Symposium Proposal: Ethical Dilemmas of Using AI for Researchers, Instructors, and Students

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Symposium Description:

As artificial intelligence (AI) tools become increasingly integrated into academic research, instruction, and student learning, ethical challenges emerge at every level of education. This Symposium will explore the ethical dilemmas associated with AI in academia, focusing on its implications for researchers, instructors, and students. Participants will engage in discussions and case studies to examine concerns such as academic integrity, data privacy, bias in AI algorithms, and the responsible use of AI in teaching and learning environments.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify key ethical challenges of AI in academic research, teaching, and student work.
- Describe the implications of AI-generated content for academic integrity and authorship.
- Recognize biases inherent in AI tools and their potential impact on research and education.
- Explore strategies to integrate AI into coursework and instructional design ethically.
- Discuss institutional policies and best practices for AI use in academia.

Abstract:

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes deeply integrated into academic research, instruction, and student learning, ethical challenges arise across all levels of education. This Symposium explores key ethical dilemmas, including academic integrity, data privacy, AI bias, and responsible implementation in teaching. Through interactive discussions and case studies, participants will examine AI's role in academia, assess ethical risks, and explore best practices for responsible AI use. The session aims to equip educators, researchers, and students with strategies to navigate AI ethically.

Introduction

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools, such as ChatGPT, has rapidly transformed the higher education landscape, prompting significant discussions among educators and institutions. This literature review outlines key themes and challenges identified in recent scholarship concerning the integration of AI in academia, underscoring the urgent need for informed dialogue among college professors.

Review of Literature

Ethical Challenges and Academic Integrity

The proliferation of GenAI has raised serious ethical concerns, particularly regarding academic integrity. Traditional notions of authorship and originality are being challenged as AI can generate text that may be indistinguishable from student-written work. Concerns about plagiarism have intensified, as students may submit AI-generated content as their own. Existing university codes of ethics, which emphasize original work and proper referencing, are being tested by these new technologies. Scholars emphasize that AI cannot be considered an author due to the requirement of accountability and legal standing (Stokel-Walker, 2023). This necessitates a re-evaluation of assessment practices and the development of strategies to ensure that student work reflects individual knowledge acquisition.

Policy Development and Institutional Responses

Universities worldwide are grappling with how to respond to these challenges, with many institutions introducing initial policies and guidelines. These responses vary widely, from outright prohibitions to permitted use with attribution. Some universities are exploring methods

to verify the authenticity of student work, such as "authenticity interviews" (Imperial College London, 2024). Creating clear and audience-focused policies at the institutional and course levels is crucial for managing AI use ethically. A "bottom-up" approach that respects professors' autonomy in setting course-specific guidelines while ensuring open communication with students is generally considered a best practice for transparency.

Pedagogical Shifts and Assessment Re-evaluation

The capabilities of GenAI necessitate revisiting assessment practices. Traditional essay-based assignments face particular challenges. However, AI also presents opportunities for automating tasks like test question generation and feedback provision. Some institutions recommend a shift towards new assessment methods, such as in-class group work or responses to very recent readings with limited online footprints (University of Toronto, 2024), to mitigate the risks associated with AI-generated content. Furthermore, pedagogical approaches are being reshaped, calling educators to prepare students for a future workforce where AI literacy is essential.

The Importance of Guidance and AI Literacy

Faculty need effective policies and guidance to navigate the integration of AI in their courses. It is recommended that universities provide proactive central support and resources to ensure equitable access to AI tools and to foster inclusive AI use. Encouraging transparency regarding AI use and educating students on ethical AI practices are vital. The Modern Language Association and Conference on College Composition and Communication (MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force, 2024) joint statement emphasizes that policies should be accompanied by education about AI, prioritizing both ethical conduct and the mission of higher education.

AI and Academic Research

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into academic research presents a unique set of ethical dilemmas that warrant careful consideration as AI tools become increasingly utilized in research processes. Concerns arise regarding authorship and plagiarism, particularly when AI can generate content that could be included in research outputs. The traditional understanding of authorship, requiring accountability and legal standing, is challenged by AI's capabilities, as scholars emphasize that AI cannot be considered an author due to these requirements (Stokel-Walker, 2023). Furthermore, ethical considerations extend to data privacy and security in AI data collection and usage, as well as the potential for bias in AI algorithms that could impact the validity and objectivity of research findings. Ensuring transparency and accountability in AI-driven research is also crucial for maintaining the integrity of scholarly work. This necessitates a proactive discussion among researchers to navigate these challenges and establish best practices for the responsible use of AI in academic inquiry.

Conclusion

The literature clearly indicates that generative AI presents both significant challenges and potential opportunities for higher education. A symposium focused on these issues is timely and crucial for fostering a shared understanding among college professors, enabling them to develop effective strategies for maintaining academic integrity, adapting pedagogical approaches, and ethically integrating AI into their teaching practices.

Symposium Format:

- Interactive presentation with real-world case studies
- Small group discussions on ethical dilemmas
- Q&A session and sharing of institutional approaches

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of AI's ethical challenges in academia
- Practical strategies for researchers, instructors, and students to navigate AI ethically
- Collaborative discussion on institutional AI policies and best practices

Symposium Outline:

1. Introduction to AI in Academia (10 minutes)

- Overview of AI applications in research, instruction, and learning
- Examples of commonly used AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Turnitin AI Detection, Grammarly, AI research assistants)
- The dual role of AI as both a facilitator and a challenge in academia

2. Ethical Challenges in AI-Assisted Research (15 minutes)

- Authorship and plagiarism concerns: Who owns AI-generated content?
- Data privacy and security: Ethical concerns in AI data collection and usage
- Bias in AI algorithms and its impact on research validity
- Transparency and accountability in AI-driven research

3. AI in Teaching and Learning: A Double-Edged Sword (15 minutes)

- The role of AI in personalized learning and assessment
- Risks of over-reliance on AI tools for grading and feedback
- Potential AI biases in educational content
- Challenges in detecting AI-assisted plagiarism and cheating

4. Ethical Use of AI by Students (10 minutes)

- AI-generated essays, coding, and problem-solving: Where do we draw the line?
- The role of AI in skill development versus academic dishonesty
- Institutional policies and student responsibility

5. Best Practices and Institutional Guidelines (10 minutes)

- Strategies for responsible AI integration in coursework
- Ethical AI usage policies for students and faculty
- Encouraging transparency and critical thinking in AI-assisted learning

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