Does AI Enhance or Inhibit Creativity?

Adina Cruz

Introduction

Creativity and expression can take almost any form, and as humanity advances, so do our methods for innovation. However, humans have also come to the conclusion that we need to work smarter, not harder, in an effort to eliminate labor-based systems. I believe that as a result, we are now beginning to struggle to find the joy in creating and devaluing our minds, coupled with the concern that most creations made with AI are unethically sourced by harmful tech companies trying to monopolize AI. In this essay, I will be exploring the connection and differences between human expression, machine learning and databases, questioning our gradual detachment from reality, and the goals and values of the companies who claim that AI is now the future.

What is Generative AI?

Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence technology that can produce various types of content including text, imagery, audio, and synthetic data. Companies like Google, Meta, ChatGPT, Microsoft, and others advertise their intelligences as a technology that bridges the gap between creativity and innovation, being able to solve any problem that a human cannot.

Midjourney

ChatGPT

Hugging Face

DALL·E 2

stability.ai

Bard

NovelAI

CapCut

Google AI

Bing

OpenAI

character.ai

Copyrights

As AI began to take the world by storm, the hardest hit industries are currently the media and entertainment industries–career paths one would expect to require a significant amount of creativity for writing, drawing, filmmaking, and more. GenAI learns by recognizing patterns in the data it is being fed, and the open-source material all over the internet gives it unlimited access. Jordan Lloyd, British historian and author, describes the disconnect as such in Shumakova, N. I., et al. "Towards Legal Regulations of Generative AI in the Creative Industry: Shumakova." Journal of Digital Technologies and Law, 23 Dec. 2023

"Copyright Law as written covers expressions created by human endeavour. As noted, the creation of prompts is based on human imagination, but the resulting process and generated asset is not, therefore cannot be copyrighted if we accept the prevailing mindset. I akin Generative AI to a form of gambling, like a slot machine at a casino. Spinning the reels creates variations, where you can lock in certain variations you like, then spin the reel again to achieve a more desirable result. This is, more or less, how prompters work when utilising Generative AI". The question that always follows the discussion about the legal status of generative AI is whether we can protect products generated with the use of it as objects of copyright law and intellectual property rights. Again, as we established earlier, under the letter of law it is possible in several countries. But the question is – should we do it? "No, or at least, it should have a new form of copyright / intellectual property (IP) protection framework to cover assets generated by AI as a distinctly separate entity from existing copyright law. The existing copyright framework is not perfect but it is well established, benefiting creators and IP businesses alike. The protections and reimbursements offered by the existing system are of course, under threat from the deluge of AI generated assets. I read somewhere that it took just nine months to generate as many 'new' artworks as there have been in the entirety of recorded history. Clearly, copyright and IP legislation will need to act fast in order to protect original creators".

AI in Academia

While AI adds a new level of accessibility to endless creation and cognitive exploration, the sometimes-allowed use in schools and universities are "eliminating" the need for complex thinking and problem-solving. However, if an ethical approach were to be made to assist teachers and students, it might allow for an easier workflow and steady amounts of productivity. On the flip side, high school and college students who often struggle with procrastination and deadlines are more likely to use ChatGPT. Siva Vaidhyanathan, professor of Media Studies at the University of Virginia, found this to be true in the case of her class of 120 students.

Guardian News and Media. (2023, May 19). *My students are using AI to cheat. here's why it's a teachable moment*. The Guardian.
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/18/ai-cheating-teaching-chatgpt-students-college-university

In my spring lecture course of 120 students, my teaching assistants caught four examples of students using artificial-intelligence-driven language programs like ChatGPT to complete short essays. In each case, the students confessed to using such systems and agreed to rewrite the assignments themselves.

With all the panic about how students might use these systems to get around the burden of actually learning, we often forget that as of 2023, the systems don't work well at all. It was easy to spot these fraudulent essays. They contained spectacular errors. They used text that did not respond to the prompt we had issued to students. Or they just sounded unlike what a human would write.

Our policy, given that this was the first wave of such cheating we encountered (and with full consideration that all students at the University of Virginia pledge to follow an "honour code" when they enrol), was to start a conversation with each student. We decided to make this moment work toward the goal of learning.

We asked them why they were tempted to use these services rather than their own efforts, which, for a two-page essay, would have been minimal. In each case, they said they were overwhelmed by demands of other courses and life itself.

Creativity beyond the arts being affected

The increased use of AI has led to the steady decline of labor jobs, although some would argue that the rise of tech jobs will increase productivity, create more jobs, which will in turn boost the economy of the United States. According to Indeed, one of the leading job search companies in the United States, claims that generative AI will impact almost every job in America in some way, especially as remote work becomes more available.

