

Enacting AI Disclosure in Scholarly Publishing

by Marcel LaFlamme¹ and Natalie Meyers^{1, 2, 3}

1. Association of Research Libraries, Washington, DC
2. Coalition for Networked Information, Washington, DC
3. San Diego Supercomputer Center, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA

Correspondence: marcel@arl.org

To submit an article to a scholarly journal today is to encounter what anthropologists studying secrecy have described as an “imperative to tell” (Manderson et al., 2015, p. 185). Authors are increasingly expected to disclose whether and, if so, how they have used generative AI in the preparation of their manuscript. Modeled after the conflict of interest statements introduced at biomedical journals to indicate when an author has a financial stake in the findings they report, AI disclosure statements seek to alert readers—including reviewers—to an outside influence that demands to be reckoned with. Whether found in a published article’s methods section, acknowledgments, or a dedicated metadata field, these statements invite us to read guardedly, qualifying what is on the page in light of what else we now know. This commentary investigates how an enduring structure of the confession is being operationalized in the face of rapidly changing norms and practices around the use of generative AI.

In what follows, we describe and critically reflect on developments in scholarly publishing for an audience of social/cultural anthropologists, highlighting interventions that stand to affect anthropological publishing even if they did not originate with the discipline. We do not offer a systematic comparison of publisher policies on AI disclosure, nor do we present empirical data on the extent to which anthropologists are complying with such policies, as these undertakings exceed the scope of this commentary. Rather, we sketch a landscape of emerging AI disclosure and attribution practices and consider how they might be adapted to address anthropology’s distinctive epistemic and ethical commitments. We offer specific recommendations on strategies for AI disclosure that build on existing practices in anthropological publishing. We also look beyond publisher policies at how the expectation to disclose AI use is being codified across scales and sectors, in order to place disciplinary choicemaking in relation to relevant trends in other regulatory and professional domains.

The public release of ChatGPT in November 2022 touched off a range of responses across scholarly publishing. A few publishers, like the Science family of journals, initially moved to prohibit the use of AI-generated text or images. But a series of guidelines from industry groups (e.g., STM, 2023; WAME, 2023) soon captured a growing consensus: while AI was neither to be credited as an author nor cited as a source in its own right, the use of AI tools by human authors was to be permitted as long as it was disclosed. Publisher-specific policies on what and where to disclose would follow, like the guidelines from Wiley—the current publisher of *American Ethnologist*—detailing different expectations for disclosing AI use in text generation, research methodology, and the production of figures (Wiley, 2025). But by this point, generic free-text disclosures like “assisted by AI” are no longer seen as sufficient. There is instead a move toward machine-readable, taxonomically controlled solutions that can be systematized across publisher platforms and mined at scale for metascientific insight

The latest approaches to AI disclosure focus on how credit and responsibility are to be attributed with greater precision to both humans and machines, inspired in part by contributor role taxonomies like CRediT (Allen et al., 2025). For instance, the Artificial Intelligence Disclosure Framework (Weaver, 2024) builds disclosure statements around natural-language descriptions of how a given tool was used at predefined stages of the research and writing process. The Generative AI Delegation Taxonomy (Suchikova et al., 2025) adds a fixed-choice list of micro-level tasks, while the AI Attribution Toolkit (He, Houde, and Weisz, 2025) captures contextual details such as the extent of AI contributions. As yet, none of these approaches has been adopted at scale, but a number of their creators have begun working with organizations including publishers on a consensus-based reporting standard, with a consultation on what content to include planned for the 2026 World Conference on Research Integrity.

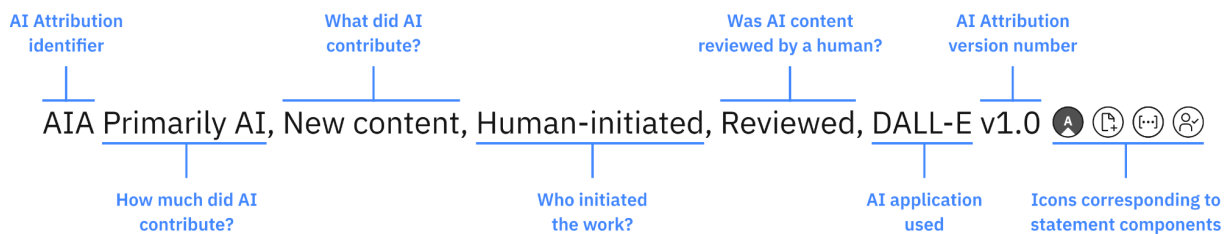


Figure 1. Sample AI attribution statement. (Courtesy of IBM Research)

