Guidance on artificial intelligence (AI) and YRE

The Young Reporters for the Environment programme is a perfect platform for young people to showcase their understanding for environmental issues. To ensure a fair and rewarding experience for all participants of the YRE International Competition, it is important to have a system in place to detect AI-generated entries to.

Preserves the spirit of the YRE: The YRE competition aims to develop young people's critical thinking, research, and communication skills. Purely AI-written entries bypass this development process lessening the educational benefits of the programme.

Ensures originality and creativity: The YRE competition values real life perspectives and creative approaches to environmental issues in a young person's community. AI-generated entries might lack the originality and personal touch that comes from a young reporter's own experiences and insights.

Fairness: If AI-generated YRE entries become commonplace across all categories, it could disadvantage young people who rely on their own research and writing skill.

Focuses on development: By identifying AI entries at a school, scout group or youth group level, educators can encourage young people to develop their writing and research abilities for a more meaningful YRE experience.

Rewards genuine effort: Detecting AI allows the YRE competition to recognise and reward the genuine effort put in by young reporters- reinforcing the importance of hard work and dedication as a life skill.

AI has a place in the YRE programme

The YRE competition recognises the ever-evolving world of media technology and the exciting potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in environmental reporting. FEE believe AI can be a powerful tool for future generations to raise awareness and advocate for positive change environmental change when greening communities.

From 2024 the YRE programme and international competition will embracing the next 30 years of YRE by allowing AI entries in the Staged Campaign Photo and Short-form Campaign Video categories. Allowing young people to explore the creative possibilities of AI while showcasing their environmental messages.

Using AI effectively

FEE understand that successfully utilising AI for reporting requires skill and strategic thinking. To acknowledge this, we're introducing the new 'Image of the Year Award' that will specifically recognise young reporters who effectively leverage AI to convey their original environmental report in a visually compelling way.

Why AI matters for YRE

AI offers a range of benefits for environmental reporting and dissemination:

- Enhance: to help young reporters with Step 1 - Investigate, AI tools can analyse vast datasets to environmental data to identify environmental trends and patterns, providing valuable insights for targeted YRE reporting.

- Target: to help young reporters with Step 2 - Researching Solution, AI can find relevant (local) experts, gathers data on solutions, analyses pros & cons of solution and using sentiment analysis to find solutions that appeal to different members of the community

- Personalise: to help young reporters with Step 3 - Reporting, AI can personalise communication with specific demographics that young reporters would like to target to put their YRE solution into practice.

- Engage: to help young reporters with Step 4 - Dissemination, AI can assist in creating impactful visuals and content to help reach a wider audience.

How to identify AI in YRE competition categories where it is not permitted

Article Category

NOTE: the use of translation apps to convert text from native language to English for the purpose of judging in the International Competition is allowed. Please indicate when submitting an article to FEE if a translation app has been used. This will in no way affect the way in which the article is assessed.

Potential ways to spot the use of AI in a YRE article

Patterns or repetition: The most obvious sign of AI-generated content is repeated words, phrases, or sentences. AI is designed to recognise patterns and replicate them as accurately

as possible. As such, you may see the same sentence structure used regularly in different paragraphs within the same piece of writing.

Overuse of certain phrases or vocabulary: AI models can sometimes overuse certain phrases or vocabulary that it has learned during training. This is the result of the AI trying to fill up space with relevant keywords. This is because some of the spammy AI-generation SEO tools love keyword-stuffing articles (keyword stuffing is when you repeat a word or phrase so many times that it sounds unnatural). Some AI text generators will attempt to imitate this style.
Reddit thread dedicated to the collection of overused AI words: [Overused ChatGPT terms - add to my list! : r/ChatGPTPro (reddit.com)](#)

Coherence: AI-generated articles may appear coherent at first glance, but if you look closely, there are often structural issues. For example, AI-written content tends to be overly formulaic and lacks natural flow between topics or ideas. They are also not mindful of grammar rules or basic punctuation.

Check the details and facts: Depending on the topic, an entirely AI-generated article may only be written in the general sense. What we mean is that it could ignore facts, look for the lack of details. Most AI models are only trained on data from 2021 and before (Bing Chat does have access to current events). So, if the YRE article you are checking deals with facts and figures post 2021, it is less likely (in this section at least) to be AI generated.

Do the sources exist?: Many AI text generators will create fake sources that appear convincing. You should check every single source if you believe the article has been written by AI.

Look for a lack of emotion: AI-generated content tends to lack of emotion or personality in the writing as the AI algorithms are built to be as efficient as possible and replicate human writing with minimal effort, so they may omit emotional words and phrases- such as:

> *"I am curious to find out more about this issue in my local community.*

> *"My research and findings for solutions leave me felling even optimistic about the impact our actions will have".*

Strange paraphrases: Tools like Quillbot take existing articles and essays from other languages, that others have written and combine and paraphrase them so that they do not always flag up on plagiarism checkers. This can result in phrases being "translated" literally and in a way that doesn't make sense.

Absence of personal experience: AI content lacks the ability to establish a personal connection, this is vital for a winning YRE article that shows how a young person has

directly engaged with and found solutions for environmental issues in their community. Look for YRE articles that share personal insights and stories and interviews with local people who are known to the young person.

Article AI Testing

For more accurate assessment of whether a YRE article is AI generated, you'll need to rely on specialised apps and services. Focus on testing that can detect content produced by: GPT-3, GPT-3.5, and GPT-4o, Gemini Pro, Claude 3, Llama 3, Bloom, Jaspr, and Rytr.

