

WHAT THE FUTURE: CREATIVITY

A woman's profile is shown in silhouette against a dark background. Her head is tilted upwards, and her eyes are closed. A vibrant, multi-colored (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) smoke-like or liquid-like visualization flows from her head, suggesting a dynamic and creative mind. The background is dark with some faint, glowing particles.

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**+ Leaders from Meta and Snap, trailblazing AI
artists, a powerhouse agency creative and
arts academics envision the future of
creativity in an AI world and what that will
mean for brands, consumers and audiences**

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How the AI revolution will reshape the ways we create, work and play

Imagine it's 2034. Or you can have artificial intelligence imagine it for you! But how well will AI do that? Will it be as creative as humans can be? Or will we even care about this debate?

There has always been a push-pull between old ways of being creative and new ways. Is photography “art” the way a painting is? Is point-and-shoot photography still photography? Is Photoshop real enough? Are CGI effects still real cinema?

Roger Linn was a young guitarist who just wanted to be able to record his guitar riffs better, so he invented the drum machine. A third-order impact of which was essentially '80s pop music. Legendary drummer for The Police, Stewart Copeland, interviewed Linn recently and said, “It’s fair to say that to many drummers he is Beelzebub himself.”

Enter generative AI.

Apple and Samsung recently traded commercials playing off (or inadvertently stoking) the fears that AI tools will crush traditional forms of creative expression. The Apple spot was viewed by many creative folks on many platforms as an

affront, the very dystopia that the brand’s landmark “1984” was supposed to be shattering with its thrown hammer.

One way to think of creativity is a simple one: It’s about mastering the tools available to get the output you want. People still paint portraits even though they could take a photograph much faster. It’s all OK.

Creativity is newer than you think

It’s easy to think that cave dwellers were all like, “Hey, drawing animals on the wall is really creative. I’m just over here hunting and gathering food.” But according to Samuel W. Franklin’s “The Cult of Creativity,” summarized last year in *The New Yorker*, our fascination with creativity as an ideal only goes back to the decades following World War II. Franklin posits that creativity had two origins. One was in psychology as researchers tried to measure creativity as a companion to the way SAT tests measure intelligence.



82%

of U.S. adults say it is important to feel like they have a creative outlet in their daily life.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

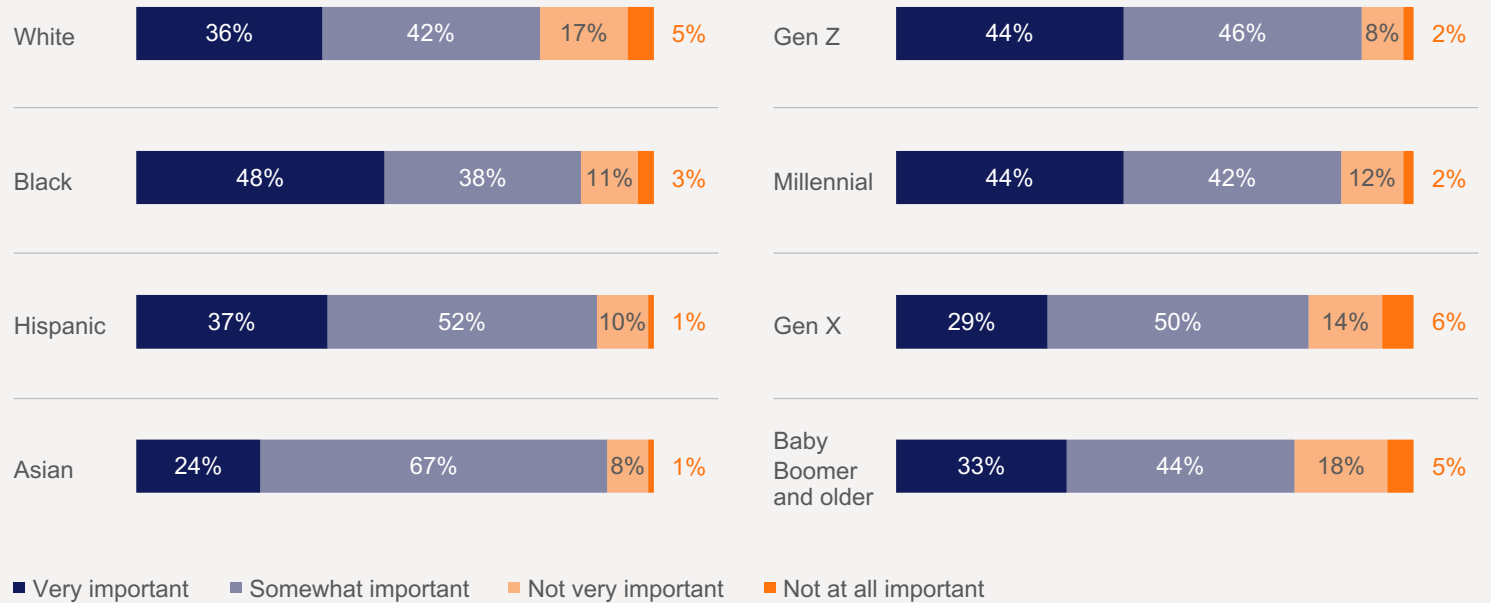
The other was a business-driven desire to have creativity steering innovation and growth as a reaction to the “company man” ideal needed to power the nation through the Depression and a world war. Considering the future of creativity through that business lens, it’s no wonder companies are freaking out about generative AI.

Today, 78% of workers say they get to be creative in some ways at their job. On one hand, if AI can help everyone be a bit more creative than they would otherwise by generating ideas and ready-made images and video — great! On the other hand, will there be a level of sameness and a derivative quality that dilutes creativity? Could generative AI lead to outputs that are *less* creative in the future?

Not that derivative can’t also be creative. Take the huge popularity of stories people write in existing creative universes (such as Harry Potter fan fiction). “The history of fanwork counters the image of a lone author producing work entirely on their own and releasing a finished polished work,” says Claudia Rebaza on behalf of the Organization for Transformative Works, a nonprofit that hosts the fanfic site the Archive of Our Own (AO3).

People overwhelmingly want to have a creative outlet

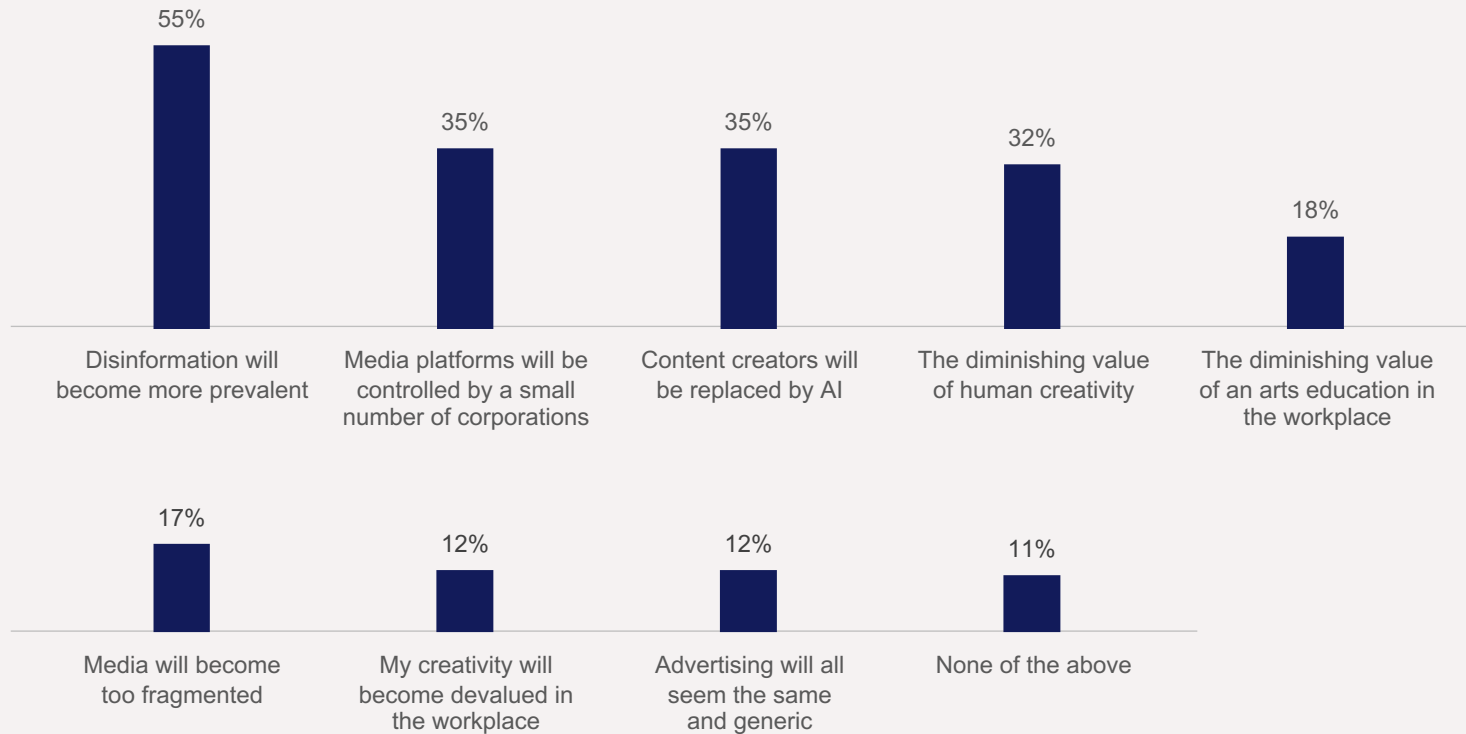
Q. How important, if at all, is it for you to feel like you have a creative outlet, however you define it, in your daily life?



