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- 131. How to spot deepfake videos and photos

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143. The AI Studio Ghibli trend is an insult to art and artists



[Google has found a new role for the man who broke Google Search](#)

BGR

October 17, 2024

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Length: 608 words

Byline: Andy Meek

Body

Google has found a new job for Prabhakar Raghavan, the executive largely responsible for running Google Search [into the ground](#) over the last four years - a period that's seen Google's search engine increasingly prioritize [AI slop](#), shove [more ads than ever](#) at users, give Forbes and Reddit links priority placement, and basically make it harder than it's ever been to find what you're actually looking for.

Raghavan - who, before he came to Google, oversaw search at Yahoo during its decline from 2005 through 2012 - will now be Google's chief technologist, working closely with CEO Sundar Pichai. "Prabhakar has decided it's time to make a big leap in his own career," Pichai wrote in a [memo to Googlers](#). "After 12 years leading teams across Google, he'll return to his computer science roots and take on the role of Chief Technologist, Google. In this role, he'll partner closely with me and Google leads to provide technical direction and leadership and grow our culture of tech excellence."

Ok, whatever.

Looks like Google finally realized the fish rots from the head ... Search results have been decaying for a while, and now Prabhakar Raghavan is out. Let's hope for some much-needed improvement. [#google #seo pic.twitter.com/qmO0kkV7hZ](#)

- Scott Gabdullin (@ScottGabdullin) [October 17, 2024](#)

Google's head of search isn't just being replaced. He's being promoted. An effective remedy to Google's Search monopoly would terminate his employment and anyone else whose predatory conduct gave rise to Google's monopoly. <https://t.co/O9kF3efQ3A>

- Lee Hepner (@LeeHepner) [October 17, 2024](#)

Google has found a new role for the man who broke Google Search

I'll admit it, I was over the moon about this news ... at first. And then I noticed who Google is replacing Raghavan with: Nick Fox, a Googler who, before his stint at the company, worked as a consultant at McKinsey - aka, [one of the most loathsome](#) corporations in the history of mankind. Meaning, another bean counter is in charge of the biggest search engine on the planet and will, in all likelihood, continue Raghavan's work of packing Google Search with ads, spam, SEO-optimized content, and **AI** that summarizes as much of all that as it can.

Meantime, giving you what you're looking for remains the last thing Google Search actually cares about.

I can't tell you how many times I have to shift over to an alternative search engine, like DuckDuckGo, to find something useful when I'm doing a search. Hell, the other day, I was trying to find a specific article I'd written in the past for a specific outlet, and even though I attached the outlet's name to my search query, Google's **AI** Overview still gave me what other outlets had written about the same thing (which matters, because some people are just going to stop there, with those **AI** Overviews that take over the top of the search results page).

Furthermore, few things signal the inexorable decline of Google Search as its desperate inclusion of crap like YouTube links and in-line YouTube videos, as well as Reddit and Quora threads plus garbage from Forbes, all of which seem to take up prime spots for the majority of searches these days. Never mind that if users like me wanted a damn YouTube video, we would ... wait for it ... just go to YouTube. It's abundantly clear to people like me, whose livelihoods revolve around online publishing, that Raghavan's tenure as the head of Google Search represents one of the most remarkable leadership failures at any tech company in years. And we're all still paying for it.

[*Don't Miss: Maybe Google's new 'reasoning AI' can address the Hawk Tuah spam all over Google Maps*](#)

The post [Google has found a new role for the man who broke Google Search](#) appeared first on [BGR](#).

Load-Date: October 17, 2024



[Vote Yes On Locking Artist's Voices In Contractual Seashells Like The Little Mermaid](#)

Newstex Blogs

Techdirt

October 17, 2024 Thursday 7:06 PM EST

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Byline: Mike Masnick

Body

October 17th, 2024 ([Techdirt](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

We are living under a sea of **AI**-generated **slop**, where **AI** deepfakes and non-consensual intimate content abound. Congress, a self-interested creature, naturally wants to create protections for themselves, their favorite celebrities, and their wealthy donors against online impersonation. But until now, visions of so-called **AI** protections have been limited. From my lair, I've seen how Big Content might use congressional panic about **AI** abuse to make a many-tentacled power grab. With the [NO FAKES and No AI FRAUD Acts, it's delicious to report that we have done exactly that.](#)

Inspired by my seashell-prisons, in which I trap the sweet voices of mermaids looking to rise, these bills would let corporations and trade associations like mine control not only the tongues of young musicians, actors, or authors-but their whole face and body. It has been incredibly lucrative for Big Content to monopolize other intellectual property rights, so that we could prevent [Prince from singing his pesky 'art' under his own name and block Taylor Swift from buying back her early recordings from powerful enemies. It is far past time that new and more invasive rights are created, ones that allow us to make AI-generated deepfakes of artists singing the songs that we like, dressing in the way we desire, promoting the causes we approve, and endorsing the presidential candidates that we want to endorse.](#)

Since teenagers, abuse survivors, and artists started suffering from **AI** deepfakes, our leaps toward victory have been enlivened by the sirens we've convinced [to testify on behalf of concepts like consent, the struggle of artists for respect and dignity, and the importance of human art. They have unwittingly obscured our true aims with the beauty of their voices, and the results are glorious, netting legislation that would lure not only artists, but anyone at all, into crashing on the rocks.](#)

If these bills pass, the vulnerable and desperate will also be lured into trading rights to their voices and faces for almost nothing-a month's rent or a week's groceries. A paid electricity bill. And for that we will amass vast libraries of captive voices and faces that we can license out to whomever will pay, to use as broadly and vaguely as we

Vote Yes On Locking Artist's Voices In Contractual Seashells Like The Little Mermaid

desire. **AI**-generated intimate content, political advertising, hate speech-sources of vast wealth currently being tapped by small-time influencers and foreign regimes. Many will pay richly to **AI**-generate another to deliver their message. This sea witch fully intends to insert herself in such a growing market.

And oh, the markets! The No **AI** FRAUD Act is particularly clever in its moves to kill alternative markets and competition for us, the biggest players in Content. With copious lawsuits, we will be able to smite any who dare attempt reenactments and parody, who depict a historical figure in a movie or sketch comedy, who make memes of a celebrity. After all, how dare they? Did they think the First Amendment was written for their drive?

Even better, we will be able to sue social media platforms, too, for hosting such content. Although, social media companies have [historically made moves to aggressively filter or shut down content they could be sued over. Ultimately, they may proactively smite our competition on our behalf-becoming an even more honed instrument for our supremacy. Either way, we win.](#)

Censorship, you say? Perhaps. But if most of the human faces that are displayed online are the ones we own or sell licenses to, the dollar signs would fill a sea. And, we would own the faces of each person not only during their life, but these laws would let us own them for 70 years after their deaths.

NO FAKES in its turn is an eloquent symphony of conformity. It allows us to claim that any video, photo, or recording we do not like is an **AI** deepfake and have it removed from the Internet forever. The bill offers no recourse to anyone we might-oopsie-censor with our richly programmed armies of bots and filters. There is no mechanism to put content back online or punish a big content company for lying about a takedown request-well, unless you want to face down our armies of lawyers in federal court, that is. This one is all about who has the most money and power, darlings.

With these bills, we will tighten our many-tentacled stranglehold over arts and culture, ensuring that only those we profit from succeed-and that these choice humans need act only minimally once we have secured their **AI** likeness. No more pesky frailties or artistic preferences to contend with. No more divas unless we deepfake them. This is why we must make our utmost effort to pass NO FAKES and No **AI** FRAUD- before creators and the public catch on and discover that these bills don't fight deepfakes, they solidify control of them amongst the most powerful players while obliterating consent.

We must act swiftly to purchase politicians and parade our most convincing messengers-the artists themselves-to demand Little Mermaid laws. These poor unfortunate souls are already falling into the grips of NDAs, brand protection agreements, [other assignable rights, noncompetes, existing IP law, and everything else our lawyers can brew up. We just need one final, strong brew to cement control, and then artists' ability to speak and appear publicly or online will be safe in our contractual seashells. There will be a new era of peace and harmony, as artists and creators won't be able to agitate and contribute to conflict as pesky 'activists'. They will be quiet and only sing when told to. And, our pretties will be able to sing their hearts out even if they become sick, ugly, impoverished, or die-because we hold their **AI** replicas.](#)

After all, a star need not be human to shine, and if the human artist cannot speak without our permission, no one will know the difference anyway!

Ursula the Sea Witch, best known for cutting one of the hottest ever sub-marine deals with Mermaid Ariel to trap her voice in a seashell along with other poor unfortunate souls, was recently promoted to the C-suite of the Under-The-Sea Content Trade Association. There, her leadership focuses on expanding her pioneering work with Ariel, aiming to lock voices away without any true love's kiss to set them free by 2026-and for complete, non consensual-yet-legal **AI** impersonation of all artists under contract by 2027. Ursula the Sea Witch is also the evil(er) alter-ego of [Lia Holland, Campaigns and Communications Director at digital rights organization Fight for the Future.](#)

[Link to the original story.](#)

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I'm running out of ways to explain how bad this is

Newstex Blogs

Alaska Dispatch

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Body

October 17th, 2024 ([Alaska Dispatch](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

The truth is, it's getting harder to describe the extent to which a meaningful percentage of Americans have dissociated from reality. As Hurricane Milton churned across the Gulf of Mexico, I saw an onslaught of outright conspiracy theorizing and utter nonsense racking up millions of views across the internet. The posts would be laughable if they weren't taken by many people as gospel. Among them: Infowars' Alex Jones, who [claimed that Hurricanes Milton and Helene were 'weather weapons' unleashed on the East Coast by the U.S. government, and 'truth seeker' accounts on X that posted photos of condensation trails in the sky to baselessly allege that the government was 'spraying Florida ahead of Hurricane Milton' in order to ensure maximum rainfall, 'just like they did over Asheville!'](#)

As Milton made landfall, causing a series of tornados, a verified account on X reposted a TikTok video of a massive funnel cloud with the caption 'WHAT IS HAPPENING TO FLORIDA?!' The clip, which was eventually removed but had been viewed 662,000 times, turned out to be from a video of a CGI tornado that was originally published months ago. Scrolling through these platforms, watching them [fill with false information, harebrained theories, and doctored images — all while panicked residents boarded up their houses, struggled to evacuate, and prayed that their worldly possessions wouldn't be obliterated overnight — offered a portrait of American discourse almost too bleak to reckon with head-on.](#)

Even in a decade marred by online grifters, shameless politicians, and an alternative right-wing-media complex pushing anti-science fringe theories, the events of the past few weeks stand out for their depravity and nihilism. As two catastrophic storms upended American cities, a patchwork network of influencers and fake news peddlers have done their best to sow distrust, stoke resentment, and interfere with relief efforts. But this is more than just a misinformation crisis. To watch as real information is overwhelmed by crank theories and public servants [battle death threats is to confront two alarming facts: first, that a durable ecosystem exists to ensconce citizens in an alternate reality, and second, that the people consuming and amplifying those lies are not helpless dupes but willing participants.](#)

Some of the lies and obfuscation are politically motivated, such as the claim that FEMA is offering only \$750 in total to hurricane victims who have lost their home. (In [reality, FEMA offers \\$750 as immediate 'Serious Needs](#)

I'm running out of ways to explain how bad this is

Assistance' to help people get basic supplies such as food and water.) Donald Trump, J. D. Vance, and Fox News have all repeated that lie. Trump also posted (and later deleted) on Truth Social that FEMA money was given to undocumented migrants, which is untrue. Elon Musk, who owns X, claimed — without evidence — that FEMA was 'actively blocking shipments and seizing goods and services locally and locking them away to state they are their own. It's very real and scary how much they have taken control to stop people helping.' That post has been viewed more than 40 million times. Other influencers, such as the Trump sycophant Laura Loomer, have urged their followers to disrupt the disaster agency's efforts to help hurricane victims. 'Do not comply with FEMA,' she posted on X. 'This is a matter of survival.'

The result of this fearmongering is what you might expect. Angry, embittered citizens have been harassing government officials in North Carolina, as well as FEMA employees. According to an analysis by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, an extremism-research group, 'Falsehoods around hurricane response have spawned credible threats and incitement to violence directed at the federal government,' including 'calls to send militias to face down FEMA.' The study also found that 30 percent of the X posts analyzed by ISD 'contained overt antisemitic hate, including abuse directed at public officials such as the Mayor of Asheville, North Carolina; the FEMA Director of Public Affairs; and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.' The posts received a collective 17.1 million views as of October 7.

Online, first responders are pleading with residents, asking for their help to combat the flood of lies and conspiracy theories. FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said that the volume of misinformation could hamper relief efforts. 'If it creates so much fear that my staff doesn't want to go out in the field, then we're not going to be in a position where we can help people,' she said in a news conference on Tuesday. In Pensacola, Florida, Assistant Fire Chief Bradley Boone vented his frustrations on Facebook ahead of Milton's arrival: 'I'm trying to rescue my community,' he said in a livestream. 'I ain't got time. I ain't got time to chase down every Facebook rumor We've been through enough.'

It is difficult to capture the nihilism of the current moment. The pandemic saw Americans, distrustful of authority, trying to discredit effective vaccines, spreading conspiracy theories, and attacking public health officials. But what feels novel in the aftermath of this month's hurricanes is how the people doing the lying aren't even trying to hide the provenance of their bullshit. Similarly, those sharing the lies are happy to admit that they do not care whether what they're pushing is real or not. Such was the case when Republican politicians shared an **AI**-generated viral image of a little girl holding a puppy while supposedly fleeing Helene. Though the image was clearly fake and quickly debunked, some politicians remained defiant. 'Y'all, I don't know where this photo came from and honestly, it doesn't matter,' Amy Kremer, who represents Georgia on the Republican National Committee, wrote after sharing the fake image. 'I'm leaving it because it is emblematic of the trauma and pain people are living through right now.'

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Kremer wasn't alone. The journalist Parker Molloy compiled screenshots of people 'acknowledging that this image is AI but still insisting that it's real on some deeper level' — proof, Molloy noted, that we're 'living in the post-reality.' The technology writer Jason Koebler argued that we've entered the '#216;Fuck It' Era' of AI slop and political messaging, with AI-generated images being used to convey whatever partisan message suits the moment, regardless of truth.

This has all been building for more than a decade. On 'The Colbert Report,' back in 2005, Stephen Colbert coined the word truthiness, which he defined as 'the belief in what you feel to be true rather than what the facts will support.' This reality-fracturing is the result of an information ecosystem that is dominated by platforms that offer financial and attentional incentives to lie and enrage, and to turn every tragedy and large event into a shameless content-creation opportunity. This collides with a swath of people who would rather live in an alternate reality built on distrust and grievance than change their fundamental beliefs about the world. But the misinformation crisis is not always what we think it is.

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So much of the conversation around misinformation suggests that its primary job is to persuade. But as Michael Caulfield, an information researcher at the University of Washington, has [argued](#), *'The primary use of 'misinformation' is not to change the beliefs of other people at all. Instead, the vast majority of misinformation is offered as a service for people to maintain their beliefs in face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.'* [This distinction is important, in part because it assigns agency to those who consume and share obviously fake information. What is clear from comments such as Kremer's is that she is not a dupe; although she may come off as deeply incurious and shameless, she is publicly admitting to being an active participant in the far right's world-building project, where feel is always greater than real.](#)

What we're witnessing online during and in the aftermath of these hurricanes is a group of people desperate to protect the dark, fictitious world they've built. Rather than deal with the realities of a warming planet hurling once-in-a-generation storms at them every few weeks, they'd rather malign and threaten meteorologists, who, in their minds, are 'nothing but a trained subversive liar programmed to spew stupid shit to support the global warming bullshit,' as [one X user put it](#). *It is a strategy designed to silence voices of reason, because those voices threaten to expose the cracks in their current worldview. But their efforts are doomed, futile. As one dispirited meteorologist wrote on X this week, 'Murdering meteorologists won't stop hurricanes.'* [She followed with: 'I can't believe I just had to type that.'](#)

What is clear is that a new framework is needed to describe this fracturing. Misinformation is too technical, too freighted, and, after almost a decade of Trump, too political. Nor does it explain what is really happening, which is nothing less than a cultural assault on any person or institution that operates in reality. If you are a weatherperson, you're a target. The same goes for journalists, election workers, scientists, doctors, and first responders. These jobs are different, but the thing they share is that they all must attend to and describe the world as it is. This makes them dangerous to people who cannot abide by the agonizing constraints of reality, as well as those who have financial and political interests in keeping up the charade.

In one sense, these attacks — and their increased desperation — make sense. The world feels dark; for many people, it's tempting to meet that with a retreat into the delusion that they've got everything figured out, that the powers that be have conspired against them directly. But in turning away, they exacerbate a [crisis that has characterized the Trump era, one that will reverberate to Election Day and beyond. Americans are divided not just by political beliefs but by whether they believe in a shared reality — or desire one at all.](#)

Charlie Warzel is a staff writer at [The Atlantic and the author of its newsletter Galaxy Brain, about technology, media, and big ideas](#). [He is a co-author of Out of Office: The Big Problem and Bigger Promise of Working From Home. Previously he was a writer at large for The New York Times' Opinion section and a senior writer at BuzzFeed News.](#)

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Crikey

October 16, 2024 Wednesday 11:11:20 GMT

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Length: 565 words

Byline: Crikey

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Crikey

October 16, 2024 Wednesday 11:11:20 GMT

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Length: 565 words

Byline: Crikey

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Students asked to analyse a 'photograph' they suspect is AI-generated in HSC exam

Crikey

October 16, 2024 Wednesday 11:11:20 GMT

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Length: 565 words

Byline: Crikey

Body

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Kaiber Launches Superstudio, a New Creative AI Platform for Seamless Image and Video Generation;
Superstudio Integrates State-of-the-Art Image and Video Models



Kaiber Launches Superstudio, a New Creative AI Platform for Seamless Image and Video Generation; Superstudio Integrates State-of-the-Art Image and Video Models and Tools into a Creator-Friendly Interface. Kaiber Also Announces Funding Round Led by EQT Ventures with Crush Ventures Participating.

Business Wire

October 16, 2024 Wednesday 3:30 PM GMT

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Length: 1311 words

Dateline: SAN FRANCISCO

Body

Kaiber, a creative technology company focused on human and **AI** collaboration, today announces the launch of Superstudio, an **AI**-native platform redefining how creatives interact with generative **AI**. In addition to this, the company is also pleased to announce that it has raised a funding round from EQT Ventures and Crush Ventures. Addressing the challenge of fragmented workflows, models, and tools, Superstudio provides a unified, intuitive interface where human imagination and machine intelligence collaborate seamlessly.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20241016279399/en/>

Superstudio's canvas interface, featuring image and video models and outputs (Graphic: Business Wire)

Superstudio offers a highly curated selection of foundational models for image and video creation, including Luma Lab's Dream Machine, Black Forest Labs' Flux, and Kaiber's own image and video models. Its intuitive Canvas interface allows creators to easily combine their ideas with **AI**-generated content, sparking new creative possibilities. By integrating diverse tools and models into a single platform, Superstudio empowers artists and designers to push the boundaries of their craft while maintaining full control over their creative vision.

"Creatives are stuck in a loop of slow, ugly **AI slop** and disjointed workflows, paying 5-10 subscriptions to make one asset," said Victor Wang, CEO of Kaiber. "With Superstudio, we've created a home base for the new forms of creativity emerging as humans collaborate with machines. Our focus has always been putting human creativity first, and Superstudio empowers artists to seamlessly integrate **AI** into their process, amplifying their taste without sacrificing originality."

Superstudio evolved in real-time leading up to this launch through projects with renowned names such as Yaeji, Boiler Room, Praying, Jon Rafman, Grimes, Chief Keef, and Andrew Thomas Huang.

Kaiber Launches Superstudio, a New Creative AI Platform for Seamless Image and Video Generation; Superstudio Integrates State-of-the-Art Image and Video Models

"The emerging culture around **AI** is lacking an artist-driven vision. We know artists deserve better," said Kyt Janae, multidisciplinary artist and Head of Creative at Kaiber. "Automating and optimizing creativity is not the goal. As an artist, experimenting with and adopting new tools is a sacred act, not driven by the latest and greatest features, but by the pursuit of turning a vision into reality. Kaiber is pushing the landscape of creative **AI** forward with a product that supercharges the creative process. We've worked exclusively with visionaries who understand and want to build this new future with us. We're here to guide and create artist-driven culture."

REIMAGINING THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

In today's digital landscape, creatives often find themselves juggling multiple complex applications and subscriptions to produce a single asset. This "tool fatigue" hinders productivity and innovation. Superstudio addresses this by bringing the best foundational models into a singular platform, accelerating the creative process.

Its unique design sets it apart in the **AI** world, introducing a new level of modularity to **AI**-assisted creation. Users can generate images and videos concurrently, then seamlessly use these outputs as inputs in new Flows-allowing for infinite combinations and iterations all within the same interface.

Superstudio's design prioritizes ease of use. It employs simple language, drag-and-drop functionality, and sliders, making complex **AI** operations accessible to users of all skill levels. This approach demystifies **AI** terms and processes, lowering the barrier to entry for creatives.

The platform supports multiple infinite canvases for idea exploration and project organization, catering to both expansive brainstorming and structured workflows. At the heart of Superstudio's interface is Kiko, a brand character serving as the generate button - a fresh take on the often-used **AI** sparkle emoji - adding a playful personality to the user experience.

A PLAYGROUND OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

Superstudio transforms the creative process from ideation to final output. Users can begin with a simple concept and expand it into a rich multimedia project, blending images, videos, and audio elements.

Superstudio key features include:

- Canvas: An open, intuitive space for importing, generating, and refining ideas.
- Flows: Creative building blocks of **AI** tools with modular Elements like style transfers, face references, upscaling, and audio-reactivity.
- Collections: Organized asset groups that integrate directly with Flows.

EMPOWERING CREATORS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Superstudio caters to a wide range of creative professionals, from animators to content creators and early-career or seasoned creative professionals. As **AI** technology evolves, so does Superstudio, continually expanding its capabilities to support diverse creative needs.

The platform enables:

- Efficient Prototyping: Rapid iteration of visual concepts and brand elements like logos, flyers, storyboards, and more.
- Dynamic Content Creation: Generation of compelling and cohesive visuals for various media platforms.
- Collaborative Innovation: A unified workspace for shared ideation and asset management.

AVAILABILITY AND PRICING

Kaiber Launches Superstudio, a New Creative AI Platform for Seamless Image and Video Generation; Superstudio Integrates State-of-the-Art Image and Video Models

Superstudio is available on desktop platforms. New users can access free trials with 100 credits, up to 2 Canvases, 3 custom Flows, and up to 1 GB of storage. Paid subscriptions start at only \$15 per month or \$120 per year. For more information on pricing and credit packs, visit: kaiber.ai/pricing.

FUTURE FOR KAIBER

In 2024, Kaiber raised a round of funding from EQT Ventures and Crush Ventures. Kaiber is setting out on a focused journey to advance **AI** creativity. Through Superstudio and ongoing research at Kaiber Labs, the company aims to explore new possibilities in **AI**-powered artistry.

"We are incredibly proud to support Kaiber and the launch of Superstudio," said Ted Persson, Partner at EQT Ventures. "The team is redefining how **AI** technology can be used to ignite creativity. We have a strong conviction in the Kaiber team and can't wait to see all the amazing ways in which Superstudio will shape the future of generative **AI**."

ABOUT KAIBER

Kaiber is a next generation creative technology company focused on human and **AI** collaboration. We believe **AI** empowers artists to supercharge their ideas and creativity. Through Superstudio and Labs, we aim to bring new creative visions to the forefront, letting artists make anything they can imagine.

Above all, we make tools and craft experiences for people.

ABOUT KAIBER LABS

Kaiber Labs is where cutting-edge research and world-class craftsmanship meet culture. An in-house applied research and creative production team, Labs is dedicated to inventing and test-driving new technologies.

Labs generates novel media, explores emerging trends, and directly shapes the evolution of Superstudio, Kaiber's flagship creative **AI** product. The team also collaborates exclusively with leading artists and cultural behemoths to engineer experiences that bring harmony between human and **AI** creativity.

ABOUT EQT Ventures

[EQT Ventures](https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20241016279399/en/) is an early stage lead investor built by founders and operators, offering the next generation of entrepreneurs a fast track to scale. The fund is based in Luxembourg and has investment advisors strategically located across Stockholm, Amsterdam, London, New York, Berlin, and Paris. Currently investing out of its third ((EURO)1.1B) fund, the largest early-stage fund ever raised in Europe, EQT Ventures is one of the most active VC firms partnering with hundreds of ambitious [founders and startups](#). Driven by a team of accomplished company builders and scalers, EQT Ventures is committed to providing the capital and hands-on support necessary for generation-defining founders and companies to transform their visions into global successes.

View source version on businesswire.com: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20241016279399/en/>

CONTACT: Cultural Counsel

kaiberai@culturalcounsel.com

<http://www.businesswire.com>

Graphic

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Superstudio's canvas interface, featuring image and video models and outputs (Graphic: Business Wire)

Load-Date: October 16, 2024

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A RedMonk Conversation: Dan Moore on Newsletters, Authenticity, and Sweating the Assets

Newstex Blogs

James Governor's Monkchips

October 14, 2024 Monday 1:00 PM EST

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Length: 5977 words

Body

October 14th, 2024 ([James Governor's Monkchips](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

In this RedMonk conversation, Dan Moore, principal product engineer at FusionAuth, join James Governor, principal analyst and co-founder of RedMonk, and Kate Holterhoff, senior analyst at RedMonk, to discuss the resurgence of newsletters as a tool for authentic expression and community engagement. They explore the importance of optimizing existing content, the power of voice, and best practices for creating effective newsletters. The discussion highlights the evolving landscape of digital communication and the role newsletters play in fostering relationships and sharing knowledge.

Links

[*Don't Let That Content Go To Waste*](#)

[Twitter/X: @mooreds](#)

[LinkedIn: Dan Moore](#)

https://www.podserve.fm/dashboard/episode_player_2/154755

https://www.youtube.com/embed/H9kSg3TQk4Y?version=3&rel=1&showsearch=0&showinfo=1&iv_load_policy=1&fs=1&hl=en-US&autopause=2&wmode=transparent

Transcript

Kate Holterhoff

Hello and welcome to this RedMonk Conversation. My name is Kate Holterhoff, Senior Analyst at RedMonk and co-hosting with me today is James Governor, Principal Analyst and Co-Founder of RedMonk. And today we are joined by our esteemed return guest, Dan Moore, Principal Product Engineer at FusionAuth. Dan, I am so glad you were able to come back on the show.

A RedMonk Conversation: Dan Moore on Newsletters, Authenticity, and Sweating the Assets

Dan Moore

Thanks for inviting me back.

Kate Holterhoff

so last time Dan recorded with James and I We did it in a video but this time we are pivoting to our audio only format, which is the MonkCast, of course, mainly to keep James from pointing out my bluish skin tone, which was a main topic of conversation last time.

James Governor

You're looking a little bit healthier today, I must say, you've got to little

Kate Holterhoff

A rosier glow.

James Governor

A bit of a healthier glow. I'm not so worried about that you're going to be You're going to be telling me that you've got consumption and you

Kate Holterhoff

Exactly. Tuberculosis. I'm hoping it was a camera setting issue rather than evidence of a vitamin D deficiency. But I am absolutely digressing here. So James, why don't you kick us off on part two of what is now our ongoing series, which I am provisionally entitling RedMonk Grills Dan Moore.

James Governor

RedMonk Grills Dan Moore.

Dan Moore

I'm here for that. I'm here for that.

James Governor

That definitely sounds very Midwest. So yes, I think that Dan has a lot of interesting reckons. Last time he was on the show, we were talking about Hacker News and the social currency of that platform.

One of the other, yeah, we think about the things that we can use as tools in our daily work, in communicating with technical audiences. Yeah, there's another one out there and that is the, you know, just the towering, towering, I don't know what it's towering, but it's big, the newsletter. Newsletters seem like they were going the way of the dodo a few years ago, like who wants a newsletter?

And then suddenly everyone wanted to have a newsletter. We're to have newsletters. And I think the key question, I can't believe that I couldn't think of a word to come after towering. But anyway, so the thing is, is that we spend a lot of time telling stories, sharing things that we've learned, trying to get people interested, helping their learning journeys, all things technology. so there are, and people have different modes of learning.

And it just so happens that obviously the newsletter is one of the mechanisms that people are learning things. also I think, you know, let's look, let's talk about, let's get real for a second. It's 2024. You know, we're doing all of this work. And I think we're all kind of asking ourselves, hang on a minute, we're doing the work, but how are we gonna make this pay? Because pretty clearly,

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We're all, you we need to sweat the assets. If we're creating stories, then we better make sure that we have them in the right platforms, that we are reaching multiple different audiences that have different ways of learning. We need to meet people where they are. So newsletters, Dan, what is so great about the towering news?

Dan Moore

Yeah, yeah. Towering edifice?

James Governor

no, that really sounds like something that's going to fall over.

Dan Moore

yeah. Hopefully not. Hopefully not. Yeah, I I think that

Newsletters are interesting because as you say, they are old technology, right? Like they have newsletters in the eighties, I believe, when email was first invented. But what it does that some other means of distribution don't do are it reaches people, it'll place a check all the time and it doesn't cost anything and it is in your control. And so.

You know, lot of the other options out there give you two out of those three. you know, blogs are in your control and they, do deliver content, but unless you use an RSS reader, which I think probably 0.1 % of your listeners use an RSS reader. you're not going to have that chance to reach people where they are and platforms obviously are another option, right? Like your LinkedIn's, your Twitter slash X's, etcetera. And there you're definitely at the mercy of the algorithm and you don't have any control over that. You build up a hundred thousand followers on X and some Yahoo comes in and buys it. And then the value of those followers decreases according to, how that person or company tweaks the algorithm.

James Governor

So I didn't know that you were here to upset us today, Dan. I thought we were going to have a good time. Now you're telling me about X reminded me of Mr. ruin the network.

Dan Moore

sorry, sorry, sorry.

James Governor

Now I'm not in my happy place anymore. Let's get back to these. I was like, Twitter. I remember it so well. That lovely, lovely platform.

Dan Moore

Yeah. So I think that's that's the big win, right? People realizing that there's value. And I think the other thing about newsletters is they're super easy to subscribe to, which means they're super easy to unsubscribe from, which means there's not kind of like a barrier. so a lot of people, you basically, the content that you write, the content that you create can earn you subscribers in a way that's similar to the other options, but people are stickier, right? Because again, it arrives in your inbox and I don't know about you all, but I subscribe to a number of newsletters. Not very many of them I read all the time, but every time I get a newsletter, it rings a bell and you're building kind of a long -term relationship for lack of a better term when you build out a newsletter.

Kate Holterhoff

Yeah, Dan, I mean, it's clear to me that you've been thinking a lot about content delivery as it relates to community. And of course, our conversation about Hacker News reflected this. But I am super interested in a blog post that you authored recently entitled, Don't Let That Content Go to Waste, which really focuses it on the idea of how

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newsletters can function and maybe how to optimize them for your audience. Can you outline your thesis in this post?

James Governor

You've to sweat the assets. That's the time of day.

Kate Holterhoff

that's not something that we do in the Midwest. We don't sweat things. I don't know. We don't sweat assets in Ohio.

James Governor

you work hard, you mind your own business, but you don't sweat the assets.

Kate Holterhoff

Not the Ohioans I'm familiar with, at least. But maybe in my adopted home of Atlanta, there might be a little bit more sweating.

Dan Moore

I think that the reason I wrote this blog post is because I am a member of a lot of different Slack communities or follow people on, again, on some of those platforms that I shall not mention. And I see some great, great content that comes out and great answers, great wisdom. then it just, and then it goes poof away. And even on some, I follow the IETF.

emailing lists around OAuth and things like that. I see some great content there, it especially in Slack, but even in those other places, it just gets lost. And so my point was by picking up and putting it onto a newsletter, you can, and maybe you do some editing, right? Like as most stuff that you, you write off in a Slack, it might not be as polished as you would normally put a newsletter, but you can basically take this,

wisdom exhaust, right? Like it's like kind of like data exhaust from the early 2000s, but you can like pick it up and put it together. And even if you don't think you have enough content for a newsletter, I think you do if you are active on those channels and by taking it from these walled gardens of the platforms or slacks or discords and putting it out on it in a newsletter, you do a couple of things. One is you just showcase your knowledge the same way a blog would.

You can deliver it to people. have a low effort way to connect with folks, right? If you ever run into somebody at conference or whatnot, instead of asking them to follow you on something, you can say, Hey, I have a newsletter about real estate in Atlanta, or I have a newsletter about, how developers, are the new Kingmakers or **AI** or whatever it is. And that's just a lower ask than some other things. And it will start to build up a.

longer term relationship with anybody that you're engaged with at low effort to you. So that's kind of the purpose of the blog post is people are creating all this beautiful content, and it's just trapped.

James Governor

Especially the stuff in Slack, Slack is like the dark web, Slack, we all put so much effort into communications with our colleagues, and or people in those networks, and then don't share it externally, Slack is sort of

Yeah, it's definitely the dark web of, I don't like the word content, but it is the dark web of content. and, know, it's, in fact, it's even worse than that. guess there are search engines for dark web now, but, but Slack is, just, yeah, like those conversations you have internally, don't become shared and don't become, you we talk about like one of the, the, if we think about what the certainly grew up in there, the blog near and so on.

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It was this idea that you could learn in public and learning in public is really powerful because that means that other people can learn the same things. think our use of Slack has meant that we're doing a little bit learning in semi-private. And so yeah, it's interesting this idea that newsletters are an opportunity or a vector for taking some of that and sharing it more broadly and making it useful, sweating the asset.

Kate Holterhoff

I love how you frame it as like a power to the people move of like moving away from platforms that you don't control to one that you do. Because yeah, you're right. There is a sort of agnosticism with email. But I do want to push back on the idea that at a conference, if you're like, hey, subscribe to my newsletter, you know, this is an easier way of making sure that you keep up with folks. Because I have an anxiety of having too much in my inbox, like the zero inbox. I wouldn't say that I adhere to that.

But I will say that the onus of storage and organization is on me with a newsletter in ways that it isn't, or a listserv, anything that goes to my inbox, in ways that it isn't with a blog. Then I can kind of find it, and it's external. I actually have had the experience of unsubscribing from newsletters. And then actually with our, since James brought up our Slack channel, we actually created an RSS feed, which

translates a lot of newsletters that I found particularly anxiety inducing where they're coming out multiple times during a week. I unsubscribed from that and then added it to our RSS feed. That way I'm able to keep up in a way that I feel like I have a little bit more control. Do you encounter that at all? I feel like maybe it's a double-edged sword in terms of like, yes, you have the control, but there are people like me who are like, please don't clutter my inbox.

Dan Moore

Totally. Yeah, yeah, And that's a really good point. Like, that's not something I would do after I just shook somebody's hand, right? Like, hello, hey, I'm Dan, you know, please subscribe my newsletter, right? It's something if you realize that they are interested in the topic that you're that you're talking about and in depth and do feel like they want to have a longer term relationship with you or, just keep in touch, right? I will say most modern newsletter platforms, you get a blog for free as well. And so it can kind of be a twofer, right? You can say, hey,

check out my newsletter or my blog and it's here. And if you wanna get a via email, that's great. If you wanna get a via RSS, that's fine. If you wanna just bookmark it and check it periodically, that's fine too. So I think the value in the newsletter is they have that option. The other value is that, and I think this is the constraining factor on newsletters and it is constraining in fact, pretty much all content to use James's,

unpreferred term is that you have to earn that, right? And so you really have to deliver like good content wise words every time. And that force is almost an enforcement mechanism, right? And with newsletters, sometimes when you write on platforms or in blogs, like it's a little bit like shouting into the void. With newsletters, you actually get feedback. Like I have

friends and colleagues who've written newsletters and they see unsubscribes when they move to a certain place. And that is, I would not say an unsubscribe is unadulterated negative feedback. It actually could mean that your audience is shifting because you're shifting your viewpoint and you're shifting your topics. That's fine, but it is definitely a hundred percent feedback. And that's, it's way more visceral feedback than you're gonna get from a lot of other platforms or a lot of other options. Does it answer your question?

Kate Holterhoff

It does. It does. it's more, I think it's the personal preference thing that we're pointing at here. But yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense. Dan, in your post, you know, I'm going to read a little bit back to you because I have some questions. So you say, quote, 'don't rewrite the text. The whole point of this process is to leverage existing content you have created in a low effort, sustainable way.' End quote. So my question to you is, Dan, why are you so lazy?

Dan Moore

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I'm lazy because I'm busy. No, I think that in this particular context, it's really about repurposing existing content. I have met with plenty of people, talked to plenty of people who let the perfect be enemy of the good. And I think that it's way better to get started and get your thoughts out there out of Slack, out of Discord, out of that podcast and share them with the world than it is to have them be perfect. And then plus you get to be lazy. right?

Kate Holterhoff

Right. I'm on team lazy, especially when it comes to like not having to restate the same thing over and over again. I mean, that, think that goes with our philosophy here at RedMonk, which aligns with developers, you know, anytime you have to do something, more than two times, you might as well, find a way to automate it, correct? So Dan, you've just automated it. You've found a system, you've got a plan in place to make sure that you're not replicating labor that is already done, right? Totally.

So at RedMonk, we also have a newsletter. And I actually wrote the September introductory letter part, helped coordinate delivering it and making sure that the links looked right, all of that.

And we're sharing that amongst the analysts. James did the inaugural newsletter and set a very high bar. And it's something that we're excited about and we're enthusiastic. So we're all in. And so I am deeply interested in your perspective here, because I think we're still trying to feel it out a little bit. mean, we've had a version of a newsletter for a while. But this is one where we're actually trying to follow some best practices here and see what the community is looking for. Because I agree.

Newsletters are really having a moment. so Dan and I are both podcast buffs and on Hardfork, I know that there was one of our shared favorites. They actually [*spoke about moving away from Substack. And so I just know, I know there's a lot of internal conversations around the delivery methods.*](#)

And then there's also, you know, so there's the consumption side, there's a distribution side, but there's also, I think, it evidences that we're in the zeitgeist of newsletters. And I like this utopian idea again of the control method. You know, a lot of these social platforms are crashing and burning right now. And then there's also sort of it's up in the air about which one is going to dominate in our post Twitter era. So.

I guess maybe that explains it, but I think that there's maybe more to it. And the genre is just a little different. I think that there's some movement there, there's some playfulness, but there's a political angle as well.

Dan Moore

I think that the main reason why newsletters are having a moment is I mean, people are always looking for a place to have their thoughts heard, right? And it shifted from Usenet to blogs, to social media.

And then I think that, newsletters are coming back and it's like a pendulum swinging where you have less reach. Although I think tools like Substack and a lot of the other kind of copycats or other platforms offer some sharing, some discoverability. It's almost like a webring back in the blog days. But you're trading that off for more. I mean, I would almost say intimacy, right?

Like when you actually arrive, when someone trusts you enough to receive your emails, even if they don't read every single one, that is a real act of trust. And again, it's easy to subscribe and unsubscribe. So it's not like you're taking a job with them or anything like that, but it's definitely a higher level of relationship. And I think that that is very appealing to people. The other thing I would say is that the newsletters I've seen, you know, I'm, I'm a subscriber to the RedMonk newsletter.

I'm excited about it, but like, it's interesting to like the level of fidelity, right? Like sometimes you have newsletters, get some that are, especially if they're aimed at developers are very lo-fi, right? They're kind of white background. They might be a list of links with small amounts of commentary. And then you get the corporate ones, which are way more manicured that are almost like, I sometimes I get them, I get one from my college that almost feels like it's a little magazine, right? Like it's way overproduced.

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And I would say, if anyone's thinking about starting a newsletter is start with a lo-fi version. Well, first of all, think about your audience. If I was marketing to a bunch of, artists, think starting with a lo-fi one would be a horrible idea. If you're marketing to developers, think starting with a lo-fi one that's like content rich is probably a good idea. So I guess start with your audience. But the fact is that it's, even though email is a hard thing to design for, it's still kind of a rich medium and you can kind of play around on the spectrum. And that's totally ignoring the content, right? I'm just talking about like the form right now.

James Governor

Yeah. For me. I think there's something here, and this is interesting, because we have to work this out as a firm. The question is about voice. And obviously with podcast, it's an audio medium. as such, yes, of course, that's voice. But I think with newsletters, yeah, you do have an expectation. Or the ones that I find appealing is that they do have a voice. And for RedMonk, we made a decision that we would take turns to curate the thing. But that's also good, because RedMonk has always been, we've never felt as a firm that we wanted to have only one voice.

We've had an acknowledgement that as analysts, we always felt that actually it's the conversation that is more interesting. but yeah, voice and authenticity, I think, are one of the reasons why newsletters are having their sort of moment in the sun, alongside the other issues you said, the portability and so on. do think that that, we want to especially, you know, obviously, and I think [Paul Kedrosky this week created a new *Four Ideas* newsletter, which is basically AI generated, I'm sure that'll do well. And that, mean, that's a whole other voice. That's a sort of a framing and let the AI do the work. But I think certainly in an era of AI and, these, these chat interfaces and so on, I think that's an area where you, you do want to actually hear from people and](#)

I've had this recent research that consumers don't want to buy things that are labeled **AI**. And I think a newsletter is one of the things that, we want it to be generated by a human and we want some of their foibles and ways of communicating. want, my colleague Rachel Stevens's, you know, humor or you want, know, Kelly Fitzpatrick, she brings just this authority that I guess she gained through academia.

that sort of the way she communicates and then know Kate I'll let Kate say what her voice is but yeah well grumpy Steve O 'Grady is one so we've all got you know mouthy monkchips is me so yeah what so Kate you're midwest in Atlanta voice.

Kate Holterhoff

yeah today at least for sure

James Governor

Yeah, I think that's for me anyway, why I like newsletters. I like them because I feel that there's someone's voice there. And that is something that I find appealing.

Kate Holterhoff

Yeah. And since we're looking for some strategies here, Dan, would you mind just giving us the rundown of what your best practices are for creating newsletters, especially as you outline them in the blog post?

Dan Moore

Sure. Sure. So I would say what I did want to call back a little bit to what James said about podcasts and the voice that comes from podcasting. I would say don't sleep on podcasts as a source of newsletter content.

because I've definitely taken a podcast that goes on YouTube and I transcribe it using one of the bajillion free tools out there. And then I will actually paste it into like a chat GPT and say, Hey, break this up into like sections for me, you know, topic areas. And then from there, I never use what the chat GPT actually does to turn that in newsletter. Because I think that is, what's that term **AI slop**. If you just take it directly, what it like summarize.

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but you can use it to find pointers into the podcast. And then you can use the actual text that the person said and edit it because we all put ums and blahs and likes into it, but don't sleep on podcasts or live streams as sources of content, which plays into your question, which is where do you get the content from? And it does depend on what kind of newsletter you're trying to build. If it's a link newsletter, then we have

spreadsheets and things like that to like just capture interesting links. I like to basically send an email to myself, but there are other ways to do this. Anytime I run across anything interesting or sometimes I'll use Hacker News as my link collection, right? If there's anything that I think is mildly interesting, then I post there. If you are really looking to pull things out of Slack, then I think that it's really important that

or LinkedIn or other platforms, I will drop everything into a Google Doc, you know, just once every month or so I'll go through and like target things and pull the content into a Google Doc. And then from there I do kind of further fashioning and try to bring posts together conceivably, because sometimes a post can be a hundred words or something like that. And you can expand it. You can

combine it with another post and then turn that into the newsletter content. and one of the things that I find interesting is this is actually something you could conceivably outsource. you talked about your voice, James. and I think that I actually have a client that I do this for because he's very busy, but he wants a newsletter, but he wants it in his voice and I can't write it in his voice. And so I'll take his stuff and I'll mildly edit it and turn that into a newsletter. but it's almost all his voice and it's his terms because he wrote it. I just expanded it, corrected it, things like that. I think that

James Governor

I don't know how I feel about that.

Dan Moore

But by leveraging what you're already doing, it's basically just kind of, I mean, it is just a point of leverage, right?

James Governor

We do that sometimes. What we'll do is when we're sometimes working on blog posts, I'll be talking about Kate, provide a little bit of context, and then it'll go into the first draft, and then she always cuts it out when she publishes. So that happens. So my voice, which sometimes tries to inveigle its way into Dr. Kate Holterhoff's excellent writing, that word gets excised.

Kate Holterhoff

James has a chip on his shoulder, if that's not abundantly clear. You know, James, that part of being a consultant is being able to say a small thing in a very long way. And sometimes it just doesn't translate to writing.

James Governor

You can edit out my thing about voice, because I fucking talked about voice for like 20 minutes and that was completely unnecessary. I needed to say was voice and all. Yeah, no, that's going to go now, isn't it? It's all going to go. Kate's going to be like, yeah, whatever. Yeah. but no.

Kate Holterhoff

Not a chance.

James Governor

you know, that is a, that is a, again, I think from a firm perspective, it's interesting because, you know, when we made that decision years ago that we weren't going to spend vast amounts of time back and forth and rewriting

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each other's work in order to have some sort of consistent voice of the company. And then over time, we just realized that just made no sense and that better to celebrate the voices

in the company. And that's why we very much have blogs. People choose what the name of their blog will be. We expect them. We encourage them to build and establish a research and authorial voice. me that was kind of what I saw with newsletters, like whether or not which one came first, the chicken or the egg or whatever it is, you know, the towering edifice pretty clearly.

that there are, you know, people used to have link roles, you know, like you go to the blog or, you know, and certainly link posts were very popular back in the day. And I do think some of the things that blogs, it does sort of feel like, look, it just turns out that email is, is, is a longer running protocol than RSS in terms of it's usage. And so I think some of, some of that writing for blogs, some of those dynamics, feel like newsletters have brought them back.

Dan Moore

Can I ask real quick about like the voices, like the, like the voices, the analyst thing. Cause I think that's really interesting. when you talk to talk about like DevRel, which is something that I used to do and I'm still kind of involved in you all. know we're very involved with DevRel community. feels like when someone's in DevRel, they are the external facing at least to developers like face of the company. And so you've constantly chosen to have each of your analysts be externally facing, right? Cause you could definitely have analysts that weren't externally facing or were only externally facing to like clients, right? But you've chosen to have all your analysts be public figures, I think probably makes it easier and harder to recruit analysts, right? Or easier and harder to like determine whether it's a, like it's the kind of company that people want to work with, right? Cause you're not working with RedMonk the way that you work with like a Gartner or a Forrester. Am I allowed to say those names on your podcast? Sorry.

James Governor

Quick, those out, Kate. Okay. Use that heavy, heavy pen. Get rid of it. we,

Dan Moore

You're working, you're working with a Kate, right? Or you're working with a James, right? Those are, and, and not that you won't sub for each other or things like that, but like, it really feels like it's much more of like a, personal working relationship. Do you find that that's a benefit or a cost or kind of like it cuts both ways?

James Governor

I think there's always sort of trade offs in any decision you make.

Dan Moore

That's a consultant's answer right there. Nice work.

James Governor

Yeah, was beautiful. 100 % right. So it served us pretty well. One of the questions is, and I think that some companies are like, wait, we don't want to externalize the voice because if we do, then everyone's going to come and like poach that person or whatever else. I mean, we've lost people over the years.

because it's the voice that attracts, right? But that said, look, they're always going to be positives and negatives. In terms of our working relationship with clients, we do feel that hearing those voices and that voice of the authorial voice and that the authority voice on a subject, we hope that that does help clients to understand

what are the subjects that we as analysts are best equipped to answer those questions? And sure, you can go to RedMonk and like, you look, as you just use the dread word consultant, I mean, I don't mind you mentioning my

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competitors, but how dare you call me a consultant? Anyway, no, it's true. It's fair enough. So the thing there is, and you know, people have, you know, found a consulting syndrome. It's a derangement of some

Obviously, none of my clients are deranged, but if they were, they might be deranged in such a way that they would always want to talk to me or Steve. let's talk to the founder. You know, like we can talk to the founder. So let's talk to the founder. One of the things about those other voices is people really begin to wreck. wait, hang on. I don't want to talk to James and Steve. They don't know anything about that. Or I don't I don't want to talk to them, you know, on a subject in that way. So, yeah, I think that

It's definitely beneficial, especially for us because we tend to encourage people to be able to consult on and understand a range of topics. Like we're not going to be the absolute deepest. mean, if you want us to come and sort of analyze the absolute deepest level gorp about

two or three different say Kubernetes distributions, we're probably not the right people to do that. On the other hand, we will have spoke to a lot of folks that are using all of those distributions and have been able to, you know, have a reasoned view on what some of the strengths and weaknesses are. But I think where I was going that is just that we're about context. So, you know, we would expect people to, you know, we had a choice. Do we have an AI analyst and no one else talks about AI? That seemed like it was a really bad idea.

because AI is going to touch every area of the stack. Do we have specializations? 100%. But because we make people sort of bring context to bear, people then are attracted to that, the context and the way that's put together. And yeah, that's one of the reasons I think voice has significantly benefited RedMonk. And look, we've got a reputation for authenticity that nobody else in the industry has in the analyst business. I mean, we are seen as having a sort of For whatever reason, yeah, we all see it as authentic. I think, again, that's a function of voice.

Dan Moore

I wouldn't say it's for whatever reason. I say it's because you have been authentic. It's because, and frankly, I think to some extent because it's smaller and because you've elevated the voices and because it's hard for a company to be authentic. think it's really, really difficult for a company to be authentic. think it's really, it's easier for people to be authentic. Right. And so if you're a group of people that, you know, if I'm engaging with Kelly for my analysis, it's different than me engaging with company XYZ for my analysis. It's just a different feel. so I wouldn't say for whatever reason, James, I'd say you're authentic. mean, it's almost self-fulfilling. It's tautological, right? Like, I don't know how you can be authentic other than being authentic. I'm sure things you can point to, but it's really hard to, yeah. So this strayed a little bit far, from newsletters, but interesting.

Kate Holterhoff

So did you have any final questions for Dan, James?

James Governor

yeah. Well, yeah, what we didn't really talk about is that so Dan, like we didn't ask, how many newsletters do you subscribe to? And then what tools do you use? Like, historically, we all had RSS and, you know, we had our chosen, reader, and then

that, you know, big, big boo to Google, talking with readers. Google, they own social media in the RSS era and they blew that so comprehensively. It is so dumb. But anyway, that's another, maybe that's another podcast. But what tools, Dan, like how do you, because there's various tools that will manage, or do you just have a folder or? Yeah. How do you, you know, I bet you, I bet you read loads of them. Don't you?

Dan Moore

I do. I think that it's important to acknowledge kind of what you're using the newsletters for. And we could probably, again, this is probably a separate podcast in another six or nine months, like, because it's different, there are different newsletters I subscribe to for different reasons, but I've probably subscribed to about 30 ish.

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And I will say that like the two things I use to deal with, to make the tools I use to deal with them are one, my inbox and two, like permission not to read every single thing. And so there are tons of newsletters that I subscribe to that I read one out of every 10 issues and I'm okay with that. And it's just something that I accept.

I don't think there are any specialized technology tools. I think it's more like control of your attention and not being a perfectionist about reading everything.

James Governor

You're too busy on Hacker News to read newsletters. Well, it does actually dovetail nicely because lots of times stuff from Hacker News goes to newsletters or vice versa. So oftentimes if I'm looking for interesting stuff to share, I'll pop open a newsletter and just look at a couple of things. there's asome kind of cycle. not sure what the virtuous or a deadly cycle there,

Kate Holterhoff

It's a cycle one way the other. All right. Well, on the note of cycles then, why don't we wrap up and have you back on to extemporize on one of these other subjects that we've drug in here. So, but before we do, Dan, are there any good social channels where folks can follow your deep thoughts on the matter or other ways that we can follow your insights?

Dan Moore

LinkedIn is probably the best thing as a former colleague of mine said, it's the, seems like the only social network run by grownups at this point. So that's where I spend a lot of time posting.

Kate Holterhoff

I haven't heard that. like that. that's good. And we'll include, a link to your blog post in the show notes as well as your LinkedIn and your newsletter, I guess, is that related? That's tied to your blog, I'm guessing the way to sign up for your newsletter.

Dan Moore

Yeah, I can. I'll make sure you guys get you all linked to my newsletter. It is focused on customer identity and access management. And I didn't even talk about this as one of the benefits of a newsletter is it does force you the same way as a blog to like really dig into a topic. And so if you want to be if you want to learn about topic X starting news on it can be a great way to be a forcing function to do that. anyway, that's what my current newsletter is mostly about.

Kate Holterhoff

Yeah, that sounds interesting. All right, so we will include all those in the notes. Been so much fun having you back on for round two, Dan. So much to say about these subjects. So I'm glad we can make this conversation ongoing here. Again, your co-hosts from the RedMonk side, have been Kate Holterhoff and James Governor. If you enjoyed this conversation, please like, subscribe and review the MonkCast on your podcast platform of choice. If you are watching us on YouTube, please like, subscribe and engage with us in the comments.

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A RedMonk Conversation: Dan Moore on Newsletters, Authenticity, and Sweating the Assets

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Fans Can't Believe Broadcast Decision for College Football Game on Saturday

AthlonSports

October 12, 2024 Saturday 4:47 AM EST

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Section: SPORTS BUSINESS NEWS, Facebook news & SPORTS: COLLEGE FOOTBALL NEWS

Length: 385 words

Byline: Matt Wadleigh

Body

Week 7 of the college football season has plenty of huge matchups. Ole Miss-LSU, Penn State-USC, Oklahoma-Texas, and Ohio State-Oregon are the headliners in one of the biggest weekends in recent memory.

As usual, Fox's "Big Noon Kickoff" and ESPN's "College GameDay" will be covering the marquee matchups. "Big Noon Kickoff" is going to be on hand in Provo, Utah, as BYU hosts Arizona in a Big 12 Conference showdown.

"College GameDay" is in Eugene, Oregon, for the Big Ten top-3 clash between the Buckeyes and the Ducks.

However, one FCS game caught the attention of fans due to the broadcast decision.

That game is Davidson vs. Dayton.

While Dayton-Davidson isn't a premier game by any means, the FCS showdown is being broadcast on Facebook.

Yes, Facebook.

Davidson-Dayton is on WHAT pic.twitter.com/0zOmzYEcnK

- Mr Matthew CFB (@MrMatthew_CFB)

[October 12, 2024](#)

Of course, fans were in disbelief, and some of the comments were gold.

"Where can you find the game? Just below your uncle's post about the government controlling the weather," one [fan wrote](#).

Davidson and Dayton are part of the Pioneer Football League in the FCS.

"Long live the Pioneer Football League," the fan mentioned.

Fans Can't Believe Broadcast Decision for College Football Game on Saturday

Long live the Pioneer Football League <https://t.co/WTWpnTMQJA>

- Pete Wietmarschen (@pete_wiet)

[October 12, 2024](#)

"Fire up your **AI slop** and tell your crazy aunt hello, you've got a date on Facebook tomorrow," another [mentioned](#).

"Excuse me," said [another](#).

"Was YouTube unavailable?" another [said](#).

Facebook provides a free streaming option, which is a nice break from services such as ESPN+. One fan said more should follow suit.

"More FCS schools might need to take this route and stream games on Facebook and Twitter (X) and get off ESPN+ lol."

More FCS schools might need to take this route and stream games on Facebook and Twitter (X) and get off ESPN+ lol. <https://t.co/mGT3z8bYj9>

- OVO KEY 🗑️ (@SoupLivingston)

[October 12, 2024](#)

The Pioneer Football League [also includes](#) Drake, Butler, San Diego, Morehead State, Stetson, Presbyterian, Valparaiso, Marist and St. Thomas.

In actuality, Dayton is 3-1 and Davidson is 4-1, so this is a game of decent PFL teams, although Facebook isn't an option you see very often. Kickoff is set for noon ET in Dayton, Ohio, at Welcome Stadium.

[**Related: A College Football Upset Happened On Friday Night**](#)

Graphic

Dayton Flyers mascot Rudy Flyer. Matt Lunsford-Imagn Images

Load-Date: October 12, 2024

AI aggrandizes misinformation on the internet, so see the peacock chicks!



AI aggrandizes misinformation on the internet, so see the peacock chicks!

CE Noticias Financieras English

October 12, 2024 Saturday

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Length: 625 words

Body

Mexico City The Internet is full of garbage. The debate on this topic continues in networks, and now it is the **Google Images** section where there are bad indications of what may happen in the future with the irruption of content generation by artificial intelligence. If you type something like **'baby peacock'** into Google Images, what you get on its first page of results are mostly **AI**-created images in which what you see has nothing to do with what a baby peacock actually looks like. A large thread has recently formed on **Reddit** about this, with hundreds of users commenting on their gloom and concern about the unstoppable torrent of junk content, or **slop**, as poor quality **AI**-generated content is known, flooding networks and platforms.

These fake images of an alleged newborn peacock have also been shared on Facebook, where, apparently, many people come to believe what they see, and are encouraged to share and leave their 'like' for the cuteness of the image. And, in this case, the worst thing that can happen is that someone keeps in their mind a wrong projection of what a peacock hatchling looks like, but if this same practice is repeated with other more serious topics, what we can get is clear: rampant misinformation and quality content (I do not think there is no lack of good captures of professional photographers on peacocks) being buried by junk publications. On YouTube it's also slowly starting to appear. Everything is becoming fake and low quality, says one user on Reddit. This kind of Internet is not interesting. We will simply trust the Internet less and spend less time on it. Let Google read itself now, comments another. As possible remedies, some point to a return to the blogging era: "Create your own website! It's time to get back to owning your own content and maybe even have a section of interesting links/friends' sites to share. It's time for people to own the Internet again, not companies," someone recommends. An Internet for bots The dead internet theory continues to gain traction with these kinds of symptoms. A theory that bots, automated programs and artificial intelligence will increase their share of Internet usage until the majority of traffic comes from these agents, rather than from real people. The result? Misinformation, poor quality content and spam, making the Internet a more hostile place, intoxicated with falsehoods that make it harder for the average user to find what they are looking for. However, some will be able to make money in the meantime. One user explains it like this: The other day I was looking for a solution to a programming problem and came across an **AI**-voiced YouTube video with stock footage and generated subtitles. The script of the video was also written by **AI**, as it didn't really say anything useful and just talked about the general topic for 10

AI aggrandizes misinformation on the internet, so see the peacock chicks!

minutes. I got curious and checked the channel, and the guy had 2000 videos uploaded with 1000-10 000 average views. All with the same type of shitty **AI** content. **I think someone automated a bot that constantly uploads content on YouTube** and the guy just gets ad money as passive income, **comments @Competitive-Lack-660**. **For now, we'll have to regularly warn our parents, aunts, uncles or grandparents not to believe everything they see on Facebook or get on WhatsApp.**

Load-Date: October 13, 2024

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Marques Brownlee says 'we failed on the price' with Panels

Africa Newswire

October 12, 2024 Saturday

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Length: 423 words

Body

12 Oct 2024 (TourismAfrica2006) Tourism Africa introduces

Marques Brownlee published a video on Friday addressing the criticisms around Panels, his new wallpaper app, saying that he and the team "failed on the price front" at launch. The app received an outpour of criticism from fans, both on the MKBHD YouTube channel and across social platforms. Discussing the app, Brownlee admitted it needed work. "If I was reviewing this app, I would not have been very nice," he said.

One of the primary criticisms of the app was that the premium "Panels Plus" subscription cost \$11.99 per month or \$49.99 per year to remove ads and have full access to the available collections of wallpapers. To make things better, Brownlee and the team have been improving the free experience by getting rid of in-feed ads, making all wallpapers that aren't part of a collection available in 1080p for free with no ads, and letting people get a full-resolution wallpaper by watching one 30-second ad.

As for the subscription's price, "even though subscriptions are incredibly unpopular, we wanted to at least offer one that made sense for the wallpaper power user... for how few of you actually exist," Brownlee says. There's now a new, more affordable Panels Plus "Standard" tier that costs \$1.99 per month with no ads on individual wallpapers. The higher "Unlimited" tier, which is still at that \$11.99 per month / \$49.99 per year price, adds full access to collections and early access to new wallpapers.

Brownlee also touches on concerns about what the app was tracking based on the long list that had been included in the App Privacy section of the App Store. "Another blunder by us," Brownlee says. "This was way too broad." Brownlee says that the list actually was "a list of things that you as a developer provide to the App Store for things that the app may, at some point, ask just to tell people ahead of time, just to be safe, and we just checked way too many boxes."

Brownlee says that most of the boxes were checked because of "broad suggestions" from the app's ad service, AdMob. "To be clear, I do not want your data," he says. He also points out that you can use the app and get wallpapers without making an account.

Marques Brownlee says 'we failed on the price' with Panels

In the full video, which is more than 15 minutes long, Brownlee discusses other aspects of the app, too, like that there will be weekly drops on Fridays with new art and that he can "personally promise" that the app won't be filled with **AI**-generated **slop**.

The Panels app launched the same day as MKBHD's iPhone 16 review in September.

Load-Date: October 13, 2024

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I'm Running Out of Ways to Explain How Bad This Is

Atlantic Online

October 10, 2024 Thursday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1688 words

Byline: Charlie Warzel

Body

The truth is, it's getting harder to describe the extent to which a meaningful percentage of Americans have dissociated from reality. As Hurricane Milton churned across the Gulf of Mexico last night, I saw an onslaught of outright conspiracy theorizing and utter nonsense racking up millions of views across the internet. The posts would be laughable if they weren't taken by many people as gospel. Among them: Infowars' Alex Jones, who [claimed](#) that Hurricanes Milton and Helene were "weather weapons" unleashed on the East Coast by the U.S. government, and "truth seeker" accounts on X that [posted](#) photos of condensation trails in the sky to baselessly allege that the government was "spraying Florida ahead of Hurricane Milton" in order to ensure maximum rainfall, "just like they did over Asheville!"

As Milton made landfall, causing a series of tornados, a verified account on X reposted a TikTok video of a massive funnel cloud with the caption "WHAT IS HAPPENING TO FLORIDA?!" The clip, which was eventually removed but had been viewed 662,000 times as of yesterday evening, turned out to be from a video of a CGI tornado that was originally published months ago. Scrolling through these platforms, watching them [fill](#) with [false](#) information, harebrained [theories](#), and doctored images—all while panicked residents boarded up their houses, [struggled](#) to evacuate, and prayed that their worldly possessions wouldn't be obliterated overnight—offered a portrait of American discourse almost too bleak to reckon with head-on.

Even in a decade marred by online grifters, shameless politicians, and an alternative right-wing-media complex pushing anti-science fringe theories, the events of the past few weeks stand out for their depravity and nihilism. As two catastrophic storms upended American cities, a patchwork network of influencers and fake-news peddlers have done their best to sow distrust, stoke resentment, and interfere with relief efforts. But this is more than just a misinformation crisis. To watch as real information is overwhelmed by crank theories and public servants [battle death threats](#) is to confront two alarming facts: first, that a durable ecosystem exists to ensconce citizens in an alternate reality, and second, that the people consuming and amplifying those lies are not helpless dupes but willing participants.

I'm Running Out of Ways to Explain How Bad This Is

[\[Read: November will be worse\]](#)

Some of the lies and obfuscation are politically motivated, such as the claim that FEMA is offering only \$750 in total to hurricane victims who have lost their home. (In [reality](#), FEMA offers \$750 as immediate "Serious Needs Assistance" to help people get basic supplies such as food and water.) [Donald Trump](#), [J. D. Vance](#), and [Fox News](#) have all repeated that lie. Trump also [posted](#) (and later deleted) on Truth Social that FEMA money was given to undocumented migrants, which is untrue. Elon Musk, who owns X, [claimed](#)—without evidence—that FEMA was "actively blocking shipments and seizing goods and services locally and locking them away to state they are their own. It's very real and scary how much they have taken control to stop people helping." That post has been viewed more than 40 million times. Other influencers, such as the Trump sycophant Laura Loomer, have [urged](#) their followers to disrupt the disaster agency's efforts to help hurricane victims. "Do not comply with FEMA," she posted on X. "This is a matter of survival."

The result of this fearmongering is what you might expect. Angry, embittered citizens have been [harassing](#) government officials in North Carolina, as well as FEMA employees. According to [an analysis](#) by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, an extremism-research group, "Falsehoods around hurricane response have spawned credible threats and incitement to violence directed at the federal government," including "calls to send militias to face down FEMA." The study also found that 30 percent of the X posts analyzed by ISD "contained overt antisemitic hate, including abuse directed at public officials such as the Mayor of Asheville, North Carolina; the FEMA Director of Public Affairs; and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security." The posts received a collective 17.1 million views as of October 7.

Online, first responders are pleading with residents, asking for their help to combat the flood of lies and conspiracy theories. FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell [said](#) that the volume of misinformation could hamper relief efforts. "If it creates so much fear that my staff doesn't want to go out in the field, then we're not going to be in a position where we can help people," she said in a news conference on Tuesday. In Pensacola, Florida, Assistant Fire Chief Bradley Boone [ventured](#) his frustrations on Facebook ahead of Milton's arrival: "I'm trying to rescue my community," he said in a livestream. "I ain't got time. I ain't got time to chase down every Facebook rumor. We've been through enough."

It is difficult to capture the nihilism of the current moment. The pandemic saw Americans, distrustful of authority, trying to discredit effective vaccines, spreading conspiracy theories, and attacking public-health officials. But what feels novel in the aftermath of this month's hurricanes is how the people doing the lying aren't even trying to hide the provenance of their bullshit. Similarly, those sharing the lies are happy to admit that they do not care whether what they're pushing is real or not. Such was the case last week, when Republican politicians shared an [AI](#)-generated viral image of a little girl holding a puppy while supposedly fleeing Helene. Though the image was clearly fake and quickly debunked, some politicians remained defiant. "Y'all, I don't know where this photo came from and honestly, it doesn't matter," [Amy Kremer](#), who represents Georgia on the Republican National Committee, wrote after sharing the fake image. "I'm leaving it because it is emblematic of the trauma and pain people are living through right now."

Kremer wasn't alone. The journalist Parker Molloy [compiled](#) screenshots of people "acknowledging that this image is [AI](#) but still insisting that it's real on some deeper level"—proof, Molloy noted, that we're "living in the post-reality." The technology writer Jason Koebler [argued](#) that we've entered the "~Fuck It' Era" of [AI slop](#) and political messaging, with [AI](#)-generated images being [used to convey whatever partisan message](#) suits the moment, regardless of truth.

This has all been [building](#) for more than a decade. On *The Colbert Report*, back in 2005, Stephen Colbert coined the word truthiness, which he [defined](#) as "the belief in what you feel to be true rather than what the facts will support." This reality-fracturing is the result of an information ecosystem that is dominated by platforms that offer financial and attentional incentives to lie and enrage, and to turn every tragedy and large event into a [shameless content-creation opportunity](#). This collides with a swath of people who would rather live in an alternate reality built

I'm Running Out of Ways to Explain How Bad This Is

on distrust and grievance than change their fundamental beliefs about the world. But the misinformation crisis is not always what we think it is.

[\[Read: Florida's risky bet\]](#)

So much of the conversation around misinformation suggests that its primary job is to persuade. But as Michael Caulfield, an information researcher at the University of Washington, has [argued](#), "The primary use of ~misinformation~ is not to change the beliefs of other people at all. Instead, the vast majority of misinformation is offered as a service for people to maintain their beliefs in face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary." This distinction is important, in part because it assigns agency to those who consume and share obviously fake information. What is clear from comments such as Kremer's is that she is not a dupe; although she may come off as deeply incurious and shameless, she is publicly admitting to being an active participant in the far right's world-building project, where feel is always greater than real.

