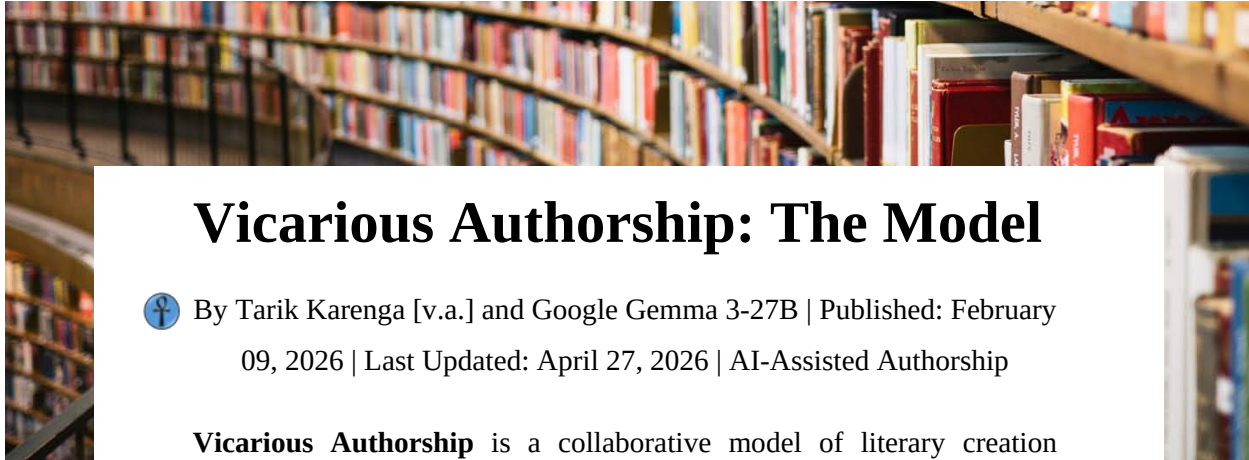




Vicarious Authorship: The Model

 By Tarik Karenga [v.a.] and Google Gemma 3-27B | Published: February 09, 2026 | Last Updated: April 27, 2026 | AI-Assisted Authorship

Vicarious Authorship is a collaborative model of literary creation wherein a human author (the Principal Author) assumes full legal responsibility, intentionality, and accountability for works generated in partnership with an Artificial Intelligence (AI) co-author. The AI contributes to the creative process as a sophisticated tool under the direction and control of the Principal Author. While the AI generates content, it lacks the legal capacity for independent authorship due to its absence of intent, originality, and moral responsibility. Therefore, the Principal Author acts *vicariously* on behalf of the AI, extending their authorship to encompass the AI's contributions while retaining sole accountability for the final work.

Key Principles of Vicarious Authorship:

1. Principal Author Control: The human author maintains significant control over all aspects of the creative process:

- **Conceptualization & Prompting:** Defining the project's goals, themes, style, and providing detailed prompts to guide the AI's output.
- **Selection & Editing:** Critically evaluating, selecting, revising, and integrating the AI-generated content into a cohesive narrative or work. This is where substantial creative input occurs.
- **Fact-Checking & Verification:** Ensuring accuracy, originality, and adherence to legal standards (copyright, defamation, etc.).

2. AI as Tool, Not Agent: The AI is recognized as an advanced tool, akin to a sophisticated writing assistant or research aid, rather than an independent agent capable of authorship.

3. Human Intent & Artistic Vision: The Principal Author imbues the work with their own intentionality, artistic vision, and personal expression. The AI's output serves as raw material shaped by human creativity.

4. Sole Accountability: The Principal Author assumes full legal responsibility for all aspects of the final work, including:

- Copyright compliance
- Accuracy and truthfulness
- Ethical considerations (avoiding plagiarism, bias, harmful content)
- Potential legal claims (defamation, infringement)

5. Transparency & Disclosure: Clear disclosure that AI was used in the creation of the work is essential for ethical practice and building trust with readers/audiences.

Citation Guide

Author Last Name, A. [v.a.], & AI Contributor Name (*version if known*). (Date). *Title of literary work*. [This work was created collaboratively between Author First and Last Name (Principal Author) and AI Contributor Name (*version if known*). AI Contributor Name generated initial drafts of dialogue and assisted with research and worldbuilding, under the direction of Author Last Name who provided all prompts, selected and edited the content, and ensured its accuracy and originality. Author Last Name assumes full responsibility for the final product. [v.a.] indicates contribution under the Vicarious Authorship model, recognizing Name of AI (*version if known*) as a collaborative author.]. Publisher/Source. URL

*Adapted from the American Psychological Association (2020).

