

Taking a Stand on Generative AI

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As I visited websites and searched for items for the Of Interest segment of yesterday's Journal, I found this quote in a comment on an article posted in The Passive Voice:

"PG believes that AI is another tool an author may choose to use to write more easily/better in the same manner as typewriters were selected by some authors as preferable to fountain pens and word processors were selected by some authors as preferable to typewriters.

"Does anybody want to get rid of SpellCheck or Grammarly because they're a form of computerized writing assistance?" The Passive Guy (David P. Vandagriff)

The Passive Voice is a blog with ostensibly thousands of readers. I am disappointed. This is the kind of hot, steamy garden fodder that makes me want to throw up my hands and stop trying.

As an attorney, PG should easily recognize his comment is irresponsible and a category mistake.

And his final statement on AI — "If AI works for you as a part of your writing toolkit, PG says you should use it. If you don't like AI for any reason, don't use it." — does nothing to mitigate that mistake.

Yes, typewriters (and later, electric typewriters and dedicated word processors and computers) made it easier for writers to put words on the page.

But neither the typewriter, electric typewriter, dedicated word processor nor computer (without the human writer having accessed an AI platform) will "generate" or create anything. At all. Ever.

He also erroneously classifies SpellCheck (sic) and Grammarly as "computerized writing assistance."

Neither program assists the human writer in writing. Like typewriters, etc. they neither generate nor create anything. They help only with error checking, and in that way maybe with clarity, but both are flawed even in that capacity.

Simply put, generative AI is a cheat. It is operated by thieves.

Even if the "writer" who employs generative AI admits in the front or back matter of the work that the work was created in whole or in part by generative AI (as s/he will if s/he has even the slightest bit of integrity), s/he is still admitting to cheating.

If a student admits, even in a small note on the test paper itself, to having cheated on the test, does that admission somehow make the fact that s/he cheated more acceptable?

The same holds true for so-called writers who use generative AI.

All of that said, sure, of course, if you like AI, use it, and if you don't, don't. I am not the GM of the universe, and I don't really care.

I'm only a guy who values integrity. Admittedly, I have more sense than money. That and opinions that are solidly based on my dislike (to put it *very* mildly) of cheaters and others who exhibit what Cap'n Call in *Lonesome Dove* called "rude behavior."

S/he who does choose to use AI should not compound the crime by claiming s/he is a writer. S/he is at best a "prompter." Perhaps the byline on the cover should read "Prompted by *Prompter Name*."

What appears in any story generated by AI are not the words, sentences, situations, scenes and chapters of a writer. They are words, sentences, situations, scenes and chapters written by other people who actually earned the right to lay claim to them.

People who use generative AI may be likened to vendors along the side of the road, selling bags of plastic or wax oranges out of the back of their pickup truck and hoping buyers will believe they were picked fresh off a tree.

They may be likened to rustlers of old who, having stolen cattle from a neighbor, change the brand with a running iron and present them for sale as their own at a stockyard.

They are the kind of people who make guys like me and Wes Crowley look for a rough, thorny sisal rope and a tree with a horizontal branch.

Okay, now I'm gonna go create something. You know, like generative AI can never do.