Chapter 7
Artificial Intelligence and Ethics in Academia:
Redefining Integrity in Scientific Research

Jose Gabriel Carrasco Ramirez
https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7548-135X
Quarks Advantage, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the complex intersection of AI and academic ethics through a multidisciplinary lens, incorporating perspectives from law, international relations, philosophy of science, computer science, and the social sciences. It outlines how AI is reshaping every stage of the research continuum—from hypothesis generation to scholarly dissemination—while considering the broader socio-political context of these changes. The discussion highlights central ethical issues, including authorship, algorithmic opacity, bias, privacy, and unequal distribution of resources, and reviews evolving governance frameworks implemented by leading academic institutions. Despite adopting a level of scholarly rigor suitable for an interdisciplinary audience, this text emphasizes clarity and engagement, weaving empirical examples and case studies—such as the rapid rollout of AI tools during the COVID-19 pandemic—into its analysis.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

When future historians reflect on the early twenty-first century, they may well identify artificial intelligence (AI) as a defining force that reconfigured academic inquiry. What began as a niche domain within computer science—rooted in computational logic and heuristic problem-solving—has expanded into a multifaceted ecosystem of tools and methodologies, influencing fields as varied as drug discovery, astrophysics, and literary analysis (Russell & Norvig, 2021; Alpaydin, 2021). The scale of this transformation is starkly evident when comparing the academic sphere at the turn of the millennium to the present: journals that once published only occasional articles on machine learning now devote special issues to AI-driven advances (van Dis et al., 2023), and conferences in biology, physics, linguistics, and law consistently feature AI as a central catalyst for innovation.

Multiple factors have fueled this expansion. The exponential rise in computational power, long forecast by Moore's Law, has furnished the hardware required to train increasingly complex AI models (Kelly,

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2020). Algorithmic breakthroughs—especially in deep learning—have amplified AI's capacities, enabling it to address problems previously assumed to demand uniquely human intuition (LeCun et al., 2015; Jumper et al., 2021). Moreover, the unprecedented availability of large-scale data, drawn from digital platforms and global collaborative networks, offers AI systems the raw material to detect correlations, refine forecasts, and generate novel insights (Crawford, 2021; Noble, 2018). Tasks that once required years of painstaking human effort—such as exhaustive literature reviews—can now be accomplished in a fraction of the time by AI-assisted technologies (Terras, 2020).

Yet, despite this enthusiasm, unease persists within academic circles. Some scholars warn that AI may reduce the craft of research to automated processes, subordinating human expertise to algorithmic decision-making (Broussard, 2018; Crawford, 2021). Others caution that AI-driven approaches can inadvertently reinforce existing biases, thereby marginalizing underrepresented voices and perpetuating systemic inequities (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018; Mehrabi et al., 2021). Perhaps most provocative is AI's growing ability to generate text—an innovation that has ignited intense debate over authorship, challenging traditional notions of intellectual contribution in academic publishing (Stokel-Walker & Van Noorden, 2023). These concerns underscore the pressing need for ethical frameworks capable of keeping pace with AI's rapid and transformative ascent.

This chapter investigates these emerging ethical tensions and the ways in which AI both empowers and disrupts academia. It explores how AI modifies every stage of the research lifecycle, from formulating hypotheses to disseminating findings, and situates these transformations within broader issues of knowledge production, equity, and integrity. Real-world illustrations—including AI's influence on peer review and the unequal access to high-performance computing resources—illuminate why questions of justice, authorship, and intellectual property are now deeply enmeshed with machine learning technologies.

On a personal note, my background as a PhD in law and international relations, coupled with extensive experience in computational methods, informs this discussion. Rather than advocating purely technical solutions, this work advances an interdisciplinary framework that intertwines legal, philosophical, and technological perspectives. The overarching aim is to promote a nuanced understanding of how AI can be harnessed responsibly in academia—not merely as a tool for efficiency but as a transformative phenomenon that warrants thorough ethical scrutiny.

7.2 AI'S TRANSFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH LIFECYCLE

Artificial intelligence is not merely accelerating research—it is redefining it. From hypothesis generation to data collection and analysis, AI is altering long-established scientific practices and simultaneously creating new frontiers (Russell & Norvig, 2021; Alpaydin, 2021). Where intuition, domain expertise, and trial-and-error once guided discovery, machine-driven analysis now complements—and at times even displaces—these human-centered processes (Jumper et al., 2021; Crawford, 2021). AI systems can rapidly parse immense datasets, uncover latent patterns, and propose research directions that human investigators might otherwise overlook (Bommasani et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, these changes are not without controversy. If an algorithm identifies a correlation and proposes a research question, does the intellectual credit rest with the researcher, the machine, or both? If AI automates key steps in experimental design, how does this affect the necessity for human oversight? These questions lie at the core of current debates about epistemology, authorship, and research integrity (Floridi, 2019; Birhane et al., 2022).