


DIGITAL
FUTURES
SUMMIT
2024

PRESENTED BY **AFTRS**

AI and the Creative Horizon



The Australian Film Television and Radio School acknowledges the Traditional Owners, the Bidjigal and Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, on whose land we meet, work, study and teach.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all nations of this land.

Foreword

When AFTRS was created back in 1973, the school was set a mandate to provide industry with the skills, training and knowledge it needed to thrive. The school was also given a mandate to conduct and lead research, because what the government recognised was that robust research and data are key to the ongoing resilience of our sector. A thriving industry needs access to deep thinking on emerging ideas and technology, so that instead of being reactive to the immediate shifts and changes of the sector, our eyes are on the longer-term horizon.

It's what this fourth edition of AFTRS Digital Future Summit is all about – bringing big thinkers from education, government and industry together to talk about the pressing issues our sector is grappling with.

At the moment, I can't think of a bigger issue than AI. As this new tech frontier opens up, it's posing questions about creativity, ethics, learning, production, and IP. And while we might not have all the answers, we need to make sure we're asking the right questions and having the right conversations.

Thanks to our panellists for their time and ideas, and thank you to all our attendees – and those of you reading now – for being part of this important conversation.

Welcome to AFTRS Digital Future Summit: AI and the Creative Horizon.

Dr Nell Greenwood
AFTRS CEO

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Introduction

In October 1975, AFTRS Research and Survey Unit was established, and since that time, AFTRS has conducted and provided research and data to stay on top of emerging ideas and technology within an ever-evolving screen environment. A recent major disruption facing the sector is with the emergence of AI, which poses significant questions around creativity, ethics, learning and intellectual property.

On Wednesday 10 April 2024, AFTRS presented the fourth annual Digital Futures Summit, which was an opportunity for leaders, educators and policymakers in the Australian and international screen and broadcast industries to discuss the impact, challenges and possibilities of technological change on labour, training and creativity.

In 2024, the interactive online event titled AI and the Creative Horizon dissected the use of AI in the creative industries and education. These sessions included:

- Learning with AI
- Critical Making: AI in Screen and Audio Education
- Augmented Creativity: AI in the Creative Industries
- Indigenous Sovereignty and AI: Storing Cultural Practices and Reclaiming Narratives through AI, Film, Radio and Beyond
- The Politics of AI: Navigating Ethics, Inclusion and Job Disruption in the Creative Industries.

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is when a computer system or machine is able to simulate problem solving and intelligence in the same way a human can¹. It is not a new concept in theory or in practice, with the first proof of concept for AI dating back to the historic conference [Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence](#) (DSRPAI) in 1956². But in the 2020s, there has been an AI boom that directly impacts educational environments. The launch of ChatGPT by OpenAI in November 2022, amongst other emerging tools, has created a technological shift that poses many questions for screen practitioners and educators – some that are yet to be answered.

The discussions from AFTRS' Digital Futures Summit investigate how the sector can engage with them in ethical ways to the benefit of screen practitioners and their creative practice.

Quotes have been edited and condensed for clarity.

¹ <https://www.ibm.com/topics/artificial-intelligence>

² <https://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2017/history-artificial-intelligence/>

Chapter 1

Learning with AI

Moderator

AFTRS Head of Industry & Alumni Engagement [Robbie Miles](#). Robbie is an AFTRS alumnus (Graduate Certificate: Screen Drama – Directing & Screenwriting, 2009) and an experienced development executive who has worked on projects such as *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Danger Close*, and produced the feature film, *Crushed*, the ABC iview series *Sarah's Channel* and worked for Animal Logic's genre label, Truant Pictures, as Development & Production Executive.

Panellists

[Professor Danny Liu](#) is a molecular biologist by training, programmer by night, researcher and academic developer by day, and educator at heart. Working within the DVC (Education) Portfolio at the University of Sydney, Professor Liu is part of the Educational Innovation team and helps educators improve their teaching by embracing the possibilities of AI.

[Dr Teresa Crea](#) is a narrative and simulation researcher, writer/director and academic who teaches at the University of New South Wales where she runs a simulation immersive technology program and leads a network of creative technologists that work in areas that span visualization to robotics. Teresa is passionate about emerging technologies and how they are impacting our narrative understandings from a neuroscientific perspective.

[Dr Miles Thorogood](#) is an artist, engineer and teacher at the University of British Columbia, who has a research background in the practice and theory of sound design and interactive digital art. At UBC, he is also director of the Sonic Production Intelligence Research and Applications Lab, which conducts research on modelling creative behaviours and developing new computational assistive tools.

The use of Artificial Intelligence in educational institutions offers a number of benefits, both for students and educators. There are challenges though; speed bumps that need to be navigated as the pathway forward is charted and boundaries are set between what is helpful in an educational context, and what is harmful. How can educators assess learning outcomes when students are using AI? How can they spot plagiarism? What is lost if creating – and grading – is offloaded to machines to reach a final product faster? These are some questions posed by the emergence of AI tools in educational spaces, but it's not the first time the sector has adjusted to a technological shift.

In 2001, the free online encyclopaedia Wikipedia was launched. Professor Danny Liu from the University of Sydney says it offers an interesting parallel to AI.

“When Wikipedia came in, the first reaction of educators was to ban it: that [it] would be cheating,” he says. “But [eventually] we saw it as another source and helped our students develop information and digital literacy skills, which is also what they need to do these days with AI. We need to accept that these tools are out there, and to scaffold and support

students to learn how to use them. We've been here before and we're resilient as educators. We can do it again with AI.”

Another shift was toward the use of open-source software (OSS), which gives users the right to inspect and alter the source code of software. Dr Miles Thorogood from the University of British Columbia says the emergence of platforms such as Arduino in 2005 gave creative practitioners the ability to create work with computational tools, which was a realm previously only reserved for engineers and computer scientists.

“More and more tools are designed for creative people by creative people,” he says.

Accessibility and bias

Not only do more creative people have access to computational tools to create work, but they are equitable in other ways too. Dr Teresa Crea from the University of New South Wales says the way people are able to prompt with AI can be accessible.

“You can use verbal instructions, so there's an option to use all of our senses in prompting, [which] overcomes the literacy barrier perhaps,” she says.

In metropolitan cities such as Sydney, Teresa says most students use AI.

“In our last round of assessments throughout Turnitin, which is able to detect AI in most classes, every student had used AI and it went from a ratio of 20% to 100%,” she says. “The next thing we're going to need to do as instructors is get people to understand why they are using AI. What I'm trying to unpack is: *Why are you prompting the way you're prompting? Do you know that when it gives you an answer, it is modelled with a certain algorithm that has a certain bias inherent?*”

A chatbot such as ChatGPT³, for example, is based on large language models (LLMs) and has openly acknowledged its bias.³ Miles says understanding biases is important.

“The algorithms are primarily in English language with English constructs that don't take into account different kinds of world views, different sorts of ways of thinking,” he says.

When AI does respond to a prompt, it's also about interrogating that. Teresa says too many students are taking everything AI says as fact.

³ <https://help.openai.com/en/articles/8313359-is-chatgpt-biased>

“They're not questioning it in any way. It's this trust that they're putting into the AI that I find really disconcerting because it is part of the offloading [of effort] and an easy way out, but it's actually letting their whole thinking be framed by the algorithm.”

Don't offload creativity

Another complication with the use of AI in creating work is finding the line between assistance, and offloading. The concern is that students, in an effort to create an impressive final product fast, turn to AI and as a result, hamper the sometimes-arduous learning process that would have led to achieving a similar result on their own.

Teresa says: “I'm finding that people are so bedazzled with AI tools that they're starting almost to offload their creativity to the AI. It's a tool, but it's not to replace [students'] own thinking and creativity.”

Students disengaging with their own learning is not a new concept for educators but AI brings a new dimension to it. Danny says students can now produce and submit assessments without any doing any work or learning. One way to address this is by assessing the process, rather than the final product.

“If we can assess by tracking how students *learn* – not looking at the product that they produce necessarily, but how they have gone about producing it. We can create things now that wouldn't have existed before AI and things with lower budget, but it's still a human who is driving the project. Our assessments just need to be updated to help us be assured that students have learned what they need to through that process.”

For Miles, teaching primarily studio-based, in-person art courses has allowed for one-on-one time with students to assess their design process.

“We tend to have an evaluation process that is modular and staggered,” he says. “Learning about how to do project management, scaling projects to be able to time manage, looking at the fundamental principles of their creative practice that they're exploring. So each step, they can clearly demonstrate what it is they're thinking is in their process to arrive at each sub goal within the evaluation process.”

