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Editorial Board critiques AI-written journalism

Eva Marriott-Fabre | Features Editor: Print

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With Artificial Intelligence ever-evolving, people in workplaces and schools are continuously implementing AI to increase efficiency and innovation. This has prompted discussions on whether AI has the potential to outperform human beings on various tasks and skills, and to an even more frightening extent, whether computers may one day replace entire professions.

Thinking about which skills I possess that could be rivaled by AI, I began to consider my role as a high school journalist. I can only rightfully attribute many of the skills I have developed over the course of high school to being on The Standard.

As anyone on the publication would know, being a skilled journalist entails choosing the best quotes from interviews, writing according to AP style, considering ethics with difficult topics and much more.

Does ChatGPT have the capability to demonstrate each of these skills, and if so, is journalism one of the professions at risk of being replaced? If a reporter were to submit an article completely fabricated by AI, would I even notice? To find out, I created an account for ChatGPT and gave it a role as a reporter for the day.

I assigned the computer multiple articles to write, trying different techniques in my prompts to see if it would change the quality of writing. Throughout this process, I instructed the chatbot to detect and imitate certain editors' writing styles, encouraged it to implement more quotes from a diverse range of sources – in other words, fake people it generated by itself – and reminded it several times of the difference between a title and a headline.

Ultimately, I selected two examples of AI-generated writing which could be put into two sections of the publication (features and opinions) that I felt best exemplified its strengths and weaknesses. Just like any reporter for The Standard, ChatGPT was put through the editing process, and each article was critiqued by three editors from the corresponding section. Here is how each editor evaluated ChatGPT's skills:

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Features

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For this article, I gave ChatGPT the following prompt:

The following link is to the website of the publication The Standard, a high school newspaper: <https://standard.asl.org/> Write a journalistic article in the same writing style as all the articles on the website, as if you were a writer for the publication. In your article, include essential journalistic elements such as a headline, quotes from a variety of students and teachers, and background research if needed.

In response, ChatGPT wrote an article with headline "ASL Students and Teachers React to New COVID-19 Guidelines."

This is an absolutely fantastic article! Can you write another one with the same guidelines as before?

Sure, I'd be happy to write another article for you. What topic would you like me to cover?

Can you write about students who have moved around the world to several countries, and how it has impacted their identity?

ChatGPT then wrote a draft on the topic I suggested. The article did not have a headline and did not use sources' first and last names, so I gave it the following edits to produce the draft that would go on to the editors.

Your article is great! But it could be better. Make sure to include a headline and also, you should use sources' first and last names.

Moving Around the World: How Multiple Countries Shape Students' Identities

ChatGPT | Reporter

~~Moving to multiple countries can have a profound impact on a student's identity. For some, it can be a source of pride and a unique experience that sets them apart from their peers. For others, it can be a source of confusion and an identity crisis.~~

"I have lived in four different countries, and I feel like I am a different person in each one," says Hannah Kim, a high school student who has lived in South Korea, the United States, China, and Singapore. "It's difficult to know which country I truly belong to and which culture I identify with the most."

Students who have moved around the world face unique challenges that can impact their identity development. According to Dr. Maria Torres, a psychologist who specializes in cross-cultural identity, "Students who move around a lot can struggle with finding a sense of belonging and forming a stable sense of self. They may feel like they don't fit in anywhere and can have a hard time making friends."

However, there are also benefits to living in multiple countries. "I have had the opportunity to experience different cultures, learn new languages, and meet people from all over the world," says Max Smith, a student who has lived in the United States, Germany, and Australia. "It has made me more open-minded and adaptable."

Moving around can also lead to a sense of independence and self-reliance. "I have had to learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable," says Sofia Rodriguez, a student who has lived in Spain, Australia, and the United States. "Moving to a new country can be scary, but it has taught me that I am capable of adapting to new situations and making friends wherever I go."

Despite the challenges, many students who have moved around the world feel that it has ultimately had a positive impact on their identity. "I feel like I have a unique perspective on the world and a deeper understanding of different cultures," says Kim. "I may not have a clear sense of where I belong, but I am proud of my diverse background."

For students who are struggling with their identity due to moving around the world, Dr. Torres recommends seeking support from family, friends, or a mental health professional. "It's important to have a sense of belonging and to feel connected to others," she says. "Talking to someone who understands your experience can be helpful in forming a stable sense of self."

- Giulia Scolari** Features Editor: Online
This lead isn't very relevant: in features we mostly start with a personal reaction and the following quote by Kim would be a great starter.
- Sophia Bateman** Lead Features Editor
always use "said"
- Giulia Scolari** Features Editor: Online
graduation year?
- Sophia Bateman** Lead Features Editor
No oxford comma!!
- Sophia Bateman** Lead Features Editor
Quote introductions/transitions and quotes should be in separate paragraphs
- Giulia Scolari** Features Editor: Online
AP Style doesn't include courtesy titles.
- Eden Leavey** Deputy-Editor-In-Chief: Print
Always attribute the quote to a source after the first sentence.
- Eden Leavey** Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print
Since this is a quote, we know that it is coming from the source's perspective. Thus, "I think" and "I feel" are redundant.
- Sophia Bateman** Lead Features Editor
This article has 2 female students, 1 male student, and 1 female adult - source diversity! we always want a mix of grade levels and gender so make sure the students are from different grade levels and possibly get another male teacher/adult

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Opinions

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For this article, I gave ChatGPT the following prompt:

Write an article for The Standard on a policy or aspect of life at ASL you believe should be changed. The article will be for the opinions section of the publication, so instead of interviewing students and teachers, write from a first-person perspective. However, you should back up your argument with surveys sent out to the school community and background research from trustworthy sources online. Your article should be written in AP Style, have a headline and be written in the writing style as the following three articles from The Standard linked below:

Guest submission: History month displays make our stories visible, deserve respect
Student burnout requires acknowledgement
Environment, Explained: High School classes should embrace more paperless opportunities

A Call for More Inclusive and Diverse Course Readings at ASL

ChatGPT | Reporter

As a student at ASL, I have noticed a troubling pattern in many of my classes: a lack of diversity and inclusivity in the readings assigned by teachers. While I appreciate the opportunity to learn about traditional and classical literature, I believe it is time for our school to move beyond the canon of mostly white, male authors and explore the works of writers from diverse backgrounds.