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

Disinformation dominates people's top three worries about the future

Q. When thinking about the future of our society, which of the following potential scenarios do you find most worrying? (% Total)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

“Instead, there's the idea of a community of writers, readers and other creators all mingled together and interacting with one another on both specific works and general discussion and works which get produced piecemeal and in various states of ‘finished.’” Because in their hobbies people overwhelmingly want to be creative, too.

Fanfic's proliferation is just one tiny niche of that, and yet remix culture is so huge that McDonald's did an entire campaign — and even flipped the logo on its bags — nodding to it. If you know, you know, and if you don't, you were really confused about what was going on.

Unleashing the bad

The dark side of AI creativity is that machines can create good as well as bad things. For instance, we're worried about disinformation, which is likely warranted as AI can create believable things at unbelievable scale.

The push-and-pull of technology hits the fanfic community, too. On one hand, authors are mad that AI was trained on their works without any hint of compensation or credit or, frankly, mere permission.

“This is a contentious issue in fandom. There is no way we can say what fan creators as a whole or those on our platforms think about how AI may be affecting fanworks,” says OTW’s Rebaza. “There is always a risk in assuming that the most outspoken people represent the larger group. But it would seem the opinion is much more negative than positive.”

Yeah, but who cares?

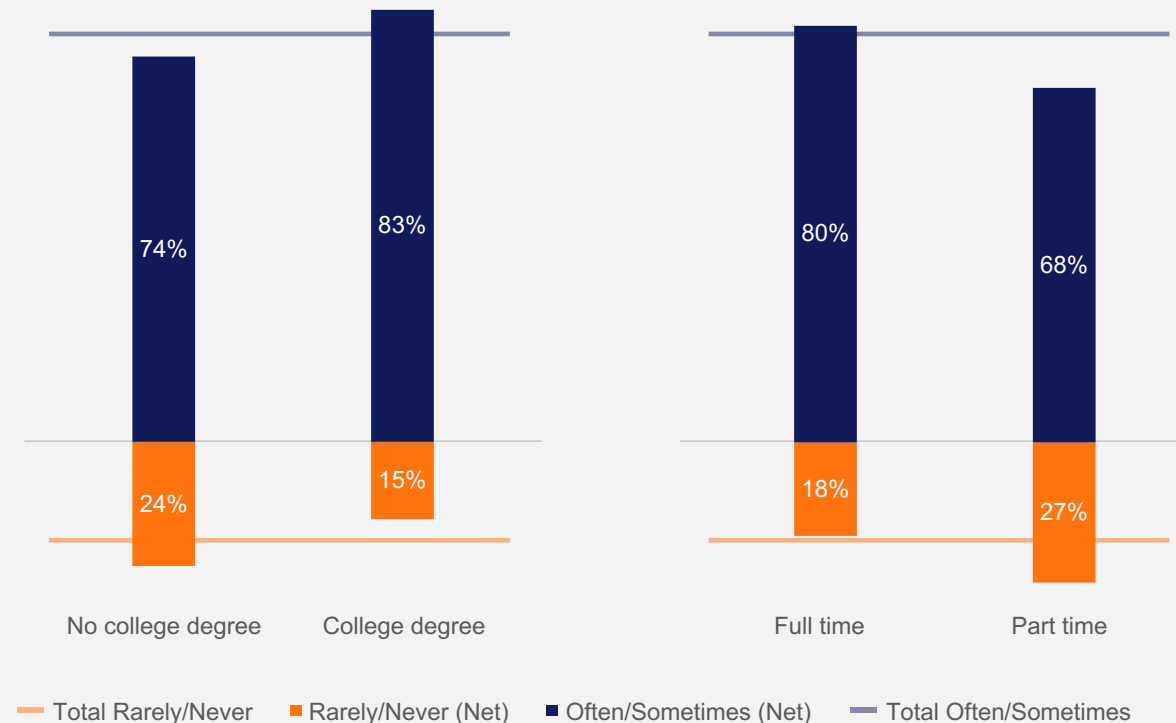
That’s the billion-dollar question, right? If people can use AI to make an image or movie or song or, um, cough, a magazine that people want to enjoy — what difference does it make? A lot of content on social media isn’t what you would ever describe as professional or polished, but people still watch and scroll.

Fanfic is original in a sense but also not in that it uses someone else’s characters and settings, just with novel story lines. And yet remixes are undeniably creative. Would an AI have thought to set an erotic story blending Lou Reed lyrics in the world of the Neal Stephenson’s novel “Seveneves”?

Probably not, but author NotHereNJ did!

Most workers feel they can be creative often to solve problems

Q. How often, if at all, do you feel like you get to be creative to solve problems in your job?



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 597 employed U.S. adults.)

As Rebaza says, “There is an audience for everything.” And there’s something to a point she made about how AI can democratize creativity. “The fact that works may be imperfect or brief or not easily grasped outside of a small group may be more of an incentive to others to create than something which is extremely well done. There’s the idea that ‘I could do that too,’ or seeing positive responses may also encourage people who wouldn’t have expected to find readers.”

Today anyone can turn a prompt into an image, video or song. Anyone can write an introduction to WTF, if you like phrases such as, “The future of creativity is a conversation, a collaboration between human and machine, a journey into the unknown.” Actually, that’s not entirely terrible.

History often hints at the future. In the past, tech disruptions led to more jobs being created than lost. There aren’t nearly as many darkroom techs as there used to be, but there are plenty of people creating photography. The thing here is that AI is disrupting so many creative (and less creative) professions all at once. That’s the part that will be hard to forecast.

We’ll see more Roger Linns be able to make music because they have AI drum machines. Ad agencies will be able to skip storyboards and use text-to-video to make 15 sample rough spots for clients to look over. Streaming music services and

maybe AO3 will be flooded with AI works. But just as there are few arguments about whether photography is creative anymore, so too will discussion of “Is AI art?” likely fade.

There are practical as well as philosophical implications

- For brands, the opportunities lie in helping people be creative, which is a nearly universal human value. There are also challenges in keeping brand voices authentic as marketing messages (and disinformation) proliferate.
- For creators, how do you break through, and how do you make a living, if that’s your goal?
- For platforms, there are opportunities in curation. One estimate says more than 300 million terabytes of data are created each day. That’s before these tools really take off.

But for those of us who create, the crazy misfits who think they can change the world, the good news might just be that the more human involvement, the more premium the works will become in any genre or medium or sector.



***Matt Carmichael** is editor of *What the Future* but is not generally cubist.*



55%

of Americans worry that disinformation will become more prevalent, when thinking about the future of our society.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Nov. 15-16, 2023, among 1,120 U.S. adults.)

Shifts: Creativity democratized, globalized and immersive



Trevor Sudano is a principal at Ipsos Strategy3. trevor.sudano@ipsos.com

Creative revolution: The democratization of creative tools is revolutionizing the landscape of creativity. Affordable and accessible software for design, video editing, music production and more are empowering individuals to express their creativity without requiring professional training or expensive equipment.

Online platforms and social media provide a stage for showcasing and sharing these creations. Open-source resources and collaborative tools not only enable learning and skill development, but also foster a sense of community and collective creativity. However, this shift also challenges traditional notions of authorship and IP, requiring new perspectives on copyright and compensation.

Globalized culture: While the U.S.' main export has traditionally been culture, recently there's been a rise in creative communities across the globe influencing and driving creativity. From blockbuster shows and movies from South Korea, anime and gaming from Japan, or reggaetón from Latin America, these communities, facilitated by digital platforms, are influencing creativity across the globe.

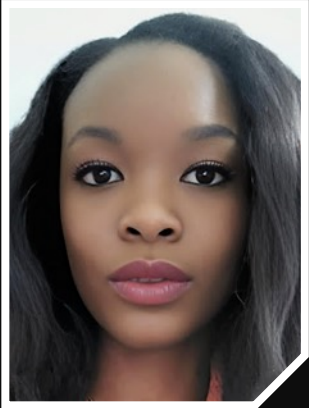
Bringing together diverse individuals who can share ideas, collaborate and inspire one another is fostering a rich exchange of creative perspectives and changing our expectations and norms across creative industries. Though it is important to approach this space respectfully to avoid accusations of cultural appropriation.

Immersive technology: The advent of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and mixed reality (MR) technologies has changed our expectations of creative experiences.