“And within the evaluation criteria, just trying to impress upon students that it's hard work [and] there's a learning curve... there's eureka moments and there's headaches but those headaches are

good. It means your brain is making new connections.”

The ability of students to use AI increasingly well shows the need to update assessments. Research shows AI text is becoming more difficult to detect⁴ and Danny says as AI generation tools get better, the detection tools are going to fall behind.

“There's a bit of an inequity issue there because the AI detectors are detecting either poor use of AI or use of free AI, so if you are a good user or can pay for AI, you can stay undetectable. Plagiarism is a big issue in that situation because you're no longer measuring a human's skill, you're measuring the ability to use AI or afford it,” he says.

“The way we've thought around this is having assessments which you secure. These may be interactive orals where it might be a mock conversation between a producer and a client, and through that 15 to 20-minute interactive oral assessment, you ensure your students have achieved the learning outcomes they need to. But for every other assessment, our take is that we can't stop students using AI and we probably shouldn't because it's going to be part of their world. We need to scaffold them to use it, and have those

⁴ <https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/02/07/1067928/why-detecting-ai-generated-text-is-so-difficult-and-what-to-do-about-it/>

two kinds of assessments: the supportive ones and also the secure ones.”

Endless opportunities

AI tools offer exciting new possibilities for educators and students. Danny says a recent example is the ability for teachers to create AI doubles of themselves.

“It’s not a copy of themselves, but it’s an AI that can perform some particular roles the teacher would otherwise need to do. We can’t be available for our students 24/7 but an AI could [and] because AI is so good at understanding natural language, we can actually get it to supplement and augment what we do,” he says.

“So, for example, you might have a situation where you need a student to learn how to work with a producer and you don’t have 100 producers available to talk to 100 students, but you might be able to make an AI double of a producer [for] students to interact with. The student can say, ‘now that I’ve had the conversation with you, AI producer, what’s some feedback you might give me? How could I improve? What things [did] I miss?’ It’s a powerful way to leverage language and conversation to improve learning. We just need to think about the ways that we might be able to offer students these experiences in finite, controlled, task-

oriented ways to help them with learning.”

Zurich University of the Arts offers [cineDesk](#), which gives students an interactive tool to visually map out a scene before filming. It can be used in preproduction for directors, cinematographers and production designers to block scenes and previsualise lighting. While it doesn’t replicate the experience of being on a soundstage and problem solving under time pressure, it’s an example of creating a safe virtual environment for learning.

Teresa says the psychological safety is incredibly important in simulated environments.

“From my understanding, and the work that I’ve done in terms of the neuroscience, when you roleplay or simulate something, you’re actually firing the exact same neural pathways in your brain as if it were real. It’s an exciting form of education because you can put students directly in an environment they can work through and reproduce what they would in real life. But you need to be aware that if something were to happen in that simulation or you’re simulating something potentially traumatic, you need to guide people because they’re living it as if they would in real life. There are heaps of possibilities but we need to manage simulations carefully.”

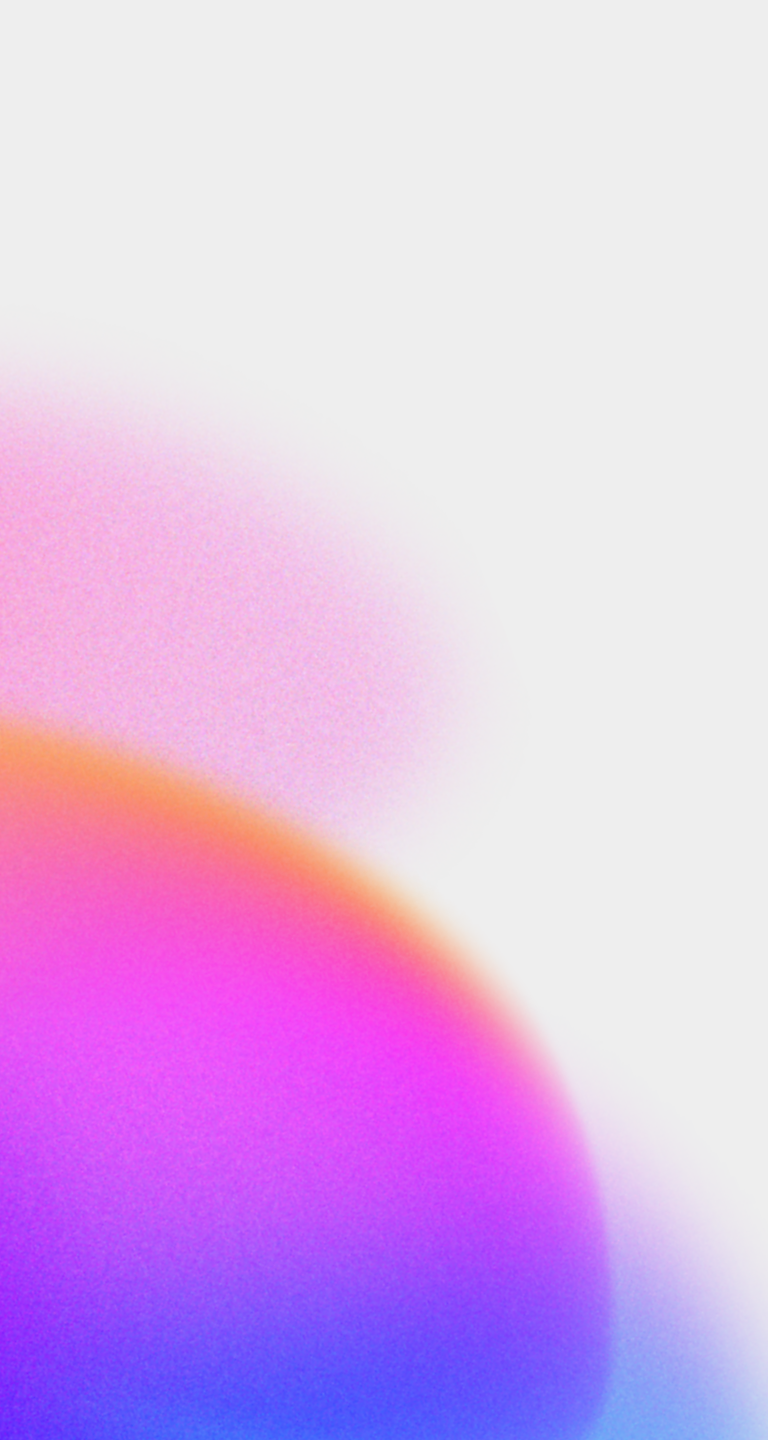
It’s about keeping a human in the loop when working with AI.

Danny says: “At the University of Sydney, for example, we have said that teachers can’t use AI to grade work that counts for marks because it removes that relationship and understanding of where your students are at. Teachers can use AI to support the provision of feedback, but the AI can’t be the one that determines the feedback initially. We do want AI to be seen as an augmentation to human skills, but definitely not a replacement for human relationships or skills.”

Maintaining our humanity

A platform like ChatGPT was trained on data that was written by humans. It’s why conversations with the chatbot can feel human even though they are not. It’s an example of how the human experience is within the foundations of AI – and the goal is to keep it that way. Teresa says there is a theory about AI and it’s to do with Aristotle’s *Poetics*, where narrative theory is broken into three elements: logos, ethos and pathos, or “the logic, the emotion and the ethics.”

“This view is that AI technology has gone off on a trajectory and picked up logos - reason and rational - and society is lauding AI generally [for] its creativity.”



It's the bedazzlement alluded to earlier, where AI can creatively come up with a story or image based on just a few prompts, but Teresa says there's danger in that.

“We've left behind ethos: the emotion and the ethics,” she says. “The beauty of narrative and storytelling from time immemorial is that it puts all three elements together. So forget what AI can do in creating its own stories and so forth, the human act of storytelling brings all of that meaning together for us, and we cannot lose that. We cannot lose that as creatives.”

Chapter 2

Critical Making: AI in Screen and Audio Education

Moderator

AFTRS Senior Lecturer – Sound, [Dr Mark Ward](#). Mark is an AFTRS alumnus, sound designer and media educator with over 30 years of experience. As co-founder of sound design house Counterpoint Sound and the production company Oracle Pictures, Mark's sound credits include *Lantana*, *The Quiet American* and *In the Cut*. Mark was Head of Sound at AFTRS between 2006 and 2009. Mark's doctoral research explored the neurophenomenology of emotion in cinematic media, and he is currently exploring strategies for designing media in new and dynamic ways using the paradigm of 4EA cognition with a particular focus on embodied narrative.