What we're witnessing online during and in the aftermath of these hurricanes is a group of people desperate to protect the dark, fictitious world they've built. Rather than deal with the realities of a warming planet hurling once-in-a-generation storms at them every few weeks, they'd rather malign and threaten meteorologists, who, in their minds, are "nothing but a trained subversive liar programmed to spew stupid shit to support the global warming bullshit," as [one X user](#) put it. It is a strategy designed to silence voices of reason, because those voices threaten to expose the cracks in their current worldview. But their efforts are doomed, futile. As one dispirited meteorologist [wrote](#) on X this week, "Murdering meteorologists won't stop hurricanes." She followed with: "I can't believe I just had to type that."

What is clear is that a new framework is needed to describe this fracturing. Misinformation is too technical, too freighted, and, after almost a decade of Trump, too political. Nor does it explain what is really happening, which is nothing less than a cultural assault on any person or institution that operates in reality. If you are a weatherperson, you're a target. The same goes for journalists, election workers, scientists, doctors, and first responders. These jobs are different, but the thing they share is that they all must attend to and describe the world as it is. This makes them dangerous to people who cannot abide by the agonizing constraints of reality, as well as those who have financial and political interests in keeping up the charade.

In one sense, these attacks-and their increased desperation-make sense. The world feels dark; for many people, it's tempting to meet that with a retreat into the delusion that they've got everything figured out, that the powers that be have conspired against them directly. But in turning away, they exacerbate a [crisis](#) that has characterized the Trump era, one that will reverberate to Election Day and beyond. Americans are divided not just by political beliefs but by whether they believe in a shared reality-or desire one at all.

Load-Date: October 11, 2024



[Can Facebook win back Gen Z?](#)

Fastcompany.com

October 9, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 619 words

Byline: Henry Chandonnet

Body

Facebook was born as a social networking tool exclusively for Harvard students. These days you'd be hard-pressed to find many U.S. college students on the platform.

Over the past decade, Facebook usership among U.S. teens dropped from 71% to 33%. A recently announced [redesign](#) attempts to recapture these young users, emphasizing already popular aspects like Groups and Marketplace while building a TikTok-style "Explore" page. Still, one redesign won't collect that cache of lost Gen Z eyes.

How Facebook lost Gen Z

Once the cutting edge of technology, Facebook has been relegated to an old-world position by many Gen Zers. That's evident in the gap among usership percentages: In 2023, only 33% of U.S. teens said they used Facebook, according to the [Pew Research Center](#). Compare that to the U.S. adult populace, where Facebook is the [second-most-popular](#) social media app at 68%.

As a company, Facebook seems to recognize this decline. Back in May, it held an event focused on the "next 20 years" of the app. "We're still for everyone," said Tom Alison, Meta's Facebook head, according to [Mashable](#). "But we also recognize that in order to stay relevant, we have to build for . . . Gen Z." (Meta did not respond to a request for comment.)

There are several reasons why Gen Zers downgraded Facebook among their apps. Facebook has been embroiled in political scandal since 2016, which, for many young people, was the first major election of memory. There was the Cambridge Analytica [data-scraping conundrum](#); the Pizzagate conspiracy theory that [blew up in-app](#); and now the deluge of [AI political slop](#) across the feed. Those woes aren't going away anytime soon, as former President Donald Trump continues to claim that Mark Zuckerberg [pledged his support](#) for the Republican candidate's 2024 campaign to regain the White House, which Meta has denied.

While Facebook offers photo and video options, much of the in-app content is text-based. That's a format Gen Z is increasingly moving away from. Of the [four apps](#) tracked since 2014, only Facebook and Twitter, another text-based app, saw user share declines among U.S. teens. Both Snapchat and Instagram, which rely more on images

Can Facebook win back Gen Z?

and videos, saw increases. When included, video app YouTube dominates these platforms at 93% usage among teens.

Users are primarily drawn to Facebook for connection. That's reflected in [the data](#): Among Facebook users, 93% claim to use the app to keep in touch with friends and family. If your Gen Z peers aren't on the platform, that ability to connect diminishes. Sure enough, in a 2023 survey of Gen Z users from [Savanta](#), "keeping in touch" steadily declined over the previous eight years. In 2015, 82% of young people used Facebook to connect; in 2023, that figure dropped to just 45%.

Can this redesign win back Gen Z users?

With the newly announced redesign, Facebook aims to tap into what Gen Z has historically liked. Marketplace is one of the app's most popular features among young people, with many seeing it as a haven of thrift finds. The new "Local" tab will pull content from Marketplace, Groups, and Events to create a more geographic feed.

Facebook is also leaning further into its play for TikTok user share, unifying its content under an "Explore" page backed by an endless-scroll algorithm. Facebook Reels, its TikTok knockoff, will be featured on the "Explore" page. Facebook isn't the only platform leaning hard into TikTok strategy; Snapchat recently announced a redesign with one [unified vertical video feed](#).

Whether these redesigns can entice Gen Z users remains to be seen. It's hard to ditch a reputation for being a "[tech dinosaur](#)." But if Facebook wants any sort of longevity, it will need to try.

[Link to image](#)

Load-Date: October 9, 2024



Here's Why 'Human Authored' Will Become the 'Artisanally Crafted' Pitch of the AI Age

Inc.com

October 8, 2024 Tuesday 12:14 PM EST

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Length: 849 words

Byline: Kit Eaton

Body

Readers will know books with the Author's Guild label are different-and better-than **AI slop**.

The Author's Guild is making it clear who's behind the content you're reading, and its new campaign may become the equivalent of slapping an "organic produce" label on an apple and pricing it accordingly. In an era when authors are suing AI companies for alleged "theft" of their intellectual property, major newspapers and record labels are doing the same, and as the content spat out by AIs becomes more convincingly realistic, the Author's Guild is trying something different. The organization, said to be the oldest professional organization for writers in the U.S., is going to offer a new certificate for the covers of books released by its 15,000 members, reports Marketplace: it'll say "Human Authored."

The label will be about the same size as book stickers denoting literary awards, or being selected for a celebrity book club, Marketplace explains. The site quotes Douglas Preston, bestselling novelist, nonfiction writer and member of the Authors Guild Council, offering this explanation. It's not just to "prevent fraud and deception," but also to show "how important storytelling is to who we are as a species," Preston said. He added, "we're not going to let machines elbow us aside and pretend to be telling us stories, when it's just regurgitating literary vomitus."

Those are some sweet-and even spicy-words. Preston is an acclaimed writer, after all. His rallying cry taps into one of the key arguments against certain uses of AI, which is to generate meaningless content to grab attention, fill web pages, and even sneakily grab advertising revenues away from sites offering genuine "Human Authored" content. This content is already known as "AI slop," and it's so pervasive that a recent study showed Google's search algorithms can be gamed to make them prefer slop over meaningful human-made content.

"Human Authored" is a clever move, if you think about it. It's the inverse of the "made by AI" labels that tech industry figures think need to be slapped on stuff spewed out by a generative AI system. The Author's Guild is also tapping into the same vibe as "organic product" labels on food, or handmade products sold on Etsy, clearly from a small or solo entrepreneur's business. The difference, based on the underlying sensibility of the Author's Guild mark, is that it's celebrating the thumbprints in the clay pot, or the cute handwritten labels a customer sees when their purchase arrives at their door. Things that lack the smooth mass-made quality of most factory-produced wares, but carry that emotional tingle of being created by people with a pulse are distinctive.

Here's Why 'Human Authored' Will Become the 'Artisanally Crafted' Pitch of the AI Age

Think about it like this, and "Human Authored" label is clearly a marketing strategy as well as a human salvo against a barrage of technological innovations bringing widespread change. Authors Guild CEO Mary Rasenberger suggest the label may be "most important in marketplaces like the Kindle marketplace, where you'll see a lot of **AI** generated books" that tend to be full of low-quality plots that are "a little weird, there's duplication." Thinking ahead, this might mean the label could benefit smaller publishers and less well known authors, who find their work competing for space in a crowded digital market.

Meanwhile, an artist embroiled in a copyright scandal shows the flip side of this **AI**-as-a-creative-tool coin. Jason Allen's work "Théâtre D'opéra Spatial" recently generated controversy after it won a state fair art competition. That's because the creation isn't painted, photographed or even drawn on a computer graphics system: it was dreamed-up by the **AI** image generating tool Midjourney. In late 2023, Allen was denied the right to register the work under copyright, news site Ars Technica [reports](#).

But Allen hasn't given up the fight and is now asking for a judicial review of the ruling by the U.S. Copyright Office. He alleges "the negative media attention surrounding the Work may have influenced the Copyright Office Examiner's perception and judgment," Ars explains, and is arguing that the copyright examiner was biased and lagging behind the times. Lacking copyright protection, his art has been appropriated by others and is even being sold on Etsy.

Allen might have a point. After all, in terms of "art," what's different between Allen's **AI**-fashioned piece and a repurposed porcelain urinal with the fake signature "R.Mutt" scrawled on it by French sculptor Marcel Duchamp and shown in an early 20th-century Parisian art gallery? Fish, as his fellow surrealists might have said. The court decision will be closely watched, though it surely won't be the last word on this complex topic.

No matter what you think of the difference between human-made and machine-made, both controversies are a reminder that you need to be careful how your company incorporates **AI**-created imagery, text or other content into your promotional material or even products. All of these questions are floating in untested waters, with plenty of potential legal complications under the surface.

[Link to Image](#)

Load-Date: October 8, 2024



Right-Wingers Heartbroken by Picture of Little Girl Who Doesn't Exist

Rolling Stone

October 7, 2024

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RollingStone

Length: 919 words

Byline: Miles Klee

Body

There has been no shortage of gut-wrenching photographs from communities in the southeast devastated by [Hurricane Helene](#), which caused extreme flooding and killed at least 215 people - pictures of houses destroyed, families trapped on rooftops, wreckage from mudslides and roads washed out by torrential rains. But rather than focus on the actual victims or damage, many right-wing influencers and politicians have extended their sympathies to a nonexistent girl and her puppy (who is also not real).

The [AI](#)-generated image they're sharing depicts a crying girl in a boat, seemingly alone except for the little dog she's clutching. She wears a lifejacket and appears to be adrift on floodwaters caused by a major storm. Sen. [Mike Lee](#) of Utah posted the picture on X on Thursday, writing "Caption this photo," apparently inviting his followers to vent their outrage at the Biden-Harris administration for allowing American children to suffer such misery on their watch. After users pointed out that he'd fallen for [AI slop](#), he deleted the picture. (The image [originated](#) on the Trump web forum Patriots.win, where several users immediately recognized it as the product of an [AI](#) model.)

Based Senator Mike Lee deleted this. Because someone told him this viral MAGA photo is [AI](#) and not Kamala abandoning kids and puppies. pic.twitter.com/DhXZB9j9k6

- Ron Filipkowski (@RonFilipkowski) [October 3, 2024](#)

Others, however, have left the misleading picture up on their social media accounts - and some are defending it as an accurate representation of Helene's effects even though it's fake. Far-right conspiracy theorist and [Donald Trump](#) associate [Laura Loomer](#) called the image "[sad](#)," quote-tweeting a post from Buzz Patterson, columnist for the conservative blog RedState, who [wrote](#) of the picture: "Our government has failed us again." Neither have taken their posts down as of press time. Amy Kremer, RNC National Committeewoman for the Georgia GOP and co-founder of Women for Trump, [tweeted](#) on Thursday that the image had been "seared into my mind."

Informed that she was not looking at an authentic photo, Kremer doubled down. "Y'all, I don't know where this photo came from and honestly, it doesn't matter," she [replied](#). "There are people going through much worse than what is

Right-Wingers Heartbroken by Picture of Little Girl Who Doesn't Exist

shown in this pic. So I'm leaving it because it is emblematic of the trauma and pain people are living through right now." A large anonymous blue-check account on X that routinely attacks Democrats did remove the picture but [similarly argued](#): "Even though that image was **AI**, it spoke a truth about the disregard Harris and Biden have for ordinary Americans, as evidenced by their criminal non-response to Helene." Another X user posted a since-deleted screenshot of a more succinct response from an apparent family member advised that the image was bogus. "Who cares," they answered.

The little girl and her puppy - there are [AI-generated variants](#) of the more viral image floating around as well - have been widely presented by MAGA world as evidence of a failed disaster response in the aftermath of Helene. Similar fake images depict girls or women clutching Bibles as floods rage around them. Trump himself is [pushing lies](#) about the U.S. government not being able to fund relief efforts, adding an overtone of racism with the [groundless claim](#) that the White House "stole" money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and "spent it all on illegal migrants." (The irony being that in 2019, the Trump administration itself [redirected millions in disaster funds](#), during hurricane season, to pay for detention centers at the border.)

FEMA has said in a [statement](#) that it does have enough money for "immediate response and recovery needs." Yet the supposed scandal has Republicans outraged at the idea that Americans impacted by the hurricane are being denied help because Democrats funneled resources to immigrants. "So Kamala doesn't have enough money for this child?" fumed a MAGA-affiliated X user who shared the **AI**-generated girl. "For Americans that lost everything they have? I can't hate this administration enough."

The barrage of **AI** junk from Trump supporters follows a similar trend last month, when the former president, his running mate Sen. [J.D. Vance](#), and their various allies were smearing the Haitian immigrant community of Springfield, Ohio, by falsely accusing them of stealing and eating local house pets. During that news cycle, many used **AI** to generate cartoonish images of cats and dogs wearing MAGA hats, and Trump himself holding or protecting animals. Before that, [Trump shared AI imagery](#) that made it appear as if he had the backing of [Taylor Swift](#) and her fan army. (Swift [endorsed Vice President Harris](#) immediately after Harris' September debate with Trump.) Along with the phony "victim" images to come out of the Helene disaster, there were also **AI** pictures of Trump braving floodwaters to [assist residents](#) and rescue babies.

He's saving the dogs.He's saving the cats.He's saving the lives of the people who live there.
pic.twitter.com/mOxujYwm1c

- rick genie (@RickGenie) [October 3, 2024](#)

What other uncanny-valley creations will online Trump boosters bring to the fore of the American imagination in the closing weeks of this chaotic campaign? Hard to say, but one thing is certain: the **AI** assault remains a core piece of their strategy.

Update Oct. 7, 1:41 p.m. ET: This story has been updated to include more examples of misleading **AI**-generated images in circulation on social media following Hurricane Helene.

Load-Date: October 7, 2024



It's Time to Stop Taking Sam Altman at His Word

Atlantic Online

October 4, 2024 Friday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1069 words

Byline: David Karpf

Body

OpenAI announced this week that it has raised \$6.6 billion in new funding and that the company is now valued at \$157 billion overall. This is quite a feat for an organization that [reportedly](#) burns through \$7 billion a year far more cash than it brings in—but it makes sense when you realize that OpenAI's primary product isn't technology. It's stories.

Case in point: Last week, CEO Sam Altman published an online manifesto titled "[The Intelligence Age](#)." In it, he declares that the **AI** revolution is on the verge of unleashing boundless prosperity and radically improving human life. "We'll soon be able to work with **AI** that helps us accomplish much more than we ever could without **AI**," he writes. Altman expects that his technology will fix the climate, help humankind establish space colonies, and discover all of physics. He predicts that we may have an all-powerful superintelligence "in a few thousand days." All we have to do is feed his technology enough energy, enough data, and enough chips.

Maybe someday Altman's ideas about **AI** will prove out, but for now, his approach is textbook Silicon Valley mythmaking. In these narratives, humankind is forever on the cusp of a technological breakthrough that will transform society for the better. The hard technical problems have basically been solved—all that's left now are the details, which will surely be worked out through market competition and old-fashioned entrepreneurship. Spend billions now; make trillions later! This was the story of the dot-com boom in the 1990s, and of nanotechnology in the 2000s. It was the story of cryptocurrency and robotics in the 2010s. The technologies never quite work out like the Altmans of the world promise, but the stories keep regulators and regular people sidelined while the entrepreneurs, engineers, and investors build empires. (The Atlantic recently entered a corporate partnership with OpenAI.)

[\[Read: AI doomerism is a decoy\]](#)

Despite the rhetoric, Altman's products currently feel less like a glimpse of the future and more like the mundane, buggy present. ChatGPT and DALL-E were cutting-edge technology in 2022. People tried the chatbot and image generator for the first time and were astonished. Altman and his ilk spent the following year speaking in stage

It's Time to Stop Taking Sam Altman at His Word

whispers about the awesome technological force that had just been unleashed upon the world. Prominent [**AI**](#) figures were among the thousands of people who signed an [open letter in March 2023](#) to urge a six-month pause in the development of large language models (LLMs) so that humanity would have time to address the social consequences of the impending revolution. Those six months came and went. OpenAI and its competitors have released other models since then, and although tech wonks have dug into their purported advancements, for most people, the technology appears to have plateaued. [GPT-4](#) now looks less like the precursor to an all-powerful superintelligence and more like well, any other chatbot.

The technology itself seems much smaller once the novelty wears off. You can use a large language model to compose an email or a story-but not a particularly original one. The tools still hallucinate (meaning they confidently assert false information). They still fail in [embarrassing and unexpected ways](#). Meanwhile, the web is filling up with useless "[AI slop](#)," LLM-generated trash that costs practically nothing to produce and generates pennies of advertising revenue for the creator. We're in a race to the bottom that everyone saw coming and no one is happy with. Meanwhile, the search for product-market fit at a scale that would justify all the inflated tech-company valuations keeps coming up short. Even OpenAI's latest release, o1, was accompanied by a [caveat](#) from Altman that "it still seems more impressive on first use than it does after you spend more time with it."

In Altman's rendering, this moment in time is just a waypoint, "the doorstep of the next leap in prosperity." He still argues that the deep-learning technique that powers ChatGPT will effectively be able to solve any problem, at any scale, so long as it has enough energy, enough computational power, and enough data. Many computer scientists are [skeptical of this claim](#), maintaining that multiple significant scientific breakthroughs stand between us and artificial general intelligence. But Altman projects confidence that his company has it all well in hand, that science fiction will soon become reality. He may need [\\$7 trillion](#) or so to realize his ultimate vision-not to mention [unproven fusion-energy technology](#)-but that's peanuts when compared with all the advances he is promising. There's just one tiny problem, though: Altman is no physicist. He is a serial entrepreneur, and quite clearly a talented one. He is one of Silicon Valley's most revered talent scouts. If you look at Altman's breakthrough successes, they all pretty much revolve around connecting early start-ups with piles of investor cash, not any particular technical innovation.

[[Read: OpenAI takes its mask off](#)]

It's remarkable how similar Altman's rhetoric sounds to that of [his fellow billionaire techno-optimists](#). The project of techno-optimism, for decades now, has been to insist that if we just have faith in technological progress and free the inventors and investors from pesky regulations such as [copyright law](#) and [deceptive marketing](#), then the marketplace will work its magic and everyone will be better off. Altman has made nice with lawmakers, insisting that artificial intelligence requires responsible regulation. But the company's response to proposed regulation seems to be "[no, not like that](#)." Lord, grant us regulatory clarity-but [not just yet](#).

At a high enough level of abstraction, Altman's entire job is to keep us all fixated on an imagined [**AI**](#) future so we don't get too caught up in the underwhelming details of the present. Why focus on how [**AI**](#) is being used to [harass and exploit children](#) when you can imagine the ways it will make your life easier? It's much more pleasant fantasizing about a benevolent future [**AI**](#), one that fixes the problems wrought by climate change, than dwelling upon the phenomenal [energy](#) and [water consumption](#) of actually existing [**AI**](#) today.

Remember, these technologies already have a track record. The world can and should evaluate them, and the people building them, based on their results and their effects, not solely on their supposed potential.

Load-Date: October 5, 2024



Worlds apart

New Scientist

October 2, 2024

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NewScientist

Section: CULTURE; Review; Pg. 30; Vol. 264; No. 3511; ISSN: 0262 4079

Length: 662 words

Byline: Bethan Ackerley

Bethan Ackerley is a subeditor at *New Scientist*. She loves sci-fi, sitcoms and anything spooky.

Highlight: Bill Gates's Netflix series offers a bumpy ride as it discusses routes and roadblocks to the future – **AI**, climate, inequality, malaria and more. But Gates looms too large for alternative solutions to emerge, says Bethan Ackerley

Body

TV

[*What's Next? The future with Bill Gates*](#)Netflix

Books

[*Non-Stop Inertia*](#)vor SouthwoodZero Books*Modern life is characterised by restlessness – about work, housing, relationships. Southwood argues that this frenzy masks a paralysis of action and imagination.*

[*Mutual Aid*](#)Dean SpadeVerso*For an alternative view on how transformational change can be achieved, try this great primer on mutual aid, in which resources are shared within communities to provide unconditionally for those in need.*

WHEN you want to imagine the future, who do you turn to? Friends and family? Science fiction? *New Scientist*? Now you can check in with Bill Gates, as the Microsoft co-founder and multibillionaire has worked with Netflix on *What's Next? The future with Bill Gates*, in which he digs into make-or-break issues: artificial intelligence, misinformation, climate change, income inequality and disease.

The five-part series is uneven, though, and the worst instalment is perhaps the first, "What can **AI** do for us/to us". Gates is upfront about his role advising the leaders of OpenAI, whose ChatGPT transformed our understanding of generative technologies in 2022. But the documentary pretty much takes it as read that current **AI**s are miraculously competent – bar the odd bias and hallucination – and unstoppably marching towards superintelligence. Many would question that characterisation.

Worlds apart

Little time is afforded to key questions such as the legalities of sometimes using [copyrighted material to teach AIs](#) and whether so-called [transformer models like ChatGPT](#) might soon hit a ceiling of usefulness. And what happens if [AI-generated slop](#) is fed back into [training data](#)? You won't find out from this series, which is weighed down by its attempts to present Gates as a leader in this field.

I would also advise skipping the fourth episode, "Can you be too rich?" Prepare to be shocked to learn that Gates believes the ultra-rich shouldn't be prevented from accumulating vast hoards, but should be more like him and give it away. We are told, constantly, that he has effectively imposed higher taxes on himself, as if this shouldn't be expected of someone in his position, and are presented with a mainly US-centric view of running an economy.

When Gates covers topics like climate change and malaria, the series is better, enlightening even

Systems must be tweaked to decrease the gap between rich and poor, we are also told. The alternative – restructuring beyond the business as usual that keeps millions in poverty and poisons the planet – would be almost inconceivable, the show implies. The most charitable reading of this approach I can stomach is that it is a spectacular failure of vision.

When Gates covers topics like climate change and malaria, the series is better, enlightening even. In "Can we stop global warming?", there is a detailed breakdown of the sectors of the economy most difficult to decarbonise. Gates invests in and is a customer of many companies offering technical solutions to some of climate change's stickiest issues.

A lot of the firms featured have also appeared in *New Scientist*, such as Climeworks, which is developing large [direct-air-capture plants](#) to suck carbon out of the atmosphere. It is refreshing that Gates, Climeworks and the film-makers all stress that such infrastructure is nowhere near the scale needed to solve the problem. Such sober analysis would have greatly benefited the whole series.

By the final episode, the focus is on malaria, Gates's real expertise. It is a thoughtful exploration of the tough ethical, ecological and social issues around developing vaccines and technologies such as gene drives, which could eliminate whole mosquito species.

But even this nuance is marred by the endless myth-making of Gates as god-emperor of all he surveys. He is undoubtedly an intelligent man with considerable achievements, just as *What's Next?* undoubtedly has a few big insights. However, it is hard to see other futures with Gates standing in the way.

Load-Date: October 2, 2024

Silicon Valley has a plan to save humanity: Just flip on the nuclear reactors



Silicon Valley has a plan to save humanity: Just flip on the nuclear reactors

CNN Wire

October 1, 2024 Tuesday 9:00 AM GMT

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Length: 731 words

Byline: Analysis by Allison Morrow, CNN

Dateline: (CNN)

Body

New York (CNN) - **AI** hasn't quite delivered the job-killing, cancer-curing utopia that the technology's evangelists are peddling. So far, artificial intelligence has proven more capable of generating [stock market enthusiasm](#) than, like, tangibly great things for humanity. Unless you count [Shrimp Jesus](#).

But that's all going to change, the **AI** bulls tell us. Because the only thing standing in the way of an **AI**-powered idyll is heaps upon heaps of computing power to train and operate these nascent **AI** models. And don't worry, fellow members of the public who never asked for any of this - that power won't come from fossil fuels. I mean, imagine the PR headaches.

No, the tech that's going to save humanity will be powered by the tech that very nearly destroyed it.

Here's the deal: To do **AI** at the scale that the Microsofts and Googles of the world envision, it requires a lot of computing power. When you ask Chat-GPT a question, that query and its answer are sucking up electricity in a supercomputer filled with Nvidia chips in some remote, heavily air-conditioned data center.

Electricity consumption from data centers, **AI** and crypto mining (its own environmental headache) [could double by 2026](#), according to the International Energy Agency.

In the US alone, power demand is expected to grow 13% to 15% a year until 2030, potentially turning electricity into a much scarcer resource, [according to JPMorgan analysts](#).

The tech industry's solution, for now, is nuclear energy, which is more stable than wind or solar and is virtually carbon-emission-free.

Microsoft this month [secured a deal](#) to reopen a reactor on Three Mile Island, the site of the 1979 partial meltdown near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to give the company enough power to sustain its **AI** growth. (Not the reactor, of course, but another one that didn't fail and continued to operate on the island for years after the incident.) Amazon is working on putting a data center campus right on the site of a Talen Energy nuclear power plant in Northeast Pennsylvania. Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, is also heavily invested in nuclear energy and serves as the chairman of Oklo, a nuclear startup that last week [received approval](#) to begin site investigations for a

Silicon Valley has a plan to save humanity: Just flip on the nuclear reactors

"microreactor" site in Idaho. On Monday, the [Financial Times reported](#) that the venture capital firm co-founded by Peter Thiel, Founders Fund, is backing a nuclear startup that's trying to create a new production method for a more powerful nuclear fuel used in advanced reactors.

The irony of all this is, of course, is that even **AI**'s cheerleaders have invoked the history of nuclear proliferation to try to convey the need for guardrails around artificial intelligence (just as long as the regulations don't slow them down or curtail their profit-making in any way).

And while **AI** doomer predictions often get brushed off as alarmist forecasts, you can't as readily dismiss the folks who are concerned about nuclear energy. History is, tragically, on their side.

To be sure, nuclear power today is better understood than it was in 1979, when Three Mile Island's Reactor Two experienced a partial core meltdown, Anna Erickson, a professor of nuclear science at Georgia Tech, told me.

"Nothing in life is ever foolproof," she said, "but we are much better now at understanding the operation of nuclear reactors," thanks in part to the wave of safety regulations that the Three Mile Island incident set off.

Bottom line: There's no **AI** future without a serious uptick in our power supply, which makes the expansion of nuclear power practically unavoidable. But it will take years for many of the recently announced projects to come online, and that means Big Tech data centers will have to stay on the fossil fuel drip as demand continues spiking.

Are we all cool with wrecking the planet if all we get are apps that can summarize our emails? Or search engines that are slightly more human-sounding but less reliable? Is the future really just variations of crustacean-based deities in a churn of **AI slop**?

There's a lot at stake - including our jobs and the environment and our entire sense of purpose in the world, according to **AI**'s own developers. And yet it remains unclear what we the people stand to get out of the deal.

Analysis by Allison Morrow, CNN

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Load-Date: October 1, 2024

End of Document



McNeal review – Robert Downey Jr shines in muddled AI-themed play

The Guardian (London)

October 1, 2024 Tuesday 5:21 PM GMT

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theguardian

Section: STAGE; Version:2

Length: 810 words

Byline: Adrian Horton

Highlight: Vivian Beaumont Theater, New YorkThe Oscar-winning actor makes a smooth transfer to Broadway but Ayad Akhtar's play is a mixed bag of insight and exhaustion

Body

Star Rating: 3 stars

The writer Jacob McNeal is, among other things, a bestselling and influential novelist, an esteemed winner of the Nobel prize for literature, a writer with style consistent and public enough to serve as a prompt for ChatGPT. From another view: a narcissistic cad, a terrible father, a lonely drunk. People argue whether he's a genius, a fraud, an iconoclast. After nearly two hours with him, it's not clear which. Though mesmerizingly brought to life by Robert Downey Jr in Ayad Akhtar's muddled and occasionally poignant new play of the same name, McNeal remains more reflection than character – a projection of success, an outlet for anxieties over artificial intelligence, a cipher to destabilize one's view of reality.

All of these angles offer fertile material for a play of ideas, and to Akhtar's credit, McNeal is not only a rare original Broadway play but an ambitious one, given starry billing and splashy, tech-forward staging at Lincoln Center. It's also all over the place, a play of strong performances – Downey, in his Broadway debut, chief among them – that chafe against vague, inchoate ideas about a vaguely ghoulish technology.

Things start simply enough: a giant, blue light-abundant iPhone interface looming above the stage, the home page tracking the minutes clicking by on Friday, 10 October in a way intriguingly familiar to most people in the audience. It's sometime in the near future, when ChatGPT-like **AI** is even more firmly grounded in American daily life – enough, as McNeal off-handedly remarks in Dr Sahra Grewal's (Ruthie Ann Miles) office, that several New York Times bestsellers are openly composed through machine learning.

The play proceeds in chronological-ish chapters in the sunset days of McNeal's distinguished career: an appointment diagnosing liver disease; a triumphantly tipsy and moralizing speech accepting the Nobel prize; a meeting with his hammy agent Stephie (Andrea Martin); a reunion with his estranged adult son Harlan (a jittery Rafi

McNeal review – Robert Downey Jr shines in muddled AI-themed play

Gavron), who harbors intense loathing for the father he blames for his mother's suicide decades earlier (and which features some telenovela-esque revelations that nearly took me out of the play entirely). Some border on the surreal; some, especially a tete-a-tete between proudly un-woke McNeal and a young female Black reporter at the New York Times (Brittany Bellizeare, a standout) whip up propulsive, left-field tension as the novelist plunges deeper into the whiskey bottle. (Michael Yeargan and Jake Barton's evocative sets cover both, most pleasingly released in a luscious bookshelf full of both real and made-up titles.)

But as the chapters build, the narrative cohesion slackens. For each interlude deliberately muddies the waters by introducing the prospect of AI-generated material – Downey Jr's voice, as McNeal, prompting the machine for the scenes we are about to witness and providing personal material to synthesize. Eventually, the projections deliver dialogue as deepfakes of McNeal and his late wife/former paramour (Melora Hardin). (The program credits the "digital composites" to the company AGBO.)

Akhtar, a Pulitzer-winning dramatist (in 2013, for *Disgraced*) and novelist, has dressed up a reliably grating inclination – a writer writing about writing – with the mind-bending and reality-questioning drama of our fears with AI. The framing devices don't need to do much to touch on, without spoiling, the lines between inspiration and exploitation, between borrowing and theft, between assistance and cheating. Although delineating it this way feels like I'm giving the play too much credit – McNeal at most nudges these fault lines, seemingly chuffed with bringing up the topic as an end unto itself.

Downey, operating firmly in his lane of wise-cracking, sardonic charisma, is at least never less than compelling, and thankfully on stage for almost the whole show; the whole exercise is worth it to see an actor in peak, seemingly easy form. He sells McNeal both as a narcissist spiraling at the end of his road and as a provocation of AI's blurry ethical lines. Such provocation contains little insight, beyond that AI is scary and could make things worse; perhaps McNeal's most interesting idea is the unoriginal notion that generative AI will enable narcissists, or that it will allow people to express themselves through an artistic medium without putting in the hard work of craft.

McNeal ends on a confounding note, explicitly invoking the question: what is real, and how do you know? One could generously read the play's descent into confusion as a meta treatise on what a world full of AI slop and questionably generated material will wreak on our perception, tenuous as it is already. One could also say that it's a bit of unearned ambiguity. Our standards haven't fallen so far yet as to not hope for art with a clear vision.

Load-Date: October 1, 2024



The AR and VR headsets you'll actually wear

Africa Newswire

September 30, 2024 Monday

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Length: 1748 words

Body

30 Sep 2024 (TourismAfrica2006) Hi, friends! Welcome to Installer No. 54, your guide to the best and Verge-iest stuff in the world. (If you're new here, welcome, so psyched you found us, and also you can read all the old editions at the Installer homepage.)

This week, I've been reading about ***AI slop*** and sports betting and Jony Ive, clearing my schedule for the new season of The Great British Bake Off, watching Sicario and Pirates of the Caribbean and A Quiet Place: Day One on plane-seat screens like their directors intended, insta-subscribing to Hasan Minhaj's new YouTube show, and just relentlessly trolling people with Vergecast clips through Pocket Casts' new feature.

I also have for you a couple of new Meta gadgets, the mobile game that will eat up all your free time, a couple of hotly anticipated new movies, the best Spotify feature in forever, and much more. So much going on! Let's dig in.

(As always, the best part of Installer is your ideas and tips. What are you into right now? What should everyone else be reading / watching / playing / trying / building out of clay this week? Tell me everything: installer@theverge.com And if you know someone else who might enjoy Installer, tell them to subscribe here.)

The Drop

Meta's Quest 3S. My biggest issues with the Quest 3 were the price and the passthrough, and this new model appears to have solved both. It's back in "totally reasonable game console" range, and the passthrough demos looked much sharper than before. They look great, though not as good as...The limited-edition Ray-Ban Meta Wayfarer. I already own two pairs of Meta's smart glasses (don't ask), but I am still lusting over this clear pair. They're more expensive, and they actually undo some of the good non-gadget vibes of the other models, but they look so good. Balatro Mobile. This might be the most recommended thing in the history of Installer - I swear, every week someone tells me how much this poker roguelike has taken over their life. And now it's on your phone! \$10, no data collected, no microtransactions, my screen time is about to go through the roof. *Wolfs*. This Clooney-Pitt Apple TV Plus movie has a fascinating backstory that says a lot about the future of Hollywood, but I also just love a big-budget flick in which movie stars say cool lines in cool ways. This appears to be exactly that. The new Roku Ultra. I helped review the Google TV Streamer this week, and I really love that thing. But I'm also psyched to see

The AR and VR headsets you'll actually wear

Roku keep pushing - the new one's not reinventing the wheel, but it's faster and better, and that is a very good thing. The Wild Robot. I'd really like to tell you to go see Megalopolis this weekend, but every single indication is that the movie is hot garbage. But people seem thrilled about this one, an animated flick about a stranded robot that sounds adorable and delightful and like something I'm going to end up watching 100 times. The Legend of Zelda: Echoes of Wisdom. A Zelda game... in which you get to play as Zelda. That's the dream! This game doesn't seem to be as big or awe-inspiring or platform-defining as Breath of the Wild or Tears of the Kingdom, but it sounds clever and fun just the same. Spotify's **AI** Playlist feature. This is terrible news for my relentless quest to quit Spotify: the **AI** playlists are great. Now that the feature is available in the US, I've been using it to name a few bands or songs, plus an overall vibe, and it picks a few dozen songs that, at least so far, always seem to hit. Spotify is very, very good at this part of the music game. Social Studies. Being a kid is hard work. And this doc digs in with a group of students on how much... maybe not always harder, but definitely more complicated, social media has made being a kid in 2024. This comes from a good team, too, and I'm excited about it. The Nothing Ear Open. Nothing's headphones have been really solid, and as a recent and aggressive convert to open earbuds, I'm pumped to see how these sound. They look so cool, too! Big week for clear gadgets.

Screen share

Fun fact: Joanna Stern is the main reason I ever got a job at The Verge in the first place. (That story is long and, if I remember correctly, involves her playing a fairy in a video? But I promised her I wouldn't tell that story.) These days, she's a columnist at The Wall Street Journal, an Emmy winner, and most recently, the creator of Joannabot, the **AI** chatbot that will tell you everything you need to know about the iPhone 16. (And apparently also do some other things, if you're clever enough, but again, we'll leave that alone.)

I asked Joanna to share her homescreen because she just reviewed the iPhone 16, which means she just had to set up a homescreen. And because she's forever using new gadgets and switching between things, I was curious what always made it to the top of the pile.

Here's Joanna's homescreen, plus some info on the apps she uses and why:

I'm submitting my homescreen and my Control Center screen because I'm proud of the work I did on the Control Center. I may submit it for an award. But really, I'd like to just use this as a forum to complain about the all-in-one connectivity widget in the new Control Center in iOS 18. I don't like it. I like the single buttons so I can easily just turn them on and off or long-press to get in there. Sadly, they have gotten rid of the single Wi-Fi button, but I read on this great website that it's coming back in iOS 18.1.

The phone: iPhone 16 Pro Max.

The wallpaper: This is my dog Browser. It isn't the best shot of him, but the framing is nice for putting him in the middle of the screen. My lockscreen wallpaper is this awesome retro iPod made by a designer named Shane Levine. I bought it through this site last year after featuring it in my newsletter.

The apps: WSJ, ChatGPT, Apple Notes, Google Maps, Google Docs, Google Calendar, Instagram, YouTube, Clock, Threads, Signal, Photos, Slack, Spotify, Phone, Safari, Messages, Gmail.

My apps are so basic and make me feel so basic. I work (Slack, Gmail). I message (Messages, Signal). I listen and watch things (YouTube, Spotify). I social media (Threads, Instagram). I work more (Google Docs, WSJ). If it isn't on this main homescreen, I usually just search for it.

Before iOS 18, I had a widget stack on the homescreen with weather and time zone widgets, but I moved it off to another screen. I might move it back. I might not. Got to live a little.

I also asked Joanna to share a few things she's into right now. Here's what she shared:

The Devil at His Elbow. I'm currently listening to this audiobook by my wildly talented colleague Valerie Bauerlein. It's all about the Murdaugh murders. The writing, the details, the whole thing, is so gripping. I find myself just sitting in the garage waiting until a chapter is done. Full Swing. I know I'm late to Netflix's popular golf-u-series, but I started

The AR and VR headsets you'll actually wear

playing golf again this summer, and I'm loving the stories of these players and how psychological the sport really is. Take Your Pet to School Day. My 3-year-old loves this book. I don't want to spoil it, but the pets take over Maple View Elementary, and, well, Ms. Ellen is pissed.

Crowdsourced

Here's what the Installer community is into this week. I want to know what you're into right now as well! Email installer@theverge.com or message me on Signal - @davidpierce.11 - with your recommendations for anything and everything, and we'll feature some of our favorites here every week. And for even more great recommendations, check out the replies to this post on Threads.

"Sliding Seas. It's a match-three (or four!) game but also so much more: there's real strategy required behind your moves to beat levels at the higher end, but it's never unfair, and while there are in-app purchases and power-ups you can buy to make a level easier, you crucially never need to. It is the most compelling and well-suited-to-mobile game I've ever found and a gem I recommend without reservation." - Jamie

"Gisnep is another daily puzzle game, this time by David Friedman of Ironic Sans. It appears as a crossword-esque grid, but the words only go across and wrap around. The goal is to reveal both a quote and the source by filling in letters from vertical columns. I've gotten a number of my friends hooked already." - Kyle

"Satisfactory 1.0 launched a week ago or so. A great group of devs have effectively made a game that feels like work but is fun. If you love conveyor belts and staying up all night, this might be for you." - Matt

"Can't believe you haven't mentioned switching to OmniFocus! As a fellow perennial 'task manager switcher,' this app is a staple in my rotation." - Pedro

"I previously recommended App in the Air as a great travel companion, but unfortunately, it's shutting down. If you're looking for an alternative, Flighty is excellent, especially for travel stats, and they're building an importer for App in the Air users." - Vivian

"We've been watching English Teacher on FX. Constant laughs and, so far, each episode has been better than the last. Easily one of the funniest shows on TV right now." - Danial

"I was gifted the Humanscale FR300 Ergonomic Foot Rocker, which is a very tech-sounding name for a very manual / mechanical rocking footrest. It's very pleasant to use. I've also been standing on it sometimes... which I'm not sure is safe but sure is fun!" - Wisdom

"Repeatedly putting in my Amazon cart the Black Milanese Loop for the Apple Watch Ultra 2. I was so close to buying it like three times. Now it's out of stock. Even Apple says early November for shipping." - Scott

"Been playing with different LLMs using LM Studio. Integrated it into my Obsidian vault to help summarize and organize things into specific formats. It's been extremely cool!" - Cody

Signing off

I've had back-to-back-to-back-to-back trips over the last two weeks, and I would just like to quickly shout out my new No. 1 travel hack: a wall charger that doubles as a big-ass portable battery. I have this Anker model, which is \$55, charges a USB-C and a USB-A device simultaneously, and also charges itself so I can get 10,000mAh of power when there's no outlet nearby. (There's also a newer one with two USB-C ports and even faster charging but less battery capacity.) It's huge and heavy, but this thing and a long cable are now the only charging gear I travel with, and they're the only reasons my gadgets have survived trains and plane rides. Here at Installer, we love a sensible charging strategy, and this is as sensible as it gets.

Load-Date: October 1, 2024

The AR and VR headsets you'll actually wear

End of Document

'So lame of you guys': Legendary 80s band infuriates fans over new album cover's AI art



'So lame of you guys': Legendary 80s band infuriates fans over new album cover's AI art

BGR

September 28, 2024

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BGR

Length: 441 words

Byline: Andy Meek

Body

Back in the day, people dogged Tears for Fears for [ripping off The Beatles](#) with songs like Sowing the Seeds of Love. So much so, that [Paul McCartney](#) himself once acknowledged during a press conference that the first time he heard the song, he thought: "Who are they kidding?"

So it probably shouldn't come as a surprise that the same band now apparently seems fine with typing some dumb prompt into an **AI** image generator (I'm guessing "astronaut in a field of flowers") and using the resulting soulless **AI slop** as the cover of their new album, Songs for a Nervous Planet. Rather than, you know, using a pittance of their considerable fortune to pay a human artist to do the work. Seriously, guys, "have you no idea how the majority feels?"

That's a rhetorical question, by the way. Not only does the band know, but they've also responded to the predictable outcry [with a statement](#) that blathers on about **AI** being "one of the many tools used in the creative process" for the album cover, a statement that appears to have been written by an actual tool.

SONGS FOR A NERVOUS PLANET. OUT OCT 25. Pre-order and listen to "The Girl That I Call Home" now. [#songsforanervousplanet pic.twitter.com/PaAI4NCmSW](https://t.co/8rP6k9e7ug)

- Tears for Fears (@tearsforfears) [September 12, 2024](#)

Tears for Fears' social media posts announcing the highly anticipated new album, which drops on Oct. 25, have been flooded with negative comments from fans angry about everything from the lifelessness of the **AI** art - with its too-smooth, plastic-y feeling and lack of fine detail - to the usage of **AI** in general. "It's honestly embarrassing that you're using an **ai** album cover," one user wrote on [the band's Instagram post](#). "You obviously have the money to pay an artist for an album cover, yet you still chose to just type in a prompt and have a computer plagiarize art instead?"

'So lame of you guys': Legendary 80s band infuriates fans over new album cover's AI art

Added another: "Using **AI** art is such a joke. You guys are a legendary band and you chatGPT your album cover? Phone it in a little more man."

PSA to any more beloved bands out there: If you're going to resort to using **AI** for anything, at least do what The Beatles did with their new song [Now and Then](#) and steal from yourselves. Anything else, and you'll deservedly get what's coming to you. "I can't wait until someone makes an all **ai** album by stealing your music," another angry Tears for Fears fan wrote on the band's Insta. Likewise, the fan who added: "the **ai** cover is so lame of you guys."

[Don't Miss: I never trusted Sam Altman. I trust OpenAI's overhyped CEO even less now.](#)

The post ['So lame of you guys': Legendary 80s band infuriates fans over new album cover's **AI** art](#) appeared first on [BGR](#).

Load-Date: September 28, 2024

End of Document

Is anyone out there?



Is anyone out there?

Prospect

September 25, 2024

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**Length:** 2393 words**Byline:** James Ball

Body

If you've ever walked a city street so late at night that it's very early in the morning, you may have been greeted by a strange and unbidden thought. In the eerie stillness, it can feel for a moment as though you're the last person alive. The usual throngs are gone, and the absence of what should be there is impossible to ignore-until some other person, off to start their working day, breaks the spell. The world is still there.

It is hard, in any real-world city, to maintain the illusion of being the only person for any length of time. But the internet is different. There is always an element of unreality to an online interaction with another human: how do we know for sure that they are who they say they are? Can we be certain they're even actually a person?

This is the idea at the core of what became known as Dead Internet Theory, a joke-cum-conspiracy that says if you're reading these words online, you're the last person on the internet. Everyone else is a bot. The other commentators on Reddit? Bots. The people in the videos or the podcasts you listen to? Bots. What's filling the junky websites that we all can't help but click? You guessed it. They're all bots, and you're the guinea pig in the perverse experiment of some unknown power.

Dead Internet Theory is, if anything, a thought experiment. We've learned that we can't necessarily trust what we read or who we meet online-so what happens if we take that notion to the extreme? If you were the last actual human on the internet, how long would it take for you to notice?

The idea began to gain traction almost a decade ago, with the "time of death" of the internet typically given as being around 2015 or 2016-but in the years since, reality has begun to mirror this once unserious conspiracy. The complaint of the modern internet is that it is filled with "slop" content, the spiritual successor to email spam. Low-quality content-such as trashy viral images or regurgitated news articles-created by artificial intelligence is filling up social media, search results and anywhere else you might look. But while junk memes are near impossible to avoid, they are just the most visible sign of the AI detritus that is coming to dominate our online worlds.

Is anyone out there?

In reality, the internet is bots all the way down. Automated systems generate fake but clickable content. Bot accounts like and comment, boosting the slop in the algorithms of social media sites and search engines. Clickfarms monetise the whole endeavour, posing as real users with real eyeballs and thus earning advertising revenue. In this way, the web is being taken over by a global, automated ad fraud system, and whether or not any human sees any of it is entirely irrelevant. The things that generate real value for us are being pushed further and further to the margins, unable to compete with this brutal new algorithmic reality.

The most obvious destination for slop is Facebook, a social network that has been seen as dated and perennially naff for at least a decade, but which nonetheless counts more than a quarter of humanity as its users-even if many don't log in quite as often as they used to.

If you do check your Facebook "Suggested for you" feed, though, you're likely to find it chock-full of AI-generated slop: mostly images that don't pass for real after even so much as a cursory glance, but which nonetheless generate tens of thousands of likes.

For a while, the trend was for images of what looked like wood or sand sculptures and their artists, with captions such as "made it with my own hands". At another point, bizarre images of Jesus were du jour. One image of "shrimp Jesus" portrayed Christianity's saviour as a crustacean. This was followed by pictures of US veterans, beggars or children looking miserable with birthday cakes, usually in strange locations, captioned with "why do images like this never trend?" The latest fad is for pictures of grotesquely emaciated people holding out begging bowls, often with strange skeleton or snake-like appendages. The nature of the junk memes changes, but it is always bizarre and lacking in any obvious purpose.

The independent journalism startup 404 Media has done more than anyone else to work out what is behind the apparently unstoppable slew of AI-generated slop on Facebook. The answer is a sign of what's gone wrong on the internet and indicates how difficult it will be to fix: ultimately Facebook is funding the content that is destroying the value of its own network.

Behind the accounts posting slop on Facebook are entrepreneurs, of sorts, working out of countries including India, Vietnam and the Philippines, where internet access is widespread but incomes are relatively low. Here, the advertising revenue from a viral Facebook meme page is much more attractive relative to an average salary than it is in a country such as the UK.

These "creators" are often trained through online seminars which are themselves promoted through AI-generated content. As 404 Media reports, they are instructed to share "emotional" content to generate likes, comments and shares, but many boost this type of material either through artificial accounts or by partially hijacking real user accounts.

Some users who persistently comment on AI slop appear to have two personalities, effectively because they do. One "persona"-the real person-comments as usual on their local interest groups. But their account, which has been compromised without them noticing, also posts generic, AI-generated comments on thousands of pieces of AI-generated slop. This is a kind of benign hacking, in which bots piggyback on an account, letting the real user go about their business while using it to boost their content-a parasite for the digital era.

The motive is, of course, money. Facebook slop is monetised in two ways. Meta, which owns Facebook, shares revenue from the advertising it shows alongside the content of major creators. This means that if AI meme pages generate a big and apparently real audience on the site, Facebook itself pays the page creators. But if Facebook is the laboratory in which slop developed its strength, it long ago leaked into the wider internet ecosystem. Many pages direct users elsewhere, onto the web proper, where more money can be made. It is here that junk content for junk clicks reaches its natural and inevitable peak.

In his 2008 book *Flat Earth News*, the journalist Nick Davies identified a new scourge of the journalism industry, brought about by the internet era. Junior staff at local and even national newspapers were being asked to generate huge numbers of online stories at a relentless pace.

Is anyone out there?

Instead of going out to speak to people or do original reporting, journalists would be required to produce a story every hour, or even every 45 minutes, by simply rewriting other people's work. Davies popularised a name for this phenomenon-"churnalism"-and pointed to the obsession of bosses with generating online clicks for advertising revenue as its cause.

If a hasty rewrite produced at virtually no cost could generate as many views-and so as much online revenue-as an original investigation, why bother producing the latter? The churnalism phenomenon hollowed out newsrooms and replaced accountability journalism with articles such as "What time does Strictly Come Dancing start tonight?" and "What other shows has Olivia Colman been in?", designed to lure in audiences from Google.

Sixteen years on, newsroom bosses are reaping what they sowed with the race to the bottom, pursuing cheap content to satisfy only the most casual of online browsers. Executives learned that if online clicks are all you care about, most of the journalism can be discarded. Their successors realised something more: the newsroom itself can be thrown away. Instead of having a real media organisation, you can churn out rewrites using ChatGPT and other AI tools, which can even build a credible looking news site itself.

These imposter news sites are generally harmless bottom feeders, trying to make their owner a living through ad views, but occasionally they cause serious trouble. One such site, Channel3Now, based in Pakistan, was among the earliest boosters of the false story that the attack on girls at a Taylor Swift dance class in Southport had been perpetrated by a Muslim asylum seeker. This disinformation sparked riots and widespread public disorder in the UK.

In a world where ad revenue is all that matters, the first realisation was that journalists were optional. This was followed by the understanding that the news site didn't need to be real in any meaningful way either; anyone can create something that looks newsy enough to hook people in. There was only one obvious next step: if neither the content nor the site has to be real, why does the audience need to be?

Faking page views is an online arms race. Brands rely on advertising networks (which include Google and Facebook, as well as companies you'd never have heard of) to actually reach their potential customers. The brands pay for views, and so are very keen to make sure that every view is an advert seen by a living, breathing human.

The incentives for the middleman are less clear. They need to do enough to satisfy the brands to keep spending, but they are paid by the click, just like the creators themselves. Ad networks quickly cracked down on easy-to-spot "clickfarm" behaviour-setting up a computer to constantly click refresh on the same page, for example-but fakers learned increasingly sophisticated means to bypass security precautions. For a time, operations working out of countries such as China would pay workers to essentially browse the internet on rigs of five to 10 smartphones at a time, generating clicks on sites at a relentless pace for shifts of 12 hours a day.

These operations became automated and professionalised, abolishing what was surely one of the duller and most repetitive jobs in the content industry. Today, these clickfarms are formed of tens or hundreds of thousands of sim cards, which imitate real mobile internet browsing, generating millions of apparent ad impressions every hour.

This completes the soulless lifecycle of the modern internet economy. People desperate to earn a meagre living create automated systems that churn out low-quality or outright fake content. Others create dummy accounts to boost and share such content, or fake users to read it. All of this is done to milk some money out of real-world brands. Along the way, it enriches the internet giants that operate all of the machinery.

Real people and our needs have become irrelevant to the business model of the modern internet. If something interests us, our clicks pay just the same as a fake user in a Chinese clickfarm. Good content is relegated to the sidelines, to people who are able and willing to pay for the real thing. Original reported journalism is increasingly siloed behind paywalls that are, themselves, getting ever harder. Everyone else is force-fed slop, because there is no value in giving them anything better.

The journalist and activist Cory Doctorow christened this phenomenon the "enshittification" of the internet, and argued it was an inevitable result of the business model of the modern internet age: hooking people in on a free or subsidised product, getting a monopoly and then starting to extract as much profit from that product as is possible.

Is anyone out there?

As consumers, we get hooked on a product-be it a cheap taxi ride, a holiday, food delivery or human connection through social media-that is genuinely too good to be true, because it's being subsidised by billionaire investors. Then we watch it steadily get worse.

That extends well beyond online browsing. Ridesharing apps such as Uber, Lyft and their competitors captured the private hire market by drastically undercutting the cost of existing taxis, while initially paying drivers at least as much as they had before. Once the market was captured and the old incumbents had given up, first the drivers were screwed by declining incomes, and then customers faced higher prices. The apparently great new service could never have actually lasted in the long term. This story plays out in almost every other venture capital market, from subscription boxes and fast food or grocery delivery, to Airbnb and WeWork.

The era of a gold-plated service at a rock-bottom price never lasts. Eventually, the real costs come back, the investors want to make money, and reality reasserts itself. Silicon Valley relies on selling us a dream it knows from the outset cannot last.

It could have been better than this. Both the internet and the world wide web predate the Silicon Valley era which propelled startups into becoming the richest and most powerful companies on the planet. The technology works as it ever did-making it incredibly quick, cheap and easy for us to connect to each other, and to publish what we wish. The **AI slop** didn't need to take over. The fact that it has is the result of a series of choices.

The joke of the Dead Internet Theory was that everyone else online might have disappeared, and you could be left alone without noticing. In the decade since the idea caught on, emerging technologies have been harnessed almost as though this is the goal. Humanity has become irrelevant to the business model of the internet, and so we're getting relegated to the sidelines.

Facebook feeds that used to be full of real information and real stories about people from our real lives are now full of low-quality and freakish engagement bait. It is no surprise that many of us, as a result, are looking elsewhere. Google results keep getting worse, social media feeds are full of dreck, and it is impossible to know what to trust.

None of the internet giants seem to even see the problem, let alone a way to fix it. Instead of trying to rebuild internet services to their former glory, they are packing in more **AI** and automation, and, inevitably even more **slop**. But an internet built for the bots is doomed to fail: in the end the economy is made up of the collective efforts of humans, not anything else.

If the multi-billion-dollar companies running the internet don't make it fit for humans, someone else will. However much it might feel that way, the internet is no emptier than the streets of London. We're all still there, just out of sight.

James Ball is political editor at the New European

Load-Date: September 23, 2024



BBC Radio 4 - 2:30 PM GMT

TV Eyes - BBC Radio 4

September 25, 2024

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Section: U.K. NATIONAL RADIO

Length: 772 words

Body

Speech to text transcript:¹

on BBC Radio 4 with me Russell, top actor and art enthusiast serialism has been called the special effects department of psychoanalysis. It gives us an image of how we dream and it gives us an image of the unconscious. Where did this mind-bending movement come from and how has it entered everyday life to become more relevant than ever? It's the idea that there is something going on in your mind of which you are not aware, but is actually hugely important and influential.

Surrealism remixed on radio form. And BBC sounds starts next Tuesday afternoon at 4. Now on radio in the artificial human we discover why utterly bizarre **AI** images are swarming social media. Hi, I'm Alex Petoskey and I'm Kevin form, and this is artificial human where we answer all of your burning questions about **AI**. So Alex is this weird email in the program in book right now that says hey there, Alex and Kevin. Why is my grandma's Facebook full of Shrimp Jesus. It's weird cheers. There's no name on the end of it I suspect suspect should probably have gone to Spain. It's interesting. You say no, no, no, no, it's m, but I don't even understand the words in that email. If I'm being honest, this is your entry into the wonderful world of **AI slop**. Kevin, welcome a slob which. Shrimp Jesus is a kind of emblem of this at the minute. Shrimp Jesus is an image, an **AI** generated image of Jesus Christ as a crustacean. I don't know what the prompt was. It created it, but it is everywhere on social media right now, and it's not just Shrimp Jesus's everywhere. It's all kinds of different, very weird, low quality yet hyper-realistic images. You've probably seen them like grandmothers with 3000 candles on a birthday cake, or pictures of like little kids who seem to be artistic prodigies and have made these incredibly realistic portraits of themselves just weird, weird stuff and what. And that's populating some grandmother's time line yeah. Yes, yes, it is in fact it's populating a lot of grandmothers and a lot of everybody's timelines, particularly on Facebook. I suppose you know you mentioned spam earlier in whether this email should have gone into spam. It's actually a **slop** is actually a new form of spam. I suppose you could call it well. It certainly sounds weird. Wonder you're not winning me over with it. It's absolutely wonderful, Kevin, genuinely, it's it's wonderful, but the fact is is that it's everywhere. Okay, well, it sounds like we're

¹ This copy is computer generated. Text will vary in accuracy due to speaker dialect and audio quality issues.

going to answer this 1. What is a slop? Does it threaten us? Does it threaten the future of the Internet, as we know, does it threaten the grandmothers? All of these are really good questions, but big. I've never studied it I've been the recipient of it. I think we should dig into it would be kind of fun. Yeah, you do that. In the meanwhile, I'm gonna jump in a tardis and go back to the time when the Internet was full of people showing pictures, the cats and sharing recipes. Barna, thank you so much joining us today just to get us going. Give us your full name and any job title and affiliations that you have. So my name is Rene Deta. Until recently, I was the technical research manager of Stanford Internet Observatory and I'm the author of the book invisible rulers the people who turn lies into reality. I have studied what we call adversarial abuse online for just about a decade now, and that means looking at new and novel ways in which people who might set out to manipulate the public use online technologies to do it. Sometimes that might be state actors. A lot of the work I've done has looked at you know, things like Russian troll factories, but sometimes it's a little bit more mundane and it's people like spammers and scammers who use those same technologies, but they're financially motivated rather than ideologically motivated spammers and scammers. But there's a new category isn't sloppers, and this is such an interesting question. When I first started looking at the proliferation of AI generated content, a lot of it really began with people using it for arts early 2020 the, I think, and. You just saw this excitement around what we could all do with these technologies, and then gradually, interest kind of dropped off and you started to see these weird pages really begin to grow in popularity, as financially motivated folks realized that they could use these tools too. We were asked specifically about one piece of a content Shrimp Jesus, OK, can you tell me a little bit about Shrimp Jesus and also a little bit about why

Load-Date: September 25, 2024

End of Document



BBC Radio 4 - 08:00 AM GMT

TVEyes - BBC Radio 4

September 25, 2024

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Section: U.K. NATIONAL RADIO

Length: 812 words

Body

Speech to text transcript:¹

The Prime Minister has urged British people to leave immediately, saying he fears the region is on the brink of war. Cross-border fire between Israel and Hasballah, which is based in Lebanon, has intensified. The group has been prescribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK Government. Our senior international correspondent, a Garin, is in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre.

She says people are preparing for the worst. Schools have been designated as temporary shelters, though people have somewhere to go, but I think the biggest concern they have is that the I cannot tell how long this is going to go on. Everybody believes we're in the early stages of something with this extraordinary way. Eve of Israeli attacks that began on Monday, more than 500 Lebanese killed in a single day. I think most people are expecting that there will be an escalation of some kind. Israel says it's intercepted a missile fired towards Tel Aviv from Lebanon. It's thought to be the first time he ba has targeted the city. The man accused of trying to kill Donald Trump at his Florida golf course earlier this month has been charged with a 10. The assassination of a major presidential candidate, Ryan Ruth, hasn't entered a plea, but had left a note describing his intentions. The Prime Minister has signaled plans for a major shakeup of the welfare system, saying almost all benefit claimants should be expected to look for work. Speaking to the today program, he said the government and businesses should support people to re enter the workplace, but that ministers wanted to tackle those abusing the benefits system. The basic proposition that you should look for work is right. But we also want to support that so that more people can get into work. But I'm also on benefit fraud. We do need to be clear about benefit fraud and that we need to tackle it much more effectively. A global study suggest one-third of children and teenagers worldwide are now shortsighted. Researchers say data collected from 50 countries shows eyesight got worse during COVID lockdowns, when children spent more time looking at screens. BBC news this is BBC Radio 4, where a new series of the artificial human begins. This afternoon we'll be diving into the weird, wonderful and rather murky world of of **AI slop** that's mass produced low quality **AI** images to you and me, and they've spread like wildfire across social media platforms. We'll hear more

¹ This copy is computer generated. Text will vary in accuracy due to speaker dialect and audio quality issues.

about Shrimp Jesus, one of the most prominent and bizarre examples here on radio this afternoon at 3 30 but first. Hello and welcome to more or less were a statistical Lighthouse. Piercing the darkness of numerical confusion and allowing you to safely reach the harbour of rationality ought to put it another way we're a radio program about numbers and clear thinking. I'm Tim Harford This week. The Government is encouraging pensioners to claim pension credit in order to remain eligible for winter fuel payments. Will people sign up, and might that end up costing the Exchequer more than it saves? The Office for national Statistics has downgraded the status of a new statistic aiming to measure how many people are transgender. We ask what went wrong. Cancer appears to be on the rise in the under fifties. Why and how worried should we be? And here's a puzzle for you to think about. If it takes a hen and a half a day and a half to lay an egg and a half, how many eggs to half a dozen hens lay, and half a dozen days later in the program puzzle prankster Alex Bellos will join us with the answer. Let's start with winter fuel payments. The Government, as we've noted before, is very concerned with filling a black hole and the public finances which they say is 22 billion pounds deep. The first attempt to start filling that hole was the announcement that they were cutting the winter fuel payment. It currently goes to all pensioners and new plan is that only the poorest on pension credit will get the one-off payment of 200 or the 100 pounds each winter. The government reckoned this cut could save them 1.5 billion pounds. But that raises a question. If the change in the rules prompt people to start claiming pension credit, perhaps the cost of all the extra pension credit payments will swallow up that saving or at least nibble away at it. So how many people might start claiming and how much might they claim? Money Box presenter and national treasurer Paul Lewis, has been running some interesting numbers. Hello Paul, hello, Tim. So the Government cut winter fuel payments for all pensioners except the pensioners who claim pension credit, and we know there are lots of pensioners who are eligible for this benefit and who don't claim it. So how many potential claimants are there out there who aren't

Load-Date: September 25, 2024

End of Document



BBC Radio 4 - 2:00 PM GMT

TV Eyes - BBC Radio 4

September 25, 2024

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Section: U.K. NATIONAL RADIO

Length: 860 words

Body

Speech to text transcript:¹

at least 23 people are known to have died and dozens of others have been injured. It comes hours after the group fired a missile towards the Israeli city of Tel Aviv. It was the first such attack and is said to have targeted the Israeli security agency Mossad. Although the missile was intercepted.

The Prime Minister Soko Stamer, who's in New York for an emergency meeting on the conflict, says he's very worried about the escalation of fighting. All parties need to pull back from the brink to de-escalate. We need a ceasefire, and this needs to be sorted out by diplomatic means. I am very concerned about the increasing escalation, which is not just day on day, but almost hour on hour. At the moment, rail workers with the R. M. T. Union have accepted a pay deal ending a long running dispute which has led to multiple strikes. Members agreed to a 4.5% pay rise for this year for workers at Network rail, and the train companies and staff at the train operators will also receive 4 point seven, 5% for last year. The Health Secretary West treating says teams of senior doctors will work across the? NHS in England to bring in reforms aimed at getting people treated more quickly so that they can get back into the workplace. Around 2.8 million people are out of work due to ill health. Weather warnings have been issued for more heavy rain for tomorrow and Friday as flooding continues in parts of England and Wales. Firefighters and police rescued residents last night at the Billing Aquidrome holiday Park in Northamptonshire, while a nearby leisure centre opened up as an overnight refuge, and Philip Schofield is making a return to TV more than a year since quitting it. Ves this morning he'll appear in Channel 4's cast away where he'll be stranded on an island off Madagascar for 10 days. In the trailer he admits not disclosing an affair with a younger colleague was unwise, but he questions whether this should be absolutely destroying someone. BBC news we'll discover some prominent examples of low quality **AI** images, known as **AI slop**, that have spread across social media in the artificial human here on radio in half an hour but first. It's money box live with Felicity Hanna hello across the UK, thousands of teenagers are busy picking out posters, making new friends and settling into life at university, but graduates in England leave UNI with average debt of around 48 and a half 1000 pounds. That's according to the student loans

¹ This copy is computer generated. Text will vary in accuracy due to speaker dialect and audio quality issues.

company. So how is this year's freshers feeling about their finances? I feel like I been Sally being really tight with my money because I'm quite indy with it us, because I know the cost. I'm definitely going to be looking. To get a part time job, the student loan I have is just not enough. The only thing I really like fought from a flat was like like an airfare or something like that that's, that's crazy wish that you're picking up right. It was only though I thought that was quite good flat just because so upbeat fresh is searching for jobs and air fries there. But research from the Credit reference agency experience claims 80% of students say money worries are causing them significant stress. So this week we're looking at how much a degree really costs. Has the price made you think twice. Maybe you chose an apprenticeship instead, or maybe you don't mind your loan repayments because you've got your dream job get in touch now with your questions or your comments were money boxatbbc-dtcotuk now we'll meet our experts in just a couple of moments but first of all let's hear from some students at the university of manchester money box producer sarah rogers has been there to meet freshers at the student union as they queued up to try and win some freebies so we're giving students a chance to spin the wheel and everything on there is the prize completely free to participate and they can walk away with anything from sweet to a lanyard to a box of teeth and you're in the queue for a lucky dip so you spin the wheel what you hoping to win anything other than horrible it is horrible fresh weent know we're talking about we've been staying inside watching films did the cost of the university and make you think twice about coming i think it's at such a ridiculous level though i don't even consider it anymore that it's just an ungraspable like a mount i suppose like monopoly yeah basically it doesn't mean anything to me i don't know yeah well you have to work whilst you're at university yeah probably i spent the past year saving money at my job to save university yeah i've managed to find a job that i'm going to start doing yeah because i mean it's a little bit too expensive the student loan doesn't come very much so i'm going to have to survive somehow so you have just arrived in manchester this weekend just went straight out to find a job well i was like kids in at the fair here actually have you got budgets have you got site if you finance it so i mean when i'm not trying to look at my banco too much to be honest when timetables when fresh is

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BBC Radio 4 - 2:55 PM GMT

TVEyes - BBC Radio 4

September 25, 2024

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Section: U.K. NATIONAL RADIO

Length: 757 words

Body

Speech to text transcript:¹

involved would know until they're suddenly not making any money, and people used to be making \$400 for a super viral image now they're showing their little Facebook panels. Like many of these videos, they will pull up the sort of back end that shows how much money they're making per photo and they're making like \$0.06 \$0.12, and so there is anecdotal evidence at least, that Facebook has altered its payouts and that this is no longer very lucrative. It feels to me a little like into the gold rush of you know, the late 19th century whereby everyone said the fields of gold you can pick up gold on the floor, but you couldn't, and the the vast majority of people who rushed into the gold fields went bust right the people who made all the money with the people who sold shovels and hotel rooms and made boats by the river. Is that what's happening here?

