

DRPR guideline on the use of AI in PR

Preamble

The increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into communication processes is fundamentally changing the PR industry and enabling efficiency gains: AI not only supports text and image generation, but also analysis, strategy, planning, distribution and evaluation, and interlinks these areas.

Communicators must observe and comply with the legal basis when using AI along the PR value chain (e.g. AI Regulation, General Data Protection Regulation, trademark and copyright law). When using AI along the PR value chain, communicators must observe and comply with the legal framework (e.g. AI Regulation, General Data Protection Regulation, trademark and copyright laws). German Council of Public Relations (DRPR) recommends implementing the AI Regulation (EU AI Act) at an early stage. The risk classification of the AI Regulation also applies to PR and communication.

In addition to existing legal regulations and communication codes, the DRPR is specifying its AI guidelines, particularly with regard to content generation and editing, in order to provide guidance in everyday PR work. The guidelines are intended as a professional ethical and strategic guideline to help PR professionals integrate AI systematically, reflectively and responsibly along the entire value chain. In doing so, the DRPR does not view AI exclusively from the perspective of potential risks, but also, and in particular, as a tool that, when used responsibly, can have positive social and communicative effects.

The DRPR recommends that companies, agencies and institutions incorporate the principles of the DRPR AI guideline into their own guidelines in dialogue with lawyers, data protection officers and communication strategists and publish these guidelines in an accessible and transparent manner on their own channels.

The German Council of Public Relations guideline on the use of AI in PR addresses the following points:

- Transparency and labelling of AI-generated content
- Responsibility and human oversight in the use of AI
- Joint responsibility of clients and agencies/service providers
- AI literacy to ensure AI skills/training and further education

I. Transparency and labelling

Labelling is always mandatory for PR and communications professionals when AI-generated content

- a. is created and published without being checked (e.g. AI-based simulation translation of a speech, unchecked AI-generated social media post, unchecked AI translation of a press release),
- b. may give recipients the impression that it is a reproduction or representation of reality (e.g. AI-generated images/videos/audio, even if these have been manually edited or human-created images/videos/audio files that have been deliberately altered or manipulated by AI).

In these cases, PR and communications professionals **must label the use of AI openly, transparently and in a way that is clearly recognisable** to the layperson so that the recipients of PR activities can recognise this beyond any doubt. Digital labels (e.g. watermarks) that cannot be directly detected by the human eye are not sufficient and must be supplemented by a clearly recognisable label.

Beyond this regulation, every organisation is free to transparently label any use of AI in its communication work.

II. Responsibility and human oversight

The respective organisation and its actors remain responsible for the selection and use of AI and the distribution of AI-generated content. This responsibility includes in particular

II.1 Truthfulness

The principle of accuracy and truthfulness enshrined in the German Communication Code also applies to working with AI tools. AI-generated content should be reviewed and checked by humans in this regard, as the publishing organisation/person is responsible for this content. Unchecked AI-generated content must therefore be labelled as such (see I.).

The AI-based creation and dissemination of fake news and so-called 'deep fakes' for the purpose of manipulating stakeholders or for other unfair purposes is not permitted. If realistic AI content is created with the consent of the actors depicted, it must be labelled as AI-generated (e.g. video of CEO in a language that the CEO does not speak; see I b).

Furthermore, it is not permissible to feign relevance through AI-generated interactions or comments, or through the misuse of AI-based distribution tools ('bots').

II.2 Avoidance of discrimination and bias

When publishing AI-generated content, it must be ensured that this does not reinforce discriminatory patterns.

II.3 Discursive fairness

AI must not be used to systematically discredit opposing opinions or manipulate discursive spaces.

II.4 Avoidance of automated communication

The fully automated use of AI, e.g. to derive entire communication strategies or through the implementation of autonomous AI agents, must be critically examined. Strategy remains a human mental activity with ethical responsibility. This applies in particular to the field of crisis communication.

II.5 Tool selection

Anyone who uses PR tools with AI functionalities (e.g. for media analysis, stakeholder mapping, text adaptation) must critically reflect on how they work and what information the AI output is based on.

III. Joint responsibility of clients and agencies/service providers

All regulations mentioned in the AI guideline apply to agencies, editorial offices, freelancers, semi-professional providers and private individuals who offer media-like platforms (influencers).

If companies or other organisations commission agencies or individuals to carry out PR measures, the provisions of the AI Directive apply to both the client and the contractor. Both parties bear equal responsibility in this regard

Agencies or platforms that provide AI-generated content for use in PR and communication must explicitly advise their clients to observe AI guidelines.

IV. AI literacy/training and further education

AI competence throughout the PR process must be ensured. Communicators must be trained in the use of all commonly used AI tools (e.g. for media analysis, KPI definition, research) in a manner that ensures responsible use. Communicators must be trained in the use of all commonly used AI tools (e.g. for media analysis, KPI definition, research) in a manner that ensures responsible use. Communicators must be trained in the use of all commonly used AI tools (e.g. for media analysis, KPI definition, research) in a manner that enables responsible and reflective use of AI in accordance with this AI guideline. The principles of the AI guideline must be communicated in training and further education.

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