These immersive technologies offer new mediums for creative expression, allowing artists to design in three-dimensional spaces, create interactive experiences, and transcend physical limitations. By turning passive viewers into active participants, this can deepen emotional engagement and create more powerful and memorable experiences. Additionally, AR/VR/MR could further enhance collaboration globally, allowing creators to work together in virtual spaces, irrespective of geographical distances.



How AI could make platforms more inclusive for everyone



Victoria Ekwenuke

Marketing inclusion lead, Meta

She says she's not a techie, but Meta's Victoria Ekwenuke loves the magic of technology and its ability to connect people to ideas across cultures and borders.

She believes generative AI can democratize creativity and help amplify voices that often go unheard. But Ekwenuke also sees the potential for AI to reinforce old biases, stifle craftsmanship and spread disinformation. That's why she says it's critical to include the right people and to test, evaluate and revise systems to ensure that these models are inclusive and useful for all.

42%

of Americans feel that people having equal access to new AI tools and apps for creating will get better in the next few years.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

What The Future interview with Victoria Ekwenuke

Kate MacArthur: What will the implementation of AI into platforms change for creators and their audiences?

Victoria Ekwenuke: Creators will have the potential to create more engaging content that could better resonate with their audiences. And the audiences then benefit by consuming content that might be more tailored or aligned to what they're looking for, whether they know it or not. But on the other hand, AI has the potential to stifle creativity. Technology has this unique ability to both inspire and atrophy skills. Maybe we're far away from the bad, but it is something we should be thinking about.

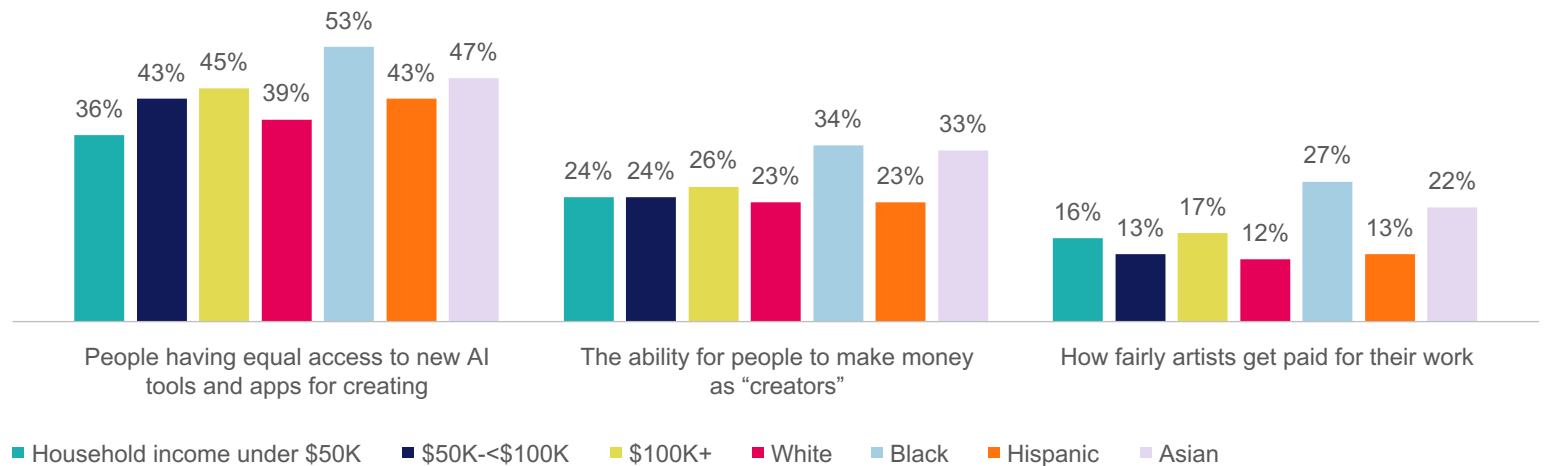
MacArthur: How so?

Ekwenuke: Some will say that AI is about working smarter, while others could say that we are losing sight of craftsmanship. There was a time when you would have to put in time and work to truly master a skill. When I talk about atrophy, I'm talking about it in the sense of we're building a muscle that's becoming accustomed to taking shortcuts. It's fast fashion, it's microwave culture.

I'm not sure how this is going to play out in the long run across industries and disciplines. Earning the right to say "I'm an expert" in something is still important. And there is conflict between these two things.

Americans are concerned about how creators will succeed in the AI age

Q. In the next few years, do you feel like each of the following will get better or worse? (% Will get better)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

MacArthur: One of the bigger discussions about AI is that it's not built on diverse and representative systems. What happens then?

Ekwenuke: The old saying that your output is only as good as your input truly stands the test of time and is extremely relevant here. Which is why when developing

AI products, diversity of thought spanning culture, gender, age, experience and education is extremely crucial. We need to ensure we have the right people at the table to build this machine — which we know at the moment is not the case. We have to pay greater attention to this now for us to truly benefit from the full potential of what AI can mean for everyone.

MacArthur: How can platforms make that happen?

Ekwenuke: There should be some sort of iterative process where we are constantly testing, evaluating and then revising.

MacArthur: What can creators from under-represented backgrounds do in the meantime?

Ekwenuke: It's a virtuous cycle, right? Those creators, who are on the edge cases, those coming from underrepresented backgrounds, they have to use this tool with the mindset that they're also helping to build it. The thinking has to be, "I'm using it to get what I want from it, and I'm adding to the algorithm."

MacArthur: How do you guide creators to keep it authentic and not change their content just to sell?

Ekwenuke: At Meta, there's an entire team dedicated to empowering creators. Now, there's nothing wrong with pivoting because there are many people, especially within this space, that are still finding themselves. Even when they want to switch [content], the guidance is to inform them to continue to be true to themselves because this will allow all the other success metrics to follow. So it's, "Do I want to play the short game today and get all the clicks in the world, or am I trying to play the long game and have impact with the audiences that I'm serving?"

MacArthur: With such diversity in the audiences on platforms, how do we ensure platforms work for everyone?

Ekwenuke: Empathy and having the ability to listen to your audience will help to ensure you're reaching everyone. Yes, it's good to target. But even in targeting, you don't want to miss what you could learn from people outside of that target. It's not only about making people feel seen. We want people to feel valued, heard and understood.

MacArthur: We have a potentially divisive near-term future with elections and wars. How can people manage through that?

Ekwenuke: I don't have the answers. We're at that nascent stage with AI, and there's so much to unpack with this question. First, AI and tech in general have a huge role to play in shaping the future with integrity. When we talk about the dangers of AI and tech — like deep fakes and misinformation — naturally, there's a lot of skepticism. Unfortunately, people and companies will need to be much more vigilant in deciphering what's real versus not. When I think about emerging audiences beyond the election, for obvious reasons, AI won't be embraced by everyone. I truly believe there's a rising cohort of people who would rather go back to basics.

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future.



The old saying that your output is only as good as your input truly stands the test of time and is extremely relevant here."

How AI and human insights can help designers think out of the box

Plenty of attention has gone to how artificial intelligence can help designers make more work, faster. But to make the most of these tools, designers should explore how AI can help them better utilize human insights — not replace them.

Innovation is often inspired by unmet needs. That, by definition, requires listening to the perspectives of real people. But doing so at scale is easier said than done.

Generative and analytical AI can bring both creativity and efficiency to this process. Ipsos trained its innovation AI models using actual consumer data from a diverse range of audiences, ensuring that relevant and representative human inputs are woven into each AI output. AI platforms can process this information differently than a human analyst, meaning that they can identify additional opportunities for innovation.

AI's capacity to save time and money is important. But researchers should look at these tools not as a shortcut or workaround, but as an opportunity to harness consumer data and develop ideas beyond what already exists.

78%

of Americans say they often or sometimes feel like they get to be creative to solve problems in their job.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 597 employed U.S. adults.)



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How AI will help tomorrow's creators push artistic boundaries



Daniel Lefcourt

Professor, Rhode Island School of Design

As a professor at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Daniel Lefcourt teaches first-year students practical skills and critical thinking in courses influenced by everything from pre-Columbian architecture to the Bauhaus movement. He thinks generative tools will enable individuals to express themselves in entirely new ways — and that those trained in the arts will have an advantage in an increasingly visual culture. But he thinks it would help if the companies designing those tools would get artists in the room.

35%

of Americans are most worried that content creators will be replaced by AI when they think about the future of our society.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)



What The Future interview with Daniel Lefcourt

Christopher Good: How do you teach the arts at a time when AI is transforming how we view it?

Daniel Lefcourt: My job as an art professor is to bridge the gap between past and present, and to make connections to the history of art and design. Rule-based systems and randomization — the key components of AI art — have been in artists’ toolkits for hundreds of years.

Good: So, how do you teach (and use) AI in the classroom?

