

Tyler Perry halts \$800m studio expansion after being shocked by AI

Publication Date: 2024-02-23

Author: Dan Milmo

Section: Technology

Tags: Artificial intelligence (AI), Television, news

Article URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/feb/23/tyler-perry-halts-800m-studio-expansion-after-being-shocked-by-ai>



Tyler Perry has paused an \$800m (£630m) expansion of his Atlanta studio complex after the release of OpenAI's video generator Sora and warned that "a lot of jobs" in the film industry will be lost to artificial intelligence. The US film and TV mogul said he was in the process of adding 12 sound stages to his studio but has halted those plans indefinitely after he saw demonstrations of Sora and its "shocking" capabilities. "All of that is currently and indefinitely on hold because of Sora and what I'm seeing," Perry said in an interview with the Hollywood Reporter. "I had gotten word over the last year or so that this was coming, but I had no idea until I saw recently the demonstrations of what it's able to do. It's shocking to me." The AI tool was launched on 15 February – with limited access to a few researchers and video creators – and caused widespread astonishment with its ability to produce realistic footage a minute long from simple text prompts. Perry, whose successes include the Madea film series, said Sora's achievements meant he would no longer have to travel to locations or build a set: "I can sit in an office and do this with a computer, which is shocking to me." Demonstrations released by OpenAI, the developer of the groundbreaking ChatGPT chatbot, show photorealistic scenes in response to prompts such as asking for a shot of people walking through "beautiful, snowy Tokyo city" where "gorgeous sakura petals are flying through the wind along with snowflakes". Perry said the breakthroughs presented by Sora would affect a range of jobs throughout the film industry, including those of actors, editors, sound specialists and transportation crew. He said: "I am very, very concerned that in the near future, a lot of jobs are going to be lost. I really, really feel that very strongly." Perry said an immediate example was the construction workers and contractors who would no longer work on his planned studio expansion because "there is no need to it". He added that he used AI in two recently shot films in which the technology was used to age his face and help him avoid hours in the makeup chair. Concerns over the impact of AI on jobs were a feature in recent strikes by Hollywood actors and writers, with the peace deals that ended those disputes both featuring guardrails on using the technology. However, Perry told the Hollywood Reporter that a "whole industry" approach was still needed to save jobs. "It can't be one union fighting every contract every two or three years. I think that it has to be everybody, all involved in how do we protect the future of our industry because it is changing rapidly, right before our eyes," he said.