



3 August 2023

Hon Ed Husic MP

Department of Industry, Science and Resources
Industry House,
10 Binara Street,
Canberra

Dear Minister Husic,

RE: Safe and Responsible AI public consultation submission

My enclosed submission pertains to the emergence of generative AI systems their potential influence on the Higher Education sector. I would like to draw particular attention to the delivery of equitable and inclusive teaching and learning practices in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) disciplines in the shadow of emergent forms of AI.

As an academic and media artist who has been researching digital media and cultures of automation for over two decades, I view recent developments in artificial intelligence with great anticipation for its unquestionable benefits. However, I also hold grave concerns for students and educators in this period of rapid unregulated experimentation and expedited deployment, to which I would like to speak to in this submission, which is in two parts:

Attachment 01 – A Summary of the **key challenges** ahead for Higher Education more generally

Attachment 02 – A draft **discussion paper** of trends in the delivery of HASS disciplines

In my academic role at the University of Melbourne in Arts Teaching Innovation (ATI) my main focus is digital media literacy and education futures as it pertains to the provision of teaching and the design of curricula. I therefore see the HASS domain as playing an important role going forward – along with its various challenges and opportunities it shares with other disciplines.

The HASS Methodology

Therefore, I would like to paraphrase my central thesis - specifically, that the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) are well-placed to coordinate their respective disciplines and methodologies to strategize the human response to the challenges that lie ahead in terms of emergent forms of AI, synthetic media, information manipulation and their associated socio-economic and socio-political influences.

Broadly, our thinking should coalesce around the following basic principles of governance:

- reducing data and algorithmic [bias](#)
- interpreting and safeguarding [cultural data](#) and institutional knowledge

- investigating historical inequality (of access) and under-representation (of cultures) in technological platforms and training databases
- advising on sustainable data management and processing hardware infrastructures
- reducing the exploitation of personal data, identity, and behavioural metrics
- compensating individuals for their data when it is used, shared, or sold *

While a HASS lens is important, equal weight should be given to ethical and risk-mitigation factors prescribed by research colleagues in IT, Design, Medicine, Law, Business and the Creative Arts disciplines. I would suggest that HASS can be a starting point to coordinate and synthesise knowledge and material practices around inter-disciplinary consultation and complimentary policy matrices.

The Case for the Arts

There is an urgent need to interrogate and propose human-centred responses to the broader concerns of the current period of technological instability. HASS disciplines are in the business of not only assessing historical and contemporary conditions, but also strategizing for a safe, respectful, and dignified future. The time to act is now however and our young people and our institutions should be central to this assessment and mitigation effort.

The cost of supporting Australians to navigate the future will only grow exponentially, especially for those living with and through challenging circumstances amplified by AI systems, such as:

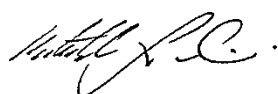
- increasingly virtualised, anonymous and synthetic interactions
- the further fragmentation of work-life and deterioration of work futures
- new territories of exploitation and uncertainty in private and commercial spaces
- the automation, casualisation and reduced rights of the gig economy
- AI imposters seeding disinformation and inflammatory discourse
- further marginalisation of the vulnerable and the under-represented members of the community
- exploitation of those without means or access to new technologies, training and/or language to defend themselves

These might seem like familiar arguments across other policy areas such as the provision of welfare or labour and consumer rights – typical concerns of humanists – however, this is demonstrative of the potential multifarious impact of emergent AI systems on Australian society in the very near future.

We should design two contingency strategies – for two years and ten years into the future, as we cannot be certain which will come first!

If you seek further advice or clarification, please do get in touch.

All the best with the herculean task ahead,



Mitch Goodwin, PhD, BACA, BA Hons
Arts Teaching Innovation
Faculty of Arts
University of Melbourne

mitch (dot) goodwin (at) unimelb.edu.au

* This last point is possibly the most contentious. This speaks to the proposal by [Tedd Nelson and his Xanadu machine](#) which advocated for micropayments to be made whenever someone contributed data to the network. This notion is only now a potentiality as we pursue quantum computing and have a viable means by which to put corporations on notice for exploitative data mining - and now AI data training - practices.