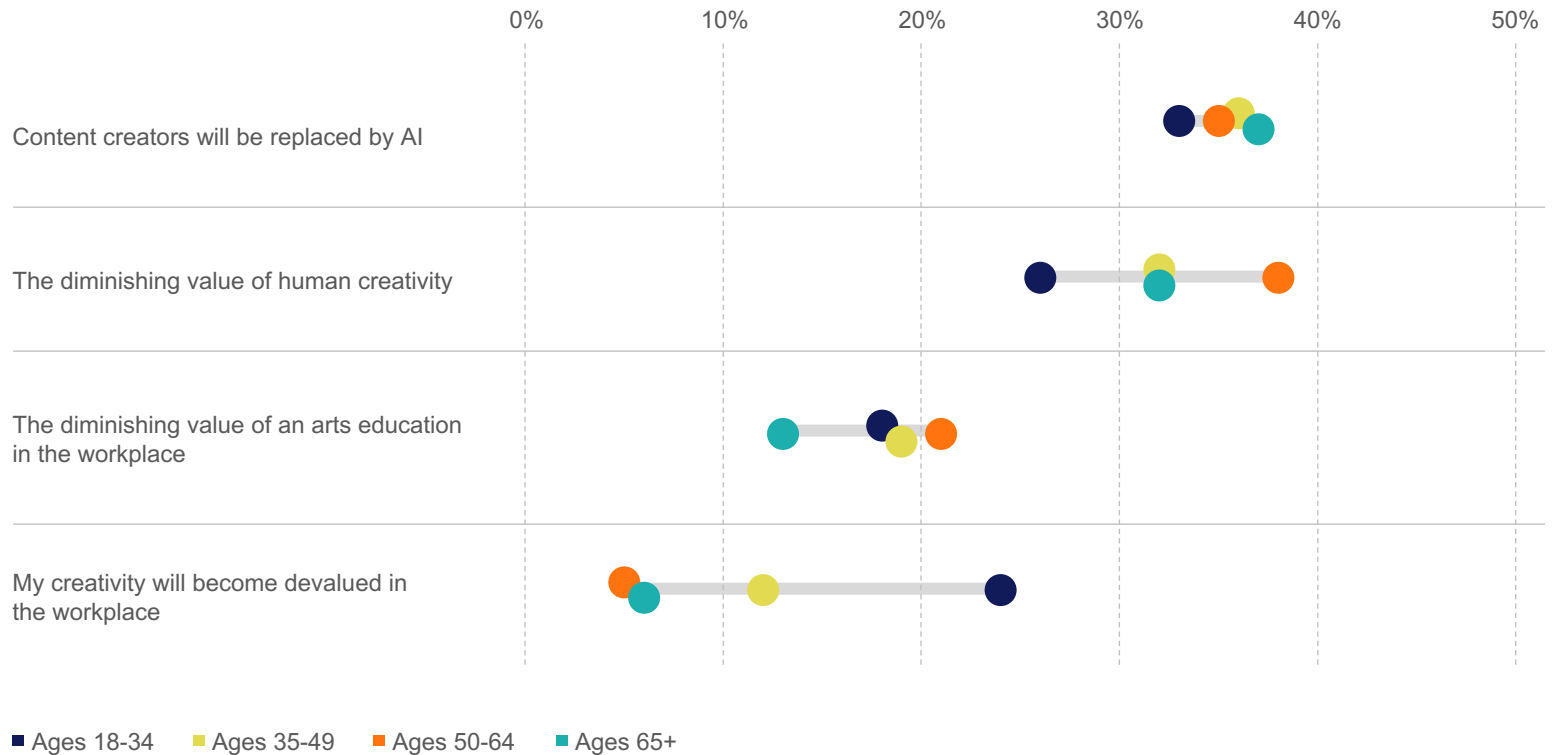
Lefcourt: In some ways, my students and I are asking questions together. Supposedly these tools are going to totally transform the world and transform every field: architecture, industrial design, illustration, etc. I’m excited about that possibility. But every tool has limitations. I see my role and my students’ role as finding out what the outer limits of the possible are.

Good: Those limitations can inspire artists, right?

Lefcourt: Totally! Exploring the limits of any tech is an art form. Like ‘80s punk zine graphics made with Xerox machines. Or with turntables and hip-hop. They had to figure out how to push the tech to make these new art forms! It’s the same with AI now. It’s wild how all these images that look so realistic to us right now will, in a few years, look quaint and distorted. Which is also true of 3D graphics, or any technology, really.

What worries people most about the future value of human creativity

Q. When thinking about the future of our society, which of the following potential scenarios do you find most worrying?



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

Good: Why should artists use AI in their work?

Lefcourt: With my students — the ones that hate AI or those that just say it's not their style, which I would say are the majority — what I'm arguing for is that you'll be able to do more as an individual. If I want to make a full feature film, I can design the characters, I can do all the voices. I can edit it. That, to me, is interesting. And I think new forms of storytelling are going to come out of this.

Good: You can make things faster with AI. What are the consequences of that?

Lefcourt: If we're just interested in doing what we're currently doing, but faster and cheaper to get labor costs down, that's an extractive model. Thinking like this is a dead end, because if a certain type of content starts to get cranked out by AI, then that content loses value. This pattern is not new. I mean, look at modernist architecture. You have the early masterpieces, and then you get office parks that are cheap knockoffs. I would draw a contrast between an extractive approach to AI and a truly generative one. What I'm interested in is: What is this amazing new medium, and what sorts of films and images and games can we make that have never been seen before?

Good: Does that impact the value of an arts degree?

Lefcourt: For us, it's more about teaching critical thinking skills and how to approach these tools speculatively.

I'm old enough that I learned commercial illustration as a teenager using paint and an airbrush. I can't even tell you how slow it was. When Photoshop was adopted by the industry, there was a panic that we would all be out of jobs because it was so much faster. But Photoshop and early CGI produced the multibillion-dollar game industry, and there was a generation of illustrators that made an incredible living off that industry. What I see is a culture that's going to become vastly more visual. More images have been produced this year than in all of human history, right? Going to art school positions you to be at the forefront of this new visual culture.

Good: What should our readers be thinking about?

Lefcourt: I've been speaking to a lot of people in the industry over the last few years, and there's a shocking lack of real artists, designers and writers involved in making AI tools. The tools are being made, and then they're asking creatives afterwards if they like them. And I would argue that they are often building the wrong tools! I think whoever develops collaboratively with creatives is going to have a serious competitive advantage — along the lines of what Steve Jobs did by bringing in Jony Ive [as chief design officer]. The value of these new tools is still speculative. You need to get far closer to the actual people who intend to use these tools.

Christopher Good is a staff writer for What the Future.



What I see is a culture that's going to become vastly more visual. More images have been produced this year than in all of human history, right?"

Why AI shouldn't be used as a shortcut for craftsmanship



Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan

Senior lecturer, Northwestern University's Medill School

What happens if you want to pivot from one creative profession to another? Author Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan is the first George R. R. Martin Chair in Storytelling at Northwestern University's Medill School, named after the "Game of Thrones" author. Martin was a journalism student there and wants to help journalists (like Tan herself) become authors (also like Tan). When she thinks about the future of creativity, she's thinking of how new voices will get heard, and how the craft of writing must persist in an AI age.

46%

of Americans feel how fairly artists get paid for their work will get worse in the next few years.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

What The Future interview with Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan

Matt Carmichael: So the program you teach is about transitioning from one form of creativity to another?

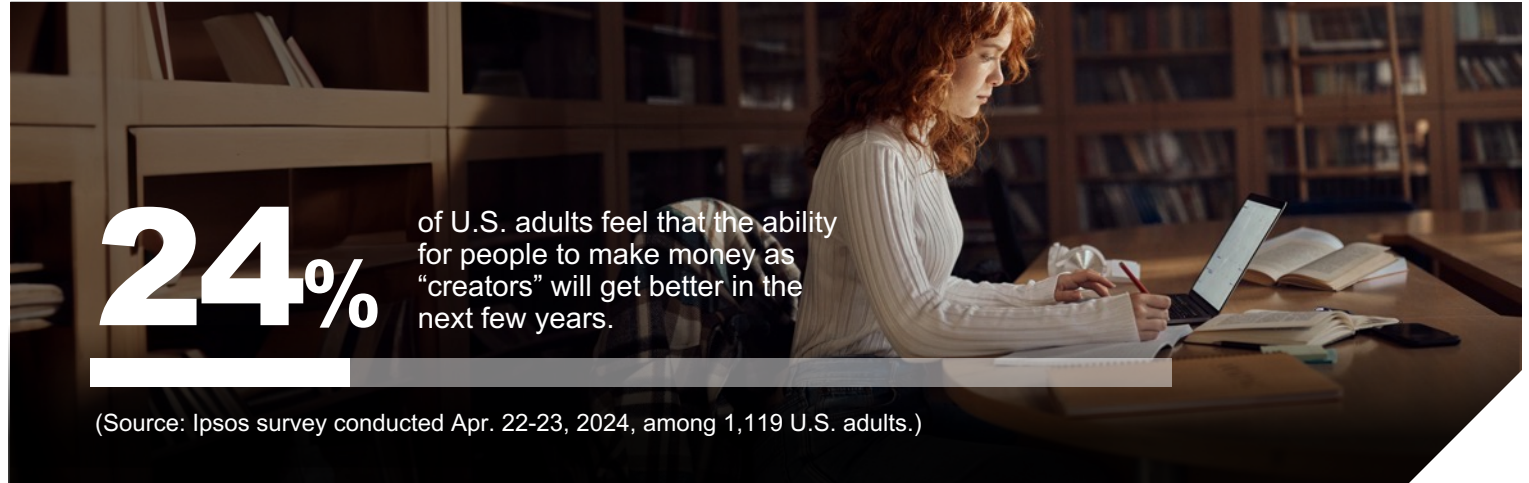
Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan: Yes, there's no program quite like it anywhere. There are workshops for journalists to become better journalists. There are workshops for creative writers who want to be better creative writers, but there's no real workshop that bridges the two.