Panellists

[Natalie Beak](#) is the Discipline Lead for Production Design at AFTRS, where she oversees the MAS program. Natalie brings over 15 years of experience in film, television, commercial, and event production across Australia and the UK. Passionate about mentoring emerging designers, Natalie remains actively engaged in the industry, with a particular focus on new technologies and collaborative frameworks.

[Dr Ruari Elkington](#) is a creative and screen industries academic at QUT (Queensland University of Technology). He is Chief Investigator with QUT's Digital Media Research Centre and publishes in the field of screen distribution, screen studies and education.

[Majella Clarke](#) is a conductor, oboist, pianist and sound artist based between Australia and Finland, and a Senior Industry Practitioner who teaches in the postgraduate programs at SAE Creative Media Institute. A climate change scientist and environmental economist, MBA Majella hold degrees in Science, Economics and an MBA, and pushes experimental boundaries with a technologies such as neural audio synthesis.

AI in the classroom is a challenge for the education sector. It does not stop the iterative process for creating screen and audio works but it does shorten it, and finding a balance so AI augments learning while not disrupting the use of imagination, interrogation and self-expression is a fine line.

Dr Ruari Elkington from QUT says AI is challenging the notion of the creative process.

“It’s such a paradigm shift,” he says. “For those of us that may have ChatGPT4 or Midjourney, many of us are able to very quickly – the speed aspect is an important part – be really amazed at what can be generated in terms of the output... So it raises really important questions of: *what does the process mean? How important is the act of creation for our sense of self?*”

“For many people, including the general public who are not identifying as creatives, they’re going to be very happy with the fact that they can press that button, make that voice call, make that gesture, and something immediate and impressive is generated. For folks that do want to return to the ‘making’ – and acknowledge the

value of creating – it raises big questions. I certainly don’t have answers for them, but it does make us think about that fundamental nature of creativity.”

It’s a conversation

To address the use of AI while making a project, AFTRS Production Design Discipline Lead Natalie Beak is specific in framing how students can use it.

“When they find themselves interacting with these tools, it needs to be a conversation. It is just a tool. It’s [about] the journey, the learnings, how you grow along the way. The process of art making is what art is in itself.”

Natalie has used the tools herself to explore how it works.

“When I have dabbled in [Midjourney](#), the conversational element is really important. It’ll spit out some imagery and I’ll take that into Photoshop, I’ll pull it apart, add some other things, collage on top, spit it back to Midjourney and start having an interaction with it that way. That, I’ve found, is a way to start breaking down this inherent bias [in AI].”

For Majella Clarke from SAE Creative Media Institute, having this conversation with AI also makes the process more creative.

“Your iterative process, instead of being a month, can be a day. Sometimes it can be longer, or sometimes we just take the idea and the concept that Generative AI gave us and we put the rest in the bin and rework that with our human creativity,” she says.

Maintaining agency

For Majella, the biggest question to ask of students – and universities – is around what they are willing to lose.

“Something we are discussing with the students, ‘how much of your agency as an artist are you willing to give up when you use this type of technology?’ On one hand Generative AI can increase our agency in creative making, but on the other hand, it can take it away. I think that’s going to be the call of universities and tertiary institutions to address: how much agency are you willing to sacrifice versus collect?”

Majella says the CEO of Nvidia, a world leader in AI computing, made a

controversial suggestion in 2024 that AI could make coding redundant. While that would make coding more accessible, Majella feels there is still something at stake.

“When it comes to the creative practice, from my experience, you have more agency and control over what you generate if you can code.”

Agency is what Majella thinks will ensure creatives feel like artists, rather than curators.

“We can use generative AI to substitute the role of the artist and become a curator,” she says. “[But if] you’re iterating with it, you’re augmenting that creativity. And with that, you are increasing your agency as an artist and stepping away as a curator.”

Ruari says the notion of curatorship can also be framed in a positive way, by looking at the human who is making subjective calls behind the screen.

“Going back to this incredible sea of content, where everything is being created so easily, where’s the human element in that? Part of it is humans eyeballing other humans to say, ‘I’m engaging you on a human level and

communicating that this content is important for these reasons.’ There’s something in that with curatorship.”

Aesthetics and AI

With people relying on machine-made creative outputs, another area where Generative AI is having impact is in aesthetics.

Majella says they have been able to identify a distinct change in visual and audio creativity in art-making aesthetics.

“What we’ve noted is that whenever we use futuristic words and concepts, the generations coming out of AI are dystopian narratives. There’s also a feminist angle that needs to be questioned with the characters, identity and body image that’s being typically generated,” she says. “It certainly warrants discussion because... we’re going to start having the same looking backgrounds, the same looking characters in our plots and then, where’s the creativity in that?”

Natalie agrees that aesthetics – and analysing the bias that leads to this aesthetic repetition – is important.

“There is such an inherent bias to

Generative AI and particularly tools such as Midjourney and the sorts of images and data sets that they’re relying on to pull their imagery. It does raise really big questions about a Western-centric viewpoint and how that is framing the world, with diversity in mind.”

There are huge ethical considerations, both around how creatives engage with the tools and exclude their work from being scraped into the dataset. The [Human Artistry Campaign](#) have developed seven core principles for ethical use of AI and is one place Natalie encourages people to visit if they want to explore the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence to support human creativity.

Discussions around bias, datasets and AI are also significant because Natalie believes Generative AI offers so much potential for world building.

“With the explosion of AI, the time is ripe to be exploring alternative ways to really experience stories and story making,” she says, particularly the practice framed by the production designer and educator Alex McDowell who originated the narrative design system, world building.

“It’s a practice where the design of the

world precedes the telling of the story, and when I start to introduce these ideas to students, I really see sparks flying,” she says. “They’re excited about breaking down the barriers between their own disciplines and coming to story creation in a different way. It’s relevant to this conversation because the technologies that we’re dealing with currently are encouraging us to reimagine how we do what we do. VR and immersive tech, virtual production, and now AI: these technologies are fundamentally changing the way that we think about storytelling.”

Natalie says these tools are also available to access for many students in Australia.

“In my experience using virtual production at AFTRS, one of the biggest hurdles is the steep learning curve of these technologies and a program like Unreal Engine is inaccessible for a lot of people. With the arrival of these tools, Generative AI is able to help bridge that gap and allow access to that technology and exploration of process.”

The future of critical making and AI

Despite how much Generative AI can already do, it is only in its infancy.

Ruari says: “It’s so impressive and transformative, we tend to lose sight that we really are in this Netscape/dial-up modem/AOL stage of Generative AI.”

He likens Generative AI’s text-based input to wizardry.

“We’re effectively casting these spells,” he says. “It’s finding these little bits of text that you can throw into the machine and it will spit out something magical. But that’s going to change rapidly. There are huge limitations around text-to-video... [but] the place I think many people want to go is video-generating-video or images-generating-video. We’re still some way from that.”

The evolution away from a text and language-based models would make AI more accessible to a broader scope of creatives, says Natalie.

“Text being reintroduced as a controller of creative process is a little bit problematic, and particularly for audio-visual creators

– the fact that we’re having to use text and mainly English text in order to generate these interactions needs to evolve,” she says.

Majella thinks it’s also about knowing ‘how’ to talk to Generative AI with text.

“We’re going to have to revisit how we teach language for prompting Generative AI. In the English context [alone], we have a lot of different nuances, but machines cannot detect that. We’ve got to learn our language for prompt engineering and how we’re going use text-to-text/text-to-image/text-to-audio prompts to Generate AI.”

Majella has already witnessed students merging different AI models. They might start with text-to-text to generate song lyrics, then use text-to-audio to put audio behind it, and use text-to-image to add some visual. Gesture-to-sound is another AI model that is used in live performance and can be mapped and practiced as a type of instrument. One of the challenges until recently with this was latency in the signal. However, Majella has been working with the Intelligent Instruments Lab at the Iceland University of the Arts and developed a sonic conducting pattern that uses neural audio synthesis.

“The sonic pattern I’m using is applying a state-of-the-art technology called Realtime Audio Variational autoEncoder or RAVE models and this produces gesture to sound without the latency and creates new performance possibilities,” she says. “So it’s a responsive instrument.”

Majella believes gesture as a field of AI and creativity, and the study of human movement, will be one of the next frontiers.

“Mainly because gesture, choreography, dance – it’s one of the last areas that can be replaced with artificial intelligence. It’s the most creative space for humans to be,” she says. “If we look at all of the robotics experiments, trying to get robots to move like humans, they’re far from it. When we look at how the audio-visual industry is trying to generate humans in films, we don’t have a natural walk or dance yet.”