How do these subtly distinct impulses to, on the one hand, disclose influence and, on the other, attribute contribution relate to existing conversations in social/cultural anthropology? Reflexivity, understood as an attention to epistemic contingency, is well-established as a disciplinary norm (Boyer, 2015). In other words, it is assumed that the anthropologist will be influenced by factors from their personal and cultural background to the labor conditions under which they carry out their research: these influences are seen as inevitable—as opposed to bias that needs to be eliminated—and worthy of disclosure. Indeed, anthropologists are expected to be curious about how these influences shape their interactions in the field and the modes of analysis to which they are drawn, to proactively reckon with these influences and show readers some evidence of this reckoning. Anthropology journals have generally not embraced the positionality statements favored by some other fields, leaving authors to disclose and reflect on what they judge to be relevant aspects of their biography in the text of their publications. Recently, concerns have been raised about dynamics of “coercive disclosure” (Fuchs, 2025), whereby anthropological authors are prompted to disclose private or even traumatic experiences in order to establish their ethnographic authority and, more pragmatically, advance their careers.

Although single authorship remains the default for both journal and book publishing in social/cultural anthropology, there is ample discussion about crediting the diverse forms of contribution to scholarship that the single author elides. Co-authorship has been proposed as one means of recognizing the labor of research assistants and technicians (Kawa, 2022), even as the CRediT taxonomy has earned praise for “decomposing unitary authors into dividual contributors” (Blissett, 2024, p. 23). Anthropologists are also inventing textual conventions for cotheorizing (Weiss, 2021) and formats for staging polylogic conversations with interlocutors (e.g., Miyarrka Media, 2019). Meanwhile, the uptake of digital and computational methods by some anthropologists has demanded more transparent accounts of how specific technologies contribute to research findings. As still others experiment with new practices of structuring the ethnographic encounter, the eclipse of any naturalistic vision of the field may require clearer attribution of the contributions of a variety of “field devices” (Estalella, 2024).

Given these broadly positive views toward disclosure and attribution, then, what qualms might anthropologists have about reporting the use of AI in their publications? First, a growing body of research shows that disclosure of AI use across a range of tasks erodes perceptions of the user’s trustworthiness (Schilke and Reimann, 2025; Nakano et al., 2025) as well as the perceived quality of the product (Li et al., 2024). Therefore, authors might be disinclined to disclose their use of AI—even if they are supportive of disclosure by others—because of the stigma they expect to incur by doing so. This disinclination may be heightened in scholarly communities where professional discourse

about the use of AI tends to be critical or even condemnatory (e.g., Jowsey et al., 2025). Where this is true, publishers expecting authors to provide detailed disclosures of their use of AI are asking a lot! And, since one limitation of disclosure statements is that they rely on authors to be both truthful and thorough in reporting their activities, the AI disclosure paradigm that is taking root in scholarly publishing includes a powerful bias toward underreporting. In fact, in some contexts, attestations of not having used AI at all may be a more meaningful way for authors to stake their claims to credibility.

Without taking a position on which uses of generative AI by anthropologists ought to be acceptable (and to whom), the two of us are interested here in exploring approaches to AI disclosure and attribution that are attuned to anthropological concerns. We are supportive of efforts to develop an extensible reporting standard for the use of AI that could be implemented across publishers, as discussed above. Yet we argue that reflexive in-text commentary on the impact that AI use had on the reported research, if any, can be a valuable complement. Otherwise, authors “invite readers to impute these impacts based on their own—perhaps limited or faulty—understanding” (Schroeder, Pareek, and Barocas, 2025, p. 1200) of what has been disclosed. We also propose that publications disclosing AI use could be accompanied by evidence of actual author interactions with AI tools, such as transcripts of prompt outputs. Openly sharing transcripts alongside publications would permit a richer, more qualitative assessment of the input authors sought and what was provided, making these backstage interactions more visible and helping to normalize them. While the probabilistic nature of large language models means that these interactions are not reproducible in the strict sense, this motivation for open sharing may also be less relevant to anthropologists than enabling reuse and reinterpretation (Elfenbein, Hoffman, and LaFlamme, in press).

Another approach to AI attribution that might appeal to anthropologists is that of collective-centered creation, as developed by philosophers Donal Khosrowi, Finola Finn, and Elinor Clark. They posit that both scientific discovery and artistic creatorship are best understood as the achievement of collectives, defined as “a potentially large and diverse set of actors and entities that all make important contributions” (Khosrowi, Finn, and Clark, 2023, p. 892). The nature and extent of these contributions is assumed to vary, but the emphasis is less on allocating credit within the collective and more on determining who—or what—ought to be considered part of the collective in the first place. For Khosrowi and colleagues, there is no a priori reason that AI systems, the developers who built these systems, or the creators of their training data cannot make a contribution that rises to the level of inclusion. Rather, this is an empirical question to be decided by analysis of the features or qualities of a given contribution. So can we envision inviting AI systems and their makers into the collectives anthropologists form? One precedent for such a move is the Matsutake Worlds Research Group, which

approached inclusion with the premise that “every contributor should be able to draw the project into new and original directions” (Choy et al., 2009, p. 372). For this project, experiments in scholarly collaboration prompted participants to pay attention to collaboration that was already happening in the world across boundaries of human and nonhuman, such that the findings of a research report could poetically be described as “the fruiting body of a larger underground life process” (p. 383). Can we imagine a transposed version of this image that would depict human–AI collaboration?