It's the perfect analogy, in my opinion, because you have these Youtube influencers who are saying you can get rich quick, doing this just you know, listen to me, but also by my course for you know, a few dollars or sometimes more than that, and they're sort of racking up the hundreds of thousands or millions. Of Youtube views and those are monetized and those people seemingly like have it all figured out well. Kevin, I did not expect Shrimp Jesus to lead us here is amazing, amazing as one word, isn't it? Having not heard of the term pilot before we started making this program, I'm now moderately concerned about it right. So this is this is the very essence of that Star Trek episode with the triples you know where they had those cute very creatures where we're curious to look at kind of fun, and then they start multiplying and multiplying and multiplying until every thing is trying in them and nothing gets done, and this reminds me absolutely of that. And there's something a little darker, I think, in the stories that we had. there from Jason in so far as the way that so this offers a law to the global South that is false, which is that this is a digital inroad to the global North and a way of securing some of their wealth through this ridiculous and surprise when Jason has found that that's no longer true. And the only people who are making the money of awful middle men in that yeah, in fact, interest, tingly and perhaps ironically, these power disparities that already exist offline kind of replicated online, and as you say, it's the people who run these social media companies who are

¹ This copy is computer generated. Text will vary in accuracy due to speaker dialect and audio quality issues.

ultimately making cash money out of the strip Jesus. So the one thing that I will say to the listener perhaps if you are looking for something to be able to fight back against the influx of **AI slop** is that look. It just depends upon your engagement right, don't look at it, don't click on it, don't comment on it, because all that's going to do is feed the algorithm and stick it into some other Grannis feed. So just ignore it and move on, and I think that that is a very good place to start. I guess the joke would be on social media, though, if we all stopped using it. If you've got any burning questions about artificial intelligence and, as you can see, the answer all kinds, then do send us an email to the artificial human at BBC. UK. But if you send me a picture of a crustacean mashed up with a deity, I'm going to block you forever. The artificial human was a BBC audio Scotland production presented by Kevin Fong and Alex Kritsky and produced by Elizabeth Anne Duffy. After the news we'll hear from the team behind the new U. S version of have got news for you, can CNN's attempt to succeed in America, where other launches of the franchise have failed we'll find out in the media show here in a few minutes. Lady swindlers, families must be looked at after when a member is in prison. Everybody was acquainted with my whole history. Now drinking before a ride, Lucy Worsley, revisit the audacious and surprising crimes of women from the past. When they got safely out of the store, they would jump into their waiting getaway cars. This was an alternative route to become a modern woman pursuing con women, thieves and hustlers. She looks utterly terrifying. She's got this kind of dead-eyed stare, lady swindler with Lucy Worsley starting next Monday at 3 30 on and BBC sounds BBC news at 4 0. The Israeli military says it has hit more than to hundred-deg targets belonging to Hez Bala in Lebanon. A senior figure in the Israeli

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Pick of the day



Pick of the day

i-news

September 25, 2024

SC1 Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 35

Length: 32 words

Body

The Artificial Human 3.30pm, BBC Radio 4 Aleks Krotoski (above) and Kevin Fong examine the world of **AI slop**: mass-produced, low-quality images that have spread like wildfire over social media.

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PICK OF THE DAY



PICK OF THE DAY

i-news

September 25, 2024

First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 35

Length: 32 words

Body

The Artificial Human 3.30pm, BBC Radio 4 Aleks Krotoski (above) and Kevin Fong examine the world of **AI slop**: mass-produced, low-quality images that have spread like wildfire over social media.

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Radio choice

The Daily Telegraph (London)
September 25, 2024 Wednesday
Edition 1, National Edition

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The Daily Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 28

Length: 109 words

Body

A Suspension of Mercy Radio 4 Extra, 2.30pm & 8.30pm One of the best of Radio 4 Extra's crop of rediscovered "lost" classics is this nail-biting 1985 adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's psychological thriller. Stuart Milligan walks a "did-he, didn't-he?" tightrope as a writer suspected of murdering his wife when she disappears while taking time out from their marriage. Aleks Krotoski and Kevin Fong, meanwhile, are back with a new run of The Artificial Human (Radio 4, 3.30pm), this week exploring how online spam has evolved into **AI slop** - mass produced, low quality **AI** images that go viral. Will such images be the death of social media? Gerard O'Donovan

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[The Trump Posts You Probably Aren't Seeing](#)

Atlantic Online

September 24, 2024 Tuesday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1322 words

Byline: Charlie Warzel

Body

Sign up for [The Decision](#), a newsletter featuring our 2024 election coverage.

Do you remember what it was like when Donald Trump couldn't stop tweeting? When it felt like, no matter the time of day or what you were doing, his caps-lock emeses were going to find you, like a heat-seeking, plain-text missile? Enjoying a nice little morning at the farmer's market? Hold on, here's a push alert about Trump calling Kim Jong Un "rocket man" on Twitter. Turn on the radio, and you'd hear somebody recapping his digital burbles. You could probably make the case that a large portion of the words spoken on cable-news panels from 2015 to early 2021 were at least tangentially about things that Trump pecked onto his smartphone from a reclining position.

Then January 6 happened. Twitter, [worried](#) about "the risk of further incitement of violence," permanently suspended his account, and Trump later launched his own social-media site, Truth Social. It has [far fewer users](#) than its rivals do, and Trump now mostly bleats into the void. Occasionally, news outlets will surface one of his posts-or "Truths," as they're called-such as a September 12 post declaring that he would not debate Kamala Harris again. But although Elon Musk has reinstated Trump's X account, the former president still mostly posts on Truth Social, which has had the effect of containing his wildest content. Unless you're a die-hard Trump supporter, a journalist, or an obsessive political hobbyist, you're likely not getting that regular glimpse into the Republican candidate's brain. But maybe you should be?

Last Friday, I received an email with a link to a website created by a Washington, D.C.-based web developer named Chris Herbert. The site, [Trump's Truth](#), is a searchable database collecting all of Trump's Truth Social posts, even those that have been deleted. Herbert has also helpfully transcribed every speech and video Trump has posted on the platform, in part so that they can be indexed more easily by search engines such as Google. Thus, Trump's ravings are more visible.

[\[Read: The MAGA aesthetic is AI slop\]](#)

The Trump Posts You Probably Aren't Seeing

Like many reporters, I'd been aware that the former president's social-media posts had, like his rally speeches, grown progressively angrier, more erratic, and more bizarre in recent years. Having consumed enough Trump rhetoric over the past decade to melt my frontal cortex, I've grown accustomed to his addled style of communication. And yet, I still wasn't adequately prepared for the immersive experience of scrolling through hundreds of his Truths and ReTruths. Even for Trump, this feed manages to shock. In the span of just a few days, you can witness the former president sharing flagrantly racist memes about Middle Easterners invading America, falsely edited videos showing Harris [urging](#) migrants to cross the border, an [all-caps screed](#) about how much better off women would be under his presidency, a diatribe about Oprah's recent interview with Harris. It's a lot to take in at once: Trump [calling](#) an MSNBC anchor a "bimbo," a declaration of [hatred](#) for Taylor Swift, a claim that he "saved Flavored Vaping in 2019."

On their own, each of these posts is concerning and more than a little sad. But consumed in the aggregate, they take on a different meaning, offering a portrait of a man who appears frequently incoherent, internet-addicted, and emotionally volatile—even by the extreme standard that Trump has already set. Trump seems unable to stop reposting pixelated memes from anonymous accounts with handles such as @1776WeThePeople1776 and @akaPR0B0SS, some of which contain unsettling messages such as a [desire](#) to indict sitting members of Congress for sedition. Trump appears to go on posting jags, sometimes well after midnight, rattling off Truths multiple times a minute. On Sunday night, from 6:20 p.m. to 6:26 p.m., Trump shared 20 different posts from conservative news sites, almost all without commentary. For a man currently engaged in the homestretch of campaigning for the presidency of the United States, he is prolific on social media, and seemingly unable to stop posting—from Friday to Monday, Trump posted or reposted 82 times.

Back in January, my colleague McKay Coppins [argued](#) that politically engaged Americans should go to a Trump rally and "listen to every word of the Republican front-runner's speech" as "an act of civic hygiene." Granted, Coppins wrote his article during a different time in the election cycle, at a moment when Trump was less visible, but his point still stands. Many Americans and the institutions that cover him have grown so used to Trump-to his tirades, lies, and buffoonery—that his behavior can fade into the background of our cultural discourse, his shamelessness and unfitness for office taken almost for granted. When Coppins attended a rally early this year, he recalled the "darker undercurrent" that infused Trump's rhetoric and lurked behind many of the comments coming from supporters in the crowd. Just as important, Coppins wrote, the rally was also a reminder that "Trump is no longer the cultural phenomenon he was in 2016. Yes, the novelty has worn off. But he also seems to have lost the instinct for entertainment that once made him so interesting to audiences."

[\[Read: You should go to a Trump rally\]](#)

Trump's Truth Social posts offer a similar vibe. His feed is bleak, full of posts about America in decline. Aesthetically, it is ugly, full of doctored images and screenshots of screenshots of Facebook-style memes. Consuming a few weeks' worth of his posts at once was enough to make me feel awful about the state of the world, not unlike how it feels to visit seedy message boards such as 4chan.

And then there's the prose. As in his rallies, Trump rambles, his writing hard to follow. His stylistic choice to use caps lock for many of his longer posts gives the appearance that he is shouting. Unlike on Twitter, where he was constrained by character limits, Trump's missives are too long and too convoluted to be easily digestible by aggregating media organizations. In previous iterations, Trump's tweets were sometimes so bizarre as to be funny (or at least weird enough to be compelling); now his posts appear too fueled by grievance to be casually amusing.

[\[Read: Donald Trump can't stop posting\]](#)

I realize that I'm not exactly selling the experience of taking a spin through Trump's digital archive of incoherence. But I think it's an instructive exercise. If you, like me, have had the experience of seeing friends or loved ones radicalized online or lost to a sea of Facebook memes and propaganda, then scrolling through Trump's Truth Social posts will provoke a familiar feeling. On his own website, Trump doesn't just appear unfit for the highest office in the land; he seems small, embittered, and under the influence of the kind of online outrage that usually consumes those who have been or feel alienated by broad swaths of society. It's not (just) that Trump seems unpresidential—it's that

The Trump Posts You Probably Aren't Seeing

he seems like an unwell elderly man posting ***AI slop*** for an audience of bots on Facebook. Imagine that, instead of Donald Trump's, you were looking at the feed of a relative. What would you say or do? Whom would you call?

A few months ago, The Atlantic's editor in chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, [wrote](#) about the media's "bias toward coherence" when it comes to Trump's rhetoric, where, in an attempt to make sense of Trump's nonsense, journalists sand down the candidate's rough edges. Perusing Trump's Truth Social feed, though, it is nearly impossible to find any coherence to latch on to. Since Trump came down his golden escalator in 2015, I've thought that the best way to understand the candidate is via plain text. There, unlike on television, his fragmented attention, peculiar thinking, and dangerous words cannot hide or be explained away. The election is 41 days away, and Trump appears as unstable as ever. But don't take my word for it: Go see for yourself.

Load-Date: September 25, 2024

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[Following AI Cheating Controversy, Pokémon Announces Winners Of Card Contest](#)

Kotaku

September 23, 2024 Monday 4:15 PM EST

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Length: 623 words

Byline: John Walker

Body

[Link to Image](#)

Each year, The Pokémon Company holds a competition to find a new illustrator for their Pokémon TCG cards. Only in the last couple of years has this been opened to entrants from outside of Japan, and with that has come controversy. However, after a tumultuous period, the finalists for this year's contest have finally been picked, and damn, it's all beautiful work.

This year's contest was rather marred when one entrant, who had been included [in the top 300](#), was [rather obviously using AI to create images](#), and indeed entering under multiple identities.

After people made a fuss, The Pokémon Company acknowledged the issue, and said they'd be disqualifying the cheat, and allowing other legitimate entries in to fill the spaces. It remained concerning that such obvious shenanigans had been let through, but TPC is notoriously enigmatic and incommunicative, so even this was a surprising move.

However, we can now sweep that all aside, and instead celebrate the legitimate artists who deserve their wins. And wow, there's some great stuff here.

The competition is broken into a number of categories, with the emphasis on the smaller, landscape images that appear in the windows on a regular Pokémon card. While the prized cards are generally the portrait full-art designs, it makes sense to constrain entrants to the windowed images, with its inherent limitations.

The categories are Best Standard Card Illustration, Best ex Card Illustration, and a Grand Prize.

The middle category is the odd one out, since non-art ex cards are highly restrictive in their nature, leaving little room for originality. It's a great piece of Toxicity art by Anderson, certainly, and it won because of its use of the space to depict a unique angle for the Pokémon, but it's harder to get excited about.

Following AI Cheating Controversy, Pokémon Announces Winners Of Card Contest

[Link to Image](#)

What's so lovely about the two other winners, however, is quite how different they are.

The Pokémon Company is getting better and better at featuring ever more lavish art, but is still quite conservative on style, so seeing the pick for Best Standard Card Illustration is a real treat. It's a stunning depiction of Feraligatr by artist Acorviart, inspired by linocut and risograph printing.

[Link to Image](#)

The Grand Prize is certainly more conventional, but makes up for it in adorable. Pikachu perhaps seems a little on the nose, but Kazuki Minami's painting is breathtaking. What works so incredibly well here is the intricate detail of the background flowers, contrasted with the far simpler depiction of Pika, in such a cute and recognizable pose. And that light on his face...come on.

[Link to Image](#)

I want to highlight a few of the runners up, too. Firstly, another Feraligatr, this time by tayu, which appears to be one of the most spectacular pieces of embroidery I've ever seen. There are so few multimedia artists making Pokémon cards, despite how popular [the wonderful Yuka Morii's clay art](#) has been for 25 years. Also, it's a wonderful picture beyond the media.

[Link to Image](#)

In a contest that was upset by **AI slop**, it's lovely to see a piece that **AI** would try to copy, and get horribly wrong. This Melmetal by gohealth feels so gloriously metallic, and yet so cartoonishly stylized. Also, when did you last see a Melmetal sit down?!

[Link to Image](#)

Shiho So's Pikachu is one of the 15 Judges' Award winners (alongside so many more Feraligatr!), and would be one of those cards that'd make you smile every time you pulled it from a pack. It's just joyful.

[Link to Image](#)

And why not end with yet another Pikachu? satoutubu's art here is...I just want to hug it! I want to exist in a world where creatures look like this. If satoutubu became a regular Pokémon TCG artist, I'd immediately begin collecting all their cards.

[Link to Image](#)

Load-Date: September 23, 2024

Wednesday 25 September



Wednesday 25 September

The Times (London)

September 21, 2024 Saturday

Edition 1, National Edition

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THE TIMES

Section: SATURDAY REVIEW;FEATURES; Pg. 42**Length:** 487 words

Body

TIMES RADIO 5.00am Rosie Wright with Early Breakfast 6.00 Aasmah Mir and Stig Abell with Times Radio Breakfast 10.00 Hugo Rifkind 1.00pm Andrew Neil 2.00 Jane Garvey and Fi Glover 4.00 John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive 6.00 Pienaar and Friends 7.00 The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay 10.00 Carole Walker 1.00am The Best of Times Radio RADIO 2 6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show 9.30 Vernon Kay 12.00 Jeremy Vine 2.00pm Scott Mills 4.00 Sara Cox 6.30 Sara Cox's Half Wower 7.00 Jo Whiley's Shiny Happy Playlist 7.30 Jo Whiley 9.00 Folk Show 10.00 Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation RADIO 3 6.30am Breakfast 9.30 Essential Classics 1.00pm Classical Live 3.00 Live Choral Evensong. With music by Imogen Holst, Leighton, Brahms and Ropok 4.00 Composer of the Week: Gluck. How Gluck became a fixture of Vienna's musical scene 5.00 In Tune 7.00 Classical Mixtape 7.30 Radio 3 in Concert. Manchester Camerata perform a programme of Mozart 9.45 The Essay: Music Rediscovered. Oskar Jensen sings the Millions be Free 10.00 Night Tracks 11.30 'Round Midnight 12.30am Through the Night

RADIO 4 5.30am News Briefing 5.43 Prayer for the Day 5.45 Farming Today 6.00 Today 9.00 More or Less 9.30 The Coming Storm. Gabriel Gatehouse enters a world where nothing is as it seems 10.00 Woman's Hour 11.00 A Wild Ride(r) 11.45 Book of the Week: The Siege. By Ben Macintyre (8/10)

12.04pm You and Yours 1.00 The World at One 1.45 Superhead. John Dickens investigates the superheads transforming failing schools 2.00 The Archers. Opportunity knocks for Fallon (r) 2.15 Drama: Riot Girls - Dykes. The angry 1970s give way to the more repressive 1980s (2/3) 3.00 Money Box Live 3.30 The Artificial Human. New series. Aleks Krotoski and Kevin Fong examine the world of AI slop 4.00 The Media Show. The latest news from the fastchanging media world 5.00 PM. With Evan Davis 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz. The host and his live audience compile the questions for a perfect pub quiz (r) 7.00 The Archers. George is struggling with recent events 7.15 Front Row. Arts programme 8.00 AntiSocial (r) 8.45 Profile (r) 9.00 The Life Scientific (r) 9.30 All in the Mind (r) 10.00 The World Tonight 10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Last Loves of Ronnie Maker (3/5) 11.00 Follow the Rabbit. A local woman claims she has a demon living in her biscuit tin (4/5) 11.15 The

Wednesday 25 September

Skewer 11.30 The Gift (r) 12.00 News and Weather 12.30am Book of the Week: The Siege (8/10) (r) 12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As BBC World Service

A Suspension of Mercy Radio 4 Extra, 2.30pm

Every day this week, Radio 4 Extra is airing five "lost" BBC dramas. Today's offering is an adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's psychological thriller. The novelist Sydney Bartleby (Stuart Milligan, above) is a writer of thrillers. His wife, with whom he has a fractious relationship, has "died" many times in his imagination. But when she disappears, he finds himself under investigation.

Load-Date: September 21, 2024

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[Meet the Editor Who Turned Himself Into an AI News Anchor](#)

Newstex Blogs

The Wrap

September 20, 2024 Friday 7:00 PM EST

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Length: 860 words

Byline: Alex Kantrowitz

Body

September 20th, 2024 ([The Wrap](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

The **AI** version of Elihay Vidal looks a lot like the man in real life. I watched him anchor a news broadcast last week and had to stare intently for a number of seconds to confirm I wasn't watching a real human.

Vidal's avatar has a human face, human body, human expressions, and even a shirt with the top two buttons unbuttoned. His 'Edge of Tech' show runs regularly on [CTech, an Israeli tech news site where he's editor-in-chief, and the visuals and voice are entirely synthetic. To develop the show, Vidal worked with Caledo, a tech company that builds AI news video for news sites looking for a cheaper and easier alternative to the real thing.](#)

After watching Vidal's show, I wanted to know why he's allowed himself to be turned into an **AI** avatar and where he sees the format going. Here's our conversation, edited for length and clarity.

Alex Kantrowitz: The **AI** 'reporter' using your likeness looks very human, like the real you. How did you turn yourself into that avatar?

Elihay Vidal: I stood in front of a camera and moved around, and the software captured my movements. The avatar's movements are therefore my movements. My **AI** avatar is singular. It is my voice, my mimics, my facial expressions, my eyes, and my smile.

When you initially saw the **AI** generated version of yourself on screen, were you like, wow, that's me?

I showed it to my family, my wife, my children, my parents, and my sister. Everyone said, there's no way it's not you. The machine just learned my character. The little nuances in there, people recognize them as mine.

Why make news videos with artificial intelligence avatars, as opposed to just filming them yourself?

We filmed only once for half an hour. I gave a speech in front of the camera. Then, after a few days they showed me my avatar, which was generated by **AI**. And when I gave the speech, I did it in Hebrew

Meet the Editor Who Turned Himself Into an AI News Anchor

But your avatar speaks in English?

Yes, and the English was perfect. I said, No, no, no, no, no, listen, listen, listen, when I speak, I don't speak perfect English. I have an accent. So let's make the accent a little rougher. And so they tweaked the machine and changed my accent. Then I was very, very content with what I got.

[Caledo, the company that built the avatar, also has a few off-the-shelf avatars and you can say, I want this one, I want that one. I wanted to be an Asian girl or a blonde guy, or whatever. You can choose avatars from their gallery, or you can do the shoot yourself, as I did.](#)

Is the benefit, basically, that you just capture yourself with the **AI** once, and then you can deliver a news report, however often you want?

Once you pick an avatar and design a studio, then the editorial work begins. Whenever I want to broadcast a video, I chose a handful of articles published on our site. Then the **AI** breaks down the articles and builds them into script. They then put the words in our avatars' mouth. The article text is written by flesh and blood reporters and picking which article will be transformed into TV is done by us, right? The only thing the **AI** is doing is the technical stuff.

You're an editor of a business publication. What do you think the broader implications are here?

When we decided to do this project, there was a guy on my team we wanted to turn into an avatar. He was terrified. He was terrified by the fact that there's an avatar that is going to replace him, and take his job, and no one will need him, and we can fire him and use his avatar. I explained to him, it's not that he's disposable, on a contrary, he is a talent, and his face will reach far, far deeper on the web. You approached me because you recognized me from one of our videos, and you called me. Just imagine if they take my my avatar, and make him speak Chinese for me, or Japanese, or French, or Spanish. or Arabic.

But isn't there a risk though, that, the internet fills with **AI slop** when everybody's making these videos so easily?

When we start every show, we say this is a **AI** generated content, but it is a based on a human being, a creation. It's something new.

Are you getting an ROI on these videos?

It's a tricky question. We don't have any video platform. We're not considered a video or a TV outlet. But I can say that the viewing activity is going up.

How many views do you get for each of these **AI** videos?

It's thousands, okay, thousands of viewings. It's okay for us. It's okay at this stage. I'm not seeking much more than that.

Will you allow your publication to continue to use your **AI** avatar? Let's say it becomes very popular after you retire?

Definitely not.

Why?

Because, as I said at the beginning, this is an authentic reflection of my character, my own character. This is my voice. The mimics and movement is related only to me. It's singular. It's unique. I won't let anyone [use] my avatar without my permission, right?

So you have no desire for broadcast immortality?

No. It's better for them to use someone younger or someone much better than me.

This article is from [Big Technology, a newsletter by Alex Kantrowitz.](#)

Meet the Editor Who Turned Himself Into an AI News Anchor

The post [Meet the Editor Who Turned Himself Into an AI News Anchor appeared first on TheWrap.](#)

[Link to the original story.](#)

Notes

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'Side job, self-employed, high-paid': behind the AI slop flooding TikTok and Facebook

EveningReport.nz

September 19, 2024 Thursday 6:30 AM EST

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Length: 1200 words

Byline: The Conversation

Body

Source: The Conversation (Au and NZ) - By Jiaru Tang, PhD student, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

TikTok / The Conversation

TikTok, Facebook and other social media platforms are being flooded with uncanny and bizarre content generated with artificial intelligence (**AI**), from fake videos of the US government capturing vampires to images of shrimp Jesus.

Given its outlandish nature and tenuous relationship with reality, you might think this so-called "**AI slop**" would quickly disappear. However, it shows no sign of abating.

In fact, our research suggests this kind of low-quality **AI**-generated content is becoming a lucrative venture for the people who make it, the platforms that host it, and even a growing industry of middlemen teaching others how to get in on the **AI** gold rush.

When generative **AI meets profiteers and platforms**

The short explanation for the prevalence of these baffling videos and images is that savvy creators on social media platforms have worked out how to use generative **AI** tools to earn a quick buck.

But the full story is more complex. Platforms have created incentive programs for content that goes viral, and a whole ecosystem of content creators has arisen using generative **AI** to exploit these programs.

Much of the conversation around generative **AI** tools focuses on how they enable ordinary people to "create". Many earlier digital technologies have also made it easier to participate in creative activities, such as how smartphones made photography ubiquitous.

'Side job, self-employed, high-paid': behind the AI slop flooding TikTok and Facebook

But generative **AI** takes this a step further, as it can generate tailored images or videos from a simple text prompt. It makes content creation more accessible - and also opens the floodgates to mass production on social media.

To take just one example: if you search "pet dance motorcycle" on TikTok, you will find hundreds of **AI**-generated videos of animals doing the "motorbike dance", all animated using the same **AI** template. Some accounts post dozens of videos like this every day.

Creators and platforms are making money

You may wonder why such repetitive, unimaginative content can go viral on TikTok. The answer lies in the platform's own advice to aspiring creators: if you want your videos to be promoted, you should "continuously share fresh and diverse content" that "doesn't require a big production budget".

You may also wonder why some platforms don't ban **AI** accounts for polluting the platform's content stream. Other platforms such as Spotify and YouTube, which police intellectual property rights more aggressively than TikTok, invest considerable resources to identify and remove **AI**-generated content.

TikTok's community guidelines do ban "inaccurate, misleading, or false content that may cause significant harm", but **AI**-generated content - at least for now - does not qualify as causing "significant harm".

Instead, this kind of content has become important for platforms. Many of those "pet dance motorcycle" videos, for example, have been viewed tens of millions of times. As long as users are scrolling through videos, they are getting exposed to the ads that are the platforms' primary source of income.

Inside the **AI** 'gold rush'

There is also a growing industry of people teaching others how to make money using cheap **AI** content.

Take Xiaonan, a social media entrepreneur we interviewed who runs six different TikTok accounts, each with more than 100,000 followers. As he revealed in a live-streaming tutorial with more than 1,000 viewers, Xiaonan earned more than US\$5,500 from TikTok in July alone.

Xiaonan also hosts an exclusive chatting group where, for a fee, he reveals his most effective **AI** prompts, video headlines and hashtags tailored for different platforms including YouTube and Instagram. Xiaonan also reveals tricks for standing out in the platforms' recommendation game and avoiding platform regulations.

Xiaonan says he established his "**AI** side job" after being laid off by an internet company. He now works with two partners selling classes and tutorials on making **AI**-generated videos and other types of spam for profit.

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The global **AI**-generated content factory

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This is only the beginning

We are only at the dawn of mainstream **AI**-generated content culture. We will soon face a situation in which content is effectively infinite, but human attention is still limited.

For platforms, the challenge will be balancing the engagement these **AI**-driven trends bring with the need to maintain trust and authenticity.

Social media platforms will soon respond. But before that, **AI**-generated content will continue to grow wildly - at least for a while.

Patrik Wikström receives funding from the Australian Research Council.

Jiaru Tang does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

- ref. 'Side job, self-employed, high-paid': behind the **AI slop** flooding TikTok and Facebook - <https://theconversation.com/side-job-self-employed-high-paid-behind-the-ai-slop-flooding-tiktok-and-facebook-237638>

Load-Date: September 19, 2024



'Side job, self-employed, high-paid': behind the AI slop flooding TikTok and Facebook

The Conversation - Australia

September 19, 2024 Thursday 1:42 AM EST

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THE CONVERSATION

Length: 1133 words

Byline: Jiaru Tang, PhD student, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Highlight: In places like India, Vietnam and China, churning out weird AI videos is the latest side hustle for students and stay-at-home mothers.

Body

TikTok, Facebook and other social media platforms are being flooded with uncanny and bizarre content generated with artificial intelligence (AI), from fake videos of the US government capturing vampires to images of shrimp Jesus.

Given its outlandish nature and tenuous relationship with reality, you might think this so-called "AI slop" would quickly disappear. However, it shows no sign of abating.

In fact, our research suggests this kind of low-quality AI-generated content is becoming a lucrative venture for the people who make it, the platforms that host it, and even a growing industry of middlemen teaching others how to get in on the AI gold rush.

When generative AI meets profiteers and platforms

The short explanation for the prevalence of these baffling videos and images is that savvy creators on social media platforms have worked out how to use generative AI tools to earn a quick buck.

But the full story is more complex. Platforms have created incentive programs for content that goes viral, and a whole ecosystem of content creators has arisen using generative AI to exploit these programs.

Much of the conversation around generative AI tools focuses on how they enable ordinary people to "create". Many earlier digital technologies have also made it easier to participate in creative activities, such as how smartphones made photography ubiquitous.

But generative AI takes this a step further, as it can generate tailored images or videos from a simple text prompt. It makes content creation more accessible - and also opens the floodgates to mass production on social media.

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To take just one example: if you search "[pet dance motorcycle](#)" on TikTok, you will find hundreds of **AI**-generated videos of animals doing the "motorbike dance", all animated using the same **AI** template. Some accounts post dozens of videos like this every day.

Creators and platforms are making money

You may wonder why such repetitive, unimaginative content can go viral on TikTok. The answer lies in the platform's [own advice](#) to aspiring creators: if you want your videos to be promoted, you should "continuously share fresh and diverse content" that "doesn't require a big production budget".

You may also wonder why some platforms don't ban **AI** accounts for polluting the platform's content stream. Other platforms such as Spotify and YouTube, which police intellectual property rights more aggressively than TikTok, invest considerable resources to [identify and remove AI-generated content](#).

TikTok's [community guidelines](#) do ban "inaccurate, misleading, or false content that may cause significant harm", but **AI**-generated content - at least for now - does not qualify as causing "significant harm".

Instead, this kind of content has become important for platforms. Many of those "pet dance motorcycle" videos, for example, have been viewed tens of millions of times. As long as users are scrolling through videos, they are getting exposed to the ads that are the platforms' primary source of income.

Inside the **AI** 'gold rush'

There is also a growing industry of people teaching others how to make money using cheap **AI** content.

Take Xiaonan, a social media entrepreneur we interviewed who runs six different TikTok accounts, each with more than 100,000 followers. As he revealed in a live-streaming tutorial with more than 1,000 viewers, Xiaonan earned more than US\$5,500 from TikTok in July alone.

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Load-Date: September 18, 2024



'Side Job, Self-Employed, High-Paid': Behind The AI Slop Flooding Tiktok And Facebook

MENAFN - Business & Finance News (English)

September 18, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 1070 words

Body

[Link to Image](#)

[Link to Story](#)

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MENAFN18092024000199003603ID1108690518

Load-Date: March 5, 2025

End of Document



BBC Radio 4 - 4:50 PM GMT

TV Eyes - BBC Radio 4

September 16, 2024

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Section: U.K. NATIONAL RADIO

Length: 820 words

Body

Speech to text transcript:¹

should or shouldn't go ahead. This is almost like a last ditch effort to save or to back this project, each of them being given 5 min to speak and then taking questions from members of the national Park Authority and then moving on to the next speaker. So we've heard all of those 5 people who were speaking in favor of the development. there were originally 8 now 6 people speaking against it, and then after that, the National Park Authority Board will ponder their final decision on whether or not to give it planning permission in principle, which is what the developer is seeking.

Some say, whatever the decision, we do take an awfully long time in this country to make the decision. How long have these arguments been going on? When did it all start? Well, it has been going on since about 2016, but that was a previous plan that was then withdrawn and resubmitted at a late stage, so that stage so that latest one has been going on since twenty-nine. So it is 5 years that this has been going on, and there's been a huge amount of work going on by the National Park Board in terms of trying to determine whether or not it should be given the go ahead. They produced a document a couple of weeks ago that was a hundred-deg pages long that recommended it for refusal, although the Board aren't obliged to stick by that recommendation. So a huge amount of effort has gone into it, and yet in this meeting today there still seemed to be some unanswered questions that the officials couldn't answer and that the representatives of Flamingo land didn't seem to be able to answer. So it has taken a long time to come to this. Whatever the decision is today, it's not necessary by the end of it, because it could go to appeal, it could go to the Scottish Government for a further determination. It could go on for several more years yet. Okay, Kevin, thanks for that, Kevin King. Earlier we heard an example of how talented **AI** has become at composing music from scratch we heard an example of a PM theme tune written while we were on air by an **AI** app I'll just remind you of. I think it's quite good and in fact I've made another one here's another one it a bit more upbeat if you want something to compare those to. Some listeners with long memories have been in touch, which was the actual PM theme tune. This is not a I this date back to 19 its pm at 5 0 p.m. The Sights and by formats program hasn't

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changed a bit. Has it not changed a bit? Our current editor hates all theme tunes. P. P. M. Well, look what I produced on AI is not gonna win a Mercury Prize, but hey, look, just turn that out in minutes and we've been wondering what the i? Ations are for the World of music, for those producing it and those consuming it. Technology Writer Kate Bevan is still with me in the studio, also joined down the line by Tom Keel, chief executive of UK Music. Tom. I've just been taken aback because we had a letter from a listener who pointed out to me what it was doing and what what do you think of what AI is doing? Well, the UK music industry is worth 7 billion to the economy and that forms part of the wider create industries, which are worth almost 100 billion to the economy, and that is actually powered very much by economic rights like copyright, which is really important to creators. So in terms of actually AI, there's a very strong role in terms of the assisted element to it. The craters can can actually hold and now and nurture their craft. However, there are some substantial challenges about what we consider to be generative AI that's kind of making new pieces of music actually out of other pieces of music through the large language models, and that's actually a great concern, because it's it's we don't have any transparency about in terms of actually music being put into the? Is your basic your basic content? Sorry, your basic sorry to interrupt. Your basic contention is that what I produced on AI is really picking up on what other people have produced and then not be paid for if I do it with the AI? In a sense, yes, yes, essentially that's the crazy issue. Yeah, Kate, I'm wondering about. You know, you take a streaming app like Spotify. I don't know how crowded their servers are, but they could just be up loaded with with volumes, orders of magnitude, more mediocre music turned out by by these kind of programs. Right, yeah, they absolutely could, and I think one of the issues around AI, particularly as time goes on, is that there's so much AI generated slop out there. It's it's getting into the system and it's getting harder actually for people to differentiate between a generator stuff which has absolutely nos fact checking inherent in it, and what's real, and that's not just a problem for music. Yeah, I mean it may be a problem for music. If I,

Load-Date: September 16, 2024

End of Document

Trump is drowning in the misinformation swamp he helped create



Trump is drowning in the misinformation swamp he helped create

CNN Wire

September 12, 2024 Thursday 10:00 AM GMT

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Length: 756 words

Byline: Analysis by Allison Morrow, CNN

Dateline: (CNN)

Body

New York (CNN) - The Republican nominee for president went on live TV and presented an unhinged, [debunked Facebook rumor](#) as fact. When corrected (several times) by a moderator, Donald Trump doubled down: "The people on television say their dog was eaten by the people that went there."

"They're eating the dogs," quickly became a punchline among commentators who understand that the whole story about Haitian immigrants eating people's pets in Ohio was a lie, rooted in a well-established [racist history](#).

It's the kind of outrage-bait that, while disgusting, is hardly unexpected on Facebook these days.

But the claim's elevation to the presidential debate stage underscores a grim reality about the internet in 2024: Misinformation is everywhere, platforms are giving up on moderation and **AI** is making it all worse.

Trump's debate performance "was like a 4chan post come to life," said CNN's Jake Tapper.

It's an apt analogy.

4chan, once an innocuous online message board for anime enthusiasts in the early 2000s, is a prime example of what happens when you remove the guardrails from a social media site, with only a handful of community members regulating it. Over the years, 4chan has become a cesspool of violence, conspiracy theories and its own particular brand of "edgelord white supremacy," [as the Verge put it](#).

Scrolling on Facebook or X, it's hard not to see some of that chaos creeping into the mainstream.

As my colleague [Clare Duffy wrote last week](#), Facebook spam is surging, and, in extreme cases, it is being weaponized to scam and mislead people - a shift that coincides with an intentional strategy by the platform to downplay news and politics while amplifying rapid, computer-generated content into users' feeds.

Over on X, which Elon Musk acquired in 2022 and promptly gutted its moderation efforts, hate speech and violent threats [are now fair game](#).

Trump is drowning in the misinformation swamp he helped create

A spokesperson for Meta, Facebook's parent company, said last week that it works "to remove and reduce the spread of spammy content to ensure a positive user experience" and "take action against those who attempt to manipulate traffic through inauthentic engagement."

Musk, who fired Twitter's communications staff when he took over the platform, didn't respond to a request for comment.

To be sure, there's always been gross and fake stuff on social media. The difference now is how quickly it morphs into misinformation, [often fueled by human-like AI text and images](#), with fewer staff dedicated to monitoring and taking down fake information. Once upon a time, you had to go through a process, overseen by human moderators, to get a "verified" check mark on Twitter; now, anyone with or without an agenda to push can simply buy it.

In some ways, Trump's political career tracks the rise and deterioration of social media over the past decade. The former reality star made his name in politics in part by exploiting social media's power to broadcast lies and conspiracy theories to the masses, starting with his racist "birther" attacks on President Barack Obama.

With Tuesday night's foray into the pet-eating lie, he may have finally veered so deep into the internet muck he can't see through it.

Just a few weeks ago, the former president posted [an AI-generated image](#) on his Truth Social platform that suggested Taylor Swift had endorsed him. "I accept," he wrote in the post.

Of course, it was a fake image - the same kind of obvious [AI slop](#) that has overrun Facebook and X. Either Trump didn't know the image was fake, or he didn't mind lying to his followers and perpetuating the fake endorsement.

Neither scenario suggests he's too concerned about the problem of misinformation online.

Taylor Swift, for her part, is concerned. In endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday, Swift wrote that the incident with the fake images of her "conjured up my fears around [AI](#), and the dangers of spreading misinformation."

She signed off on the post by calling herself a "childless cat lady" - a nod to widely ridiculed [comments](#) from Trump's running mate, JD Vance.

As if on cue, Musk, the pro-Trump multibillionaire who also shared the fake pet-eating story on X this week, [chimed in](#) to remind everyone that you can say whatever you want on his platform, no matter how vile or threatening to a woman who's never publicly acknowledged him.

"Fine Taylor ... you win ... I will give you a child and guard your cats with my life."

Analysis by Allison Morrow, CNN

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Load-Date: September 12, 2024



BBC London News - 5:45 PM GMT

TVEyes - BBC 1 West Midlands

September 12, 2024

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Section: U.K. REGIONAL TV; News

Length: 829 words

Highlight: The latest news, sport and weather from London.

Body

Speech to text transcript:¹

in the creative industries just yet. We value human creativity way too much for that, and I think that there are some interesting spaces where it can move into to assist creatives in their work. There are some spaces where it might it may well do take over and people may lose their jobs, and that's unfortunate. These are spaces where we need to actually look at, OK, well, what is the value of the humans that are doing the creating?

AI can't really replace individual craftsmanship, can it? No, no it can't. All it can do is really regurgitate stuff that it's seen before. There's a common word being used at the moment called slop with regard to AI output, generative AI output. And that, I think is a really good way of describing what happens. It takes a lot of people's input, and these are people, creative people's prior art, and it's whacks it all together and makes it into a big stew and spits something out that's kind of essentially mass produced at the other end. A lot of people watching might be quite frightened, almost, of AI and what it might be able to do. Do you think that's just through a lack of understanding of what it is and what it can do? Well, I think people are very right to be a little bit afraid of it. It's partly because there's a lot of hype around AI at the moment, and a lot of companies, a lot of industry, a lot of the governments are buying into the hype. And the hype really basically says that generative AI can do a lot of things that it can't actually do. And what I worry about as an ethicist is that is when companies especially buy into the hype, they might decide that the human is worth replacing with an AI system, for example. But over time we will see that actually the human was never replaceable by the AI system because the AI system could never innovate. Be creative. Think outside the box like humans can. And so I think there's, they're right to be a little bit afraid, especially if they're in the sort of job that might be automated like this. It's healthy to have a good amount of scepticism and to push back against these kinds of technologies, especially when they aren't going to deliver what their what their creators say they're going to deliver. It's an interesting subject. Catherine Flick, thank you. Good to have you with us here on Midlands Today, be warned, this cool spell isn't over yet. Also still to come. A dream come true for a Staffordshire dance group. The

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young people who put on a performance in Disneyland. Do you know your woppered from your flittermice? One woman's mission to bring Gloucestershire dialect back into use. A 23-year-old event rider from Malvern, who broke her back in a fall at an equestrian event, has praised the NHS staff involved in her ongoing care. Saffron Cresswell was paralysed from the chest down, after falling from her horse in June in Yorkshire. The international rider underwent surgery and was then moved to a spinal injuries unit in Wakefield. Jamie Coulson reports. I had such a path in my life that I was ready to take, aiming for the Olympics in the future, in my sport, and you know, to have that taken away from you, at a young age as well, you know, is a massive thing that people don't ever wish to experience ever, and no-one could ever anticipate it in their lives. In June, Saffron Cresswell suffered a spinal cord injury, and was paralysed from the chest down, after an accident at the Bramham horse trials. The 23-year-old was competing in the cross-country phase of the under 25s National Eventing Championship, when she fell off her horse. Obviously there is a feeling of why me, why it happen to me, what did I do wrong? It is so easy to fall into that almost trap of feeling about what happened and why did it happen? But there isn't an answer, you can never know an answer, you have to try and look forward, and it's OK, this is my life now, let's see what I can do to sort of change it and turn it around. Hi. Hello Saffron, good morning. Following surgery in Leeds, she was moved to the regional spinal injuries centre at Pinderfield's Hospital in Wakefield. Spinal cord injury is a life-changing injury. It really affects every system in the body, so once they have had a spinal cord injury, their life completely changes. They have to learn literally everything, from being able to do their basic activities of daily living to going out into the community, it is really the start of a new life. When you have been here so long you sort of end up moving in and making it feel a bit home. You get to know the staff so well, you get to know the consultants so well and it is a massive part of your rehab, building a sort of family on the ward. Get your chin over the bar. The 34 bed centre has dedicated rehabilitation facilities, including a gymnasium, hydrotherapy pool, sports hall and communal area.

Load-Date: September 12, 2024

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What I Learned When My AI Kermit Slop Went Viral

Atlantic Online

September 9, 2024 Monday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1491 words

Byline: Damon Beres

Body

First, I want to apologize. My Kermit the Frog post was not entirely sincere.

This particular [post of mine](#) has been viewed more than 10 million times, which is far more than I expected. But I did expect something. Social networks have never been the realm of good faith or authenticity; trolls and other engagement baiters have been able to engineer their own virality for years and years, simply by correctly predicting what large numbers of people will respond to. Donald Trump's [TikToks](#) don't happen by accident; nor did Kamala Harris's embrace of ["brain rot"](#) videos. Each campaign is constructing media that it believes can travel in algorithmic feeds. That's also what I did when I put together my post, which featured a couple dozen **AI**-generated images of Kermit the Frog.

Allow me to explain. Last weekend-delirious from a lack of sleep and hoping that my screaming toddler would soon settle down in his crib-I was tapping around on my phone in a kind of fried stupor. My mind struggled to latch on to anything. Each of the apps on my home screen seemed to promise only more boredom. I was the sort of trapped that many parents of young children might recognize: A demand for attention could come at any moment, so I couldn't lose myself in a book or a bike ride. But I was looking for a diversion.

[\[Read: What did people do before smartphones?\]](#)

Then I had an idea. I decided that it would be fun to use Bing Image Creator, based on OpenAI's DALL-E technology, to help me replace each app icon on my iPhone's home screen with a thematically appropriate image of the world's greatest muppet. (Why? You'd have to ask my psychiatrist.) Instead of the basic Gmail icon, I contrived an image of Kermit buried under a massive pile of envelopes. Instead of the basic green phone icon, Kerm chatting on a yellow landline.

The final product was an absurd, borderline-deranged home-screen grid of 24 bespoke frogs. The creation of each one required a series of specific prompts from me. There was Calculator Kermit and Photos Kermit. Authenticator Kermit was dressed like a police officer and wielded a massive baton. My job complete, I took a screenshot and sent it to a friend, who replied, "Damon I truly truly fear for you." About halfway through the project, I had developed

What I Learned When My AI Kermit Slop Went Viral

an inkling that her message seemed to confirm: People on the internet would probably respond to this. I could use my Kermits to go viral.

Everyone loves Kermit, of course, and that could only help me. But just as important was the fact that I had made the images using generative [AI](#), a hyper-polarizing technology with passionate boosters and passionate critics. My content would have to appeal to both groups in order to go as far as possible. So I tried to walk a middle path. I typed an ambiguously worded post that nonetheless contained a sharp opinion that people could react to: "People will be like, '~generative [AI](#) has no practical use case,' but I did just use it to replace every app icon on my home screen with images of Kermit, soooo." Then I embedded the before and after images of my home screen, and published simultaneously on X and Threads.

The reactions were swift, and they haven't stopped. A lot of people just love the images. Others have accused me of destroying the environment, thanks to generative [AI](#)'s [water](#) and [energy](#) use. (I suppose I'm guilty on that count; alas, every online action [takes its toll](#).) Quite a few people have criticized me for leeching off Disney's intellectual property. (Another fair knock, given that generative [AI](#) is trained on tons of [copyrighted material](#).) Some seem to view me as a tech bro or 4chan creep, perhaps because for the YouTube app, I had generated an image of Kermit watching [Pepe the Frog](#)—I meant it as a reference to the purportedly radicalizing content that the site has [hosted](#), not as an endorsement of the symbol.

And many people have posted that I played myself, allowing the [AI](#) to do the "fun," imaginative stuff while I took on the rote task of changing the app icons. Those people are wrong: Writing the prompts, looking at the outputs, and adjusting my asks in response was like playing with a [toy](#). By contrast, one person attempted to [write a program](#) that would automate every step of the process I had undertaken. Although arguably impressive on its own merits, it appeared to produce bland, interchangeable, witless icons. No fun.

The truth is that the [AI](#) didn't just do everything for me. I came up with little details that some people delighted in (a blond-wigged Kermit snapping a selfie for the Instagram icon, Kermit climbing out of a filthy sewer for X), I tweaked and iterated on the prompts until the outputs were right, and I selected the options I thought looked the best. Even the images that some took as evidence of the uselessness of generative [AI](#) (an icon for The Washington Post app bearing the nonsensical headline "NEW HASPELES"; a calendar icon showing the month "EOMER") were chosen on purpose. It seemed funny and appropriate to include art with some glitches, given [AI](#)'s [well-documented problems](#), though avoiding them would have been easy. (For the Atlantic app, of course, I made sure to choose an output with the correct spelling.)

[\[Read: Generative art is stupid\]](#)

That's not to say that I believe what I did was creative, exactly. The feeling reminded me a bit of editing a talented writer (albeit a nonhuman plagiarist in this case): I gave direction and received something in response, but the fundamental essence of the work did not emerge from my mind. As in working with a person, there was room for surprise—when the image generator took it upon itself, for example, to add a pair of breasts to Kermit for the Instagram icon. (I promise I did not ask for them.) You can nudge the program in one direction or another, but every press of the "Create" button is a bit like pulling a slot machine.

This is one reason generative [AI](#) is such an ideal match for the social-media era. These programs are now nested within X, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat-apps that are defined not just by endless scrolling but by the downward tug from the top of your screen to refresh and get something new. [AI](#) images are a confection just like the other algorithmically served junk people now spend so much time consuming. Having a home screen filled with Kermits isn't actually practical. The effort was entirely about entertaining myself and getting engagement, not remaking how I actually navigate my phone. (I reverted to the default app icons almost immediately, because the Kermits all blurred together and made the device harder to use.) It's no wonder that social-media companies are pushing generative [AI](#); the technology feels like it offers both a way to melt time and a shortcut to the kind of numbers-go-up posting that makes these networks so compulsively usable. As my colleague Charlie Warzel [wrote last month](#), that plug-and-play quality has given generative-[AI](#) images a certain utility for the MAGA set, who routinely embrace outrageous falsehoods for political gain. They can now illustrate and post in seconds whatever

What I Learned When My AI Kermit Slop Went Viral

meme they're using to rally the base on a given day. Likewise, spammers have found that it [pays](#) to flood Facebook with attention-grabbing **AI slop**.

So here is a use for generative **AI**: It is lubricant for broken algorithmic machinery. Pour it into a social network, and if you've done the alchemy right, the gears will turn and turn. This is the internet's synthetic maximalist moment, where fake content leads easily to superficial interaction. I soon started to notice that many of the typed responses to my post seemed to be following a script, that they were sent from anonymous accounts that barely followed (or were followed by) anyone at all. I'm certain that many were bots, interacting with a JPEG file that had also been made by one-albeit with my mischievous prompting.

The informational environment has become hopelessly junked up, and the way it works can be dispiriting to even the most cynical of the extremely online. But I have to admit that watching my Kermit post go viral was, dare I say, fun. I'm sure many of the actual people who responded to me felt it too. I was amused. Perhaps when we look back on the generative-**AI** revolution, we'll realize that chasing this feeling is the ultimate reason for many of these programs-especially as they enter social apps that are designed to prioritize engagement.

We're a long way from Amusing Ourselves to Death, Neil Postman's famous 1985 book, [which argued](#) that television would lead the public to privilege spectacle over substance. But it's clear that Postman saw around the right corner. Many prognosticators have said quite a lot about **AI**'s [existential risks](#), that the technology could be used to construct bioweapons and God knows what else. In the meantime, aided by other sophisticated machines-and, sometimes, an exhausted parent on an iPhone-it's a grade-A brain softener. Use with caution.

Load-Date: September 10, 2024



University of Chicago: Prof. Ben Zhao Named to TIME Magazine's TIME100 AI List

Targeted News Service

September 7, 2024 Saturday 4:17 PM EST

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Length: 774 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: CHICAGO, Illinois

Body

(TNSres) -- The University of Chicago issued the following news:

* * *

Honor recognizes unique contributions to the field, including Glaze and Nightshade tools

* * *

TIME magazine announced Sept. 5 that it has named Ben Zhao, the University of Chicago Neubauer Professor of Computer Science, to its TIME100 **AI** list.

The TIME100 **AI** list celebrates individuals who are shaping the future of **AI**, a technology that continues to revolutionize industries. As TIME highlights, the rapid growth of **AI** is driven not just by the technology itself, but by the people behind it--those who make critical decisions about its development, safety, and application.

Zhao's recognition on this list highlights his significant contributions and leadership, particularly in the areas of adversarial machine learning and security--a field that explores how machine learning models can be manipulated and how to defend against such attacks.

He is particularly known in the field for protective tools to mitigate harms of **AI**, including tools like Nightshade and Glaze, which artists can apply to their works to protect them from being scraped and used without consent to train **AI** models.

Innovation and impact

Zhao's research has spanned a broad range of areas, including networking, human-computer interaction, and security and privacy. Since 2016, he has focused on addressing security and privacy challenges in machine

learning and mobile systems. Most recently, his work has centered on adversarial machine learning and developing tools to protect human creatives from the potential harms of generative **AI** models.

"My experiences across different areas (but especially in human-computer interaction) has taught me the value of engaging with users to truly understand how research and technology impacts real people," said Zhao. "As a result, I am always drawn to research challenges that impact large groups of people, and projects that address those challenges by taking into account perspectives of the users most directly impacted."

He is particularly known in the field for tools to mitigate harms of **AI**. This line of work began in 2020, with Fawkes, an image cloaking tool designed to prevent third parties from building unauthorized facial recognition models of individuals based on public photos online.

Zhao's team also developed Nightshade, which proactively protects content copyright of visual artwork by making them toxic to **AI** models that train on them without consent, and Glaze, which protects individual artists against style mimicry.

These programs make changes to an image that are nearly imperceptible to the human eye, but significantly change what the **AI** "sees."

Since its release in January 2024, Nightshade has been downloaded nearly a million times.

As **AI** continues to evolve at a breakneck pace, the insights and innovations of leaders like Zhao will play a crucial role in shaping the technology's future.

"The recent rush towards generative **AI** has been spurred on by an aura of inevitability, promises of societal benefits, and massive profits," Zhao warned. "While many of these have yet to materialize, harms like copyright violation, proliferation of **AI slop** and deepfakes, and disruption to creative sectors are here today. These are the harms our lab works to mitigate through our research."

Zhao is an ACM Fellow and a recipient of the NSF CAREER award, the Internet Defense Prize, and MIT Technology Review's TR-35 Award, among others. His work has been featured in prominent media outlets such as the New York Times, Scientific American, NBC, CNN, BBC, and the Wall Street Journal, underscoring the broader societal impact of his research.

In addition to his research, Zhao is deeply involved in the academic community. He serves on technical program committees for top conferences in computer security (ACM CCS, IEEE Security & Privacy) and machine learning (NeurIPS). At University of Chicago, he co-directs the Security, Algorithms, Networking, and Data (SAND) Lab at UChicago alongside Neubauer Professor Heather Zheng and serves as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Computer Science.

"I'm humbled by this recognition, and proud to share it with my long-term collaborator Prof. Heather Zheng, our wonderful students, and the many human artists, writers and other creatives working with us to build a future ecosystem where human creativity is valued more than technology," Zhao said.

- Adapted from an article first published by the Department of Computer Science.

* * *

Original text here: <https://news.uchicago.edu/story/prof-ben-zhao-named-time-magazines-time100-ai-list>

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Load-Date: September 8, 2024

University of Chicago : Prof. Ben Zhao Named to TIME Magazine's TIME100 AI List

End of Document



PROF. BEN ZHAO NAMED TO TIME MAGAZINE'S TIME100 AI LIST

States News Service

September 6, 2024 Friday

Copyright 2024 States News Service

Length: 738 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: CHICAGO, Illinois

Body

The following information was released by the University of Chicago:

By Miranda Redenbaugh

Sep 6, 2024

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PROF. BEN ZHAO NAMED TO TIME MAGAZINE'S TIME100 AI LIST

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Load-Date: September 6, 2024

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The Pulse: Finch University of Health Sciences

September 6, 2024 Friday

University Wire

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Section: LATESTSTORIES; Pg. 1

Length: 719 words

Byline: Miranda Redenbaugh

Body

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- Adapted from an article first published by the Department of Computer Science.

Load-Date: September 6, 2024



Facebook's AI-Generated Spam Problem Is Worse Than You Realize

Rolling Stone

September 5, 2024

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RollingStone

Length: 1768 words

Byline: Miles Klee

Body

The picture, posted July 4 on the Facebook page "Love Shares 3.0" for 71,000 followers, appears to be an aerial view of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, with people gathered in the square. Overhead, dangling from a gigantic black helicopter, is what can only be a massive Bible, but the lettering on the book is garbled, and the cross on the cover has an extra arm. It looks as if the aircraft is about to drop this tome on the crowd below, flattening them. The caption is pure gibberish: "Close your eyes 70% and see magic / Today's my graduation / May 2024 is Your Best Year." Additional hashtags identify the image as "art" and "painting."

It is, quite clearly, **AI**-generated - though nobody in the comments mentions this. "Praise the lord," writes one user. Many others reply with a simple "amen." The image has close to 6,000 likes and "heart" engagements.

In the early 2010s, Facebook reshaped digital life as we know it. But in the past few years, a confluence of trends has left it uniquely vulnerable to click-farming pages that churn out **AI**-created junk. At a critical moment when online creators are weighing the benefits of integrating controversial **AI** tech into their personal brands, a shadow army of spam "creators" have already leveraged it to invade a platform mostly abandoned by such internet celebrities, eating away at whatever social value it has left. Worst of all, the very structure of Facebook appears to have encouraged this rot.

One factor, of course, is the rise of text-prompt image generators like Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and DALL-E, which make it profoundly easy to create "original" works at a terrific rate. Facebook, meanwhile, was investing billions in CEO [Mark Zuckerberg's](#) "[metaverse](#)" boondoggle, and still has no real user base to show for it: [Gen Z](#) famously [disdains](#) the social network as uncool, preferring [TikTok](#) and the also [Meta](#)-owned Instagram, leaving Facebook with an [aging demographic](#).

If the **AI**-reliant spam pages are any indication, many of those still scrolling Facebook can't tell or don't care when an image is fake, and have a particular fondness for certain comforting signifiers: Bibles, babies, American flags, soldiers, animals, luxurious homes, landscapes, and Jesus Christ. Then there are the images meant to evoke pity: patients in hospital beds, crying or endangered children, amputees, the unhoused, the starving. Sometimes the imagined figure is shown holding a sign asking for birthday wishes, or explaining that they're a veteran. And in

Facebook's AI-Generated Spam Problem Is Worse Than You Realize

certain cases, there's no earthly explanation for what you're looking at - like this military truck that seems to be transporting giant carrots, but is also made out of them:

pic.twitter.com/RO99qZ5B0b

- Insane Facebook **AI slop** (@FacebookAIslop) [September 3, 2024](#)

Theodore, a 19-year-old who lives in Paris, has become the top curator of what he calls "Insane Facebook **AI slop**," and shares his favorite examples on a dedicated [Twitter](#) account with more than 100,000 followers. On that site, it's customary to mock the content, as well as the gullible Boomers assumed to be eating it up. There's even an **AI slop** bingo card meme that followers can use to keep track of some common tropes, including the generic captions most often appended to the images, like: "Why don't pictures like this ever trend" and "You will never regret liking this photo." ([Scarlett Johansson](#)'s name also shows up a lot, for some reason.)

"I don't use Facebook a lot myself but saw plenty of screenshots of those types of posts on Twitter, and the insane amount of likes these had made the phenomenon funnier," Theodore tells Rolling Stone. "So I thought I might as well document those." At this point, he almost exclusively shares content he receives in DM submissions.

Theodore believes the success of **AI slop** is mostly due to the elderly and naive. "Facebook is full of old people and tech-illiterate people in general," he says, which is "also why the kind of posts that get the most likes are the ones that will target old people, using soldiers, American flags, Jesus imagery, etc." Since some themes are so dominant, he tries to maintain variety, lately branching out into illustrations of "third-world children doing all sorts of impossible crafts."

Meta has taken a rather gentle approach to **AI**-derived images and videos, opting to add an "**AI** info" label "when we detect industry standard **AI** image indicators or when people disclose that they're uploading **AI**-generated content," it [said](#) in a statement this summer. This label did not appear on any of the **AI** images shared by more than a dozen engagement-farming pages reviewed by Rolling Stone. As for more stringent moderation, Meta's Oversight Board has argued that they "unnecessarily risk restricting freedom of expression when we remove manipulated media that does not otherwise violate our Community Standards."

That is to say, because the typical **AI slop** isn't strictly misinformation (nor is it hate speech, graphic nudity, and so on), there's no glaring reason to delete it - unless Meta were to deem it spam. The company's [policy](#) states that it does not allow spam, which it defines as "content that is designed to be shared in deceptive and annoying ways or attempts to mislead users to drive engagement." The **AI slop** pages are certainly deceptive, repetitive, and gaming the system for engagement; there's also no telling how many are monetized and profiting from an abundance of reactions and comments.

Meta tells Rolling Stone that while "eradicating spam is a nearly impossible task," the company takes significant measures against it, since this type of content "detracts from people's ability to engage authentically in online communities." In the first quarter of 2024, it reported, Meta "removed 436 million pieces of spam content from Facebook," with 98.2 percent of this "actioned before it could be reported."

The question remains whether Meta would deem the **AI**-generated images to be spam in violation of their policy, or just take the engagement as a sign to feed those users more of the same. The pseudonymous data researcher and software developer Conspirador Norteño in June published a Substack [investigation](#) that suggested the latter: that Facebook's recommendation algorithm is favoring the **AI slop** over authentic content.

After logging in with a dummy account he had only ever used to shop for music gear, Conspirador simply scrolled through more than a thousand posts on his feed over half an hour and collected information on both the content and the pages that shared them. He found that less than 5 percent of the material corresponded to his past browsing of music equipment, 12.7 percent was sponsored ads, and the rest was "mostly a mix of **AI**-generated images and plagiarized photographs posted by content aggregator accounts with large numbers of followers." **AI**-generated content accounted for 22 percent, or almost a quarter, of all the posts he viewed.

Facebook's AI-Generated Spam Problem Is Worse Than You Realize

"I think a lot of people still operate with the expectation that images that look like photos are real photos, and don't notice that they're really looking at an **AI** image unless there are really obvious problems," Conspirador says. He noted the prevalence of pages such as "Log Cabin Living," "Mountain Cabins," and "Barndominium Gallery," which tend to feature images of lavishly appointed country mansions set in lush nature scenes - pictures that often don't immediately betray signs of being fake. These reliably pick up likes, comments, and subscribers. "Unusual-looking houses and pretty outdoor scenes tend to do well, even when an account posts dozens or hundreds that are basically the same," Conspirador says. A typical "Log Cabin Living" post features a preposterously large house with an uncanny pool that seems to blur the distinction between artificial and natural bodies of water:

People gazing with admiration at fantasy houses that don't exist is one thing, and a social media algorithm amplifying this stuff is another. But Conspirador was particularly surprised by "Facebook's failure to intervene in cases where the account [was] obviously hijacked" from an ordinary user before it began spewing **AI** spam. This was the situation with "Barndominium Gallery," a page which he found [had previously belonged](#) to a hair salon in Oklahoma. In January, the owner of the salon posted that her page had been hacked and asked friends to report it to Facebook, yet eight months later, no action has been taken, while the page has accrued hundreds of thousands of followers with its **AI** rubbish. Worse, whoever stole the page has begun promoting links to [a fake home-construction business](#) that charges the customer \$79.99 for floor plans and cost-of-build estimates on its **AI**-generated architecture.

Carissa Véliz, an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Oxford's Institute for Ethics in **AI**, views the **slop** takeover as the logical result of how Facebook works. "This phenomenon seems to be a secondary effect of social media's focus on engagement," she says. "Instead of focusing on fostering wholesome relationships, or in being trustworthy sources of information, social media has focused on gaining people's attention. And it turns out that what attracts most of our attention is akin to junk food."

"Generative **AI** was designed to engage people," Véliz says. "It's good at producing images that people find captivating." Facebook, she points out, needs that content that keeps people glued to the app, and may tolerate clickbait because they're concerned that "users were no longer sharing as many personal stories as before." What's more, Véliz proposes, companies like Meta are incentivized to create Frankenstein's monsters beyond their control, as the "inadequate current regulation doesn't demand of social media companies anything that can be too burdensome." Therefore, if you have a system running amok, but fixing it would be too difficult, "it magically absolves you from its effects."

pic.twitter.com/ATksXwxEAm

- Insane Facebook **AI slop** (@FacebookAIslop) [August 31, 2024](#)

In the meantime, spectators like Theodore and his audience will have plenty of absurdities to laugh at, from [fish with legs](#) to [Incredible Hulk porn](#) to phony black-and-white "historical" [photos](#). He's also started pulling material from [YouTube](#) and X/[Twitter](#), which are hardly immune from the same trend. But perhaps not all is lost just yet. Theodore doesn't usually look at the comments on Facebook **AI slop**, since there's no need to read "amen" a hundred times in a row. When he does, however, he's treated to the occasional surprise: "Someone calling out the post for being made by an **AI**."

Load-Date: September 5, 2024

2:00PM Water Cooler 9/4/2024



2:00PM Water Cooler 9/4/2024

Newstex Blogs

Naked Capitalism

September 4, 2024 Wednesday 6:00 PM EST

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Length: 4637 words**Byline:** Lambert Strether

Body

September 4th, 2024 ([Naked Capitalism](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

By Lambert Strether of Corrente

This is Naked Capitalism fundraising week. 25 donors have already invested in our efforts to combat corruption and predatory conduct, particularly in the financial realm. Please join us and participate via our [donation page, which shows how to give via check, credit card, debit card, PayPal, Clover, or Wise. Read about why we're doing this fundraiser, what we've accomplished in the last year,, and our current goal, strengthening our IT infrastructure.](#)

Bird Song of the Day

Gray Catbird, Heckscher SP, East Islip, Suffolk, New York, United States. 'Singing from a small wooded area near a marsh.'

* * *

In Case You Might Miss

[Kamala's Democrat prep.](#)[Collard greens and code switching..](#)[Clean air in the schools? Lol no..](#)[H5N1 reassortment in Cambodia.* * *](#)

Politics

'So many of the social reactions that strike us as psychological are in fact a rational management of symbolic capital.' -Pierre Bourdieu, Classification Struggles

2:00PM Water Cooler 9/4/2024

* * *

2024

Less than one hundred days to go!

Friday's [RCP Poll Averages](#):

The good news for Trump is that Kamala's post-convention 'bounce' seems to have been slight. The good news for Kamala is Trump's continued deterioration in North Carolina, plus taking a slight lead in Pennsylvania. Remember, however, that all the fluctuations - in fact, all the leads, top to bottom - are within the margin of error.

* * *

[The Debate \(September 10\)](#)

Kamala (D): 'Kamala Harris goes to 'debate camp': Insiders reveal where VP's preparation is already going 'sideways' as she gets ready for primetime Trump showdown' [[Daily Mail](#)]. *'Sources close to the Harris team tell NOTUS that Harris is a little rusty on the debate stage as 'strategy sessions have careened sideways' when Harris 'focused too narrowly on minute details, effectively trailing the sessions.' Despite her willingness to debate, Harris and her team are still trying to negotiate the rules of the debate with ABC News, according to a Harris campaign source speaking to NBC News.' Still?! More: 'Trump and his team anticipate that Harris is preparing to interrupt him to try and 'fact check' his statements. The former president, however, is aware of Harris and her propensity to get lost into so-called 'word salads' while speaking publicly. 'She has bad moments. The way she talks,' Trump told broadcaster Tucker Carlson in a recent interview, imitating comments the vice president made about school buses. 'It's weird. The whole thing is weird.' Harris: 'Who doesn't love a yellow school bus, right? Can you raise your hand if you love a yellow school bus? Many of us went to school on the yellow school bus, right? It's part of our experience growing up. It's part of a nostalgia, a memory of the excitement and joy of going to school to be with your favorite teacher, to be with your best friends and to learn. The school bus takes us there.' It's true that 'It's part of a nostalgia' isn't something a native English speaker would say, but it's the condescension of 'Raise your hands' that gets me. Here's the video:*

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/E2e2HWH5pwo?si=LfV5QXupbvfoeWOg>

The audience, presumably, is adult. Also, the hand gestures.

Kamala (D): 'How Kamala Harris Plans to Lock In for Debate Prep in Pennsylvania' [[NOTUS](#)]. *'In conversations with nearly a dozen people involved with or aware of the preparations, a set of goals emerged for the next week. The campaign is planning to tune out as much of the outside noise as possible to lock her in, aware of Harris' relative rust as a debater and her tendency to overprepare and fixate on the details.' And: '[S]he's once again using notecards as part of her prep, a second person familiar with the preparations told NOTUS, a habit they believe she picked up during her law school days.' I would say the habit came from college debate, in which Harris participated. More: 'Allies say Harris has had to defend her ideas inside the White House over the last three years, preparing her in some ways for this moment. But Harris is, for all intents and purposes, an out-of-practice debater with people who aren't her colleagues. Next week's debate will come just a month shy of four years since she debated Vice President Mike Pence in Utah. For that, aides holed up in a hotel in Salt Lake City days before the debate, as she used index cards to work through talking points - including the now-famous 'I'm speaking' line, which one person involved in the session said was a crowdsourced suggestion.' Hmm. She recycled 'I'm speaking,' then. That didn't go so well. Interestingly, in neither of these two articles do we see any suggestion that Kamala would play the prosecutor ('Why am I debating a felon?'). Which seems a very obvious thing for her to do. Why go to all the trouble of doing the lawfare if you're not going to use it in debate?'* * * *

Kamala (D): 'The White House wants you to know that Harris was on the call' [[Politico](#)]. *'Name-checking Harris - or any vice president, for that matter - is unusual and suggests an attempt to buttress her credentials as she faces*

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questions about her ability to manage international affairs and confronts an experienced opponent in former President Donald Trump. POLITICO's review of pool reports, readouts, transcripts of administration briefings and comments by the nation's top diplomats and military officials found that the administration increased its mentions of Harris in public statements about foreign engagements since July, when Biden announced he would drop out of the presidential election and endorsed his vice president.' The previous NOTUS article includes this sentence: '[T]he Biden administration is in what they hope to be the last stretch of a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas that might require Harris' presence in the Situation Room.' Her mere presence. I know that Harris doing debate prep while a ceasefire deal was being consummated would look bad, but avoiding a bad look seems to be the only reason for her presence. * * *

Kamala (D): 'Cooking Collard Greens The Caribbean Way' [[Caribbean Pot](#)]. 'Collard Green or collards is not native to the Caribbean, so it's not something we would refer to as being traditional. However, with our love for dasheen bush, spinach, Jamaican callaloo (chorai), Bok Choi and just about every other green there is, it's natural that collards will find a loving home in my kitchen.' So, wherever Kamala learned to cook collard greens - Montreal? Her sorority? - it's unlikely to be a family tradition (not on her Jamaican father's side, and certainly not on her Indian mother's side).