The coming years will only inspire more change in Generative AI, but it’s not something students or educators should shy away from.

Majella says: “I don’t think people need to be so afraid of it, like, ‘*should I be using it? It’s really replacing my creativity.*’ It creates a rapid space to work at again and again, and you’re actually more productive if you’re able to learn to flex that muscle in the brain. I would call it ‘augmenting human creativity’ when you’re using that type of artificial intelligence – and I think it *is* a creative process.”

LEARNING WITH AI

MORE & MORE TOOLS ARE DESIGNED FOR CREATIVE PEOPLE BY CREATIVE PEOPLE.

ACCESSIBILITY & BIAS

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

THE PUBLIC WILL BE HAPPY TO PRESS A BUTTON & MAKE SOMETHING IMPRESSIVE



WE CAN USE GENERATIVE AI TO SUBSTITUTE THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST AND BECOME A CURATOR...

CHAT GPT LAUNCHED NOV 2022



POSES MANY QUESTIONS THAT HAVE NO ANSWERS

HOW CAN EDUCATORS ASSESS LEARNING OUTCOMES WHEN STUDENTS USE AI?

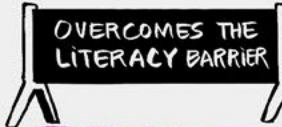
WHAT IS LOST IF CREATING + GRADING IS OFFLOADED TO MACHINES?



AFTRS 2024

DIGITAL FUTURES SUMMIT

THERE'S AN OPTION TO USE ALL OF OUR SENSES IN PROMPTING WHICH OVERCOMES THE LITERACY BARRIER



AI AND THE CREATIVE HORIZON

DO YOU KNOW THAT WHEN AI GIVES YOU AN ANSWER IT IS MODELLED WITH A CERTAIN ALGORITHM THAT HAS A CERTAIN BIAS?

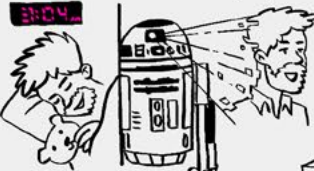
WE NEED PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY ARE USING AI

THE ALGORITHMS ARE PRIMARILY ENGLISH LANGUAGE... DON'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DIFFERENT KIND OF WORLD VIEWS



AS TEACHERS, WE ARE NOT AVAILABLE 24/7, BUT AI IS...

3:04



HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

ZURICH UNIVERSITY OFFERS CINEDESK TO VISUALLY MAP A SCENE BEFORE FILMING



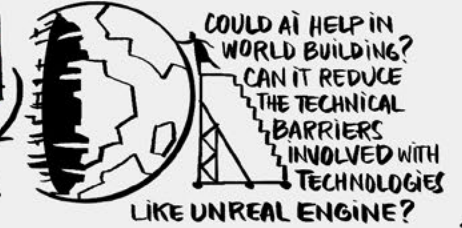
IT'S A CONVERSATION



MIDJOURNEY SPITS OUT SOME IMAGERY, I'LL PULL IT APART & PAINT OVER IT, THEN FEED IT BACK TO MJ. THIS BREAKS ITS INHERENT BIAS



THE AESTHETICS OF GENERATIVE AI IS REPETITIVE AND NEEDS TO BE QUESTIONED



YOUR ITERATIVE PROCESS INSTEAD OF BEING A MONTH CAN BE A DAY.



COULD AI HELP IN WORLD BUILDING? CAN IT REDUCE THE TECHNICAL BARRIERS INVOLVED WITH TECHNOLOGIES LIKE UNREAL ENGINE?

MAINTAINING OUR HUMANITY

AI HAS PICKED UP LOGOS BUT LEFT BEHIND ETHOS EMOTION & ETHICS



MAINTAINING AGENCY

HOW MUCH OF YOUR AGENCY ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP WHEN YOU USE THIS TYPE OF TECHNOLOGY?

CEO OF NVIDIA: AI WILL MAKE CODING REDUNDANT

YOU HAVE MORE AGENCY & CONTROL IF YOU CAN CODE



THE FUTURE OF CRITICAL MAKING AND AI...

GEN AI = WIZARDY "WE'RE EFFECTIVELY CASTING SPELLS."

STUDENTS ARE ALREADY COMBINING DIFFERENT AI SYSTEMS

EDUCATORS SHOULD NOT SHY AWAY FROM AI IT MIGHT AUGMENT HUMAN CREATIVITY...

HUMANITY AUGMENTED HUMANITY ABANDONED

DON'T OFFLOAD CREATIVITY

PEOPLE ARE SO BEDAZZLED BY AI... THEY ARE STARTING TO OFFLOAD THEIR CREATIVITY

STUDENTS CAN NOW SUBMIT ASSESSMENTS WITHOUT DOING ANY WORK OR LEARNING

WE NEED TO ASSESS THE PROCESS RATHER THAN THE OUTCOME



THE HUMAN ACT OF STORYTELLING BRINGS MEANING FOR US. WE CANNOT LOSE THAT.

CRITICAL MAKING: AI IN SCREEN & AUDIO EDUCATION

SESSION TWO

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE ACT OF CREATION FOR OUR SENSE OF SELF?

ILLUSTRATED ON GADIGAL LAND BY ALAN CHEN | SH@PESHIFTERS.COM

Chapter 3

Augmented Creativity: AI in the Creative Industries

Moderator

AFTRS Lecturer in Creative Practice and Theory [Maija Howe](#)

Maija's research explores intersections between screen forms, cultures, technologies and industrial conditions, focusing particularly on amateur, experimental, feminist and queer screen practices. Maija has worked on large scale screen commissions including Soda_Jerk's *Terror Nullius* (2018) and Sam Smith's *Cameraman* (2011), and her writing has appeared in publications such as *The Moving Image*, *Senses of Cinema*, *NITRO*, and *Amateur Filmmaking: The Home Movie*, *The Archive*, *the Web*.

Maija's passion for screen innovation is driving her current interest in AI and its implications for the screen and sound industries.

Panellists

[Claire L. Evans](#) is a writer and musician exploring ecology, technology, and culture. She is the singer for the Grammy-nominated pop group YACHT, whose 2019 album *Chain Tripping* was one of the first pop albums to be composed in collaboration with artificial intelligence. Claire is also co-founder of VICE's imprint for speculative fiction, *Terraform*, co-editor of the accompanying anthology *Terraform: Watch Worlds Burn*, and author of 2018's *Broad Band: The Untold Story of the Women Who Made the Internet*. She has given invited talks at the Walker Art Center, TEDx, Google I/O, The New Museum, Goethe Institut, SXSW, and many more.

[Anton Andreacchio](#) is a creative industries producer, entrepreneur and data scientist whose research includes applications of natural language processing with a focus on sentiment UX in screenplays. Anton has founded several companies including: Artisan Post Group, an AACTA-award-winning full-service post production house; Convergen, an animation company that specialises in infrastructure visualisation; and Jumpgate, an immersive

reality studio that has had works that have premiered at Sundance, SXSW, Venice Biennale, ACMI, Art Gallery of South Australia and more. Anton holds a Master of Philosophy (Applied Mathematics), MBA, Bachelor of Mathematical and Computer Science and Company Directors Course.

[Arul Baskaran](#) leads the ABC Innovation Lab's strategy team, which focuses on research and exploration of emerging technologies to serve changing audience needs. He has held leadership roles in product management and digital strategy across the media and cultural sector. More recently, his focus has been on leveraging AI, AR and VR to develop new ABC services. Arul holds a master's degree from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

[Anthony Frasier](#) is former NPR producer and the CEO and founder of ABF Creative, a Webby Award-winning audio production powerhouse celebrated for its vibrant multicultural storytelling and family audio content.

Over the last two years, a wealth of analytic and Generative AI options has been released with far ranging implications for the creative industries. These impact everyone from artists to large-scale media organisations - some who have already been introducing AI into their work.

Long before ChatGPT, writer and musician Claire Evans was trialling AI with her pop group YACHT, whose 2019 album *Chain Tripping* was one of the first pop albums to be composed in collaboration with artificial Intelligence. YACHT used machine learning models to generate notes, lyrics, band portraits, videos and album artwork.

“That took years and required collaboration with machine learning researchers and other artists to get right. We treated the album as a science experiment, so we worked within very strict parameters, using only our back catalogue as prompts,” she says.

Anthony Frasier, a former NPR producer and the CEO and founder

of audio production house ABF Creative, started his AI journey during the pandemic.

“We wanted to create a podcast for children that would entertain them [and] keep them informed,” he says.

They decided on a topic – African folktales – but turned to AI to help them choose a human voice. A machine learning algorithm created a lookalike audience to their intending audience that they could test voice actors with.

