

# How to get away with AI-generated essays

Publication Date: 2024-02-19

Author: Unknown

Section: Technology

Tags: Artificial intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, Higher education, Computing, Exams, Plagiarism, Universities, letters

Article URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/feb/19/how-to-get-away-with-ai-generated-essays>



No wonder Robert Topinka found himself in a quandary (The software says my student cheated using AI. They say they're innocent. Who do I believe?, 13 February). To test ChatGPT's abilities and weaknesses, I asked it to write a short essay on a particular topic that I specialised in. Before looking at what it produced, I wrote my own 100% original short essay on the same topic. I then submitted both pieces to ChatGPT and asked it to identify whether they were written by AI or a human. It immediately identified the first piece as AI-generated. But then it also said that my essay "was probably generated by AI". I concluded that if you write well, in logical, appropriate and grammatically correct English, then the chances are that it will be deemed to be AI-generated. To avoid detection, write badly. Prof Paul Kleiman Truro, Cornwall • Robert Topinka gets into a twist about whether his student's essay was genuine or produced by AI. The obvious solution is for such work not to contribute to the final degree qualification. Then there would be no point in cheating. Let there be real chat between teachers and students rather than ChatGPT, and let the degree be decided only by exams, with surprise questions, done in an exam room with pen and paper, and not a computer in sight. Michael Bulley Chalon-sur-Saône, France • Dr Robert Topinka overlooks a crucial factor with respect to student cheating – so long as a degree is a requirement to obtain a reasonable job, then chicanery is inevitable. When I left school at 16 in the early 1970s, an administrative job could be had with a few O-levels; when I finished my PhD two decades ago and was looking for that sort of job, each one required A-levels, and often a degree. I was a mature student, studying for my own edification, and so cheating was self-defeating. Cheating will stop being a major problem only when students attend university primarily to learn for the sake of learning and not as a means of gaining employment. Dr Paul Flowers London • Do you have a photograph you'd like to share with Guardian readers? If so, please click here to upload it. A selection will be published in our Readers' best photographs galleries and in the print edition on Saturdays.