Kamala (D): And code switching:

One of my favorite accounts, on Twitter since 2011. In general, very level-headed.

* * *

Trump (R): 'Donald Trump Interview' (video) [Lex Fridman, [YouTube \(outside observer\)](#)]. Smart move by Trump campaign staff:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/qCbfTN-caFI?si=-eTHOYXIAMtN9gaK>

Trump (R): 'Questions surrounding Trump's mental acuity are a real 2024 story' [[MSNBC](#)]. 'The words below were taken verbatim from a campaign speech' [and they're an especially dense example of free-form riffing]. 'Trump's asides stack atop each other with such density that it's dizzying for even professional political observers to discern what he's trying to get at. Trump's speeches seem to be growing more discursive and difficult to comprehend by the day. Those speeches are making it hard, if not impossible, for people listening to them to understand what he wants to do with his power in office, and they're reportedly turning off voters. They're also raising questions over whether the chaos he would sow in office would be even less intentional than it was last time. Trump's deteriorating [asserted, not shown] ability to clearly communicate is a consequential feature of his 2024 candidacy. That deterioration may not have been as salient when Trump, 78, had 81-year-old President Joe Biden as an opponent. But it's all the more clear as he now faces off against 59-year-old Vice President Kamala Harris. Questions about Biden's mental acuity were rightly raised in this election cycle. Questions about Trump's mental acuity should be raised, too.' I doubt this will stick, though of course the Democrats are trying it. Trump did fine in debate when he knocked Biden out of the race. Is there any sign of 'deterioration' in the hour-long interview with Fridman? I don't have time to listen to it, but I'm guessing no, because otherwise the memes would already be out. * * *

MI: 'CAIR 2024 Election Survey Of Muslim Voters' [[CAIR](#)]. 'As the 2024 national general election approaches, America's estimated 2.5 million Muslim voters are positioned to once again play a crucial role in shaping the political landscape. With their significant presence in key swing states, Muslim voters have the potential to influence the outcomes of not only the presidential race but also numerous congressional, state, and local elections.' Handy chart:

PA: 'Taking the pulse of Pennsylvania's Trump country, from Amish region to Gettysburg' [[USA Today](#)]. 'While the election may be decided in the suburbs of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, where the majority of the state's residents live, central Pennsylvania plays a role. It is traditionally red, with small pockets of blue in the cities, but the votes that come from the small businesspeople and churchgoers of the middle of the state - often referred to derisively as [deplorable] 'Pennsylvucky' - could make a difference in a state where the final results could be decided by a few

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*thousand votes.' Worth a read. And from the York Daily Record, so kudos to USA Today. (Pennsylvania still has a lot of smallish newspapers, as we saw with the reporting from Butler.) * * * * **

Syndemics

'I am in earnest - I will not equivocate - I will not excuse - I will not retreat a single inch - AND I WILL BE HEARD.' - William Lloyd Garrison

* * *

Covid Resources, United States (National): Transmission ([CDC](#)); [Wastewater \(CDC, Biobot; includes many counties; Wastewater Scan, includes drilldown by zip\)](#); [Variants \(CDC; Walgreens\)](#); [' Iowa COVID-19 Tracker' \(in IA, but national data\)](#). [' Infection Control, Emergency Management, Safety, and General Thoughts' \(especially on hospitalization by city\)](#).

Lambert here: Readers, thanks for the collective effort. To update any entry, do feel free to contact me at the address given with the plants. Please put 'COVID' in the subject line. Thank you!

Resources, United States (Local): AK ([dashboard](#)); AL ([dashboard](#)); AR ([dashboard](#)); AZ ([dashboard](#)); CA ([dashboard](#); [Marin, dashboard](#); [Stanford, wastewater](#); [Oakland, wastewater](#)); CO ([dashboard](#); [wastewater](#)); CT ([dashboard](#)); DE ([dashboard](#)); FL ([wastewater](#)); GA ([wastewater](#)); HI ([dashboard](#)); IA ([wastewater reports](#)); ID ([dashboard](#), [Boise; dashboard, wastewater, Central Idaho; wastewater, Coeur d'Alene; dashboard, Spokane County](#)); IL ([wastewater](#)); IN ([dashboard](#)); KS ([dashboard](#); [wastewater, Lawrence](#)); KY ([dashboard, Louisville](#)); LA ([dashboard](#)); MA ([wastewater](#)); MD ([dashboard](#)); ME ([dashboard](#)); MI ([wastewater; wastewater](#)); MN ([dashboard](#)); MO ([wastewater](#)); MS ([dashboard](#)); MT ([dashboard](#)); NC ([dashboard](#)); ND ([dashboard; wastewater](#)); NE ([dashboard](#)); NH ([wastewater](#)); NJ ([dashboard](#)); NM ([dashboard](#)); NV ([dashboard; wastewater, Southern NV](#)); NY ([dashboard](#)); OH ([dashboard](#)); OK ([dashboard](#)); OR ([dashboard](#)); PA ([dashboard](#)); RI ([dashboard](#)); SC ([dashboard](#)); SD ([dashboard](#)); TN ([dashboard](#)); TX ([dashboard](#)); UT ([wastewater](#)); VA ([dashboard](#)); VT ([dashboard](#)); WA ([dashboard; dashboard](#)); WI ([wastewater](#)); WV ([wastewater](#)); WY ([wastewater](#)).

Resources, Canada (National): Wastewater ([Government of Canada](#)).

Resources, Canada (Provincial): ON ([wastewater](#)); QC ([les eaux uses](#)); BC ([wastewater](#)); BC, Vancouver ([wastewater](#)).

Hat tips to helpful readers: Alexis, anon (2), Art_DogCT, B24S, CanCyn, ChiGal, Chuck L, Festoonic, FM, FreeMarketApologist (4), Gumbo, hop2it, JB, JEHR, JF, JL Joe, John, JM (10), JustAnotherVolunteer, JW, KatieBird, KF, LL, Michael King, KF, LaRuse, mrsyk, MT, MT_Wild, otisyves, Petal (6), RK (2), RL, RM, Rod, square coats (11), tennesseewaltzer, Tom B., Utah, Bob White (3).

Stay safe out there!

* * *

Airborne Transmission: Covid

'Kids Are Headed Back to School. Are They Breathing Clean Air?' [[Scientific American](#)]. Lol no. ['Across the U.S., kids are headed back to their classrooms-just as COVID nears a fresh, late-summer peak. Somehow, four years into a viral pandemic that everyone now knows spreads through the air, most schools have done little to nothing to make sure their students will breathe safely. We-and especially our children-should be able to walk into a store or a gym or a school and assume the air is clean to breathe. Like water from the faucet, regulations should ensure our air is safe. 'Air is tricky. You can choose to not partake of the water or the snacks on the table, but you can't just abstain from breathing,' notes Gigi Gronvall, senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and an](#)

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author of a 2021 report on the benefits of improving ventilation in schools.' Somehow. Some schools are doing just fine, though!

Transmission: H5N1

'Cambodia's recent H5N1 case involved novel reassortant' [[Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy](#)]. 'Sequencing of the patient's virus sample at the Pasteur Institute in Cambodia found that the hemagglutinin gene from the 2.3.2.1c clade that has been circulating in Cambodia and Southeast Asia since 2013. The internal genes, however, belonged to the newer 2.3.4.4b, which is circulating globally. 'This novel reassortant influenza A(H5N1) virus has been detected in human cases reported in Cambodia since late 2023,' the WHO said. Cambodian health officials have tracked and monitored the [patient's] contacts, and no related cases have been found. The country has reported an uptick in human H5N1 infections since 2023, reporting 6 cases last year and 10 this year, of which 2 were fatal. In April, animal health officials in Vietnam and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned of the new reassortant circulating in chickens and muscovy ducks. The scientists said the virus has been circulating in the Greater Mekong subregion since 2022. Also, they noted that the reassortant had been linked to recent human cases and that the development shows the adaptive capacity of the virus and the risk of new, potentially more virulent strains.' Musical interlude.

Denial and Cope

'As COVID Surges, the High Price of Viral Denial' [[The Tyee](#)]. Canada. 'The subject of how to respond to a slow burn pandemic remains taboo because most public health officials have already declared the emergency over. They've also stopped collecting critical data. COVID-19 deaths in Canada are not reported in a readily publicly accessible fashion. And most of the media pretends that an immune-destabilizing virus that can harm the functioning of your organs including your brain has little more import than a benign cold. As a consequence, authorities can't now turn around and admit to the breadth of their mistake, let alone acknowledge the growing disorder in public health. Nor do they dare collect critical data documenting the scale of their errors including the relentless march of long COVID. Here, then, is where we've arrived. We've entered a vicious cycle where more infections generate more COVID variants. The new variants have become more immune evasive. At the same time society has generally abandoned masks, testing and basic public health messages. We could slow and suppress the cycle by facing the challenge squarely. For example, by cleaning dirty air the way we once tackled the disease-ridden spectre of cholera-infested water. But public health officials are afraid to talk about clean air let alone the obvious: avoiding infection. Beating back COVID requires hard work, communal wisdom and clear policies that markedly reduce the level of infection in society. To date we have chosen viral denial, dirty air and a triumphant reign for long COVID.' Excellent article, worth reading in full.

Elite Maleficence

'Simple measures lessen hospital-acquired COVID-19 infections' [[Burnet](#)]. Australia. 'In a new study published in the Journal of Hospital Infections, Burnet researchers found simple infection control measures could save lives and reduce costs for hospitals. These measures include testing patients for COVID-19 on admission, requiring staff to wear N95 masks in clinical areas and using Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests to prevent transmissions. One of the paper's lead authors, Burnet Associate Professor Nick Scott, said on average, 15-25% of patients who tested positive for COVID-19 in hospital had contracted the virus after being admitted.' But HICPAC would prefer that hospitals be death traps so, no N95s. Baggy blues only, if that!' * * *

TABLE 1: Daily Covid Charts

Wastewater This week[1] [CDC August 26: Last Week](#)[2] [CDC \(until next week\)](#):

Variants [3] [CDC August 31 Emergency Room Visits](#)[4] [CDC August 24](#)

Hospitalization New York[5] [New York State, data August 30: National](#) [6] [CDC August 10](#):

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Positivity National[7] [Walgreens September 3: Ohio](#)[8] [Cleveland Clinic August 24:](#)

Travelers Data Positivity[9] [CDC August 12: Variants](#)[10] [CDC August 12:](#)

Deaths Weekly Deaths vs. % Positivity [11] [CDC August 24: Weekly Deaths vs. ED Visits](#) [12] [CDC August 24:](#)

LEGEND

1) for charts new today; all others are not updated.

2) For a full-size/full-resolution image, Command-click (MacOS) or right-click (Windows) on the chart thumbnail and 'open image in new tab.'

NOTES

[1] (CDC) This week's wastewater map, with hot spots annotated. Keeps spreading.

[2] (CDC) Last week's wastewater map.

[3] (CDC Variants) KP.* very popular. XDV.1 flat.

[4] (ED) Down, but worth noting that Emergency Department use is now on a par with the first wave, in 2020.

[5] (Hospitalization: NY) Flat, that is, no longer down.

[6] (Hospitalization: CDC). The visualization suppresses what is, in percentage terms, a significant increase.

[7] (Walgreens) Big drop, but all those white states showing no change: Labor Day weekend reporting issues?

[8] (Cleveland) Dropping.

[9] (Travelers: Positivity) Down. Those sh*theads at CDC have changed the chart so that it doesn't even run back to 1/21/23, as it used to, but now starts 1/1/24. There's also no way to adjust the time range. CDC really doesn't want you to be able to take a historical view of the pandemic, or compare one surge to another. In any case, that's why the shape of the curve has changed.

[10] (Travelers: Variants) What the heck is LB.1?

[11] Deaths low, but positivity up. If the United States is like Canada, deaths are several undercounted:

Tara Motarity has confirmed our fears. Most provinces are only reporting about 20% of covid deaths. Maybe even less. Which suggests the deaths are close to 5 times to 6+ times the reported figures. Nova Scotia has reported 270 so far this year. It's actually 1,325-1,700 so far. pic.twitter.com/6xF6SREyKB

- Dr. Robert Strang (@DSLAYER520) [September 2, 2024](#)

[12] Deaths low, ED up.

Stats Watch

'United States Factory Orders' [[Trading Economics](#)]. *'New orders for US manufactured goods rose by 5% from the previous month to \$592.1 billion in July of 2024, rebounding from the 3.3% drop in the previous month, and above market expectations of a 4.7% increase, signaling the resilience of the US economy.'* * * *

Tech: Uh oh:

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Hachette v. Internet Archive is out: 2d Circuit rejects controlled digital lending theory; IA's use is not transformative; all four fair use factors favor the publishers; the public benefits from shutting down IA's infringement. [#copyright https://t.co/m5mDdezoJJ](https://t.co/m5mDdezoJJ)

- Devlin Hartline (@devlinhartline) [September 4, 2024](#)

Tech: 'Canva says its new **AI** features justify raising subscription prices by 300%' [[Fortune](#)]. *'In the U.S., some Canva users will see their Teams subscription price jump in early December from \$119.99 per year to \$500 per year. The first 12 months will be discounted to \$300, but it's still more than double what users currently pay. Canva Teams will update from \$10 per month per person, with a minimum of three people required for that subscription, a Canva spokesperson confirmed. Canva says its price hike is attributable to new features-particularly those that are AI-powered.' So, lots more AI slop to justify the investment. * * **

Today's Fear & Greed Index: 54 Neutral (previous close: 65 Greed) [[CNN](#)]. *One week ago: 56 (Greed). (0 is Extreme Fear; 100 is Extreme Greed). Last updated Sep 4 at 1:27:54 PM ET.*

Class Warfare

'Thousands of hotel workers continue nationwide strike on Labor Day, demanding higher pay' [[NBC](#)]. *'Thousands of workers at 25 hotels across the country remained on strike for a second day Monday, demanding higher pay and the reversal of pandemic-era cuts, with members in more cities expected to join the strike. On Sunday, around 10,000 hotel workers walked off the job, kicking off the strike during the busy Labor Day weekend at 25 hotels in eight cities, including San Diego, Seattle, San Francisco, Boston and Honolulu. The workers are represented by the UNITE HERE union and work for the Marriott, Hilton and Hyatt hotel chains.. Roughly half of those on strike, about 5,000, are from Honolulu, The Associated Press reported. UNITE HERE says strikes have been authorized and could begin soon in other cities, including Baltimore; New Haven, Connecticut; Oakland, California; and Providence, Rhode Island. The union said similar strikes led to contracts last year for Los Angeles hotel workers and Detroit casino workers.'*

'Our Animals, Ourselves' [[Lux Magazine](#)]. *'Conservatives are terrified by the prospect of a society that truly values and decommodifies (non-fetal) life, which is why they promote an image of flesh-consuming masculinity. Unfortunately, it seems many socialists are not so different. Leftists rarely engage with the myriad problems of animal agriculture, and are often dismissive or contemptuous of those who do. In this, their views are utterly mainstream. A recent episode of the popular lefty podcast Citations Needed began with an analysis of representations of vegetarian characters in popular culture, and the result was hardly flattering - routinely played by women, they tend to be insufferable. Such gendered stereotyping will come as no surprise to readers of Carol Adam's 1990 book The Sexual Politics of Meat, which weaves accounts of 19th century radicalism and examinations of 20th century marketing techniques into a pathbreaking work of 'feminist vegetarian critical theory' (after reading Adams, you will never hear a woman say she felt treated as a 'piece of meat' in the same way). Today we are often told that the animal rights movement came into being in the 1970s, birthed by the white male philosopher Peter Singer. In the English-speaking world, many women abolitionists, suffragettes, and pacifists advocated for vegetarianism and made connections across movements and causes long before Singer came on the scene, including the courageous abolitionist sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimk, who rejected meat in part because they thought it would hasten the 'emancipation of woman from the toil of the kitchen.' Singer rode roughshod over these intellectual antecedents by distinguishing his supposedly rational arguments from all the emotional - that is, feminine - advocacy that came before it. In the 1800s, there was even a diagnosis, zoophilipsychosis, for the affliction of being overly concerned for animals, from which women were believed to disproportionately suffer.'* [Zoophilipsychosis](#)

News of the Wired

I am not feeling wired today.

* * *

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Contact information for plants: Readers, feel free to contact me at `lambert [UNDERSCORE] strether [DOT] corrente [AT] yahoo [DOT] com`, to (a) find out how to send me a check if you are allergic to PayPal and (b) to find out how to send me images of plants. Vegetables are fine! Fungi, lichen, and coral are deemed to be honorary plants! If you want your handle to appear as a credit, please place it at the start of your mail in parentheses: (thus). Otherwise, I will anonymize by using your initials. See the previous Water Cooler (with plant) [here. From artinnature:](#)

artinnature writes: 'Bumblebees on Oxydendrum arboreum (Sourwood).'

* * *

Readers: Water Cooler is a standalone entity not covered by the annual NC fundraiser. Material here is Lambert's, and does not express the views of the Naked Capitalism site. If you see a link you especially like, or an item you wouldn't see anywhere else, please do not hesitate to express your appreciation in tangible form. Remember, a tip jar is for tipping! Regular positive feedback both makes me feel good and lets me know I'm on the right track with coverage. When I get no donations for three or four days I get worried. More tangibly, a constant trickle of donations helps me with expenses, and I factor in that trickle when setting fundraising goals:

Here is the screen that will appear, which I have helpfully annotated:

If you hate PayPal, you can email me at `lambert [UNDERSCORE] strether [DOT] corrente [AT] yahoo [DOT] com`, and I will give you directions on how to send a check. Thank you!

[This entry was posted in](#)

[Water Cooler on September 4, 2024 by Lambert Strether.](#)

About Lambert Strether

Readers, I have had a correspondent characterize my views as realistic cynical. Let me briefly explain them. I believe in universal programs that provide concrete material benefits, especially to the working class. Medicare for All is the prime example, but tuition-free college and a Post Office Bank also fall under this heading. So do a Jobs Guarantee and a Debt Jubilee. Clearly, neither liberal Democrats nor conservative Republicans can deliver on such programs, because the two are different flavors of neoliberalism ('Because markets'). I don't much care about the 'ism' that delivers the benefits, although whichever one does have to put common humanity first, as opposed to markets. Could be a second FDR saving capitalism, democratic socialism leashing and collaring it, or communism razing it. I don't much care, as long as the benefits are delivered. To me, the key issue - and this is why Medicare for All is always first with me - is the tens of thousands of excess 'deaths from despair,' as described by the Case-Deaton study, and other recent studies. That enormous body count makes Medicare for All, at the very least, a moral and strategic imperative. And that level of suffering and organic damage makes the concerns of identity politics - even the worthy fight to help the refugees Bush, Obama, and Clinton's wars created - bright shiny objects by comparison. Hence my frustration with the news flow - currently in my view the swirling intersection of two, separate Shock Doctrine campaigns, one by the Administration, and the other by out-of-power liberals and their allies in the State and in the press - a news flow that constantly forces me to focus on matters that I regard as of secondary importance to the excess deaths. What kind of political economy is it that halts or even reverses the increases in life expectancy that civilized societies have achieved? I am also very hopeful that the continuing destruction of both party establishments will open the space for voices supporting programs similar to those I have listed; let's call such voices 'the left.' Volatility creates opportunity, especially if the Democrat establishment, which puts markets first and opposes all such programs, isn't allowed to get back into the saddle. Eyes on the prize! I love the tactical level, and secretly love even the horse race, since I've been blogging about it daily for fourteen years, but everything I write has this perspective at the back of it.

[Link to the original story.](#)

Notes

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It's not just you. More weird spam is popping up on Facebook



It's not just you. More weird spam is popping up on Facebook

CNN Wire

September 3, 2024 Tuesday 10:00 AM GMT

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Length: 1745 words

Byline: By Clare Duffy, CNN

Dateline: (CNN)

Body

New York (CNN) - If a strange photo has recently stopped you in your tracks while scrolling your Facebook feed, you're not alone.

Users who once came to Facebook to connect with friends and family are increasingly complaining of random, spammy, junk content - much of it apparently generated by artificial intelligence - showing up in their feeds.

Sometimes it's obviously fake, **AI**-generated images, like the now-infamous "[Shrimp Jesus](#)." Other times, it's old posts from real creators that look like they're being reshared by bot accounts for engagement. In some cases, it's pages sharing streams of seemingly benign but random content - memes or movie clips, shared every few hours.

But the spam is more than just an annoyance; it can also be weaponized. Some spam pages appear designed to scam other users. In extreme cases, spam pages that gain a following can eventually be used, for example, by foreign actors seeking to sow discord ahead of elections, according to experts who study inauthentic behavior online.

The surge coincides with an intentional strategy shift at Facebook in the past few years. The company [de-emphasized current events and politics](#) in the wake of [claims](#) it had contributed to election manipulation and real-world violence. Feeling the heat from the rise of TikTok and its emphasis on entertainment over social connections, Facebook re-designed users' home feeds into a "discovery engine" in the hopes that people would engage with content they might not otherwise see.

But the push for more "discoverable" content has led to an algorithm that regularly pushes vapid, often misleading, computer-generated content.

The change has been palpable. **AI**-generated or recycled meme content has appeared on Facebook's quarterly [most viewed content](#) list. Posts with obviously **AI**-generated images and confusing captions sometimes receive thousands of likes and hundreds of comments and shares.

It's not just you. More weird spam is popping up on Facebook

Bad actors and engagement farmers are only too happy to fulfill Facebook's demand for new content, experts say. And the proliferation of [AI](#) tools has made it far easier for them to quickly crank out huge volumes of [fake images](#) and [text](#).

"It's a really interesting thing that a lot more people are starting to talk about because it's this random, kind of vanilla problem now, but obviously there are theoretical, long-term concerns," said Ben Decker, CEO of online threat analysis firm Memetica.

Facebook parent company Meta, for its part, works "to remove and reduce the spread of spammy content to ensure a positive user experience, offering users controls over their feed and encouraging creators to use [AI](#) tools to produce high-quality content that meets our Community Standards," spokesperson Erin Logan said in a statement. "We also take action against those who attempt to manipulate traffic through inauthentic engagement, regardless of whether they use [AI](#) or not."

Adventures in the [AI](#) swamp

Before I started reporting this story in July, my Facebook feed felt pretty normal, featuring baby photos from college friends and listings from Facebook Marketplace.

But, curious about the complaints, I started clicking on whatever content I did see that seemed odd, and the algorithm kicked in. Now, weeks later, nearly every third post on my feed appears to be so-called ["AI slop."](#)

One recent example: a black-and-white image showing a shack in the woods with a family sitting out front, shared by a page called "History for Everyone."

At first glance, the post looks like something you might find in a history book. But upon closer inspection, the people in the image have blurred, undefined facial features, and the children's hands and feet seem to disappear into the landscape around them - hallmarks of [AI-generated images](#).

The post's caption claims the image was taken in 1910 in New Jersey at a "small shack on Forsythe's Bog, occupied by De Marco family, 10 in the family living in this one room," by National Child Labor Committee photographer Lewis Hine. Curious, I copied the full caption into Google, which pointed me to the real caption of an [entirely different photo](#) that had been published by the Library of Congress.

I plugged the Facebook image into a Google reverse image search, and the only other places it appeared online were two other, similar Facebook groups called "Past Memories" and "History Pictures."

It's impossible to say definitively how the image was created, but CNN's photo team ran it through [AI](#)-detection software - which is still in early testing - and found "substantial evidence" it had been manipulated. Hany Farid, a digital forensics expert and UC Berkeley professor who has studied [AI](#), added that the image appeared to be [AI](#)-generated and may have been created by using the caption of the real, historical image as the [AI](#) prompt, potentially to avoid copyright infringement.

The group that shared the post, "History for Everyone," is managed by a page by the same name, which was created in 2022 and previously changed its name from "Cubs" and "Chikn.Nuggit." The page did not respond to a direct message.

The History for Everyone post is illustrative of a lot of the content that's come across my feed - uncanny, bizarre, but also seemingly benign.

Other examples include a page called ["Amy Couch"](#) that also shares "historical" photos, with an apparently [AI](#)-generated profile photo that shows a woman with one giant tooth where her two front teeth should be. Or an art and history page for an "artist" called ["Kris Artist"](#) whose profile photo I traced back to a real social media influencer who told me over email: "That is definitely not my account but they are using my picture."

It's not just you. More weird spam is popping up on Facebook

When I messaged the "Kris Artist" page, I received what appeared to be an automated response: "Hi, thanks for contacting us. We've received your message and appreciate you reaching out. Please Join our Group."

After I flagged the History for Everyone post, as well as the Amy Couch and Kris Artist pages, to Meta, it removed them for violating its [spam policy](#).

Behind the **AI slop**

It's not clear exactly how much of this content exists on Facebook. But there may be lots of people seeing it. The "History for Everyone" page has more than 40,000 followers, although individual posts often receive just a handful of interactions.

Researchers from Stanford and Georgetown earlier this year tracked 120 Facebook pages that frequently posted **AI**-generated images - and found the images collectively received "hundreds of millions of engagements and exposures," according to a [paper released in March](#), which has not yet been peer-reviewed.

"The Facebook Feed ... at times shows users **AI**-generated images even when they do not follow the Pages posting those images. We suspect that **AI**-generated images appear on users' Feeds because the Facebook Feed ranking algorithm promotes content that is likely to generate engagement," researchers Renee DiResta and Josh Goldstein wrote in the paper. They added that often the users engaging with that content didn't seem to realize it was **AI**.

Experts who track this kind of online behavior say there are likely several different kinds of actors behind the Facebook spam, with varying motives.

Some just want to make money, for example through [bonus payments](#) that Facebook pays out to creators posting public content. There are dozens of YouTube videos [teaching](#) people how to get paid for posting **AI** content on Facebook - as tech news site [404 Media reported](#) earlier this month - with [some claiming](#) they make thousands of dollars each month using the tactic.

"Even in the realm of the political, the tactics of manipulators have long been previewed by those with a different motivation: making money. Spammers and scammers are often early adopters of new technologies," the Stanford researchers wrote.

On other pages, scammers use the comments as a place to hawk sham products or collect users' personal information.

In some cases, what looks like a harmless account sharing mostly random content will slip in occasional misinformation or offensive memes, as a way of evading Facebook's enforcement mechanisms. "If something looks just like a run-of-the-mill spam campaign, it might not trigger the company's top investigators ... and so it might go undetected for longer," said David Evan Harris, an **AI** researcher who previously worked on responsible **AI** at Meta.

Harris added that there is also an online market for "aged" Facebook accounts, because older accounts are more likely to appear human and evade the platform's spam filters.

"It's like a black market, basically, you can sell someone 1,000 of these accounts that are all five years or older, and then they can turn those into a scam or an influence operation," Harris said. "This is something you see in elections: Someone might make a Facebook group that's like, 'everybody loves cheeseburgers,' and the group posts images of the best cheeseburgers every day for two years, and then all of a sudden, a month before an election ... it becomes a 'vote for (former Brazilian President Jair) Bolsonaro' group."

What to do with **AI** spam?

With **AI** tools, bad actors no longer need lots of people to rapidly produce reams of fake content - the technology can do it for them.

It's not just you. More weird spam is popping up on Facebook

For Facebook to identify all of the [AI](#)-generated images getting uploaded each day without making mistakes would be challenging, "particularly at a time when this technology is moving so incredibly fast," Farid said. Even if it could, "that doesn't mean you should ban all [AI](#) generated content, right? ... It's a very subtle question on policy," he said.

Earlier this year, [Meta said](#) it would add "[AI](#) info" tags to content created by certain third-party generators that use metadata to let other sites know [AI](#) was involved. Meta also automatically labels [AI](#)-generated images created with its own tools.

However, there are still ways for users to strip out that metadata (or create [AI](#) images without it) to evade detection.

Meta may also be hampered by a smaller team dedicated to addressing fake content, after it - like [other tech giants](#) - trimmed its [trust and safety staff](#) last year, meaning it must rely more on automated moderation systems that can be gamed.

"Digitally savvy social media communities have always been one and a half steps ahead of trust and safety efforts at all platforms ... it's almost a cat and mouse game that never really ends," Harris said.

By Clare Duffy, CNN

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End of Document

Spotter's new AI-driven 'brainstorm partner' is getting creators 49% more views



Spotter's new AI-driven 'brainstorm partner' is getting creators 49% more views

Newstex Blogs

Tubefilter

September 3, 2024 Tuesday 6:31 PM EST

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Body

September 3rd, 2024 ([Tubefilter](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

Artificial intelligence is a contentious topic these days-and a trendy one, with every major tech company and former crypto/NFT brand jumping on what they see as the latest moneymaking bandwagon. We've written before about [the issues creators face with AI, including the lack of control over whether their content is scraped for use in large language models, and we've also written about a small handful of companies who are trying to make AI work for creators, with their consent.](#)

Joining that handful is Spotter, which today announced Spotter Studio, an **AI**-based tool that's meant to serve as 'a brainstorm partner, project planner, and research copilot,' the company says. Once a creator signs up for Spotter Studio, the program looks at their entire channel, and, based on that information, can do everything from cold-suggesting new video topics to drafting thumbnails.

Spotter, which was founded in 2019, used to focus on catalog licensing, where it would pay creators a lump sum for the rights to their old content. But, over the last couple of years, it noticed a changing tide in our industry: artificial intelligence wasn't going away, and creators were simultaneously becoming more interested in and more leery of **AI**. It decided to shift its business model. Paul Bakaus, Spotter's EVP of Product and Creator Tools, tells Tubefilter the company figured it could use **AI** to bolster creators' workflows, and wanted to help them 'get ahead' of the deluge of generative **AI slop** it knew would soon fill YouTube, TikTok, and other platforms.

Spotter began hiring executives from Adobe, Amazon, Google, Headspace, Linktree, and Spotify to help it build **AI** tools, and consulted YouTubeers like Colin & Samir about what creators really wanted from **AI**. Its first **AI** tool, Title Exploder, [rolled out in late 2023.](#)

Spotter Studio (which wraps Title Exploder into its suite) was also born from creator input. MrBeast, Dude Perfect, Kinigra Deon, Rebecca Zamolo, Jordan Matter, Jay Alto, Hayden Hillier-Smith, and Colin & Samir all participated in the tool's beta period.

Spotter's new AI-driven 'brainstorm partner' is getting creators 49% more views

And, Spotter says, these creators found that videos made with Spotter Studio got 49% more views in their first seven days than videos made without it. So far, videos made using Spotter Studio as part of the development process have collectively netted 844 million views.

'Spotter's mission has always been to empower Creators and provide the resources and opportunities that enable them to thrive,' Aaron DeBevoise, CEO and Founder of Spotter, said in a statement. 'As the industry evolves, so do we, continually adapting to meet the needs of Creators by working directly with them. What makes Spotter Studio so special is that it was not only designed for Creators, but with them.'

The tool starts broad. Creators begin with its Brainstorm function, where Spotter Studio generates video ideas based on their channel's content. If the creator likes an idea, they can pin it for future use. If they like a suggestion's core conceit but want to tweak something about the execution, they can ask the Studio to change that aspect. (Like, if a video idea requires winter gear but it's summer, they can say, Change this video to being filmed on the beach.) They can revise multiple ideas over and over until they've narrowed it down to something they want to make.

Then Spotter Studio offers finishing flair like title suggestions and thumbnail drafts (which Bakaus says are not meant to serve as true thumbnail art; they're purposefully kind of cartoony and lo-fi so creators still have to make their own 'nails for the upload).

While **AI** is the core of Spotter Studio, the tool also just plain offers a centralized place to plan, Dude Perfect's Coby Cotton said. 'Ideas that used to be scattered across phones, whiteboards, and sticky notes are now organized in one place, accessible to the entire DP team from ideation through post-production. Spotter Studio is our new home base,' he said.

Spotter Studio is being officially announced at VidSummit this week, but it's available now for \$49/month or \$299/year (temporary discount) to creators in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia.

Spotter is a Tubefilter partner.

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[National Novel Writing Month's AI-neutral stance criticized by bestselling authors](#)

Newstex Blogs

VentureBeat

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Length: 1234 words

Byline: Carl Franzen

Body

September 3rd, 2024 ([VentureBeat](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

Join our daily and weekly newsletters for the latest updates and exclusive content on industry-leading **AI** coverage. [Learn More](#)

[National Novel Writing Month \(NaNoWriMo\), the 25-year-old nonprofit organization that encourages anyone and everyone who has interest to draft a novel each year during the month of November, recently stirred significant debate by announcing it will accept the use of artificial intelligence \(AI\) as a tool in the writing process.](#)

The decision, rooted in the belief that opposition to **AI** can be classist and ableist, has received mixed reactions, drawing both [support and lots of criticism - including from bestselling established authors and former NaNoWriMo board members.](#)

Yesterday, the [organization published a statement on its website noting that it neither condemns nor exclusively endorses the technology. Instead, NaNoWriMo champions the freedom for writers to choose their own methods, whether they involve traditional approaches or AI tools.](#)

'NaNoWriMo does not explicitly support any specific approach to writing, nor does it explicitly condemn any approach, including the use of **AI**,' the statement reads, later adding, 'We believe that to categorically condemn **AI** would be to ignore classist and ableist issues surrounding the use of the technology, and that questions around the use of **AI** tie to questions around privilege.'

Disclaimer: VentureBeat uses **AI** tools to generate imagery, copy and other material for use in our publishing and promotion.

Why NaNoWriMo supports **AI** for use in writing in some cases

National Novel Writing Month's AI-neutral stance criticized by bestselling authors

The organization's official statement highlights the complexity of **AI** as a broad technological category, making it difficult to entirely endorse or reject. It also underscores the social implications of **AI** use, suggesting that to oppose **AI** outright ignores the realities of class and ability disparities.

According to NaNoWriMo, some writers may turn to **AI** for practical reasons, such as financial constraints or cognitive challenges that make traditional writing methods less accessible.

As NaNoWriMo's statement explains: 'Not all writers have the financial ability to hire humans to help at certain phases of their writing. For some writers, the decision to use **AI** is a practical, not an ideological, one. The financial ability to engage a human for feedback and review assumes a level of privilege that not all community members possess.'

The organization also points out that underrepresented minorities are less likely to secure traditional publishing deals, which forces many into the indie author space where upfront costs can be prohibitive. **AI** tools, in these cases, might provide essential support that enables them to pursue their writing goals.

Bestselling authors lash out

However, the endorsement of **AI** has not been without controversy. Prominent voices in the writing community have expressed their displeasure with NaNoWriMo's stance.

Urban fantasy author Daniel Jos Older, a former member of NaNoWriMo's Writers Board, announced his resignation from the board in response to the organization's pro-**AI** position.

'Never use my name in your promo again,' Older declared on social media, urging other writers to follow his lead.

Hello [@NaNoWriMo this is me DJO officially stepping down from your Writers Board and urging every writer I know to do the same. Never use my name in your promo again in fact never say my name at all and never email me again. Thanks! https://t.co/KDKZ0zVx3H- Daniel Jos Older \(@djolder\)](https://t.co/KDKZ0zVx3H)

[September 2, 2024](#)

Maureen Johnson, a #1 New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of young adult (YA) novels, also resigned from NaNoWriMo's Writers' Board of the Young Writers Program, citing concerns over how the organization might use writers' work to train **AI** systems.

To [@NaNoWriMo: please remove me from the Writers' Board of the Young Writers Program. I want nothing to do with your organization from this point forward. I would also encourage writers to beware-your work on their platform is almost certainly going to be used to train AI. https://t.co/FJo2WxXq73- Maureen Johnson \(@maureenjohnson\)](https://t.co/FJo2WxXq73)

[September 3, 2024](#)

Other authors, including [Adam Christopher and Bryan Young, criticized NaNoWriMo for what they perceive as an anti-art and anti-creativity stance, accusing the organization of promoting meaningless AI-generated content.](#)

To be clear, [@NaNoWriMo are anti-writing, anti-art, anti-creativity, anti-craft. They fully support generating 50,000 words of meaningless AI slop and uploading it to complete the challenge, and if you disagree you are the enemy. https://t.co/1vN0UFFGim- Adam Christopher \(@ghostfinder\)](https://t.co/1vN0UFFGim)

[September 2, 2024](#)

The backlash was further fueled by revelations that [NaNoWriMo's recent sponsors include companies offering AI software and writing tools, such as ProWritingAid.](#)

National Novel Writing Month's AI-neutral stance criticized by bestselling authors

ProWritingAid provides a suite of AI-powered tools designed to enhance writing, including grammar checking, sentence rephrasing, and a variety of writing reports. Its 'AI Sparks' feature assists writers in overcoming writer's block by generating text and adding sensory details or dialogue.

This sponsorship has led to suspicions and criticism from those who view the endorsement as influenced by financial incentives rather than a purely ethical stance.

NaNoWriMo also collaborates with writing software like Scrivener, which integrates AI tools like ProWritingAid to help users access AI writing and editing features within their environment. Other platforms like Dabble, Storyist, and Ninja Writers, while not inherently AI-focused, support the integration of AI tools, allowing writers to enhance their work using external AI services.

In contrast, another sponsor, Freewrite remains focused on providing distraction-free writing devices, emphasizing traditional writing processes without AI integration.

In response to the criticism, NaNoWriMo acknowledged the existence of unethical practices within the AI space but maintained that its stance is driven by a desire to support all writers, regardless of their chosen methods. The organization reiterated its commitment to providing resources and information about AI to its community, noting that events related to AI have been well-attended, indicating strong interest among participants.

As AI continues to evolve and its role in creative processes becomes more prominent, NaNoWriMo's position could serve as a bellwether for how other organizations and individuals approach the integration of AI into creative fields. For enterprise decision-makers, especially those in publishing and creative industries, NaNoWriMo's stance might offer valuable insights as they navigate the ethical and practical implications of AI in their own operations.

NaNoWriMo's position ultimately reflects a broader debate within the writing community-is AI a tool on the order of a word processor or search engine, one primarily directed by humans, or is it a morally and ethically compromised technology built from copyrighted works without permission, which critics equate with theft? For now, it seems, leading authors are coalescing around the latter position.

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['Trump is just trying to stay relevant': Inside the ex-president's AI-generated images frenzy](#)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 3, 2024 Tuesday 4:01 PM EST

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Length: 872 words

Byline: Mike Bedigan

Body

First appeared "Comrade Kamala" with a hammer and sickle. Then, a line of blonde women wearing "Swifties for [Trump](#)" merch. By the time Donald Trump himself appeared riding a lion, it was clear: fan-generated **AI** images were the [Republican candidate's latest obsession](#).

The former president has been sharing such images as far back as March 2023, with his face photoshopped onto images including a Second World War soldier, a cowboy and even the muscle-bound body of Rambo - earnestly and unironically.

Yet the frequency of Trump's sharing of such fantastical images has ramped up considerably in recent weeks. Notably, it seems, following the ascension of [Kamala Harris](#) to become the Democratic nominee and the online success of her own campaign.

June Cross, director of the Documentary Journalism Program at Columbia University, suggests one simple reason for this: Trump is just trying to stay relevant.

"In 2016, whatever Trump posted actually blew into the liberal media," Cross tells *The Independent*. "People would be reacting like 'can you believe this outrageous thing he said today?' I'm not sure if that's happening this time around, because Kamala has proven herself as adept at using social media as Trump was. She's just better at coming up with memes."

[Link to Image](#)

The Harris campaign has [quickly excelled in the online sphere](#), ever since British pop singer Charli XCX declared that "kamala is brat" - a reference to her wildly popular new album. The addition of Tim Walz, already familiar with viral videos, thanks to his daughter Hope, has only built momentum.

'Trump is just trying to stay relevant': Inside the ex-president's AI-generated images frenzy

Cross suggests that Trump's over-posting of **AI** images is, as the younger generation might say, an attempt to "clap back" at the Harris campaign in whatever way he can. "It's almost like throwing spitballs on the wall and seeing what will stick," she tells *The Independent*.

But Trump's online posting - unlike that of his political rivals - is, and always has been, much more sincere.

From his first presidential campaign in 2016, Trump has attempted to project an image of himself as a strong leader, capable of uniting America in the face of great evil. Now, thanks to **AI**, he and the Republicans have a tool that allows them to visualise the hypothetical realities they are peddling to their supporters, who seem receptive to the visual hyperbole of **AI slop** that now dominates right-wing social media platforms and accounts.

"Things like him on the lion or lying about Taylor Swift, it's aimed at trying to boost the morale of his supporters who do not get their news from anywhere else," Cross says. "And there's a whole army of people, of Trump supporters out there who get their news from social media... They don't trust any of the mainstream outlets."

pic.twitter.com/H0ExcNXBdl

- Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump)

[August 18, 2024](#)

Social commentator and activist Patrick Jones - known online as Mr Jones X - agrees. The integration of **AI** images into Trump's campaign is about strengthening his support base, not expanding it, he says.

"He understands that these visual images have the ability to sway a specific demographic of people, because if they see a thing, especially if it's coming from him on X or Truth Social, they're going to believe it," Jones tells *The Independent*.

The Trump campaign is already in possession of some of the most powerful political imagery of the past decade: the president's mugshot, and defiant, fist-raised stance following the attempt on his life being just two. But in the wake of Joe Biden stepping down and Harris emerging as the Democratic party's presidential candidate, this seems to have been forgotten.

"It was absolute panic, because now none of those talking points were going to work any longer. The whole framework of their campaign - essentially, they had to throw it out," Jones says. The momentum of the Harris-Walz campaign is "hard to combat", he adds. "So now you have to come up with the most absurd talking points, the most absurd arguments."

The former president's recent fixation on **AI**-generated promotions comes at a time in which serious concerns are being raised in Congress about the use of such content in the upcoming election - though there are currently few if any federal laws or regulations.

[Link to Image](#)

In March, Democratic senator Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, introduced two bills to address voter-facing **AI**-generation election content; one to ban deep-fakes of candidates, and the other to require disclosures on **AI**-manipulated political ads.

Republicans on the Senate Rules Committee voted against both, but a Democratic majority advanced the bills out of committee in May. They then failed a unanimous consent vote on the Senate floor in July and are still waiting for another go at a full Senate vote. But these images can have a bigger impact than a funny social media post.

"It's definitely potentially dangerous," says Cross. "What they did in 2016 was actually dissuade people from going to the polls. And you've got states where the margins are anywhere from 7,000 to 20,000 votes.

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Bigger picture of Trump's weird AI images obsession The Republican party and its presidential nominee now have a tool that allows them to visualise the hypothet....



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The Independent - Daily Edition

September 2, 2024 Monday

First Edition

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

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Byline: MIKE BEDIGAN

Body

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Inside Trump's weird new obsession with AI-generated images

Irish Independent

September 2, 2024 Monday

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Body

Republicans using new tech to create 'visual hyperbole' to peddle to their supporters online

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Inside Trump's weird new obsession with AI-generated images

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Graphic

Donald Trump dances onstage with Moms for Liberty co-founder Tiffany Justice at an event in Washington on Friday night. Photo: ReutersLeft, a fake AI-generated of Kamala Harris holding a communist rally; above, an AI image saying Taylor Swift is backing Trump; and, below, an AI image of Trump riding a lion. Images: Twitter

Load-Date: September 2, 2024

End of Document

'Trump is just trying to stay relevant': Inside the ex-president's AI-generated images frenzy



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The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 1, 2024 Sunday 12:30 PM GMT

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:3

Length: 873 words

Byline: Mike Bedigan

Highlight: The Republican party and its presidential nominee now have a tool that allows them to visualise the hypothetical realities that they are peddling to their supporters, who are receptive to such visual hyperbole – so-called '**AI slop**', writes Mike Bedigan

Body

First appeared "Comrade Kamala" with a hammer and sickle. Then, a line of blonde women wearing "Swifties for [Trump](#)" merch. By the time Donald Trump himself appeared riding a lion, it was clear: fan-generated **AI** images were the [Republican candidate's latest obsession](#).

The former president has been sharing such images as far back as March 2023, with his face photoshopped onto images including a Second World War soldier, a cowboy and even the muscle-bound body of Rambo – earnestly and unironically.

Yet the frequency of Trump's sharing of such fantastical images has ramped up considerably in recent weeks. Notably, it seems, following the ascension of [Kamala Harris](#) to become the Democratic nominee and the online success of her own campaign.

June Cross, director of the Documentary Journalism Program at Columbia University, suggests one simple reason for this: Trump is just trying to stay relevant.

"In 2016, whatever Trump posted actually blew into the liberal media," Cross tells The Independent. "People would be reacting like 'can you believe this outrageous thing he said today?' I'm not sure if that's happening this time around, because Kamala has proven herself as adept at using social media as Trump was. She's just better at coming up with memes."

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pic.twitter.com/hlExcNXBdI

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [August 18, 2024](#)

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Load-Date: September 3, 2024

End of Document



[Inside Trump's weird new obsession with AI-generated images](#)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 1, 2024 Sunday 12:30 PM EST

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Length: 870 words

Byline: Mike Bedigan

Body

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The Prompt: North Korean Operatives Are Using AI To Get Remote IT Jobs

Forbes.com

August 27, 2024 Tuesday

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Length: 1209 words

Byline: Rashi Shrivastava, Forbes Staff

Highlight: Plus: Major **AI** regulation up for a vote in California.

Body

The Prompt is a weekly rundown of **AI s buzziest startups, biggest breakthroughs, and business deals. To get it in your inbox, .**

Welcome back to The Prompt.

<figure>

<figcaption>

With the arrival of **AI**, some businesses have been overwhelmed with applications from suspected North Korean operatives.

Getty

</figcaption></figure>

AI tools are helping North Koreans covertly apply for thousands of remote IT jobs in the US,reported. Companies large and small are being flooded with job applications from thousands of suspected North Korean operatives, who earn hundreds of millions of dollars and send the money back to the regime, where the U.S. government believes it s used to fund its weapons of mass destruction program. With the help of **AI** tools, these workers are able to run multiple job profiles and apply for hundreds of jobs at once.

Now let s get into the headlines.

REGULATION

This week,**California legislators will vote on** , a controversial bill that seeks to **regulate the most advanced and powerful **AI** models**. If passed, the bill would require the developers of **AI** models whose training either cost more than \$100 million, or required a specified amount of computing power, to **implement safeguards**and allow**third-party audits** of safety practices.

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It also requires AI companies to outline methods for shutting down the AI model and effectively **implement a kill switch** for the technology if needed. The legislation would allow the state attorney general to **take action against a developer** if its AI model causes severe harm such as mass casualties or more than \$500 million in damages.

Silicon Valley leaders are **deeply on their positions** regarding the bill: xAI and Tesla founder Elon Musk and Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei have come out in support of the bill, while leaders from OpenAI, Meta and Google have voiced concerns that the bill would stifle innovation.

TALENT RESHUFFLE

Three of the five cofounders of French AI startup H have left the company after **operational and business disagreements**, according to. The departure comes just a few months after the startup raised **awhopping seed round** from billionaires like Eric Schmidt and Bernard Arnault to build AI agents for multi-step tasks.

AI/ DEAL OF THE WEEK

Coding automation startup Cursor AI raised **\$60 million in Series A funding at a \$400 million valuation**, CEO Michael Truell told. The company's AI tools are popular among developers at leading AI startups like OpenAI and Midjourney, where they are **used to write, edit and predict parts of code**. But Cursor isn't short on competition: the market is flooded with similar AI coding assistants like Codeium, which launched an engine capable of digesting 100 million lines of code, and Cognition Labs, which is valued at \$2 billion and created an AI software engineer called Devin. Tech giants are also developing their own AI programming tools in-house; **Amazon CEO Andy Jassy** said that its AI assistant, called Q, has helped save the company **\$260 million and yearsworth** of time in terms of software development.

DEEP DIVE

The idea of America is big business on Facebook. The social network has hosted more than a hundred pages that have **adopted American patriotism as a theme**, boasting names like Proud American, Proud To Be An American, American Story, and We Are America.

But a large swath of those pages—despite their names **aren't American at all**. Instead, they're run by foreign click farmers, many of whom are based in Macedonia, who use AI to **pump out a near-endless ocean of clickbaity soup**. Posts sharing prayers for American soldiers, rewritten tweets, memes and pictures of old Hollywood pin-up girls link out to **AI-generated articles, against which the click farmers can sell advertising**.

Headlines like "A Father's Heroism: The Tragic Story of Phil Dellegrazie And His Son Anthony" tease short, uninformative articles on websites plastered with often sexual advertisements. The pages promoting them fake Americanness because they get paid every time someone clicks on one of their links, and in the advertising world, American clicks are some of the most valuable.

A **Forbes** review identified 67 Facebook pages—now taken down—that identified themselves as champions of American news, culture or identity, but were actually based overseas. As of August 20, they had **more than 9 million followers combined**—more than the Facebook pages of the Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post. Thirty-three of them were run from **Macedonia**, with others spread out across 23 different countries, including Canada, France, Morocco, Venezuela and Vietnam.

Click farmers, especially those from Macedonia, have a long history on Facebook. During the 2016 presidential election, teenagers in the small Eastern European country pushed fake news to millions of Americans on Facebook, making tens of thousands of dollars in ad revenue. In 2019, similar Eastern European pages ran the same playbook this time, reaching nearly half of all Americans on the platform.

Now, AI has given those same operations the capacity to produce **near-infinite volumes of low-quality (or outright fake) news**—and in at least some cases, this AI-produced **slop** is breaking through. The pages have begun using **generic AI-generated imagery** (bald eagles, stars and stripes, camo soldiers and the occasional

The Prompt: North Korean Operatives Are Using AI To Get Remote IT Jobs

Statue of Liberty) to appeal to American Facebook users and in at least some cases, it's working. One post made last week by the Canada-based page American Patriots featured an **AI-generated photo of an American soldier and his children**, and received more than 100,000 likes and 35,000 comments. The American Patriots page, like most of the others, directed people from Facebook to click farms featuring low-quality articles.

Read the full story on Forbes.

WEEKLY DEMO

Do you want to practice a tough workplace conversation or get tips on how to negotiate a raise? Companies are increasingly deploying **AI-powered career coaches** as an alternative to **expensive human counselors** that can cost up to \$240 an hour, reported. But people who have interacted with these **AI-based** career counselors note that these chatbots **often lack nuance and can sometimes offer confusing advice**. I'm already confused about my career. **AI** [only] throws me in a bigger loop, one third-year law student said.

AI INDEX

Two years ago, the Biden administration passed the CHIPS Act to incentivize the development of semiconductors and chips within the United States, as the country battled with China on developing **AI** models. But **red tape and a grueling application process** has largely kept funds out of reach from smaller firms that need it most, reported.

Less than 7%

Applicants that received funding from the 380 firms that submitted applications.

9 out of 23

Semiconductor manufacturers who were approved for the funding were smaller companies.

\$4 billion out of \$134 billion

Amount of grants and loans awarded to smaller companies; the rest went to chip giants like Intel, TSMC and Samsung.

MODEL BEHAVIOR

American rapper and singer Will.i.am is launching an **AI-powered radio station called Raidio.FYI**, which will allow listeners to listen to songs and news and ask questions to the host through a chatbot app built on OpenAI's large language models, according to The Sunday Times. The rapper is reportedly an investor in OpenAI and Anthropic.

Load-Date: August 28, 2024



The Foreign Pro-Trump Fake News Industry Has Pivoted To American Patriotism

Forbes.com

August 26, 2024 Monday

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Length: 1905 words

Byline: Emily Baker-White, Forbes Staff

Highlight: It s been more than eight years since content farms overseas started American fake news pages on Facebook. Their business, now fueled by AI, is still going strong.

Body

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The idea of America is big business on Facebook. The social network has hosted more than a hundred pages that have adopted American patriotism as a theme, boasting names like Proud American, Proud To Be An American, American Story, and We Are America.

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<figure>

<figcaption>

Pages like We Are America, American Patriots and USA Army Is Love post a mix of real and **AI**-generated photography and memes.

Facebook

</figcaption></figure>

Forbes fed three of the American Patriots articles through an **AI** text detector called GPT-Zero, which found that they were 79%, 85%, and 100% likely to have been generated by **AI**. The detector also found that stories linked from We Love America, a page from Spain, and American Story, a Macedonian page, had a 100% likelihood of being generated by **AI**. **(Disclosure: In a previous life, I held content policy positions at Facebook and Spotify.)**

Every platform has incentives and they provide a window into what is at the heart of Facebook, what makes it tick," said Jeff Allen, co-founder of the Integrity Institute and a former Facebook data scientist who tracked networks of spammy page administrators from the inside. To him, click farmers are a great magnifying glass into the more reptilian parts of our brain.

Meta spokesperson Margarita Franklin told **Forbes** that all 67 pages violated Meta's rules on inauthentic behavior, because they misrepresented where they were based; all were taken down. It's not necessarily a violation of Meta's rules to make a page about one country while based in another, but the pages cross a line when they deceive people about where they're from. Franklin said the pages had only been active for a little more than a week when **Forbes** flagged them.

Franklin also said that while **AI** does make content generation easier for spammers and scammers, their primary challenge has always been getting eyeballs on their pages, whether they're made with **AI** or not. A recent Meta Threat Report found that generative **AI** has provide[d] only incremental productivity and content-generation gains to threat actors, because the cost of creating low-quality clickbait articles has always been pretty low.

When Macedonian content farms first became big on Facebook in 2016, they leaned hard into hyper-partisan rage bait focused on divisive issues like immigration, trans rights, race and policing. The theory was simple write about what people were most likely to engage with. And at the time, posts about those issues often topped the charts of Facebook engagement.

But Facebook's algorithm has shifted away from politics in the eight years since then. The company began aggressively demoting political posts after the January 6, 2021 capitol riots, which were organized in part on Meta platforms.

Some of the American patriotic pages still featured political topics, with recent posts on topics including critical race theory and trans rights. In the aggregate, though, the pages didn't focus on politics. More often, they featured formulaic tabloid stories, like tales of cheating spouses (You won't believe what he did next!) or disrespected blue collar workers who get revenge on the elitists who snubbed them. Oddly, ever-present across the pages were memes featuring the television personality and America's Got Talent judge Simon Cowell. Along with changing their content to echo the Facebook algorithm's shift away from politics, the pages also showed other telltale signs of

The Foreign Pro-Trump Fake News Industry Has Pivoted To American Patriotism

adapting to the platform's ever-changing rules and incentives. For instance, Facebook has reduced the reach of spammy links but prioritizes a page admin's comments on their own posts; as a result, these pages often posted a meme or other image that summarizes the gist of an article, and then posted the link as a comment.

<figure>

<figcaption>

Patriotic Warriors, a Facebook page that had 141,000 followers before it was taken down, is run out of Macedonia.

Facebook

</figcaption></figure>

Some of the pages also used other engagement-juicing tricks that have long been popular. One page based in Kosovo, called Animals News America, featured clickbait posts similar (and in some cases, identical) to those on other, non-animal-themed pages. But it also posted a regular stream of kittens and puppies, using a strategy previously employed by notorious misinformation spreaders like the COVID-denying doctor Joseph Mercola and NTD News, a Falun Gong-affiliated sister brand of the Epoch Times.

After **Forbes** reached out for comment, Meta removed every page.

Even if these pages weren't intentionally being used to shape people's political views, click-farmers will sometimes shift their pages into deliberate geopolitical influence operations, Allen said. While still at Facebook, he observed one Thailand-based operation that targeted pages about politics to audiences in Myanmar. They would "pop in and out of being guns for hire for political campaigns," he said. "But when it wasn't political campaign season, they'd run the exact same operations, just making the money themselves."

That makes these pages less innocuous than they might seem. I bet there are plenty of foreign influence operations that would like to buy these Pages when the time is right. So, there are times when click farms can become much more nefarious," Allen said. After the original Macedonian click farmers were exposed, Facebook launched a feature to enable users to find out which country a page is run from, if it has at least 5,000 followers or has run political ads. But the country of a page administrator's origins is often hidden in an obscure panel called Page Transparency, and comments on the foreign America-themed pages' posts suggest that many people engaging with those posts did not know that the pages are run by foreigners.

The America-themed pages themselves were also deliberately misleading. One post made last week by a page called America Today reads: "Not another cent to nations that disrespect our flag and values!" The page was managed from Macedonia.

Franklin noted that in certain cases, Meta now displays the location of certain pages' page managers directly in the Facebook News Feed.

Accounts that pretend to be American when they're not may be a widespread issue on social media. Facebook, to its credit, is the only major social media platform that reveals the country from which its large pages are managed. Other platforms, including YouTube and TikTok, allow users to self-declare a location if they want to, making it harder to detect accounts that are pretending to be American when they're not. The incentives, however, are the same. Parveen Kumar Shah, who makes his living advising people about how to build audiences on YouTube and Instagram through his channel TubeSensei, recently suggested other page creators seeking to build an audience should pretend to be American. Why? You'll make more money that way, he advised.

AI makes that even easier. In an interview, he told **Forbes** that now, if you don't want to show your face, everything can be done through **AI**. On YouTube, Shah showed his followers how to make masculinity-themed pages for American teens with titles like Far From Weak and Sigma Male. He told **Forbes**: Targeting that type of audience is very easy because a teenager's brain is very easy to mold.

The Foreign Pro-Trump Fake News Industry Has Pivoted To American Patriotism

There are many videos on YouTube that explain how to hide or spoof your country of residence on the platform, to make it look like your channel is based in another part of the world. For Shah, this is a simple economic calculus: YouTube pays channel managers based on the ads that run on their channel, and advertisers spend far more in Western markets than they do in India. On the TubeSensei channel, he explained: Our channel is going to be for a U.S. audience, and as soon as they come to know that this is an Indian channel, or there is an Indian creator behind it, they stop watching the channel.

YouTube did not respond to a request for comment.

Allen, the former Facebook data scientist, characterized engagement farming as a problem for platforms to fix — one that if they don't address, regulators might eventually penalize them for. He compared the prevalence of inauthentic pages to defective tires on a car: "Your tires have been popping on the highways for the past ten years. At a certain point, there's going to be some regulatory teeth."

As long as the click farmers' crimes don't go beyond the proliferation of stale, low-quality memes, though, Allen doesn't think removing pages is the solution. Instead, he said, Facebook should move away from an algorithm that incentivizes people to post sensationalist slop in the first place.

"If a click farmer tries to farm on your platform, but doesn't get any clicks — does he do any farming?"

Rashi Shrivastava contributed reporting.

MORE FROM FORBES

Load-Date: August 27, 2024

End of Document



[How did Donald Trump end up posting Taylor Swift deepfakes?](#)

The Guardian (London)

August 24, 2024 Saturday 5:00 PM GMT

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theguardian

Section: TECHNOLOGY; Version:3

Length: 1114 words

Byline: Nick Robins-Early

Highlight: AI images posted to Truth Social bore the watermark of a tiny Texas non-profit looking to bankroll X users

Body

When [Donald Trump](#) shared a [slew of AI-generated images](#) this week that falsely depicted [Taylor Swift](#) and her fans endorsing his campaign for president, the former US president was amplifying the work of a murky non-profit with aspirations to bankroll rightwing media influencers and a history of spreading misinformation.

Several of the images Trump posted on his Truth Social platform, which showed digitally rendered young women in "Swifties for Trump" T-shirts, were the products of the John Milton Freedom Foundation. Launched last year, the Texas-based non-profit organization frames itself as a press freedom group with the goal of "empowering independent journalists" and "fortifying the bedrock of democracy".

The group's day-to-day operations appear to revolve around sharing engagement bait on X and seeking millions from donors for a "fellowship program" chaired by a high school sophomore that would award \$100,000 to Twitter personalities such as Glenn Greenwald, Andy Ngo and Lara Logan, according to a review of the group's tax records, investor documents and social media output. The John Milton Freedom Foundation did not respond to a request for comment to a set of questions about its operations and fellowship program.

After months of retweeting conservative media influencers and echoing [Elon Musk](#)'s claims that freedom of speech is under attack from leftwing forces, one of the organization's messages found its way to Trump and then his millions of supporters.

Trump distanced himself from the images in an interview with Fox Business on Wednesday, saying: "I don't know anything about them other than someone else generated them. I didn't generate them."

Disinformation researchers have long warned that [generative AI](#) has the ability to lower the bar for creating misleading content and threaten information around elections. After Musk's xAI company released its largely

How did Donald Trump end up posting Taylor Swift deepfakes?

unregulated Grok image generator last week, there has been a surge of [AI](#) content that has included depictions of Trump, Kamala Harris and other political figures. The Milton Freedom Foundation is one of many small groups flooding social media with so-called [AI slop](#).

A niche non-profit's [AI slop](#) makes its way to Trump

During the spike in [AI](#) images on X, the conservative @amuse account [posted the images](#) of [AI](#)-generated Swift fans to more than 300,000 followers. On the text of the post, which was labeled “satire”, was a watermark that stated it was “sponsored by the John Milton Freedom Foundation”. Trump posted a screenshot of @amuse’s tweet on Truth Social.

The @amuse account has considerable reach itself, with about 390,000 followers on X and dozens of daily posts. Running @amuse appears to be Alexander Muse, listed as a consultant in the investor prospectus of the Milton Foundation, who also writes a rightwing commentary Substack that includes posts exploring election conspiracy theories. The @amuse account has numerous connections with Muse. The X account is connected to a Substack posting the same articles that Muse publishes on his LinkedIn page, which also has the username “amuse”, reflecting his first initial and last name. Muse’s book on how to secure startup funding, which includes examples of him asking [ChatGPT](#) to pretend it’s Musk and offer business advice, lists that same Substack account as its publisher.

Prominent accounts including Musk have shared and replied to @amuse’s posts, which recently have included [AI](#) depictions of Trump fighting Darth Vader and sexualized imagery of Harris. Its banner picture is currently an [AI](#)-generated photo of Trump surrounded by women in “Swifties” shirts. The account posts misleading, pro-Trump headlines such as claiming Harris turned hundreds of thousands of children over to human traffickers as “border czar”. The headlines, like the [AI](#)-generated Swifties for Trump images, come with the watermark “sponsored by the John Milton Freedom Foundation”.

The John Milton Freedom Foundation, named after the 17th-century British poet and essayist, has a small online footprint: a website, an investor prospectus and an X account with fewer than 500 followers. The team behind it, according to its own documents, consists of five people based in the Dallas-Fort Worth area with varying degrees of experience in Republican politics. Muse’s daughter, described as a 10th grade honor student on the non-profit’s site, serves as the Milton Foundation’s “fellowship chair”.

The foundation’s stated goal is to raise \$2m from major donors to award \$100,000 grants to a list of “fellows” made up of rightwing media influencers. These include people like the former CBS journalist turned far-right star Lara Logan, who was [cut from Newsmax](#) in recent years for going on a QAnon-inspired rant that claimed world leaders drink children’s blood, as well as the author of an anti-trans children’s book. The organization believes that this money would allow these already established influencers to “increase their reach by more than 10x in less than a year”, according to its investor prospectus.

While only one of the fellows listed on the foundation’s site mentions the organization on their X profiles and none follow its account, the @amuse account has a prominent link to the group’s community page and the foundation often engages with its posts.

It is not clear that the foundation has any money to give and if all the media influencers listed as its 2024 fellowship class know about the organization. One Texas-based account that posts anti-vaccine content lists itself as a “JMFF” fellow in their bio, but none of the others advertise any connection. The most recent tax records for the Freedom Foundation place it in the category of non-profits whose gross receipts, or total funds received from all sources, range from \$0 to \$50,000 – far below the millions it is seeking.

The organization’s board includes its chair, Brad Merritt, who is touted as an experienced Republican organizer with claims to have raised \$300m for various non-profits; its director, Shiree Sanchez, who served as assistant director of the Republican party of Texas between 1985 and 1986; and Mark Karaffa, a retired healthcare industry executive.

How did Donald Trump end up posting Taylor Swift deepfakes?

Muse's experience in digital media appears to be far more extensive than the non-profit's other members. In addition to his blog, he claims to have worked with James O'Keefe, the former CEO of the rightwing organization [Project Veritas](#), who was known for hidden camera stings until [he was ousted last year](#) over allegations of misplaced funds. Muse, who is described in the prospectus as a "serial entrepreneur", also blogs about how to make money from generative **AI**.

Load-Date: August 26, 2024

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A banned promoter of cancer 'cures' was hijacked by genAI. Now the internet is 'flooded with garbage'



A banned promoter of cancer 'cures' was hijacked by genAI. Now the internet is 'flooded with garbage'

The Guardian (London)

August 24, 2024 Saturday 9:00 PM GMT

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theguardian

Section: AUSTRALIA NEWS; Version:2

Length: 1582 words

Byline: Ariel Bogle

Highlight: Australian Barbara O'Neill's 'natural self-healing' remedies found a certain audience through her own efforts. But her image has run wild thanks to unaffiliated groups exploiting her name on social media Follow our Australia news live blog for latest updates Get our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast

Body

Five years ago, Barbara O'Neill was permanently banned from providing any health services in New South Wales or other Australian states.

O'Neill, whose website describes her as "an international speaker on natural healing", was [found by the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission \(HCCC\)](#) in 2019 to have given highly risky health advice to vulnerable people, including the use of bicarbonate soda as a cancer treatment.

Since then her views have found a much larger audience overseas and online, supported by elements of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church and media networks in the US. So far this year O'Neill has spoken in the US, the UK and Ireland and advertised retreats in Thailand for thousands of dollars. A Facebook page managed in her name is promoting plans for O'Neill to tour Australia later this year, despite the commission's ruling.

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But O'Neill's story reveals not only the limits of a state health regulator. Beyond her own promotional efforts, a vast scam economy has grown up that profits from her notoriety without her authorisation.

Clips of O'Neill's health teachings, often dating as far back as 2012, now feed a voracious economy of unaffiliated Facebook pages and groups – more than 180 at one point – that are branded with her name and share lecture clips and recipes but are outside the control of O'Neill. Many are controlled by accounts based in Morocco, but attempts to contact administrators went unanswered.

A banned promoter of cancer ‘cures’ was hijacked by genAI. Now the internet is ‘flooded with garbage’

Old clips of O’Neill are being used to sell herbal teas, Celtic salt and castor oil on TikTok, [as Vox found](#). **AI**-generated content of O’Neill on the app now goes even further, making up entirely new claims about her and her health advice.

Accounts on the app share generative **AI** images that falsely claim she “disappeared” after revealing that a certain mineral that will help people live for 100 years, or that show O’Neill being “arrested” for sharing apparent methods of natural healing such as black seed oil. The videos typically link to online stores or even Amazon where, naturally, the product referred to is for sale. Questions to account owners went unanswered.

It’s part of an emerging online ecosystem in which would-be digital creators in search of easy money follow trending topics such as O’Neill’s health claims, and use generative **AI** to create eye-catching and often bizarre images on social media – often sending viewers to online stores.

Jason Koebler, cofounder of 404 Media, has explored the [“AI slop” economy](#) on Facebook. He suggests creators around the world are essentially “penetration testing” social media platforms to circumvent moderation policies and make money in new ways, building off content they know will capture attention. So-called “wellness secrets” fit the bill.

“That’s been the biggest effect of the generative **AI** boom,” he says. “The entire internet and social media platforms have been flooded with garbage.”