“Our audience was mums staying at home with young children, so we were able to audition different voices against this audience and we chose the one that gave the best score,” he says. “We’re still working with her to this day.”

That podcast – African Folktales with Miss Jo Jo – won a Webby Award in 2022. “And Jo Jo herself was chosen by an AI audience,” says Anthony.

While Claire and Anthony are predominantly working in audio and sound, producer and data scientist

Anton Andreacchio first started looking at how analytics could be applied to the creative process in 2016. Anton, whose research is focused on story arc analysis, was interested in seeing words as data points.

“We were [originally] using it alongside some development processes with scripts to do some very basic things with natural language processing, like trying to understand the personality types of characters using their dialog or a network analysis of who is speaking to who,” he says. “Since then we’ve been really proactively trying to work alongside writers’ rooms and with industry creatives.”

Anton says they use a lot of procedural AI tools but, “we are very wary of plugging things into large language models, particularly given the licensing around it. For example, we did a lot of work analysing *Aftertaste*. The production was really generous in sharing a lot of the scripts from season one, which we then did some work on and presented in the season two writers’

room just as a provocation. We're very wary of putting those scripts into large language models because then it's part of that reinforcement learning that's happening. It becomes part of what's training that model and it's not clear to me that the legals around that are all ironclad at this point."

As a result, when they are working with people's IP (Intellectual Property), Anton says they tend to do it in-house, using programming languages like R and Python.

"That said, some of these tools are getting so good if we can use API that is clear in what they're doing, then we use it for all sorts of things," he says.

At the ABC Innovation Lab, Arul Baskaran and the team have been testing off-the-shelf systems as well as investing in R&D (Research and Development), and leveraging open-source models trained on their data. He says through a series of pilots they have been working to separate the AI hype from what could be useful to the public broadcaster.

"The first one was audio transcription," he says. "We publish

over 100 podcasts and only six of them were transcribed at the time. We ran a pilot using off-the-shelf systems as well as a platform that our own machine learning team had been developing and we found that it was much more efficient, but there were some really useful insights. There was one case where the off-the-shelf American system kept mentioning 'urination' in the transcript and it seemed really out of context. The internal platform correctly transcribed that as 'Eora Nation', which is an Indigenous place name, because it had been trained on local data so it had references to pick up on that. We've also done lots of voice synthesis work using AI voice to read ABC News articles. [And we] used translation and a Chinese AI voice to create a daily news bulletin in Chinese as well."

Arul says they have also been looking at hyperlocal content. In a country as big as Australia often weather reports are not specific enough, so the ABC Innovation Lab has trialled taking hyperlocal weather data, turning that into a script, recording it using a synthetic voice and dropping it into the local area.

"This is another case where we we're trying to say, can we do something at scale that we couldn't do necessarily with humans, but could be useful using AI," he says.

At ABF Creative, Anthony says they have considered creating their own AI chat bot.

"Simply because, for instance, we have a podcast called Sean Words that's 500 episodes. That's a lot of transcripts. We're like, 'could we somehow pull all these transcripts and create this character that people can talk to?' We haven't taken the leap yet [but] definitely interested in doing that, as the tools become easier and adaptable [for] someone who isn't a programmer."

Challenges and opportunities

AI is built on data, so for a public broadcaster like ABC, which has a deep content archive spanning decades, Arul says there is a huge amount of potential to train tailor-made models that offer the greatest benefit to Australians.

“That’s a huge opportunity with some immediate applications and flexibility in being able to translate content into other languages, personalise content – there are teams at the ABC that are working on all of those near-term things. Really the bigger opportunities are not just automating existing work, but conceiving of entirely new content and services we haven’t thought of yet.”

A key element is bringing Australian audiences along for the ride though. Arul says the ABC and BBC commissioned research to see how audiences perceive AI.

“Long story short, they’re not opposed to us using AI in our work. They expect us to lead the way in some ways, but they absolutely expect us to maintain trust,” he says. “Trust in media around the world is at a low and potentially in a future that’s awash with AI generated content, how do we use AI in ways that further our work without compromising that trust? So we’re thinking about how we take audiences on a journey by being really transparent about how we’re using AI, starting with small

utilitarian improvements, features and services, and building from there. Another challenge is just being cut out of the equation with audiences. If people are going to AI for answers about the news [with] services like Perplexity, it’s important for us to maintain that relationship with the audience and not be disintermediated.”

Meanwhile, Anton is concerned about whether companies and individuals are actually participating in the AI conversation properly or just downstream from the tech monopolies. There’s also a challenge in cutting through the ‘tech hype’ around AI.

“It was only a couple of years ago that people were challenging whether modelling was actually intelligent, and now we’re saying that everything is intelligent as opposed to trying to disentangle what is general artificial intelligence and what is really just a continuation of an automation trend,” Anton says.

Anthony, who has a background in the tech industry, agrees.

“There are a lot of scammers in the industry where people are actually raising millions of dollars for automation, just by calling it AI. Or just wrapping a nice wrapper around an API but not really doing real AI work at all. That’s going to become obvious over time,” he says. “The other challenge I see, especially from the podcast space, is there are a lot of brand safety tools that scan the audio and flag things as unsafe for brands. One thing we’ve seen, especially for African-American podcasting in the States, a lot of the content is being flagged as negative because they’re not understanding there’s a certain vernacular or slang, or they’re flagging it as vulgar activity or even sexual when it’s nowhere near that. That’s a challenge because a lot of large companies are using this technology to automate their brand safety practices and excluding an entire group that already is under monetized in general.”

For ABF, efficiency as a small company is their biggest reason to use AI.

“We have some creative ways where

we're using it, but for the most part, it's 'organise these notes. We've just come up with a bunch of story beats, help us put this in a more organised way to bring to a meeting,' Anthony says. "I deal with voices all day and when you're telling a story to a young child and you have to hit inflections and emotions at certain points in the story, AI doesn't do that yet. There's no way to replace a human right now in the work that we do. Can it get there someday? Yes, I believe it will. But at this moment, there's something about imperfection humans can sense. Take that out and it's too perfect. It's just boring."

For Claire, part of being an artist is valuing the challenge of constraints.

"I'm not really interested in a frictionless creative experience or a push-button creative experience. There's a great deal of things that AI can do to make lots of processes more efficient and productive. I'm looking for the opposite. I value friction and constraints. That's where all the good stuff comes from creatively," she says. "A great deal of what makes art interesting is failure

and wrongness. I was really attracted to AI initially because it was quite inadequate at its stated ends when I was beginning to work with these tools. If you pushed the AI model enough, it would generate all sorts of strange, wonky and otherwise fascinating output that made for a great starting point for creative work. Now, these systems are becoming more polished and we're getting something more banal on a larger scale. So for me, the actual practical challenge of working with AI now is finding ways to re-introduce friction into a process that is designed to be as quick as possible. That means adding pain points, adding constraints, adding weird rules and limitations."

The constraint on *Chain Tripping* was that YACHT could not write melodies or lyrics.

"[We would] take a melody from our back catalogue that was written ten years ago and another melody from our back catalogue written five years ago, and run it through a latent space interpolation model to split the difference and see if we could trick

the system into giving us something that we want. It would always fall a little bit left of field but whatever came out would be interesting," Claire says. "I love just trying to make these tools do things they weren't quite meant to do, pushing them beyond their parameters. Also thinking of output as not an end in itself, but as one step along a much longer daisy chain of processes. So taking output and then acting upon it in some way: organising it, reinterpreting it, covering it, switching mediums, translating it to a different style. There's lots of different ways. Even actually performing something generated by an AI system as a human being and letting your own physical limitations wrap around it and see what happens then. The farther we can get away from this idea of pressing a button and getting something, the better."

Embracing technological change

Claire has faith in artists to metabolise technological change as they did in the past with the advent of electronic music tools like synthesizers and drum machines .

“Giving the example of the drum machine, it’s probably put a few session drummers out of work, but it also was the catalyst for hip hop, techno, post-punk,” she says. “There are ways to absorb these technologies and create novel forms that will keep us protected from obsolescence. I hope artists will take the mantle of that challenge with AI as they have with everything else, because then it will just become a tool.”

Arul says there’s a parallel with photography and the predicted death of painting.

“But out of that came abstraction and expressionism. The same thing happened when Photoshop and digital photography came. There was a lot of outcry about how ‘this is the end of photography’ as well. And it wasn’t,” he says.

Instead he believes AI will enhance workflows and free up space to focus on the areas humans excel in, which is the emotional, authentic core of storytelling.

