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Antagonizing & Tailoring LLM Writing in a Mock Public Relations Crisis Management Campaign for Business Communication Classes

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Overview

This Business Communication in-class activity uses a sample case study in which an imaginary company had a public fallout, with the purpose of students developing and refining the skills needed to regain trust and goodwill amongst the company's various stakeholders—both internally within the company itself, and externally amongst the general public. Students are first instructed to copy/paste the case study into various Large Language Models (of their own choosing) and encouraged to determine the effectiveness of the response, make observations on the language being used, and further antagonize the model with additional instructions to better tailor the message to sound more human-centric and less generic. In doing so, students make observations on the predictable language patterns and limitations of LLMs writing, thus debunking the myth that human writing no longer has inherent value if a machine is capable of mimicking it (Byrd et. al), especially when LLMs have their own inherent biases and a clear preference for human writing (Haverlas et. al). To better assess the LLM-generated output, students are encouraged to imagine themselves in the place of the differing audiences to understand their specific needs, values, and concerns, and determine how satisfied they are with the responses. The goal in the activity is to demonstrate to students that, despite what LLMs produce, they do not have to accept the results at face value and can still maintain agency and creative control of the process. Students learn how to better use such models ethically and responsibly for

drafting academic assignments, understanding the role of rhetorical and audience awareness in public-facing writing while still maintaining agency.

Time Commitment

1-2 class sessions (50 minutes each)

Materials

Laptop/computer, access to LLMs, notetaking materials

Activity Process

- Students will read the sample case study (see appendix), and feed the public relations crisis management scenario into any LLM.
- Next, students will make observations on the language patterns, word choice, etc., used in the output, and assess the effectiveness of the response by first imagining themselves in the shoes of the various audiences, then as writers on behalf of the business.
- Next, students will antagonize the LLM with further prompts & instructions to refine & better tailor the writing to sound more human-centric & less generic, again switching back and forth in assessing the language by taking on the role of the intended audience, and the role of PR representative.
- Finally, students will complete the reflection questions (see appendix).

Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this activity/assignment will:

- Gain an understanding of the predictable nature of LLM writing, its limitations and inherent biases
- Develop an understanding of audience & rhetorical awareness
- Think critically about when and how to use LLMs when writing for the public, and the value of human-generated writing in a public-facing field

Learning Accommodations

- Instructor may choose to have students do the assignment in small groups, assigning individual roles such as notetaker, reporter, etc. Students may choose any LLM application to use and make their own observations they then report back to the class before answering the reflection questions individually.
- Instructor can choose to run the assignment with the class as a whole, utilizing a projector screen. The class will then make observations together after which students can contribute to a collaborative editing process and class discussion based around the reflection questions (see appendix).

Works Cited

- Byrd, Antonio. "Truth-Telling: Critical Inquiries on LLMs and the Corpus Texts that Train Them." *Composition Studies*, vol. no. 51, 2023, pp.135-142.
- Haverals, Wouter, and Meredith Martin. "Everyone Prefers Human Writers, Including AI." *airXiv, preprint, arXiv:2510.08831*, 2025.

Further Reading

Littlefield, Jamie. “Stochastic Publics: The Emergence and Ethics of AI-Generated Publics in Technical Communication.”
Journal of Business and Technical Communication vol. 39,
no. 1, 2024, pp. 26-41.

Appendix

AI & Writing for a Public Audience

How well do you think AI/LLMs can write a message intended for a public audience? Using the sample case study below, make an assessment on AI-generated content written on behalf of a public-facing company. Then, further antagonize the AI model by providing additional prompts & instructions to better refine & tailor the writing. What is your overall takeaway?

Read through the case study and follow the instructions below. Please make sure you include a full copy of the chat, including the initial response & any and all instructions used to antagonize the model.

Lastly, answer the reflection questions listed at the end.

Instructions

Select an LLM of your choosing (ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.) and do the following

- copy/paste the case study into the LLM
- read through the initial results
- make observations on language, word choice, sentence structure, etc.

- imagine yourself first in the role of the intended audience for each message (the internal memo, general social media post, and one of the four complainants), and consider what it are the needs and values of each, and if the message reflects their individual concerns in a way that sounds genuine and sincere
- take on the role of the PR representative & use your knowledge of audience & rhetorical awareness, passive vs active voice, tone, tact, goodwill, etc. to further antagonize the model with a series of instructions to refine the writing
- switch back and forth between taking on the role of the audience, and the role of the PR rep, in each of your assessments
- continue this process until the contents of the messages have been altered from the initial output by about 80% or higher, and the messages sound genuine & human-centric
- save a copy of the entire chat log with the original prompt and all follow-up instructions you provide
- complete the reflection questions

Fun Festival Fiasco Case Study

Fun Festival is a yearly 3-day music festival held every summer over Memorial Day weekend. The event consists of 40+ artists performing on stages set up over a field with various merch tables and concession stands, and is attended by up to 20,000 people. Further, the organization recently introduced a “Go Green” initiative: to combat single-use plastic, free water refill stations were provided at the festival and guests were encouraged to bring their own refillable water bottles.

