

Ignorance Is Bliss? When Transparency Backfires: Examining the Impact of Disclosing AI Use in Marketing

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Given that AI tools can generate content indistinguishable from that created by humans, we examine the effect of transparency disclosures on consumer perceptions of a blog, especially as calls for AI regulation grow. Our research finds that, while consumers are generally not skilled at identifying AI-generated content, transparency disclosures about the use of the technology seem to trigger skepticism (rather than trust) among consumers. In our study, we find that consumer attitudes toward and perceptions of the usefulness of a blog were more negative when it was disclosed (versus not disclosed) that the blog was generated by AI. However, this negative bias did not occur when the blog was authored by an individual. In this case, consumer attitudes toward and perceptions of the blog's usefulness were not influenced by authorship disclosure. These findings suggest that transparency disclosures about the use of AI in marketing may backfire. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how transparency disclosures can inform consumers about the use of AI without automatically triggering negative perceptions.

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