# Detecting AI in Editorial Workflows

## Establishing Policies and Procedures

Presentation to the

GW Ethics in Publishing Conference

October 23, 2026

Thad McIlroy
The Future of Publishing
San Francisco, CA

# Outline

- The crisis
- The causes
- The issues
- Some solutions

# The situation is out of control!

**Four major cancellations:**

1. Mia Ballard, “Shy Girl” (April 2026)
2. Jamir Nazir, “The Serpent in the Grove” (May 2026)
3. Jerry Falade, “Call Me, I'll Hide The Body” (July 2026)
4. Thélyson Orélien, “It Was Either That Or Die” (September 2026)

Pangram.

Blog › Case Studies › AI is Writing Prize-Winning Fiction

CASE STUDIES

# AI is Writing Prize-Winning Fiction

Pangram flagged four of ten recent Commonwealth Short Story Prize regional winners as AI-generated — our investigation into AI in literary fiction.

Jenna Russell • May 21, 2026

The New York Times

TIMES EXCLUSIVE

# *Book on Truth in the Age of A.I. Contains Quotes Made Up by A.I.*

The Guardian

TV & radio Stage Classical Games Design a better world

Books

# $2m crime novel deal collapses amid questions over AI use

Agents withdraw Jerry Falade's hotly anticipated debut after saying they can no longer authenticate 'how the manuscript evolved'

Poynter. 50 YEARS

*Journalism. Truth. Democracy.*

# Opinion | I gave 'Shy Girl' a five-star review before I found out it was AI-generated

The New York Times

# *His Novel Had a Shot at a Top Book Prize. Then Someone Ran an A.I. Test.*

"It Was Either That Or Die," by the Haitian-Canadian author Thélyson Orélien, was the hit of the French literary season. Now it has been pulled from the shortlist for a prestigious prize.

# The causes

- The literary community fundamentally hates AI
- AI's original content grab is unforgiveable
- Authors are incentivized to lie
- AI, more generally, appears to be out of control
- AI copyright issues are murky, encouraging worst-case
- (Note that the scholarly publishing community has attempted progressive solutions)

# The issues

- This has been a problem for fiction thus far
  - Stay tuned for nonfiction scandals
- Publishers have not been forthright nor clear in their AI policies
- Authors receive confusing and contradictory messages from publishers and the media
- Publishers rely on the "originality" clause in contracts

# Some solutions

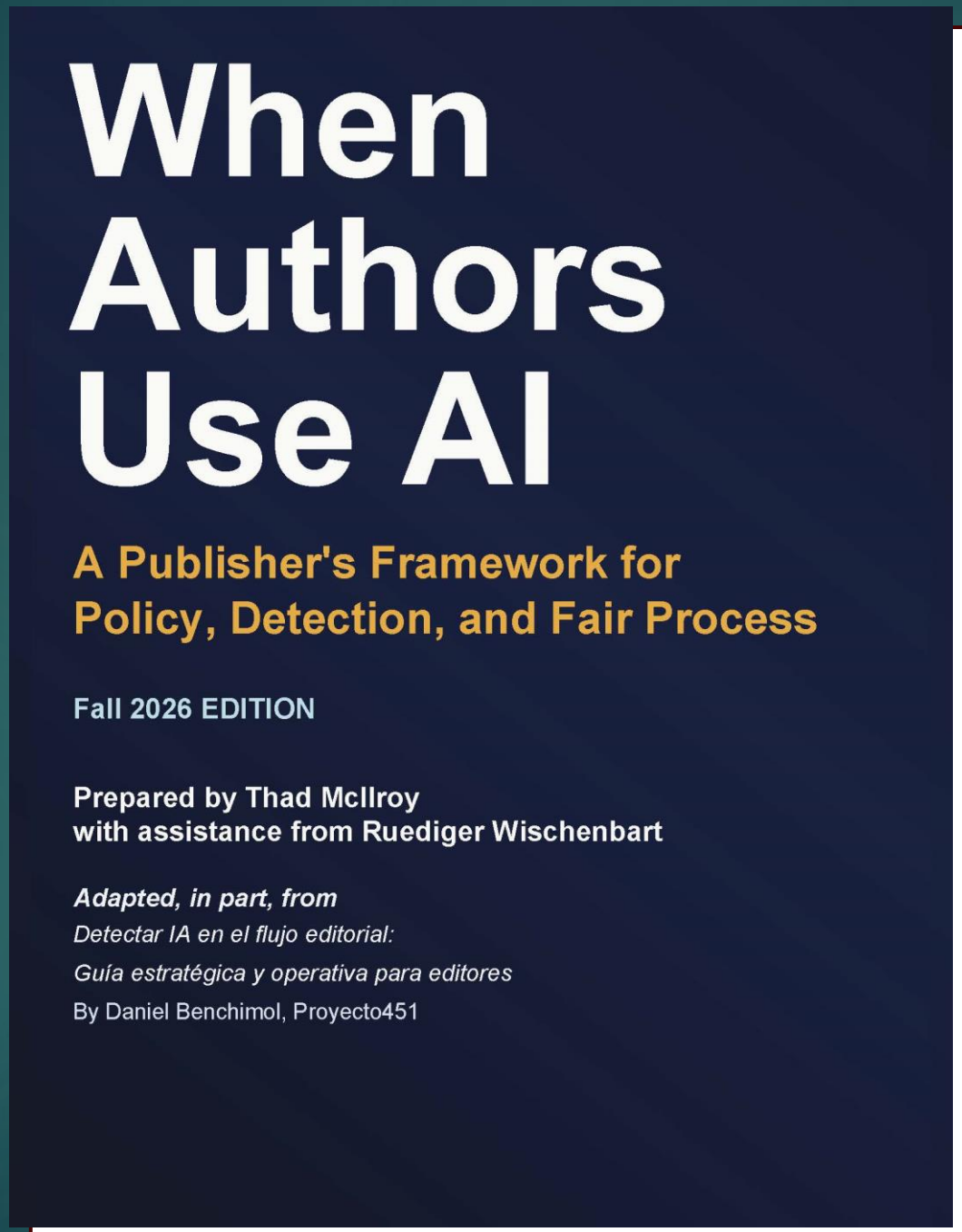
- Underlying respect and trust must be restored
- "Disclosure" must be incentivized (for both sides), not punished
- Publishers must revise their author contracts immediately to be explicit about author AI use
- Publishers must be clear about their own use of AI
- Publishers must publish (publicly) detailed policies

# Author solutions

- Authors need to spend time trying to understand AI's potential value
  - Stop condemning what they don't understand
- Authors should discuss AI issues upfront with their publisher
- Authors should submit an "AI use" report with their manuscript

# We all need to understand

- AI is not going away:
  - It's only going to get more useful
  - And authors will find more & more uses for AI
- Governments may attempt to regulate AI, but they don't care about book publishing and AI
- Authors and publishers need to adapt and to move forward as partners, not adversaries




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