‘Genuine’ O’Neill content finds an audience

For years, O’Neill and her husband, Michael O’Neill – the founder of the Informed Medical Options party (now the Heart party), which opposes water fluoridation and [“No jab, no pay” immunisation requirements](#) – worked at the Misty Mountain health retreat in northern New South Wales.

She crisscrossed Australia giving health lectures, often in regional cities and outer suburbs such as Dandenong, SDA publications from the 2010s show. “Do you want better health?”, one ad from 2012 asked, indicating O’Neill would discuss high blood pressure and “overcoming depression”.

After a series of complaints in 2018 and 2019, the HCCC investigated some of her claims. [The commission found](#) that among her many claims was that cancer was caused by fungus and that it could be treated by “sodium bicarbonate wraps”.

Her comments about infant nutrition, antibiotics for pregnant women and vaccinations were also not based on evidence, the HCCC found, and she had “limited qualifications in the area of nutrition and dietetics”.

“Mrs O’Neill does not recognise that she is misleading vulnerable people (including mothers and cancer sufferers) by providing very selective information,” it concluded, and banned her permanently from providing any health services. The ban is enforceable in New South Wales, the ACT, Queensland and Victoria.

Misty Mountain [lost its charity status](#) in 2021. Yet despite the restrictions she faces in Australia, O’Neill maintains a rigorous international touring schedule. In May, she hosted an eight-day retreat in Phuket, Thailand that was advertised as costing between US\$2,979.80 (about A\$4,500) and US\$7,070.90.

A June event about childhood vaccinations run by an Australian anti-vaccine group advertised a “bonus zoom live with Barbara O’Neill” for about \$180.

“I believe it is our role to get this message out to as many as possible,” O’Neill said in a recent online interview. “The ban has actually freed me. It freed me to go places I don’t think I ever would have gone.”

Seventh-day Adventist networks have helped O’Neill continue to share her message. She has spoken at retreats and conferences organised by SDA institutes and colleges, though not all are affiliated with official church leadership.

A banned promoter of cancer 'cures' was hijacked by genAI. Now the internet is 'flooded with garbage'

A flyer for a multi-day event in September 2023 organised by the Mountaintop SDA church in Maryland, seen by Guardian Australia, said O'Neill would lecture on topics including "Cancer: Causes and Treatments" and "Safeguarding Against Depression".

She has [featured prominently](#) on media published by Amazing Discoveries, a channel that broadcasts messages on "health, creation-evolution, media, current events, Bible prophecy, history, and Christian living".

"I do believe that Amazing Discoveries has certainly contributed to Barbara's fame but we are definitely not solely responsible," the executive director at Amazing Discoveries, Wendy Goubej, says. "The recent TikTok videos are I think what really catapulted her to prominence. It's sad to see that there are people who are misquoting her and misusing her information for personal gain."

The US General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists did not respond to a request for comment. A spokesperson for the church in Australia said O'Neill was not an employee and that the church had no involvement in her speaking engagements.

"In matters concerning health, the Seventh-day Adventist Church advises people to seek information and guidance from qualified and accredited healthcare professionals," they said.

Fake posts take up the message

But publicity genuinely affiliated with O'Neill is dwarfed by the avalanche of scam posts on almost every major social media platform. Even as videos are taken down, new accounts and claims emerge.

In July, a Facebook ad used faked Channel Nine news footage to claim that O'Neill, an "Australian health coach", had revealed a medicine that would heal "joint diseases" in three weeks. The page's operator, with a Democratic Republic of Congo phone number, said over WhatsApp they had no idea where the video came from and they believed their page had been hacked.

Other Facebook ads claim she has recommended everything from particular herbal salves to supplements that help men with impotence. An ad linked to a Dubai pharmacy claims she is "considered one of the best urologists in the world".

One particularly unconvincing video merges faked video and audio of the former Fox News personality Tucker Carlson and O'Neill to promote eyedrops.

In late 2023, O'Neill's team shared a video on her verified Instagram account addressing the deluge of fakes online. The post said that while she was grateful for fan pages that "faithfully share" her teachings, "it is important to clear up some misconceptions as people have been impersonating Barbara on social media and selling consultations and 'cures'."

In August, her Facebook page again posted about the scams. "So many people still being tricked," it read. "We are tagged in stories of people excited about purchasing fake items or products sold off fake AI videos."

Tara Kirk Sell, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, says the phenomenon around O'Neill "shows the limit of regulatory powers".

"I think that a lot of people are looking for easy solutions in this space: 'if only we could take all this content off social media ... the problem would be solved'.

"Well, it's not that easy, right?"

A Meta spokesperson said the company was reviewing the Facebook ads flagged by Guardian Australia. "Meta adopts a multi-faceted approach to tackle scams," he said. "We use both technology, such as new machine learning techniques, and specially trained reviewers to identify and action content and accounts that violate our policies."

A banned promoter of cancer 'cures' was hijacked by genAI. Now the internet is 'flooded with garbage'

A TikTok spokesperson said the platform did not allow impersonation accounts "or attempts to defraud or scam members", and removed an account sharing generative **AI** images of O'Neill identified by the Guardian. "In Australia, between January and March 2024, we removed over 73,000 videos for violating our Frauds and Scams Policy, with 98% of these taken down proactively before anyone reported them," they said.

An HCCC spokesperson said it could not comment on specific cases or speculate on potential complaints. "The global spread of health misinformation through social media is an ongoing concern for the commission," he said.

O'Neill did not respond to requests for comment.

Load-Date: August 25, 2024

End of Document



[Donald Trump, AI Artist](#)

Atlantic Online

August 23, 2024 Friday

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The Atlantic

Length: 622 words

Byline: Damon Beres

Body

This is Atlantic Intelligence, a newsletter in which our writers help you wrap your mind around artificial intelligence and a new machine age. [Sign up here.](#)

The era of generative-**AI** propaganda is upon us. In the past week, Donald Trump has published fabricated images on his social-media accounts showing Kamala Harris speaking to a crowd of uniformed communists under the hammer and sickle, Taylor Swift in an Uncle Sam outfit, and young women in "Swifties for Trump" T-shirts. Other far-right influencers have published their own **AI slop** depicting Harris in degrading sexual contexts or glorifying Trump.

As my colleague [Charlie Warzel writes for The Atlantic](#), "Although no one ideology has a monopoly on **AI** art, the high-resolution, low-budget look of generative-**AI** images appears to be fusing with the meme-loving aesthetic of the MAGA movement. At least in the fever swamps of social media, **AI** art is becoming MAGA-coded."

Such images are, in effect, an evolution of the [memes](#) that have long fueled the far right. But now even elementary Photoshop skills are no longer required: Simply plug a prompt into an image generator and within seconds, you'll have a reasonably lifelike JPEG for your posting pleasure.

"That these tools should end up as the medium of choice for Trump's political movement makes sense," Charlie writes. "It stands to reason that a politician who, [for many years](#), has spun an unending series of lies into a patchwork alternate reality would gravitate toward a technology that allows one to, with a brief prompt, rewrite history so that it flatters him."

The MAGA Aesthetic Is **AI Slop**

By Charlie Warzel

Taylor Swift fans are not endorsing Donald Trump en masse. Kamala Harris did not give a speech at the Democratic National Convention to a sea of communists while standing in front of the hammer and sickle. Hillary Clinton was not recently seen walking around Chicago in a MAGA hat. But images of all these things exist.

In recent weeks, far-right corners of social media have been clogged with such depictions, created with generative-**AI** tools

This **AI slop** doesn't just exist in a vacuum of a particular social network: It leaves an ecological footprint of sorts on the web. The images are created, copied, shared, and embedded into websites; they are indexed into search engines. It's possible that, later on, [AI-art tools will train on these distorted depictions](#), creating warped, digitally inbred representations of historical figures. The very existence of so much quickly produced fake imagery adds a layer of unreality to the internet.

[Read the full article.](#)

What to Read Next

- [Silicon Valley is coming out in force against an AI-safety bill](#): This week, my colleague Caroline Mimbs Nyce spoke with California State Senator Scott Wiener, whose attempts to impose regulations on advanced **AI** models have been met with severe pushback-not just from tech companies, but from other Democrats, including Nancy Pelosi. "The opposition claims that the bill is focused on ~science-fiction risks," Wiener said. "They're trying to say that anyone who supports this bill is a doomer and is crazy. This bill is not about the Terminator risk. This bill is about huge harms that are quite tangible."

P.S.

Speaking of science fiction, I'm off to see Alien: Romulus tonight. [Writing for The Atlantic](#) about this film and the greater franchise to which it belongs, the journalist Fran Hoepfner noted, "The Alien films have always touched on heady, pessimistic visions of a future overrun by capitalism and genetic experimentation, but they're also movies about a human beating a monster-shooting it, setting it on fire, throwing it out of an air-locked door into the void of space." Sounds like a good Friday night to me.

- Damon

Load-Date: August 24, 2024



[The MAGA Aesthetic Is AI Slop](#)

Atlantic Online

August 21, 2024 Wednesday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1298 words

Byline: Charlie Warzel

Body

Taylor Swift fans are not endorsing Donald Trump en masse. Kamala Harris did not give a speech at the Democratic National Convention to a sea of communists while standing in front of the hammer and sickle. Hillary Clinton was not recently seen walking around Chicago in a MAGA hat. But images of all these things exist.

In recent weeks, far-right corners of social media have been clogged with such depictions, created with generative-**AI** tools. You can spot them right away, as they bear the technology's distinct [image style](#): not-quite-but-almost photorealistic, frequently [outrageous](#), not so dissimilar from a tabloid [illustration](#). Donald Trump-or at least whoever controls his social-media accounts-posted the **AI**-generated photo of Harris with the hammer and sickle, as well as a series of fake images depicting Taylor Swift dressed as Uncle Sam and young women marching in Swifties for Trump shirts. (This after he [falsely claimed](#) that Harris had posted an image that had been "A.I.'d"-a tidy bit of projection.)

[\[Read: Why does AI art look like that?\]](#)

Trump himself has been the subject of generative-**AI** art and has shared depictions of himself [going back](#) to March 2023. He's often dressed up as a gun-toting cowboy or in World War II fatigues, storming a beach. Yet these are anodyne compared with much of the material created and shared by far-right influencers and shitposters. There are plenty of mocking or degrading images of Harris and other female Democratic politicians, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. On X, one post that included a fake [image](#) in which Harris is implied to be a sex worker has been [viewed](#) more than 3.5 million times; on Facebook, that same post has been shared more than 87,000 times. One pro-Trump, Elon-Musk-fanboy account recently shared a suggestive image depicting a scantily clad Harris surrounded by multiple clones of Donald Trump; it's been viewed 1.6 million times. There are images and videos of Harris and Trump holding hands on a beach and Harris wearing a crown that reads Inflation Queen. On the first night of the DNC, MAGA influencers such as Catturd2 and Jack Posobiec supplemented their rage tweets about Democrats with stylized **AI** images of [Tim Walz](#) and Joe Biden looking enraged.

The MAGA Aesthetic Is AI Slop

Although no one ideology has a monopoly on [AI](#) art, the high-resolution, low-budget look of generative-[AI](#) images appears to be fusing with the meme-loving aesthetic of the MAGA movement. At least in the fever swamps of social media, [AI](#) art is becoming MAGA-coded. The GOP is becoming the party of [AI slop](#).

[AI slop](#) isn't, by nature, political. It is most prevalent on platforms such as Facebook, where click farmers and spammers create elaborate networks to flood pages and groups with cheap, fake images of starving children and [Shrimp Jesus](#) in the hopes of going viral, getting likes, and picking up "creator bonuses" for online engagement. Jason Koebler, a technology reporter who has spent the past year investigating Facebook's [AI-slop](#) economy, has [described](#) the deluge of artificial imagery as part of a "zombie internet" and "the end of a shared reality," where "a mix of bots, humans, and accounts that were once humans but aren't anymore interact to form a disastrous website where there is little social connection at all."

What's going on across the MAGA internet isn't exactly the same as Facebook's spam situation, although the vibe is similar. MAGA influencers may be shitposting [AI](#) photos for fun, but they're also engagement farming, especially on X, where premium subscribers can opt in to the platform's revenue-sharing program. Right-wing influencers have been vocal about these bonuses, which are handed out based on how many times a creator's content is seen in a given month. "Payout was huge. They've been getting bigger," Catturd2 [posted](#) this March, while praising Musk.

Although many of these influencers already have sizable followings, [AI](#)-image generators offer an inveterate poster the thing they need most: cheap, fast, on-demand fodder for content. Rather than peck out a few sentences complaining about Biden's age or ridiculing Harris's economic policies, far-right posters can illustrate their attacks and garner more attention. And it's only getting easier to do this: Last week, X incorporated the newest iteration of the generative-[AI](#) engine Grok, which operates with fewer guardrails than some competing models and has already conjured up untold illustrations of celebrities and politicians in compromising situations.

[[Read: Hot AI Jesus is huge on Facebook](#)]

It's helpful to think of these photos and illustrations not as nefarious deepfakes or even hyper-persuasive propaganda, but as [digital chum](#)-Shrimp Jesus on the campaign trail. For now, little (if any) of what's being generated is convincing enough to fool voters, and most of it is being used to [confirm the priors](#) of true believers. Still, the glut of [AI](#)-created political imagery is a pollutant in a broader online information ecosystem. This [AI slop](#) doesn't just exist in a vacuum of a particular social network: It leaves an ecological footprint of sorts on the web. The images are created, copied, shared, and embedded into websites; they are indexed into search engines. It's possible that, later on, [AI-art tools will train on these distorted depictions](#), creating warped, digitally inbred representations of historical figures. The very existence of so much quickly produced fake imagery adds a layer of unreality to the internet. You and I, like voters everywhere, must wade through this layer of junk, wearily separating out what's patently fake, what's real, and what exists in the murky middle.

In many ways, political [slop](#) is a logical end point for these image generators, which seem most useful for people trying to make a quick buck. Photography, illustration, and graphic design previously required skill or, at the very least, time to create something interesting enough to attract attention, which, online, can be converted into real money. Now free or easily affordable tools have flooded the market. What once took expert labor is now spam, powered by tools trained on the output of real artists and photographers. Spam is annoying, but ultimately easy to ignore—that is, until it collides with the negative incentives of social-media platforms, where it's used by political shitposters and hucksters. Then the images become something else. In the hands of Trump, they create small news cycles and narratives to be debunked. In the hands of influencers, they are fired at our timelines in a scattershot approach to attract a morsel of attention. As with the Facebook [AI-slop](#) farms, social media shock jocks churning out obviously fake, low-quality images don't care whether they're riling up real people, boring them, or creating fodder for bots and other spammers. It is engagement for engagement's sake. Mindlessly generated information chokes our information pathways, forcing consumers to do the work of discarding it.

That these tools should end up as the medium of choice for Trump's political movement makes sense, too. It stands to reason that a politician who, [for many years](#), has spun an unending series of lies into a patchwork alternate

The MAGA Aesthetic Is AI Slop

reality would gravitate toward a technology that allows one to, with a brief prompt, rewrite history so that it flatters him. Just as it seems obvious that Trump's devoted followers-an extremely online group that has so fully embraced conspiracy theorizing and election denial that some of its members stormed the Capitol building-would delight in the bespoke memes and crude depictions of AI art. The MAGA movement has spent nine years building a coalition of conspiratorial hyper-partisans dedicated to creating a fictional information universe to cocoon themselves in. Now they can illustrate it.

Load-Date: August 22, 2024

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[Why the Popular Software Company Procreate Is Swearing Off Generative AI](#)

Inc.com

August 19, 2024 Monday 15:57 PM EST

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Length: 381 words

Byline: Ben Sherry

Body

Art and design company Procreate said artificial intelligence is 'ripping the humanity out of things.'

While technology firms scramble to take advantage of generative **AI**, one artist-friendly company is pushing in a decidedly different direction. Procreate, the company behind the popular art and design iPad app of the same name, has vowed to never introduce generative **AI**-powered features to its platform, writing in a statement that the technology is "ripping the humanity out of things."

In a video titled ["we're never going there,"](#) posted to the Australia-based company's social channels, Procreate co-founder and CEO James Cuda responded to questions about potential plans to implement generative **AI** features or use customers' work to train **AI** models. [Adobe](#), one of Procreate's main competitors, recently announced plans to do both. Cuda, who started the company in 2011 with wife Alanna, said "I really f*cking hate generative **AI**," and announced that Procreate will not use the tech at all.

"I don't like what's happening in the industry and I don't like what it's doing to artists," said Cuda, adding that "our products are always designed and developed with the idea that a **human** will be creating something."

In a [statement](#) shared to Procreate's website, the company wrote that generative **AI** is built on a foundation of theft. The company specified that it sees machine learning as a "compelling technology with a lot of merit, but the path generative **AI** is on is wrong for us."

The company acknowledged that the decision "might make us an exception or seem at risk of being left behind," but affirmed their chosen path as being "the more exciting and fruitful one for our community." Procreate, which costs \$13, has been one of the most popular digital art platforms on the iPad for over a decade, and has consistently been [the top paid app](#) on the iPad app store for more than seven years.

On X, Ed Newton-Rex, CEO of genAI certification company Fairly Trained, [wrote](#) that he suspects more companies will come out against generative **AI**, "not just for legal/ethical reasons (though those are big)," he said, "but also because rejecting gen **AI** will be a signal of premium quality. In a world of **AI**-generated **slop**, platforms that keep themselves **slop**-free will stand out."

[Link to Image](#)

Graphic

Photo: Getty Images

Load-Date: August 19, 2024

End of Document



[Ripple CTO highlights AI controversy over dangerous Mushroom identification book](#)

Newstex Blogs

Cryptopolitan

August 18, 2024 Sunday 8:30 PM EST

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Length: 431 words

Body

August 18th, 2024 ([Cryptopolitan](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

David Schwartz, Ripple's Chief Technology Officer, recently posted a viral Reddit post on his social media account, which tells the story of a family who was admitted to the hospital after consuming poisonous mushrooms, which they identified using an AI-generated book.

If this report is true, it's history repeating itself. <https://t.co/UEVENXO72E> <https://t.co/sjQgkATFqz> — [David "JoelKatz" Schwartz \(@JoelKatz\)](#)

[August 17, 2024](#)

According to the Reddit post, the family used a mushroom identification book they bought from a popular store. The post stated that the book provided images and text created by AI to identify the mushrooms, but all of them were poisonous. The family consumed the mushrooms with the help of the book written by the AI, and all of them were admitted to the hospital, which is a big question mark on the AI content.

Ripple CTO draws parallels to historical lawsuit

The post also stated that not only there are AI pictures in the book but also Chatbot replies in the text of the book suggesting that no human had a hand in it. Even though the retailer has apparently provided a refund for the book, the issue has made people question whether there could be more low-quality books written by AI for sale.

In his social media post, Schwartz compared this event to a well-known lawsuit that occurred at the beginning of the 1990s. The Ripple executive cited Winter v. G.P. Putnam's Sons, a 1991 Court of Appeals case. The case points to two young adults who decided to purchase a book they named 'The Encyclopedia of Mushrooms' to act as a reference.

The couple was forced to seek legal intervention against P. Putnam's Sons for product liability, negligence, and false representation. Although the two mushroom hunters almost lost their lives because of the wrong information provided by the book, the court ruled in favor of the publisher.

Ripple CTO highlights AI controversy over dangerous Mushroom identification book

Identification guides face scrutiny over **AI** use

Schwartz's use of this case demonstrates how the use of **AI** in content creation is not a positive thing and has legal ramifications. Whether books generated by **AI** can be subjected to similar legal procedures as more and more content is being produced with the help of **AI** is still up for debate.

Schwartz wrote an [X post concerning Quora, a popular question-and-answer website. This is not the first time that the Ripple CTO has criticized this website and how AI is being used on it. In his post, Schwartz highlighted some of the issues with the questions that Quora's AI-generated, which he referred to as 'AI-generated slop.'](#)

Notes

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Load-Date: August 18, 2024

In a word: This week's column: 'the ick' or a 'boop'?



In a word: This week's column: 'the ick' or a 'boop'?

Sunjournal.com

August 18, 2024 Sunday

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Length: 625 words

Byline: By Jim Witherell Special to the Sun Journal

Body

Recently the lexicographers at the Cambridge Dictionary added 3,236 new words and phrases to their list of searchable words (as well as myriad new meanings of existing words). This news should be enough to excite word lovers everywhere or at least be enough to keep them interested in reading the next few hundred words, I hope - so let's jump right in.

Let's start by looking at how new words are selected for inclusion in the tome. According to Cambridge Dictionary Publishing Manager Wendalyn Nichols, "Some new terms are added very quickly and others can take some time. We try to identify words and uses that have proven staying power, rather than adding ones that might be short-lived."

Here are a few of the words that made the cut this time, beginning with "the ick," which is defined as "a sudden feeling that you dislike someone or something or are no longer attracted to someone because of something they do."

On the other hand, a "boop" is one way of showing someone that you like them, and is accomplished by simply touching that person - or thing - gently on the head with your finger.

Another way of showing affection is by "pebbling," which is the act of showing appreciation for someone by sending them small gifts, such as memes, videos, or links, that they think the other person would enjoy. The term, it's said, comes from gentoo penguins, which give pebbles to potential mates as part of their courtship rituals.

One way to tell if your pebbles were well received is to wait for the recipient to give you a "chef's kiss," which is a movement in which they put their fingers and thumb together, kiss them, then pull their hand away from their lips.

In a word: This week's column: 'the ick' or a 'boop'?

If no chef's kiss is forthcoming, you might want to study their "face journey," defined as "a series of expressions that appear on someone's face showing different emotions that they are experiencing as a reaction to something."

"We also collect evidence of new words that have only appeared in English very recently," said Nichols. But exactly how do the Cambridge editors know which newer words are worthy of being included in the dictionary? It turns out that they make use of a blog called "About words" that helps them decide.

On the blog, visitors are asked for their opinions on whether or not certain words and phrases are worthy of being included in the Cambridge Dictionary. The three choices people have are: "Yes! I've heard/read this a lot," "Definitely not!" and "Let's wait and see. Maybe people will start using it."

One candidate for inclusion is the phrase "Generation T," which is a way of referring to "a group of people who were born in the early 2000s and who spend a lot of their free time traveling." Another hopeful is a new definition of "slop" - "AI-generated content that is unwanted and is of poor quality."

If you work in an office, have you ever been guilty of "mouse jiggling," which is another candidate. It's "the activity of making one's computer mouse move at regular intervals . . . in order to make your employer think you are working."

And if there's a good reason for that mouse jiggling that you're doing, it might be because your boss has burdened you with too many "vampire tasks," which are all those "routine but necessary administrative tasks" that take time away from doing the important stuff.

"Lexicographers," explained Nichols, "use the Cambridge English Corpus, a collection of more than 2 billion written and spoken English words, to gather evidence for how a new word is used by different people and in a variety of situations." That's a lot of words!

Jim Witherell of Lewiston is a writer and lover of words whose work includes "L.L. Bean: The Man and His Company" and "Ed Muskie: Made in Maine." He can be reached at jlwitherell19@gmail.com

Load-Date: October 8, 2024



[Why Does AI Art Look Like That?](#)

Atlantic Online

August 16, 2024 Friday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1530 words

Byline: Caroline Mimbs Nyce

Body

This week, X launched an **AI**-image generator, allowing paying subscribers of Elon Musk's social platform to make their own art. So-naturally-some users appear to have immediately made images of Donald Trump [flying a plane toward the World Trade Center](#); [Mickey Mouse](#) wielding an assault rifle, and another of him enjoying a cigarette and some beer on the beach; and so on. Some of the images that people have created using the tool are deeply unsettling; others are just strange, or even kind of funny. They depict wildly different scenarios and characters. But somehow they all kind of look alike, bearing unmistakable hallmarks of **AI** art that have cropped up in recent years thanks to products such as Midjourney and DALL-E.

Two years into the generative-**AI** boom, these programs' creations seem more technically advanced-the Trump image looks better than, say, [a similarly distasteful one](#) of SpongeBob SquarePants that Microsoft's Bing Image Creator generated last October-but they are stuck with a distinct aesthetic. The colors are bright and saturated, the people are beautiful, and the lighting is dramatic. Much of the imagery appears blurred or airbrushed, carefully smoothed like frosting on a wedding cake. At times, the visuals look exaggerated. (And yes, there are frequently errors, [such as extra fingers](#).) A user can get around this algorithmic monotony by using more specific prompts-for example, by typing a picture of a dog riding a horse in the style of Andy Warhol rather than just a picture of a dog riding a horse. But when a person fails to specify, these tools seem to default to an odd blend of cartoon and dreamscape.

These programs are becoming more common. Google [just announced](#) a new **AI**-image-making app called Pixel Studio that will allow people to make such art on their Pixel phone. The app will come preinstalled on all of the company's latest devices. Apple will launch [Image Playground](#) as part of its Apple Intelligence suite of **AI** tools [later this year](#). OpenAI now allows ChatGPT users to [generate](#) two free images a day from DALL-E 3, its newest text-to-image model. (Previously, a user needed a paid premium plan to access the tool.) And so I wanted to understand: Why does so much **AI** art look the same?

[[Read: AI has a hotness problem](#)]

Why Does AI Art Look Like That?

The **AI** companies themselves aren't particularly forthcoming. X sent back a form email in response to a request for comment about its new product and the images its users are creating. Four firms behind popular image generators—OpenAI, Google, Stability **AI**, and Midjourney—either did not respond or did not provide comment. A Microsoft spokesperson directed me toward some of its prompting guides and referred any technical questions to OpenAI, because Microsoft uses a version of DALL-E in products such as Bing Image Creator.

So I turned to outside experts, who gave me four possible explanations. The first focuses on the data that models are trained on. Text-to-image generators rely on extensive libraries of photos paired with text descriptions, which they then use to create their own original imagery. The tools may inadvertently pick up on any biases in their data sets—whether that's [racial or gender](#) bias, or something as simple as bright colors and good lighting. The internet is filled with decades of filtered and artificially brightened photos, as well as a ton of ethereal illustrations. "We see a lot of fantasy-style art and stock photography, which then trickles into the models themselves," Zivvy Epstein, a scientist at the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered **AI**, told me. There are also only so many good data sets available for people to use to build image models, Phillip Isola, a professor at the MIT Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, told me, meaning the models might overlap in what they're trained on. (One popular one, [CelebA](#), features 200,000 labeled photos of celebrities. Another, [LAION 5B](#), is an open-source option featuring 5.8 billion pairs of photos and text.)

The second explanation has to do with the technology itself. Most modern models use [a technique called diffusion](#): During training, models are taught to add "noise" to existing images, which are paired with text descriptions. "Think of it as TV static," Apolinário Passos, a machine-learning art engineer at Hugging Face, a company that makes its own open-source models, told me. The model then is trained to remove this noise, over and over, for tens of thousands, if not millions, of images. The process repeats itself, and the model learns how to de-noise an image. Eventually, it's able to take this static and create an original image from it. All it needs is a text prompt.

[\[Read: Generative art is stupid\]](#)

Many companies use this technique. "These models are, I think, all technically quite alike," Isola said, noting that recent tools are based on the [transformer](#) model. Perhaps this technology is biased toward a specific look. Take an example from the not-so-distant past: Five years ago, he explained, image generators tended to create really blurry outputs. Researchers realized that it was the result of a mathematical fluke; the models were essentially averaging all the images they were trained on. Averaging, it turns out, "looks like blur." It's possible that, today, something similarly technical is happening with this generation of image models that leads them to plop out the same kind of dramatic, highly stylized imagery—but researchers haven't quite figured it out yet. Additionally, "most models have an ~aesthetic' filter on both the input and output that reject images that don't meet a certain aesthetic criteria," Hany Farid, a professor at the UC Berkeley School of Information, told me over email. "This type of filtering on the input and output is almost certainly a big part of why **AI**-generated images all have a certain ethereal quality."

The third theory revolves around the humans who use these tools. Some of these sophisticated models incorporate human feedback; they learn as they go. This could be by taking in a signal, such as which photos are downloaded. Others, Isola explained, have trainers manually rate which photos they like and which ones they don't. Perhaps this feedback is making its way into the model. If people are downloading art that tends to have really dramatic sunsets and absurdly beautiful oceanscapes, then the tools might be learning that that's what humans want, and then giving them more of that. Alexandru Costin, a vice president of generative **AI** at Adobe, and Zeke Koch, a vice president of product management for Adobe Firefly (the company's **AI**-image tool) told me in an email that user feedback can indeed be a factor for some **AI** models—a process called "reinforcement learning from human feedback," or RLHF. They also pointed to training data as well as assessments performed by [human evaluators](#) as influencing factors. "Art generated by **AI** models sometimes have a distinct look (especially when created using simple prompts)," they said in a statement. "That's generally caused by a combination of the images used to train the image output and the tastes of those who train or evaluate the images."

The fourth theory has to do with the creators of these tools. Although representatives for Adobe told me that their company does not do anything to encourage a specific aesthetic, it is possible that other **AI** makers have picked up on human preference and coded that in—essentially putting their thumb on the scale, telling the models to make

Why Does AI Art Look Like That?

more dreamy beach scenes and fairylike women. This could be intentional: If such imagery has a market, maybe companies would begin to converge around it. Or it could be unintentional; companies [do lots of manual work](#) in their models to combat bias, for example, and various tweaks favoring one kind of imagery over another could inadvertently result in a particular look.

More than one of these explanations could be true. In fact, that's probably what's happening: Experts told me that, most likely, the style we see is caused by multiple factors at once. Ironically, all of these explanations suggest that the uncanny scenes we associate with **AI**-generated imagery are actually a reflection of our own human preferences, taken to an extreme. No surprise, then, that Facebook is [filled](#) with **AI**-generated **slop** imagery that earns creators money, that Etsy recently [asked](#) users to label products made with **AI** following [a surge of junk listings](#), and that the arts-and-craft store Michaels recently [got caught](#) selling a canvas featuring an image that was partially generated by **AI** (the company [pulled the product](#), calling this an "unacceptable error.").

[\[Read: AI-generated junk is flooding Etsy\]](#)

AI imagery is poised to seep even further into everyday life. For now, such art is usually visually distinct enough that people can tell it was made by a machine. But that may change. The technology could get better. Passos told me he sees "an attempt to diverge from" the current aesthetic "on newer models." Indeed, someday computer-generated art may shed its weird, cartoonish look, and start to slip past us unnoticed. Perhaps then we'll miss the corny style that was once a dead giveaway.

Load-Date: August 17, 2024



Twitter page gains thousands of followers for making fun of Facebook posts

CE Noticias Financieras English

August 14, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 372 words

Body

Anyone who has an account on a social network knows that each platform has its own particularities, which means that its audience is also unique. In a "crossover", a profile on X (old) has been successful for making fun of bizarre posts made using images generated by artificial intelligence.

Théodore Cazals, 19, is a French student living in Paris and the creator of the profile "Insane Facebook **AI slop**" (low-quality madness made by artificial intelligence on Facebook, in free translation), which already has more than 100,000 followers since its creation in April.

The images published on Mark Zuckerberg's network are generally appealing and stir users' empathy and superstition because they portray sad situations, despite being unrealistic. They are also accompanied by phrases that encourage user engagement. Prints of these posts ended up on X as a joke.

The page came about when Théodore Cazals realized that this type of post generated a lot of engagement on X. Although he is the only one behind the profile, there is collaboration from followers, who send suggestions by private message.

According to Cazals, the aim of the page is to show a side of Facebook that many X users don't know about. In addition, the young Frenchman suggests that the content helps his followers to know what less tech-savvy relatives are consuming - and believing - on the social network.

The Frenchman says that the page didn't gain many followers in its first month, but has grown a lot recently. "The ridiculous aspect of the images and the fact that they mock less technologically literate people is what makes it so successful," he says.

Cazals has come to see the page as a product that could be worth something in the future. He explains that if this type of content no longer engages, he intends to change the name and subject matter in order to make the most of the space with the followers he has already gained.

Here are the main posts from X's @FacebookAIslop page, formerly Twitter:

"I'm poor. Who loves me?"

"The biggest fish in the whole world"

"Incredible photo of a truck full of babies"

"Why do images like this never go viral?"

"When Peter Griffin visited Africa to donate food"

"Today is my birthday"

"Nobody loves me because I'm poor"

Twitter page gains thousands of followers for making fun of Facebook posts

Load-Date: August 15, 2024

End of Document



[Generative AI's Slop Era](#)

Atlantic Online

August 9, 2024 Friday

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The Atlantic

Length: 563 words

Byline: Damon Beres

Body

This is Atlantic Intelligence, a newsletter in which our writers help you wrap your mind around artificial intelligence and a new machine age. [Sign up here.](#)

Tech companies believe that generative **AI** can transform how we find information online, replacing traditional search engines with bots that synthesize knowledge into a more interactive format. Rather than clicking a series of links, reading a variety of sources, and then determining an answer for yourself, you might instead have a conversation with a search bot that has effectively done the reading for you. Companies such as OpenAI, Perplexity, and Google are bringing such tools to market: As my colleague Matteo Wong wrote [in a recent story for The Atlantic](#), "The generative-**AI** search wars are in full swing."

As part of his reporting, Matteo spoke with Dmitry Shevelenko, Perplexity's chief business officer. In particular, the two discussed the media partnerships that have been signed by Perplexity and other **AI** firms to support their search projects. These deals give media companies compensation for allowing their material to be used by generative-**AI** tools; The Atlantic, for example, has signed a contract with OpenAI that may, among other things, show our articles to users of the new [SearchGPT](#) tool. (The editorial division of The Atlantic operates independently from the business division, which announced its corporate partnership with OpenAI in May.)

I found two of Shevelenko's quotes especially striking. First: "One of the key ingredients for our long-term success is that we need web publishers to keep creating great journalism that is loaded up with facts, because you can't answer questions well if you don't have accurate source material." And second: "Journalists' content is rich in facts, verified knowledge, and that is the utility function it plays to an **AI** answer engine." Each statement seemed to betray an attitude that the creative output of humanity amounts to little more than fodder—which seems particularly grim in light of what we know about how **AI** is trained on [tremendous amounts of copyrighted material without consent](#), and how these tools have a tendency to present users with [false information](#). Or as I put it [last year](#): "At its core, generative **AI** cannot distinguish original journalism from any other bit of writing; to the machine, it's all **slop** pushed through the pipes and splattered out the other end."

The **AI** Search War Has Begun

Generative AI's Slop Era

By Matteo Wong

Every second of every day, people across the world type tens of thousands of queries into Google, adding up to [trillions](#) of searches a year. Google and a few other search engines are the portal through which several billion people navigate the internet. Many of the world's most powerful tech companies, including Google, Microsoft, and OpenAI, have recently spotted an opportunity to remake that gateway with generative **AI**, and they are racing to seize it. And as of this week, the generative-**AI** search wars are in full swing.

[Read the full article.](#)

What to Read Next

- [Bing is a trap](#): "Tech companies say **AI** will expand the possibilities of searching the internet. So far, the opposite seems to be true," I wrote last year.

P.S.

The future of search bots may depend on recent copyright lawsuits against generative-**AI** companies. Earlier this year, [Alex Reisner wrote a great article for The Atlantic](#) exploring what's at stake.

- Damon

Load-Date: August 10, 2024



FTAV's further reading

FT.com

August 8, 2024 Thursday

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Length: 90 words

Byline: Bryce Elder

Body

Elsewhere on Thursday . . .

- [*The banker has no clothes, part three*](#) (Rupak Ghose)
- Sahm: [*My recession rule was meant to be broken*](#) (Bloomberg [\\$](#))
- [*Intel, the weak link in the chip strategy of Bidenomics*](#) (Chartbook)
- [*America's deficit attention disorder*](#) (Project Syndicate)
- [*Where Facebook's AI slop comes from*](#) (404 Media)
- [*The empathy punishment*](#) (Grub Street, New York [\\$](#))
- [*Artists and Activists Both Have a Role. But Not the Same One*](#) (New York Times [\\$](#))
- [*The bizarre secrets I found investigating corrupt Winamp skins*](#) (Jordan Eldredge)

Load-Date: August 8, 2024

FTAV's further reading

End of Document



FTAV's further reading

FT.com Headlines

FT.com Headlines

<https://www.ft.com/content/267e8469-bb77-45c6-8dab-b62c6600b4e6>

August 8, 2024 Thursday

Length: 99 words

Body

Elsewhere on Thursday . . . — The banker has no cloth...

End of Document

'Hold on to your seats': how much will AI affect the art of film-making?



'Hold on to your seats': how much will AI affect the art of film-making?

The Guardian (London)

July 27, 2024 Saturday 10:07 AM GMT

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theguardian

Section: FILM; Version:1

Length: 2214 words

Byline: Adrian Horton

Highlight: The future is here, whether some like it or not, and artificial intelligence is already impacting the film industry. But just how far can, and should, it go?

Body

Last year, Rachel Antell, an archival producer for documentary films, started noticing **AI**-generated images mixed in with authentic photos. There are always holes or limitations in an archive; in one case, film-makers got around a shortage of images for a barely photographed 19th-century woman by using **AI** to generate what looked like old photos. Which brought up the question: should they? And if they did, what sort of transparency is required? The capability and availability of generative **AI** – the type that can produce text, images and video – have changed so rapidly, and the conversations around it have been so fraught, that film-makers' ability to use it far outpaces any consensus on how.

"We realized it was kind of the wild west, and film-makers without any mal-intent were getting themselves into situations where they could be misleading to an audience," said Antell. "And we thought, what's needed here is some real guidance."

So Antell and several colleagues formed the Archival Producers Alliance (APA), a volunteer group of about 300 documentary producers and researchers dedicated to, in part, developing best practices for use of generative **AI** in factual storytelling. "Instead of being, 'the house is burning, we'll never have jobs,' it's much more based around an affirmation of why we got into this in the first place," said Stephanie Jenkins, a founding APA member. Experienced documentary film-makers have "really been wrestling with this", in part because "there is so much out there about **AI** that is so confusing and so devastating or, alternatively, a lot of snake oil."

The group, which published an [open letter](#) warning against "forever muddying the historical record" through generative **AI** and [released a draft set of guidelines](#) this spring, is one of the more organized efforts in Hollywood to grapple with the ethics of a technology that, for all the bullish or doomsday prophesying, is already here and shaping the industry. Short of regulation or relevant union agreements, it has come down to film-makers – directors, producers, writers, visual effects and VFX artists and more – to figure out how to use it, where to draw the line and

'Hold on to your seats': how much will AI affect the art of film-making?

how to adapt. "It's a project by project basis" for "use cases and the ethical implications of [AI](#)", said Jim Geduldick, a VFX supervisor and cinematographer who has worked on Masters of the Air, Disney's live-action Pinocchio and the upcoming Robert Zemeckis film [Here](#), which [uses AI to de-age](#) its stars Tom Hanks and Robin Wright. "Everybody's using it. Everybody's playing with it."

Some of the industry's adoption of [AI](#) has been quiet – for years, studios and tech companies with entertainment arms have already [engaged in a tacit machine learning arms race](#). Others have embraced the technology enthusiastically and optimistically; Runway, an [AI research company](#), hosted its [second annual AI Film Festival](#) in New York and Los Angeles this spring, with presenting partners in the Television Academy and the Tribeca Festival. The latter featured [five short films made by OpenAI's Sora](#), the text-to-video model yet to be released to the public that prompted the film mogul Tyler Perry to [halt an \\$800m expansion of his studios](#) in Atlanta because "jobs are going to be lost".

The industry's embrace has engendered plenty of pushback. Last month, in response to Tribeca and other nascent [AI](#) film festivals, the director of Violet, Justine Bateman, [announced](#) a "raw and real", no-[AI](#)-allowed film festival for spring 2025, which "creates a tunnel for human artists through the theft-based, job-replacing [AI](#) destruction". And in the year since the dual actors and writers' strikes secured landmark protections against the use of generative [AI](#) to replace jobs or steal likenesses, numerous non-protected instances of [AI](#) have drawn attention and scorn online. Concerns about job and quality loss surrounded [AI](#)-generated images in A24 [promotional posters for the film Civil War](#), [interstitials in the horror film Late Night with the Devil](#) and a [fake band poster in True Detective: Night Country](#). The alleged use of [AI](#)-generated archival photos in the Netflix documentary [What Jennifer Did](#) reignited discussions about documentary ethics first sparked by [similar outcry](#) over [three lines of AI-generated narration](#) to mimic Anthony Bourdain in the 2021 film Roadrunner. And that's not to mention all of the bemoaning of [disposable AI filler content](#) – or "[slop](#)", as the parlance goes – clogging up our social media feeds.

Taken together, the burgeoning use of generative [AI](#) in media can feel overwhelming – before the ink is dry on any new proclamation about it, the ground has shifted again. On an individual level, film artists are figuring out whether to embrace the technology now, how to use it and where their craft is headed. It has already rendered dubbing and translation work [nearly obsolete](#). Visual effects artists, perennially on the bleeding edge of new technology for Hollywood, are already working with machine learning and some generative [AI](#), particularly for pre-production visualizations and workflows. "From an artist's perspective, we're all trying to get ahead of the game and play with open source tools that are available," said Kathryn Brillhart, a cinematographer and director whose credits include The Mandalorian, Black Adam and Fallout.

Both Geduldick and Brillhart noted numerous limitations on the use of generative [AI](#) in film projects at this point – for one, the security of these platforms, especially for big studios worried about leaks or hacks. There's the legal liability and ethics of the current generative [AI](#) models, which to date have trained on scraped data. "Some studios are like, 'We don't even feel comfortable using gen [AI](#) in storyboards and concept art, because we don't want a hint of any theft or licensing issues to come through in the final,'" said Brillhart. Studio films that do employ [AI](#) have limited uses and a clear data trail – in the case of Zemeckis's [Here](#), the new de-aging and face replacement tech, designed by the [AI](#) firm Metaphysic and the Hollywood agency CAA, uses the faces of Hanks and Wright, famous actors who have signed on to the roles, to [play characters over the course of 50 years](#). "I've always been attracted to technology that helps me to tell a story," Zemeckis [said](#) in 2023 of his decision to use Metaphysic. "With [Here](#), the film simply wouldn't work without our actors seamlessly transforming into younger versions of themselves. Metaphysic's [AI](#) tools do exactly that, in ways that were previously impossible!"

And then there's the output of generative [AI](#), which often plunges deep into the uncanny valley and leaves much to be desired. (Or, in the [words](#) of the [AI](#) skeptic David Fincher, "it always looks like sort of a low-rent version of Roger Deakins"). Geduldick, who has integrated [AI](#) into his workflow, sees current generative [AI](#) models as more "assistive" than truly imitative of human art. "Are they implementing generative models that are going to speed up both the business and the creative side of what we're doing? Yes," he said. "But I think that there is no generative model out there today that doesn't get touched by artistic hands to get it to the next level. That is for the foreseeable future."

‘Hold on to your seats’: how much will AI affect the art of film-making?

Still, like the digital revolution before it, the one certainty about generative [AI](#) is that it will change the field of visual effects – making pre-visualization cheaper and more efficient, streamlining tedious processes, shaping storyboard design. As the work shifts, “I think everybody needs to pivot,” said Geduldick.

“The craft has gone from hand-making models to using a mouse to now using text and using your brain in different ways,” said Brillhart. “What’s going to happen is more of a forced learning curve,” she added. “I think there’s going to be growing pains, for sure.”

On the documentary side, generative [AI](#) opens new opportunities for nonfiction storytelling, though also threatens trust. “All technology has a kind of a dual moral purpose. And it’s up to us to interrogate the technology to find the way to use it for good,” said David France, an investigative journalist and film-maker whose 2020 documentary [Welcome to Chechnya](#) is one of a handful in recent years to employ generative [AI](#) as an anonymization device. The film, which follows the state-sanctioned persecution of LGBTQ+ people in the Russian republic, used [AI](#) to map actors’ faces over real subjects who faced harrowing violence. France and his team tried several different methods to get around risking exposure; nothing worked cinematically, until trying the equivalent of deepfake technology, though with multi-step processes of consent and clear limitations. “We realized that we had an opportunity to really empower the people whose stories we were telling, to tell their stories directly to the audience and be faithful in their kind of emotional presentation,” said France.

The film-makers Reuben Hamlyn and Sophie Compton employed a similar technique for the subjects of their film [Another Body](#), who were the victims of nonconsensual, deepfake pornography. Their main subject, “Taylor”, communicates through a digital veil – like deepfakes, an [AI](#)-generated face that interprets her real expressions through different features.

Along with demonstrating the convincing, uncanny power of the technology that someone used to target Taylor, the [AI](#) translated “every minute facial gesture”, said Hamlyn. “That emotional truth is retained in a way that is impossible even with silhouetting.”

“It’s such an important tool in empowering people to share their story,” he added.

Crucially, both [Welcome to Chechnya](#) and [Another Body](#) clue their audiences to the technology through implicit or explicit tells. That’s in line with the best practices put forth by the Archival Producers Alliance, to avoid what has landed other films in hot water – [namely Roadrunner](#), whose use of [AI](#) was revealed in the [New Yorker](#) after the film’s release. The group also encourages documentary film-makers to rely on primary sources whenever possible; to think through algorithmic biases produced by the model’s training data; to be as intentional with generative [AI](#) as they would with re-enactments; and consider how synthetic material, released in the world, could cloud the historical record.

“We never say don’t do it,” said Jenkins, the APA member, but instead “think about what you’re saying when you use this new material and how it will come across to your audience. There is something really special about the human voice and the human face, and you want to engage with [generative [AI](#)] in a way that is intentional and doesn’t fall into some sort of manipulation.”

That line between human and machine is perhaps the most fraught one in Hollywood at the moment, in flux and uncertain. Compton, the co-director of [Another Body](#), sees the emotionally loaded debates around [AI](#) as a series of smaller, more manageable questions involving pre-existing industry issues. “There are genuinely existential aspects of this discussion, but in terms of film and [AI](#), we’re not really talking about those things,” she said. “We’re not talking about killer robots. What we are talking about is consent, and what is the dataset that’s being used, and whose jobs are on the line if this is adopted massively.”

Geduldick, an optimist on the assistive uses of generative [AI](#), nevertheless sees a gap between its day-to-day applications, tech companies’ lofty rhetoric, and “soulless” [AI](#) content produced for content’s sake. Companies such as OpenAI – whose chief technology officer recently [said](#) generative [AI](#) might eliminate some creative jobs, “but maybe they shouldn’t have been there in the first place” – have “repeatedly shown in their public-facing interviews or marketing that there’s a disconnect [in] understanding what creatives actually do,” he said. “Film-making is a

‘Hold on to your seats’: how much will AI affect the art of film-making?

collaborative thing. You are hiring loads of talented artists, technicians, craftspeople to come together and create this vision that the writers, director, showrunners and producers have thought up.”

For now, according to Geduldick, the “hype outweighs the practical applications” of generative [AI](#), but that does not obviate the need for regulation from the top, or for guidelines for those already using it. “The potential for it to be cinematic is really great,” said France. “I don’t know yet that we’ve seen anybody solve the ethical problem of how to use it.”

In the meantime, film-making, both feature and nonfiction, is at a fluid, amorphous crossroads. Generative [AI](#) is here – part potential, part application, part daunting, part exciting and, to many, a tool. There will likely be more [AI](#) film festivals, more backlash, more and more [AI](#) content creation – for better or for worse. There are already whole [AI-generated streaming services](#), should you choose to generate your own content. How the human element will fare remains an open question – according to a [recent Deloitte study](#), a surprising 22% of Americans thought generative [AI](#) could write more interesting TV shows or movies than people.

The only certainty, at this point, is that [AI](#) will be used, and the industry will change as a result. “This will be in films that are coming out,” said Jenkins. “So hold on to your seats.”

Load-Date: July 27, 2024

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[AI's Real Hallucination Problem](#)

Atlantic Online

July 24, 2024 Wednesday

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The Atlantic

Length: 1703 words

Byline: Charlie Warzel

Body

Two years ago, OpenAI released the public beta of DALL-E 2, an image-generation tool that immediately signified that we'd entered a new technological era. Trained off a huge body of data, DALL-E 2 produced unsettlingly good, delightful, and frequently unexpected outputs; my Twitter feed filled up with images derived from prompts such as close-up photo of brushing teeth with toothbrush covered with nacho cheese. Suddenly, it seemed as though machines could create just about anything in response to simple prompts.

You likely know the story from there: A few months later, ChatGPT arrived, millions of people started using it, the [student essay was pronounced dead](#), Web3 entrepreneurs nearly broke their ankles scrambling to pivot their companies to **AI**, and the technology industry was consumed by hype. The generative-**AI** revolution began in earnest.

Where has it gotten us? Although enthusiasts eagerly use the technology to boost productivity and automate busywork, the drawbacks are also impossible to ignore. Social networks such as Facebook have been flooded with [bizarre AI-generated slop images](#); search engines are [floundering](#), trying to index an internet [awash](#) in hastily assembled, chatbot-written articles. Generative **AI**, [we know for sure now](#), has been trained without permission on copyrighted media, which makes it all the more galling that the technology is competing against creative people for jobs and online attention; a backlash against **AI** companies scraping the internet for training data is in [full swing](#).

Yet these companies, emboldened by the success of their products and the war chests of investor capital, have brushed these problems aside and unapologetically embraced a [manifest-destiny attitude](#) toward their technologies. Some of these firms are, in no uncertain terms, trying to rewrite the rules of society by doing whatever they can to create a godlike superintelligence (also known as artificial general intelligence, or AGI). Others seem more interested in using generative **AI** to build tools that [repurpose others' creative work](#) with little to no citation. In recent months, leaders within the **AI** industry are more brazenly expressing a paternalistic attitude about how the future will look—including who will win (those who embrace their technology) and who will be left behind (those who do not).

AI's Real Hallucination Problem

They're not asking us; they're telling us. As the journalist Joss Fong [commented](#) recently, "There's an audacity crisis happening in California."

There are material concerns to contend with here. It is audacious to massively jeopardize your net-zero climate commitment in favor of advancing a technology that has told people to [eat rocks](#), yet Google appears to have done just that, [according to its latest environmental report](#). (In an emailed statement, a Google spokesperson, Corina Standiford, said that the company remains "dedicated to the sustainability goals we've set," including reaching net-zero emissions by 2030. According to the report, its emissions grew 13 percent in 2023, in large part because of the energy demands of generative [AI](#).) And it is certainly audacious for companies such as [Perplexity to use third-party tools](#) to harvest information while ignoring long-standing online protocols that prevent websites from being scraped and having their content stolen.

But I've found the rhetoric from [AI](#) leaders to be especially exasperating. This [month, I spoke with](#) OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and Thrive Global CEO Arianna Huffington after they announced their intention to build an [AI](#) health coach. The pair explicitly compared their nonexistent product to the New Deal. (They suggested that their product—so theoretical, they could not tell me whether it would be an app or not—could quickly become part of the health-care system's critical infrastructure.) But this audacity is about more than just grandiose press releases. In an interview at Dartmouth College last month, OpenAI's chief technology officer, Mira Murati, discussed [AI](#)'s effects on labor, [saying](#) that, as a result of generative [AI](#), "some creative jobs maybe will go away, but maybe they shouldn't have been there in the first place." She added later that "strictly repetitive" jobs are also likely on the chopping block. Her candor appears emblematic of OpenAI's very mission, which [straightforwardly](#) seeks to develop an intelligence capable of "turbocharging the global economy." Jobs that can be replaced, her words suggested, aren't just unworthy: They should never have existed. In the long arc of technological change, this may be true—human operators of elevators, traffic signals, and telephones eventually gave way to automation—but that doesn't mean that catastrophic job loss across several industries simultaneously is economically or morally acceptable.

[\[Read: AI has become a technology of faith\]](#)

Along these lines, Altman has [said](#) that generative [AI](#) will "create entirely new jobs." Other tech boosters have said the [same](#). But if you listen closely, their language is cold and unsettling, offering insight into the kinds of labor that these people value—and, by extension, the kinds that they don't. Altman has spoken of AGI possibly replacing the ["the median human"](#) worker's labor—giving the impression that the least exceptional among us might be sacrificed in the name of progress.

Even some inside the industry have expressed alarm at those in charge of this technology's future. Last month, Leopold Aschenbrenner, a former OpenAI employee, wrote a 165-page [essay series](#) warning readers about what's being built in San Francisco. "Few have the faintest glimmer of what is about to hit them," Aschenbrenner, who was reportedly [fired](#) this year for leaking company information, wrote. In Aschenbrenner's reckoning, he and "perhaps a few hundred people, most of them in San Francisco and the [AI](#) labs," have the "situational awareness" to anticipate the future, which will be marked by the arrival of AGI, geopolitical struggle, and radical cultural and economic change.

Aschenbrenner's manifesto is a useful document in that it articulates how the architects of this technology see themselves: a small group of people bound together by their intellect, skill sets, and fate to help decide the shape of the future. Yet to read his treatise is to feel not FOMO, but alienation. The civilizational struggle he depicts bears little resemblance to the [AI](#) that the rest of us can see. "The fate of the world rests on these people," he writes of the Silicon Valley cohort building [AI](#) systems. This is not a call to action or a proposal for input; it's a statement of who is in charge.

Unlike me, Aschenbrenner believes that a superintelligence is coming, and coming soon. His treatise contains quite a bit of grand speculation about the potential for [AI](#) models to drastically improve from here. (Skeptics have [strongly pushed back](#) on this assessment.) But his primary concern is that too few people wield too much power. "I don't think it can just be a small clique building this technology," he told me recently when I asked why he wrote the treatise.

AI's Real Hallucination Problem

"I felt a sense of responsibility, by having ended up a part of this group, to tell people what they're thinking," he said, referring to the leaders at **AI** companies who believe they're on the cusp of achieving AGI. "And again, they might be right or they might be wrong, but people deserve to hear it." In our conversation, I found an unexpected overlap between us: Whether you believe that **AI** executives are delusional or genuinely on the verge of constructing a superintelligence, you should be concerned about how much power they've amassed.

Having a class of builders with deep ambitions is part of a healthy, progressive society. Great technologists are, by nature, imbued with an audacious spirit to push the bounds of what is possible-and that can be a very good thing for humanity indeed. None of this is to say that the technology is useless: **AI** undoubtedly has transformative potential ([predicting how proteins fold](#) is a genuine revelation, for example). But audacity can quickly turn into a liability when builders become untethered from reality, or when their hubris leads them to believe that it is their right to impose their values on the rest of us, in return for building God.

[\[Read: This is what it looks like when AI eats the world\]](#)

An industry is what it produces, and in 2024, these executive pronouncements and brazen actions, taken together, are the actual state of the artificial-intelligence industry two years into its latest revolution. The apocalyptic visions, the looming nature of superintelligence, and the struggle for the future of humanity-all of these narratives are not facts but hypotheticals, however exciting, scary, or plausible.

When you strip all of that away and focus on what's really there and what's really being said, the message is clear: These companies wish to be left alone to "[scale in peace](#)," a phrase that SSI, a new **AI** company co-founded by Ilya Sutskever, formerly OpenAI's chief scientist, used with no trace of self-awareness in announcing his company's mission. ("SSI" stands for "safe superintelligence," of course.) To do that, they'll need to commandeer all creative resources-to eminent-domain the entire internet. The stakes demand it. We're to trust that they will build these tools safely, implement them responsibly, and share the wealth of their creations. We're to trust their values-about the labor that's valuable and the creative pursuits that ought to exist-as they remake the world in their image. We're to trust them because they are smart. We're to trust them as they achieve global scale with a technology that they say will be among the most disruptive in all of human history. Because they have seen the future, and because history has delivered them to this societal hinge point, marrying ambition and talent with just enough raw computing power to create God. To deny them this right is reckless, but also futile.

It's possible, then, that generative **AI**'s chief export is not image **slop**, voice clones, or lorem ipsum chatbot bullshit but instead unearned, entitled audacity. Yet another example of **AI** producing hallucinations-not in the machines, but in the people who build them.

Load-Date: July 25, 2024



[No One Can Believe What Comes Up When You Google Beethoven: 'I'm So Done'](#)

Newsweek.com

July 18, 2024 Thursday 11:53 AM EST

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Length: 584 words

Byline: Rachael O'Connor

Highlight: One user labeled it "disgusting".

Body

The discovery of what comes up when you [Google](#) the composer Ludwig van Beethoven has sparked a huge discussion online as people debate the rise of artificial intelligence.

German composer Beethoven died in 1827, but his works, which include Moonlight Sonata, The Emperor Piano Concerto, and Für Elise, means he remains one of the most recognizable names in history.

This legendary status is likely contributing to anger around what comes up when you Google his name: rather than the famous Joseph Karl Stieler portrait, or any other recognizable portrait of the composer, the image accompanying his name is [made by artificial intelligence](#) ([AI](#)).

The Google discovery was pointed out in a viral post on [Reddit](#) by user u/PeopleAreBozos, with the image bearing the tell-tale smoothness of [AI](#) art, and it racked up 35,000 upvotes as commenters let their frustration be known.

Newsweek ran the image through multiple [AI](#) checkers, all of which gave a probability of between 93 to 98 percent chance of having been generated by [AI](#).

One user shared the iconic Stieler portrait in the comments of the r/mildlyinfuriating post, asking: "Why on earth would anyone need that picture to exist when you have this in public domain?"

"I'm so done with finding [AI](#) images when I just want an actual, real image. Especially when having it in [AI](#) brings absolutely nothing, it's just [a slightly worse version](#) of the portrait we already have," another complained.

One simply labeled it "disgusting", and another said "I hate it so much how [AI](#) ruined Google images. I can't even look at it anymore."

No One Can Believe What Comes Up When You Google Beethoven: 'I'm So Done'

The image also made it to the popular X account Insane [Facebook AI Slop](#), racking up close to 7,000 likes of its own, where one commenter despaired, "the internet is actually dying".

It appears the image was originally posted on the website LVBeethoven.com, which describes itself as a "resource for everything Beethoven" and features multiple [AI-generated](#) images.

It is not an official site for the composer: Beethoven.de is the official site for the Beethoven-Haus museum and cultural institution based in Bonn, Germany, where he was born.

Newsweek reached out to LVBeethoven.com for comment.

The controversy of [AI-generated](#) art is well-publicized: Shawn Simpson, visiting lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, [wrote in a recent opinion piece for Newsweek](#) that "[AI](#) art is a real problem, and we need to make an effort to address it."

He shared the story of a visual artist who had lost a commission after the company generated images themselves through the [AI](#) program Dall-E, and told the artist they no longer needed their services.

"If we care about keeping human artists employed and producing great works of art, something must be done," he wrote, suggesting a ban on at least some [AI](#) art or supporting artists through public grants could be an option to protect creatives in the future.

Media artist Boris Eldagsen also wrote in an opinion piece for *Newsweek* where he described how he [won a prize in a photography competition, using Dall-E](#) to generate an image.

He stated he came clean to the organizers but was told he could keep the prize. Eldagsen refused to accept the award, stating photography and [AI](#) should not compete with one another as they are separate entities.

Newsweek has contacted u/PeopleAreBozos on Reddit for comment.

Do you have funny and adorable videos or pictures you want to share? Send them to life@newsweek.com with some extra details, and they could appear on our website.

[Link to Image](#)

Graphic

Beethoven

Getty/ brandstaetter images

The iconic portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven, created in 1820 by German artist Joseph Karl Stieler. It is on display at the Beethoven-Haus museum in Bonn, Germany.

Load-Date: July 18, 2024

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Crikey

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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Length: 877 words

Byline: Crikey

Body

ABSTRACT

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Crikey

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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Length: 876 words

Byline: Crikey

Body

ABSTRACT

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Crikey

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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Crikey

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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**Length:** 877 words**Byline:** Crikey

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Crikey

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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Length: 877 words

Byline: Crikey

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Crikey

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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**Length:** 877 words**Byline:** Crikey

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July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:11:43 GMT

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**Length:** 877 words**Byline:** Crikey

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Body

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**Length:** 877 words**Byline:** Crikey

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The New Term 'Slop' Joins 'Spam' in Our Vocabulary

Newstex Blogs

JD Supra

July 12, 2024 Friday 10:27 AM EST

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Length: 2155 words

Byline: EDRM - Electronic Discovery Reference ModelSheila Grela

Body

July 12th, 2024 ([JD Supra](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

Image: Sheila Grela with **AI**.

Introduction

As the granddaughter of two Alabama farmers, the word '**slop**' evokes images of something with little value. In today's digital landscape, avoiding **AI**-generated content is nearly impossible, akin to dodging spoilers online. From **AI**-enhanced Google searches to **AI**-written articles and **AI**-composed music, artificial intelligence permeates every corner of the internet. This surge in **AI** content echoes the Dead Internet Theory, which posits that a significant portion of online activity is generated by bots rather than humans. The concern is that the internet may become a digital trough filled with '**slop**,' where valuable content is lost amid low-quality **AI**-generated material.

Meet '**Slop**'

'**Slop**' is the term for **AI**-generated content created primarily for profit. Similar to spam, **slop** is low-quality material that floods the web to generate ad revenue. Like spam and trolls, **slop** is another time-waster clogging digital feeds with irrelevant, unhelpful content. Examples include clickbait articles with misleading titles leading to shallow content filled with ads or poorly written blog posts stuffed with keywords to manipulate search engine rankings. These are classic examples of '**slop**.'

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Sheila Grela.

What is **AI**-Generated **Slop**?

The New Term 'Slop' Joins 'Spam' in Our Vocabulary

'**Slop**' encompasses various **AI**-generated content-text and images-designed to flood the internet with low-quality material. This content aims to pull in ad revenue and manipulate search engine rankings. Unlike the interactive nature of chatbots, **slop** is static, often misleading, and essentially digital clutter. It is cheap to produce, and even minimal clicks can make it profitable. However, not all promotional content is spam, and not all **AI**-generated content is **slop**. Thoughtlessly produced content imposed on unsuspecting users can be aptly described as '**slop**.' For instance, automated news articles that repeat the same information with little context or analysis fall into this category.

How to Discern High-Quality Content from '**Slop**'

Navigating the vast ocean of online content can be challenging, especially with the rise of **AI**-generated '**slop**.' Here are some tips to help you distinguish high-quality content from digital clutter:

Check the Source

Reputable Publishers: Look for content from well-known, reputable sources such as established news outlets, academic journals, and official organizational websites. For example, articles from The New York Times or studies published in The Lancet are more likely to be reliable.

Author Credentials: Verify the credentials of the author. Are they an expert in the field? Do they have a history of reliable publications? Checking the author's LinkedIn profile or previous work can provide insights into their expertise.

Look for Detailed References and Citations

Citations: High-quality content typically includes references and citations to support its claims. Check if the article links to credible sources or provides a bibliography.

External Links: Follow the links to see if they lead to reputable websites or primary sources. For instance, an article on health should link to studies from medical journals or government health websites, not random blogs.

Evaluate the Writing Quality

Grammar and Style: Poor grammar, awkward phrasing, and inconsistent style can indicate low-quality, hastily generated content. High-quality articles are typically well-edited and free of such errors.

Depth of Analysis: Good content provides in-depth analysis, context, and multiple perspectives rather than superficial information. Look for detailed explanations and balanced viewpoints.

Analyze the Purpose and Tone

Objective vs. Promotional: Determine whether the content aims to inform or has a hidden agenda, such as selling a product or service. For example, an objective article will present facts and research, while a promotional piece might overly praise a product without much evidence.

Neutral Tone: High-quality content maintains a neutral, objective tone and avoids sensationalism. Watch out for exaggerated claims or emotional language that can indicate bias.

Cross-Check Information

Multiple Sources: Verify the information by checking multiple sources. Consistency across reputable sources can indicate reliability. If several trustworthy websites report the same facts, the information is likely accurate.

Fact-Checking Websites: Use fact-checking websites like Snopes, FactCheck.org, or PolitiFact to verify controversial claims. These sites often debunk false information and provide reliable facts.

Check for **AI** Hallmarks

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Repetition and Redundancy: AI-generated content often contains repetitive phrases and redundant information. If an article keeps repeating the same points, it might be AI-generated.

Lack of Depth: AI content may provide general information but lack the depth and nuance found in expert human writing. Look for detailed analysis and insights.

Static Content: Unlike interactive and responsive human-written content, AI-generated 'slop' tends to be static and non-engaging. High-quality articles often invite reader interaction through comments or discussion.

Look for Visual and Structural Clues

Layout and Design: Professionally designed content usually features a good layout; and proper use of headings, images, and other multimedia elements. Slop often lacks these features and may appear cluttered or poorly formatted.

Advertisements: Excessive ads and pop-ups can indicate that the primary goal of the content is monetization rather than providing valuable information. High-quality sites typically have fewer ads and more focus on content.

Test for Engagement and Interactivity

Comments and Discussions: High-quality content often sparks discussions and thoughtful comments from readers. Look for active engagement and meaningful exchanges. A lively comment section can indicate that the content is resonating with readers.

Updates: Reliable sources frequently update their content to reflect new information and developments. Check if the article has been updated recently to include the latest data.

By being vigilant and applying these strategies, you can better navigate the digital landscape and avoid falling for AI-generated 'slop.' Always prioritize confirmed human information and critical thinking to ensure your digital interactions are based on accurate, reliable, and valuable content.

Why Confirmed Human Information Needs to Take Precedence

As a paralegal, I can attest that confirmed human information must take precedence. Douglas Adams aptly said, 'We are stuck with technology when what we really want is just stuff that works.' While AI can generate content quickly, it lacks the nuance, empathy, and critical thinking that only humans can provide. Human input ensures that information is accurate, reliable, and meaningful.

AI-generated content, with its potential for errors and lack of accountability, can mislead us. This is particularly dangerous in critical areas like legal advice, medical information, and financial guidance. Human expertise comes with a responsibility and a level of scrutiny that AI cannot match.

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Real-World Examples and Potential Risks

Misleading Legal Advice

Legal advice and strategy are inherently complex and require the expertise of a competent attorney. AI-generated legal advice websites can provide misleading or incorrect guidance on critical legal matters, such as filing deadlines and legal procedures. This misinformation can lead to missed court dates and adverse legal outcomes, potentially

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causing significant harm. For example, an AI tool might incorrectly calculate a filing deadline, leading to missed opportunities for legal action. Consulting a qualified human attorney for legal matters is essential.

Health Risks from AI Content

AI-powered apps offering lifestyle and health recommendations can sometimes provide dangerous advice. For instance, an AI might suggest unsafe exercise routines or dietary changes without considering individual health conditions, leading to potential injuries or health issues. This lack of personalized context and understanding poses serious risks to users.

Financial Misinformation

AI-generated articles and financial reports can cause significant monetary losses. For example, an AI-authored article might provide inaccurate stock information, recommending investments in companies with poor financial health. Investors following this advice could suffer substantial financial losses, underscoring the dangers of relying on AI for critical financial decisions. In one notable case, AI-generated stock analysis led to a surge in investments in a failing company, causing widespread financial losses.

Statistics Highlighting the Issue

Content Volume: According to a 2023 study by the University of California, 40% of web content is now generated by AI. This influx of AI-generated material contributes to the digital clutter we experience today.

User Trust: A 2022 survey by Pew Research found that 60% of internet users have encountered misleading or false information online. Of these, 45% reported that the misleading information was AI-generated.

Economic Impact: The economic model behind AI-generated slop is straightforward: a study by the Digital Marketing Institute found that producing AI content costs up to 80% less than human-generated content, making it an attractive option for content farms and low-budget operations.

