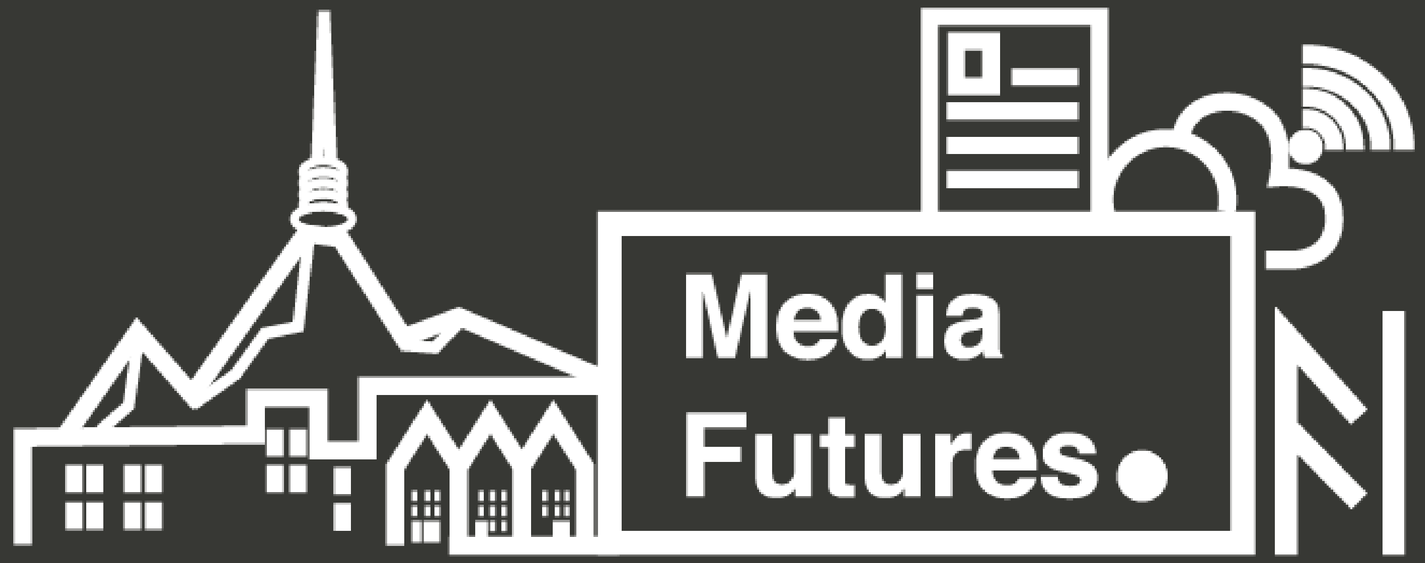


The AI-optimistic perspective

Christoph Trattner · University of Bergen · SFI MediaFutures

Research ethics and AI: Where is the line? · DNVA, 12 November 2026

Research Centre for Responsible Media Technology and Innovation
Project number 309339

Norwegian Centre for Research-based Innovation

This autumn I kept saying the same thing

KHRONO · 31 AUG 2026

Det er ikke søknaden som er forskningen

IN ENGLISH

The application is not the research

SCIENCE · EDITORIAL · 1 OCT 2026

Keep AI-augmented science contestable

DOI 10.1126/science.aek7949

KHRONO · 10 NOV 2026

KI-utvalget ser faren for sensorene. Den gjelder studentene også

IN ENGLISH

The AI committee sees the danger for examiners. It applies to students too.

“The question has never been who wrote the sentence.”

Where we are going tonight

1

Why be optimistic about AI?

History, a definition, and results we can measure

2

But what about writing?

The hard case, and a provocation

3

Is there a catch?

What happens when the tool is taken away

4

So where is the line?

Fields differ, the guideline, and where I stand

My claim: the line is not at the tool. It is at responsibility.

PART 1 OF 4

Why be optimistic about AI?

Every new tool was first a scandal

c. 370 BC	1450s	1610	1970s	1976	2001	2022
Writing	**Printing press**	**Telescope**	**Calculator**	**Computer proof**	**Wikipedia**	**Generative AI**
THE FEAR	THE FEAR	THE FEAR	THE FEAR	THE FEAR	THE FEAR	THE FEAR
“It will destroy memory.” Socrates, in Plato’s Phaedrus	Cheap, error-ridden books; scribes defended copying by hand	Some scholars refused to look through Galileo’s instrument	Students will no longer be able to calculate	A proof no human can check is not a proof (four-color theorem)	Banned as a source in classrooms	“It writes for us.”
WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT HAPPENED
Became the basis of all scholarship	Made the scientific journal possible	Instrument readings became evidence	Allowed, and the exams changed	Accepted, with new standards for checking	Where most of us now start	**Our turn to write the norms**

Each time the fear was real. Each time the answer was new norms, not a ban.

