Title: The Risks of "Prompt and Paste": Why You must Guard against using AI Outputs Without Review

"Prompt and paste" refers to the practice of using generative artificial intelligence (AI), like ChatGPT or Google's Gemini, to produce outputs and immediately paste them into professional or academic contexts without thorough review or editing. While the capabilities of generative AI are impressive, the risks associated with relying on them without scrutiny are considerable. In many cases, *prompt and paste* can lead to inaccurate, biased, or misleading information being shared resulting in serious consequences for businesses, professionals, students, and anyone who relies on these outputs for decision-making or external communication to clients, the community, or business partners.

The Allure of "Prompt and Paste"

Generative AI -- sometimes called large language models or LLMs -- has made it easier to "create" content in seconds. Whether it's drafting an email, writing a report, or preparing marketing copy, generative AI can streamline processes that once took hours. The temptation to simply *prompt and paste* is understandable, especially when under tight deadlines or when the task is mundane. However, the outputs of generative AI and LLMs, while often coherent and polished, are not infallible.

The Risk of Inaccuracy

One of the primary risks of *prompt and paste* is inaccuracy. The LLMs used to make the generative AI tools are trained on vast datasets, but the LLMs do not actually have any understanding of the material they produce. The LLMs generate text based on patterns and predictions, which means they can confidently provide incorrect information just as easily as they can provide correct information. For example, using ChatGPT to draft a technical report in the financial sector may generate paragraphs that sound accurate, but the generative AI just as likely may misrepresent crucial financial figures or regulations. Without review, these errors could damage your professional reputation or even lead to legal issues.

The Bias Factor

Generative AI has inherent biases from the data on which they trained. These biases can be subtle or overt, depending on the prompt and the context in which the AI is used. *Prompt and paste* users may unknowingly propagate these biases in their own work. For instance, if generative AI is used to generate hiring criteria or marketing messages, it could reinforce gender, racial, or socio-economic stereotypes. Without reviewing the content with multiple stakeholders to ensure it

aligns with the ethical standards and organizational values, there is risk of perpetuating biased narratives that could harm both the brand and the audience.

The Risk for Students: Academic Integrity at Stake

"Prompt and paste" also poses an unique risk for students. With the ease of generating essays, reports, or summaries using generative AI tools, students may be tempted to bypass the critical thinking and research process. This reliance on AI-generated content can undermine their learning and likely violate academic integrity policies.

For example, a student may use generative AI to write an essay on a complex historical topic, but without thoroughly reviewing the output, the student could unknowingly submit inaccurate or fabricated information. Worse, AI-generated text might lack the depth of analysis and originality that teachers and professors expect, leading to plagiarism accusations. Many educational institutions have strict guidelines against the use of AI-generated content without proper attribution, and students who engage in "prompt and paste" could face serious consequences, including academic penalties or expulsion.

Furthermore, by relying on generative AI outputs without review, students miss out on the opportunity to develop critical skills such as research, synthesis, and original thought. The habit of letting generative AI do the work can hinder students' intellectual growth and leave them ill-prepared for future academic or professional opportunities.

Misleading or Hallucinatory Information

Another risk is that LLMs can produce "hallucinations" — instances where the AI fabricates facts, statistics, or even references that do not exist. For example, if a law firm uses generative AI to summarize legal precedents, the LLM might inadvertently produce a case or ruling that never occurred. If the user engages in "prompt and paste" without verifying sources of the information, they could end up basing critical decisions on false premises, with potentially severe consequences.

The Human Touch is Still Necessary

The ease and speed of generative AI and LLMs can make them invaluable tools in certain contexts, but they are best used as a starting point, not the final product. Human oversight is essential. Users should view LLM outputs as drafts that require careful review and revision. For example, when using AI to generate marketing content, the tone, message, and accuracy must align with the company's branding and goals. When generating research summaries, experts need to cross-check sources and verify claims. The human role in this process -- often called human-in-the-loop or human-on-the-loop -- cannot be understated.

Use AI Wisely

While "prompt and paste" may seem like a time-saving solution, the risks of using LLM-generated content without review are too large to ignore. Inaccuracies, biases, and hallucinations are real concerns that can have wide-ranging impacts on your work and reputation. Instead of viewing generative AI as a replacement for human insight, think of it as a powerful tool that, when used responsibly and thoughtfully, can enhance productivity without sacrificing quality. Responsible users of generative AI will always review, revise, and ensure that what you share is accurate, ethical, and aligned with your goals.

Post Script

To practice what we preach, this article was written with the process it recommends avoiding the negative outcomes with *prompt and paste:*

1. Develop an idea for an article based on discussions with colleagues

2. Prompt generative AI

3. Review and update generated content

4. Team reviews updated content

5. Update output with key terms and adjust the length.

6. Repeat steps 4 & 5, as needed

7. Publish

Only one (1) step relied on the Generative AI tool and all the other steps included human(s) in the loop.