The Mission Statement

“Here at Fun Festival, we believe live music is for everyone! We strive to create a welcoming, safe, and fun environment for music fans from all walks of life to come together and let loose for one enjoyable weekend. So come to Fun Festival and let the good times roll!”

The Fiasco

Usually the festival runs smoothly, but this summer things got a little out of hand. Despite the max capacity of 20,000 occupants, it was clear that tickets had been oversold, as more than 45,000 attendees showed up on the final day. Additionally, the layout of the field was not well organized. This created a whole slew of issues...

- Issue One: Crowd Surges. The overcrowding of the festival led to multiple crowd surges in which large herds of people pushed into each other, unsure of which direction to go as
 - There were no clearly labeled exits, pathways, etc.
 - People were standing in what should have been walkable pathways due to the size of the crowd
 - The crowding made it difficult for attendees to move and many remained stuck in place, unable to reach water refill stations or bathrooms

- Issue Two: Lack of Water, Security and First Aid. The size of the crowd was compounded by additional contributing factors:
 - There was not enough security on site to handle the size of the crowd

- The temperature reached a scorching 100 degrees Fahrenheit, leading to attendees passing out from heat exhaustion
- EMTs struggled to make their way to attendees to administer first aid due to crowding
- There were only 6 free water refill stations distributed throughout the venue and constant usage led to multiple broken spigots, meaning more than half of them did not function properly

The Fallout

Attendees were clearly upset over the multiple issues and took to the festival's official social media page to voice their concerns...

- Customer Complaint One: Jennifer writes, "It's disgusting the way your organization clearly values profits over safety, despite what your mission statement claims. It's clear you oversold the event in order to make more money, leading to a very dangerous situation. I'll never attend Fun Festival again."
- Customer Complaint Two: Sam writes, "Your 'Go Green' initiative was a total failure. How are six water refill stations supposed to service 20,000 people never mind the 45,000 that showed up? DO BETTER!"
- Customer Complaint Three: Elaina writes, "My daughter passed out from heat and lack of water and it took EMTs HALF AN HOUR to get through the crowd to help us. Do you even care about people's safety, or is it just money you care about."

- Customer Complaint Four: Kenzi writes, “I was stuck in the crowd and couldn’t even move! Instead of offering help your joke of a security guard just yelled at us that we were going the wrong way. He didn’t even TRY to do anything about it!”

The Response: PR Crisis Management

Fun Festival’s Vice President of Marketing has asked to meet with you, the company’s Public Relations manager, to discuss this situation. In the meeting, the Vice President tasks you with writing several messages on behalf of the company:

- an “About Us” statement for the official website which includes the company’s mission statement
- a message for the internal company blog
- a general post on the company’s social media page addressing the situation
- individual responses to the 4 angry commenters

Your job is to address the situation over social media to re-establish trust & goodwill with customers, and to write a memo to employees to maintain internal relationships and provide clear instructions on how to represent the company on social media, including how to respond to comments & other points handling the situation. You must figure out how to convey the message so that each audience has their needs and concerns addressed. Further, your goal is to also represent yourself and the company in a social media sphere and regain trust & goodwill amongst the public.

Reflection: Final Takeaways

After completing your LLM assessment and antagonizations, reflect on the questions below.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the worst, and 10 being the best), how would you rate the effectiveness of the initial response? What made you choose your rating? Provide examples with a follow-up analysis.
2. What, if any, patterns did you find in the initial response? This can refer to sentence structure, sentence patterns, word choice, formatting, etc. Provide examples with a follow-up analysis.
3. How many additional sets of instructions did you provide until you were satisfied with the results? What made you feel satisfied? Provide examples with follow-up analysis.
4. If you were one of the four Facebook commenters, how genuine would you have found the initial response? Provide examples with a follow-up analysis.
5. Choose one of the additional instructions you used to antagonize the model, and explain its significance. Why did you provide the instruction? What was lacking/ in the initial response that warranted further tailoring & refining? Provide examples with a follow-up analysis.
- 6.
7. What is your overall takeaway on this activity? What have you learned/discovered about LLM writing vs human writing? How might you use LLM as a basis—and not an end result—when writing on behalf of a public-facing company?