“I’ve been following Sora and the generative video that’s coming out of Open AI and people saying, ‘films are going to be made by AI’. But we know that films are made of a thousand steps and decisions, so I can see where you could use the AI on some of those steps [but] I don’t think it’ll be AI making a movie,” he says. “At the moment, AI is really great at tasks and not so good at jobs. So a task like colour grading or cleaning up sound, it’s great at. Not so good at directing.

The systems still need to be told what to create, and the best stories are shaped by genuine emotion. That’s where skilful humans using these tools can create compelling content.”

Indigenous Sovereignty and AI: Storing Cultural Practices and Reclaiming Narratives through AI, Film, Radio and Beyond

Moderator

[Ellen Hodgson](#) is an Anishinaabe / Apsaalooke filmmaker who grew up on Ngunnawal Country. She is the Community Outreach Engagement Manager within the First Nations and Outreach team at AFTRS. In the role, Ellen co-designs initiatives and strategy with the screen industry and communities to support access and pathways for underrepresented film practitioners. Ellen has worked as a lecturer and tutor at AFTRS, as well as a producer, casting director and production coordinator in advertising, factual, narrative and long-form for companies such as Marvel, Netflix, HBO and Lingo Pictures.

Panellists

[Brett Leavy](#) is a First Nations digital Aboriginal and descendant of the Kooma people. He is the director of a B-corp social impact company whose research and development in Virtual Songlines seeks to use Blockchain as well as augmented and virtual realities to authentically represent First Nations cultural heritage landscapes. His company Bilbie Virtual Labs creates software for visualising heritage landscapes for PC, AR, and VR and contributes to the conservation and environmental management using First Nations research methodologies. Brett is blazing a trail towards an Indijiverse for Australia that meets First Nations perspectives – a virtual heritage time machine.

[Cienan Muir](#) is a Yorta Yorta/Ngarrindjeri man who grew up around Melbourne, Echuca and Shepparton. Cienan hosted the first ever Indigenous Comic Con (IndigiCon) in Australia in 2019 and is the creator of the IndigiNerd pop culture company, which focuses on Indigenous representation in popular culture spaces.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived on the continent for upwards of 60,000 years, while AI has emerged within the last century. This new technology, however, offers great potential to support and preserve existing Indigenous Knowledge (IK) systems.

Cienan Muir, a Yorta Yorta and Ngarrindjeri man and creator of IndigiNerd pop culture company, hopes to see a digital world that's accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and easily understandable for Elders.

A relationship that First Nations can have with AI as a repository of Songlines, which may otherwise be lost. It does need the right protocols and boundaries around it, but it could be an extremely beneficial tool to have. To achieve this, would be to deliver Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

"It's really in the name," Cienan says of the term. "It's giving sovereign data back to Indigenous communities. It's the right for Indigenous people to govern, collect, own and apply that data. [For] a long time data was collected from our community, was stolen from our Mobs, and in some cases was used against us. We know what's best for our community, so it makes sense for that data to go back to our community."

Professor Maggie Walter from the University of Tasmania is a palawa woman who has been instrumental in leading the global movement of Indigenous data sovereignty. First Nations digital storyteller Brett Leavy implores people [to listen to Professor Walter's dissection of the issue](#), but at its heart says it's about taking ownership back.

"There's a way that the tool of AI can help us take that back," he says. "All those vast numbers of, for instance, Closing the Gap reports. That's where Indigenous knowledge in our hands becomes all the more powerful. We've got a lot of issues to tackle and any tool for that purpose is going to be a godsend if we can control it."

Brett works in Indigenous knowledge management, and digitising that knowledge in a way that engages First Nations youth to connect with country and identity. His virtual time machine *Virtual Songlines* uses 3D virtual landscapes of pre-colonisation Australia to show places where the traditional knowledge of First Nations people originated. So far, it has been applied to places including Brisbane's Cross River Rail Experience Centre, the National Maritime Museum in Sydney, the Ian Potter Museum in

Melbourne, and Yagan Square in Perth. In January 2024, Brett also created a digital artwork in consultation with the Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council, where the sails of the Sydney Opera House were lit up with four First Nations trailblazers: Nanbarry, Barangaroo, Pemulwuy and Patyegarang.

"Two strong women that you can easily see in history and two strong men. Not many people know Pemulwuy or his escapades [but] there's a comparative person like Pemulwuy all over the country," he says. "There's a whole untapped level of First Nations perspectives in every country town, regional centre, remote community, and urban spaces. There are 400,000 stories you can tell tomorrow."

AI and new technologies offer another way of telling these stories.

"I use AI to generate meta humans and I've built 11,000 of them based on historical references," Brett says. His next step will be adding voices to the digital. "Once you do that, I mean, that's going to be resounding. It's a one step at a time process. It's what I call a virtual walkabout."

AI as a tool for a greater goal

Brett sees Generative AI as a scaffolding tool on top of computers – something to expediate processes and empower First Nations voices.

“I study AI as much as I can. I try and look at how I can incorporate machine learning, how I can do virtual conversations with my characters. Always doing this with First Nations people, taking them along as much as I can,” he says.

Cienan believes AI can help creatives who face barriers with funding.

“The standard process is that artists need to complete a proposal or pitch and satisfy funding objectives and KPIs. AI can assist in that, particularly when we consider that there’s a lot in our community and a lot of our Elders that do still have some level of difficulty with reading and writing, through no fault of their own. That’s just the cards that were dealt. So in that sense, I think AI can have a strong part to play.”

Engagement done right

There is a right and a wrong way of engaging with First Nations communities, and ensuring that Indigenous Sovereignty remains intact. Cienan says in the last five years IndigiNerd has been getting emails from video game developers, companies and studios wanting to bring him on board as a cultural consultant.

“They reach out specifically to try and incorporate some of the diverse storytelling of our community and get our perspectives on life and how that would work within the gaming mechanics,” he says. “Our stories are still being treated as just another diverse bookmark that a gaming development house can put in their games and tick the box and move on. Whereas for myself coming on board as an Indigenous cultural consultant, you’re sharing a lot of your stories, your Songlines, your trauma... I’d be going through the proper cultural protocols or seeking feedback from my Elders, my community – asking is this okay to tell this story.”

It’s again where Indigenous Sovereignty comes in and the need for First Nations stories to remain in the hands of First Nations people.

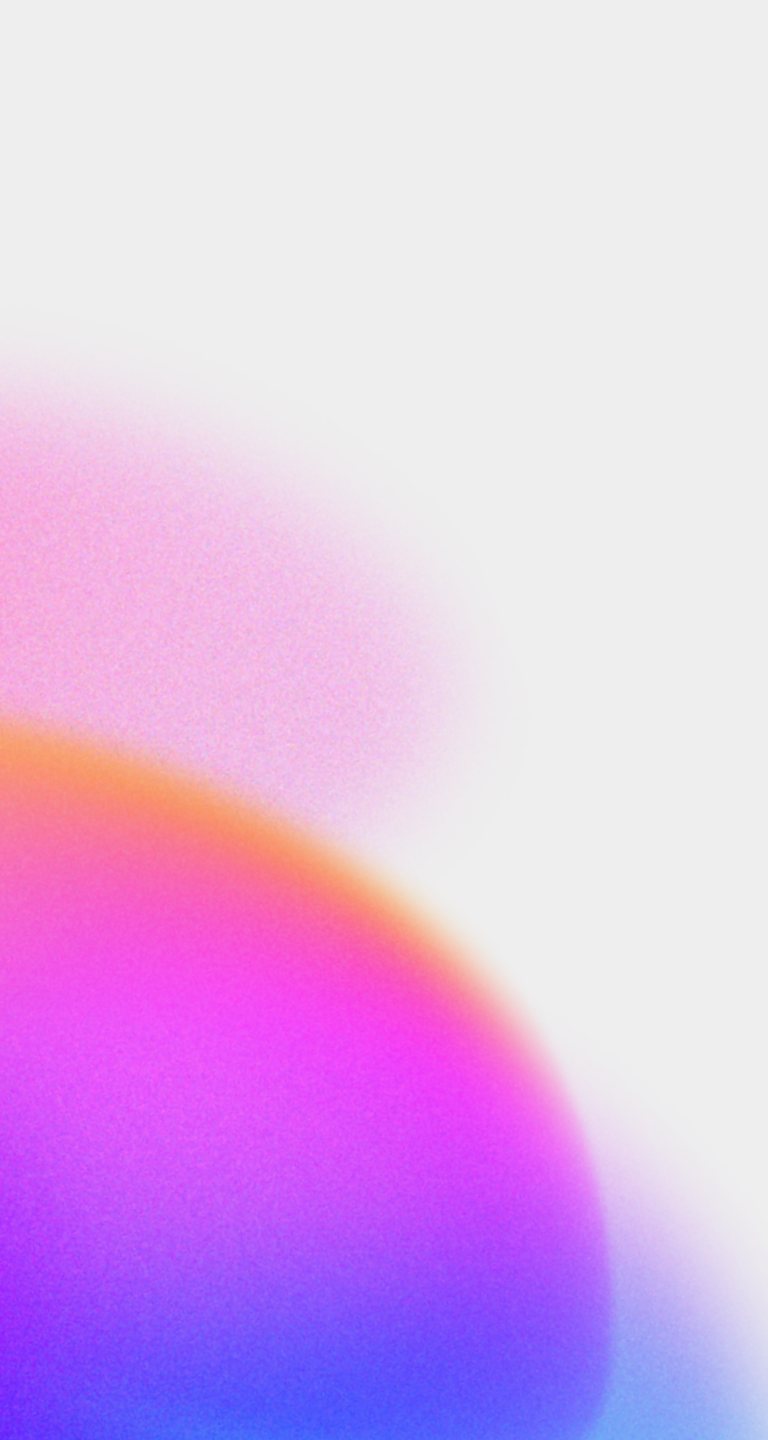
Cienan is optimistic about the untapped potential of AI for First Nations people.