*Virtually every job will face some level of exposure to potential GenAI-driven change. But while GenAI can learn to do some tasks reasonably well, it is unlikely to fully replace many jobs— especially those that require manual skills and/or deep personal connections. For a PDF summary of key findings from this research, **please click here.** And for a PDF version of the entire report, **please click here.***

- All jobs face some potential exposure to GenAI-driven change. While only 19.8% of jobs face the highest level of potential exposure, more than a third (34.6%) face the lowest potential exposure.
- Unlike prior advances in robotics and computing that largely impacted manual labor, roles filled by knowledge workers are potentially the most exposed to change from generative AI.
- Driving roles face the lowest potential exposure to skills GenAI could reasonably replace or augment, while software development roles face the highest potential exposure.
- As the labor market continues to adjust to the rise of remote work, the higher the odds are that a job can be done remotely, the greater its potential exposure is to GenAI.
- Many of the jobs most in demand from employers in today's tight labor market are among those with the least potential exposure to GenAI-driven change. A majority (20) of the 25 most common jobs posted on Indeed currently face a lower potential exposure to GenAI than the average job posting.

Artists and Writers Combatting AI

Sarah Andersen, Kelly McKernan, Karla Ortiz, and several other artists are plaintiffs who teamed up to sue several generative AI and art-sharing websites for the allowed copyright infringement to take place and be displayed on their platforms. To combat further scraping, computer scientists from the University of Chicago created Glaze, "a tool designed to alter how AI training algorithms perceive the style of digital artwork to confuse the models." Artists apply this "glaze" over their finalized images to prevent recognizable patterns to be detected by generative AI.

Joseph R. Saveri (State Bar No. 130064)
Cadio Zirpoli (State Bar No. 179108)
Christopher K.L. Young (State Bar No. 318371)
Elissa A. Buchanan (State Bar No. 249996)
Travis Manfredi (State Bar No. 281779)
JOSEPH SAVERI LAW FIRM, LLP
601 California Street, Suite 1000
San Francisco, California 94108
Telephone: (415) 500-6800
Facsimile: (415) 395-9940
Email: jsaveri@saverilawfirm.com
              czirpoli@saverilawfirm.com
              cyoung@saverilawfirm.com
              eabuchanan@saverilawfirm.com
              tmanfredi@saverilawfirm.com

Counsel for Individual and Representative
Plaintiffs and the Proposed Class

[Additional Counsel Listed on Signature Page]

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

Sarah Andersen, an individual;   Case No. 3:23-cv-00201-WHO
Kelly McKernan, an individual;
Karla Ortiz, an individual;
H. Southworth pka Hawke Southworth, an   **FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT**
individual;
Grzegorz Rutkowski, an individual;   **CLASS ACTION**
Gregory Manchess, an individual;
Gerald Brom, an individual;   **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**
Jingna Zhang, an individual;
Julia Kaye, an individual;
Adam Ellis, an individual;

        Individual and Representative Plaintiffs,

        v.

Stability AI Ltd., a UK corporation;
Stability AI, Inc., a Delaware corporation;
DeviantArt, Inc., a Delaware corporation;
Midjourney, Inc., a Delaware corporation;
Runway AI, Inc., a Delaware corporation;

        Defendants.

Case No. 3:23-cv-00201-WHO
FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT

Artists and Writers Combatting AI (cont).

The Writers Guild of America strike that occurred in 2023 wasn't the first to happen, but it was the latest since 1988 to disrupt Hollywood to the capacity it has. Writers demanded fair compensation, health benefits, pensions, writing credits and residuals, and the explicit disclosure if writers are being handed material made by AI to "tweak" whatever scripts they're working on. After 148 days and many empty negotiations, Hollywood agreed to a tentative deal with WGA–which shows that Hollywood still has a long way to go when it comes to ethics.

"Us" vs "Them"

It is not generative AI merely existing that is harmful, but the notion that humans no longer have a need to use more brain power than necessary. "Work smarter, not harder", but the work was really done by someone else, then the program puts whatever spin you asked for in the prompts. This may seem harmless, but in a post-pandemic, internet-rich, and maybe even lazy society, creativity no longer represents hard work, nor the satisfaction of making something all on your own. Maybe some people prefer not to be so hands-on, but as it stands, AI is currently doing the thinking for us–and it's not doing a good job, because the programs cannot understand consciousness, but it only attempts to copy someone else's. The human touch is becoming a thing of the past.
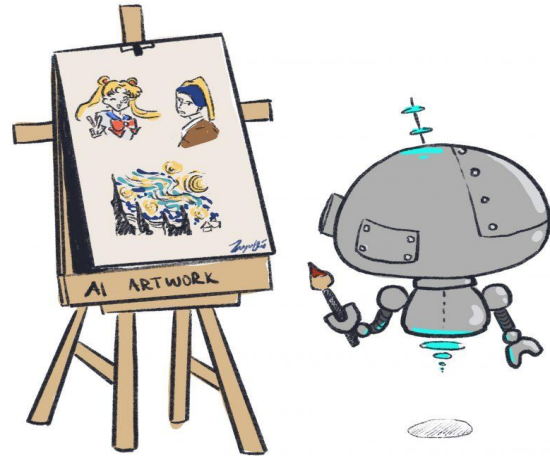
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