

# 2023 saw a number of AI scandals, demonstrating the need for clearer guidelines for brands and publishers

Article

**The trend:** The increasing application of AI in various fields has led to notable controversies, especially in technology conferences, journalism, and marketing. Each case presents unique challenges regarding authenticity, transparency, and the ethical use of AI.

**Airball:** Last week, **Sports Illustrated** publisher **The Arena Group** terminated CEO **Ross Levinsohn** after a report that the publication used AI to produce stories and create fake author bios.

- The questionable content was removed from the magazine's website.
- This situation highlights the ethical implications and potential reputational risks associated with using AI in content creation without proper disclosure.

**Fabricated diversity:** **DevTernity**, a software and developer conference, became embroiled in scandal last month when its organizer, **Eduards Sizovs**, was accused of creating fake female speakers.

- These speakers had AI-generated images and fabricated credentials, a deceptive attempt to showcase diversity in a male-dominated event.
- The fallout was significant, leading to **high-profile withdrawals from the event and its eventual cancellation.**
- Despite the evidence, Sizovs denied wrongdoing and blamed the backlash on "cancel culture." He also admitted to running an **Instagram** account with over a thousand photos of a woman named "Julia Kirsina," further blurring the lines between digital authenticity and fabrication.

**Disclosure confusion:** A [study](#) conducted by SOCi, involving more than 300 digital marketers, revealed a significant hesitation to disclose the use of generative AI in marketing.

- While **65% of companies have integrated AI into their tech stacks**, over half of the marketers surveyed expressed concern over revealing this to customers. This hesitance reflects a broader uncertainty in the marketing industry about how the public perceives AI's role in advertising and customer engagement.

**Getting proactive:** Last week, **The New York Times** appointed **Quartz** co-founder **Zach Seward** as the editorial director of artificial intelligence initiatives, a role focusing on establishing ethical principles for AI use in journalism and leading a team to explore AI tools in the newsroom.

- This strategic move, aimed at leveraging AI while preserving journalistic integrity, reflects the media's growing engagement with the technology amid concerns over its impact on public trust and journalistic standards.

**Our take:** Problems arise from the misuse or nondisclosure of AI, raising critical questions about the ethical boundaries of its application.

- The DevTernity scandal, Sports Illustrated's content controversy, and marketers' hesitancy to disclose AI usage collectively highlight the ethical challenges of AI in tech, journalism, and marketing, emphasizing the need for transparency and integrity.
- These developments underscore the necessity for clear ethical guidelines and transparency in AI deployment. They highlight the delicate balance between harnessing AI's capabilities and respecting the principles of authenticity and trust, which are paramount in technology, journalism, and marketing.
- As AI continues to evolve, these industries must navigate its integration responsibly, ensuring that innovation does not come at the cost of ethical compromise.