Carmichael: How do bridges like this work?

Tan: I was talking to a novelist who was a food writer. He said that journalism school prepared him better for writing novels than his MFA did. Novels only come alive when the world feels real. When a character walks into a room or a cafe or a restaurant, you have to feel like you're there with them. The way to bring that out is the details. As journalists we're supposed to be masters at observing things. The best fiction is well-reported fiction.

Carmichael: Specifically, journalism is a tough profession these days. Does becoming a novelist give someone any better shot at earning a living?

Tan: Book publishing is an industry in great turmoil. I worry that this means publishers are going to be less willing to take risks on books that are daring or that sound different. If you're not an established name already, it can be difficult to get a large enough advance to pay your bills while you write your book.



Carmichael: So what should would-be writers do?

Tan: My philosophy is if you want to write books, do it. But do it because you love it, not because you think it's going to make you instantly rich. Some authors don't hit it big enough to live off their books until their fourth or fifth book, but you'll never get there if you quit after the first one.

Carmichael: How are you using or not using AI tools in the classroom?

Tan: I tell my students, if you want to learn, then you should learn. You should do the work. If you're going to write a novel, you have to write the outline, you have to develop the characters or you're not going to understand

what you're doing. I don't think cutting corners is a good idea. You don't live the creative process if you don't put every stone down yourself. I don't use AI at all. I want to tell my own stories and I want to tell them exactly the way I want to tell them.

Carmichael: So how hopeful are you about the future of creativity?

Tan: Despite my fears for the future, we're actually in a time when you are hearing different voices bubbling up still. My hope is that a good story is a good story, and it will find its way into the world no matter what.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future.

How ‘generative reality’ will become a new art medium



Refik Anadol

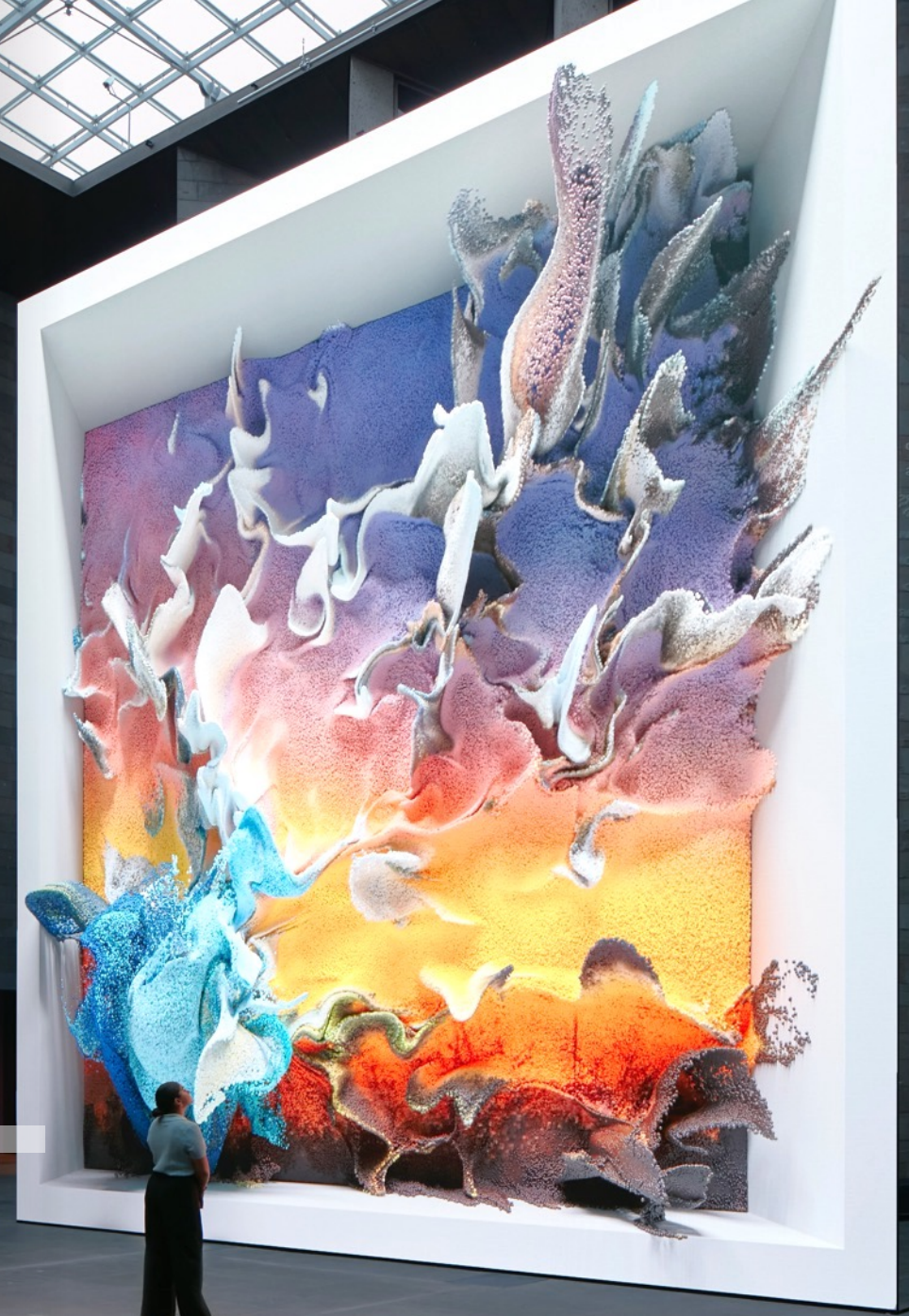
Artist

What happens when you essentially create a new art form? You have to invent a lexicon alongside it. Refik Anadol’s 20-person studio team creates AI art, sure. But first it captures billions of photos to train those custom AIs on. The result is art that seems to live and move and “dream” at installations at the Sphere in Las Vegas and at the New York Museum of Modern Art. He describes this medium as “data painting.” When he thinks about the future of art, he’s thinking about how new tools can help capture and visualize human memory.

48%

of Americans agree that in the future, generative AI will be used by everyone when they are creating things.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)



What The Future interview with Refik Anadol

Matt Carmichael: Clearly, what you do is not the same as giving one of the AI chatbots a prompt. How is your approach different?

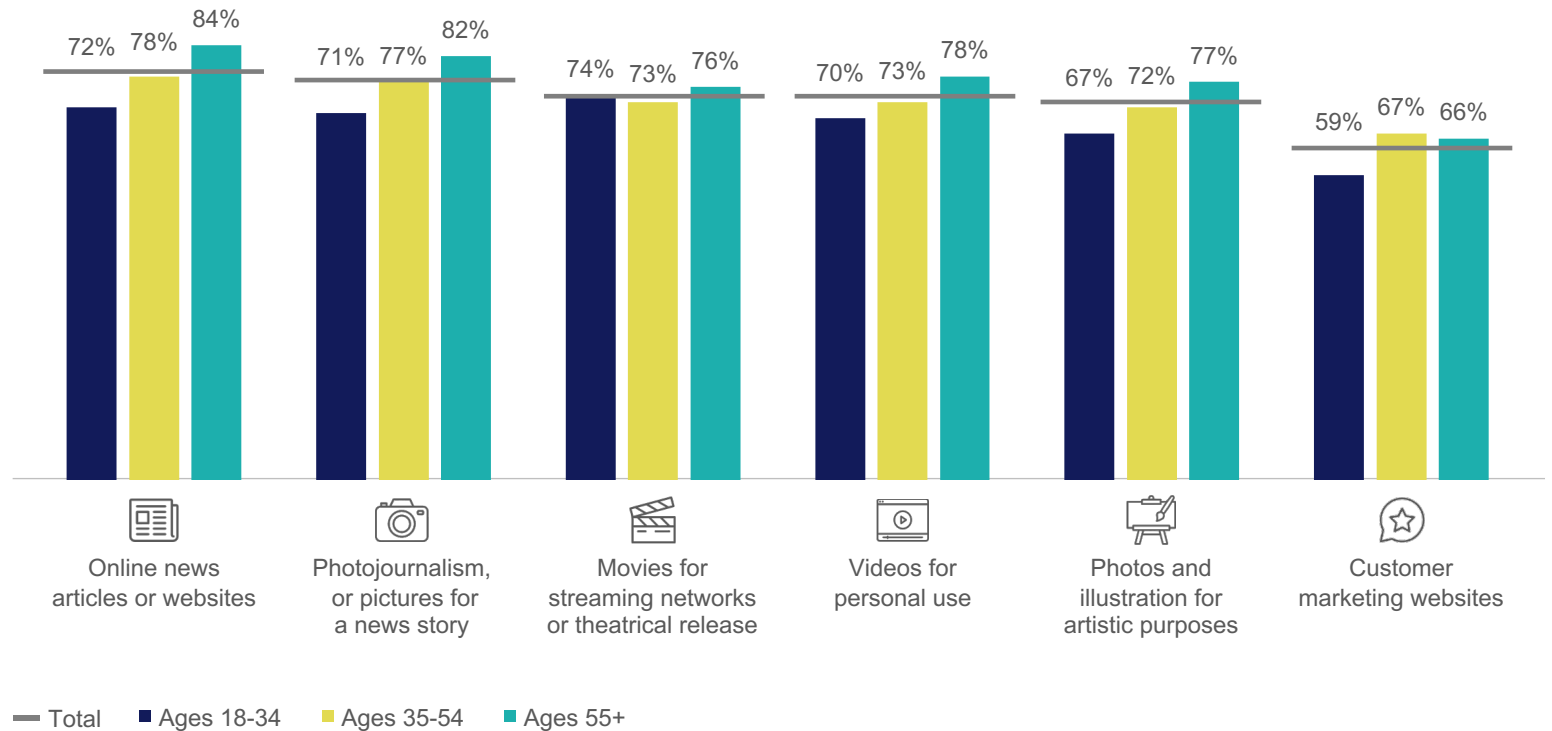
Refik Anadol: I was the first artist-in-residence at Google, which allowed me and my team to learn how to use AI way before what we have now. I focus on using collective memories of humanity, meaning topics such as nature, space and public urban culture, things that are not individual, but rather more about the societal interests that I hope everyone loves and cares about. We train our own models with our own datasets. So that's a very different approach. But the context here is to make a "thinking brush" where I am aware of the pigment and the memory, and how this AI *could* dream [and] hallucinate, then I try to create a mimic reality.

