

# Flagged as 'AI-generated': Does it make you feel deceived or authentic?

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CCS Concepts: • **Do Not Use This Code** → **Generate the Correct Terms for Your Paper**; *Generate the Correct Terms for Your Paper*; *Generate the Correct Terms for Your Paper*; *Generate the Correct Terms for Your Paper*.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Do, Not, Us, This, Code, Put, the, Correct, Terms, for, Your, Paper

## 1 AUTHENTICITY CRISIS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

As AI-generated figures, photos, and videos become increasingly common, individuals struggle to discern genuine content from fabricated ones. With younger generations growing up surrounded by media saturated with easily created fake content, the concepts of 'authenticity' have transformed. Consequently, alongside 'credibility' and 'trustworthiness', authenticity emerges as a crucial concept for comprehending the consumers' perception in the contemporary media landscape. Authenticity pertains to staying true to oneself [2]. Authenticity is not regarded as an inherent quality of an object but rather as a reflection of one's own beliefs, expectations, and perspectives [2][3]. Thus, authenticity can be built in even a fabricated context if it meets users' expectations. In short, authenticity refers to an entity's ability to align with users' expectations of a platform or content by creating a relevant schematic fit [1]. Although AI-generated content was once considered fake, our understanding of how this perception is evolving remains limited, particularly as users become more knowledgeable about the uses of generative AI in content creation. We aim to explore how AI-generated content affects users' perception of authenticity on social media.

## 2 THE ROLE OF TRANSPARENCY

TikTok recently announced that it will disclose its adoption of generative AI to social media users. How will this change influence users and the social media ecosystem? If users are informed that certain content is generated by AI, will they have negative feelings toward the content? Or, will they appreciate the platform being transparent about using generative AI? What would be the side effects of this transparency? Will social media users automatically perceive non-flagged content as human-generated, potentially exacerbating the issue? There are many problems we need to address regarding the use of generative AI in user-generated content for content consumers. In our recent study titled 'Do Virtual Influencers' Life Shares Give You the Creeps? Exploring the Impact of Identity Disclosure and Message Focus on Consumer Perceptions and Advertising Effectiveness' (Submitted to AEJMC, 2024), we investigated how virtual influencers' (VIs) identity disclosure and content focus affect users' attitudes and behavioral intention. The study found that perceived authenticity is a significant variable affecting users' attitudes toward VIs and brands. Consistent with the Uncanny Valley theory, the disclosure of virtual influencers' identities increased perceived eeriness, subsequently having a negative effect on users' attitudes. However, contrary to our assumption, the disclosure did not decrease users' perceived authenticity. We propose that transparency about VI's identity could positively influence perceived authenticity, potentially

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alleviating users' tension. We posit that users could have similar perceptions about AI-generated content because content about or from virtual influencers also involves ambiguity from AI.

Based on the assumption that social media platforms can identify AI-generated content, we aim to explore 1) how to effectively communicate AI adoption to users, and 2) what psychological mechanisms are at play when users become aware of it. We intend to investigate these aspects utilizing the concept of 'perceived authenticity'.

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