As practices of AI disclosure and attribution continue to evolve, there is a growing recognition that not all uses of AI may need to be disclosed. Voices that previously argued for universal disclosure have more recently called for voluntary options and for mandatory disclosure to be reserved for uses that are “intentional and substantial” (Resnik and Hosseini, 2025, p. 5), while uses that do not affect the content of research could be considered optional or even unnecessary to disclose. For example, AI writing assistance is being discussed as a use case for which voluntary disclosure would be more appropriate (Hosseini et al., 2025). Anthropologists might argue that writerly craft is part of the substance of scholarship in their field, in contrast to fields where writing is regarded as a mere wrapper for data, and thus that mandatory disclosure of writing assistance should remain the expectation for anthropological publications. On the other hand, AI writing assistance has the potential to make scholarly publishing more equitable for non-native speakers of English, and mandatory disclosure of this assistance might be counterproductive in further setting these authors apart. We see this as an open question that anthropologists are well-positioned to take up, as they weigh competing goods and harms.

In closing, we want to zoom out from scholarly publishing to take stock of how disclosure of AI use is being codified in other contexts. Article 50 of the European Union’s AI Act, considered the first comprehensive regulation on AI by a major regulator, requires service providers to ensure that individuals “are informed that they are interacting with an AI system” and “that the outputs of the AI system are marked in a machine-readable format and detectable as artificially generated” with limited law enforcement exceptions. China’s new content labeling standard goes further and requires explicit labeling of all AI-generated content across various media formats. Service providers are obligated to disclose their labeling practices, users are prohibited from altering these markers, and foreign companies operating in China must comply, reflecting a significant step toward global AI content transparency. Guidelines for specific sectors are also emerging, like one from UNESCO on the use of AI in courts calling for individuals to be informed “in a proper and timely manner when and how AI systems are deployed, acquired, and used” (Gutiérrez, 2025, p. 19), including information about what tools were used and their versions, in support of a guaranteed

right to contest decisions made with the involvement of AI. Parallel guidelines from the American Medical Association (2024, p. 8) note that “when AI is utilized in health care decision-making at the point of care, that use should be disclosed and documented to limit risks to, and mitigate inequities for, both patients and physicians, and to allow each to understand how decisions impacting patient care or access to care are made.”

Can these cross-sectoral examples help anthropologists to rally around AI disclosure and attribution as a positive development for the discipline? Admittedly, the confessional is seldom a pleasant place to be, and qualitative researchers have good reason to resist expectations of compliance with publishing policies designed for other ways of knowing. But, especially as anthropologists increasingly work in team settings with colleagues from beyond the discipline and the academy, they will be hard-pressed to insulate themselves from broader disclosure norms. Meanwhile, as AI literacy among researchers increases, the stigma associated with the use of AI may well prove to be transient, even as the opportunity to establish trust through thoughtfully chosen forms of disclosure and attribution is likely to be more lasting.

References

Allen, Liz, Veronique Kiermer, Simon Porter, and Ruth Whittam. 2025. “A Ten-Year Drive to Credit Authors for Their Work—and Why There’s Still More to Do.” *Nature* 648: 33–34. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-025-03860-5>

American Medical Association. 2024. “Augmented Intelligence Development, Deployment, and Use in Health Care.” <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/ama-ai-principles.pdf>

Blissett, Luther. 2024. “The *Hau* of the Article and Dividual Authors: Reimagining Authorship in Anthropology.” *Social Anthropology* 32(2): 20–41. <https://doi.org/10.3167/saas.2024.320203>

Boyer, Dominic. 2015. “Reflexivity Reloaded: From Anthropology of Intellectuals to Critique of Method to Studying Sideways.” In *Anthropology Now and Next: Essays in Honor of Ulf Hannerz*, edited by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Christina Garsten, and Shalini Randeria, 91–110. Berghahn.

