# Journalists flag rising challenges in spotting AI-written content



The growing use of AI tools like ChatGPT in drafting press releases, commentary, and bios is creating new challenges for journalists and PR professionals tasked with distinguishing authentic writing from machine-generated text.

Tech reporter Chris Stokel-Walker points to recurring linguistic “tells,” such as phrases like *“flip the script”* and formulaic structures beginning *“They’re not just… they’re”*. Freelance journalist Harry Wallop says spotting such stock phrases is often an instant giveaway, while Dr Roger Miles notes AI copy frequently avoids concrete verbs in favour of abstractions like *“making money”* instead of *“profitability.”*

Other signals include near-uniform paragraph lengths, puffed-up importance (e.g. *“stands as a testament”*), and overly smooth tone. Content strategist James Snodgrass likens AI’s non-committal style to a “2.2 undergraduate essay.” According to Tom’s Guide, additional hallmarks include vague generalisations, formulaic openings (*“Have you ever wondered…”*), and overly upbeat, jargon-filled prose that reads more like a press release than authentic commentary.

The issue is particularly acute in public relations. Julie Thomson Dredge of Frame PR says clients increasingly rely on ChatGPT due to lack of writing confidence, leaving PR professionals to rewrite AI copy into credible, human language. She warns that sending AI-generated text to journalists wastes time, undermines credibility, and can lead to blacklisting.

To cope, newsrooms are turning to AI-detection tools like Pangram and Quillbot, which scan for machine-generated patterns, though they are far from perfect. Similar tech, such as SightEngine, is used for spotting AI-created images.

The consensus across UK journalism and PR is clear: while AI can support writing, genuine human insight, judgement, and authenticity remain irreplaceable. The industry faces a delicate balance—leveraging AI’s efficiency while protecting the integrity of content in an era of rapid digital transformation.

Created by [Amplify](https://www.hbmadvisory.com/amplify): AI-augmented, human-curated content.

## Bibliography

1. <https://pressgazette.co.uk/publishers/digital-journalism/how-to-spot-ai-written-copy/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.tomsguide.com/ai/how-to-spot-ai-writing-5-telltale-signs-to-look-for> - This article from Tom’s Guide explains how to identify AI-generated writing by highlighting five common signs often found in machine-generated content. With AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude being widely used, many emails, articles, or social media posts may be AI-composed. First, AI often uses formulaic openings such as “Have you ever wondered…” due to its training on repetitive marketing language. Second, AI writing tends to be vague and generic, avoiding concrete details, sources, or personal experiences. Third, it can resemble press releases, filled with jargon and broad claims without specifics. Fourth, it typically maintains a consistently upbeat tone, lacking the variation seen in human emotions or opinions. Fifth, AI-generated content tends to miss the messy, real-world nuances and caveats that authentic human experiences provide. Additionally, while em dashes are not proof of AI, misuse of them for false sophistication is another indicator. The article encourages readers to use AI tools to support writing, not replace genuine human insights, and provides further resources to explore AI detection and responsible usage.
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