

AI in Media: Should we use generative AI to create content?

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“We do not read and write poetry because it is cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is full of passion.” – *Robin Williams, Dead Poets Society*

Since the first ochre handprint pressed into a cave wall in Sulawesi some 50,000 years ago, the human race has steadily engaged in the unbroken act of creation. We hold this insatiable thirst to formulate and conceive, an impulse so fundamental to our species that we can define it as constitutive to what it means to be human. As AI becomes entangled with the production of our media, we face a question beyond technology: will we preserve the arduous labour of original human thought, or trade it for the hollow convenience of synthetic content? I contend that generative AI’s wholesale adoption in all forms of content creation threatens human creativity, critical thought and our very authenticity, and must therefore be resisted. By content, I mean here not the neutral or informational sense of the word (data, reports, summaries), but rather creative content: work whose purpose is expressive rather than merely functional, artefacts that exist not to relay information efficiently but to give external form to an internal human process of feeling. I apply this same logic to my use of the word ‘create’. This is the category where the act of creating is inseparable from the meaning made, which is what I am most concerned AI threatens gravely.

“AI is only as powerful as the person using it.” – Kevin Schade, *The Ethics of Generative AI: A Tool or a Threat to Creativity?* Schade, along with a broader chorus of interpretations, positions AI as a neutral instrument, where its output is a reflection of the human wielding it. Some truth is held here; a well-crafted prompt carries genuine intention. But this is where confusion lies: mistaking the presence of thought for the presence of creation. The development of the idea is only ever half of what makes

creative content such an ingrained part of society; the other half is the sustained labour of bringing that thought into form. To 'create' is not merely to produce a spectacle; it is a wrestle with uncertainty to synthesize disparate fragments of the human experience into something hitherto unseen, enacting a form of thinking unavailable to any being that has not suffered the friction of genuine effort. Discarded drafts, false starts, long walks taken to loosen a stubborn idea all create this friction; passion and effort manifest. This prolonged afflatus can be recognised as inefficiency, but it is not an 'uneconomical' trade-off to be optimized through a prompt, rather it is the crucible in which insight is forged. Generative AI, despite its technical virtuosity, offers only a simulacrum of this process: text, image and sound generated through statistical inference rather than lived understanding. It is not thought or intention behind content that makes it sacred, but the process by which it is wrought.

It is a fundamental freedom of humanity to formulate autonomous thought and express it; to restrict this liberty is to succumb to determinism, thought governed by an external source. This matters because an idea, left unexpressed, is intangible, lost among the myriads of thoughts we have daily, gaining significance only through actualisation, the creation of content. This process is introspective: to transform an internal concept into media is to materialise something previously inaccessible, forcing its creator to confront the thought, an accumulation of choice and revision that reveals the mind which produced it. As Hannah Arendt argued, thinking is fundamentally solitary, which is precisely why it cannot be outsourced without being hollowed out. Kant's distinction between following a rule and giving one clarifies why AI cannot perform this introspection on our behalf. A craftsman, however skilled, works within a pre-set grammar; he can be taught it, master it, and satisfy it completely. Genius, Kant argued, is not this craftsmanship at its highest pitch, but the rarer thing that invents the very rule the craftsman follows, doing so without being able to say how, because true originality cannot be reverse-engineered even by the mind that produced it. Generative AI will only

ever sit on the craftsman's side. Trained on what humans have already made, everything it produces is recombination, an average of a million rules already given, never a new one given for the first time. It cannot originate, because to originate means stepping outside what exists, and a statistical model cannot grasp the outside. Nor can it introspect: introspection requires a self to confront, and AI has none. Hence the term 'AI slop': content produced not merely without effort, but by a system following, at scale, a rule it never gave, about a self it never had.

We are not being replaced. We are volunteering. Every prompt typed over a sentence is just more small abdication, quietly handing over the one thing that was ever truly ours. The machine does not need to conquer human creativity; we give it away, one convenience at a time. When we allow AI to speak for us, we do not gain a voice. We lose one, and call the silence efficiency. The cave painter had no algorithm to press her hand to stone for her. She did it herself, because the doing was the meaning. Fifty thousand years later, we are the first generation offered a way out of that labour, and mistaking the offer for a gift. It is not a gift. It is a forfeiture. And forfeitures, once made, are rarely returned. So the choice is stark, and it will not stay open forever: create, and remain human in the fullest sense of the word, or delegate, and become merely the prompt that started a process we no longer understand. We will not lose this fight in a single moment. We will lose it in a thousand small surrenders, each one called convenience.