Testing will check whether the article text is AI-generated, then it checks the content against millions of web pages for plagiarism. To ensure that the content is original and authentic. On most AI tests there is an AI detection score shown as a percentage. This the percentage of the article that is original and the percentage of it that is AI-generated.

The second part of the AI test is the plagiarism score. Because although the article maybe 100% written by an YRE student, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is plagiarism-free.

AI article advice for educators and youth leaders

Google Docs' Version History: this feature can detect human-like writing that saves after each small change is made in a document. Having the young people compose their YRE article exclusively in Google Docs and share an editable copy of their drafts is a good way to track whether they are pasting content from another site, or if they are working bit by bit in a more 'human fashion'.

You know your students' writing and communication styles. When reviewing a young person's work, look for significant deviations from this usual style. Does the vocabulary, sentence structure, or complexity of ideas feel significantly different? Does the tone match the student's usual approach? Also, AI-generated text may lack the specific mistakes or idiosyncrasies that a student typically makes. Such as:

> *"Your and you're"*

> *"Their and there"*

If you suspect young people of using AI to write their YRE Article a good way is to check this is by quizzing the students on the content of their article. Ask them to explain how they worked through the 4 steps of the YRE programme to produce their finished article.

Young people may also use an anti-AI detector, or "text humaniser," that is able to alter AI-generated content to mimic human writing. A text humanizer works by adjusting patterns typical of AI, reads more authentically. An AI humaniser scans for commonly used AI phrases, eliminates the passive voice, and restructures sentences to give your content a more natural, human-like quality!

Tools to check for AI generated YRE articles

Many tools have a word count limit and may ask you to set up an account once the word limit check has been exceeded. Some of the tools below will also detect AI images and can also be used to create AI text and images:

- **GPTZero:** https://gptzero.me/
  (This is the top free AI detector generally used in education settings)

- **Surfer AI Detector:** https://surferseo.com/ai-content-detector/
  (this website also has an AI text humaniser choice)

- **Copyleaks:** https://copyleaks.com/ai-content-detector

- **Undetectable AI:** https://undetectable.ai/

- **Crosplag:** https://crossplag.com/ai-content-detector/

- **Hugging Face:** https://huggingface.co/openai-community/roberta-base-openai-detector

- **Turnitin:**
  https://www.turnitin.com/newuser_type.asp?r=27.9830137335264&svr=6&session-id=&lang=en_us&

- **Scribbr:** https://www.scribbr.co.uk/ai-detector/

- **Originality AI**: https://originality.ai/?lmref=ivgXZA

- **Winston AI:** https://gowinston.ai/

One Take and Photo Story Categories

Potential ways to spot the use of AI

Some AI-generated images may lack specific Metadata camera data or have unusual data embedded within the image file itself. It might include details like camera model, resolution, and copyright info.

- Look for details in the image that look unrealistic and out of place (unnatural).

- Inconsistencies in lighting and shadows on objects.

- Textures that appear blurry or overly smooth, especially on objects like hair or fur.

- Repeating patterns or strange artifacts in the background that are out of scale.

- Reflections that don't quite match the surroundings.

- Mismatched skin tones, strange numbers of digits (especially if holding an object), or oddly proportioned features.

- Strange anatomy or odd combinations of features.

Tool to check for AI generated YRE photos

- **AI Or Not:** https://www.aiornot.com/dashboard/home

Long-form Reportage Category

Potential ways to spot the use of AI

Unnatural language pattern: AI-generated speech can sound too smooth and lack the natural hesitations, stammers, fillers and variations in pitch young reporters might have.

Lack of personal voice: The YRE competition emphasises student voices! If the reportage video lacks personal perspective or feels prescribed, it could be AI-generated.

Unrealistic movement: AI-generated footage might have people or objects moving in unnatural or jerky ways. Pay attention to wildlife movement or human interaction that does not seem natural.

Sudden scene changes: AI editing can be seamless, but abrupt cuts or scene transitions without context could be a sign of splicing AI-generated visuals.

Inconsistent lighting/ resolution: AI-generated footage may come from various sources and have inconsistencies in lighting angle, colour balance, or resolution compared to young reporters filmed scenes.

Production time: Creating a high-quality video that adheres to the YRE assessment criteria can take some time for young reporters to produce. AI tools can be faster than traditional manual filming and editing. If a young person produces a reportage video in an unusually short time this could be as sign all or parts of it are AI generated.

Technical knowledge: Some young reporters (especially in the 19-25 age category, or from FEE EcoCampus setting) could be very technology literate able to carry out complex editing techniques or special effects. Be mindful of very high-end editing that could be an AI assisted, especially if the young reporter is new to filming and editing.

The best approach is to encourage students to document their work through the 4 steps of YRE to show their Long-form Reportage process: through photos, storyboards, draft scripts, interview questions etc.

Tools to check for AI generated videos

At the time of creation of this document there are currently not universally accepted, publicly available tools with perfect accuracy for detecting AI-generated videos. However, some resources can be helpful

- **Microsoft Video Authenticator Tool:** This is a free tool from Microsoft that analyses videos for signs of manipulation. While not specific to AI use, it can identify inconsistencies that might suggest AI manipulation.

- **Reverse Image Searching:** If a video includes still elements like signs, logos, or backgrounds, try taking screenshots and using a reverse image search engine. If these elements appear elsewhere online and can not be linked back to the young reporters filming location(s), it could be a sign of them using AI-generated elements.