What I mean by an AI optimist

AI OPTIMIST

Someone who expects the benefits of AI to outweigh the harms, if we do the work.

Measure what it does. Be open about its use. Keep a person responsible.

Not a salesman. Not blind to risk. Not against rules.

WHY IT DESERVES A FAIR CHANCE

1 **People vote with their use**

Nobody forces them, and they keep coming back.

2 **The gains can be measured**

In science, in medicine, in finance. Not promises, results.

3 **Saying no also has a cost**

The later diagnosis. The researcher writing in her third language. Those costs make no headlines.

The gains are already here, and they can be measured

SCIENCE · AlphaFold

200M+

protein structures predicted and shared, used by 3M+ researchers. Nobel Prize 2024.

MEDICINE · Cancer screening

+29%

more breast cancers found, with 44% less reading work. Trial with 105,000 women in Sweden.

DRUG DISCOVERY

75

AI-discovered molecules have entered human trials since 2015.

WEATHER · ECMWF

1,000×

less energy per forecast with the AI model in operation since 2025; cyclone tracks up to 20% better.

FINANCE · Norway's oil fund

20%+

productivity gain reported by Tangen; all 680 employees use AI daily. Staff's own estimate.

OFFICE WORK · Science 2023

−40%

time on writing tasks, 18% better quality, and smaller gaps between workers.

Sources: DeepMind (2025); MASAI, Lancet Digit. Health (2025); Jayatunga et al. (2024); ECMWF (2025); N. Tangen, 5 May 2026; Noy & Zhang, Science (2023).

PART 2 OF 4

But what about writing?

This is where the debate gets emotional.

A quick question for the room

HANDS UP, PLEASE

1. **Who has used AI this year to write code or run an analysis?**
2. **Who has used AI to improve the text of a paper or an application?**
3. **And who said so in the paper?**

A scientific paper is not a writing exam

It reports what you found.

We do not give Nobel Prizes in biology or chemistry for the art of writing.

We give them for the finding.

If the finding is yours, others can contest it, and you answer for it, the prose can have help.

WHAT THE PRIZES WERE GIVEN FOR

NOBEL PRIZE IN CHEMISTRY 2025

Metal–organic frameworks

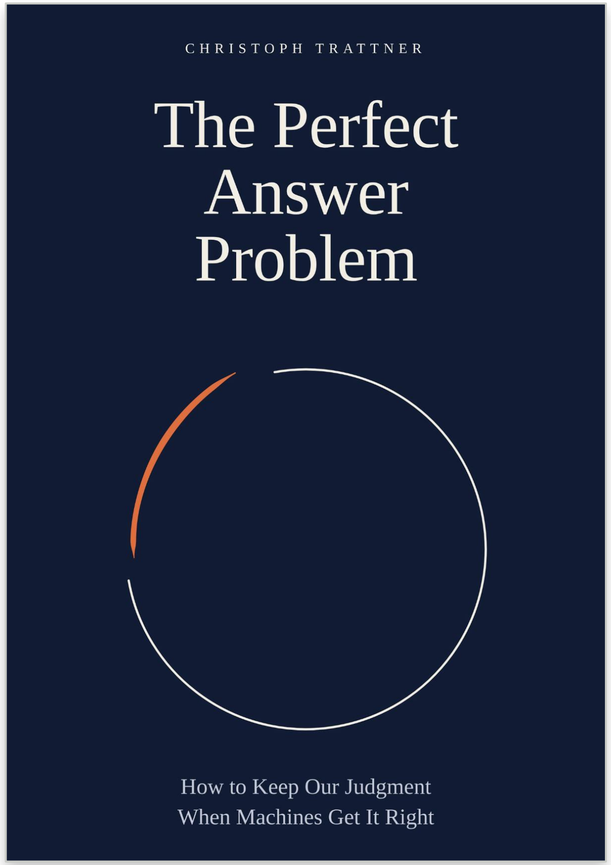
NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE 2025

Peripheral immune tolerance

NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

The one prize where the writing is the work

I am writing a book, and I asked people one question



BOOK IN PROGRESS

The Perfect Answer Problem

How to Keep Our Judgment When Machines Get It Right

For the book I have been interviewing researchers and journalists. I asked them:

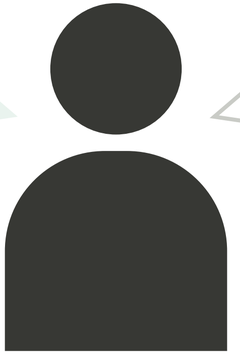
“What is so special about writing?”

