

Impact Entrepreneur / Impact Journalism Institute

Guidance Memorandum on the Use of Generative AI in Editorial Submissions

To: Impact Entrepreneur Correspondents and Contributors

From: Impact Entrepreneur Editorial Committee & Impact Journalism Institute

Subject: Responsible Use of Generative AI in IE Editorial Work

Purpose: To clarify expectations regarding the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in submissions to Impact Entrepreneur

A Note on This Document

This guidance memorandum is a living document. Generative AI is evolving rapidly — reshaping workflows, markets, and governance frameworks in ways that are difficult to fully anticipate. We have endeavored to establish principles and expectations that are durable, but we recognize that specific applications, capabilities, and risks will continue to shift.

We welcome feedback from correspondents and contributors as you encounter new questions, edge cases, or challenges in your own work. Your experience in the field is essential to keeping this guidance both practical and credible. We expect to revisit and update these provisions periodically as the landscape develops.

Why This Guidance Matters

Generative AI tools are now widely available and increasingly used in research, writing, and editing. Like any powerful tool, they can be used well — or poorly.

At Impact Entrepreneur, our editorial mission is to advance the Impact Economy as a serious field of practice. That requires:

- Clear authorship
- Defensible arguments
- Verifiable evidence
- Systems-level thinking grounded in lived expertise

This memorandum explains how generative AI may — and may not — be used in work submitted to IE, and how editors will engage with AI-assisted content.

Our goal is not restriction. It is **credibility**.

Core Principle: Responsibility Cannot Be Automated

Impact Entrepreneur is grounded in a simple but non-negotiable principle:

The named author is fully responsible for the substance, accuracy, and implications of their work — regardless of whether AI tools were used.

Generative AI may assist the writing process, but it does not:

- Create accountability
- Supply judgment
- Confer expertise
- Replace critical thinking

Example

✓ *Appropriate:*

A correspondent uses AI to help reorganize a draft article on blended finance so that the argument flows more clearly — then revises it carefully, verifies all facts, and stands behind every claim.

✗ *Not appropriate:*

A contributor submits a polished article on impact measurement frameworks that relies on generic language and vague assertions, cannot explain the reasoning behind key claims, and turns out to be largely AI-generated.

Fluency is not the same as insight.

Acceptable Uses of Generative AI

When disclosed transparently and used with care, AI tools may be used to support — but not replace — authorial work.

Acceptable uses include:

- **Idea generation or outlining**
(e.g., brainstorming angles for an article on community ownership models)
- **Language refinement and editing for clarity**
(e.g., tightening prose, reducing repetition, improving transitions)
- **Summarizing publicly available material**
(with independent verification of facts and interpretation)
- **Translation or adaptation**
(where the underlying content was authored by the contributor)

Example

✓ A contributor writing about climate finance in Kenya uses AI to help summarize several publicly available policy documents, then checks each summary against the originals and adds context from interviews and field experience.

Uses That Are Inconsistent with IE Standards

Certain uses of generative AI undermine editorial integrity and are not acceptable.

These include:

- Generating **original analysis or conclusions** the author cannot independently defend
- Inventing or embellishing **data, examples, quotations, or sources**
- Masking a lack of subject-matter expertise or firsthand engagement
- Submitting AI-generated text that has not been **meaningfully reviewed, revised, and owned** by the author

Example

✘ A submission on inclusive insurance includes confident-sounding claims about uptake rates and community impact — but the author cannot identify the source of the data or explain how the conclusions were reached.

This is a red flag, whether or not AI was disclosed.

Transparency and Disclosure Expectations

Impact Entrepreneur requires contributors to disclose **material use of generative AI** during the submission process.

Meaningful disclosure includes:

- Whether AI tools were used for:
 - Drafting
 - Editing
 - Research assistance
- The general nature of that use

Disclosure is not punitive. It helps editors understand:

- How a piece was developed
- Where additional clarification or verification may be needed
- How best to support the author through revision

Failure to disclose significant AI use may be grounds for rejection.

Editorial Review and AI-Assisted Submissions

AI-assisted submissions are held to the **same — and sometimes higher — standards** as any other work.

Editors may:

- Ask authors to explain reasoning behind claims or frameworks
- Request source clarification or additional evidence

- Flag generic or imprecise language that substitutes for analysis
- Require revisions where AI-assisted text obscures mechanisms, trade-offs, or accountability

This is consistent with IE’s broader editorial approach: revision is collaboration, not judgment.

A Special Note on Writing *About* AI

Impact Entrepreneur actively welcomes rigorous work that examines generative AI itself — as:

- An economic system
- A labor and power structure
- A capital-shaping force
- A site of governance and accountability gaps

Such work must meet the same standards as any other topic:

- Evidence over speculation
- Systems insight over hype
- Precision over abstraction

Example

✔ Strong: An article that examines how AI-driven credit scoring may reinforce exclusion in emerging markets, drawing on concrete cases, regulatory analysis, and institutional incentives.

✘ Weak: An article that relies on hypothetical scenarios or sweeping claims about AI “changing everything” without evidence or specificity.

In Closing

Impact Entrepreneur contributors are not passive commentators. You are co-architects of an emerging field.

Used responsibly, generative AI can support your work. Used carelessly, it can weaken trust, blur authorship, and dilute insight.

Our shared commitment — as contributors, editors, and educators — is to ensure that the work we publish:

- Advances understanding
- Respects readers’ intelligence
- Strengthens the credibility of the Impact Economy

We appreciate your partnership in that effort.

Impact Entrepreneur Editorial Committee
Impact Journalism Institute