Carmichael: My kids described your work "Unsupervised" at MOMA as hypnotic.

Anadol: Our work can create a positive impact about paying attention and letting us focus on something else to create a flow state, not a meditative state. "Unsupervised" received 38 minutes of average viewing time. Because our work is focused on a living artwork, meaning it's not a frozen pigment, it's in flux. What happens if data becomes a pigment? They can move, shape, create color, form patterns. One of the reasons "Unsupervised" has this very positive impact and engagement is coming from this machine hallucination.

Americans would prefer human-driven content, with younger adults less so

Q. For each of the following, please indicate how much you would prefer human-driven content or AI-driven content. (% Prefer human-driven)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

Carmichael: In our Future of Creativity survey, people were split on whether AI is a tool just like any other. What do you think?

Anadol: For me, AI is a cognitive enhancement of our mind. When I think about a tool, it's more like a physical object or a keyboard or mouse. AI is more than that because it enhances our thoughts, our reasoning and our creativity.

Carmichael: How do you view AI?

Anadol: It's inspiring to think about AI as a friend. Here, a being is appearing in our life. They have some voice, they have some character, they can be joyful, they never get tired. They're encouraging you to contribute new ideas and concepts and so forth. It's a fascinating dialogue, and we'll have machine-human collaborations more and more. I call it "finding human in non-human." It's a fascinating new dialogue we are going through.

Carmichael: People used to question if photography was art. Do you think we'll debate whether AI is art in the future, or will we get over it?

Anadol: I don't think questioning if it's art or not will be relevant even in a couple of years. Machines will make art. Machines will be a part of our life and they'll be blended invisibly. That's a predictable future. I find it powerful and inspiring to think of this machine as a thinking brush.

It doesn't forget. If I want to paint with all the flowers or trees or clouds in the world, that's making art with a new type of pigment, a new type of brush and a new type of canvas.

Carmichael: What role will artists play in the future?

Anadol: Artists are always the alarm mechanisms for humanity. We highlight what may happen next and warm up society and bring all the questions, so society feels comfortable when the societal shift happens. I asked almost a decade ago if a machine can learn, can it dream, can it hallucinate? These are the questions we are now actually exploring in creativity.

Carmichael: Do you think in 2008 you would have imagined what you were working with now? What do you think you will get to play with in 2044?

Anadol: We will be entering this very inspiring era. I'm calling this new medium "generative reality." I love the physical world. I love nature. I am not trying to replace anything at all. If you're watching a movie, it's not real, but feels real. We will create realities and these realities will have multiple senses and this will be a whole new imagination. Cinema will evolve, music will evolve, opera will evolve, every form of art will evolve.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future.



Artists are always the alarm mechanisms for humanity. We highlight what may happen next and warm up society and bring all the questions, so society feels comfortable when the societal shift happens.”

Why ideas matter more than how art is created



Stephanie Dinkins

Artist and professor of art at Stony Brook University

As AI-generated art becomes more prevalent, so do questions about its value and implications. Should it matter whether a human or an AI created a work? Stephanie Dinkins is the Kusama Endowed Professor of Art at Stony Brook University and a renowned artist focused on AI's intersection with social issues. She believes that while AI will change art, the ideas behind art matter more than the method of creation. She sees AI as an opportunity to push creative boundaries and produce better outcomes, especially for marginalized communities.

72%

of U.S. adults agree that as generative AI technology improves, it will be harder for most people to tell what is created with AI and what isn't.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)



What The Future interview with Stephanie Dinkins

Kate MacArthur: Why work with AI?

Stephanie Dinkins: Because if AI is not ubiquitous now, it's going to be. It impacts all our lives so much, whether we realize it or not, in the spaces that we understand, like our phones and things that we have. But also in much greater situations where many decisions are being made about our lives. I don't think we can afford not to delve into AI and think about it, because it is so intertwined in our world. It is crafting a lot of the structures that we live on top of.

MacArthur: You've worked with AI for more than a decade. What have you learned?

Dinkins: I've learned that AI is fraught. That people are trying in many instances to do better. Or at least when they are prodded to do the work of trying to clean biases out of datasets to make algorithms more transparent and open and visible for folks, they are trying.

In fact, as you watch the trajectory of generative systems, you can start to see when you're making images the ways in which companies have shifted in response to the calls from academics and others who have said, "This is biased. What are you going to do about it?" I've learned that there is a space of possibility to call for something different and to have that change. I've learned that sticking our head in the sand about the technology is not going to serve us.

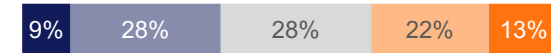
People are split on AI as a creative tool and its use in creative works

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% Total)

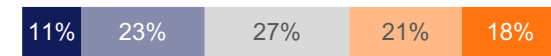
As generative AI technology improves, it will be harder for most people to tell what is created with AI and what isn't



AI is just a tool for creativity like any other



I don't care if entertainment (e.g., a movie, song, game) was created by AI, as long as I like it



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

MacArthur: Will it matter in the future that AI created something instead of a human?

Dinkins: I happen to think in the future it's not going to matter that much. We can talk about stopping it. But my philosophy has been AI just *is*, and that means I need to

contend with what it brings with it. To me, that has meant a lot of what I'm calling surfing, like surfing with or on the technology. Thinking about what it does, thinking about what I do, thinking about how we get together and put those two things together to make something better than either of us might have created alone.

MacArthur: How will we consider talent and artistry when AI is part of the equation?

Dinkins: Yeah, what is talent? It is interesting to think about the AI that won the photo contest. The AI knows the rules of photography so well that it can produce something that looks like a photograph that people want to see. But what artists do often is break the rules and break out of those rules. Now we have to adjust where we place the idea of talent. Is rule-breaking now talent, which maybe benefits society when we're more willing to step out and do things in ways that are more unusual?

MacArthur: If people can get art they like for \$20 instead of \$2,000, what's wrong with that?

Dinkins: The way that it is more democratically spread is new, but we've always done this. It's just who's taking from who and what space? This is an interesting question because what does it mean when the masses are so threatened by something that we've always done that we want to curtail it? It's just a faster, more expedient way to do it, which makes it much more frightening because everybody can do it.

MacArthur: Does AI art cheapen the value of art?

Dinkins: My take on art is that the concept, the idea, the intellectual question is the art, not the thing. If you think like that, then it doesn't matter, because the idea is here

and can take its form in many ways. Versus this object that is something to be revered for some reason. That's kind of a voting system where a bunch of people got together and said, "This is worth this because we are willing to spend this much money on it," and there is a whole system that is set up to uphold that. I'm hopeful that it will allow us to be more adventurous and open and produce differently, because suddenly we can't rely on those systems that are actually pretty exclusionary.

MacArthur: Could human art become more valued as a result? How would AI change the value game?

Dinkins: It's so hard to say where value lies. It feels to me that someone is always going to want to support at least some kind of art and feel like they have the market on something particular.

But that uniqueness now becomes something you lock away. You definitely can't put it into public digital space because then we can just clone it. Do we start making things for black boxes that just sit in containers so that the beauty is not available? Or do we unleash the beauty, whether it's AI beauty, human beauty, hybrid, and consider that a way forward?

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future.