Choy, Timothy K., Lieba Faier, Michael J. Hathaway, Miyako Inoue, et al. 2009. “A New Form of Collaboration in Cultural Anthropology: Matsutake Worlds.” *American Ethnologist* 36(2): 380–403. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2009.01141.x>

Elfenbein, Timothy W., Andrew S. Hoffman, and Marcel LaFlamme. In press. “Emerging Forms of Open Research in Social/Cultural Anthropology.” *Journal of Electronic Publishing*.

Estalella, Adolfo. 2024. “Ethnographic Experimentation and the Disappearing Field of Ethnography.” *Ethnos*, December 10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2024.2438004>

Fuchs, Sandhya. 2025. “Weaponised Positionality? Coercive Disclosure in the ‘Publish or Perish’ Academy.” *Swiss Journal of Sociocultural Anthropology* 31: 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.36950/sjsca.2025.31.10415>

Gutiérrez, Juan David. 2025. “Guidelines for the Use of AI Systems in Courts and Tribunals.” UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.58338/LIEY8089>

He, Jessica, Stephanie Houde, and Justin D. Weisz. 2025. “Which Contributions Deserve Credit? Perceptions of Attribution in Human-AI Co-Creation.” *Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* 540. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.371352>

Hosseini, Mohammad, Bert Gordijn, Gregory E. Kaebnick, and Kristi Holmes. 2025. “Disclosing Generative AI Use for Writing Assistance Should Be Voluntary.” *Research Ethics* 21(4): 728–735. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161251345499>

International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers (STM). 2023. “Generative AI in Scholarly Communications: Ethical and Practical Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in the Publication Process.” <https://stm-assoc.org/document/stm-generative-ai-paper-2023>

Jowsey, Tanisha, Virginia Braun, Victoria Clarke, Deborah Lupton, and Michelle Fine. 2025. “We Reject the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Reflexive Qualitative Research.” SSRN, October 29. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5676462>

Kawa, Nicholas C. 2022. “Who Gets to Be an Author?” *Anthropology of Work Review* 43(2): 72–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/awr.12241>

Khosrowi, Donal, Finola Finn, and Elinor Clark. 2023. "Diffusing the Creator: Attributing Credit for Generative AI Outputs." *Proceedings of the 2023 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society*: 890–900. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3600211.3604716>

Li, Zhuoyan, Chen Liang, Jing Peng, and Ming Yin. 2024. "How Does the Disclosure of AI Assistance Affect the Perceptions of Writing?" arXiv, October 6. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2410.04545>

Manderson, Lenore, Mark Davis, Chip Colwell, and Tanja Ahlin. 2015. "On Secrecy, Disclosure, the Public, and the Private in Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 56(S12): S183–190. <https://doi.org/10.1086/683302>

Miyarrka Media. 2019. *Phone and Spear: A Yuta Anthropology*. Goldsmiths Press.

Nakano, Hiroki, Jo Takezawa, Fabrice Matulic, Chi-Lan Yang, and Koji Yatani. 2025. "Understanding Reader Perception Shifts upon Disclosure of AI Authorship." arXiv, October 28. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2510.24011>

Resnik, David B., and Mohammad Hosseini. 2025. "Disclosing Artificial Intelligence Use in Scientific Research and Publication: When Should Disclosure Be Mandatory, Optional, or Unnecessary?" *Accountability in Research*, March 25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2025.2481949>

Schilke, Oliver, and Martin Reimann. 2025. "The Transparency Dilemma: How AI Disclosure Erodes Trust." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 188: 104405. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2025.104405>

Schroeder, Hope, Akshansh Pareek, and Solon Barocas. 2025. "Disclosure without Engagement: An Empirical Review of Positionality Statements at FAccT." *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, 1195–1210. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.373207>

Suchikova, Yana, Natalia Tsybuliak, Jaime A. Teixeira da Silva, and Serhii Nazarovets. 2025. "GAIDeT (Generative AI Delegation Taxonomy): A Taxonomy for Humans to Delegate Tasks to Generative Artificial Intelligence in Scientific Research and Publishing." *Accountability in Research*, August 8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2025.2544331>

Weaver, Kari D. 2024. "The Artificial Intelligence Disclosure (AID) Framework: An Introduction." *College & Research Libraries News* 85(10).

<https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.85.10.407>

Weiss, Margot. 2021. "The Interlocutor Slot: Citing, Crediting, Cotheorizing, and the Problem of Ethnographic Expertise." *American Anthropologist* 123(4): 948–953.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13639>

Wiley. 2025. "Using AI Tools in Your Research: A Guide for Research Authors, Editors, and Reviewers." <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/publish/article/ai-guidelines>

World Association of Medical Editors (WAME). 2023. "Chatbots, Generative AI, and Scholarly Manuscripts: WAME Recommendations on Chatbots and Generative Artificial Intelligence in Relation to Scholarly Publications." <https://wame.org/page3.php?id=106>