It is interesting

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD ME

AI FOR WRITING CODE?

“Yes. No problem.”



AI FOR WRITING TEXT?

“No. Or I am not sure.”

THE SAME RESEARCHER

Same person. Same responsibility. Why the difference?

This was always OK. So why not the LLM?

WHO HAS ALWAYS HAD A HAND IN MY TEXT

Co-authors	rewrite my paragraphs	Always OK
Colleagues	comment and rephrase	Always OK
Copy editors	fix my English	Always OK
Editors	cut the text and change the title	Always OK
Grant consultants	polish our applications	RCN pays for it
An LLM	does a bit of all of this	A problem?

WHY IT WAS ALWAYS OK

- **I read every change.**
- **I decide what stays.**
- **I answer for the text.**

The same three conditions can hold with an LLM.

What is mine: the idea, the argument, the responsibility.

Source for grant support: Research Council of Norway, PES scheme, NOK 138 million for 2025–2027 (C. Trattner, Khrono, 31 August 2026).

PART 3 OF 4

Is there a catch?

The case against me.

What we know: with AI, people gain a lot



nature human behaviour

Article

https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-026-02566-6

Generative AI and the temporary upskilling of knowledge workers

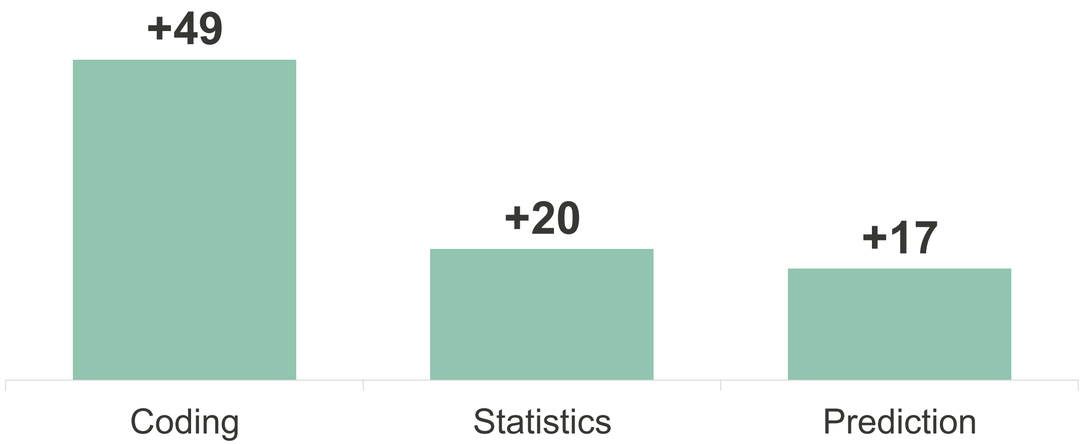
Received: 1 August 2024

Emma Wiles[1], Lisa Krayer[2], Mohamed Abbadi[2], Urvi Awasthi[2], Ryan Kennedy[2], Pamela Mishkin[3], Daniel Sack[2] & Francois Candelon[2]

487

BCG consultants in a randomized trial, doing data-science tasks outside their own skills. Published 26 October 2026.

POINTS GAINED WITH CHATGPT, COMPARED WITH THE CONTROL GROUP



With ChatGPT: **large gains.**

Afterwards, without it: **no better than the control group.**

Source: Wiles, Krayer, Abbadi, Awasthi, Kennedy, Mishkin, Sack & Candelon, Nature Human Behaviour (2026), doi:10.1038/s41562-026-02566-6.

What we do not know: what sticks?

