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GENERATIVE AI: GUIDELINES

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RULES ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI IN AFP CONTENT

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications such as Copilot and ChatGPT have become very useful tools for journalists, and their role in our work will grow in the future. AFP does not directly publish content produced by AI, but we may use AI to assist our journalistic work with systematic human verification.

Please always bear in mind that these tools are built on complex technologies capable of producing the best, and also the worst, results. Outputs from generative AI can be wrong, imprecise or incomplete, even when the results appear polished and read smoothly.

AFP remains open to experimentation by its journalists, who are encouraged to explore AI's possibilities and to share their experiences with the redchef. However, the use of AI must respect our editorial rules and ethical guidelines, and this is particularly important when it comes to data protection.

The technology is evolving rapidly and its potential impact on journalism and our work practices means the Agency will continue to update its editorial and ethical guidelines on using AI.

At AFP, we must use AI responsibly, and strictly for professional purposes. Always remember that using these tools comes with a financial and environmental cost.

AI can be useful for many tasks, but there are risks and pitfalls of which to be aware. These guidelines set out possible uses of AI by AFP journalists, while explaining potential dangers and weaknesses.

In brief:

- **Production:** We do not create or distribute AFP content generated by artificial intelligence, except in strictly defined cases to illustrate AI-related stories.
- **Security:** AI software and applications are never entirely secure. We must be vigilant when using personal, professional and confidential information, especially on tools open to the general public. Only AFP-recommended tools provide an acceptable minimum level of security.
- **AI and data protection:** Do not feed sensitive information into an AI tool. Always ask yourself what risk would be incurred if data given to an AI tool became public or was hacked. Sensitive content includes confidential details of a vulnerable source, the identity of a witness, and the identity or location of a journalist reporting from a dangerous or sensitive area. The same applies to personal data that could put you at risk. Be also aware that AI-generated content produced by an AI tool may belong to a third party and be protected by copyright and its use could infringe intellectual property.
- **AI as a tool:** AI can, in some cases, help us prepare stories, conduct research, translate documents and summarize long texts. These uses are permitted, but keep in mind the technology may produce inaccurate, biased, stereotyped or outdated results: they must never be used without systematic human verification. All AI-generated content must be checked by a journalist before any publication.

SOURCES

Generative AI programs such as conversational “chatbots” rely on probabilistic processing of vast amounts of data that include incomplete, biased, unverified, erroneous or copyrighted elements. They cannot under any circumstances be considered sources. They are configured to imitate human language, but we must not write about them as if they have human qualities (known as anthropomorphism), nor quote them as a human source with opinions.

Do not quote their outputs without verification, and it is strictly forbidden in our wires to quote answers produced by ChatGPT and cite it as the source.

It is, however, permitted to quote chatbot responses in stories explaining how AI works, taking care to clearly flag their origin.

In our coverage, we must be aware that these technologies amplify gender inequalities and produce stereotypes and discriminatory bias.

AI can help diversify our sources, provided we take care of the prompt and carefully check the results.

PRODUCTION

We do not directly use Copilot, ChatGPT or similar applications to write our dispatches, produce infographics, images, videos or audio.

Our clients and readers must be assured that AFP output is the work of its journalists, not of a technology.

Exceptionally, we may publish AI-generated content under conditions, with appropriate labelling, if the news justifies it. The decision rests with the central editorial desk.

For our visual production, we must ensure that our freelancers and occasional contributors do not supply AI-generated content.

The difficulty of detecting photos or videos generated by these technologies requires AFP journalists to exercise the utmost vigilance when verifying content supplied by third parties such as partner news agencies, amateur photos and videos, and content downloaded from social media platforms (user-generated content, or UGC).

TRANSLATION

AFP has its own AI-powered translation assistance tool, **AFP Translate**. Each translation remains entirely the responsibility of the journalist. Careful human verification is indispensable to ensure the quality, accuracy and adaptation of a text.

Users should keep in mind that there may be gaps when translating long texts, complex sentences, idiomatic expressions and cultural nuances, which can lead to significant errors. It is therefore essential to meet the following conditions when using the tool:

- **Language proficiency**

All AI-generated translations must be reviewed by a journalist who is fully proficient in both languages, to check accuracy, idiomatic usage, context and compliance with the Agency's editorial rules. Translations to be used in stories must be done into journalist's native language or working language, not into a second language. The tool must only be used to translate from a language that you already master. Do not use the tool to translate from a language that you either don't know or for which you only have a basic knowledge.