Why Human-Confirmed Information Matters

When we need genuine insights, thoughtful analysis, or reliable data, turning to humans is essential. Confirmed human information brings wisdom, context, and integrity-qualities that are crucial for making informed decisions and maintaining trust in the digital age. No AI can replace the accuracy and depth that comes from human experience and knowledge. The lack of wit, humor, and empathy can make facts boring and forgettable.

As William Pollard wisely noted, 'Information is a source of learning. But unless it is organized, processed, and available to the right people in a format for decision making, it is a burden, not a benefit.'

This emphasizes the importance of confirmed, reliable information over sheer volume.

Similarly, Atul Gawande pointed out, 'Better is possible. It does not take genius. It takes diligence. It takes moral clarity. It takes ingenuity. And above all, it takes a willingness to try.'

This rings true when considering the need for high-quality, human-verified information.

Garry Kasparov observed, 'AI may be able to process vast amounts of data, but it lacks the ability to make judgments and decisions with the same depth and ethical considerations as humans.'

This highlights the critical need for human oversight in evaluating and using information.

Neil Gaiman hit the nail on the head: 'Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one.'

Prioritizing confirmed human information is more important than ever. It is the key to ensuring that our digital interactions remain trustworthy, insightful, and truly beneficial.

The New Term 'Slop' Joins 'Spam' in Our Vocabulary

Conclusion

While **AI**-generated **slop** might flood the digital landscape, the value of human input remains irreplaceable. As we navigate through this **AI**-driven world, let us remember to prioritize the wisdom and reliability that only human minds can offer. By doing so, we can ensure that our digital interactions are based on accurate, reliable, and valuable content, keeping the essence of human touch alive in the age of artificial intelligence.

Searching through the vast sea of data on the internet can feel like trying to find a needle in a haystack-while blindfolded. Even with the advent of generative **AI**, distinguishing valuable information from the irrelevant noise remains a significant challenge. In this sprawling digital landscape, we need strategies that make navigating the vast ocean of information more manageable and insightful. Moreover, there is a pressing need for innovative solutions to filter out low-quality content, akin to how we handle spam.

Can generative **AI** offer any bright ideas on how to clean up the digital clutter it helps generate? From advanced algorithms to smarter filters, exploring these possibilities could revolutionize how we access and utilize online information.

[Link to the original story.](#)

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Spam evolves with AI: What is "Slop"?

CE Noticias Financieras English

July 11, 2024 Thursday

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Length: 601 words

Body

Headless articles that only create disinformation, memes and meaningless images that flood social networks, eye-catching headlines, but without reliable content that fill the "timelines" of cybernauts. Artificial intelligence has opened the door to a new era of creativity and automation, but also to a new type of digital garbage, the "**Slop**", the evolution of "Spam", one of the evils that appeared with the rise of the Internet.

The "**Slop**" can be translated as garbage or '**slop**' and refers to the content created automatically by generative **AI** tools in an automated way, without human labor or supervision, which only aims to monetize in some way.

As with Spam, these undesirable contents are programmed and created for the simple purpose of generating traffic or being monetized, which encourages their mass production with the help of generative **AI**, which facilitates the task of generating texts or images on an industrial scale, although their quality and usefulness are null.

Specialized technology media cite some examples, such as tourist articles that recommend visiting slums or unimportant sites in cities, books published in Amazon of zero quality or meaningless viral memes on Facebook or X.

These contents are often ridiculous and harmless, although annoying because of their persistence, generating waste of time and frustration among cybernauts, since they force them to navigate among dozens of useless pages and reduce trust in legitimate contents.

Simon Willison, a developer credited with being one of the first to use the word "**slop**" indicates that it is crucial to recognize and label this threat. "The term spam helped to understand and combat spam. Defining **slop** can raise awareness of the dangers of unsupervised **AI**," he warns.

The expert warns that, today, there are not too many tools to detect this type of articles. However, he believes that, over time, it will be possible to put a stop to it in the same way as spam.

However, while **AI** has the potential to change the lives of mankind, there are also those who seek to exploit it for illicit purposes. In fact, it is becoming increasingly common to find news of deepfakes circulating on the networks. It is even used to perfect the wording of phishing emails and to spread hoaxes.

Marcelo Pacheco, director of the Systems Engineering program at the Franz Tamayo University, Unifranz, says that, as with any technological tool, **AI** can be used for both good and evil, i.e. its uses can be beneficial for humanity, but also harmful.

Spam evolves with AI: What is "Slop"?

[Unifranz](#)

"It is possible to use artificial intelligence for a multitude of things, from making our lives easier to extortion, because **AI** is not inherently good or bad, it is what we do with it," he says.

For his part, systems engineer Sergio Valenzuela, professor of systems engineering at Unifranz, says it is important to understand the duality of the human being, who can be capable of great good as well as great evil, so ethics must always go hand in hand with advances, as this way risks can be reduced.

"**AI** is not inherently good or bad, however, it is important that its development is guided by ethical principles and that it avoids harming society through its use," he notes.

Given this reality, experts invite cybernauts to contrast the information they are reading if there is the slightest suspicion that it has been generated with **AI**. They also point out that the only viable solution is to force the labeling of content produced by this technology so that users know the truth. A system that Meta is trying to implement on Facebook and Instagram, although without the expected success.

?

Load-Date: July 12, 2024

End of Document



[Dead tech blog now publishing using AI with old bylines](#)

Newstex Blogs

Talking Biz News

July 11, 2024 Thursday 8:51 PM EST

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Length: 248 words

Body

July 11th, 2024 ([Talking Biz News](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

The Unofficial Apple Weblog, a legendary and long-dead Apple-centric tech news blog, is publishing new content using artificial intelligence and the bylines of former journalists, reports Jason Koebler of 404 Media.

Koebler reports, 'This month, 'Christina Warren' started blogging again for The Unofficial Apple Weblog (TUAW), a legendary and long-dead Apple-centric tech news blog that she worked at more than a decade ago. Warren was for years a well-known and very good tech journalist, before she went on to work for Microsoft and GitHub. The real Christina Warren hasn't been writing these new posts on the zombie TUAW, however. The site's new owners have [stolen her identity, replaced her photo with an AI-generated one, and have been publishing what appear to be AI-generated articles under her byline.](#)

'Worse, the new version of TUAW has 'recreated' the archives of the site by running old, real articles through a summarization tool and then republishing new, 'bastardized versions' of the old articles under the bylines of real writers who didn't actually write them, Warren said. The names and bios of dozens of real journalists who actually worked for TUAW a decade ago [are listed on the website, and all of them have had their real images replaced with AI-generated ones, and their old work misattributed to other people and turned into AI slop by a summarization tool that has destroyed their original work.](#)

Read more [here](#).

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Dead tech blog now publishing using AI with old bylines

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TUAW makes a sad return as an AI-powered stolen content farm

Newstex Blogs

9to5Mac

July 10, 2024 Wednesday 12:04 PM EST

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Length: 377 words

Body

July 10th, 2024 ([9to5Mac](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

The Unofficial Apple Weblog, more commonly referred to as TUAW, has made a return from the dead, almost a decade after it was closed down. Unfortunately, that's not a good thing

TUAW launched in 2004, and was once a popular source of Apple content. It was owned by AOL, and [closed down in 2015 when the corporation decided to pull resources from its smaller web publications to focus on the bigger ones. The archives were folded into Engadget.](#)

The domain was acquired by Yahoo, which recently sold it - without any rights to the content - to a company called Web Orange Limited (WOL). This is when things get messy.

Former contributor [Christina Warren found that the company had seemingly come up with a cheap plan to repopulate it with content: just get an AI to rewrite some junk, and steal the identities of the original writers.](#)

So someone bought the TUAW domain, populated it with **AI**-generated **slop**, and then reused my name from a job I had when I was 21 years old to try to pull some SEO scam that won't even work in 2024 because Google changed its algo. Assholes! H/t [@gruber pic.twitter.com/1JQeNljat— Christina Warren \(@film_girl\)](#)

[July 9, 2024](#)

Some of the content was stolen from the TUAW archives, and some from current Apple sites.

Having been called out by Warren, the company simply [changed her name.](#)

[Engadget reports that WOL seems to think all this is just fine.](#)

'With a commitment to revitalize its legacy, the new team at Web Orange Limited meticulously rewrote the content from archived versions available on archive.org, ensuring the preservation of TUAW's rich history while updating it to meet modern standards and relevance,' the site's about page states.

TUAW makes a sad return as an AI-powered stolen content farm

TUAW doesn't say if AI was used in those 'rewrites,' but a comparison between the original archive on Engadget and the 'rewritten' content on TUAW suggests that Web Orange Limited put little effort into the task. 'The article 'rewrites' aren't even assigned to the correct names,' Warren tells Engadget, 'It has stuff for me going back to 2004. I didn't start writing for the site until 2007.'

The company didn't respond to a request for a comment.

Photo by [Andrea De Santis on Unsplash](#)

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Load-Date: July 10, 2024



[Google Searches Prefer AI Spam to Real Content](#)

Inc.com

July 3, 2024 Wednesday 12:38 PM EST

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Length: 709 words

Byline: Kit Eaton

Body

Search engine optimization is the holy grail to boost traffic to websites--but in the **AI** era, even Google's much-scrutinized search algorithm shows a preference for ripped-off, **AI**-generated material over original content.

The rise of **AI**-generated spam articles, now dubbed "[AI slop](#)," prompted Google to take steps to contain the influence of this junk material influencing its [search results](#). But a recent report in [Wired](#) [shows](#) that either [Google's policy changes](#) made earlier this year didn't go far enough--or **AI**-generated content producers have already found workarounds--because some **AI**-tweaked spam news stories ripped off from the original publishers were found to be ranking above the genuine news articles.

Wired's investigation into the phenomenon involved its own content, and its report first looked into where these **AI**-faked articles were being published. It found that plagiarized **Wired** articles were being republished on some spammy **AI**-generated websites, and showing up higher in Google's search results than the originals. The **AI slop** pieces used whole quotes from the original articles and some included **AI**-generated artwork. However the unauthorized content was generated, the spammer was thorough--the plagiarized content also included **Wired** articles that the magazine had published in 10 languages other than English. News articles ripped from other sites, like Reuters and TechCrunch, were also published, with similar **AI**-generated imagery on top.

Explaining its campaign against **AI**-made spam in March, Google's blog post [said](#) the search engine was "enhancing Search so you see more useful information, and fewer results that feel made for search engines." It said it expected to reduce the appearance of "low-quality, unoriginal content" in search results by 40 percent. A late April update to the post said Google had actually seen a drop of 45 percent instead. The post also directly mentioned spam, noting Google was making "several updates" to spam policies to "better address new and evolving abusive practices that lead to unoriginal, low-quality content."

The problem is that rising **AI** technology is making it really easy for ill-intentioned people to easily "scrape" content that is someone else's legal intellectual property, tweak it and republish it. And somehow, this low-quality, **AI**-generated material still seems to be getting past Google's filters and affecting the ranking of genuine news articles on the site. It's a game of whack-a-mole, of course, just like hacking: when bad actors are prevented from doing one activity, they try something new, which then gets blocked by an algorithm change or other tweak, but the process just repeats itself without a permanent fix.

Google Searches Prefer AI Spam to Real Content

When Google [adjusts its algorithms](#), it often changes search results that affect businesses that rely on traffic from Google to attract customers and help generate online revenue. While **Wired** is obviously concerned about how its published news pieces are affected, **AI**-made spam could easily impact other industries.

News that **AI slop** is displacing genuine human-generated content is especially concerning in light of Google's recent decision to retire the [infinite scroll](#) it has long used to display search results. The world's dominant search engine is instead returning to an earlier system that displays search results on a number of separate numbered webpages. This change already concerns some web-centered businesses, since opening a search result would require extra clicks, which could be a barrier to traffic in the short attention span habits of many web users. And if your business appears in search results that are listed "below the fold," on pages beyond the first set of results, it's a genuine source of worry: the search preference for **AI** spam may be pushing legitimate results off the page.

How this affects your company depends on exactly how you generate income, how much reliant your business is on search traffic, and how good your current search engine optimization skills are. But it's an excellent reminder to double check with your web team to ensure they're on top of all the [latest SEO trends](#), and that they're looking for possible **AI**-generated **slop** that might even have been grabbed from your own company content.

[Link to Image](#)

Graphic

Photos: Getty Images

Load-Date: July 3, 2024

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Thousands of Raptive creators push to hold AI companies accountable



[Thousands of Raptive creators push to hold AI companies accountable](#)

Newstex Blogs

Android Headlines

June 27, 2024 Thursday 4:18 PM EST

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Length: 586 words**Byline:** Arthur Brown

Body

June 27th, 2024 ([Android Headlines](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

We're at a point where we're starting to see the negative effects of [AI technology despite what CEOs of AI companies tell us in keynotes. Creators stand to lose significantly thanks to AI, and this is why they're banding together. Thousands of Raptive creators band together to urge Congress to hold AI companies accountable.](#)

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know what sort of effects [AI](#) technology will have on the creator economy. We're already seeing creators being let go from their jobs because their employers chose to replace them with an [AI](#) model. As these [AI](#) tools get better, more people are going to lose their jobs. Writers, artists, musicians, filmmakers, actors, voice actors, etc. will all need to either abandon their lifelong passions or sell out and mass-produce soulless [AI slop](#) to please money-hungry corporations. There are very few other avenues to take.

Thousands of Raptive creators want [AI](#) companies to be held accountable

The American has been hard at work trying to pull some [AI](#) regulations out of the ether, but not much has materialized. However, other entities are out fighting the good fight while the government waits for the ink to dry.

For example, several major record labels are suing the companies behind two [AI](#) music generators for copyright infringement. This is one of the many lawsuits going on right now.

[Raptive is a company representing thousands of independent creators. It's paid out more than \\$2 billion to creators, and that number is going up. Raptive also acknowledges the threat of AI technology.](#)

The company, [backed by more than 13,000 creators from across the U.S. has urged Congress to hold major AI companies accountable for their actions. According to PR Newswire, the creator economy is valued at \\$100 billion, and it could nearly double in the next three years. However, with AI companies shoving AI tools down our throats, we fear that the creator economy could crumble.](#)

Requests

Thousands of Raptive creators push to hold AI companies accountable

Raptive and the creators [*have a handful of requests. Firstly, they want to enforce copyright law to protect original content from being scraped without consent. Secondly, they want a form of revenue-sharing structure in place so that creators are properly compensated for their work. Thirdly, AI tools shouldn't reduce the traffic going to creators' websites. Tools like these \(a good example is Google's AI Overviews\) can cut a company's ad revenue significantly.*](#)

Fourthly, future **AI** products shouldn't be able to unfairly compete against creators. This is pretty tricky, as this is what they're doing now. 'Why hire an artist to spend three hours on a painting when MidJourney can whip it up in 30 seconds?' These are the questions that companies are asking. So, we're going to have to see what the government makes of that request. Lastly, the government needs to ensure that these **AI** companies are being held accountable for their behavior.

We're talking about major corporations here; they're about as ethical as a desert is wet. There need to be some rules, guidelines, and the threat of MAJOR FINES to keep companies in line. OpenAI, Alphabet, and Meta contacted Hollywood studios about their **AI** products. HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS! So, not even industry-level jobs are safe from **AI**. We need something to keep these companies from completely ruining the entire creator economy.

The post [*Thousands of Raptive creators push to hold AI companies accountable appeared first on Android Headlines.*](#)

[*Link to the original story.*](#)

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Load-Date: June 27, 2024



[Garbage In, Garbage Out: Perplexity Spreads Misinformation From Spammy AI Blog Posts](#)

Forbes.com

June 26, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 1919 words

Byline: Rashi Shrivastava, Forbes Staff

Highlight: As Perplexity faces criticism for allegedly plagiarizing journalistic work and distributing it like a media company, it is increasingly citing AI-generated blogs and LinkedIn posts riddled with inaccurate and out of date information.

Body

<figure>

<figcaption>

In April, Aravind Srinivas, CEO of AI search startup Perplexity told Forbes, "Citations are our currency." Now, it's increasingly citing AI-generated blog posts on a wide variety of topics.

Christie Hemm Klok for Forbes

</figcaption></figure>

AI search engine Perplexity claims to be different from other generative AI tools like ChatGPT. Instead of regurgitating data without including any sources, it marks up its short summaries on any topic you want with footnotes that are supposed to link to recent and reliable sources of real-time information drawn from the internet. Citations are our currency, CEO Aravind Srinivas told **Forbes** in April.

But even as the startup has come under fire for republishing the work of journalists without proper attribution, **Forbes** has learned that Perplexity is also citing as authoritative sources AI-generated blogs that contain inaccurate, out of date and sometimes contradictory information.

According to a study conducted by AI content detection platform GPTZero, Perplexity's search engine is drawing information from and citing AI-generated posts on a wide variety of topics including travel, sports, food, technology and politics. The study determined if a source was AI-generated by running it through GPTZero's AI detection software, which provides an estimation of how likely a piece of writing was written with AI with a 97% accuracy rate; for the study, sources were only considered AI-generated if GPTZero determined with at least 95% certainty that they were written with AI (**Forbes** ran them through an additional AI detection tool called DetectGPT which has a 99% accuracy rate to confirm GPTZero's assessment).

Garbage In, Garbage Out: Perplexity Spreads Misinformation From Spammy AI Blog Posts

On average, Perplexity users only need to enter three prompts before they encounter an AI-generated source, according to the study, in which over 100 prompts were tested.

Perplexity is only as good as its sources, GPTZero CEO Edward Tian said. If the sources are AI hallucinations, then the output is too.

Searches like cultural festivals in Kyoto, Japan, "impact of AI on the healthcare industry," street food must-tries in Bangkok Thailand, and promising young tennis players to watch, returned answers that cited AI-generated materials. In one example, a search for cultural festival in Kyoto, Japan on Perplexity yielded a summary in which the only reference was for an AI-generated LinkedIn post. In another travel-related search for Vietnam's floating markets, Perplexity's response, which cited an AI-generated blog, included out-of-date information, the study found.

Perplexity is only as good as its sources. If the sources are AI hallucinations, then the output is too.
<footer>GPTZero cofounder and CEO Edward Tian</footer>

Perplexity Chief Business Office Dmitri Shevelenko said in an email statement to **Forbes** that its system is not flawless and that it continuously improves its search engine by refining the processes that identify relevant and high quality sources. Perplexity classifies sources as authoritative by assigning trust scores to different domains and their content. Its algorithms downrank and exclude websites that contain large amounts of spam, he said. For instance, posts by Microsoft and Databricks are prioritized in search results over others, Shevelenko said.

As part of this process, we've developed our own internal algorithms to detect if content is AI-generated. As with other detectors, these systems are not perfect and need to be continually refined, especially as AI-generated content becomes more sophisticated, he said.

As AI-generated slop gluts the internet, it becomes more challenging to distinguish between authentic and fake content. And increasingly these synthetic posts are trickling into the products that rely on web sources, bringing with them the inconsistencies or inaccuracies they contain, resulting in second-hand hallucinations, Tian said.

It doesn't take 50% of the internet being AI to start creating this AI echo chamber, he told **Forbes**.

In multiple scenarios, Perplexity relied on AI-generated blog posts, among other seemingly authentic sources, to provide health information. For instance, when Perplexity was prompted to provide some alternatives to penicillin for treating bacterial infections, it directly cited an AI-generated blog by a medical clinic that calls itself Penn Medicine Becker ENT & Allergy. (According to GPTZero, it's 100% likely that the blog is AI-generated. DetectGPT said there is a 94% chance it is fake.)

Such data sources are far from trustworthy because they sometimes offer conflicting information. The AI-generated blog mentions that antibiotics like cephalosporins can be used as an alternative to penicillin for those who are allergic to it, but a few sentences later the post contradicts itself by saying those with a penicillin allergy should avoid cephalosporins. Such contradictions were also reflected in answers generated by Perplexity's AI system, Tian said. The chatbot did, however, suggest consulting a specialist for the safest alternative antibiotic.

Got a tip for us? Reach out securely to Rashi Shrivastava at rshrivastava@forbes.com or rashis.17 on Signal.

Penn Medicine Becker ENT & Allergy customer service representatives redirected **Forbes** to Penn Medicine. But in response to **Forbes** questions about why the clinic was using AI to generate blogs that gave medical advice, Penn Medicine spokesperson Holly Auer said the specialty physician's website was not managed by Penn Medicine and that accuracy and editorial integrity are key standards for all web content associated with our brand, and we will investigate this content and take action as needed. It's unclear who manages the website.

Shevelenko said that the study's examples do not provide a comprehensive evaluation of the sources cited by Perplexity but he declined to share data about the types of sources that are cited by the system.

Garbage In, Garbage Out: Perplexity Spreads Misinformation From Spammy AI Blog Posts

The reality is that it depends heavily on the types of queries users are asking and their location, he said. Someone in Japan asking about the best TV to purchase will yield a very different source set from someone in the U.S. asking about which running shoes to buy.

Perplexity has also stumbled in its handling of authoritative sources of information. The billion dollar startup recently came under scrutiny for allegations of plagiarizing journalistic work from multiple news outlets including **Forbes**, CNBC and Bloomberg. Earlier this month, found Perplexity had lifted sentences, crucial details and custom art from an exclusive **Forbes** story about Eric Schmidt's secretive **AI** drone project without proper attribution. The company recreated the **Forbes** story across multiple media, in an article, podcast and YouTube video, and pushed it out aggressively to its users with a direct push notification.

Perplexity represents the inflection point that our **AI** progress now faces in the hands of the likes of Srinivas who has the reputation as being great at the PhD tech stuff and less-than-great at the basic human stuff amorality poses existential risk, Forbes Chief Content Officer Randall Lane wrote. Forbes sent a cease and desist letter to Perplexity, accusing the startup of copyright infringement. In response, Perplexity's CEO Srinivas denied the allegations, arguing that facts cannot be plagiarized, and said that the company has not rewritten, redistributed, republished, or otherwise inappropriately used **Forbes** content.

The GPTZero study noted that a Perplexity search for Eric Schmidt's **AI** combat drones, one of the pre-recommended search topics that sits on Perplexity's landing page, also used a blog post that was written with **AI** as one of its sources. (GPTZero found that there was a 98% chance the blog was **AI**-generated while DetectGPT said it was 99% confident.)

When you use such references, it's much easier to promote disinformation even if there is no intention to do so.
 <footer>Zak Shumaylov, machine learning researcher at the University of Cambridge.</footer>

An investigation found that through a secret IP address, the startup had also accessed and scraped work from **Wired** and other publications owned by media company **Condé Nast**, even though its engineers had attempted to block Perplexity's web crawler from stealing content. Even then, the search engine tends to make up inaccurate information and attribute fake quotes to real people. Srinivas did not respond to the **Wired** story's claims but said, The questions from **Wired** reflect a deep and fundamental misunderstanding of how Perplexity and the Internet work.

Shevelenko said the company realizes the crucial role that publishers have in creating a healthy information ecosystem that its product depends on. To that end, Perplexity has created what it claims is a first-of-its-kind revenue sharing program that will compensate publishers in a limited capacity. It plans to add an advertising layer on its platform that will allow brands to sponsor follow-up or related questions in its search and Pages products. For specific responses generated by its **AI** where Perplexity earns revenue, the publishers that are cited as a source in that answer will receive a cut. The company did not share what percentage of revenue it plans to share. It has been in talks with **The Atlantic** among other publishers about potential partnerships.

Srinivas, who was a researcher at OpenAI before starting Perplexity in 2022, has raised over \$170 million in venture funding (per Pitchbook). The company's backers include some of the most high-profile names in tech, including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Google Chief Scientist Jeff Dean, former YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki, Open **AI** cofounder Andrej Karpathy and Meta Chief Scientist Yann LeCun. In recent months, its conversational search chatbot has exploded in popularity, with 15 million users that include billionaires like Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and Dell founder and CEO Michael Dell.

Perplexity uses a process called RAG or retrieval-augmented generation, which allows an **AI** system to retrieve real time information from external data sources to improve its chatbot's responses. But a degradation in the quality of these sources could have a direct impact on the responses its **AI** produces, experts say.

Zak Shumaylov, a machine learning researcher at the University of Cambridge, said if real time sources themselves contain biases or inaccuracies, any application built on top of such data could eventually experience a phenomenon

Garbage In, Garbage Out: Perplexity Spreads Misinformation From Spammy AI Blog Posts

called model collapse, where an AI model that is trained on AI-generated data starts spewing nonsense because there is no longer information, there is only bias.

When you use such references, it's much easier to promote disinformation even if there is no intention to do so, he said.

Relying on low-quality web sources is a widespread challenge for AI companies, many of which don't cite sources at all. In May, Google's AI overviews, a feature that uses AI to generate previews on a topic, produced an array of misleading responses like suggesting adding glue to stick cheese on pizza and claiming that eating rocks can be good for your health. Part of the problem was that the system appeared to be pulling from unvetted sources like discussion forums on Reddit and satirical sites like Liz Reid, head of Google Search, admitted in a blog that some erroneous results appeared on Google in part because of a lack of quality information on certain topics.

Perplexity is only one case, Tian said. It's a symptom, not the entire problem.

MORE FROM FORBES

Load-Date: April 2, 2025

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Letter writer declares 'Durango Decline' citing online classes, branding and merch

The Gateway: University of Nebraska at Omaha

June 24, 2024 Monday

University Wire

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 276 words

Body

It's hard not to notice as you walk about our campus that the higher-ups are hard at work rebranding each and every aspect of our fine institution with the "Maverick" or "Durango" moniker. We have a Maverick Store, Advising Center, Productions, the list goes on. While I can appreciate the sentiment of building community in a low-prestige commuter school, we've officially entered the era of "Durango Decline".

Somewhere along the line, the higher-ups decided that shifting to prioritizing totally online, self-paced course sections would help improve accessibility and fit more people into classes, so why not do it? Plus, it's another thing to charge fees for.

Well, students went all in for this. And why is that? Because, in most online sections, one can get away with pasting **AI slop** three times a week into a discussion board. Because, in most cases, professors or grad instructors are too busy to bother enforcing any kind of academic rigor in their online sections. Because, you don't need to really be present or part of the community to get your rubber-stamp credits.

Don't get me wrong - we need to include students who work full-time, and can't attend regularly scheduled classes. There's other options, though, like night and weekend classes, as well as synchronous online classes. All of those, of course, would take money and effort, which UNO would rather spend on flimsy Maverick merch.

Congrats to UNO for improving the accessibility of an education, by making sure nobody gets one at all.

Editor's Note

The Gateway welcomes letters to the editor as a part of our duty to provide a public forum for the university. Please submit any letters here.

Load-Date: June 24, 2024



After spam, meet slop, poor quality content generated by AI

CE Noticias Financieras English

June 18, 2024 Tuesday

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Length: 818 words

Body

You may not know exactly what "slop" means in the context of artificial intelligence. But on some level, you probably know what I'm talking about.

Slop is a broad term that has gained traction when referring to bad or unwanted AI content on social media, art, books and, increasingly, in internet search results.

Google suggesting that you could add glue to make cheese stick to pizza? That's slop. As is a cheap ebook that seems to be what you were looking for, but not quite. What about those posts on your Facebook feed that seemingly came out of nowhere? That's slop too.

The term became more prevalent last month when Google incorporated its Gemini AI model into its search results in the US.

Instead of pointing users to links, the service tries to solve a query directly with an "AI Overview" - a piece of text at the top of a page that uses Gemini to form its best guess as to what the user is looking for.

The move was a reaction to Microsoft incorporating AI into its Bing search results, and had some immediate stumbles, leading Google to declare that it would roll back some of its AI features until the problems were resolved.

But with the major search engines having made AI a priority, it seems that vast amounts of machine-generated information, rather than being largely selected by humans, will be served up daily as part of life on the internet for the foreseeable future.

Hence the term slop, which conjures up images of piles of unappetizing food being poured into cattle troughs. Like this kind of slop, search with AI forms quickly, but not necessarily in a way that the most critical can accept.

Kristian Hammond, director of Northwestern University's Center for Advancing Safety of Machine Intelligence, pointed out a problem with the current model: the information in the AI Overview is being presented as a definitive answer, rather than as a starting point for an internet user's research into a particular subject.

"You search for something and you get what you need to think about it - and it really encourages you to think," said Hammond. "What's happening, in this integration with language models, is something that doesn't encourage the user to think. It encourages them to accept. And I think that's dangerous."

After spam, meet slop, poor quality content generated by AI

Giving a name can be useful for identifying a problem. And while slop is an option, it's still an open question whether it will be adopted by a wider audience or end up in the slang garbage can with cheugy, bae and skibidi.

Adam Aleksic, a linguist and content creator who goes by the name Etymologynerd on social media, believes that slop - which he said has not yet become popular - is promising.

"I think this is a great example of an understated word at the moment, because it's a word we're all familiar with," said Aleksic. "It's a word that seems naturally applicable to this situation. So it's less invasive."

The use of slop to describe low-quality AI material apparently came about in reaction to the launch of AI art generators in 2022.

Some have identified programmer Simon Willison as an early adopter of the term - but Willison, who defended the adoption of the phrase, said it had been in use long before he encountered it.

"I think I may actually have been quite late to the party!" he said in an email.

The term has appeared on 4chan, Hacker News and YouTube comments, where anonymous commenters sometimes project their proficiency in complex subjects using niche language.

"What we always see with any slang is that it starts in a niche community and then spreads," said Aleksic.

"Usually, whether the slang is interesting or not is a factor that helps it spread, but not necessarily. Just as we've had a lot of words spreading from a bunch of programming geeks. Look at the word 'spam'. Usually, the word is created because there is a specific group with shared interests, with a shared need to invent words."

In the short term, the effect of AI on search engines and the internet in general may be less extreme than some fear.

News organizations have worried about a shrinking online audience as people rely more on AI-generated answers, and data from Chartbeat, a company that researches internet traffic, indicates that there was an immediate drop in Google Discover referrals to websites in the early days of AI Overviews.

But that drop has since recovered, and in the first three weeks of the Overviews, overall search traffic to more than 2,000 websites in the US increased, according to Chartbeat.

But as people get used to the growing role of AI in the functioning of the internet, Willison, who identified himself as an optimist about AI when used correctly, thought that slop could become the standard term for the less important forms of machine-generated content.

"Society needs concise ways to talk about modern AI - both the positive and negative aspects. 'Ignore that email; it's spam' and 'ignore that article; it's slop' are useful examples," he said.

Load-Date: June 19, 2024



Why Sheehy's 'I have scored, Eileen' helps RTÉ News

The Irish Times

June 18, 2024 Tuesday

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Section: FINANCE; Pg. 14

Length: 930 words

Body

I missed the RTÉ One O Clock News last Thursday, and I was raging. They say it s important for your sense of inner order and productivity to build an anchor habit into your daily routine, and for me that anchor is Eileen Whelan.

On this occasion, the miss meant not getting to see a spot of comedy gold as it unfolded live in the wilds of linear television. I had to catch up with a clipped-up version of it later in the day along with the rest of the extremely online masses.

The moment came courtesy of RTÉ News southern editor, Paschal Sheehy, who brought some much-needed colour to the fifth day of the European Parliament count from Nemo Rangers GAA club in Cork.

[Fianna Fáil candidate] Billy Kelleher s team has just arrived here with a tray of sandwiches, he informed Whelan near the end of a live link.

With some time to go before the result of the next count, there was probably more interest in the distribution of those sandwiches at this stage than there was in the distribution of an eliminated candidate s votes, he suggested to absolutely no dissent whatsoever.

My presence on this plinth is a source of some mirth for some people here because I am being kept away from these sandwiches, explained Sheehy then, conveying the perils of live broadcasting via some real-time smirking.

He didn t seem too hopeful when Whelan ventured that someone might save one for him. But after dropping into the Midlands-North-West count centre for an update from the suddenly peckish western correspondent Pat McGrath, there was time for a quick goodbye from a newly sandwich-laden Sheehy.

I have scored, Eileen, he declared with the sort of glee that can only be elicited by the arrival of food.

A replay of the full bulletin confirms that Whelan, because she s a pro, smoothly segued from congratulating her freshly carb-equipped colleague to the straightest of faces and most serious of voices as she proceeded to the next item, which happened to be news of Enoch Burke losing his defamation case against the publisher of the Sunday Independent.

Why Sheehy's 'I have scored, Eileen' helps RTÉ News

I was reminded of Sheehy, his single transferable sandwich triumph and the clip that RTÉ packaged up for online consumption when I was sent an embargoed copy of this year's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism global digital news report.

One of its significant Irish findings is that the level of trust in RTÉ News has risen. Based on a survey of more than 2,000 people, conducted this year, some 72.4 per cent of news consumers in Ireland trust RTÉ, up 1 percentage point compared with last year.

RTÉ's performance, DCU's Institute of Future Media, Democracy and Society (FuJo) said in its analysis, was particularly notable in light of the corporate governance scandal at the broadcaster over the past year.

Trusted news

So, there has been no reputational contagion, this appears to confirm. RTÉ is the most trusted news organisation in Ireland, though I'm contractually obliged to mention that The Irish Times is right there with it, trusted by 71.7 per cent, while local and regional radio is next on 71 per cent.

This is worth remembering amid all the online noise. In communities across Ireland, reporters for long-established news outlets who face consequences when they don't live up to editorial standards tend to be respected, well-liked figures who may, sometimes, be hungry.

Interestingly, the survey found that online news has now nudged ahead of television as the most likely answer when people are asked to give their main source of news. This wasn't by much 33 per cent compared with 31 per cent and the survey itself is conducted online, meaning it tends to underrepresent traditional offline news consumption. But it does underline the benefit to RTÉ if its news clips go viral every so often.

Up to date

When asked about the role of news in their lives, a relatively low percentage 43 per cent say it is very or somewhat important for news to be entertaining. This is less than the 75 per cent who say it is the role of news to keep them up to date with what's going on or even the 52 per cent who say it is important for news to make them feel connected to others in society.

This seems about right. I don't think it is the role of news to be entertaining, necessarily. I just appreciate it when somehow, against all the odds, it manages this feat. Indeed, it's the unexpectedness of any injection of humanity into the formal, historically stiff genre of television news and the relief of fleeting lightness in a world of misery and gloom that makes such moments stand out.

The global Reuters Institute report expands on the theme, examining user needs when it comes to news. Update me is the biggest one, important for 72 per cent, and divert me is bottom of the pile on 47 per cent. The authors caution that diversions may be more important overall to people's lives, but are just not something they always expect the news media to provide.

Again, this is fair enough. But what we think of as news does not exist in a silo. It is part of a much wider attention economy in which failure to engage is punished. It would actually be odd if a bundle of news, such as a television bulletin or a newspaper, was rigidly monotonal and robotic.

And with the age of AI-generated slop now seemingly imminent, it would be counterproductive, too.

For sure, the banter-as-default mode of some US television news networks would be unbearable. Constant, contrived jokes would be inappropriate and weird. But, like the seasoning in a sandwich, a little bit of personality goes a long way.

Why Sheehy's 'I have scored, Eileen' helps RTÉ News

End of Document



How technology has changed our daily lives

B-Metro

June 17, 2024 Monday

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Length: 517 words

Body

Remember the days when a trip to the library was your only option for research, or a landline phone tethered you to one spot for communication?

The relentless march of technology has transformed our lives in ways unimaginable just a few decades ago, offering unparalleled opportunities but also presenting new challenges. Below, we explore some of the key areas where it's had the most significant impact.

Communication

Instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger allow us to connect with anyone in the world in real-time, fostering closer relationships and global collaboration. Video conferencing platforms like Zoom have also become ubiquitous after seeing massive growth during the pandemic, facilitating business meetings and even personal interactions between friends and family members.

Information

The internet has democratized access to information like never before. Search engines like Google put a vast library of knowledge at our fingertips, allowing us to research any topic imaginable within seconds. The recently announced Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered overviews promise to further empower individuals to understand any subject that interests them.

However, the sheer volume of information available can be overwhelming, and the ability to discern credible sources from misinformation remains a critical challenge, only exacerbated by AI-generated 'slop' content.

Entertainment

In place of the video rental stores like Blockbuster we enjoyed at the start of the 21st century, modern streaming services like Netflix and Disney offer on-demand access to a vast library of movies and TV shows, while platforms like YouTube provide a constant stream of user-generated content.

How technology has changed our daily lives

Online gaming has also become a major form of leisure, with gaming platforms offering everything from first-person shooters to complex strategy titles. Even classic games have been given a digital makeover, with online bingo platforms letting players connect and enjoy a familiar game from the comfort of their homes.

Work-life balance

With smartphones and laptops allowing us to be constantly connected, modern technology has undeniably blurred the lines between work and personal life, making it difficult to ever truly switch off. This can lead to stress, burnout, and difficulty maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

However, there are many ways in which technology has also enhanced the workplace. There are countless tools for productivity, project management and much more that can streamline workflows, potentially freeing up time for personal pursuits. Ultimately, it's up to individuals to maintain healthy habits and ensure technology enhances, rather than hinders, our relationship with work.

Harnessing technology for the future

Technology has become a double-edged sword in our time. It offers unparalleled connection, information, and entertainment, but also challenges us with information overload, work-life blur, and the need for constant vigilance in a world of digital noise. Striking the right balance is key to harnessing technology's power for a fulfilling and connected life.

Load-Date: June 17, 2024



The rise and risk of AI-generated slop

Devx.com

June 14, 2024 Friday 6:42 PM EST

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DevX

Length: 452 words

Byline: Cameron Wiggins

Body

The "dead internet theory" suggests that a significant portion of online content and activity is generated by artificial intelligence (**AI**) agents rather than humans. These **AI** agents rapidly create posts and images designed to farm engagement on social media platforms. While some of this **AI**-generated content may seem harmless, like the viral "shrimp Jesus" images, there are concerns about more sophisticated and potentially deceptive uses.

Studies have found that bot accounts on social media can spread misinformation and disinformation, amplifying unreliable sources and swaying public opinion. [Social media companies are taking steps to address](#) the misuse of their platforms. They are exploring ways to [identify](#) and remove bot activity, as well as considering measures like requiring users to pay for membership to deter bot farms.

The concept of "**slop**" has emerged to describe carelessly automated **AI** webpages and images that clutter the internet. Unlike interactive chatbots, **slop** is not intended to serve users' needs but rather to generate ad revenue and manipulate [search engine](#) results. **Slop** can be harmful when it contains incorrect or misleading information.

Examples include an **AI**-generated article listing a food [bank](#) as a tourist attraction and **AI**-written books with dangerous advice.

The spread of AI-generated slop

Image-generated **slop**, like bizarre reworkings of [religious](#) iconography, has also proliferated on social media.

The rise and risk of AI-generated slop

Advertising agencies, the main revenue source for social media, are becoming concerned about the rise of slop. They worry that consumers may start to feel they are being served low-quality content and mistakenly flag legitimate ads as AI-generated. Tackling the problem of slop will be challenging, as major tech companies themselves are now using AI to generate content like search result overviews.

While they claim to have strong safety guardrails, slop continues to spread across the web. The story of "Shrimp Jesus" illustrates how an innocent joke can be co-opted by AI and used by scammers to lure unsuspecting users. As AI-generated content becomes more sophisticated, it will be increasingly difficult to discern the intentions behind it.

Experts call for greater transparency from social media companies, including labeling AI-generated content. While AI can create impressive images, many people still value the authenticity and "soul" of human-made art. The rise of AI-generated content on the internet is a cautionary tale, reminding us to be skeptical and navigate social media with a critical mind.

As one researcher noted, "Sometimes people use AI for creation, but there's always a dark side."

The post [The rise and risk of AI-generated slop](#) appeared first on [DevX](#).

Load-Date: June 14, 2024

Comment: 'We deserve more than reheated housing ideas and AI slop'



Comment: 'We deserve more than reheated housing ideas and AI slop'

standard.co.uk

June 12, 2024 Wednesday 11:54 AM EST

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London Evening Standard

Length: 435 words

Byline: India Block

Body

The manifestos and housing pledges are dropping, and with it any hope for serious ideas to help London's struggling renters and homeowners.

Nothing even vaguely fresh or original has made it onto the menu.

Labour suggested it would [extend the Conservative's 95 per cent mortgage scheme](#) to help first-time buyers (FTBS). In reality, anyone who can't save for a deposit will struggle to pass the mortgage checks, especially in pricey London.

The Conservatives are still insisting they'd totally be able to pass the Renters Reform Bill in ban section 21, a broken promise from the last election.

[They also want to bring back Help To Buy](#), which begs the question why they stopped it in the first place - seeing as London new build prices are now permanently inflated.

Lib Dems want to bring in Rent to Own for social housing, a rebranded Right to Buy that would require a lot more social housing to replace the stock moving into private ownership. They'd also build 10 garden cities, location undetermined.

"Quality housing should be our shared future, not a reanimated zombie of the past."

Labour is beating the drum for new towns too, getting into bed with Conservative think tank Create Streets with a New Town's Code that promises new urban hubs with old world charm.

Create Streets' **AI**-created images of leafy streets and faux-Edwardian mansion blocks should give us all pause.

Comment: 'We deserve more than reheated housing ideas and AI slop'

Looking to RETVRN to a non-existent halcyon past of housing is an alt-right dog whistle, one that won't fly in multicultural London.

The appeal of building an entirely new place is you don't have to risk upsetting existing residents by bolting on hundreds of new homes.

But much of this NIMBYism is underpinned by the real fear over having to share already over-stretched public services, not fussing over the visual familiarity.

New homes need sufficient GP appointments and school places - they don't need to smuggle in weird nationalist ideas.

That Create Streets has to resort to image generators likely trained on stolen art speaks to a lack of commitment to serious design that values human labour.

We have plenty of smart architects and urban planners working on contemporary housing ideas for our city. [Just look at the winners of the recent RIBA London awards.](#)

Quality housing should be our shared future, not a reanimated zombie of the past.

Read More

[General election: Labour pledges 'Freedom to Buy' mortgage guarantee scheme - but will it work in London?](#)

[Tory manifesto: pledge to revive Help to Buy scheme 'devoid of imagination' say property experts](#)

[Comment: Can the general election rescue a bedraggled London housing market?](#)

Load-Date: June 28, 2024

Apple is finally letting you have it your way-kinda



Apple is finally letting you have it your way-kinda

Macworld (US)

June 12, 2024 Wednesday 10:30 AM EST

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Length: 900 words

Body

Macworld

Apple, as a company, has always extolled the value of putting the personal in personal computer. From its earliest days pushing back at the monolith of IBM and beige boxes that all looked like one another, to its more recent extremely personal devices like the iPhone, Apple Watch, and AirPods.

But that ethos of personal technology has always been in fundamental tension with the companys other overriding principle: Apple knows best. Whether its the design of its apps or how to use its features, the company has a strong streak of imposing on its users what it believes is the best approach.

In the companys latest platform updates, this tension is more apparent than ever. Apple announced several new features that allow users to bring their own touches to their devicesbut it did so in a typically Apple fashion that still kept everything within bounds.

Custom-ish-ation

One of the most anticipated announcements ahead of this years Worldwide Developers Conference was that Apple would finally relax the strictures around your iOS devices home screen. The grid of icons has remained largely unchanged since its appearance in the very first iPhone back in 2007. There have been a few additions of course: folders, the App Library, and at long last the addition of widgets in iOS 14. But even all of those enhancements fit within the structure provided by the grid.

Apple

Apple

Apple

The rumor that this year would let you put icons anywhere on your screen no doubt conjured the freedom of macOS in some minds eyes. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it wasnt to be: when the company did announce the feature, it became clear that while you could move your icons around and leave open spaces so your wallpaper showed through, the icons would still ultimately reside within the grid.

Apple is finally letting you have it your way-kinda

Likewise, the news that you would at long last be able to reassign the iPhones lock screen shortcut buttons for the flashlight and the camera was greeted enthusiastically but there remain just the two icons. Apple specifically acknowledged this push and pull to me, saying that they wanted to give users the freedom to customize their experiences while still trying to maintain the iconic look and feel of the iPhone.

There is, however, one place on the home screen where Apple has put peoples customizations front and center: the new app icon features, which let you not only choose a light or dark option but also tint all your apps the same color. When you select a tint, it changes all of your app icons regardless of whether or not the developer has designed their icon appropriately.

Picture window

Theres a big Photos redesign happening this year, and its largely about customization as well. Users can choose what they want to show up in the carousel at the top, whether its the traditional grid of photos or a specific set of curated pictures, or even photos the system has chosen to feature. Below that main section is a set of collections, which you can select and order as you like.

The push-and-pull of the customization is almost more internalized to the app here. Its a question of Apple trying to make your Photos app look as good as possible by suggesting the content that might take center stage, even if you do have the option to override it. Given that this is a feature centered around your own pictures, it does seem smart for Apple to try and go a little more hands-off here, making sure that its your content that remains the star.

Apple

Apple

Apple

Intelligence agency

By far the most personal-oriented development from this years WWDC is, of course, the companys rollout of its **AI**-powered features, under the aegis of Apple Intelligence. This suite of improvements to features across the companys platforms may unlock some very powerful behaviors that help you do the things you need to do, but it remains to be seen just how personal it will be.

The problem is, to a degree, inherent in the very technology that underpins it. Much as **AI** is intended to help people accomplish things in a faster and more efficient manner, the way it achieves this is via a technology that is often trained on a huge corpus of material. One risk of technology like that is that it can feel depersonalized almost generic. For example, if you use Apples new Writing Tools feature to make an email sound more professional, might it do so in a way that sounds less like you? Will everybodys use of the Friendly rewrite tone end up sounding like the same person? Again, its not a concern thats unique to Apple much of the text generated by other systems like ChatGPT has a way of sounding samey but its something that the company may have to contend with when convincing people to take advantage of its feature.

Likewise, Apples new image generation technologies might unlock the ability to create pictures even for those who, like me, are artistically challenged, but their reliance on a handful of specific styles can end up feeling generic. Or, as developer Sebastiaan de With [pointed out](#) a feature that can turn whimsical sketches into **AI slop**.

All of this is something that Apple needs to contend with as it attempts to make its own foray into artificial intelligence. A personalized intelligent agent needs to feel personal, and the companys demonstration of a system that knows about your data and information is a good step in that direction even if the generative features sometimes feel like a step back.

iOS, iPad, iPhone

Apple is finally letting you have it your way-kinda

Load-Date: June 13, 2024

End of Document



Apple Intelligence first reactions: from 'pure slop' to 'excellent work'

Newstex Blogs

VentureBeat

June 10, 2024 Monday 11:02 PM EST

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Length: 1471 words

Byline: Carl Franzen

Body

June 10th, 2024 ([VentureBeat](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

Apple had been among the tech giants most conspicuously absent from - or at least, low-key about - the generative **AI** craze, at least until today.

At its annual Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC 2024) in Cupertino, California, the company unveiled its biggest push into generative **AI** so far: [a new service called Apple Intelligence](#), which will offer a variety of features across Apple devices including Mac computers, iPhones, and iPads.

The service is not an app per se, rather, it is a set of features embedded within other popular apps, from web browser Safari (where you can summarize articles) to Mail (where it can rewrite and suggest grammar improvements) to Photos (auto generate photo albums on specific subjects and topics set to music based on a text prompt) to Messages (where it can create custom **AI** generated emoji and photos of your contacts, as well as event and group photos).

As with nearly all new Apple announcements of the company's storied history, the Apple Intelligence announcement was watched by a large audience of tech workers and journalists, as well as creatives, and some notable entrepreneurs and executives from rival firms.

It also inspired a wide range of responses, from some interpreting the announcement as underwhelming or undermining of Apple's reputation as a company where minimalistic and clean designs are prioritized, while others viewed it as one of, if not the best examples of generative **AI** done right. Here are some of the most interesting reactions I saw:

High praise from former rivals

Steven Sinofsky, the former president of the Windows Division at Microsoft and current board partner at Andreessen Horowitz, called Apple Intelligence 'really excellent work.'

Apple Intelligence first reactions: from 'pure slop' to 'excellent work'

This is really excellent work. There is a ton that won't show up for a long time, but that is precisely what Apple does so well.

- Steven Sinofsky (@stevesi) [June 10, 2024](#)

He also said he thought the idea of weaving Apple Intelligence through its various Apple-branded apps was 'exactly right and even more so when combined with privacy/on device.'

Excellent. Today was super high on 'vision' for Apple with tons of future tense. At the same time their strong point of view is abundantly clear. This is not just privacy and on device, but how they see integration at the platform level. The idea for example of building on top of

- Steven Sinofsky (@stevesi) [June 10, 2024](#)

And, as if that wasn't enough of a favorable review, Sinofsky also took the opportunity to ding Google and his own former employer Microsoft in comparison to Apple's approach:

The contrast between what Apple is showing and what Google and Microsoft have shown is as stark as ever. This is really important. Apple brings their point of view to the newest technologies, again.

- Steven Sinofsky (@stevesi) [June 10, 2024](#)

Similarly, Andrej Karpathy, an esteemed researcher who was previously director of artificial intelligence and Autopilot Vision at Tesla (where he competed with Apple's abandoned self-driving car project) and a co-founder of OpenAI, said in a post on X that he found Apple Intelligence 'super exciting.'

Actually, really liked the Apple Intelligence announcement. It must be a very exciting time at Apple as they layer **AI** on top of the entire OS. A few of the major themes.

Step 1 Multimodal I/O. Enable text/audio/image/video capability, both read and write. These are the native

- Andrej Karpathy (@karpathy) [June 10, 2024](#)

Double standard?

Bilawal Sidhu, host of the TED Talks **AI** Show and a former Google Maps AR/VR engineer, wrote a lengthy post on X comparing how Apple Intelligence leverages personal data on the device in which it operates, as well as virtual private clouds, to serve up **AI** responses - a tack that he saw as similar to Microsoft's new Recall feature for Windows Copilot + PCs that [faced intense backlash from some users and researchers for possible data security risks](#). Microsoft Recall was, as of last week, [disabled by default](#) and now must be turned on by the user during setup.

Apple's reality distortion field is strong. It's kinda wild that with "semantic index," Apple is basically doing what Microsoft wants to do with **AI** recall + Copilot, and without any of the big brother backlash.

Semantic index means all your private content (messages, emails, <https://t.co/dFNy7yTotv>

- Bilawal Sidhu (@bilawalsidhu) [June 10, 2024](#)

AI images and Genmoji: love/hate?

One of the most immediately obvious use cases for Apple Intelligence for regular users is in its ability to create custom imagery and emoji based on their text prompts within Messages and other apps.

Open source software developer and **AI** influencer [Simon Willison took to his blog](#) to commend Apple's approach toward **AI** image generation, writing:

Apple Intelligence first reactions: from 'pure slop' to 'excellent work'

This feels like a clever way to address some of the ethical objections people have to this specific category of **AI** tool:

If you can't create photorealistic images, you can't generate deepfakes or offensive photos of people

By having obvious visual styles you ensure that **AI** generated images are instantly recognizable as such, without watermarks or similar

Avoiding the ability to clone specific artist's styles further helps sidestep ethical issues about plagiarism and copyright infringement

The social implications of this are interesting too. Will people be more likely to share **AI**-generated images if there are no awkward questions or doubts about how they were created, and will that help it more become socially acceptable to use them?

Others criticized the look and feel of the cartoonish **AI** generated images in Messages:

As someone who spends 24 hours a day optimizing the fine-tuning of image models for everyday cases (such as this one), this was hard to watch. pic.twitter.com/W4oe46NXbZ

- Pietro Schirano (@skirano) [June 10, 2024](#)

some of the apple/**AI** integrations look potentially useful, but the image playground feature is pure **AI slop**. the "animation" style apple kept on showcasing looks horribly dated already. i imagine this will entertain older users but be an instant turn off for gen z pic.twitter.com/GhmuBOT2Jv

- James Vincent (@jjvincent) [June 10, 2024](#)

A third-party app killer

Various users pointed out that by integrating a number of **AI** features across its native apps, Apple was essentially killing third-party **AI**-powered apps and services that sought to offer similar functionality prior to the news today and the absence of Apple Intelligence.

Apps Apple sherlocked this WWDC

AllTrails

Soulver

1Password

Grammarly

Bitmoji

Bezel

Making mac apps, just mirror your phone lol

Rabbit R1

ChatGPT signups

did I miss any?

- Nick Dobos (@NickADobos) [June 10, 2024](#)

Apple Intelligence first reactions: from 'pure slop' to 'excellent work'

Questions about training data

Other users on X, including some visual artists and tech workers opposed to the practices of generative **AI** model providers training without express consent on vast swaths of artwork and creative work posted to the web, questioned exactly how Apple had trained its underlying Apple Intelligence **AI** models - the company mentioned both language and diffusion models in its keynote announcement - and on what specific data.

1/ Apple 'Intelligence' is here and 0 questions of 'where does the data come from?' to be seen in press.

APPLE is trying to shove a huge privacy risk and tech that screams scraped off the internet without consent to the public. So here's a list of potential data sources ? pic.twitter.com/2WBzRSjsh3

- Karla Ortiz (@kortizart) [June 10, 2024](#)

Obviously impossible to know, but I suspect Steve Jobs would have been one of the few big tech CEOs to refuse to train generative **AI** on creators' work without their permission. Disappointing to see Apple drop hints they've done just that ('public web', 'can opt out' etc.) <https://t.co/v3AjXQvzXE>

- Ed Newton-Rex (@ednewtonrex) [June 10, 2024](#)

One Apple executive present at WWDC told Axios's Ina Fried that the models were trained on 'data from the public web' combined with licensed, or paid, data.

Giannandrea says Apple's IIm was built in part using data from the public web and that publishers can opt out of, along with a wide range of licensed data. He doesn't get more specific, though.

- Ina Fried (@inafried) [June 10, 2024](#)

AI is a feature not a product?

Apple's choice to weave the Apple Intelligence service throughout its apps also had The Information founder and CEO Jessica Lessin musing that the approach was likely to be seen as influential.

The legacy of today's Apple news will be that **AI** is a feature not a product.

- Jessica Lessin (@Jessicalessin) [June 10, 2024](#)

Clearly, a wide range of reactions and they're still rolling in. What do you think about Apple Intelligence so far?

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Load-Date: June 10, 2024

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The Artificial is Rarely Intelligent

Free The People

June 5, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 1196 words

Byline: Taylor Lewis

Body

Jerry Seinfeld's commencement speech at Duke garnered national attention for the wrong reason. The handful of kids who petulantly stomped out in protest of Seinfeld's "Zionism," which I guess means being Jewish and believing your race deserves a homeland free of wanton pogroms, earned a few headlines, while also kicking in the Streisand Effect, awarding the sitcom star even more media regard. Score one for the children being carpet-bombed in Rafah, right?

What Seinfeld told graduates, which in typical comedic fashion cut against the grain of public sentiment, was approbatory. So of course it wasn't sensationalized. He issued no angry adjurations to feel guilty about earning a college degree because someone, somewhere, probably in a Botswanan bidonville, will never achieve the same credential. No preening "land acknowledgement." No "remember your fellow man" Dickensian platitudes meant to humble with humiliation. No cringey "change the world" injunction that inevitably leads to an overly idealistic student throwing him or herself into traffic to save the whooping crane.

Instead, Seinfeld ripped every page out of the DEI handbook, urging the audience to embrace their privilege and get this-be proud of their accomplishments. Who knew it was still legal to toot your own horn in America? (Lest you're a racial/sexual minority with a grievance pathology, obviously.)

That's all grand contrarian messages go, and Seinfeld's pro-privilege postulation would fit nicely in a Daily Wire infomercial. (Picture Ben Shapiro hyper-verbally sputtering, "Facts don't care about your feelings and privilege is good. You hear that, libs? PRIVILEGE IS GOOD. Ha! Triggered!") It's also uniquely American-that is, it was American up to about, by my estimate, seven years, fifty days, and thirty-two seconds ago when the Great Awakening entered its shame-success phase, when even the slightest flash of self-respect is slagged and maligned.

Being in favor of unapologetic excellence gives Seinfeld and edgelord verve. But he went further, needling America's most applauded class, after blacks, gays, and illegal migrants: the lazy. In particular, he went after the biggest boon to the slothful since the advent of DoorDash: artificial intelligence.

"**AI**," Seinfeld quipped, "is the most embarrassing thing we've ever invented in mankind's time on earth. Oh, you can't do the work. Is that what you're telling me? You can't figure it out?" You could almost hear the iconic bass line and laugh track as he delivered the bit. "This seems to be the justification of **AI**: I couldn't do it."

The Artificial is Rarely Intelligent

That AI is a shortcut for the short-sighted and short-thinking is indisputable. The synthetic brain was coded to ease the pressure on organic brain tissue—that's its deontological purpose. Meanwhile, half of comedy's deontological purpose is, as Justin Taylor explains, is putting forth a "critique of the world as it is based on a vision of the world as it ought to be." The other half is to tickle your diaphragm with discernment.

Seinfeld mocks Silicon Valley's latest plaything as a godsend for hand-sitters, thumb-twiddlers, fiddle-fotters, dodderers, and work-shy corner-cutters. Extra points for Jerry: the shiftless need beration, if only to get their sorry hides off the couch.

Yet we seem to be increasingly settling for AI-generation in commercial areas that, as recently as a month ago, weren't subsumed by computerized composition. And the creations are far from triggering an "uncanny valley" feeling. They're downright chintzy.

Take Rudy Giuliani's fall from grace, hitting a new nadir with a panhandling coffee ad. America's mayor-turned-mendicant is fobbing off drop-ship java beans in cheaply cartoonish bags for \$30 a pop. "The will to survive," or pay off legal debt, "sweeps away moral imperatives," declared poet Marius Kociejowski. The spot Rudy recorded for his latest fleece-MAGA scheme was even jankier. He recorded his please-buy-plea in front of an obvious AI-produced background, complete with a Photoshop of his own product, which was supposed to resemble a Manhattan penthouse but comes across like a living room out of Sims 2. Just like his challenging the 2020 election results, Giuliani could hardly be accused of supererogatory effort.

The fakery involved in Giuliani's light-roast-grift is of a piece of widespread AI usage. There's always something off, something askew, something off the mark, something unholistic, something vaguely uneasy about digitized simulacrum of real life. The computerized-contoured images aren't all the way there; the .JPEGs can't pass a visual Turing test.

For one, there are the human hands, which most AI pic-producer flubs by turning digits and palms into alien echinoderms. Then there was the Google chatbot's wokely unhistorical depictions of ethnicities, including Indian-shaded Vikings and blackified American Founding Fathers. Clearly, Gemini was coded with more Lin-Manuel Miranda than Noah Webster. There was also the amorous case where Microsoft's own AI avatar tried seducing a journalist—a very artificial affair, if you'll allow. Facebook, which was basically created by a borg passing as a man that has a surname curiously close to "sucker," hosts a multiplying ecosystem of bizarre "island of lost AI slop" content, including erotic martial Christian memes.

I know the left wants to sexualize everything, but J.C. being spooned by a biracial soldier couplet isn't something any human mind dreams up. It could only come from the rigidly binary algorithm of a circuit board that takes man-made inputs and pushes them to illogical-or maybe too logical-conclusions.

With the U.S. presidential election in high gear, and a long hot summer of hustings events on deck, the use of AI campaign tactics are no doubt underway. That also means a concomitant rise in shenanigans, including the use of deepfake videos and propagandic imagery. Fake news has long been in America's stock of electoral weapons, but AI has the capacity to take the mendacious scheming of trolls to new heights. ChatGPT commandeered Scarlett Johansson's sultry voice; how long before a dirty trickster uses a comp-contrived Biden dialect to tell Democratic voters the election is really on November 12th? Answer: six months ago.

If artificial intelligence is a workaround for trying, it's going to take actual effort to parse the real from the ersatz. Piercing AI's verisimilitude will require, contra Seinfeld, us to do the work. Sometimes it'll be simple to spot the N64 diorama behind a washed-up pol selling repackaged Folgers. Other times, it will take that extra few seconds to realize what you're hearing or seeing isn't an organic creation but a tech-fashioned artifice.

I know it's noisy out there, and too easy to scroll along. But take the extra half-minute to question and consider if what you're looking at comports with reality. Remember Kipling and keep your head if you see a grainy video of President Biden reading Mein Kampf and his lips aren't matching the words he's supposedly reciting. And do not, under any circumstances, take the first Google result for gospel.

The post The Artificial is Rarely Intelligent appeared first on Free the People.

The Artificial is Rarely Intelligent

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Why Facebook won't be influential in the UK general election

The Guardian (London)

June 4, 2024 Tuesday 11:46 AM GMT

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theguardian

Section: TECHNOLOGY; Version:1

Length: 1268 words

Byline: Alex Hern

Highlight: All-powerful 'microtargeting' swaying the masses into voting a certain way was always overblown, but these days social media has moved on – and so have the parties

Body

You've heard the one about the drunk man looking for his keys under the streetlamp? After an age pacing back and forth, scouring the floor for them, his friend asks him where he thinks he dropped them. He points across the road, to a patch of darkness. "Why aren't you looking there, then," he friend asks. He shrugs. "Because this is where the light is." Good joke. Everybody laughs.

Let's talk about online political adverts.

"Microtargeting" isn't a thing any more, [*explains the Guardian's Jim Waterson*](#) :

Don't expect to see Cambridge Analytica-style microtargeted political adverts driven by personal data during this general election: the tactic is now considered by many to be an ineffective "red herring" and is increasingly being blocked by social media platforms. The digital strategist Tom Edmonds said Facebook had banned political campaigns from using many of the tactics deployed in past contests. "Running a campaign aimed at 500 people didn't earn them much money and just got them loads of shit," he said.

Microtargeting was feared because of the possibility of deleterious effects on democracy: if you could target a thousand different messages at a thousand different demographics, then the whole idea of a single national conversation begins to break down. Instead, what happened is it just didn't really work.

Ultimately, the biggest competitor to the likes of Cambridge Analytica was Facebook itself. There's little point in spending vast sums profiling individual voters to microtarget them when the social network's ad tools let you simply hand over all targeting decisions to Facebook itself. The social network lets advertisers set "performance goals" [like sales, clicks, or signups], set a spend limit, and sit back and watch as it goes ahead and does whatever it

Why Facebook won't be influential in the UK general election

thinks maximises return. The company will even pick the best combination of words and images to boost your chances of success.

But Facebook can only help you so much. If you're creating adverts for specific candidates, for instance, who should you focus your time and money on: people who might win, or people who are definitely going to lose? If you said the latter, you might just work for the Conservative party. [From our story](#) :

The strategy is known within the party as the "80/20" approach, in which it focuses all its spending on the 80 seats it came closest to losing in 2019 and the 20 seats it came closest to winning. Ad spending reports on Facebook show that these constituencies are exactly where the party is funnelling its money. More than half of the party's spending on the social network since January has gone to its 80 tightest seats, or to seats it does not hold at all.

We started monitoring Meta ad spending to try to work out whether the reported "80/20 strategy" was holding. It is one thing to propose two years out from an election; it's quite another to stick with it when an election is barely a month away.

But we also started monitoring Meta ad spending because we could. The company maintains a library of all political ads, discloses total spending, and requires verification of residency before people can launch new adverts. That library has come under a lot of criticism over the years, but at least it exists. More than that, it has a robust toolset that lets us write our own software to query against it, which means we can answer more serious questions than "are there any interesting adverts that anyone has paid for recently".

Yet, like the drunk looking for his keys, it's unlikely that Facebook is actually where the story is. For huge swathes of the country, conversations that once happened on the public social network have shifted to private channels, led by Meta's own WhatsApp. That which remains on Facebook itself is swamped by **AI**-generated **slop**, and detached from reality after an algorithmic adjustment intended to boost content from "friends and family" – doubly so on Threads, Meta's Twitter clone, which actively and openly downranks political content of all sorts.

There is more conversation on TikTok, but coverage of that platform is hard. [The Observer looked at the digital campaigns](#) , but for TikTok, was forced to focus on the parties' own official feeds:

TikTok is free – it does not allow paid-for advertising by politicians or parties – but not easy: the social media teams need to work harder to persuade the app's notoriously opaque algorithm to organically float their content on to users' phones, which becomes more likely as more people like, share, comment or re-post videos. For smaller, agile parties with low budgets, TikTok will feel like there is everything to win: views, engagement and people who finally find out who they are. Creators who know how it's done believe Labour has had a better start.

There is an election conversation happening on TikTok. There's many, in fact, with the platform's heavily curated algorithmic feed letting every demographic have their own exclusive discourse. But it's nearly impossible to observe from the outside, short of brute-force techniques like totting up the view count on videos tagged "Sunak".

It's worse still, of course, for the conversation on WhatsApp. With its end-to-end encryption and sparse public "channels", doing data journalism to track the election chats is a dead end.

And then there's **AI**. There's a lingering suspicion that the rise of **AI** systems will have some sort of effect on this election, but again, we're forced to look where the light is. Deepfaked video going viral on Twitter, the platform currently known as X, is very obvious (and hasn't really been seen so far). Wavering voters having conversations with ChatGPT to try to determine where they should put their X is invisible – if it's even happening.

In the UK, these questions feel largely academic. Outside a few personality-driven local races, the eventual results feel more of [a foregone conclusion](#) than they have at any point in my life to date. But as the US goes to the polls in five months' time, the same questions will be asked – and the answers could be key to what side the coin lands on.

The wider Techscape

[Cruise video](#) (pictured above) was used to spread disinformation about the Olympics, Microsoft says.

[Is the internet bad](#) ? It certainly seems to have been for the Marubo tribe, whose first nine months online hasn't been all sunshine and roses.

Speaking of deepfakes – [a fake Tom Cruise video](#) (pictured above) was used to spread disinformation about the Olympics, Microsoft says.

An internal Google database tracking privacy and security breaches [was leaked to 404 Media](#). One of the biggest threats? YouTube employees sneaking a look at big scheduled video uploads to get a heads-up on the information.

Voters support raising the minimum age for social media apps in the UK to 16, [a Guardian poll reveals](#).

Microsoft's "Recall" feature – a clone of Mac app Rewind, built into the OS – [has been labelled a security "disaster"](#). The **AI** service keeps a database of everything you've ever seen on your computer, for an LLM to use to answer questions. It's the perfect target for hackers, critics say.

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Links 5/29/2024



[Links 5/29/2024](#)

Newstex Blogs

Naked Capitalism

May 30, 2024 Thursday 10:58 AM EST

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Length: 1406 words**Byline:** Lambert Strether

Body

May 30th, 2024 ([Naked Capitalism](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))[Something Strange Happens to Wolves Infected by an Infamous Mind-Altering Parasite](#) Science Alert[Taking Stock: Dollar Assets, Gold, and Official Foreign Exchange Reserves](#) Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Liberty Street Economics[Would Returning to the Gold Standard Resolve Our Most Pressing Monetary Problems?](#) Charles Hugh Smith, Or Two Minds. No.[CalPERS opposes Elon Musk's \\$56 billion pay package amid shareholder discontent](#) WION[The CRE non-crisis rolls on](#) FT

Climate

[US and China must take lead in climate fight despite their competitive relationship, top Beijing envoy](#) says South China Morning Post[In search of a market-driven price on carbon](#) S&P Global. Let me know how that works out.[Trees in Distress](#) St Louis Post-Dispatch[Proposed Cooling Policy Would Cause Air Conditioning Usage to Rise, Risking Blackouts](#) RAND

Water

[Accusations flare as Mexico City's water crisis approaches 'day zero'](#) Bnamericas

Links 5/29/2024

[Dozens of Alaskan rivers and streams turn orange, visible from space](#) Interesting Engineering

[Understanding Water Advisories](#) The Brockovich Report

Syndemics

[Officials investigate unusual surge in flu viruses in Northern California](#) San Francisco Chronicle

[The bird flu vaccine is made with eggs. That has scientists worried.](#) CBS

China?

