

Editorial

Already invested or absolutely incandescent? AI, scholarly publishing and information literacy

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/18.2.679>

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Alright, alright, I'll bite... it's probably about time that we had an editorial focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI), right? Statistics show that the papers that we have published on this topic reliably rank up there with our most popular pieces of writing, and it is getting increasingly hard to avoid the subject within almost every other dimension of librarianship. Having said that, and somewhat surprisingly, given the hype, publications related to AI and information literacy (IL) are fairly thin on the ground. Beyond the work of JIL board member, Noora Hirvonen (2024; Hirvonen et al., 2023), who explores AI through the lens of affordance, and Karolina Andersdotter (2023), who examines how the use of a learning circle can help to scaffold library staff engagement with the topic, it seems that research is yet to catch up with the number of op-eds, conference submissions and LibGuides that I have seen on the topic. Most recently, my colleague, Darren Flynn, recommended Annie Pho and Wynn Tranfield's (2024) paper on critical AI literacy, which provides a useful analysis of the impact that tools are having on library worker "labor, pedagogy, and professional practice," with a particular focus on the need for (and challenges of) perpetuating relationality. However, these articles aside, there is still plenty of scope to consider how AI constrains and enables the enactment of IL practices or how it creates the conditions for how the construction of information landscapes happens.

One thing that I have seen even less written about, but which raises additional interesting considerations is the impact of AI on journals such as *JIL*. Whatever you may think about AI and its future (and, at the moment, it does seem to be a bit 'deer in headlights') there are obvious practical ramifications that scholarly journals need to deal with sooner rather than later.

Naturally, one of the primary concerns for editorial boards is the use of AI for authorship—more on this in the next paragraph- but a perhaps less commonly considered concern relates to the use of AI in the reviewing stage of the scholarly communication process (Battacharya, 2024). Running the risk of uniquely focusing reviews on structural rather than analytical issues, AI for peer review also raises concerns about "ownership, plagiarism and privacy standards" as reviewers upload unpublished material into the hands of highly opaque private companies (Heidt, 2024). And don't even get me started about the issues related to data scraping, which is

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the means through which Large Language Models (LLMs) are likely to be trained (Nature, 2024). *JIL*'s much-vaunted open access model means that we are particularly susceptible to being used for these purposes and more—with neither oversight nor insight to how this data is being used. Colleagues over at *Communications in Information Literacy* have recently organised a panel to explore issues of AI related to scholarly journals (Hollister et al., 2024), but it is clear that we are only just starting to recognise the implications for the academic publishing workflow. Thankfully, a small group of *JIL* Editorial Board members has stepped up to the plate and I am happy to say that *JIL* has now published a robust set of AI guidelines for authors on our website. Recognising that AI content is neither intentionally created nor replicable, these guidelines unequivocally establish that, in the eyes of *JIL*, AI tools are not considered to be authors.

Prohibiting authors from citing material content created by AI, these guidelines further require authors to include a mandatory declaration about how they have used AI within the authoring process, including in the creation of images and graphical material as well as text. Ultimately, we hold authors responsible for the integrity of their paper and the identification of any transgressions of this policy will result in the withdrawal of both published and unpublished submissions. We believe that this approach is a fair way to acknowledge that people may legitimately use AI at various stages of the authoring process, including related to transcription as well as checking grammar or language, and the request to make this use apparent is in line with previously established conventions, for example, the use of software and tools for data analysis. My thanks go to Editorial Board members, Noora Hirvonen, Laura Saunders and Gerry Delaney, for pulling these recommendations together. We were also ably supported by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which provides useful guidance and assistance, particularly for smaller independent journals like *JIL*.

Up until about a month ago, I, like many of you, might have thought that these measures were slightly draconian. So much recent work exploring the connection between AI and IL has focused on issues of compliance, which takes away from what AI could bring (even if it is not quite there yet) as well as reinforcing the limited (and limiting) association of IL with punitive measures and the plagiarism police. However, over the last few weeks, I have been involved in not one but two potential instances of malpractice, in which authors were suspected of using AI without appropriate declarations. These situations have both now been resolved, so I am keeping the details purposefully vague. However, what is of interest to me is that on each occasion, issues were only picked up at the copyediting stage when references were being checked. I was involved as a reviewer in both of the above instances and neither I, nor the other peer reviewers who progressed the articles, picked up on these transgressions. In fact, when I went back to check how I missed the fake references, I realised it would have been extremely hard to eyeball the bibliographic bad apples as the AI software that the authors had used had inserted links to legitimate journals within the reference list, including *JIL*, albeit with completely made-up authors and article titles.