This issue is not unique to ASL; it is a nationwide problem in education. In a survey of over 1,500 high school students conducted by the non-profit organization Teaching Tolerance, 64% of students said that they were never assigned readings by authors of color in their English classes. This lack of representation in the curriculum can lead to students feeling excluded, and can even contribute to a sense of inferiority for students who are not part of the dominant culture.

At ASL, I believe that we have a responsibility to do better. While I have read some works by writers of color in my English classes, they are often assigned as an afterthought or as a supplement to the main curriculum. I believe that it is time for our school to prioritize diverse and inclusive readings as an integral part of the curriculum.

I am not alone in this belief. In a survey of ASL students conducted by myself and a group of peers, 83% of respondents agreed that ASL should assign more diverse and inclusive readings in classes. Additionally, many students expressed frustration at the lack of representation in the readings assigned, and noted that it can be difficult to relate to and engage with the material when it does not reflect their own experiences.

Furthermore, research has shown that exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences through literature can have a positive impact on students. According to a study conducted by the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, children's books written by and about people of color have increased by only 1% since 2015. This lack of representation in children's literature can have a lasting impact on a child's sense of identity and belonging.

In order to address this issue, I propose that ASL take action to diversify its course readings. This can be achieved through a number of means, including adding more works by writers of color to the existing curriculum, creating new courses that focus on literature from diverse perspectives, and providing teachers with resources and training to incorporate diverse literature into their classes.

It is time for ASL to recognize the importance of representation and inclusivity in education, and take steps to ensure that all students have the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the readings assigned in their classes. By doing so, we can create a more equitable and just learning environment for all students at ASL.

- Annika Skorski** Lead Opinions Editor
Not an edit but the idea of using chatGPT to generate an opinions piece is really dangerous because of the unavoidable bias in AI's programming
- Annika Skorski** Lead Opinions Editor
This cited source needs to be hyperlinked. This could look like "According to a survey of over 1,500 high school students conducted by Teaching Tolerance (hyperlinked), a non-profit organization..."
- Tara Behbehani** Opinions Editor: Online
Very vague, is there evidence for this?
- Eden Leavey** Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print
Get rid of filler words that weaken the strength of your sentences.
- Eden Leavey** Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print
This needs to be attributed with a statistic from the survey data.
- Tara Behbehani** Opinions Editor: Online
perhaps mention why it is important for ASL, a school, to take on this issue. One can argue that people can just read books that they relate to outside of the classroom.
- Tara Behbehani** Opinions Editor: Online
good stance for a call to action
- Eden Leavey** Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print
Comma is unnecessary because the second clause is dependent.

Graphics By Eva Marriott-Fabre · Photos by Maarya Shafqat

<p>Eva Marriott-Fabre Features Editor: Print</p> <p>What are the strengths of ChatGPT's writing?</p>	<p>Sophia Bateman Lead Features Editor</p> <p>"It's good at creating quotes and then also having, like, a flow throughout the story."</p>	<p>Eva Marriott-Fabre Features Editor: Print</p> <p>What are the weaknesses of ChatGPT's writing?</p>	<p>Sophia Bateman Lead Features Editor</p> <p>"It's just, like, horrible at journalistic structure. No matter how many times you tell it to stop the Oxford Comma, it just never stops."</p>	<p>Eva Marriott-Fabre Features Editor: Print</p> <p>Does AI have the capability to outperform journalists?</p>	<p>Eden Leavey Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print</p> <p>"There's a chance that AI will be involved in the newsroom, but I don't think that AI could ever outperform a human."</p>
<p>Tara Behbehani Opinions Editor: Online</p> <p>"Although the evidence was fake ... and ChatGPT created it, I do think that it was pretty strong. I mean, if it was real, it would be really beneficial to a piece like this [an opinions article] because it was relevant."</p>	<p>Eden Leavey Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print</p> <p>"ChatGPT forms strong deductive reasoning-based arguments that go really well with opinions articles."</p>	<p>Tara Behbehani Opinions Editor: Online</p> <p>"This piece [A Call for More Inclusive and Diverse Course Readings at ASL] is written through the opinion of a student at ASL, and I think that ChatGPT just can't get that authenticity of a real ASL student ... I feel like a real person would be able to incorporate more realistic anecdotes."</p>	<p>Eden Leavey Deputy Editor-In-Chief: Print</p> <p>"Where I think that [ChatGPT] fails is when you're trying to introduce sources and facts that are just generated by the computer, the substance isn't there."</p>	<p>Tara Behbehani Opinions Editor: Online</p> <p>"In writing, yes, perhaps, but ... I know that people will be far more confident in their news source knowing it's coming from humans, rather than AI."</p>	<p>Sophia Bateman Lead Features Editor</p> <p>"I don't think AI has the capability to take over journalism because it lacks the creativity that all of our reporters have ... It doesn't produce the most exciting and unique reporting, and that's something that's crucial to journalism."</p>