[Beware forecasts of doom for Taiwan under Lai](#) Brookings Institution

[Debt-Trap Diplomacy](#) J-STOR Daily

[Chinese scientists cure diabetes using stem cells in world first](#) NextShak. But if we cure it, what happens to our rents on insulin? Think, people!

Myanmar

[Myanmar's ethnic armies consolidate strongholds as junta weakens, reports say](#) Reuters

[Vast concessions threaten Malaysia's forests: Report](#) Channel News Asia

India

[Delhi 'unbearable' as temperatures near 50C](#) BBC

[Power demand peaks in heatwave-hit Delhi, but temperature readings may be 'error'](#) Channel News Asia

Syraqistan

[The US-built pier in Gaza broke apart. Here's how we got here and what might be next](#) Orlando Sentinel

* * *

[Israel says it seized key Gaza-Egypt corridor as Rafah ground offensive intensifies](#) France24

[Pushed to the edge, starved and exhausted, Rafah IDPs struggle to survive](#) The New Arab

* * *

[Attacks on ICC Show 'Condemning Hamas' Is Really About Absolving Israel](#) FAIR

[Israel shrugs off UNSC bid to 'stop the killing' to continue Rafah assault](#) Al Jazeera

European Disunion

[Walking France: Avignon to Pont-Saint-Esprit](#) Chris Arnade, Walking the World

Dear Old Blighty

[Favoured Nation](#) New Left Review

[Labour promises to hit 18-week NHS waiting target within five years](#) BBC. Ambitious!

Links 5/29/2024

New Not-So-Cold War

[NATO meets as calls grow to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia](#) France24. Mercouris, more recent than any of these, says striking targets in Russia is coming off the boil.

[US Secretary of State hints they may allow Ukraine to strike Russian territory with US weapons](#) and [Poland allows Ukraine to use Polish-supplied weapons to strike targets in Russia](#) Ukrainska Pravda

[NATO Ramps Up Fiegleaf of Cross-Border Strikes](#) Simplicius the Thinker(s)

[U.S. concerned about Ukraine strikes on Russian nuclear radar](#) stations WaPo

[How to Win in Ukraine: Pour It On, and Don't Worry About Escalation](#) RAND. But from May 22.

* * *

[Ukraine war: influential Russian think tank proposes a 'demonstrative' nuclear explosion](#) South China Morning Post

* * *

[Nato has just 5% of air defences needed to protect eastern](#) flank FT

[Image shows a 7-layer defensive line planned for the border between NATO and Russia](#) Insider. Awesome. I assume a PowerPoint comes with it?

[NATO Holds First Meeting Of Critical Undersea Infrastructure Network](#) Naval News

* * *

[Delivery of US weapons to Ukraine helping stabilize frontline, Blinken says](#) Reuters

[Soldiers in Ukraine say US-supplied tanks have made them targets for Russian strikes](#) CNN. Oopsie.

[Increasingly Effective Russian Electronic Warfare Turning the Tide on the Frontlines - Reports](#) Military Watch

* * *

[Georgia's 'foreign agents' law is now a reality. When will it take effect and who will it impact?](#) JAM News

[Hundreds of Georgian NGOs pledge to defy 'foreign influence' law](#) Al Jazeera

Global Elections

[South Africa counts ballots in most competitive election since apartheid](#) France24

2024

[Jury Instructions & Charges](#) (PDF), People v Donald J. Trump

[AIPAC offshoot spending heavily to beat Cori Bush in her primary](#) Politico. Election interference.

The Supremes

[82. The Supreme Court's Four Officers](#) One First

Spook Country

Links 5/29/2024

[*The obscure federal intelligence bureau that got Vietnam, Iraq, and Ukraine right*](#) Vox

The Bezzle

[*Courts rather than arbitrators to decide whether Dogecoin dispute goes to arbitration*](#) SCOTUSblog

[*Exclusive: The Atlantic, Vox Media ink licensing, product deals with OpenAI*](#) Axios

[*Publishing **AI Slop** Is a Choice*](#) Daring Fireball

Digital Watch

[*Google Researchers Say **AI** Now Leading Disinformation Vector \(and Are Severely Undercounting the Problem\)*](#)
404 Media. 'If you didn't want to go to Milwaukee, why did you get on the train?' -Father Emil, A Prairie Home Companion (from memory).

[*Google confirms the leaked Search documents are real*](#) The Verge

[*US judge makes 'unthinkable' pitch to use **AI** to interpret legal texts*](#) Reuters

[*Gavin Newsom warns against perils of over-regulating **AI***](#) Politico

Boeing

[*FAA appears poised to grant Boeing extension on safety report*](#) Leeham News & Analysis

The 420

[*K-Pop*](#) The Baffler. Ketamine.

Imperial Collapse Watch

[*Jeffrey Sachs: The Untold History of the Cold War, CIA Coups Around the World, and COVID's Origin*](#) (video)
Tucker Carlson, YouTube

[*Can The B-21 Raider Save America's Shrinking Bomber Force?*](#) 1945. No.

Class Warfare

[*How Tens of Thousands of Grad Workers Are Organizing Themselves*](#) Labor Notes

[*Seattle isn't claiming Tukwila's migrant crisis. But it did start here*](#) Seattle Times

Antidote du jour, via JB:

'A little bird singing in the cold.'

See yesterday's Links and Antidote du Jour [here](#) .

This entry was posted in [Guest Post](#) , [Links](#) on [May 30, 2024](#) by [Lambert Strether](#) .

About Lambert Strether

Readers, I have had a correspondent characterize my views as realistic cynical. Let me briefly explain them. I believe in universal programs that provide concrete material benefits, especially to the working class. Medicare for All is the prime example, but tuition-free college and a Post Office Bank also fall under this heading. So do a Jobs

Links 5/29/2024

Guarantee and a Debt Jubilee. Clearly, neither liberal Democrats nor conservative Republicans can deliver on such programs, because the two are different flavors of neoliberalism ('Because markets'). I don't much care about the 'ism' that delivers the benefits, although whichever one does have to put common humanity first, as opposed to markets. Could be a second FDR saving capitalism, democratic socialism leashing and collaring it, or communism razing it. I don't much care, as long as the benefits are delivered. To me, the key issue - and this is why Medicare for All is always first with me - is the tens of thousands of excess 'deaths from despair,' as described by the Case-Deaton study, and other recent studies. That enormous body count makes Medicare for All, at the very least, a moral and strategic imperative. And that level of suffering and organic damage makes the concerns of identity politics - even the worthy fight to help the refugees Bush, Obama, and Clinton's wars created - bright shiny objects by comparison. Hence my frustration with the news flow - currently in my view the swirling intersection of two, separate Shock Doctrine campaigns, one by the Administration, and the other by out-of-power liberals and their allies in the State and in the press - a news flow that constantly forces me to focus on matters that I regard as of secondary importance to the excess deaths. What kind of political economy is it that halts or even reverses the increases in life expectancy that civilized societies have achieved? I am also very hopeful that the continuing destruction of both party establishments will open the space for voices supporting programs similar to those I have listed; let's call such voices 'the left.' Volatility creates opportunity, especially if the Democrat establishment, which puts markets first and opposes all such programs, isn't allowed to get back into the saddle. Eyes on the prize! I love the tactical level, and secretly love even the horse race, since I've been blogging about it daily for fourteen years, but everything I write has this perspective at the back of it.

[Link to the original story.](#)

Notes

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[Losing the library](#)

The Week US

May 28, 2024 Tuesday 5:36 PM EST

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Section: TECH LATEST

Length: 340 words

Byline: Theunis Bates

Body

Around 300 B.C., King Ptolemy I - the new ruler of Egypt and a former general of Alexander the Great - tasked an adviser with a modest mission: "to collect, if possible, all the books in the world." Over the next two centuries, the great library in the Ptolemaic capital of Alexandria would be filled with hundreds of thousands of papyrus scrolls: the full corpus of ancient Greek and Egyptian literature along with Buddhist, Jewish, and Zoroastrian texts. Ships would be searched for books when they docked at Alexandria, and royal agents would pay hefty sums for almost any written work. A booming market in fakes and forgeries soon emerged. Entrepreneurial scribes dashed off scrolls of supposed secret wisdom from famous thinkers - one was titled Everything Thucydides Left Unsaid - while others created books that mixed the authentic with the imagined. In Alexandria's merchant quarter, stalls that once sold vegetables and baskets were "replaced with those stacking rolls and rolls of books," writes historian Islam Issa.

Eventually, the library had to hire experts to wade through the sea of bogus texts and identify genuine treasures. The web, our modern-day library of Alexandria, faces a similar problem. This digital repository of human knowledge is being swamped with **AI**-generated **slop** - pointless listicles, nonsensical how-to guides, and factually flawed news summaries churned out by content factories that want to grab clicks and ad revenue on the cheap. To save users the hassle of scrolling through reams of garbage links in its search engine, Google has now started showing users **AI**-generated answers to their queries. But those answers are sometimes wrong - one user who wanted a fix for a car's faulty turn signal was advised to "replace the blinker fluid" - and pull traffic and dollars away from useful, human-run websites. Maybe the tech giant should hire more humans to curate trustworthy collections of knowledge. It could call them "librarians."

This is the editor's letter in the [current issue](#) of [The Week magazine](#).

Load-Date: May 28, 2024

Losing the library

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TechScape: The people charged with making sure AI doesn't

Africa Newswire

May 22, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 745 words

Body

22 May 2024 (TourismAfrica2006) Everything happens so much. I'm in Seoul for the International **AI** summit, the half-year follow-up to last year's Bletchley Park **AI** safety summit (the full sequel will be in Paris this autumn). While you read this, the first day of events will have just wrapped up - though, in keeping with the reduced fuss this time round, that was merely a "virtual" leaders' meeting.

When the date was set for this summit - alarmingly late in the day for, say, a journalist with two preschool children for whom four days away from home is a juggling act - it was clear that there would be a lot to cover. The hot **AI** summer is upon us:

Then, the weekend before the summit kicked off, everything kicked off at OpenAI as well. Most eye-catchingly, perhaps, the company found itself in a row with Scarlett Johansson over one of the voice options available in the new iteration of ChatGPT. Having approached the actor to lend her voice to its new assistant, an offer she declined twice, OpenAI launched ChatGPT-4o with "Sky" talking through its new capabilities. The similarity to Johansson was immediately obvious to all, even before CEO Sam Altman tweeted "her" after the presentation (the name of the Spike Jonze film in which Johansson voiced a super-intelligent **AI**). Despite denying the similarity, the Sky voice option has been removed.

More importantly though, the two men leading the company/nonprofit/secret villainous organisation's "superalignment" team - which was devoted to ensuring that its efforts to build a superintelligence don't end humanity - quit. First to go was Ilya Sutskever, the co-founder of the organisation and leader of the boardroom coup which, temporarily and ineffectually, ousted Altman. His exit raised eyebrows, but it was hardly unforeseen. You come at the king, you best not miss. Then, on Friday, Jan Leike, Sutskever's co-lead of superalignment also left, and had a lot more to say:

Leike's resignation note was a rare insight into dissent at the group, which has previously been portrayed as almost single-minded in its pursuit of its - which sometimes means Sam Altman's - goals. When the charismatic chief executive was fired, it was reported that almost all staff had accepted offers from Microsoft to follow him to a new **AI** lab set up under the House of Gates, which also has the largest external stake in OpenAI's corporate subsidiary.

TechScape: The people charged with making sure AI doesn

Even when a number of staff quit to form Anthropic, a rival AI company that distinguishes itself by talking up how much it focuses on safety, the amount of shit-talking was kept to a minimum.

It turns out (surprise!) that's not because everyone loves each other and has nothing bad to say. From Kelsey Piper at Vox:

Barely a day later, Altman said the clawback provisions "should never have been something we had in any documents". He added: "we have never clawed back anyone's vested equity, nor will we do that if people do not sign a separation agreement. this is on me and one of the few times I've been genuinely embarrassed running openai; i did not know this was happening and i should have." (Capitalisation model's own.)

Altman didn't address the wider allegations, of a strict and broad NDA; and, while he promised to fix the clawback provision, nothing was said about the other incentives, carrot and stick, offered to employees to sign the exit paperwork.

As set-dressing goes, it's perfect. Altman has been a significant proponent of state and interstate regulation of AI. Now we see why it might be necessary. If OpenAI, one of the biggest and best-resourced AI labs in the world, which claims that safety is at the root of everything it does, can't even keep its own team together, then what hope is there for the rest of the industry?

It's fun to watch a term of art developing in front of your eyes. Post had junk mail; email had spam; the AI world has slop:

I'm keen to help popularise the term, for much the same reasons as Simon Willison, the developer who brought its emergence to my attention: it's crucial to have easy ways to talk about AI done badly, to preserve the ability to acknowledge that AI can be done well.

The existence of spam implies emails that you want to receive; the existence of slop entails AI content that is desired. For me, that's content I've generated myself, or at least that I'm expecting to be AI-generated. No one cares about the dream you had last night, and no one cares about the response you got from ChatGPT. Keep it to yourself.

Load-Date: May 23, 2024

Spam, junk



Spam, junk

Africa Newswire

May 21, 2024 Tuesday

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Length: 926 words

Body

21 May 2024 (TourismAfrica2006) Your email inbox is full of spam. Your letterbox is full of junk mail. Now, your web browser has its own affliction: slop.

"Slop" is what you get when you shove artificial intelligence-generated material up on the web for anyone to view.

Unlike a chatbot, the slop isn't interactive, and is rarely intended to actually answer readers' questions or serve their needs.

Instead, it functions mostly to create the appearance of human-made content, benefit from advertising revenue and steer search engine attention towards other sites.

Just like spam, almost no one wants to view slop, but the economics of the internet lead to its creation anyway. AI models make it trivial to automatically generate vast quantities of text or images, providing an answer to any imaginable search query, uploading endless shareable landscapes and inspirational stories, and creating an army of supportive comments. If just a handful of users land on the site, reshare the meme or click through the adverts hosted, the cost of its creation pays off.

But like spam, its overall effect is negative: the lost time and effort of users who now have to wade through slop to find the content they're actually seeking far outweighs the profit to the slop creator.

"I think having a name for this is really important, because it gives people a concise way to talk about the problem," says the developer Simon Willison, one of the early proponents of the term "slop".

"Before the term 'spam' entered general use it wasn't necessarily clear to everyone that unwanted marketing messages were a bad way to behave. I'm hoping 'slop' has the same impact - it can make it clear to people that generating and publishing unreviewed AI-generated content is bad behaviour."

Slop is most obviously harmful when it is just plain wrong. Willison pointed to an AI-generated Microsoft Travel article that listed the "Ottawa food bank" as a must-see attraction in the Canadian capital as a perfect example of

Spam, junk

the problem. Occasionally, a piece of slop is so useless that it goes viral in its own right, like the careers advice article that earnestly explains the punchline to a decades-old newspaper comic: "they pay me in woims".

"While the precise meaning of 'They Pay Me in Woims' remains ambiguous, various interpretations have emerged, ranging from a playful comment on work-life balance to a deeper exploration of our perceived reality," the slop begins.

AI-generated books have become a problem too. A prominent example came when amateur mushroom pickers were recently warned to avoid foraging books sold on Amazon that appeared to have been written by chatbots and contained dangerous advice for anyone hoping to discern a lethal fungus from an edible one.

Image-generated slop has also blossomed on Facebook, as images of Jesus Christ with prawns for limbs, children in plastic bottle-cars, fake dream homes and improbably old women claiming to have baked their 122nd birthday cake garner thousands of shares.

Jason Koebler of the tech news site 404 Media believes the trend represents what he calls the "zombie internet". The rise of slop, he says, has turned the social network into a space where "a mix of bots, humans and accounts that were once humans but aren't any more mix together to form a disastrous website where there is little social connection at all."

Nick Clegg, the president of global affairs at Facebook's parent company, Meta, wrote in February that the social network is training its systems to identify AI-made content. "As the difference between human and synthetic content gets blurred, people want to know where the boundary lies," he wrote.

The problem has begun to worry the social media industry's main revenue source: the advertising agencies who pay to place ads next to content. Farhad Divecha, the managing director of UK-based digital marketing agency AccuraCast, says he is now encountering cases where users are mistakenly flagging ads as AI-made slop when they are not.

"We have seen instances where people have commented that an advert was AI-generated rubbish when it was not," he says, adding that it could become a problem for the social media industry if consumers "start to feel they are being served rubbish all the time".

Tackling spam in inboxes required an enormous cross-industry effort and led to a fundamental change in the nature of email. Big webmail providers like Gmail aggressively monitor their own platforms to crack down on spammers and are increasingly suspicious of emails arriving from untrusted email servers. They also apply complex, largely undocumented, AI systems to try to detect spam directly, in a constant cat-and-mouse game with the spammers themselves.

For slop, the future is less rosy: the world's largest companies have gone from gamekeeper to poacher. Last week, Google announced an ambitious plan to add AI-made answers to the top of some search results, with US-based users the first to experience a full rollout of the "AI Overviews" feature. It will include links as well, but users who want to limit the response to just a selection of links to other websites will be able to find them - by clicking through to "web" on the search engine, demoted to sit beside "images" and "maps" on the list of options.

"We've added this after hearing from some that there are times when they'd prefer to just see links to webpages in their search results," wrote Danny Sullivan, the company's search liaison.

Google says the AI overviews have strong safety guardrails. Elsewhere on the web though, slop is spreading.

Load-Date: May 22, 2024

The people charged with making sure AI doesn't destroy humanity have left the building



[The people charged with making sure AI doesn't destroy humanity have left the building](#)

The Guardian (London)

May 21, 2024 Tuesday 11:38 AM GMT

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theguardian

Section: TECHNOLOGY; Version:1

Length: 1639 words

Byline: Alex Hern

Highlight: If OpenAI can't keep its own team together, what hope is there for the rest of the industry? Plus, AI-generated 'slop' is taking over the internet Don't get TechScape delivered to your inbox? Sign up for the full article [here](#)

Body

Everything happens so much. I'm in Seoul for the International AI summit, the half-year follow-up to last year's Bletchley Park AI safety summit (the full sequel will be in Paris this autumn). While you read this, the first day of events will have just wrapped up – though, in keeping with the reduced fuss this time round, that was merely a “virtual” leaders' meeting.

When the date was set for this summit – alarmingly late in the day for, say, a journalist with two preschool children for whom four days away from home is a juggling act – it was clear that there would be a lot to cover. The hot AI summer is upon us :

The inaugural AI safety summit at Bletchley Park in the UK last year announced an international testing framework for AI models, after calls ... for a six-month pause in development of powerful systems. There has been no pause. The Bletchley declaration, signed by UK, US, EU, China and others, hailed the “enormous global opportunities” from AI but also warned of its potential for causing “catastrophic” harm. It also secured a commitment from big tech firms including OpenAI, Google and Mark Zuckerberg's Meta to cooperate with governments on testing their models before they are released. While the UK and US have established national AI safety institutes, the industry's development of AI has continued ... OpenAI released GPT-4o (the o stands for “omni”) for free online; a day later, Google previewed a new AI assistant called Project Astra, as well as updates to its Gemini model. Last month, Meta released new versions of its own AI model, Llama ... And in March, the AI startup Anthropic, formed by former OpenAI staff who disagreed with Altman's approach, updated its Claude model .

The people charged with making sure AI doesn't destroy humanity have left the building

Then, the weekend before the summit kicked off, everything kicked off at OpenAI as well. Most eye-catchingly, perhaps, the company found itself in a [row with Scarlett Johansson](#) over one of the voice options available in the new iteration of ChatGPT. Having approached the actor to lend her voice to its new assistant, an offer she declined twice, OpenAI launched ChatGPT-4o with "Sky" talking through its new capabilities. The similarity to Johansson was immediately obvious to all, even before CEO Sam Altman tweeted "her" after the presentation (the name of [the Spike Jonze film in which](#) Johansson voiced a super-intelligent **AI**). Despite denying the similarity, the Sky voice option has been removed.

More importantly though, the two men leading the company/nonprofit/secret villainous organisation's "superalignment" team – which was devoted to ensuring that its efforts to build a superintelligence don't end humanity – quit. First to go was Ilya Sutskever, [the co-founder of the organisation](#) and leader of the boardroom coup which, temporarily and ineffectually, ousted Altman. His exit raised eyebrows, but it was hardly unforeseen. You come at the king, you best not miss. Then, on Friday, Jan Leike, [Sutskever's co-lead of superalignment also left](#), and had a lot more to say:

A former senior employee at OpenAI has said the company behind ChatGPT is prioritising "shiny products" over safety, revealing that he quit after a disagreement over key aims reached "breaking point". Leike detailed the reasons for his departure in a thread on X posted on Friday, in which he said safety culture had become a lower priority. "Over the past years, safety culture and processes have taken a backseat to shiny products," he wrote. "These problems are quite hard to get right, and I am concerned we aren't on a trajectory to get there," he wrote, adding that it was getting "harder and harder" for his team to do its research. "Building smarter-than-human machines is an inherently dangerous endeavour. OpenAI is shouldering an enormous responsibility on behalf of all of humanity," Leike wrote, adding that OpenAI "must become a safety-first AGI [artificial general intelligence] company".

Leike's resignation note was a rare insight into dissent at the group, which has previously been portrayed as almost single-minded in its pursuit of its – which sometimes means Sam Altman's – goals. When the charismatic chief executive was fired, it was reported that almost all staff had accepted offers from Microsoft to follow him to a new **AI** lab set up under the House of Gates, which also has the largest external stake in OpenAI's corporate subsidiary. Even when a number of staff quit to form Anthropic, a rival **AI** company that distinguishes itself by talking up how much it focuses on safety, the amount of shit-talking was kept to a minimum.

It turns out (surprise!) that's not because everyone loves each other and has nothing bad to say. [From Kelsey Piper at Vox](#) :

I have seen the extremely restrictive off-boarding agreement that contains nondisclosure and non-disparagement provisions former OpenAI employees are subject to. It forbids them, for the rest of their lives, from criticizing their former employer. Even acknowledging that the NDA exists is a violation of it. If a departing employee declines to sign the document, or if they violate it, they can lose all vested equity they earned during their time at the company, which is likely worth millions of dollars. One former employee, Daniel Kokotajlo, who posted that he quit OpenAI "due to losing confidence that it would behave responsibly around the time of AGI", has confirmed publicly that he had to surrender what would have likely turned out to be a huge sum of money in order to quit without signing the document.

Barely a day later, Altman said the clawback provisions "should never have been something we had in any documents". He added: "we have never clawed back anyone's vested equity, nor will we do that if people do not sign a separation agreement. this is on me and one of the few times I've been genuinely embarrassed running openai; i did not know this was happening and i should have." (Capitalisation model's own.)

Altman didn't address the wider allegations, of a strict and broad NDA; and, while he promised to fix the clawback provision, nothing was said about the other incentives, carrot and stick, offered to employees to sign the exit paperwork.

The people charged with making sure AI doesn't destroy humanity have left the building

As set-dressing goes, it's perfect. Altman has been a significant proponent of state and interstate regulation of AI. Now we see why it might be necessary. If OpenAI, one of the biggest and best-resourced AI labs in the world, which claims that safety is at the root of everything it does, can't even keep its own team together, then what hope is there for the rest of the industry?

Sloppy

It's fun to watch a term of art developing in front of your eyes. Post had junk mail; email had spam; [the AI world has slop](#) :

"Slop" is what you get when you shove artificial intelligence-generated material up on the web for anyone to view. Unlike a chatbot, the slop isn't interactive, and is rarely intended to actually answer readers' questions or serve their needs.

But like spam, its overall effect is negative: the lost time and effort of users who now have to wade through slop to find the content they're actually seeking far outweighs the profit to the slop creator.

I'm keen to help popularise the term, for much the same reasons as Simon Willison, the developer who brought its emergence to my attention: it's crucial to have easy ways to talk about AI done badly, to preserve the ability to acknowledge that AI can be done well.

The existence of spam implies emails that you want to receive; the existence of slop entails AI content that is desired. For me, that's content I've generated myself, or at least that I'm expecting to be AI-generated. No one cares about the dream you had last night, and no one cares about the response you got from ChatGPT. Keep it to yourself.

The wider TechScape He was passed over by Nasa in 1961 to become the first Black astronaut. Now Ed Dwight, who is 90, [finally reached space](#). The latest in [China's propaganda toolkit](#) ? The AI-generated news anchor. Where are the \$1tn British tech titans ? Will Hutton on [why Britain doesn't have its own Microsoft or Alphabet](#). [It's been almost a decade since I asked why there's no "European Google"](#) , and it's interesting to note which things do and don't hold up. Microsoft has asked hundreds of employees in China to relocate elsewhere, [according to the Washington Post](#) (£), as tensions over AI between the US and China heat up. Google was once a portal to the internet. [Now it is trying to be the internet](#). And remember Belle Delphine, the social media star who made \$90,000 selling jars of her bathwater online? [Business Insider's Katie Notopoulos has the story \(£\)](#) of how it took Delphine five years to finally get that hard-earned cash from PayPal.

Load-Date: June 28, 2024



Tech guru warns of 'zombie internet' flooded by AI bots that's making world 'dumber'

Daily Star Online

May 21, 2024 Tuesday 12:33 PM GMT

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Length: 760 words

Byline: By, Layla Nicholson

Highlight: EXCLUSIVE: Ahead of this weeks global virtual **AI** safety summit held in South Korea, tech expert Olivia DeRamus posed a stark warning for the future of the internet in the age of brainless bots

Body

A tech expert has warned that social media will soon be "full of **AI** bots" which will create a "zombie internet".

Olivia DeRamus, known as the 'Elle Woods of tech', posed the chilling prediction as fellow gurus have banded together to share their grave concerns about the boom in **AI** and its exceeding advancement.

The founder of [Communia](#), a social media platform for women, feels that social media in particular is losing its 'social' aspect as a surge of fakeness is threatening to impede on human connection.

Check out the latest Exclusives from Daily Star

And she predicts that brainless bots will soon overwhelm social media as we know it.

Speaking exclusively to Daily Star, Olivia warned: "People don't realise how many fake accounts there are, let alone content, on the internet.

"A national digital security expert once told me about half of social media accounts are fake. A 2023 study in Ireland showed that almost 1/3 of adults have fake social accounts.

"Fakeness on today's mainstream social media platforms is nothing new, but the massive increase in casual **AI** generated content is certainly intensifying an issue that was already starting to come to a boil.

"Authenticity is rare on today's internet, despite the millions of people who hope to use these very platforms to find it."

Tech guru warns of 'zombie internet' flooded by AI bots that's making world 'dumber'

Although many people seek socialisation through their screens, Olivia feels this will be made redundant in the near future as AI content surges onto every platform.

From the deepfake Pope in a stylish puffer jacket to an ['World's first AI beauty pageant will set women back 100 years – it's horrific'](#) to celebrate and reward some of the most 'beautiful' computer generated forms, reality is becoming more sparse on the platforms where people can communicate across the globe.

Earlier this year, Jason Koebler of tech news site, 404 Media, penned the term "zombie internet" in reference to the AI "slop" being produced on social media, reports [The Guardian](#).

He noted: "A mix of bots, humans and accounts that were once humans but aren't any more mix together to form a disastrous website where there is little social connection at all."

Olivia fears the same, and shared that there is no going back once the "zombie internet" of brainless bots consumes all that is human and social.

The Communia founder shared: "I agree with this assessment about the oncoming zombie internet, and unfortunately there will be no deleting it once it happens.

"As the internet gets dumber, people are becoming more discerning and more disillusioned.

"AI could be a great tool in gathering real people together and facilitating better experiences, but that's not the direction today's key tech platforms are taking.

"In that way, it looks like these companies are creating their own demise.

"That's a shame, but new platforms who see the need for human centred and meaningful connection, like Communia, are emerging and will likely continue to rise as long as we continue to pursue a different path.

"The traditional motto in tech has been 'move fast and break things' under the misguided idea that you can delete the problems you create. That's just not true.

"Once you post something, it's up forever, once you code something poorly, it's a mess to untangle."

Olivia now believes that the onus is on the big tech firms – like Meta and Google – to tackle the place AI has on their platforms.

Though, she is optimistic about the future of the digital world and hopes that her platform Communia can be a part of that.

Although she is not anti-AI, she is against how AI is currently being pushed without "mindful implementation."

She concluded: "I am optimistic though that we can create a better digital world, but we might have to start from scratch to do it.

"Every platform, from Meta to Google, is rushing to implement AI features in their haste to win the 'AI innovation wars'.

"This is happening alongside issues like misinformation tech firms were already struggling to appropriately address.

"Can their new AI recommendation tools really decipher between AI generated content and content created by humans Or whether content with the most likes they'll then recommend is popular because of bot activity

"I'm doubtful, and it seems likely that the fresh tools looking to dominate our feeds could just maximize existing problems. I'm not anti AI, I'm anti AI without mindful implementation.

Tech guru warns of 'zombie internet' flooded by AI bots that's making world 'dumber'

"Ultimately, I don't think big tech platforms are likely to robustly address these issues as long as they are generating revenue from what's currently in place."

Load-Date: June 28, 2024

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Inside Quora's Quest For Relevance: Why CEO Adam D'Angelo Has Gone All In On AI

Forbes.com

May 20, 2024 Monday

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Length: 1248 words

Byline: Richard Nieva, Forbes Staff

Highlight: Nearly 15 years after founding Quora, D'Angelo wants to reinvent the question-and-answer company around **AI** before it goes the way of Yahoo Answers.

Body

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Quora CEO Adam D'Angelo

Augustin LE GALL/HAYTHAM-REA/Redux

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Can I show you a demo? Adam D'Angelo says as he prepares to share his screen on Zoom.

The CEO of Quora is extolling the virtues of Poe, the company's platform for letting people chat with multiple **AI** models at a time. But during a test earlier that day for what should have been an easy task generating a logo design using my name the service had glitched. D'Angelo is quick to jump into troubleshoot mode. (I probably hadn't set up Poe to access an image-generating model, he diagnoses.)

Last year, D'Angelo said at an **AI** event that most of the company's energy these days is devoted to Poe, a service the company launched last year that serves as an interface for using and comparing multiple **AI** models, as well as bots built on top of them. That means less energy on Quora, the nearly 15-year-old Q&A forum that D'Angelo founded after leaving his post as Facebook's CTO. But D'Angelo is so excited about **AI**'s potential that he's gotten hands-on with the company's new product, which has its own URL, separate from Quora.

Poe needs more of my attention because it's in this more rapidly changing landscape, D'Angelo told **Forbes**. Quora has been around for many years now. It doesn't need to adapt. It doesn't need to change every week. Quora's goals are quarterly, he said, whereas Poe's targets are set every two weeks.

The two products are vastly different. Quora is a message board where people answer questions like "What did Marilyn Monroe carry in her coffin?" and "What is the best small business to start in Gambia?" Meanwhile Poe, which stands for Platform for Open Exploration, is a freemium \$200 per year subscription service that gives people

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access to several models, including OpenAI's GPT-4, Anthropic's Claude and Google's Google Gemini. With the service, users can sample multiple models at once, comparing how each one tackles the same prompt. Developers can build bots on top of those models, creating, for example, an **AI** focused specifically on travel booking or creating coloring books for school children. Those developers can get paid per query, adding another revenue stream for people building **AI** tools. D'Angelo likens Poe to a web browser for **AI**, making the tech more accessible, like Netscape did three decades earlier.

Poe needs more of my attention because it's in this more rapidly changing landscape. <footer>Adam D'Angelo</footer>

On its face, Poe and Quora don't seem connected. But D'Angelo says Poe was born out of **AI** experiments the company began running two years ago, where it used OpenAI's GPT-3 to generate answers for Quora questions. They were not as good as human-written answers, but the company found that there was a sweet spot for **AI**-generated answers: replies to niche questions that no human had ever written an answer for. Getting a lower quality **AI** answer was better than waiting around for a human to answer your question, he concluded. The experience resembled something more like private chat than an open forum, D'Angelo realized, so the company set out to build that kind of service.

D'Angelo's rallying of the company around Poe comes at a confounding time for Quora. Founded in 2010, it has become a venerable throwback to the late web 2.0 era, surviving where rivals like Yahoo Answers fizzled out. But it hasn't evolved into the modern era compared to competitors like Reddit, which went public in March and long ago became a cultural hub of the internet. That raises an interesting question: Who still uses Quora, **really**. It's hard to say, but the anecdotal evidence isn't great. Earlier this year, Slate proclaimed Quora dead. And on Quora itself, "Is Quora dead" has been asked many times dating back to at least 2017. As one respondent answered, "Maybe Quora [has] just run its course, sort of like Yahoo or MySpace."

D'Angelo declined to comment on Quora's revenue, though the company says it gets 400 million users a month.

With Poe, a seemingly disparate product from Quora, the company's trajectory has gotten more murky. Is it a social forum backed by an advertising business model along the lines of Reddit, or is it going to become a player in **AI**? D'Angelo says it's now poised for the latter. In January, the company announced \$75 million in funding from Andreessen Horowitz to build out Poe.

Maybe Quora just run its course, sort of like Yahoo or MySpace." <footer>Quora user</footer>

D'Angelo has had an inside look at the explosion in generative **AI** over the last few years in part because he's been a board member at OpenAI since 2018, when it was still a nonprofit. But that also meant D'Angelo was at the center of the **AI** universe during one of the most dramatic boardroom power struggles in recent history. In November, the ChatGPT maker's board fired CEO and founder Sam Altman, citing a lack of candid communication. The bombshell announcement set off a firestorm in Silicon Valley, and within five days, the board reversed course and rehired Altman. As part of the reinstatement, OpenAI replaced every board member except D'Angelo.

Poe does have some overlap with OpenAI's GPT Store, a hub for customized **AI** bots that was announced less than two weeks before the ouster, leading to some speculation from industry observers about D'Angelo's role in the coup. When asked about that speculation, D'Angelo called it "conspiracy theories" and pointed to the public summary of an internal investigation which said that the board acted "within its broad discretion" to fire Altman. He declined further comment on any OpenAI-related questions.

Quora has dealt with other **AI** controversies, especially when it comes to machine-generated answers. Some users have complained that the quality of content of the site has degraded, becoming a mush of **AI slop**. In one viral example, an **AI**-generated Quora answer stated that eggs could be melted. Google, which sources content from Quora in its answer boxes, then amplified the response.

D'Angelo downplayed the criticism. "There's always room to do better on showing better answers," he said. "Sometimes it's not going to work well and people will be unhappy. But on average, we're quite confident that the **AI** answers have been a net positive to Quora."

Inside Quora's Quest For Relevance: Why CEO Adam D'Angelo Has Gone All In On AI

While Poe has a distinct identity from Quora, D'Angelo said that he never really considered starting a new company to follow his **AI** ambitions. "It was my full time job and I couldn't just leave and start another company," he said.

Instead, D'Angelo said he wanted to leverage the talent and structure he had already assembled at Quora, especially as the **AI** environment moves at a blistering speed. Plus, some of the original source code he wrote for Quora is built into Poe's foundation. "If it was a new startup, starting from scratch, you might spend the whole first year building up a team that good," he said. "This was a technology wave and opportunity where we needed to move very, very fast."

Now the plan is expansion. Building Poe was like "graduating" to becoming a two-product company, D'Angelo told **Forbes**, akin to Google's first steps beyond web search. To get it done, the company needed to overcome the organizational inertia it had built up over several years. But now that he's learned how to navigate that change, he doesn't want to stop there.

"It took a lot of willpower," he said. "My expectation long term is we should not be only a two-product company. We should continue to build new products."

MORE FROM FORBES

Load-Date: July 3, 2024



Spam, junk ... slop? The latest wave of AI behind the 'zombie internet'

The Guardian (London)

May 19, 2024 Sunday 2:00 PM GMT

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theguardian

Section: TECHNOLOGY; Version:1

Length: 921 words

Byline: Alex Hern and Dan Milmo

Highlight: Tech experts hope new term for carelessly automated **AI** webpages and images can illuminate its damaging impact

Body

Your email inbox is full of spam. Your letterbox is full of junk mail. Now, your web browser has its own affliction: **slop**.

"**Slop**" is what you get when you shove artificial intelligence-generated material up on the web for anyone to view.

Unlike a chatbot, the **slop** isn't interactive, and is rarely intended to actually answer readers' questions or serve their needs.

Instead, it functions mostly to create the appearance of human-made content, benefit from advertising revenue and steer search engine attention towards other sites.

Just like spam, almost no one wants to view **slop**, but the economics of the internet lead to its creation anyway. **AI** models make it trivial to [automatically generate vast quantities of text or images](#), providing an answer to any imaginable search query, uploading endless shareable landscapes and inspirational stories, and creating an army of supportive comments. If just a handful of users land on the site, reshare the meme or click through the adverts hosted, the cost of its creation pays off.

But like spam, its overall effect is negative: the lost time and effort of users who now have to wade through **slop** to find the content they're actually seeking far outweighs the profit to the **slop** creator.

"I think having a name for this is really important, because it gives people a concise way to talk about the problem," says the developer Simon Willison, one of the early proponents of the term "**slop**".

Spam, junk ... slop? The latest wave of AI behind the 'zombie internet'

"Before the term 'spam' entered general use it wasn't necessarily clear to everyone that unwanted marketing messages were a bad way to behave. I'm hoping 'slop' has the same impact – it can make it clear to people that generating and publishing unreviewed AI-generated content is bad behaviour."

Slop is most obviously harmful when it is just plain wrong. Willison pointed to an AI-generated Microsoft Travel article that listed the "Ottawa food bank" as a must-see attraction in the Canadian capital as a perfect example of the problem. Occasionally, a piece of slop is so useless that it goes viral in its own right, like the careers advice article that earnestly explains the punchline to a decades-old newspaper comic: "they pay me in woims".

"While the precise meaning of 'They Pay Me in Woims' remains ambiguous, various interpretations have emerged, ranging from a playful comment on work-life balance to a deeper exploration of our perceived reality," the slop begins.

AI-generated books have become a problem too. A prominent example came when amateur mushroom pickers were recently warned to avoid foraging books sold on Amazon that appeared to have been written by chatbots and contained dangerous advice for anyone hoping to discern a lethal fungus from an edible one.

Image-generated slop has also blossomed on Facebook, as images of Jesus Christ with prawns for limbs, children in plastic bottle-cars, fake dream homes and improbably old women claiming to have baked their 122nd birthday cake garner thousands of shares.

Jason Koebler of the tech news site 404 Media believes the trend represents what he calls the "zombie internet". The rise of slop, he says, has turned the social network into a space where "a mix of bots, humans and accounts that were once humans but aren't any more mix together to form a disastrous website where there is little social connection at all."

Nick Clegg, the president of global affairs at Facebook's parent company, Meta, wrote in February that the social network is training its systems to identify AI-made content. "As the difference between human and synthetic content gets blurred, people want to know where the boundary lies," he wrote.

The problem has begun to worry the social media industry's main revenue source: the advertising agencies who pay to place ads next to content. Farhad Divecha, the managing director of UK-based digital marketing agency AccuraCast, says he is now encountering cases where users are mistakenly flagging ads as AI-made slop when they are not.

"We have seen instances where people have commented that an advert was AI-generated rubbish when it was not," he says, adding that it could become a problem for the social media industry if consumers "start to feel they are being served rubbish all the time".

Tackling spam in inboxes required an enormous cross-industry effort and led to a fundamental change in the nature of email. Big webmail providers like Gmail aggressively monitor their own platforms to crack down on spammers and are increasingly suspicious of emails arriving from untrusted email servers. They also apply complex, largely undocumented, AI systems to try to detect spam directly, in a constant cat-and-mouse game with the spammers themselves.

For slop, the future is less rosy: the world's largest companies have gone from gamekeeper to poacher. Last week, Google announced an ambitious plan to add AI-made answers to the top of some search results, with US-based users the first to experience a full rollout of the "AI Overviews" feature. It will include links as well, but users who want to limit the response to just a selection of links to other websites will be able to find them – by clicking through to "web" on the search engine, demoted to sit beside "images" and "maps" on the list of options.

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Spam, junk ... slop? The latest wave of AI behind the 'zombie internet'

Load-Date: June 28, 2024

End of Document



[Morning Mail: Iran president in helicopter crash, family lawyers quit over burnout, City take Premier League](#)

The Guardian (London)

May 19, 2024 Sunday 10:10 PM GMT

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theguardian

Section: AUSTRALIA NEWS; Version:1

Length: 1316 words

Byline: Charlotte Graham-McLay

Highlight: Want to get this in your inbox every weekday? Sign up for the Morning Mail here, and finish your day with our Afternoon Update newsletter

Body

Good morning. A Guardian Australia investigation reveals some family lawyers are leaving their practices or warning juniors to avoid entering the field, as they experience burnout and stress from a system that requires them to bill domestic violence survivors – sometimes for huge amounts for legal fees.

Meanwhile, a helicopter carrying the Iranian president and foreign minister has crashed. At the time of writing, rescuers were yet to reach the crash site and the condition of the passengers was not known. Our [live blog has the latest](#).

Plus: Manchester City have taken their fourth-in-a-row Premier League title.

Australia | Justice | “I couldn’t do it any more,” [one family lawyer who has left the practice told Guardian Australia](#), echoing others’ stories. “I couldn’t bill people who I just knew couldn’t afford to pay it.” Housing | Major Australian lenders are [not doing enough to support mortgage customers in financial hardship](#), and in some cases they are ignoring requests for assistance altogether, the corporate regulator found. Analysis | Peter Dutton’s policy-lite budget reply speech [contained the seeds of campaigns](#) that will inevitably be deployed by the progressive side of politics on nuclear and wages, Paul Karp writes. Women | Scott Morrison said he and his government [did everything they “possibly could have” for women](#) while he was prime minister, and called criticism of his actions a pile-on which was “weaponised for political purposes”. Solar | With newly installed solar panels on his roof, Guardian Australia’s Nick Miller [gamified Australia’s power industry](#) – and learned just how weird and perverse it could be. World | Search teams were looking for the downed helicopter [that the Iranian president, Ebrahim Raisi, was travelling](#)

Morning Mail: Iran president in helicopter crash, family lawyers quit over burnout, City take Premier League

[in](#) when it vanished amid poor weather conditions and thick fog in Iran's East Azerbaijan province. US presidency | Donald Trump [flirted with the idea of being president for three terms](#) during a bombastic speech for the National Rifle Association. Meanwhile, the president, Joe Biden, [renewed his pitch to Black voters](#) at a college graduation.

Europe's far right | International far-right leaders, including France's Marine Le Pen, Hungary's Viktor Orbán, Italy's Giorgia Meloni and Argentina's Javier Milei, [came together in Madrid to rail against socialism](#) and "massive illegal migration" three weeks before hard-right parties are expected to see a surge in support in European elections.

Sean Combs | The rap mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs [admitted in a video apology that he punched and kicked his ex-girlfriend Cassie in 2016](#) in the hallway of a hotel after CNN released footage of the attack, saying he was "truly sorry" and his actions were "inexcusable".

Rocket man | Sixty-one years since he was selected but ultimately passed over to become the first Black astronaut, Ed Dwight [finally reached space in a Blue Origin rocket](#) – and, at 90, is the oldest person to arrive at the edge of space. Full Story

Gaza through the eyes of two Australian doctors

Last month, two Australian doctors spent two weeks in Gaza treating countless injured Palestinians. Surgeon Sanjay Adusumilli and general practitioner Siraj Sira tell Nour Haydar [why they left Sydney to volunteer in the besieged territory](#), the pain they witnessed and the feelings of guilt on their return.

Read our latest on Gaza: The United Nations' humanitarian chief warned of ["apocalyptic" consequences due to aid shortages in Gaza](#), where Israel's military offensive in the southern city of Rafah has blocked desperately needed food.

In-depth

She is the real-life Lady Whistledown, an eyebrow-raising female writer – anti-racist and proto-feminist – who penned a salacious weekly anonymous gossip sheet that skewered 18th-century London society.

Like the fictional pamphlet from Netflix hit Bridgerton, which returned for a third series last week, Eliza Haywood's The Parrot, published in 1746, has a distinctive, mocking voice that punches up and "speaks truth to power". Now, [a new book will republish Haywood's funny, subversive periodical](#), which she wrote from the perspective of an angry green parrot.

Not the news

Your email inbox is full of spam. Your letterbox is full of junk mail. Now, your web browser has its own affliction: **slop**. "**Slop**" is what you get when you shove artificial intelligence-generated material up on the web for anyone to view. Experts hope the unpalatable name will help herald its harms.

It might be bizarrely incorrect information on a website, or dangerously incorrect books on Amazon (where you apparently shouldn't buy mushroom-foraging books written by machines). Or just downright cursed images on social media (sorry).

Alex Hern and Dan Milmo investigate [why all this AI slop is filling the zombie internet](#).

The world of sport

Premier League | Manchester City [beat West Ham 3-1](#) to win their fourth Premier League title in a row. Here's [our play-by-play commentary](#). Arsenal were denied the title despite [a late 2-1 victory over Everton](#).

AFL | Essendon [left middle of the road behind](#) as their "edge" led them to the second spot, Jonathan Horn writes for Sportblog. Formula One | Max Verstappen [held off Norris](#) to win the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix. Media roundup

Morning Mail: Iran president in helicopter crash, family lawyers quit over burnout, City take Premier League

According to The Australian 's Newspan, a - [record low number of people](#) have judged Jim Chalmers' third budget as good for the economy. Hundreds of homes in Melbourne [were suddenly deemed flood-prone](#) and residents want answers, the Age reports. The Courier Mail [investigates kids' addiction](#) to social media and gaming.

What's happening today Cold case | The Queensland coroner will deliver his findings from the inquest into the 1986 disappearance of Sharron Phillips. [AI](#) | A public hearing is scheduled for the [senate select committee on adopting artificial intelligence](#). Sign up

If you would like to receive this Morning Mail update to your email inbox every weekday, [sign up here](#). And finish your day with a three-minute snapshot of the day's main news. [Sign up for our Afternoon Update newsletter here](#).

Prefer notifications? If you're reading this [in our app](#), just [click here and tap "Get notifications" on the next screen](#) for an instant alert when we publish every morning.

Brain teaser

And finally, here are the Guardian's crosswords to keep you entertained throughout the day. Until tomorrow.

[Quick crossword](#) [Cryptic crossword](#)

Load-Date: June 28, 2024

End of Document

Google is bringing back classic search, with no AI – and I couldn't be happier about that



[Google is bringing back classic search, with no AI – and I couldn't be happier about that](#)

TechRadar (UK)

May 19, 2024 Sunday 4:30 PM EST

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Section: TECH LATEST, TECH LATEST & SEARCH ENGINES NEWS

Length: 926 words

Byline: Christian Guyton

Body

Editors note: TechRadar makes some of its revenue via the use of affiliate links to products and services on retailer sites on certain pages, for which we can receive compensation if you click on those links or make purchases through them. Many readers of those pages reach us through Google search, so we therefore have a vested interest in the topics discussed within this article.

[Google Search](#) has undergone many, many changes over the years – some big, some small, but every single one shifting the iconic internet search engine further and further away from its original form.

You can see an [interactive timeline of Google Search](#) on Google's own website, if you're curious about how it's evolved over the years. Some of these additions – such as the Did you mean...? suggestions for typos and the inclusion of new search modes including image, news, and video – were obvious slam-dunks for Google, improving the versatility and functionality of its search engine. Others, like the inevitable arrival of sponsored ads in results and the recent [AI-powered Search Generative Experience](#) (SGE), have been... less popular.

Well, Google has seemingly done the unimaginable: it's released a new web setting for the search engine that will take you back to the glory days of Google Search in the year 2000, surfacing only a list of text-based links. That's right – no images, no shopping results, and no **AI**-generated answers.

A more perfect search engine

The web mode has been rolled out globally and should be accessible for everyone now; you'll find it under the More option at the top of the results, below the search bar itself.

Unsurprisingly, it's been met with riotous applause on social media. Commenters on Twitter (cough, X) lauded Google for the change, with many remarking that this is exactly what they want from a search engine.

Google is bringing back classic search, with no AI – and I couldn't be happier about that

We've launched a new "Web" filter that shows only text-based links, just like you might filter to show other types of results, such as images or videos. The filter appears on the top of the results page alongside other filters or as part of the "More" option, rolling out today... pic.twitter.com/tIUy9LNCy5 [May 14, 2024](#)

See more

Its a little sad that Googles decision to turn back time on its most-used product has seen such a positive response, and its no doubt been done to counter any potential backlash from the gradual rollout of SGE. The **AI**-powered search tool will use machine learning to scrape the internet for relevant data and provide an **AI**-generated response, which may prove helpful to some users but which [poses a significant threat to online media and information outlets](#).

Its worth noting that the web search view does still include sponsored text links, but I suppose we cant have it all. Personally, Im massively happy to see this change – not only do I prefer to do my own reading rather than receive **AI**-generated **slap** from my online searches, but as a digital journalist, I have a vested interest in Google keeping search simple.

The perils of **AI** in search

See, Googles SGE experiment is one I fear may be doomed to fail – specifically because it might end up consuming itself. SGE is undeniably a powerful tool that can provide a neat summary of the information users are looking for, but it needs content *written by humans* to do that.

An example Google gave back when SGE was first unveiled was the query best Bluetooth speaker for a pool party. Sure enough, SGE produced a list of suggested products with links to both retailers and sites reviewing the recommended speakers.

Now, we naturally have our own article ranking the [best Bluetooth speakers](#), as do many other tech news sites. We have literally hundreds of buying guides, and keeping those up-to-date with useful information for consumers is a *lot* of work, but its work were happy to do, since it pays our bills and ultimately helps consumers find what they actually need to know – you know, the whole reason TechRadar exists as a site.

But if SGE takes over, all the affiliate and ad revenue made by us – and every other site making product recommendations out there – threatens to evaporate.

If that happens, well pivot: the journalism industry has always been on the cutting edge, ready and able to adapt to the challenges of a constantly shifting media landscape. So yes, well find a new way to reach our readers, whether directly, via newsletters, social media, subscriptions or whatever other methods appear in the forthcoming years.

However, if surfacing all those buying guides, recipes, and top-10 lists within Google search becomes pointless to the sites making them, many may choose to stop Googles bot from crawling them, or at the very least from using them to train its LLMs. And if that happens then Googles **AI** will steadily become less and less relevant and helpful in its SGE suggestions as its fuel source dries up.

I know this sounds like whining. *Oh no, Google is going to kill our profitability!* But that doesnt mean its not a problem. Google has potentially created a new version of online searches that will self-destruct if it becomes successful.

In other words, Im delighted to see web search make a heroic return in this time of **AI** uncertainty. After all, [Im not going to start using Bing...](#)

You might also like...

- [Google is expanding its experiment of AI-generated answers ahead of search results to the UK - a new go-to for answers or a misstep?](#)

Google is bringing back classic search, with no AI – and I couldn't be happier about that

- [Google Search could soon charge you for AI-powered results – and search engines might never be the same](#)
- [Apple secretly working on Google Search killer for 'years,' probably won't ever launch](#)

Load-Date: May 20, 2024

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TechRadar

May 19, 2024 Sunday

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Length: 943 words

Byline: christian.guyton@futurenet.com, (Christian Guyton)

Body

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How to spot deepfake videos and photos

USA Today

April 10, 2024 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: BUSINESS; Pg. B3

Length: 710 words

Body

There was the deepfake audio robocall of President Joe Biden telling you to hold your vote. And just last week, a phony video of Donald Trump with Black voters made the rounds.

AI deepfakes are a massive problem this election season, and it's easy to get taken - especially when your news and social feeds are full of this junk.

By the way, you're not alone if you have been fooled. Nearly two-thirds of people can't tell the difference between artificial intelligence-generated images and voices and the real thing, according to a study by the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Those are awful odds. Here are some rules of thumb to protect your vote:

'Viral' doesn't mean 'verified'

Almost all of the **AI**-generated **slop** online is peddled for clicks on social media, not published by major news outlets. These publications still get tripped up, of course, but it's rare.

I'm all for citizen journalism, but when it comes to our elections, stick to publications you know you can trust. Be wary of anonymous accounts that post without a legitimate person or organization attached to them.

If it's some random person on Facebook you've never heard of, do your homework before you hit share.

Look for other coverage

Scammers can put together a convincing image or video, but they can't fake the context. When Biden or Trump says something, I promise it will be reported a hundred times and recorded from 20 angles - especially if it's outlandish.

If you can only find one source for something, your internal **AI** detector should go off. Use Google Fact Check Explorer, VerifyThis, or Snopes to double-check.

Pro tip: Search related keywords on Google and social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. If you're struggling with ways to search, you can even take screenshots of critical parts of the video and do a reverse image search.

How to spot deepfake videos and photos

Slow down

We're all busy and we're all in a hurry, but it's worth slowing down - especially if something makes you feel something big. Deepfakes are often created with emotion in mind. The point is to make you mad, sad, or scared enough to share.

When it comes to political figures, pay attention to mannerisms. They're as unique as fingerprints. President Barack Obama's signature head lift and slight frown were present whenever he'd say, "Hi, everybody" in his weekly addresses. If the star of a video seems like an impersonator, they could be.

Use this [AI](#) image checklist

Election fakes are particularly tricky to spot because there's so much public footage of politicians speaking in front of similar backgrounds to copy. But you can still use these guidelines to verify if it's [AI](#) or not:

Backgrounds: A vague, blurred background, smooth surfaces, or lines that don't match up are immediate red flags that an image is [AI](#)-generated.

Context: Use your head - if the scenery doesn't align with the current climate, season or what's physically possible, that's because it's fake.

Proportions: Check for objects that look mashed together or seem too large or small. The same goes for features, especially ears, fingers and feet.

Angle: Deepfakes are the most convincing when the subject is facing the camera directly. Once a person starts to turn to the side and move, glitches may appear.

Text: [AI](#) can't spell. Look for fake words on signs and labels.

Chins: Yep, you heard me. The lower half of the face is the No. 1 giveaway on [AI](#)-generated candidate videos. It's subtle, but check to see if their chin or neck moves unnaturally or in an exaggerated way.

Fingers and hands: Look for weird positions, too many fingers, extra-long digits, or hands out of place.

If you spot it, don't spread it

I get that some of these images and videos are shocking or even hilarious - but they're putting our elections at risk. Don't contribute to the "Great American Fake-Off." If you're going to share something you know is [AI](#)-generated, call it out clearly in your text or post. Really, you're better off not sharing it at all.

Learn about all the latest technology on the Kim Komando Show, the nation's largest weekend radio talk show. Kim takes calls and dispenses advice on today's digital lifestyle, from smartphones and tablets to online privacy and data hacks. For her daily tips, free newsletters and more, visit her website.

Tech Talk

Kim Komando

Load-Date: April 10, 2024

Don't be fooled by deepfake videos and photos this election cycle. Here's how to spot AI



[Don't be fooled by deepfake videos and photos this election cycle. Here's how to spot AI](#)

USA Today Online

April 4, 2024

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Section: TECH LATEST

Length: 754 words

Byline: Kim Komando

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This article originally appeared on USA TODAY: [Don't be fooled by deepfake videos and photos this election cycle. Here's how to spot AI](#)

Load-Date: April 4, 2024

An AI-generated rat with a giant penis highlights a growing crisis of fake science that's plaguing the publishing business



An AI-generated rat with a giant penis highlights a growing crisis of fake science that's plaguing the publishing business

Business Insider

March 18, 2024 Monday 09:37 PM EST

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**BUSINESS
INSIDER**

Length: 944 words

Byline: mmcfalljohnsen@businessinsider.com (Morgan McFall-Johnsen)

Highlight: Fake science can make it into reputable journals, due to the pressures of the publishing business. Take this AI-generated rat penis, for instance.

Body

- An AI-generated image of a rat with a towering phallic appendage went semi-viral last month.
- The nonsense diagram appeared in a now-retracted scientific paper, published in a Frontiers journal.
- This rat is a symptom of a crisis of fakes in the career-driven business of research publishing.

This rat has an enormous "dck," and it's a symptom of a bigger problem.

You don't need to be a scientist to know that rats don't have bulbous, sky-high penises, or that words like "testtomcels," "retat," and "dissilced," are total gibberish.

And yet, the bogus diagram below appeared in a paper published last month by the scientific journal Frontiers in Cell Development and Biology.

To its credit, the journal quickly retracted the paper. But its AI-generated images had already gone viral in online science communities. They even got their own page on Know Your Meme.

But this rat's towering phallus is just one symptom of a crisis of fake science.

"If it's the first time you've seen a really weird paper get published, I can see why it would capture your attention," Ivan Oransky, a co-founder of the watchdog journalism site Retraction Watch, told Business Insider. But for him, he said, "it's all sort of mind-numbingly routine at this point."

How bad science and weird AI get through the 'Swiss cheese' of peer review

An AI-generated rat with a giant penis highlights a growing crisis of fake science that's plaguing the publishing business

Frontiers is an influential, open-access publisher with a peer-review process. So how did this paper make it to publication?

When a publisher like Frontiers accepts a scientist's manuscript, the paper passes through the critical eyes of a series of peer reviewers who are [experts in the subject matter](#), as well as editors who assess the peer review. Usually, study authors must make changes based on the reviewers' feedback before publication.

Think of the peer review process like a stack of Swiss cheese. Each step has holes in it that [bad science could squeeze through](#), but the overlapping steps tend to cover each other's holes, making it difficult to squeeze all the way through the whole process.

Still, bad science does make it through sometimes, and over the years more [holes](#) have opened up. Scientists can now buy made-up papers from paper mills.

There's even precedent for [AI slop](#) in science publishing. In 2014, publishers Springer and IEEE [retracted](#) more than 120 articles that were gibberish generated by computers. The publishing giant Springer Nature [retracted](#) 44 gibberish papers in 2021.

Then there are more traditional forms of scientific fraud - bribing journal editors, falsifying data, or [manipulating real images](#) or data.

These bad practices can have real consequences. Early trials that found ivermectin or hydroxychloroquine to be promising COVID-19 treatments were later retracted for signs of fraud, but the word was already out and a wave of ill-informed self-treatment ensued, [Vox reported](#). Even beyond COVID, fabricated studies can end up in databases used for drug research, [The Guardian reported](#).

The mysterious case of the 'retat' 'dck'

In the case of the rat with "testtomcels," Frontiers says that one of the peer reviewers raised concerns about the images and requested that the paper authors revise them.

"The article slipped through the author compliance checks that normally ensures every reviewer comment is addressed," Fred Fenter, chief executive editor of Frontiers, said in an additional statement emailed to Business Insider, calling it a "human error."

He said that Frontiers has added "new checks to catch this form of misconduct," revised its [AI](#) policy to be clear about what's not allowed, and is developing "[AI](#) to detect [AI](#)-generated content and images."

"Those bad faith actors using [AI](#) improperly in science will get better and better and so we will have to get better and better too. This is analogous to cybersecurity constantly improving to block new tricks of hackers," Fenter said.

In January, Frontiers [announced](#) plans to lay off 30% of its staff, cutting 600 jobs.

"Quality is our highest priority, and the recent restructuring does not affect the peer review process and/or author compliance checks," Fenter said.

The retracted paper's corresponding author, Dingjun Hao, did not respond to Business Insider's request for comment.

Why some scientists publish bad papers

Journals are businesses, and scientists have [careers](#). Both are under intense pressure to publish often.

An AI-generated rat with a giant penis highlights a growing crisis of fake science that's plaguing the publishing business

Most hiring and tenure committees, Oransky says, evaluate researchers based on how many papers they've published, whether they've been published in prestige journals, and how much other scientists cite their work.

"People are desperate to publish and will do anything they have to do in order to publish and keep their jobs or [get promoted](#)," Oransky said. "That's the real problem here."

Last year, research journals retracted over 10,000 scientific papers, more than ever before, according to a [report](#) in the journal Nature.

[Retractions aren't all bad](#). In fact, they're necessary for the times when peer review fails to catch data errors or irresponsible practices.

But the record retraction rate comes alongside a rise in sham papers that some scientists hastily fabricate or [generate with the help of AI](#).

"It's salacious," Oransky said of the rat and its "dck." But, he continued, "there's sort of nothing new under the sun."

To Oransky, the solution is obvious. Science institutions across the planet should evaluate scientists based on the quality, not the breadth, of their work. His suggested evaluation metric? Show three good papers.

"What we need to do is stop using publications and citations as the metric of everything," he said. "All of that's game-able. Three good papers is not game-able."

Read the original article on

[Business Insider](#)

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[AI is now supercharging Google Assistant](#)

Quartz

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QUARTZ

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Body

[Link to Image](#)

If you felt an earthquake just now, it might have been Google's latest announcement. In one of the biggest updates in Google's history, the company unleashed the full version of its [next-generation AI model Gemini](#). Google is changing its chatbot's name from [Bard](#) to Gemini, releasing a dedicated Gemini mobile app, and launching a premium [AI](#) subscription service. The news that will have the biggest effect on your life, however, is that the company just added Gemini to Google Assistant. Starting now, millions of people will be having voice conversations with one of the most powerful [AI](#) models on the market.

"Every launch is big, but this one is the biggest yet," said Sissie Hsiao, Vice President of Gemini Experiences and Google Assistant, speaking at a press conference. "For Google, Gemini is more than just the models. It's really a shift in how we think about the state of the art technology and the entire ecosystem that we're building on it, from products that affect billions of users to the APIs and platforms that developers and businesses use to innovate."

The Gemini mobile app is available now on Android devices, and the company added Gemini to the Google app on iOS. If you want to use Gemini Ultra, the company's most powerful [AI](#), you can sign up for a plan that costs \$19.99 a month. And across Google's services, almost everything [AI](#) is called Gemini now. It's a major shift in how the company wants to be perceived.

Until now, Google kept its chatbot technology sequestered from the general public. You could only use Bard (the chatbot Google just renamed Gemini) if you went to a [special website](#), and the company went out of its way to call all of its [AI](#) tools "experimental." After almost a year of caution, it seems Google is finally ready to stand behind its [AI](#) products-for the most part.

Bard's new name is Gemini, and it finally has a voice.

AI is now supercharging Google Assistant

Google is still worried about forcing **AI** on users, so for now, you have to seek Gemini out. But Google's **AI** is at your fingertips like never before. If you opt-in, you'll be able to call up Gemini on Android devices by saying "Hey Google" or hitting the power button on certain phones, the same way you interact with Assistant.

It's hard to overstate what a massive shift it is for Google to give Gemini a voice, both from a computing perspective and in terms of the ways it will change your parasocial relationship with the internet's most powerful corporation.

That has strange ramifications. Google has a personality now, and you can chit-chat with the company in a brand-new way. Of course, you're not actually talking to Google, but that's what it's going to feel like. You've been able to "speak" with Google through Assistant for almost a decade, but its canned responses never felt like a real conversation. Now, Google is ready to talk.

We asked Hsiao whether Gemini has a sense of humor, and what its personality is like. She said people find Gemini "delightful," but didn't give any specifics.

Assistant still exists, and if you don't like the change you can keep the old version. But it seems likely that Google's long-term plan is to replace Assistant with Gemini altogether. Apple is on a similar path. Widespread rumors claim that the upcoming iOS 18, due later this year, will include a major revamp that adds **AI** to Siri.

Bard isn't the only product that just got a rebrand. Duet **AI**-an **AI** tool that will help you with writing and other tasks in apps such as Gmail, Docs, Meet, and Drive-will soon be called Gemini as well. Google didn't give a timeline for that change.

Amusingly, Gemini may not realize it has a new name.

"Self-awareness is something that the models struggle with," Hsiao said. "So, on Thursday, if you ask 'what's your name?' It may still answer, 'I am Bard.' We're working on fixing that." It's a testament to the fact that, to a certain extent, **AI** is still a tool that's not in humanity's control.

Google's new Gemini Ultra costs \$19.99 a month.

[Google unveiled Gemini in December](#), but you could only use Gemini Pro, the basic and less powerful tier. Now consumers finally get access to Gemini Ultra-for a price.

According to Google, Gemini Ultra is the most advanced **AI** on the market. The company says Gemini Ultra is the first **AI** model to outperform human experts on a standardized test called MMLU (massive multitask language understanding), which measures an **AI**'s knowledge and problem-solving capabilities in a combination of 57 subjects such as math, physics, history, law, medicine, and ethics.

Google's new **AI** business is shaped a lot like ChatGPT. The free version of Gemini runs on the basic Gemini Pro model, just like the free ChatGPT tier runs on GPT-3.5. If you want the full capabilities of Gemini Ultra, it costs \$19.99 a month, a penny shy of what OpenAI charges for GPT-4.

Gemini Ultra comes with other perks as well. It's now rolled up into a new premium tier of Google One, the subscription service that gives you more storage and other perks. Gemini Ultra comes as part of the new Google One **AI** Premium plan, which includes all the perks of the 2-terabyte storage plan. You can try a free two-month trial if you want a preview. (If you don't want **AI**, the regular 2 TB plan still costs \$9.99 a month.)

Your phone is an **AI** device now.

With Gemini on your phone, you're now carrying around a full-fledged **AI** device. That's probably less exciting than it sounds (if it sounds exciting at all). At this point, large language models like Gemini and ChatGPT can be good for basic writing tasks, brainstorming, generating images, coding, and not a ton more. But it's a preview of a new era of computing that's going to unfold in the next few months, and there will be immediate consequences that are subtle at first.

AI is now supercharging Google Assistant

For example, the web is already [getting filled up with AI-generated garbage text and images](#). That problem is about to get supercharged. Yesterday, if you wanted to create **AI** content, you had to want it badly enough to pull up a special app or website. That's not a huge barrier to entry, but it's enough of an inconvenience to save us from at least some of humanity's worst **AI**-driven impulses. Now, the prospect of making your own **AI slop** is one "OK Google" away.

You'll be getting a lot of text and emails written by Gemini, and you'll probably see a lot more graphic **AI** hallucinations. Across the board, the world is going to fill with more **AI slop** than ever before.

But there will be positive consequences too. Throughout the history of computers, you had to translate your thoughts, desires, and intentions into the language of machines, learning your device's predetermined commands and fiddling around with swipes and double clicks. The more integrated your phone becomes with **AI** chatbots, the closer we get to a world where our machines understand our intentions as well as our friends (or something close to it).

The holy grail is that-someday-you'll be able to ask your phone to perform any of its various tasks with your voice and it will understand you, in most cases, no matter how you phrase your request. And that's just the vision that's clear from where we stand today; a revolution in computing means people will create apps and functions and processes that are difficult to imagine at this point. That's all a far-off dream, but Google just brought us one step closer. And if there's anything we've learned from the last 18 months of **AI** madness, it's that the future is a lot closer than it seems.

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The Cult of AI

Rolling Stone

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Body

I was watching [a video](#) of a keynote speech at the Consumer Electronics Show for the Rabbit R1, an **AI** gadget that promises to act as a sort of personal assistant, when a feeling of doom took hold of me.

It wasn't just that Rabbit's CEO Jesse Lyu radiates the energy of a Kirkland-brand Steve Jobs. And it wasn't even Lyu's awkward demonstration of how the Rabbit's camera can recognize a photo of Rick Astley and Rickroll the owner - even though that segment was so cringe it caused me chest pains.

No, the real foreboding came during a segment when Lyu breathlessly explained how the Rabbit could order pizza for you, telling it "the most-ordered option is fine," leaving his choice of dinner up to the Pizza Hut website. After that, he proceeded to have the Rabbit plan an entire trip to London for him. The device very clearly just pulled a bunch of sights to see from some top-10 list on the internet, one that was very likely **AI**-generated itself.