And therein lies my problem—it absolutely astounds me that the integrity of the entire scholarly record was only upheld, on both of these occasions, by the detail-oriented diligence of the journal's copy editors and editorial staff, all of whom, I happen to know, do this work on a voluntary basis. In effect, while AI may help with an author's efficiency and productivity, its capacity for producing misleading, sloppy and unsourced work is also directly perpetuating and aggravating the reliance of scholarly publishing on “un(der)recognized and un(der)compensated labor” (Maron et al., 2019, p. 12). The iniquity of Turnitin, with its myriad problems related to privacy, accuracy and copyright (Horovitz, 2008), means that the use of an outsourced AI

reference checking tool is nowhere on our horizon, even if small journals could afford such a service—though I also wonder how much longer it will be until fake referencing gets even more sophisticated, too? And so, in the meantime, we again dump the intractability of these issues onto scholarly communication volunteers. Scholarly communication has such a huge problem with both labour and compensation; while the production of open content is commendable, it often obscures the highly complex and skilled forms of work that makes this material available (Maron et al., 2019). These issues were key motivators in driving JIL’s overhaul of publication ethics in the last few years, including moves to recognise the indispensability of the editorial team’s labour. A couple of years on, and here we go again—while we are in good company, as evidenced by the establishment of the Wikipedia AI clean-up squad (Maiberg, 2024), it doesn’t make the solution any more straightforward.

To be continued... In the meantime, we welcome submissions where authors use AI to help organise and edit their work, but please don’t cite content created by these tools. There is a rich body of IL literature out there that you could be referencing instead—we think this reading is well worth your time and consideration.

And now for the papers that we have lined up for this December issue of JIL! First off in the research paper section is a paper from Alejandro Uribe Tirado and Juan Machin-Mastromatteo on IL in a South American context. Building on their short paper on the topic for the 50th anniversary issue of JIL, the authors employed content analysis methods to examine “milestones, perspectives and trends” within South American IL research. Noting many of the same trends that are visible within Anglo-centric histories of IL, the authors also call for a greater integration of IL research with the UN’s sustainable development goals, including related to climate and economic crisis. This paper is copyedited by Andrea Brooks.

The importance of mindfulness as a tool in managing ongoing issues related to mis/disinformation and conspiracy theories forms the topic of the second paper in this section. Authored by the interdisciplinary team of Matthew Hannah, Jennifer Hoewe, Hanna Sistek, Taeik Kim and Dan Goldwasser, this paper takes a collaborative approach to establish a framework that explicitly integrates contemporary information challenges into IL instruction. Combining mindfulness with critical thinking, this framework aims to address what the authors note as the affective dimensions of information activity. This paper is copyedited by Batul Alsaraji.

Misinformation forms the theme of the third research paper, too, with author Mandi Goodsett presenting research into the impact that “prebunking” or “inoculation” techniques have upon a learner’s ability to identify problematic informational material. Adopting a quasi-experimental research design, Goodsett reports on the use of the Chaos Creator game to explore the effect of this intervention on undergraduates’ ability to recognise misinformation. Noting that use of this tool is more effective than instruction focusing on an evaluation checklist approach, the paper nonetheless warns of the dangers of being too suspicious of material. The paper is copyedited by Waseem Azfal.

Our final paper is yes, you guessed it, also on the topic of information evaluation (I love a good theme!) with a particular focus on learner confidence and motivation. Written by Victoria Dawkins and Samatha LeGrand, the paper employs an exploratory crosswalk analysis method to map the components of Keller’s ARCS model of motivational design to core critical IL instructional practices. Providing a conceptual bridge between two different approaches to IL

teaching, this paper also presents practical recommendations for adopting these ideas in the classroom. This paper is copyedited by Amber Edwards.

I'm also delighted that after a long hiatus, we have three project reports in this issue of JIL! In the first project report, author Andrew Shenton continues his historical analysis of IL through exploring how information skills were promoted in textbooks up to the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1989. This paper was edited by Meg Westbury and copyedited by Batul Alsaraji. The second project report is particularly topical given the theme of this editorial, with author Miriam Wanjiku Ndungu examining how AI literacy could be integrated into MIL frameworks. This paper was edited by Meg Westbury and copyedited by Tasha Cooper. Finally, Amy McLay Paterson, Benjamin Mitchell, Stirling Prentice and Elizabeth Rennie provide the third project report with their evaluation of a three-workshop pilot IL collaboration with a university English department. This paper was copyedited by Amber Edwards.

Finally, to round off the issue we have two LILAC reviews that were held over from June; thanks to award winners Chidinma Onwuchekwa Ogba and Ryan Woodward for sharing their experiences of this conference.

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