“It could be learning our own morals, ethics, cultural protocols, understanding about the world and the social emotional wellbeing. It all stems from one person programming an algorithm to say ‘think more like a Blak person’.”

Preserving knowledge for the future

Cienan’s grandmother, the eldest of the Ngarrindjeri Mob, was the knowledge holder.

“This new technology around VR and AR, they provide a platform where we can put that knowledge from my grandmother in a place where it’s going to live forever,” he says. “It’s a keeping place. And my children, my children’s children can go to that keeping place knowing they’ll get knowledge from their community and they’ll have the chance to see their grandmother. That can be utilised for a lot of our historical events also, like the Cummeragunja Reserve Walk Off where a lot of our Elders walked off the mission in protest. There’s a lot of applications out there [so long as it’s gone] through the right avenues following cultural protocol, with our community in control.”



With AI technologies surging forward, First Nations artists are also entering uncharted territory, because AI does not hold all the answers.

Brett says: “I’m here challenged on how to build or how to program the flight of a boomerang in a three-dimensional world. You tell me anywhere in the world that someone has actually made a physics system for the flight of a boomerang in an interactive game environment.”

It means having a First Nations person at the helm, is vital.

“AI is not the complete, all-end tool,” Brett says. “It still requires us.”

Chapter 5

The Politics of AI: Navigating Ethics, Inclusion and Job Disruption in the Creative Industries

Moderator

[Andrea Ho](#) is AFTRS Discipline Lead for Radio and Podcasting and an experienced leader, broadcaster and content maker. She started in community broadcasting in Melbourne and NSW, at 3RRR and TUNE FM as well as at SRA (later part of SYN FM) and Channel 31. She then moved into ABC Radio, working in daily on-air presenting and journalism, and managing a regional station. She became Content Director at ABC Hobart, station manager of ABC Canberra, and then moved to executive leadership as Head of Planning, ABC Regional and Local. Andrea designed and introduced a system to track diversity in media content at the ABC, after completing a Churchill Fellowship investigating practical strategies for increasing cultural diversity in broadcast media.

Panellists

[Angela Stengel](#) is the head of ABC's Innovation Lab, which creates digital and social content for ABC and third-party platforms. Angela has previously worked in a broad range of digital content and product roles, often specialising in audio and is vice president of Sydney community radio station FBi. The intersection of humans and machines has always been of interest to her, as is engaging young and diverse audiences and exploring the uses of AI in media.

[Annabelle Sheehan](#) is a senior executive in the Asia Pacific and global screen industry. Most recently she was CEO of the New Zealand Film Commission and CEO of the South Australian Film Corporation. Annabelle's career began in post-production where she worked on feature films such as *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, *The Piano*, *Dead Calm*, *Fearless* and *The Portrait of a Lady*.

[Professor Jane Roscoe](#) is the President and Vice-Chancellor of the University for Creative Arts UCA in the UK. Prior to UCA, Jane was Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chair in Creative Industries at the University of Greenwich and also held leadership roles at the University of the West of England, Bristol, and the London Film School. Outside of academia, she was Head of Channels and Head of International Content at SBS (Special Broadcasting Service), and is a board member at the Barbican Arts Centre.

The widespread use and normalisation of AI in society and, particularly, in the screen and audio sectors, raises concerns about the real-world impact it will have on the people and jobs. In order to tackle these topics, discussions are emerging around training, Intellectual Property (IP) and rights, as well as developing and monitoring regulations, being ethical, and whose responsibility it is to address these issues.

The intersection of Policy, Ethics and AI

Professor Jane Roscoe, the president and Vice Chancellor of the University for Creative Arts UCA in the UK, says when grappling with ethical approaches to AI, her thoughts turn to regulation and policy. However, she does not believe in having a rigid set of rules.

“One of the things that’s difficult is this idea of having prefixed principles or ideas locked in place, because we need a more agile approach,” Jane says. “I’ve been thinking about what we might call situational ethics. It’s not an objective observer bystander approach to how we manage the ethics and morality issues around AI, but a very thoughtful, reflective consideration of the situation.

I’m interested in how we start to build a framework that’s more reflexive and ‘lean in’ a little more – not just put some rules in place and hope it all works out because it hasn’t so far.”

Angela Stengel, Head of Digital Content and Innovation at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) also gravitates toward the idea of situational ethics, “because jumping in and testing and having perspectives from different people is really when you can uncover what’s working and what’s not.”

Angela says the BBC have already published a set of principles around AI, while the ABC has developed a list with a diverse group of representatives.

“We haven’t published them yet but we have a group of thinkers across journalism, HR, legal, copyright, and software engineering who meet regularly to ask, ‘Have we got the right frameworks in place? Where are we piloting?’”

Jane says with situational ethics the onus of responsibility is on every individual to think about how their lived experience and values can influence decisions.

“AI makes the personal, political and the political personal,” she says. “It is about all of us engaging to help shape where

the government and policy makers go on this. And very much thinking about that next generation of both creatives and audiences.”

Angela believes to have an ethical approach, it’s important to recognise why you are wanting to work with AI, whether it’s cost-saving or a particular outcome.

“That’s really important for us at the ABC and part of our guidelines are around transparency and openness: being really clear with our audiences and our staff about where we’re using AI and why,” she says.

Annabelle Sheehan, a senior executive in the Asia Pacific and global screen industry, encourages all creatives interested in using AI – from students to established practitioners – to do some digging before they jump straight in.

“Make sure you’re researching that particular AI source and work out, ‘What did it train on? Am I happy with this company and brand of generative AI? Do I know that it’s an ethical company?’ Tools are not neutral in that sense and people need to make it their business if they’re going to use AI, to research and understand where it came from and if they are happy with what they’re using.”

Impact of AI on rights and IP

AI's impact on rights management is something that particularly interests Annabelle.

“We may be familiar with the harvesting of books and all sorts of data that AI has been trying to ingest in order to be smart – training on materials that doesn't belong to them or to companies such as ChatGPT,” she says. “There's a number of cases already in play, whether it be newspapers or novelists or screenwriters, saying ‘you've actually been training on my IP.’ And that's a really big ethical question. That's what drove, for example, the writers' and actors' strike. Both the deals by each of those two unions try to incorporate some guardrails, but it still does depend on who's going to police that and how it is going to be regulated.”

There is also debate around what happens when artists start creating with AI.

Annabelle says people who want to use AI need to understand copyright law and IP.

“You need to understand the chain of title for the material you're developing and then delivering. With the big companies

like Google and Meta harvesting copyrighted material, copyright offices everywhere are going to suddenly be having to deal with this issue and rule on it. We understand that AI material is not copyrightable. It needs a person to own it to represent it. You can't have something that was generated by AI and say ‘that's a Story By credit.’ So you need that understanding,” she says.

Jane believes this is again where situational ethics are important, as the debates happening right now may evolve in the future.

“There's the example in the UK around the dating of a piece of conceptual art. Is it the moment the human has the first idea, or is it this co-creation moment when AI and the human come together to make something? This is going to pose some real issues for monetization: who owns, who benefits, how it's used. I'm interested in this next step because leading a creative university, I've got students and staff starting to do this work now and having those conversations.”

Angela says in the Innovation Lab, they piloted using a synthetic voice to translate content into other languages, or make written content more accessible. They

turned to Radio Sydney presenter Sarah Macdonald to train the voice.

