partnership

Traditional View: "Real scholarship is purely human intellect" **Alternative View:** "Scholarship is human intellect directing appropriate tools"

Traditional View: "Using AI is cheating" **Alternative View:** "Using AI without disclosure or understanding is problematic"

Traditional View: "AI threatens academic integrity" **Alternative View:** "Hidden AI use threatens integrity; transparent use enhances it"

Traditional View: "AI will replace academics" **Alternative View:** "AI augments academic capabilities for those who master it"

Questions for Reflection

Rather than prescribing how to think, consider: - What tools do you already use that were once controversial? (calculators, spell-check, citation managers) - How is AI different from or similar to these tools? - What would responsible, transparent AI use look like in your discipline? - How might AI free you to focus on higher-level academic work?

Moving Forward: A Collaboration Mindset

Proposed Actions (from the literature)

Individual Level: - Experiment with one small task - Document and share your process - Practice transparent disclosure - Shift from "human vs. machine" to "human + machine"

Department Level: - Create safe spaces for AI experimentation - Share both successes and failures - Develop discipline-specific guidelines - Educate about actual AI capabilities (vs. sci-fi myths)

Institutional Level: - Establish clear, supportive policies - Provide training and resources - Recognise AI literacy as professional development - Support "post-digital academic writing" practices

Key Message from Research

Both academic and industry research conclude: AI should be seen as an **augmenting partner**, not a replacement. Overcoming shame requires honesty about use, curiosity about possibilities, and willingness to evolve practices.

Resources & References

- (McNealis, R. Shame in the machine: affective accountability and the ethics of AI. AI & Soc (2025). https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-025-02472-x)[https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s0014 025-02472-x]
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- (Lichtenberg, N. (2025, August 29). "AI shame" is running rampant in the corporate sector—and C-suite leaders are most worried about getting caught, survey says. Fortune. https://fortune.com/2025/08/29/what-is-ai-shame-readiness-gap-training-artificial-intelligence/)[https://fortune.com/2025/08/29/what-is-ai-shame-readiness-gap-training-artificial-intelligence/]
- Canva Workplace Study on AI Adoption (2025)
- TEQSA on Generative AI

Support: - Contact: michael.borck@curtin.edu.au - Companion website: [to be added] - Prompt library: [to be added]

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Drawing on both academic and industry research on AI shame

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