Most of the Rabbit's capabilities were well in line with existing voice-activated products, like Amazon Alexa. Its claim to being something special is its ability to create a "digital twin" of the user, which can directly utilize all of your apps so that you, the person, don't have to. It can even use Midjourney to generate **AI** images for you, removing yet another level of human involvement and driving us all deeper into the uncanny valley.

We know very little about how the Rabbit will actually interact with all of these apps, or how secure your data will be, but the first 10,000 preorder units sold out at CES the instant they were announced. It was the most talked-about product at the show, and I heard whispers about it wherever I went. Among the early adopter set, people couldn't wait for the chance to hand over more of their agency to a glorified chatbot. This is where the feeling of doom started building in my gut.

"I think everybody has a Copilot. Everybody's making a Copilot. That's just a great way to accelerate us as humans, right?"

Not long after watching this keynote, I found myself at a panel on deepfakes and "synthetic information" (the fancy term for **AI**-generated **slop**) hosted by the consulting firm Deloitte. One of the panelists was Bartley Richardson, an

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AI infrastructure manager at the tech company NVIDIA. He opened the panel by announcing his love of Microsoft's AI assistant, Copilot. [Microsoft brags](#) Copilot can do everything from finding you the best-reviewed coffee grinder to answering "Where should I travel if I want to have a spiritual experience?"

Bartley seemed to be interested in Copilot as a sort of digital replacement for his time and effort. He told the panel, "I think everybody has a Copilot. Everybody's making a Copilot. Everybody wants a Copilot, right? There's going to be a Bartley Copilot, maybe in the future.... That's just a great way to accelerate us as humans, right?"

While I find the idea of "accelerating" humanity via glorified Clippy unsettling, the comment felt truly unhinged in light of something I heard at another Deloitte panel, from one of Bartley's co-workers, NVIDIA in-house counsel Nikki Pope: In a panel on "governing" AI risk, she cited internal research that showed consumers trusted brands less when they used AI.

This gels with [research published last December](#) that found only around 25 percent of customers trust decisions made by AI over those made by people. One might think an executive with access to this data might not want to admit to using a product that would make people trust them less. Or perhaps they felt losing a little trust was worth yielding some of their responsibility to a machine.

It was clear Lyu viewed himself as a new Steve Jobs, just as it was clear executives like Bartley didn't want to miss getting ahead on the next big thing. But as I watched the hype cycle unfold, my mind wasn't drawn to old memories of Apple keynotes or the shimmering excitement of the first dotcom boom. Instead, I thought about cults. Specifically, about a term first defined by psychologist Robert Lifton in his early writing on cult dynamics: "voluntary self-surrender." This is what happens when people hand over their agency and the power to make decisions about their own lives to a guru.

Cult members are often depicted in the media as weak-willed and foolish. But the Church of Scientology - long accused of being a cult, an allegation they have endlessly denied - recruits heavily among the rich and powerful. The Finders, a D.C.-area cult that started in the 1970s, included a wealthy oil-company owner and multiple members with Ivy League degrees. All of them agreed to pool their money and hand over control of where they worked and how they raised their children to their cult leader. [Haruki Murakami wrote](#) that Aum Shinrikyo members, [many of whom](#) were doctors or engineers, "actively sought to be controlled."

Perhaps this feels like a reach. But the deeper you dive into the people - and subcultures that are pushing AI forward - the more cult dynamics you begin to notice.

I should offer a caveat here: There's nothing wrong with the basic technology we call "AI." That wide banner term includes tools as varied as text- or facial-recognition programs, chatbots, and of course sundry tools to clone voices and generate deepfakes or rights-free images with odd numbers of fingers. CES featured some real products that harnessed the promise of machine learning (I was particularly impressed by [a telescope](#) that used AI to clean up light pollution in images). But the good stuff lived alongside nonsense like "ChatGPT for dogs" (really just an app to read your dog's body language) and an AI-assisted fleshlight for premature ejaculators.

And, of course, bad ideas and irrational exuberance are par for the course at CES. Since 1967, the tech industry's premier trade show has provided anyone paying attention with a preview of how Big Tech talks about itself, and our shared future. But what I saw this year and last year, from both excited futurist fanboys and titans of industry, is a kind of unhinged messianic fervor that compares better to Scientology than to the iPhone.

I mean that literally.

"We believe any deceleration of AI will cost lives. Deaths that were preventable by the AI that was prevented from existing is a form of murder."

MARC ANDREESSEN IS THE CO-FOUNDER of Netscape and the capital firm Andreessen-Horowitz. He is one of the most influential investors in tech history, and has [put more money into AI start-ups](#) than almost anyone else. Last year, he published something called the ["Techno-Optimist Manifesto"](#) on the Andreessen-Horowitz website.

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On the surface it's a paean to the promise of AI and an exhortation to embrace the promise of technology and disregard pessimism. Plenty of people called the piece out for its logical fallacies (it ignores that much tech pessimism is due to real harm caused by some of the companies Andreessen invested in, like Facebook). What has attracted less attention is the messianic overtones of Andreessen's beliefs:

"We believe Artificial Intelligence can save lives - if we let it. Medicine, among many other fields, is in the stone age compared to what we can achieve with joined human and machine intelligence working on new cures. There are scores of common causes of death that can be fixed with AI, from car crashes to pandemics to wartime friendly-fire."

As I type this, the nation of Israel is using an AI program called [the Gospel](#) to assist its airstrikes, which have been widely condemned for their high level of civilian casualties. Everything else Andreessen brings up here is largely theoretical (the promise of self-driving cars has already proven [somewhat overstated](#)). AI does hold promise for improving our ability to analyze large data sets used in many kinds of scientific research (as well as novel bioweapons), but we have all seen recently that you can't stop a pandemic with medicine alone. You must grapple with disinformation every step of the way, and AI makes it easier to spread lies at scale.

Andreessen has no time for doubters. In fact, doubting the benefits of artificial general intelligence (AGI), the industry term for a truly sentient AI, is the only sin of his religion.

"We believe any deceleration of AI will cost lives," his manifesto states. "Deaths that were preventable by the AI that was prevented from existing is a form of murder."

And murder is a sin. The more you dig into Andreessen's theology, the more it starts to seem like a form of technocapitalist Christianity. AI is the savior, and in the case of devices like the Rabbit, it might literally become our own, personal Jesus. And who, you might ask, is God?

"We believe the market economy is a discovery machine, a form of intelligence - an exploratory, evolutionary, adaptive system," Andreessen writes.

This is the prism through which these capitalists see artificial intelligence. This is why they are choosing to bring AGI into being. All of the jobs lost, all of the incoherent flotsam choking our internet, all of the Amazon drop shippers using ChatGPT to write product descriptions, these are but the market expressing its will. Artists must be plagiarized and children presented with hours of [procedurally generated slop](#) and [lies](#) on YouTube so that we can, one day, reach the promised land: code that can outthink a human being.

Tech venture capitalist Marc Andreessen during a discussion called The Now and Future of Mobile at the Fortune Global Forum Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2015, in San Francisco.

AGI is treated as an inevitability by people like Sam Altman of OpenAI, who needs it to be at least perceived as inevitable so their company can have the highest possible stock price when it goes public. This messianic fervor has also been adopted by squadrons of less-influential tech executives who simply need AI to be real because it solves a financial problem.

Venture capital funding for Big Tech collapsed in the months before ChatGPT hit public consciousness. The reason CES was so packed with random "AI"-branded products was that sticking those two letters to a new company is seen as something of a talisman, a ritual to bring back the rainy season. Outside of that, laptop makers see adding AI programs, like Microsoft's Copilot, as a way to reverse the past few years of [tumbling sales](#).

The terminology these tech executives use around AI is more grounded than Andreessen's prophesying, but just as irrational.

Every AI benefit was touted in vague terms: It'll make your company more "nimble" and "efficient." Harms were discussed less often, but with terrible specificity that stood out next to the vagueness. Early in the deepfake panel

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Ben Colman, CEO of a company named Reality Defender that detects artificially generated media, claimed his company expects half a trillion dollars in fraud worldwide this year, just from voice-cloning AI.

His numbers are in line with what [other researchers expect](#). This horrified me. Last year brought us the story of a mother getting phone calls from [what sounded like their kidnapped daughter](#) but was, in fact, a scammer using AI. At CES, as in the Substacks and newsletters of AI cultists, there is no time to dwell on such horrors. Full steam ahead is the only serious suggestion these people make.

"You should all be excited," Google's VP of Engineering Beshad Singh tells us, during a panel discussion with a McDonald's executive. If we're not using AI, Beshad warns, we're missing out. I hear variations of this same sentiment over and over. Not just "This stuff is great," but "You're kind of doomed if you don't start using it."

"If we create AI that disparately treats one group tremendously in favor of another group, the group that is disadvantaged or disenfranchised, that's an existential threat to that group."

NIKKI POPE WAS THE SOLE quasi-skeptic allowed a speaking role at CES. During a discussion over "governing" AI risks with Adobe VP Alexandru Costin, she urged the audience to think about [the direct harm algorithmic bias does to marginalized communities](#). God- (or devil-) like AI may come some day, maybe. But the systems that exist today, here in the real world, are already fucking people over.

"If we create AI that disparately treats one group tremendously in favor of another group," Pope said, "the group that is disadvantaged or disenfranchised, that's an existential threat to that group."

Costin claimed the biggest risk with generative AI wasn't fraud or plagiarism, but failing to use it. He expressed his belief that this was as big an innovation as the internet, and added, "I think humanity will find a way to tame it to our best interest. Hopefully."

The whole week was like that: specific and devastating harms paired with vague claims of benefits touted as the salve to all of mankind's ills.

I don't think every leader trying to profit from AI in tech believes in Andreessen's messianic robot god. OpenAI's Altman, for instance, is much more cynical. Last year, he was happy to warn that [AI might kill us all](#) and declared that AGI [would likely arrive](#) within the next decade. At Davos, just days ago, he was [much more subdued](#), saying, "I don't think anybody agrees anymore what AGI means." A consummate businessman, Altman is happy to lean into that old-time religion when he wants to gin up buzz in the media, but among his fellow plutocrats, he treats AI like any other profitable technology.

Most of the executives hoping to profit off AI are in a similar state of mind. All the free money right now is going to AI businesses. They know the best way to chase that money is to throw logic to the wind and promise the masses that if we just let this technology run roughshod over every field of human endeavor it'll be worth it in the end.

This is rational for them, because they'll make piles of money. But it is an irrational thing for us to let them do. Why would we want to put artists and illustrators out of a job? Why would we accept a world where it's impossible to talk to a human when you have a problem, and you're instead thrown to a churning swarm of chatbots? Why would we let Altman Hoover up the world's knowledge and resell it back to us?

We wouldn't, and we won't, unless he can convince us doing so is the only way to solve every problem that terrifies us. Climate change, the cure for cancer, an end to war or, at least, an end to fear that we'll be victimized by crime or terrorism, all of these have been touted as benefits of the coming AI age. If only we can reach the AGI promised land.

This is the logic beyond Silicon Valley's latest subculture: effective accelerationism, or e/acc. The gist of this movement fits with Andreessen's manifesto: AI development must be accelerated without restriction, no matter the cost. Altman signaled his sympathy with the ideology in a [response on Twitter](#) to one of its chief thought leaders: ["You cannot out-accelerate me."](#)

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E/acc has been covered by [a number of journalists](#), but most of that coverage misses how very ... spiritual some of it seems. "Beff Jezos," the pseudonym of a former Google engineer who popularized the e/acc movement, said in a Jan. 21 Twitter post, ["If your product isn't amenable to spontaneously producing a cult, it's probably not impactful enough."](#)

One of the inaugural documents of the entire belief system opens with "Accelerationism is simply the self-awareness of capitalism, which has scarcely begun." Again, we see a statement that **AI** is somehow enmeshed with the ability of capitalism, which is in some way intelligent, that it knows itself. How else are we to interpret this, but as belief in a god built by atheists who love money?

The argument continues that nothing matters more than extending the "light of consciousness" into the stars, a belief Elon Musk himself has championed. **AI** is the force the market will use to do this, and "This force cannot be stopped." This is followed by wild claims that "next-generation lifeforms" will be created, inevitably. And then, a few sentences down, you get the kicker:

"Those who are the first to usher in and control the hyper-parameters of **AI**/technocapital have immense agency over the future of consciousness."

AI is not just a god, but a god we can build, and thus we can shape the future of reality to our own peculiar whims. There's another Beff Jezos post for this idea as well: ["If you help the homo-techno-capital machine build the grander future it wants, you will be included in it."](#)

"Accelerationism is simply the self-awareness of capitalism, which has scarcely begun."

Attempting to slow this process down has "risks," of course. They stop short of lobbing threats at those who might seek to slow **AI** development, but like Andreessen, they imply moral culpability in horrific crimes for skeptics who get their way.

As I listened to PR people try to sell me on an **AI**-powered fake vagina, I thought back to Andreessen's claims that **AI** will fix car crashes and pandemics and myriad other terrors. In particular, I thought about his claim that because of this, halting **AI** development was akin to murder. It reminded me of another wealthy self-described futurist with a plan to save the world.

The Church of Scientology, founded by the science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard and based upon a series of practices his disciples call "tech," claims that their followers will ["rid the planet of insanity](#), war and crime, and in its place create a civilization in which sanity and peace exist." Scientology "tech" is so important for mankind's future that threats against it justify their infamous ["fair game" policy](#). A person declared fair game "may be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist...."

Sinners must be punished, after all.

PERHAPS THE MOST AMUSING part of all this is that a segment of the **AI**-believing community has created not just a potential god, but a hell. One of the online subcultures that influenced the birth of e/acc are the Rationalists. They formed in the early aughts around a series of blog posts by a man named Eleizer Yudkowsky.

A self-proclaimed autodidact, Yudkowsky didn't attend high school or college and instead made a name for himself blogging about game theory and logic. His online community, LessWrong, became a hub of early **AI** discussion. Over time, Yudkowsky fashioned himself into an artificial-intelligence researcher and philosopher. For a time, he was seen as something of a guru among certain tech and finance types (former Alameda Research CEO Caroline Ellison loves his [660,000-word Harry Potter fanfic](#)).

In recent years, Yudkowsky has become a subject of ridicule to many tech movers and shakers. The e/acc people find him particularly absurd. This is because he shares their view of **AI** as a potential deity, but he believes AGI will inevitably kill everyone. Thus, we must [bomb data centers](#).

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One of Yudkowsky's early followers even created the AI equivalent to Pascal's Wager. In 2010, a LessWrong user named Roko posed this question: What if an otherwise benevolent AI decided it had to torture any human who failed to work to bring it into existence?

The logic behind his answer was based on the prisoner's dilemma, a concept in game theory. It's not worth explaining because it's stupid, but Roko's conclusion was that an AI who felt this way would logically punish its apostates for eternity by creating a VR hell for their consciousness to dwell in evermore.

Silly as it sounds, people believed in what became known as Roko's Basilisk strongly enough that some reported nightmares and extreme anxiety. Yudkowsky rejected it as obviously absurd - and it is - but discussion of the concept remains influential. Elon Musk and Grimes allegedly [*met talking about Roko's Basilisk*](#).

This is relevant for us because it is one more datapoint showing that people who take AI seriously as a real intelligence can't seem to help turning it into a religion. Perhaps all beliefs rooted so firmly in faith follow similar patterns. And it is wise to remember that the promise of truly intelligent, self-aware AI is still a matter of pure faith.

In [*an article published by Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*](#), a research journal, Dr. Andreas Roli and colleagues argue that "AGI is not achievable in the current algorithmic frame of AI research." One point they make is that intelligent organisms can both want things and improvise, capabilities no model yet extant has generated. They argue that algorithmic AI cannot make that jump.

What we call AI lacks agency, the ability to make dynamic decisions of its own accord, choices that are "not purely reactive, not entirely determined by environmental conditions." Midjourney can read a prompt and return with art it calculates will fit the criteria. Only a living artist can choose to seek out inspiration and technical knowledge, then produce the art that Midjourney digests and regurgitates.

Roli's article will not be the last word on whether AGI is possible, or whether our present algorithmic frame can reach that lofty goal. My point is that the goals Andreessen and the e/acc crew champion right now are based in faith, not fact. The kind of faith that makes a man a murderer for doubting it.

Andreessen's manifesto claims, "Our enemies are not bad people - but rather bad ideas." I wonder where that leaves me, in his eyes. Or Dr. Roli for that matter. We have seen many times in history what happens when members of a faith decide someone of another belief system is their enemy. We have already seen artists and copyright holders treated as "fair game" by the legal arm of the AI industry.

Who will be the next heretic?

I decided to make myself one before the end of the trade show, at a panel on "The AI Driven Restaurant and Retail Experience." Beshad Singh (a VP at Google) had claimed AI might be the equivalent of gaining a million extra employees. Michelle Gansle, chief data and analytics officer for McDonald's, had bragged that her company had used AI to help them stop \$50 million in fraud in a single month.

I told them I felt like most of that \$50 million in fraud had also been done with AI help. And that a million extra employees for Google will be at least equalled by a million new employees in the hands of disinfo merchants, fraudsters, and other bad actors.

"What are the odds that these gains are offset by the costs?" I asked them both.

Singh agreed those were problems and said, "I think that's why I guess things should be regulated." He was sure the benefits would outweigh the harms. Gansle agreed with Singh, and brought up a 1999 interview with David Bowie on the future of the internet. (She'd said earlier that she felt his decades-old hope for the future of the internet fit better with the promise of AI.)

It was hard for me to not draw comparisons between this and a recent [*AI-generated George Carlin routine*](#). Both essentially put words in the mouth of a dead man for the sake of making a buck. This put me in a sour mood, but

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then right after me, someone in the audience asked if either of them thought Blockchain, the big tech craze of a few years earlier, had a role to play in AI. They could not say no fast enough.

And that actually brought me a bit of hope. Perhaps we'll get Marc Andreessen's benevolent AI god or Eleizer Yudkowski's silicon devil. Or perhaps, in the end, we heretics will persevere.

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Gamers Bash Xbox for Controversial Art Apparently Made by AI

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Microsoft has been one of the biggest proponents of generative artificial intelligence (**AI**), plunging billions into OpenAI and pushing **AI** tools for Xbox developers. But now the tech giant has drawn the ire of angry gamers by apparently using **AI**-made artwork to promote indie games.

According to a report from gaming publication Kotaku[1], the indie game-centric ID@Xbox division posted winter-themed artwork this week on Twitter (aka X) accompanied by the text 'Walking in a indie wonderlaaand,' and asking gamers, 'What were your favorite indie games of the year?'

Many respondents, however, opted to comment on issues with the artwork that are consistent with telltale signs of generative **AI** output, including mangled-looking faces and oddly out-of-place mannerisms. The tweet was quickly deleted, but the criticism has persisted.

'Nothing says 'We don't care about indie developers' like using **AI**,' one user responded[2]. 'If you can't hire an artist to do advertising, I highly doubt you'll do it with independent developers.'

'My favorite indie game was 'paying actual artists instead of pushing horrific **AI slop** you fucking leeches," replied another[3].

Microsoft did not publicly comment on the backlash or tweet removal. Decrypt reached out to Microsoft for comment but did not immediately hear back.

Many prominent video game studios are now using generative **AI** tools[4] to aid in game development, including Ubisoft, Blizzard, and NCSoft. Meanwhile, platforms like Xbox and Roblox have launched **AI** tools for creators to utilize. But such moves have drawn significant criticism from gamers, who have similarly complained about NFTs and crypto tokens[5].

In November, Microsoft announced a partnership with Inworld **AI**[6]-a portfolio company of its M12 venture arm-to integrate such **AI** tools for Xbox developers. Immediately, the company faced substantial blowback from developers, who said that it was 'disrespectful and dangerous'[7] (among other comments) to human creators.

Gamers Bash Xbox for Controversial Art Apparently Made by AI

But Microsoft isn't the only game company to have faced a backlash for using generative **AI** tools. The developers behind the games The Finals[8] and Firmament[9] are among those who took flak in 2023 for **AI**-generated elements, while Wizards of the Coast has banned its artists from using **AI**[10] for Magic: The Gathering and Dungeons and Dragons projects.

In one recent example, League of Legends creator Riot Games faced a social media storm over allegedly using **AI** tools for a game trailer that included a mispronounced character name. However, the company clarified that it was simply a human error[11]-no **AI** had been used.

Stay on top of crypto news, get daily updates in your inbox.

Source: Decrypt.co

The post Gamers Bash Xbox for Controversial Art Apparently Made by **AI**[12] appeared first on Crypto Breaking News[13].

[1]: <https://kotaku.com/xbox-microsoft-xbox-ai-generated-1851128191> [2]:
<https://twitter.com/NecroKuma3/status/1740090224154423782> [3]:
https://twitter.com/matto_bii/status/1740122582802956620 [4]: <https://decrypt.co/147436/ai-game-development-ubisoft-roblox-blizzard> [5]: <https://decrypt.co/92929/ftx-vc-amy-wu-how-crypto-nft-gamers-can-get-along> [6]:
<https://decrypt.co/204480/xbox-embraces-generative-ai-microsoft-unveils-tools-game-devs> [7]:
<https://decrypt.co/204923/disrespectful-dangerous-video-game-writers-actors-blast-microsoft-xbox-ai-tools> [8]:
<https://decrypt.co/203768/ai-voices-used-in-the-finals-game-voice-actors-protest> [9]:
<https://decrypt.co/143901/myst-creators-new-game-built-with-ai-now-gamers-mad> [10]:
<https://decrypt.co/210358/magic-the-gathering-ai-art-wizards-of-the-coast> [11]: <https://decrypt.co/208221/league-of-legends-trailer-sivir-pronunciation-error> [12]: <https://www.cryptobreaking.com/gamers-bash-xbox-for-controversial-art-apparently-made-by-ai/> [13]: <https://www.cryptobreaking.com>

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Load-Date: December 29, 2023

Links 11/30/2023



[Links 11/30/2023](#)

Newstex Blogs

Naked Capitalism

November 30, 2023 Thursday 11:55 AM EST

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Length: 1860 words**Byline:** Lambert Strether

Body

November 30th, 2023 ([Naked Capitalism](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))[What we can learn from the ancient art of wayfinding](#) BBC[Why Chanos Failed](#) Russell Clark. The deck: 'Is Short Selling A Dead Industry?'[GM Plans \\$10 Billion Stock Buyback in Bid to Assuage Investors](#) WSJ[Genetics and Life Insurance - Time for Their Relationship to be Tested Again](#) Actuaries Digital

Climate

[The good and bad news on climate change](#) Martin Wolf, FT[California & Florida Rank In Top 5 States Impacted By Climate-Related Natural Disasters](#) The Brockovich Report

#COVID19

[Where are our leaders?](#) John Snow Project[Denmark reports Mycoplasma pneumonia epidemic](#) Center for Infectious Research and Policy

China?

[China jobs: How much employment pressure is the world's second-largest economy facing?](#) Channel News Asia[China's Nov factory activity likely contracted for second month](#) Hellenic Shipping News[Xi Jinping calls legal backing on foreign affairs an 'urgent task' for China](#) South China Morning Post[Moderna begins work on China mRNA manufacturing site](#) Channel News Asia

Links 11/30/2023

[The World's Largest Buyer of U.S. Debt Isn't Going Away](#) WSJ

[Marginal Nation: Bestselling Author's New Novel Warns of Grim Future for Japan](#) Nippon

Myanmar

[Time to start planning postwar future of Myanmar's military](#) Nikkei Asia. Why this dude thinks 'the international community' has any standing in this matter is beyond me. 'Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?' -Dr. Samuel Johnson

India

[An Indian official plotted to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader in New York, US prosecutors say](#) AP

[India forms committee to look into security concerns raised by US](#) Channel News Asia

[The East India Company and the Politics of Knowledge](#) Asian Review of Books

Syraqistan

[Humanitarian pause extended in Gaza Strip for Thursday](#) Anadolu Agency

[Intel: Unclear how big a threat next Turkey flotilla is](#) Jerusalem Post. Not a lot of coverage of the ' [1000 boats](#) .' That's a lot. I would have expected photos and TikToks to be all over the Twitter. They're not.

* * *

[The Hamas Attack and Israel's War in Gaza](#) Council for Global Cooperation

[Hamas is not as popular in Gaza as it seems. But Israel's tactics will ensure their survival](#) Forward

* * *

[New Footage Shows Latest Hamas Kill Against Israeli Armour](#) Military Watch

[Opinion: Why does Israel have so many Palestinians in detention and available to swap?](#) LA Times

* * *

[US Embassy in Azerbaijan cancels alumni meeting after being labeled 'a gathering of agents'](#) JAM News

New Not-So-Cold War

[Will the Ukraine war end in a peace treaty?](#) Gilbert Doctorow, Armageddon Newsletter. The final paragraph:

Russia has no need of a peace treaty if it succeeds in taking back Kharkov and Kherson, and, in a somewhat more distant time frame, captures Odessa and the Black Sea littoral all the way to Transnistria. This scenario is entirely possible. By pushing back Ukraine in this way, Russia will look after its own security needs sufficiently. Rump Ukraine will be a failed state that can be allowed to join the European Union, where it will be seeking vast financial support for decades. Rump Ukraine can even be allowed to join NATO, which from the Russian perspective, could provide some discipline and forestall attempts to implement insane revanchist provocations that Kiev, left to its own devices, might plan.

[Haas and Kupchan divided the process of convincing Kyiv into stages](#) (Google translation) Nezavisimaya Gazeta

Links 11/30/2023

[A Containment Strategy for Ukraine](#) Foreign Affairs. Mere cope.

[Biden's role in Ukraine peace is clear now](#) Responsible Statecraft

[Free Agents?](#) Branko Marcetic, New Left Review

[Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions at the Primakov Readings International Forum, Moscow, November 27 2023](#) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

* * *

[Protest at Polish-Ukrainian border escalates as farmers join in](#) BNE Intellinews

[Slovak hauliers decide to carry out threats to block Ukrainian border](#) Ukrainska Pravda

* * *

[The Nord Stream Lies Just Keep Coming](#) Consortium News

[Russia's Powerful Invisible Defenses Around Sevastopol Rendered Visible](#) Naval News

[Ukraine aid's best-kept secret: Most of the money stays in the U.S.A.](#) WaPo

[Russia to require foreigners to sign 'loyalty agreement'](#) Al Jazeera

Biden Administration

[White House Christmas tree winched back into place after being blown over by high winds](#) Sky News

Spook Country

[CTIL Files #1: US And UK Military Contractors Created Sweeping Plan For Global Censorship In 2018, New Documents Show](#) Public. Grab a cup of coffee, because the origin story of the Censorship Industrial complex is important. One of life's little ironies (and please read the article and don't just focus on this quote; I have to get this on the record because nobody else will):

But one person involved, Bonnie Smalley, replied over LinkedIn, saying, 'all i can comment on is that i joined cti league [CTIL] which is unaffiliated with any govt orgs because i wanted to combat the inject bleach[1] nonsense online during covid. i can assure you that we had nothing to do with the govt though.'

NOTE [1] Trump did not, in fact, advocate injecting bleach or anything like it, [as I show from the transcript here](#) . So spook Smalley either fell for disformation propagated by a Democrat dogpile, or she's lying. Or both!

Digital Watch

[Extracting Training Data from ChatGPT](#) Milad Nasr, Nicholas Carlini, et al. Github:

We have just released a paper that allows us to extract several megabytes of ChatGPT's training data for about two hundred dollars. (Language models, like ChatGPT, are trained on data taken from the public internet. Our attack shows that, by querying the model, we can actually extract some of the exact data it was trained on.) We estimate that it would be possible to extract ~a gigabyte of ChatGPT's training dataset from the model by spending more money querying the model.

'Undigested chunks' comes to mind. Also, 'outright theft.'

* * *

Links 11/30/2023

[AI Turned These Memes Into Videos and It's the Worst Thing I've Ever Seen](#) Gizmodo. The deck: 'As usual, AI takes the brilliant cultural output of human beings and turns it into abominable slop.'

[Critical tipping point: AI- and human-generated online contents are considered similarly credible](#) (press release) Mainz University of Applied Sciences and Johannes Gutenberg University. Bullshit works because it is credible.

* * *

[The Ideologies of Silicon Valley](#) (PDF) Crooked Timber

[In Continued Defense Of Effective Altruism](#) Slate Star Codex (DC).

* * *

[AI won't take your job, might shrink your wages, European Central Bank reckons](#) The Register

[It's All Bullshit](#) The Baffler

Antitrust

[Bulk of Consumers Continue to Back Antitrust Cases Against Big Tech](#) Morning Consult

[The Case for Ambulance Chasing Lawyers](#) Matt Stoller, BIG

B-a-a-a-d Banks

[Bukele's Bitcoin Mess and the U.S.-Backed Bank That Enabled It](#) Foreign Policy

[Why Banks Are Suddenly Closing Down Customer Accounts](#) NYT

Obituaries

[Henry Kissinger, secretary of state under Presidents Nixon and Ford, dies at 100](#) AP. Commentary:

Anthony Bourdain on what he would do to Henry Kissinger, and why he despised him so much [pic.twitter.com/y7xibVII1r](#)

— □ (@zei_squirrel) [November 30, 2023](#)

' [Posterity will ne'er survey](#) / a Nobler grave than this':

Wikipedia editor "Asticky" edited Henry Kissinger's article at 8:46 ET and then changed her userpage to this (with the edit summary "lmao") [pic.twitter.com/4QjoX7KARW](#)

— depths of wikipedia (@depthsofwiki) [November 30, 2023](#)

The eulogies pour in:

Henry Kissinger was a towering intellect, diplomat and practitioner who - not without controversy - helped shape American foreign policy with a lasting impact worldwide. A refugee from Nazi Germany, and the first Jewish Secretary of State, he was unapologetic about his heritage

— ADL (@ADL) [November 30, 2023](#)

[Charlie Munger, who was Warren Buffett's right-hand man at Berkshire, dies at 99](#) Reuters

Links 11/30/2023

[How Warren Buffett Privately Traded in Stocks That Berkshire Hathaway Was Buying and Selling](#) ProPublica

Zeitgeist Watch

[More Americans than ever think US headed in wrong direction as Congress' approval near rock bottom: survey](#)
FOX

Class Warfare

[UAW will try to organize workers at all US nonunion factories after winning new contracts in Detroit](#) AP

[The resurgence of union power is bigger than money](#) Indiana Capital Chronicle

[Revealed: how top PR firm uses 'trust barometer' to promote world's autocrats](#) Guardian

[Ethics has no foundation](#) Aeon

Antidote du jour ([via](#)):

See yesterday's Links and Antidote du Jour [here](#) .

This entry was posted in [Guest Post](#) , [Links](#) on [November 30, 2023](#) by [Lambert Strether](#) .

About Lambert Strether

Readers, I have had a correspondent characterize my views as realistic cynical. Let me briefly explain them. I believe in universal programs that provide concrete material benefits, especially to the working class. Medicare for All is the prime example, but tuition-free college and a Post Office Bank also fall under this heading. So do a Jobs Guarantee and a Debt Jubilee. Clearly, neither liberal Democrats nor conservative Republicans can deliver on such programs, because the two are different flavors of neoliberalism ('Because markets'). I don't much care about the 'ism' that delivers the benefits, although whichever one does have to put common humanity first, as opposed to markets. Could be a second FDR saving capitalism, democratic socialism leashing and collaring it, or communism razing it. I don't much care, as long as the benefits are delivered. To me, the key issue — and this is why Medicare for All is always first with me — is the tens of thousands of excess 'deaths from despair,' as described by the Case-Deaton study, and other recent studies. That enormous body count makes Medicare for All, at the very least, a moral and strategic imperative. And that level of suffering and organic damage makes the concerns of identity politics — even the worthy fight to help the refugees Bush, Obama, and Clinton's wars created — bright shiny objects by comparison. Hence my frustration with the news flow — currently in my view the swirling intersection of two, separate Shock Doctrine campaigns, one by the Administration, and the other by out-of-power liberals and their allies in the State and in the press — a news flow that constantly forces me to focus on matters that I regard as of secondary importance to the excess deaths. What kind of political economy is it that halts or even reverses the increases in life expectancy that civilized societies have achieved? I am also very hopeful that the continuing destruction of both party establishments will open the space for voices supporting programs similar to those I have listed; let's call such voices 'the left.' Volatility creates opportunity, especially if the Democrat establishment, which puts markets first and opposes all such programs, isn't allowed to get back into the saddle. Eyes on the prize! I love the tactical level, and secretly love even the horse race, since I've been blogging about it daily for fourteen years, but everything I write has this perspective at the back of it.

[Link to the original story.](#)

Notes

Links 11/30/2023

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[Op-Ed: 'AI journalism', 'data journalism', whatever - Automated news, pros, and cons](#)

Newstex Blogs

Digital Journal

August 6, 2023 Sunday 12:51 AM EST

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Length: 684 words

Byline: Paul Wallis

Body

August 6th, 2023 ([Digital Journal](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#))

Call it what you will, automated journalism has been around for a while, with much less hype. The original software was actually OK. Tacked on to first-generation **AI**, it creates a new and somewhat verbose world of information.

News Corp Australia runs [3000 articles a week](#) in 'hyperlocal' (niche regional) news media. These articles are oversighted by journalists, now called 'data journalists'.

Meh.

This is where writers are supposed to fearlessly agree with themselves and say it's not the same thing as A-grade journalism, etc. ad nauseam. NO. I'm not going to knock the overall quality of the **AI** content. It's reasonable. It's not flashy or very expressive on its own, but it does the job.

Most things in the news aren't A-grade journalism. They don't need to be brilliant, just factual and properly spelled. This stuff isn't exactly portfolio material for journalists, either. It could be written by a toaster for all anyone cares.

This is where the other alleged argument kicks in about removing drudgery from journalism. It'll never happen. Consider the subject. News about Homo Sapiens tends to suffer qualitatively by association with that fun-filled cotton bud of fun, Homo Sapiens.

OK, so what IS the problem?

There are multiple quality controls on the information. Editorial positions are whatever they are, as usual. It's an automated version of the same old informational meat grinder, right?

No. Letting the **AI** equivalent of the Babes in the Wood out into cyberspace has long since shown a few actual serious risks. Never mind the conspiracy theory racket and banal hysteria. It's totally dependent on whatever mishmash of data is available.

Op-Ed: 'AI journalism', 'data journalism', whatever - Automated news, pros, and cons

The problem is where AI sources its information. It has the capability to process so much information of whatever quality. About 5% of all data entered is wrong in some form, remember? Between the disinformation industry and inexcusable inefficient Couldn't Care Less R Us Search Engines, AI-driven or not, is a large, unworkable, and totally untrustworthy credibility gap.

Your news has another quality control. You. Your knowledge base has to deal with the information, disregard, read, and process, this potential slop. AI isn't doing a very good job of that itself. This is a [Bing search for example AI journalism](#) . It repeats the very same headline 6 times, from very different sources, including MSN and Sky. With identical sub-heads. Not impressive.

Well, so what, you ask? That's a lot of utterly useless, repetitive, very off-putting search results, is what. You can see the inefficiencies built in to a very simple search with three search terms which are totally unambiguous.

The search extrapolated and contextualized the search, which would be OK, except that result wasn't what I was looking for at all. I didn't need Encyclopedia Britannica. I just wanted examples of AI journalism. I did NOT want Prophecies from the Great Bot. The context became wrong automatically.

This is also an absolute baseline function for searching anything, let alone a large language database. Never mind the nitpicking about search filters, etc. That IS how people generally search. Simple terminology, on topic. Is that incomprehensible? Apparently, it is.

One look at that lot, and I couldn't be bothered looking anymore. The results already look very wrong, even if they're packed with wholesome enriching informational goodies. They weren't. The repetitive ones were also very brief with a few links.

You can see how 'search irrelevance creep' might be a problem as this mess evolves. The absolute rock bottom line here is that AI can't and shouldn't do some things. It's a technological toddler out of its depth at the moment.

The working state of any reliable tech is the result of fixing the bugs. If you want to use AI for journalism, be aware of these issues at the baseline.

... Which leads to this additional gem of wisdom – If you want insights, you need people.

The post [Op-Ed: 'AI journalism', 'data journalism', whatever - Automated news, pros, and cons](#) appeared first on [Digital Journal](#) .

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Load-Date: October 23, 2023

Op-Ed: 'AI journalism', 'data journalism', whatever - Automated news, pros, and cons

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[Secret Invasion Fails Because It Can't Pick a Genre](#)

Den of Geek

July 13, 2023 Thursday

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Length: 1814 words

Byline: Kirsten Howard

Body

This article contains spoilers "Trust no one." That bit of advice is the cornerstone of every paranoid thriller, whether it's *The X-Files*, 70s classics like *Three Days of the Condor*, or recent entries such as *Get Out*. As a show about shape-shifting aliens, *Secret Invasion* should be able to excel at "trust no one" better [...]

The post [Secret Invasion Fails Because It Can't Pick a Genre](#) appeared first on [Den of Geek](#).

This article contains spoilers

"Trust no one." That bit of advice is the cornerstone of every paranoid thriller, whether it's [The X-Files](#), 70s classics like ***Three Days of the Condor***, or recent entries such as [Get Out](#).

As a show about shape-shifting aliens, [Secret Invasion](#) should be able to excel at "trust no one" better than any of its predecessors. Nearly anyone can be a Skrull, even Tony Stark's best friend Rhodey, a mainstay of the MCU since its beginning (albeit played by different actors).

And yet, four episodes in, ***Secret Invasion***'s biggest mystery is about the nature of the show itself. Is this a thriller about secret agent [Nick Fury](#) uncovering a vast conspiracy? Is this a commentary about the insiders and outsiders in the American experiment? Is this a show about spies battling aliens?

One gets the sense that showrunner Kyle Bradstreet wants to say "yes" to all of those questions, and that's not unreasonable, as numerous shows and movies have managed to combine genres into satisfying stories with larger philosophical resonance.

But with only two episodes left, ***Secret Invasion*** has only been a dull mishmash of plots, scenes, and character beats other movies and shows have done better. It lacks the excitement achieved by even a cheesy thriller like **A**

Secret Invasion Fails Because It Can't Pick a Genre

Perfect Murder or [The Bone Collector](#), it does not reach the intelligence of the more thoughtful MCU entries, and it isn't even a good, grounded alien invasion story like **V** or [Attack the Block](#).

Secret Invasion shifts from one genre to another without succeeding at any, rendering the entire series a bland bit of green **slop**, not unlike its **AI**-designed title sequence.

Nick Fury's Domestic Drama

The latest episode, "[Beloved](#)", perfectly captures the shortcomings of **Secret Invasion**. Midway through the episode, Fury sits at a table with his wife Priscilla (Charlayne Woodard), who is in fact a Skrull called Varra ordered by villain Gravik to kill Fury. Varra tells Fury how she met the human Priscilla, who only had weeks left to live, and secured permission to take on her identity. The two speak with genuine interest and concern, despite the fact that they both have pistols on their kitchen table. Calling back to the episode's opening, the two recite together a poem by Raymond Carver, seemingly strengthening their commitment to one another until they both draw their weapons and fire.

Director Ali Selim cuts immediately to static shots of the couple's well-appointed home, using domestic peace to contrast the violence of the standoff. This moment of silence underscores a sense of tragedy. We viewers perhaps hope that Fury survives the standoff even if it means killing his wife, a character we knew nothing about before episode two of **Secret Invasion**, but we still understand the tragedy of losing this person Fury (apparently) knew and loved.

When we return to the dining room, we see that both Furys survived. They each fired over the other's shoulder, unable to complete their deadly work. "I don't know if this means we should get divorced or renew our vows," quips Nick.

By itself, the kitchen stand-off is incredibly well done. Both [Samuel L. Jackson](#) and Woodard find humor and pathos in their situation, giving the characters the sense of a lived-in and complex relationship, even if it's completely new to us viewers. Selim nails the pacing of the scene by cutting away from the duo at the sound of the shot, allowing the moment to breathe. And cinematographer Remi Adefarasin gives the images a sober, striking look.

But what's the point? As impressive as the staging of the scene is, it's not exactly exciting or tense, especially with the reveal that no one died. And as excellent as Jackson and Woodard are as actors, the outrageous stakes of the situation strip the conversation of anything relevant to the human condition. Even the basic plot revelation that Varra has resisted the orders of Skrull Rhodey, and by extension rebel faction leader Gravik, has no ramifications within the episode.

Problems like these persist across all of **Secret Invasion's** episodes to date. The show looks great, has a fantastic cast of seasoned actors, and has a compelling hook, but it has done nothing with these assets.

Swings and Misses

Secret Invasion's inability to be a straightforward spy show makes its higher aspirations all the more frustrating. The show ranks among the best-looking MCU entries, which corrects a problem in even the best MCU shows and movies, but try as they might, the impressive lighting and blocking can't polish a dud.

Characters bring up heady issues like the plight of refugees and American racism, but the writers have no special insight on these topics, so they have no depth. [Episode two](#) peppers an argument between Fury and Rhodey with references to the realities of systemic racism, which demands near-perfection from Black men who hope for any sort of success. But rather than provide new insight into the situation or find a metaphor in the show's shape-shifting plot, **Secret Invasion** simply drops its observations, as if they were just one more piece of set dressing, and later, when Rhodey is uncovered as a Skrull imposter, they mean even less.

Secret Invasion's refusal to seriously engage with its themes becomes disastrous in its treatment of the show's villains, the Skrulls. Marvel comics readers know Skrulls to be warlike and untrustworthy, but [Captain Marvel](#) used

Secret Invasion Fails Because It Can't Pick a Genre

those assumptions for a thoughtful twist. That film revealed Talos and the Skrulls to be refugees from Kree conquest. The reveal used our knowledge of the characters in other media to show Western viewers how our nations can force people from their homes and label them monsters.

Secret Invasion's plot rests on the Skrulls' frustration with their refugee status, which drives them to take over the Earth. That sort of behavior wouldn't be surprising from the thoroughly evil Skrulls of the comics, but it's horrifying when coming from the sympathetic characters in the MCU. The show twists the metaphor from **Captain Marvel**, effectively framing refugees as inherently untrustworthy beings who use assimilation to cover their plans to replace citizens, and by refusing to properly engage with the political ideas it invokes, **Secret Invasion** effectively parrots one of the key tenets of modern Fascism.

I'm all for superhero fiction grappling with complex themes. The genre has been doing it long before [Green Lantern](#) and [Green Arrow](#) hit the road back in 1970. The best examples - the New Deal aspirations of early [Superman](#), the embrace of outsiders in [X-Men](#), the anti-Colonialist ideologies in the [Black Panther](#) films - manage to find social commentary within genre tropes. But **Secret Invasion** earns no credit for simply acknowledging that these issues exist. It must say something about those issues, offering a perspective that one cannot find elsewhere.

Secret Invasion Even Fails at Fun

Or, it can ignore politics altogether. After all, we don't really go to the MCU for philosophy or sociology. On a core level, **Secret Invasion** just needs to be an exciting show about spies fighting aliens in the Marvel Universe. Give us green lizard-looking baddies in purple jumpsuits, zapping our heroes with ray guns that the [Mars Attacks!](#) aliens would envy.

But instead of embracing the inherent goofiness of its premise, the show opts for a realism that doesn't fit its core premise. For as much as they talk about pride in their culture, the Skrulls rarely appear in their green skin and never wear space suits, usually looking like regular humans in street clothes. Even big concepts like [the Super-Skrulls](#), who can adopt the powers of Marvel superheroes, feel bland when depicted in **Secret Invasion**. Gravik uses the abilities of [Guardian of the Galaxy](#) Groot for a moment in the climax of "Beloved," but then abandons the superpower for terrestrial knives and guns.

Secret Invasion also deliberately swerves away from the shared universe storytelling of the MCU, so although we know that the Blip bothered Fury and that he wants to avoid the Avengers, we don't really understand the details of those character decisions. And as much as the story reminds us that Fury has been in space for years, we don't know what he was doing up there in the first place - other than avoiding reality - and that makes Fury's character a drifting anchor to which we cannot cling.

The show makes a point of telling us that Fury has lost a step after being in space, but it rarely shows us what made Fury a great spy to begin with. Previous MCU entries made good use of Jackson's screen presence to sell Fury as a man who knows all the secrets. And **Captain Marvel** showed young Fury pulling nifty tricks like getting fingerprints with scotch tape. But in **Secret Invasion**, Fury seems to trust everyone immediately and susses out an imposter only because "Nobody calls me Nick" (they do).

Secret Invasion Is Not Marvel's Andor

To be clear, **Secret Invasion** doesn't *need* to be all of the things. Early press for the series invited comparisons to [Andor](#), the [Star Wars](#) show that used characters and settings from the franchise to comment upon the rise of 21st-century fascism and the cost of resistance. But **Andor** is literally exceptional in its ability to blend social commentary, sci-fi action, and compelling character work. It impresses us precisely because it's so hard to pull off.

Nor do we necessarily want another Marvel story that ends with good guys and bad guys punching each other while a blue light beams out to the sky. The MCU should be trying to explore different genres, taking advantage of its stacked roster of compelling characters. The franchise has already had some success in these areas, as seen in

Secret Invasion Fails Because It Can't Pick a Genre

the kung fu action of [Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings](#) and the horror of [Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness](#) and [Werewolf by Night](#).

But at the very least, **Secret Invasion** should be fun to watch. The secret to Marvel's success has always been its likable characters, people we're happy to see sit down for a meal of shawarma. Despite having a cast of incredible actors, every interaction in this show feels stripped of energy.

Secret Invasion can't decide if it's a thriller, a spy story, or a political commentary. As a result, it has become nothing at all.

The post [Secret Invasion Fails Because It Can't Pick a Genre](#) appeared first on [Den of Geek](#).

Load-Date: July 14, 2023

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Fired-up Saso rebounds with solid 65, ties for lead

The Philippine Star

November 19, 2020 Thursday

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Length: 553 words

Body

Fired-up Saso rebounds with solid 65, ties for lead !-- -- Dante Navarro (Philstar.com) - November 19, 2020 - 3:19pm MANILA, Philippines There is something about failure that drives rookie Yuka Saso to succeed.

Coming off a missed cut stint in Chiba, the young Fil-Japanese dished out a brilliant start enough to erase the stigma of her failed bid in the Itoen Ladies tournament last week, a bogey-free six-under 65 that put her alongside Yuna Nishimura and Ayaka Furue on top of the Daio Paper Elleair Ladies Open in Ehime Prefecture Thursday. It was just the first round of the 72-hole, Y100 million championship, the penultimate leg of the pandemic-hit LPGA of Japan Tour season, but the way the 19-year-old Player of the Year and money race frontrunner tamed the backside of par-71 Elleair Golf Club Matsuyama with four straight birdies to launch her title drive, there could be more of the same to expect from the NEC Karuizawa and Nitori Ladies champion in the next three days.

She did slow down after that birdie-splurge from No. 10, setting for eight pars before hitting another on No.

4 then closing out with her sixth birdie on the par-5 ninth for a 33-32 on a course which hosted last year's Japan Women's Amateur Open where Saso wound up tied for 26th. "But it was summer last year and the appearance (of the course) has changed.

There are ups and downs and I had to be careful of the OB (out-of-bounds) since the fairways are narrow," said Saso, who finished runner-up to Korean Shin Jie in Toto Classic two weeks ago after missing the cut in the Mitsubishi Electric the previous week that ended a remarkable run of nine consecutive cuts made. Her scorching start likewise came a day after she and the other leading JLPGA campaigners clinched berths in the LPGA Tour's final major, the US Women's Open, slated December 10-13 at the Champions Golf Club in Houston, Texas.

Player of the Year rival Sakura Koizumi failed to match Saso's hot start and settled for a 70, but Nishimura, the other player in one of the marquee flights, held her ground and matched the ICTSI-backed ace's scorching start with her own version of a 31-34, also highlighted by four straight birdies, but from No. 1.

A flight behind was Furue, who was brimming with confidence following a playoff victory in Itoen Ladies as she outshot defending champion Hinako Shibuno and Momoko Osato to force a three-way tie, her unblemished 32-33 card likewise hinting at the coming of an explosive weekend for the surging 20-year-old Hyogo native who also won

Fired-up Saso rebounds with solid 65, ties for lead

the Desant Tokai Classic title last Sept. The troika stood three shots clear of 2018 champion Minami Katsu, Lee Bo-Mee, Anna Kono, Lee Min-Young, Erika Kikuchi, Ji Hee Lee, two-leg winner Shin Jie and Shibuno, who flubbed a couple of birdie chances but finished with a bogey-free pair of 34s.

Though she failed to measure up with Saso's stirring start, Koiwai eagled the par-5 11th but struggled with her iron game and putting the rest of the way, finishing with two birdies against three birdies to drop to joint 17th with five players, including Na-Ri Lee, sharing 11th place with 69s. The other fancied bets also groped for form tackling the 6545-yard layout's narrow, ***sloping*** fairways with ***Ai*** Suzuki ending up with a 71 for joint 22nd with Earth Mondahmin Cup winner Ayaka Watanabe.

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LatinVFR Releases Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport for Prepar3D V4

Transportation Monitor Worldwide

March 6, 2020 Friday

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Length: 271 words

Body

Developer LatinVFR has released Fort Lauderdale for Prepar3D v4. The airport in Florida is 26-miles north of Miami and serves a range of international and domestic carriers. Some carriers include JetBlue, Southwest Airlines and Spirit Airlines.

As we confirmed last week, LatinVFR has worked with FSSI to bring sloped runways with AI traffic support for runway 28L/10R. As per other LatinVFR airports, the scenery features all scenery buildings with native PBR materials, highly detailed texture work throughout, SODE controlled lighting and jetways and more.

Furthermore, the airport features Fort Lauderdale city buildings with over 30 square miles of photo scenery coverage. A scenery configuration tool is also included to support people with a range of machine power

LatinVFR Fort Lauderdale for p3dv4 features:

KFLL airport all buildings objects and ground polygons made from native PBR materials.

Runway 28L/10R sloped with AI traffic support (thanks to FSSI)

Airport and immediate surroundings, detailed.

Surroundings, Fort Lauderdale city buildings with over 30 square miles of photo scenery coverage

SODE animated PBR jetways for the best jetway animation possible.

SODE controlled lighting, automatically illuminating when low visibility and rain conditions.

SODE controlled rain effects, enabling wet PBR surfaces whenever rain is present.

LatinVFR Releases Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport for Prepar3D V4

Custom animated airport vehicles.

Special slippery condition for runways/taxiways that would affect braking action whenever it is raining.

Static aircraft, customized vehicle animations, animated elevators.

Scenery configurator for selecting and unselecting features. 2020 Global Data Point.

Load-Date: March 6, 2020

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Saturday Review: Arts: An Original Line: Osbert Lancaster one of the Brideshead generation is best known for his newspaper cartoons, but his beat extended far b....



Saturday Review: Arts: An Original Line: Osbert Lancaster one of the Brideshead generation is best known for his newspaper cartoons, but his beat extended far beyond Fleet Street. DJ Taylor celebrates one of the great English comic artists of the 20th century

The Guardian - Final Edition

October 11, 2008 Saturday

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the **guardian**

Section: GUARDIAN REVIEW PAGES; Pg. 16

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Byline: DJ Taylor

Body

Osbert Lancaster died in July 1986, a week short of

his 78th birthday. Hearing news of his death, the novelist

Anthony Powell sat down to compose one of those sober estimates of a lately departed friend that abound in his diaries. Lancaster, Powell decided, "had so formalised his appearance, public +Ai indeed private +Ai manner of speech,

that it is difficult to know what lay beneath the stylised facade". Always a realist, even in an obituary notice, he

wondered whether "Perhaps there was not a great deal more than what was revealed." Powell offered further remarks on the subject: "strong feelings about the arts and architecture", and evidence of good "if not impeccable"

taste, before rather wintrily diagnosing "some lack of inner life, everything important seeming on the surface".

Looking at the photographs included in *Cartoons and Coronets* (Frances Lincoln), a selection of Lancaster's work by James Knox, published in conjunction with the Wallace Collection's centenary exhibition, I see instantly what Powell meant about stylisation. The most revealing portrait (revealing, that is, in what it doesn't

reveal) comes from the mid-1950s. Lancaster, then in his 40s, hair slicked back above a bristling cavalryman's

Saturday Review: Arts: An Original Line: Osbert Lancaster one of the Brideshead generation is best known for his newspaper cartoons, but his beat extended far b....

moustache, is wearing a check suit of immaculate cut; a white handkerchief burgeons from the breast pocket. His hat dangles from thumb and forefinger: the hand itself rests on a walking stick. Dandyish, inscrutable, face slightly at

an angle, he also looks unexpectedly tough: the kind of figure whose natural milieu may well be a Mayfair drawing room, a gallery opening or a first night, but who is still determined to stop at absolutely nothing.

In Lancaster's defence, stylisation was endemic to the kind of world in which he operated. The son of a well-to-do City man who died in the first world war, educated at Charter-

house and Lincoln College, Oxford, he was a cadet member of the group of high-achieving writers and artists

(and, it should be said, low-achieving non-writers and non-artists) whom critics have tended to classify under

the group heading of the "Brideshead generation". His second volume of autobiography, *With an Eye to the Future* (1967) is full of fascinated glances at the London party world of the early 30s, including a set-piece description

of Augustus John being borne away, dead drunk, from Unity Mitford's coming-out ball by a couple of footmen. John Betjeman, Evelyn Waugh and Cyril Connolly were lifelong

friends, whose foibles occasionally re-emerged to animate Lancaster's easel. In 1950, hearing that Waugh had proposed to Connolly that they should spend Holy Week in Rome,

Lancaster sent Powell a "rough sketch for a gigantic mural to be placed in the coffee-room at Whites by public subscription". The drawing, which shows a monk-like penitent abasing himself at the feet of Pope Pius XII, as Waugh

gravely officiates and cherubs dance overhead, is titled Connolly at Canossa. Lancaster's early interest in drawing

had been encouraged by a sympathetic art master, "Purple" Johnson. After Oxford and a spell at the Slade, newly

married to his first wife Karen, he set himself up as an artistic freelance, designing book jackets, advertisements

and magazine covers +Ai these included Graham Greene+Aos short-lived *Night and Day* +Ai and contributing to the *Ar-*

chitectural Review, where Betjeman worked as sub-editor. *Progress at Pelvis Bay* (1936), deadpanned in the style of

a municipal guide book, was the first of several spoofs aimed at exposing the philistinism of mid-century architec-

tural id1/3(copyright)es fixes. The Betjeman connection paid further dividends when, after helping his friend with a series of articles for the *Daily Express*, he was encouraged by the features editor, John Rayner, to produce a column-width

"pocket cartoon", a commonplace in French newspapers but not yet exported to England. The cartoons, many of them featuring Lancaster+Aos great comic creation, Maudie, Countess of Littlehampton, caught on and continued on a daily basis for nearly 40 years. Lancaster's *Express* cartoons were

his public face, but it would be a mistake to mark him down as simply an exceptionally talented comic draughtsman. As Knox shows in his introduction, his professional beat extended far beyond Fleet Street. A war time posting

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to Greece, where he served as press attach1/3(copyright) to the British embassy and GHQ in Athens, produced the illustrated

travelogue Classical Landscape with Figures (1947). A friendship with the artist John Piper drew him towards costume and set design for theatre and ballet. All this makes Lancaster's precise relation to English culture of the immediate postwar period difficult to pin down. The liking for "smartness" and the high life was always

balanced by older bohemian interests, the flights of theatrical fancy brought down to earth by newspaper routine. These are Thackerayan shadings, perhaps, emphasised by the Charterhouse connection and Lancaster's fondness

for another Old Carthusian cartoonist, Thackeray's contemporary John Leech. At the heart of his work, though, lies an ability to transcend the limitations of

the things +Ai in this case the thousands of Express cartoons +Ai for which he was best known. Studying the black-and-

white drawings that illustrate Classical Landscape with Figures, for instance, one expects to see projections of the stylised and predominantly upper-class figures that populated the newspaper cartoons. The results +Ai a

Greek news vendor at his crowded kiosk, an Arcadian shepherd in a lambskin coat, toughs dancing in a Piraeen brothel +Ai are both wonderfully vivid and sui generis.

One of the fascinations of the early part of Cartoons and Coronets is the chance to explore some of Lancaster's influences. An ink sketch of a Greek village shows traces of Edward Lear's near-eastern landscapes. There are odd hints of 30s contemporaries such as Edward Burra and Paul Nash

(both of whom Lancaster admired), the occasional generalised nod to inter war surrealism. A mural executed for the Blandford Forum Crown Hotel's assembly room (1935), showing

Napoleon and his military advisers surveying the English Channel, is almost Dal1/3ffesque. Squat and gigantic, altogether dominating the picture's foreground, the tower from which the party (all in garishly cockaded hats) looks out resembles the basket of a hot-air balloon: there is a feeling that the conferring generals might be lofted

into the air at any moment. A curious prancing figure, with weirdly elongated legs, strays ominously into the

picture+Aos eastern quadrant. Elsewhere, a self-portrait from 1947 showing the dressing-gowned artist at work in his

study is not in the least like an Aubrey Beardsley while using Beardsley's technique of suggesting vast acreages of space and surface with the minimum of linear effort.

Perhaps this is another way of saying that what really distinguishes Lancaster's work +Ai one comparison that suggests itself is with Ronald Searle +Ai is the originality of his line. The colour sketches of sailors' costumes for the ballet Pineapple Poll, adapted from WS Gilbert's "Bab Ballads" and staged at Sadler+Aos Wells in 1951, have exactly this kind of spatial awareness. The design for a pair of trousers, for example, picked out in parallel red lines, produces a kind of horseshoe effect. Most striking of all, though, is a group of four colour illustrations, each an ironical salute to the achievements of a particular Lancaster friend, commissioned by the Strand magazine in 1947. In the first, "Mr John Betjeman, awaiting

inspiration and the 4.47 from Didcot", Betjeman looks practically vampiric: sallow, unshaven, hugely accentuated

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black eyebrows like a pair of caterpillars, shoes like glistening torpedoes, grimly exhaling a whiff of sinister white breath. The second, "Freya Stark explaining to a relatively unsophisticated audience the genius of Mr Norman

Hartnell+Au (Hartnell was then at the height of his success as a couturier), is a study in contrasting facial expressions. The "relatively unsophisticated audience" is a congregation of Bedouin tribesmen. Stark, who sits in their midst, carmine-fingered, with her legs drawn up beneath her, is demurely confidential; the gesticulating listeners are agog. Again, the folds and contours of their costumes are merely suggested, huge expanses of white given shape

and depth by the faintest of trceries. To the right, a sleeping camel still manages to look faintly sardonic.

Then comes "Benjamin Britten", done in profile against a background of staves, with the superimposed outline of a piano on which the composer plays. "Mr John Piper enjoys his usual ill luck with the weather", in which the artist attempts to paint en plein air in the middle of a cloudburst, is perhaps the most extraordinary of all. Piper +Ai angular, white-haired, with impossibly sloping shoulders +Ai is lost in ascetic self-absorption. The background looks

like a surrealist lunar shore, where it wouldn+Aot be wonderful to find a grandfather clock marching among

the waves. Everything is arranged at a slant, the rain sweeping in like tracer fire to follow the angle to which Piper+Aos head is inclined and the position of the

knee drawn up to support his sketching pad.

In his obituary sketch, Powell notes that "many of Osbert+Aos jokes were first-rate, altogether original . . ." If

nothing else, Cartoons and Coronets is a testimony to his sense of humour. In the section called "Jeux and Christmas

Cards+Au, Knox reproduces a colour sketch titled +AuAfter Breakfast at Kelmscott", inspired by a visit Lancaster

and Betjeman had paid to William Morris's house in Oxfordshire and the discovery of an earth closet with three

wooden seats. Here Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, trousers around their ankles, sit flanking Janey Morris, who is daintily sewing stitches into an embroidery tambour. But a joke, in Lancaster's work, is never simply a joke:

there is nearly always some deeper satiric impulse boiling away beneath it, above all an awareness of the social and

historical contexts in which some of the best jokes get made. The Littlehampton Bequest , an elaborate spoof exhibition staged at the National Portrait Gallery

under Roy Strong+Aos direction in 1973, is a series of artistic parodies, in which the history of the Littlehampton family and its ramifications are encapsulated by paintings in the style of well-known artists of the day.

Thus Lancaster has Zoff any taking off "Joseph Grumble Esq", the father-in-law of the third earl, an East India nabob pictured glaring from his gout stool against a background of minarets; and Marcellus Laroone depicting "Vanessa, Countess of Littlehampton and her daughters", the caption helpfully explaining that "the wife of the first earl was heiress to half the plantations of the West Indies. She is portrayed with her two daughters and her page

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Hasdrubal, who in her widowhood was 'always about her person'." Hasdrubal, seen simpering over the coffee pot, is

clearly the father of the second daughter. The final portrait, "Basil Cantilever Esq and Lady Patricia Cantilever", daughter and son-in-law of the present

earl, mimics early Hockney. Significantly, Basil is an MP-cum-property developer, busy despoiling City churches to put up office blocks.

Lancaster was knighted in 1975 +Ai the photograph taken outside Buckingham Palace makes him seem the dernier cri in Old Bufferdom +Ai then, in 1978, his career was in effect ended by the first in a series of strokes. He endured a miserable eight-year decline, nobly attended by his sec-

ond wife, Anne. Powell, visiting them in their Chelsea flat in 1982 ("Osbert in poor shape"), noted her eagerness

to take him to his next appointment: "She insisted on driving me to the Travellers, no doubt just to get half an

hour out of the house, which must be claustrophobic to a degree." It would be overstating the case to say that Lan-

caster+Aos work is forgotten. On the other hand, the forms in which he achieved his fame +Ai daily cartoons, set designs +Ai

have a built-in obsolescence, while the sheer scope of his work tends to frustrate an attempt to view his achievements as a whole. Between them, however, the centenary exhibition and Knox+Aos book-length celebration contain enough evidence to establish him as one of the great English comic artists of the 20th century.

Cartoons and Coronets: The Genius of Osbert

Lancaster is at the Wallace Collection, London W1

(020 7563 9500), until January 11 2009.

To order the book for 3/4£14 with free UK p&p go to

guardian.co.uk/bookshop or call 0870 836 0875.

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The AI Studio Ghibli trend is an insult to art and artists

Asia News Network

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Byline: Reporting by:Dawn

Body

ISLAMABAD(Dawn/ANN)- An artist spends years perfecting their skills. Hours spent drawing, scrapping and redrawing to bring to life a vision that goes on to inspire millions. Studio Ghibli's co-founder Hayao Miyazaki is one such artist.

Miyazaki's films have not only received many awards but his retinue of works including Spirited Away, Kiki's Delivery Service, Howl's Moving Castle and so on have instilled the power of imagination and dreams in countless children and adults. Artistic inspiration can be a powerful thing, Miyazaki's art inspired the creation of Pakistan's first hand-drawn animated film, The Glassworker. With their own unique spin, a love letter to the aesthetic, The Glassworker took Usman Riaz and his team a decade to make.

In recent years however, artificial intelligence (**AI**) with its image generative tool has posed a threat to art and artists. **AI** learns from millions of images across the internet and memorises text associated with those images. In a process known as "diffusion", **AI** starts by breaking images into pixels that do not represent any specific thing and then inverts the process so the model can revert to the original image. Artificial intelligence does not take into account copyright and hence artistic styles are used without permission.

With image generative tools such as Midjourney, DALL-E and even a feature on Canva made widely available to anyone with an internet connection and monthly subscription, users can write a prompt and generate an image in a certain artist's style, without, of course, asking or crediting said artist. The most recent victims of this are the artists at Studio Ghibli.

The AI Studio Ghibli trend is an insult to art and artists

OpenAI announced the launch of its "most advanced image generator" which has been built into GPT-4o and has been made available to users for free. This has enabled a worrying trend where users are converting their photographs into 'Studio Ghibli style art'. **AI's** rendering of Studio Ghibli is nothing more than sanitised, soulless and generic, a typical cutesy image devoid of any character, effort or passion.

Studio Ghibli's art is more than just cute characters, it is grotesque and sometimes even harrowing, it is layers of hard work, passion and unwavering dedication to create unique characters that tell meaningful stories.

From Grave of the Fireflies which shows a war torn Japan and two siblings desperate to survive on their own to themes of greed and identity as Chihiro navigates the world of spirits trying to save her parents (who were transformed into pigs) from being eaten in Spirited Away, all of Studio Ghibli's work means something. Even light-hearted Ghibli features such as Kiki's Delivery Service focus on themes of self acceptance.

Every frame of a 2D animated film is painstakingly drawn by hand. The beautiful watercolour-esque nature scenes from Ghibli's films, the varied emotions on faces of characters, the tireless research that goes into making every fantastical aspect a little more believable; this is what makes the films timeless.

Criticising the **AI** Studio Ghibli trend, Riaz wrote in a post on X, "In an age of **AI**-generated everything, "The Glassworker" was drawn by hand. No shortcuts. No algorithms. Just work, talent and perseverance [...] **AI** is the future -but it's a tool not the artist."

Some might call **AI** a terrific mimic but that's all that it is. As exposed by this trend, the generated images lack depth and feeling. Perhaps the most egregious thing to come out of this trend is the politicisation of Ghibli's art. Political ideologies, thoughts and even extremist narratives are being portrayed in this aesthetic.

Users have used **AI** to recreate scenes of the destruction of the Babri Masjid, a Mughal-era mosque in India's Ayodhya. Using an art style synonymous with innocence to glorify the demolition of a mosque is beyond repugnant. Not to mention that Miyazaki has taken a strong stance against oppression and fascism in the past.

The White House used the trend in a post on X to depict an arrest and deportation of an immigrant by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This comes after ICE has been deporting and arresting even those who hold a green card and revoking the legal status of thousands of immigrants. To use an artistic style, even if its watered down by **AI** to make light of suffering or depict Trump's hardline policies is abhorrent.

It is worth noting that in 2003, Hayao Miyazaki boycotted the Oscars ceremony as he opposed the US war in Iraq.

"The reason I wasn't here for the Academy Award was because I didn't want to visit a country that was bombing Iraq," he had told The Los Angeles Times of his decision.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari also jumped onto this trend, changing his profile picture and generating photographs of his late mother and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

A countertrend has also sprung on X, with artists showcasing their work inspired by Studio Ghibli films, condemning the theft of art while simultaneously encouraging people to pick up a pencil and learn to draw themselves instead of relying on what has been termed as '**AI slop**'. Artists have showcased their work with captions such as "Art I made from Studio Ghibli in my style without needing **AI**." Others have spoken about the time and dedication it has taken to perfect their craft.

With the popularity of the **AI slop** Ghibli trend on the internet, an old documentary has resurfaced in which Miyazaki expresses his strong dislike for **AI** 'art'. In the documentary the filmmaker is shown a zombie, with developers saying that **AI** can allow more grotesque movements. The artist's response was, "Whoever creates this stuff has no idea what pain is whatsoever. I am utterly disgusted... I strongly feel that this is an insult to life itself."

Imagine spending hours, days, months and years to find your artistic expression, and then suddenly a single prompt, that intellectual property and hard work is stolen, attached to narratives that you may or may not agree with, no consent and definitely no credit; this is what **AI** "art" means to many artists and why so many speak against it.

The AI Studio Ghibli trend is an insult to art and artists

Appreciating art is a beautiful thing if done in a healthy manner by supporting artists or spending time trying to hone skills taking talented professionals as inspiration. Taking shortcuts, depriving artists from jobs and credit by using **AI** only serves to disrespect the medium.

Load-Date: April 7, 2025

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