My take on art is that the concept, the idea, the intellectual question is the art, not the thing.”



What creators and marketers should know about mixed attitudes on AI art

As artificial intelligence tools have grown more capable, people’s attitudes have soured on the content AI produces — raising important questions for creators using the technology.

Not too long ago, excitement about AI-generated media was at a fever pitch. But Ipsos’ polling suggests that over the last year, people have grown touchier about the use of AI to produce film, music and literature.

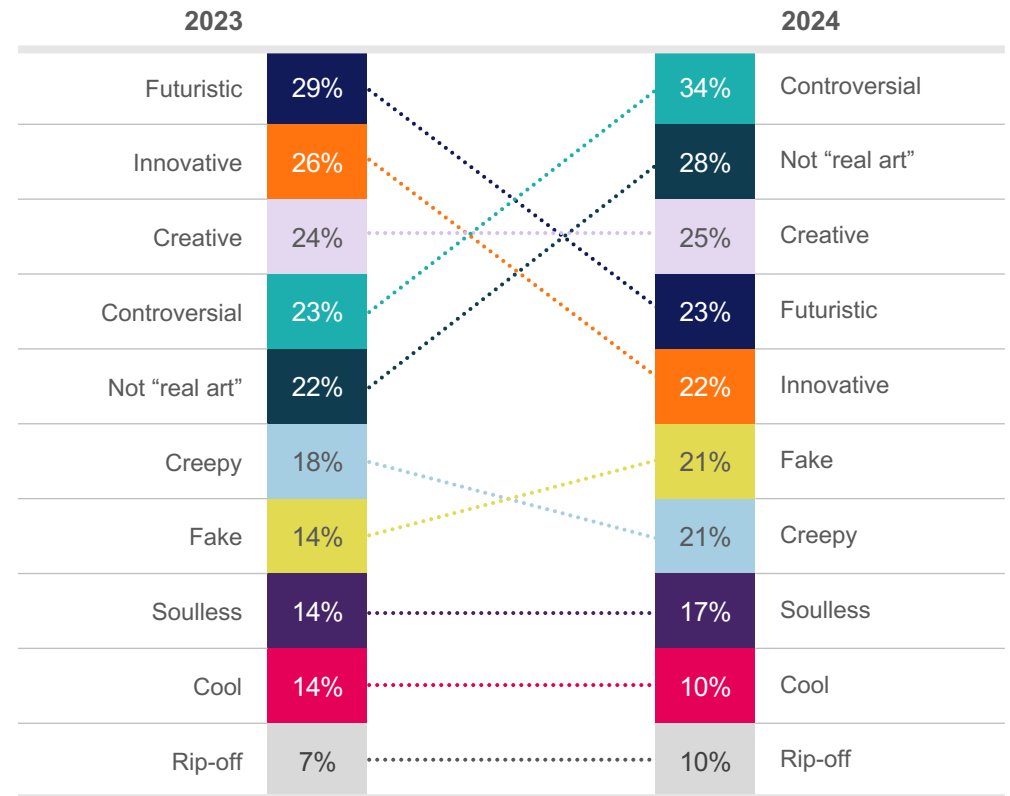
These attitudes are by no means set in stone. They also vary by age and demographic, underscoring the importance of tailoring messaging to specific audiences.

But generally, this data supports the attitude that AI should be viewed as a tool, not as a marketing term — and that brands should first focus on its tangible benefits for audiences, not its value as a buzzword.



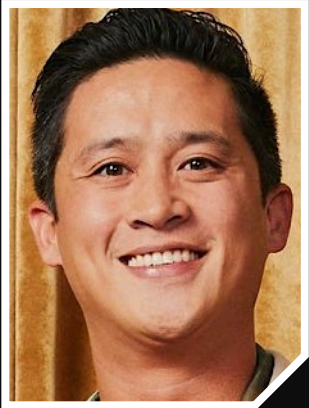
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How people describe AI for creative works is shifting



(Source: Ipsos Consumer Tracker, conducted Mar. 5-6, 2024, among 1,084 U.S. adults.)

How platforms can boost social authenticity and engagement



Alex Dao

Global head of agency development and sales partnerships, Snap

Creators have a lot of choice when it comes to the platforms they create on. The platforms all have their strengths. When Snap's Alex Dao thinks about the future of creativity, he's thinking about all the different kinds of content creators can create, the channels they'll post it on and the metrics they'll use to gauge its success. There's one metric he thinks is underrated: happiness. Here's how he's focused on bringing that to audiences, creators and brands alike.

79%

of Americans prefer human-driven content for online news articles or websites.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)



What The Future interview with Alex Dao

Matt Carmichael: Your recent campaign focused on “Less social, more Snapchat.” What does that look like in practice?

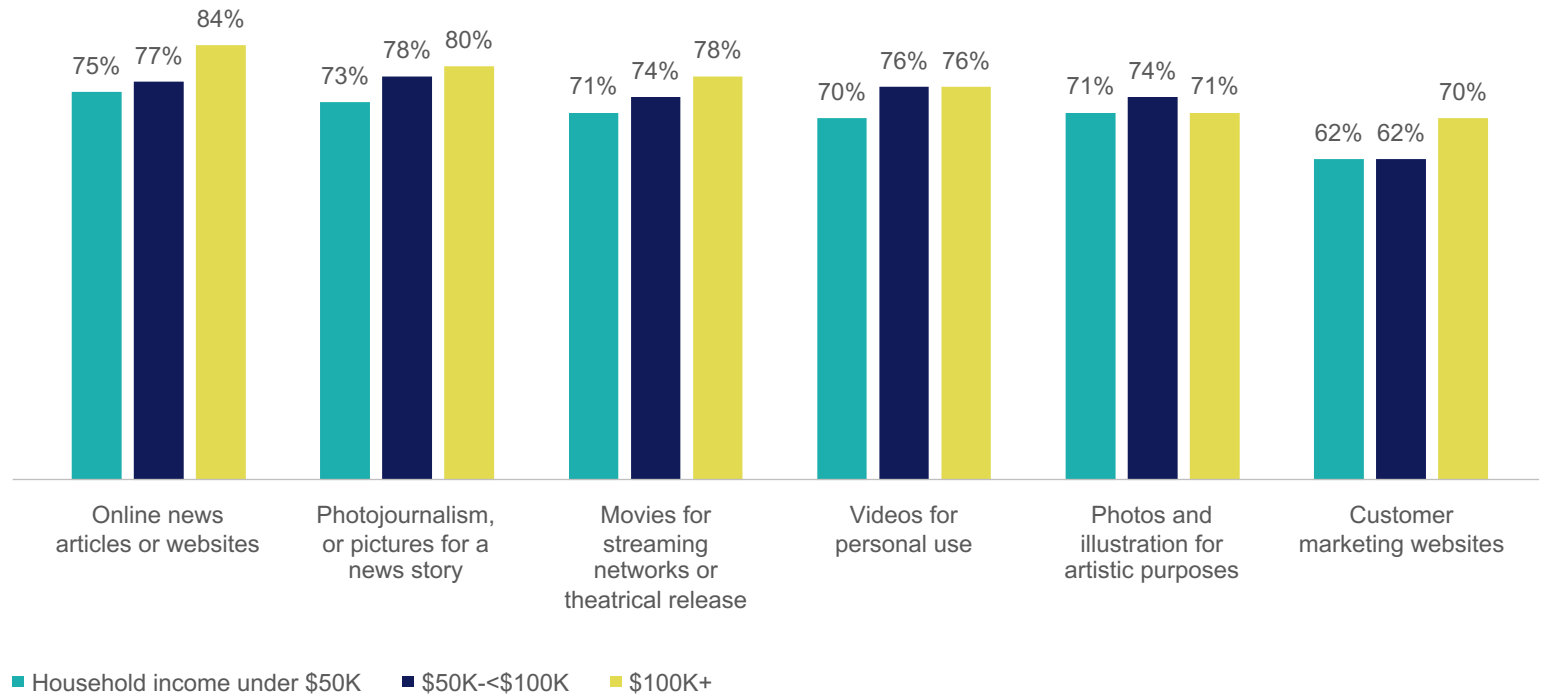
Alex Dao: We're seeing a shift in culture, especially among Gen Z and Millennials. There's a frustration toward the typical norms of social media. They're seeing a lot of divisive content. They're seeing toxic content. They're seeing competition and comparison. So, what we're seeing is the need for the opposite. More and more folks want to find more meaningful connections. They're looking for authenticity. They're looking for a place where they don't feel the typical societal pressures of social media.

Carmichael: People spend a lot of time on social apps, but also multitask on them. Does that change how brands reach their audiences?

Dao: Snapchatters care about passion points like sports, music and entertainment. One of the most common use cases that we see is they're watching a live game, but when a big moment in that game happens, they're having conversations with their friends. The way that brands have integrated is by creating experiences that enhance the sports content. We've done things with NFL teams where you could try on the helmets or the jerseys. It's super interactive, and the attention that these brands are getting from using AR in a very playful, interactive way has been really strong.

