

Artificial Slop: Why A.I. is a Poor Substitute for Artistry

By: Natalia Gladysz

You have already heard of AI. When you Google a question, such as “how do insects feel pain?” the first response is an AI-generated overview. If you enjoy scrolling through posts on social media platforms like TikTok, you might have heard the scarily realistic and incredibly silly AI-generated impressions of the presidential candidates playing Minecraft. For better or worse, if you use a device that connects to the internet, you have been exposed to AI.

In the span of just a few years, artificial intelligence has become the subject of debate and scrutiny, as well as a tool for creativity, innovation and, perhaps most commonly, efficiency. While there are many merits to the use of artificial intelligence in compiling data and finding trends in STEM fields, the use of AI as a replacement for artists is an offense to the very concept of art. As Frankenstein’s monster of amalgamated creations, AI art is detrimental to real artistry and creativity.

AI should be limited in the artistic process, whether it is used to animate shows and movies, write scripts or generate images. Creatives are losing their jobs to AI, which generates content based on the art that it has been fed. This means that everything AI creates is unoriginal and simply combines the work of human artists, who are not credited for their input.

Because everything AI creates is unoriginal, relying on AI to generate the content we consume means that creative advancements are held back or prevented from happening. Human artists are able to experiment in ways AI is unable to, like the animators at Disney who had to harness their artistic abilities and go beyond them in order to animate the movements of a realistic human figure in “Snow White.” Had AI somehow existed in this time period, the animation it would pump out would be inconsistent (as it tends to be) and also excessively cartoony, since the content being fed to it would be in the standard “rubber hose” animation style the 1920’s were known for. “Snow White” was a leap into new territory for animation, and without the input of a multitude of animated clips in a more realistic animation style, human animators might have never gotten the funding or motivation to begin a new artistic endeavor.

The shows, movies and illustrations we were raised on were written and worked on by real people with a passion for creating art. When we engaged with these works of art, we were enjoying the product of someone's passion and labor, and it moved us.

When you show your future kids AI content, know that they are consuming artificial slop created to subdue the people's desire for entertainment without compensating the creatives who would have given it life. Without the human touch, these works can't be called art; they are just content.

Think of a younger sibling or cousin drawing you a picture. When you receive this picture, you compliment their work and cherish the art they created for you. Your parents or caregivers might have displayed your works on the fridge growing up, because even though your artistic abilities might have been far from perfect, they were *yours*. They were the expression of your interests or love for your family. The adults in your life recognized this, and even if those drawings were later discarded, you and your caregivers may still remember the interest and passion you showed through your paintings or illustrations. The sentiment remains, no matter the level of artistry.

A generator can mesh together the works of children worldwide and create its own. It would be interesting to see what it comes up with, but it would not be expressing anything novel. The generator would not be expressing anything at all. It does not have the soul, the passion or the love of your little self. For this reason, no matter what it creates, the result would always be subpar to the work you made through the labor of your own hands. The insight that is poured into a work of art, that perception of the world conjured by a conscious mind confined in written words or brushstrokes, cannot be recreated.

There is a reason so many people tend to criticize AI-generated art. There is a reason why so many people are wary of its use, and it is because AI art is an unnatural imitation of artistry. Its creations are inherently creepy. They are not the result of a human worldview, labor or creativity, but of datasets that were mashed together to give off the illusion of intention.

AI is destroying the humanity of the artistic process through theft and artificiality. We deserve real, human art created by real, human creatives. If we want to indulge in the works of humans and motivate them to keep creating the art that sustains us, the usage of AI needs to be restrained.