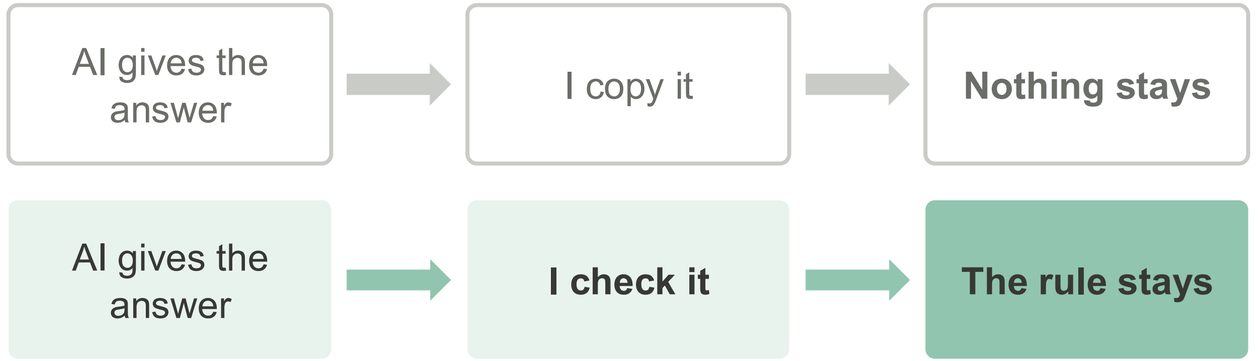
THREE OPEN QUESTIONS

1 **What sticks with people when they use the system?**

2 **What do they learn?**

3 **How do we design systems so that people learn?**

MY THEORY: PEOPLE KEEP WHAT THEY CHECK, NOT WHAT THEY ARE SHOWN



FIRST SIGNS, FROM MY BOOK INTERVIEWS

People told me they learn from their checks, beyond using the machine as a source of information.

Source: C. Trattner, “Verification Learning Theory”, arXiv:2610.37875 (2026), preprint; interviews for the book The Perfect Answer Problem (in progress).

PART 4 OF 4

So where is the line?

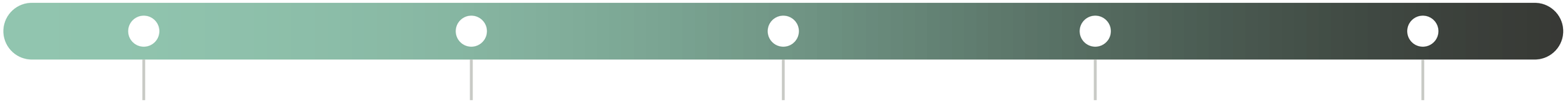
Where the line sits depends on what the writing is for

WRITING AS REPORT

The text carries the finding.

WRITING AS ART

The text is the finding.



Medicine, natural sciences
short, structured reports

Computer science, engineering
the system and the results count

Social sciences
data and argument together

Law
the wording is the instrument

Philosophy, history, literature
the argument lives in the prose

MORE OPTIMISTIC · MOSTLY FOR AI USE

AI help with the prose works like a copy editor. The finding stays the same.

MORE SKEPTICAL · MOSTLY AGAINST AI USE

AI help with the prose touches the contribution. More care is fair.

Optimist or skeptic often depends on where you sit. One rule will not fit all fields.

The NESH draft guideline gets the big things right

“Responsible use of generative AI in research: a research ethics guideline”
Draft by NESH, the National Research Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and the Humanities. 29 September 2026, open for comments until 31 December.

WHAT I AGREE WITH

✓ **It wants to support sound research, not restrict it**
A guide for reflection, not a checklist.

✓ **It names the benefit**
Fewer barriers for researchers with another first language or with reading and writing difficulties.

✓ **It separates substantial use from polishing**
And it sees that writing matters more in some fields than in others.

✓ **Only humans can be authors**
They answer for the work and must check what the tool produces.

MY ONE WISH

Keep disclosure simple.

Ask for the role, not the tool.

And keep it in line with the journals we publish in.

Norwegian title: “Ansvarlig bruk av generativ kunstig intelligens i forskning: en forskningsetisk veileder” (forskningsetikk.no).

Where the line is for me

I am more on the reporting side.
I am fine with AI as a tool for writing and polishing.



WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME AS A RESEARCHER

WHAT I CARE ABOUT MOST

Responsibility

The author answers for the text. AI cannot.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

Why?

Why AI was used, not which tool.

WHAT I NEED IN THE END

Can I contest it?

Can I challenge it? Who answers?

For the discussion: should a guideline ask which tool was used, or who answers for the work and whether others can contest it? Made with help from Claude; positions my own.

Media Futures

Thank you

for your attention

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Norwegian Centre for Research-based Innovation