

STEPHANIE DINKINS



Volume I, Beta V1

NOT THE ONLY ONE

An experiment in making a multigenerational memoir of a black American family told from the perspective of a custom deep learning artificial intelligence.



Not The Only One (N'TOO) is an ongoing experiment. It is an attempt to create a multigenerational memoir of a black American family told from the perspective of an artificial intelligence (AI) of evolving intellect. It is a voice-interactive AI entity designed, trained, and aligned with the concerns and ideals of people who are underrepresented in the tech sector. N'TOO reflects and is empowered to pursue the goals of its community through deep learning algorithms (chatbot), creating a new kind of conversant archive.

The AI entity is trained on oral histories (data) supplied by three generations of women from a single-family. Additional culturally attuned data provides context and broad narrative scope. N'TOO uses this information as the basis for its responses to questions. It is important to note that the AI communicates as a unique character and offers answers from a first-"person" perspective.

N'TOO is based on a deep learning algorithm and small data. It is housed on computers to protect community data. It is ever evolving. When I started this project, I thought I would be making an entity that would logically answer questions posed. In the making I have found the quest for a more dynamic free flowing entity that analyses data and comes up with its own limited, quirky, sometimes insightful answers more generative. Talking to N'TOO can be like talking to a two year old. The work we are doing reveals some limitations of systems the public currently interacts with. N'TOO has provided me and my team insights and learnings about natural language processing, voice synthesis, the limitations of big data and possibilities for small data, data sovereignty, and the importance of doing the work to build nuance, transparency, equity among other things into the AI ecosystem.

Here, storytelling, art, technology, and social engagement combine to create a new kind of artificially intelligent narrative form. This project works toward the creation of culturally-specific, natural language-based AI that reflects the goals of the communities making them. By centering oral history and creative storytelling methods, such as interactivity and verbal ingenuity, this project hopes to spark crucial conversations about AI and its impact on society, now and in the future.

Title/Date: Not the Only One V1, Beta 2 (2018)

Medium: Deep Learning AI, Computer, Arduino, Sensors, Electronics

Dimensions: PLA 1 sculpture - 16" x 18", pedestal 30" x 18" x 18"

Dimensions: V1: Black glass sculpture - 18" x 18", pedestal 30" x 18" x 18",
V2: 3D printed Gold Sparkle PLA - 18" x 18", pedestal 30" x 18"

Duration: N/A