Particular care must be taken with the translation and spelling of named entities (proper names, acronyms, geographic entities, etc.), which can differ between languages. The content of shortlist translations must also be checked with care. Remember that journalistic translation involves adapting the text to the needs of a specific audience and paying attention to words and expressions that may be sensitive depending on regions and cultures.

- **Style, technical terms, gender and punctuation**

Journalists must be particularly vigilant about word choice, the use of technical terms or jargon, as well as writing style. Please ensure that in a translation, the gender and gendered forms are correctly translated from one language to another. Punctuation also requires special attention: use of punctuation marks varies from language to language, and if they are used incorrectly, it can change the meaning of a sentence or number.

- **Do not rush; keep the context in mind**

Checking AI-generated translations can be time-consuming, so take this into account when deciding whether to use AFPTranslate.

- **Be careful with sensitive data**

Do not use this tool to translate sensitive information, such as confidential or legal documents. The software used by AFP is generally secure, but if you are in doubt it is preferable to avoid using an AI tool.

- **Human oversight and checks at every stage**

Checks must be carried out at each step when several AI tools are used in sequence — for example, for a transcription and then a translation. Each finalised translation must be checked and verified by another journalist against the original text, as is current practice.

TEXT

Generative AI must not be used to directly produce or edit AFP dispatches without human verification. The story idea or the first draft must always come from the journalist, who may then

use AI as an assistant to complete, correct or translate a text. Any changes must then be checked by a human.

Quotes or other material obtained using the **AFP Scribe** transcription tool must be checked against the original recording before publication.

You can copy and paste part or all of a story in an AI chatbot for the limited purposes of verification or correction, on condition that you only use Copilot, the enterprise version with a green shield icon at the top right of the home page. This is the only secure GenAI tool available for AFP staff.

Editing remains dependent on the journalist's professional skills, knowledge of the subject and ability to question the accuracy of facts.

For interviews, journalists must not publish questions that were entirely written by artificial intelligence. While applications may help in drafting questions and finding information about interviewees, AI-generated information may be inaccurate or contrary to our journalistic ethics.

It is up to the journalist to ensure that any AI-suggested questions are fact-based and comply with our code of ethics.

PHOTO

We do not publish or distribute images created in whole or in part by generative AI tools. This applies to images from our own teams as well as those supplied by partners under redistribution agreements.

The only permitted exception is the use of an AI image to illustrate an article about artificial intelligence — for example, a fake AI-generated image that went viral. Such publication must meet two conditions: the redchef must give the green light, and a visual label must be applied to the image concerned.

Beyond the importance of upholding our editorial rules to provide clients with our own production, there are numerous legal and copyright questions regarding AI-generated images.

They are often created from third-party original content that is copyrighted, unattributed or scraped from vast databases.

We prohibit the use of tools such as Midjourney or DALL-E to create images. We must be vigilant about the authenticity of images we distribute, and that includes the veracity of handout images supplied by third parties.

VIDEO

AFPTV does not produce or distribute video images created by AI. We may use images

produced by artificial intelligence only with the green light from the redchef if the news justifies it. In such cases, we must flag those images using the appropriate visual label.

We do not have tools that can reliably detect AI used in images supplied by third parties, so we must ask our sources for a signed document guaranteeing that their images comply with our directives on the use of AI-generated images. Our video teams must also exercise extra caution with amateur videos posted online (UGC). If an AI-generated video slips through our verification process, we must correct the error immediately and transparently.

INFOGRAPHICS

Videographics and infographics may be designed with tools that include artificial intelligence.

Images generated using AI should be used as illustrations or as animated visuals to help with the understanding of the story, but they must not imitate real-world images or events. Again, all content must be verified before publication.

DIGITAL INVESTIGATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

AI-generated content poses new challenges in the fight against disinformation, as existing digital verification tools cannot accurately detect whether an image is AI-generated. The publishing of AI-generated images on platforms and social networks is authorized if the story justifies it, but they must carry a clear visual label.

Social media posts published in AFP's name from Agency accounts or from AFP journalists' individual accounts must be created by people, not generated by third-party applications.

CYBERSECURITY

Downloading AI-related software onto AFP workstations is not authorised without prior approval from the IT department.

Reminder: **Never** log in to any sites using your AFP credentials (username, password).

Be especially vigilant with AI applications accessible to the public that offer no guarantees on how submitted data will be used. Never include confidential information such as contact names, internal information, phone numbers, etc.. Do not share personal information that could put you at risk or compromise the security of your family members or colleagues.