LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Humans-written versus ChatGPT-generated abstracts: beyond the discussion on "who wrote it"

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Dear Editor,

Nabata et al. [1] showed that human reviewers could not accurately distinguish between human-written and ChatGPT-generated abstracts. They discussed the merits and demerits of ChatGPT use in writing. The main merits are its time-saving and streamlining effects, while the demerits include ChatGPT's inaccuracy and ethical concerns. I have some concerns and proposals.

First, choosing the Abstract as a study target may not be effective in highlighting the possible difference between the two. I believe that many write the Abstract after the manuscript's completion. For experienced writers, including myself, abstract writing is an almost automatic procedure, often done by "copy and paste" from the completed manuscript. A manuscript consists of four parts [2]: (i) Introduction (involving the "Objective"), (ii) Methods, (iii) Results, and (iv) Discussion (describing the significance). A good Title usually reflects the "main results" and even the "significance" [3]. In Nabata et al.'s experiment, the Title, Objective, and Results were inputted, enabling ChatGPT to access almost all essential components of the original article. Thus,

writing an abstract is one of the "easiest" tasks for ChatGPT, because it is a semi-automatic procedure, highly suitable for AI. If one aims to highlight the difference between humans and ChatGPT, "uniquely human" parts should be chosen. For example, Opinion or Perspective pieces often require individual thoughts, feelings, and anecdotes (the so-called "human touch") that ChatGPT is less likely to replicate. I believe that Nabata et al. chose the Abstract because of its brevity; however, a 300-word Opinion piece is similarly short while better highlighting the difference between the two [4].

Things are not simple. To elaborate on the concept of "human touch" in writing, let me briefly explain my previous studies. I experimented with whether ChatGPT could incorporate "human touch" in manuscripts without pre-input of this element. ChatGPT generated a readable manuscript but failed to capture this touch: a human-written manuscript with human touch was considered more appealing to readers [5]. However, with appropriate input of human touch, ChatGPT generated similarly well-written Opinion Letters incorporating this element [4]. One could not distinguish human- versus ChatGPT writing even in pieces requiring human touch, if one input appropriately, let alone the Abstract.

Second, I believe that the real demerits of ChatGPT are less visible than Nabata et al. described. The real, less-visible demerits include the potential decline in (i) human writing ability, (ii) the capacity to create concepts de novo, and (iii) the primitive human yearning for paper writing. These are difficult to evaluate scientifically; however, I believe that many experienced writers may understand my intention. As AI technology advances, many will find it difficult to resist heavy reliance on it for writing. Few will fully admit, "I only input bullet points and tasked ChatGPT with the entire writing." AI detectors are—and will remain—incomplete. We, as authors, do not wish to live in fear of false accusations

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of ChatGPT use. We, as readers and reviewers, do not wish to act as detectives, scrutinizing whether a manuscript was written by AI. All of this surely diminishes the "joy of writing and reading."

Thus, my proposal is simple: allow the use of AI (ChatGPT) in writing. Its use is, in reality, inevitable. Acknowledging this, we should focus on evaluating the "product." This may not necessarily be time-saving for authors, because it requires extensive effort from authors to verify every detail and ensure that "all" content is entirely accurate. If the situation changes—for instance, with the emergence of a "perfect AI detector" or clear evidence of deteriorating writing ability due to ChatGPT use—this stance should be reconsidered.

I don't, and won't, use ChatGPT except as a final linguistic checker [4, 5]. This is because ChatGPT editing "dilutes" my writing tone and style, which have been shaped by half a century of experience and genuinely belong to me. However, I have no intention of imposing my policy on others. If one values time-saving, confirms that ChatGPT indeed improves efficiency, and fully understands both the present and future demerits of AI use, one should have the freedom to use it at their own discretion.

I highly commend Nabata et al. for their comprehensive evaluation of human versus ChatGPT writing. My only suggestion is to broaden the discussion and look beyond the visible merits and demerits. Personally, I recall a time when I did not have to consider whether "ChatGPT could improve this manuscript." It was only two years ago!

Declarations

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