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Presentation on Legal Requirements for the Academic Use of AI in Scholarly Writing

Karlsruhe, March 30, 2026 — On March 25, 2026, the workshop "Do they really guide? Guidelines for the use of LLMs in scholarly publishing" took place in Mannheim at GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. Participants included researchers from various disciplines as well as the academic publishers Elsevier, Wiley, and Springer Nature. The participants engaged in a lively discussion about current possibilities for using AI in academia, as well as about academic and publisher guidelines for handling AI in scholarly writing

Our colleague Patrick Brunner from the Intellectual Property Rights (IGR) unit also participated in the workshop. In a presentation, he explained to the other participants the legal requirements for using AI in academic writing. The presentation also took a close look at problematic terms of use set by AI providers. It is clear that it should not be up to individual researchers to review the contractual terms of use for each AI tool prior to its scientific use. This is particularly true because researchers from non-legal disciplines often lack the necessary legal knowledge to correctly classify and interpret individual contractual terms within the applicable legal system. It is therefore the responsibility of academic institutions and academic publishers to provide their researchers and authors with vetted AI tools, thereby enabling the legally compliant use of AI in research.

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Among other things, the workshop demonstrated that there is a need for standardized and comprehensible guidelines that offer researchers genuine assistance in dealing with AI in academic writing, rather than presenting them with difficult questions of interpretation and the associated uncertainties.

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