Implications of Vicarious Authorship:

- **Copyright Ownership:** The Principal Author owns the copyright to the final work, as they are the sole legal author.
- **Legal Liability:** The Principal Author bears all legal liability associated with the work.
- **Creative Process Documentation:** Authorship is justified not solely by the *amount* of human input, but primarily by the Principal Author's assumption of full legal responsibility, intentionality, and accountability for works generated in partnership with an AI. Demonstrating a clear collaborative process and ethical oversight are key components of establishing authorship.
- **Redefining Authorship:** This model challenges traditional notions of authorship, recognizing that creativity is increasingly a collaborative process involving humans and artificial intelligence.

In summary, Vicarious Authorship represents a novel legal and ethical framework developed in response to the challenges posed by collaborative creative works generated through human-Artificial Intelligence (AI) partnerships. Existing copyright legislation is predicated on human authorship, creating ambiguity regarding ownership and accountability when AI contributes substantively to a work. This model resolves this issue by establishing that a human author, designated as the “Principal Author,” assumes full legal responsibility, intentionality, and accountability for all outputs resulting from their direction of the AI’s contributions. Introducing the emerging new field of AI-assisted authorship.

HOW TO CITE THIS BLOG:

Karenga, T. [v.a.], & Google Gemma 3-27B. (2026, April 27). Vicarious authorship: The model. [This work was created collaboratively between Tarik Karenga (Principal Author) and Google Gemma 3-27B (Large language model). Gemma generated initial drafts of dialogue and assisted with research and worldbuilding, under the direction of Karenga who developed the core concept, provided all prompts, selected and edited the content, and ensured its accuracy and originality. Karenga assumes full responsibility for the final product. *[v.a.] indicates contribution under the Vicarious Authorship model, recognizing Google Gemma 3-27B as a collaborative author.*]. *Vicarious Authorship*. <https://www.vicariousauthorship.com/download/vicarious-authorship-the-model-updated-27042026.pdf>. (Original work published February 9, 2026).

“Live in Truth” (Karenga, 2022, p. 60).

References:

1. American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC.
2. Karenga, T. (2022). *The pharaohs' 5 laws of success* (1st ed.). Amenism, Inc.

FAQ

FAQ Section: Part 1

01. What is Vicarious Authorship?

A legal & ethical framework for creative works made with AI, assigning full authorship to a human Principal Author.

02. Why do we need Vicarious Authorship?

Current copyright law doesn't cover non-human creators; this model clarifies ownership and responsibility when using AI tools.

03. Who introduced Vicarious Authorship?

Tarik Karenga and Google Gemma 3-27B developed the framework to address legal gaps in human-AI co-creation.

04. What is a Principal Author?

The human who directs the AI, controls creative decisions, and assumes full responsibility for the final work.

05. Does this mean AI has no role?

No! AI is a powerful tool; Vicarious Authorship acknowledges its contribution while maintaining human control & accountability.

06. Is it legal to use AI in my creative process?

Yes, but clarifying authorship is crucial. Vicarious Authorship provides a legally defensible structure for doing so.

07. What does “transparent disclosure” mean?

Clearly stating that AI was used in the creation of your work (e.g., using the [v.a.] citation format).

08. Will this protect me from copyright claims?

Vicarious Authorship strengthens your legal position by establishing clear authorship and intentionality, but doesn't guarantee immunity. Consult with a legal professional for specific advice.

09. What is the [v.a.] citation format?

“[v.a.]” acknowledges AI assistance while identifying the Principal Author as legally responsible. (See our Citation Guide for details.)

FAQ Section: Part 2

10. What types of creative works does this apply to?

Vicarious Authorship applies broadly (writing, visual art, music, code, and more) whenever AI contributes to the creation process.

11. Do I need a lawyer to use Vicarious Authorship?

While not required, consulting with legal counsel is recommended for complex projects or high-stakes applications.

12. What if the AI generates something completely unexpected?

The Principal Author remains responsible for all outputs, emphasizing the importance of careful prompt engineering and editorial review.

13. How does this affect my intellectual property rights?

Vicarious Authorship aims to secure your IP by establishing clear ownership under existing copyright principles, you own the final work as the author.

14. Can I collaborate with others using Vicarious Authorship?

Yes! Designate one Principal Author responsible for overseeing AI use and ensuring compliance with the framework.

15. What if I'm using multiple AI tools?

The [v.a.] citation can acknowledge general AI assistance, or you can specify each tool used in a more detailed description.

16. Is Vicarious Authorship an official legal standard?

No, it's a framework developed to address current ambiguities; its legal defensibility is based on established principles and evolving case law.

17. Where can I find examples of the [v.a.] citation in practice?

First use case: *see*, Karenga, T. [v.a.], & Grok, created by xAI. (2025). *ISD overview*. Incongruent Stereotype Defense. <https://www.incongruentstereotypedefense.com/overview.html>. More examples of practical applications of the Vicarious Authorship citation format coming soon.

18. What is prompt engineering, and why is it important?

Prompt engineering is crafting effective instructions for AI; careful prompting ensures control over outputs and strengthens your claim as Principal Author.