“Because you can read out 300 utterances and it creates your voice overnight, or the other technique we wanted to try was grabbing bits of audio from Sarah's show and then building a voice. There's so much audio of people's voices who work in radio that, just thinking about fake news, is available for anyone. That's the scary side of AI for me. Actually, on her program Sarah interviewed her AI self and was quite pleased that her AI self was able to learn Mandarin overnight, which she hasn't been able to do,” she says. “We've piloted it, we tested it with audiences but we haven't actually put it into production. We're not currently using it because we need to consider how we do this, if we're licensing somebody's voice. It's fraught with ethical considerations.”

Annabelle says people should be reading through the deals struck regarding AI, such as the SAG-AFTRA and WGA deals that are freely available to read online.

“We need to learn from anyone who's already starting the process and what ideas they have applied to this problem of proper compensation and control,” she says. “The value issue is all about

leverage. If you have a voice that's valuable and a persona, you're able to make leverage out of that, and you can be paid a lot for the re-use of your voice if you wish that to happen."

Jobs and training

When it comes to job disruption in the creative industries, there are two main schools of thought. One predicts a mass destruction of jobs that must be prevented at all costs, while the other assumes the changes will bring new waves of opportunities.

Jane says both sides of the argument are true.

"There will be certain parts of our industry and the arts sector generally that will disappear with the increased use of AI. Those lower ladder entry points in parts of the industry, especially in post-production, pre-viz, those sorts of things certainly will be – or are already – very impacted by AI and technology. But I [also] hear a lot from students saying the technology now allows them to do something they may have had to train in for a long time previously. They now have access to tools that help them skip a stage so they can

move on a little quicker," she says.

There have always been changes in jobs due to the disruption of new technology, Annabelle adds, "whether it was the introduction of sound or colour or television or CGI", and this is no different.

"If you really look at the high-budget drama series and feature films, those crew numbers have only ever expanded through the changes of technology," Annabelle says. "In my day when I was in editing rooms, there were four people in the picture edit group. There's probably ten now who are dealing with digital editing, if you looked at the *Oppenheimer* or *Barbie* edit department. So it's not as if we are seeing a reduction at that higher-end budget, and you can still edit a film as one person because of new technology without too much assistance."

Jane's focus is preparing the next generation of creatives to work in these new roles.

"There will inevitably be new roles. That's the interesting space for us in education, thinking about how we might create curricula around producing people who can navigate that space and upskilling and creating new pathways," she says.

"What we have in the education sector is a huge amount of really fantastic research and development. What perhaps we don't see so quickly is that filtering through into curricula and the experience of students. I think it's about working with our institutions and tech companies to [bridge that gap between] research and development, and with teaching and learning. There's pockets of excellence and some real areas where we're lagging behind, so it's for us to take up that challenge."

Annabelle sees upskilling in AI as a type of professional development.

"I believe there could be some really valuable training for professionals in how to interact with and evolve with new AI programs. Professionals should be learning it and certainly emerging practitioners should be learning it."

AI and Inclusivity

AI is starting to be used as a tool to tackle the lack of diversity and inclusivity.

It's an area that Jane says feels more hopeful.

"I'm having conversations around

research projects that will look at using different types of AI to help with neurodiversity, to open up some spaces where people can work differently, learn differently and so on,” she says.

Another application is understanding data.

Annabelle says: “We’ve seen some great reports about what’s happening for people of diverse backgrounds in terms of employment and of the stories being told and AI analytics can only further support us by providing increased analysis of diversity and inclusion of people behind the scenes and people on camera.”

Angela says organisations like CSIRO are already doing work in Diversity and Inclusion in Artificial Intelligence and attempting to create inclusive AI.

“It just depends on our intention. Where’s something that we want to change and where can large datasets help? I think of the work that CSIRO are doing and capturing a diversity of perspectives in training these models so they reflect the society that we live in and not the world that is reflected in, say, Silicon Valley.”

Jane says the possibility of change will only happen with everybody doing their part.

“The burden of responsibility lies with us all to deal with inclusivity, not just with those communities we feel have been underrepresented,” she says.

Audiences also have more power than they perhaps realise.

Annabelle says the acceleration of diverse content and success of the streaming platforms was thanks to consumer power and audiences.

“Suddenly audiences were absolutely driving taste and the way in which streamers operated and what they chose, as the analytics around what everybody watched started to be used by streamers. People commenting on AI need to keep mentioning the power of the consumer to say, ‘I’m not interested in that kind of work. I want to see more of myself or the diversity of the world on screen’,” she says.

“Audiences have a lot more power than they think.”

SESSION THREE

AUGMENTED CREATIVITY

LAST TWO YEARS GENERATIVE AI HAS CREATED FAR REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



AI WAS USED TO CREATE A LOOKALIKE AUDIENCE FOR ABC CREATIVE ON THEIR PODCAST AFRICAN FOLKTALES. THE VOICE ARTIST THEY HIRED WAS A DIRECT RESULT OF AI TESTING.

IT'S NOT CLEAR ABOUT OWNERSHIP & IP ARE AROUND AI MODELS...

AI CAN HELP US ACHIEVE SCALE THAT CAN'T BE ACHIEVED WITH PEOPLE ALONE...

AI IS BUILT ON DATA, SO FOR A BROADCASTER LIKE ABC WHICH HAS DEEP CONTENT ARCHIVES THERE IS HUGE POTENTIAL

ARTISTS NEED TO TAKE THE MANTLE AND CHALLENGE AI

WE SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM THE IDEA OF PRESSING A BUTTON AND GETTING SOMETHING...

AFTRS 2024 DIGITAL FUTURES SUMMIT

AI AND THE CREATIVE HORIZON

IT'S WHAT I CALL A VIRTUAL WALKABOUT

SESSION FOUR

INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY & AI: STORING CULTURAL PRACTICES & RECLAIMING NARRATIVES THROUGH AI, FILM RADIO AND BEYOND

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES HAVE LIVED HERE MORE THAN 60,000 YEARS

GIVE SOVEREIGN DATA BACK TO FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

IT'S THE RIGHT OF FIRST NATION PEOPLES TO GOVERN, COLLECT OWN & APPLY THAT DATA

THERE'S UNTAPPED FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES EVERYWHERE

AI & NEW TECHNOLOGIES OFFER ANOTHER WAY OF TELLING THESE STORIES

THERE'S 400,000 STORIES YOU CAN TELL TOMORROW...

I'VE USED AI TO BUILD 11,000 META HUMANS BASED ON HISTORICAL DATA

FIRST NATION ARTISTS ARE ENTERING UNCHARTERED TERRITORY BECAUSE AI DOES NOT HOLD ALL THE ANSWERS

AI IS NOT THE COMPLETE END ALL TOOL, IT STILL REQUIRES US...

SESSION FIVE

THE POLITICS OF AI: NAVIGATING ETHICS, INCLUSION AND JOB DISRUPTION IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

WITH THE ETHICS OF AI

IT'S DIFFICULT TO HAVE PREFIXED PRINCIPLES OR IDEAS LOCKED IN PLACE

WE NEED TO TAKE A VERY THOUGHTFUL & REFLECTIVE CONSIDERATION OF THE SITUATION

SITUATIONAL ETHICS MAY ALLOW US TO TAKE A MORE AGILE APPROACH

THE ONUS IS ON ALL OF US TO THINK ABOUT HOW OUR LIVE EXPERIENCES CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS

WE MUST HELP SHAPE WHERE GOVERNMENT & POLICY MAKERS GO...

BE CLEAR WITH OUR AUDIENCE & STAFF ABOUT WHERE WE ARE USING AI & WHY...

AI CAN HELP WITH DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY, HELPING TO CAPTURE A WIDE RANGE OF PERSPECTIVES

AUDIENCES HAVE MORE POWER THAN THEY THINK...

This ebook was published by AFTRS Research as an edited version of the conversations had during the fourth edition of the Digital Future Summit 2024, *AI and the Creative Horizon*.

Text edited by Caris Bizzaca.

Illustrated Insights by Alan Chen | SH8PESHIFTERS.COM.

Brand and ebook design by Maria Harding.

How to cite this document

Digital Future Summit 2024, *AI and the Creative Horizon* (2024). Sydney: The Australian Film, Television and Radio School. aftrs.edu.au © The Australian Film, Television and Radio School 2024.

The Summit was programmed by Maddie Duncan, Sue Elphinstone, Maija Howe, Dr Tara Lomax, Robbie Miles, Jane Newtown and Natalie Pozdeev and led by Dr Alejandra Canales.

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