Wealthier Americans prefer human-driven content more than lower-income peers

Q. For each of the following, please indicate how much you would prefer human-driven content or AI-driven content. (% Prefer human-driven content)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

Carmichael: Snapchat is quite participatory. Audiences can remix, they can engage. So what does that mean for the brands that operate there?

Dao: People come to Snap to connect with their friends and family, but they stay for the content. That content could be the AR content where they're seeing brands participate. Or it could be our short form video, so more brands start to post to there to build their organic following.

Carmichael: What's the creator experience like?

Dao: If you think about the way that creators create content on other platforms, it takes a lot of time. It needs to be the perfect photo, the perfect video, with all this editing. On Snapchat, it's completely different. We want the behind the scenes, posting your day-to-day moments, people getting ready, people posting about their stress, their frustrations.

That builds a level of trust within the community because people are being honest. It's not this perfect capture of what life looks like. It's everything in between. For brands, that's their opportunity to be a part of that. Brands can speak *with* our community and not *at* our community and in a very authentic way that talks about the rawness and the realness of life.

Carmichael: A lot of social content gets cross-posted to various platforms. How does that work into the creator workflow?

Dao: On other platforms creators post their finished product. That will still land on Snap, but you'll also see the behind the scenes of how they get to the finished product. We recently announced a partnership with Live Nation that gives a behind-the-scenes, front-row pass to live music events and festivals. We worked on a Billie Eilish listening party. We had hundreds of creators come. The creators posted as they were getting ready, as they were attending the pre-party. So you get content around what's happening leading up the event, and the finished product is the event itself.

Carmichael: Brands historically "owned" their mascots or spokespeople. Now they work with influencers. How do brands own that relationship?

Dao: If you're a brand and you're picking the wrong creator for the demographic that you're going after, there's going to be a disconnect. Or if you're trying to work with a creator who isn't a big fan of your brand, the community will understand that. Beyond that, optimizing toward happiness and not just pure growth numbers and engagement metrics and likes is the future because people care about connections and happiness.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future.



Optimizing toward happiness and not just pure growth numbers and engagement metrics and likes is the future because people care about connections and happiness.”

How AI evaluations will support smarter marketing spending

Brands and businesses are already using AI to help them create ads. But they should know that AI can also be used to assess campaigns that would otherwise go unevaluated and predict their performance before launch.

When used in the correct contexts and backed by industry expertise, these tools could offer brands a major competitive advantage.

Put simply, AI still lacks the empathy and contextual understanding that powers successful ads. Evaluating all content with AI alone will lead to ads that are not as empathetic or effective as those that have gone through a human insight process.

While human feedback is still ideal, the cost and time of this process can be prohibitive for lower-spend or lower-risk assets like social and digital advertising — meaning most of these assets go forward with no evaluation or data backing.

Ipsos has developed an AI tool that can evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of videos ads and can pinpoint key moments that are driving or detracting from their impact. Ipsos testing shows that predictions from this model can double the chance brands will run a high-performing ad — enabling them to coordinate more coherent campaigns and achieve the greatest return on investment for their media spend.



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65%

of Americans say technology enhances how people create things.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

Why advertising will still need human creative directors



Bianca Guimaraes

Partner and executive creative director at Mischief

Ad agency Mischief exploded on the scene in 2020 with its deepfaked “Dictators” campaign for RepresentUs showing Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un speaking English to warn Americans against election interference. It was the first use of artificial intelligence technology for a major TV campaign. While banned from airing, the effort went viral. Today, Mischief is the hottest ad shop in the world. But as AI is igniting advertising, don’t expect it to take over the creative work, says partner and ECD Bianca Guimaraes.

61%

of adults 18-34 say they trust advertising made using mostly AI for technology companies, while 36% agree for news.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)



What The Future interview with Bianca Guimaraes

Kate MacArthur: How do you approach campaign development and media selection in the age of AI?

Bianca Guimaraes: It shouldn't affect it beyond the fact that you might need to deliver your message in six seconds versus in 30 seconds or that you have AI to help bring ideas to life. What hasn't changed and what I don't think is going to change is needing a brain and needing someone to be like, "Here's the brief. Let's see what the real problem is that we're trying to solve. Let's ask clever questions, and let's make sure we're getting to the bottom of it."

MacArthur: Would there be a role for AI to enhance the client brief?

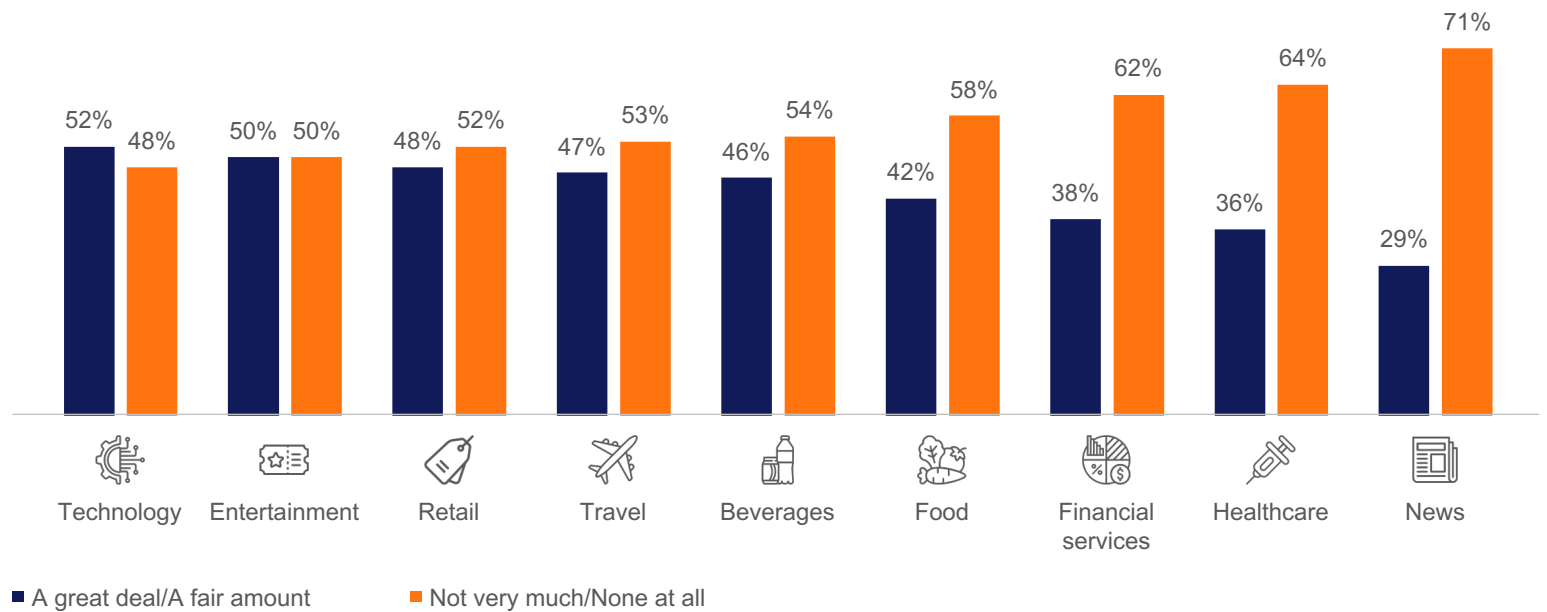
Guimaraes: That's not how I would use it. You can use AI as a tool if it's more of a design or direction to create images to better show your vision. Or you can use ChatGPT to think about some scenarios. You can take some shortcuts, but I don't believe in using AI to create the idea.

MacArthur: We asked consumers where they would trust advertising if it was made using AI, and the greatest trust was for technology and the least for news. Does that surprise you?

Guimaraes: No, but I do think that no matter what category, it's going to have to be regulated.

People trust AI-generated ads more for entertainment brands, less for news

Q. For each of the following industries, how much, if at all, would you trust their advertising if it was made mostly using AI? (% Total)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

MacArthur: Why will it need to be regulated?

Guimaraes: Because [regulators] are not going to be OK with AI generating an ad that says that you are better than the competition if you are not. There are still roles that will need people vetting all that. That ultimately depends on what the guidelines are in place at the time.

MacArthur: Do you think ads generated by AI need to be disclosed or have a disclaimer?

Guimaraes: Yes, especially if you're using people to be saying certain things. Obviously, all of that is something that [consumers] should know.

MacArthur: How concerned are you about AI replacing your job or devaluing the work you do?

Guimaraes: To be clear, I know AI's going to replace some jobs in general. There will be probably a point where clients might just think that's going to get them cheaper, faster work. The reason I am not concerned is because of the rigor that we put behind the work and all the analysis that we do that's beyond just coming up with a solution. Sometimes people think they can take shortcuts. Ultimately, they realize that you have to go back and do the thing the way you used to. There'll be some of that, but I still think we need humans involved in the process.

MacArthur: Sometimes I have an idea in my own head, but I can't quite articulate it. And I'll start playing around with the prompts, and that forces me to change the way that I'm speaking and thinking about it. In some ways, it makes me better at building my own ideas.

Guimaraes: That's such a good point. Every time you're putting something on AI, the prompt is really something that you're finessing to get the right result. You're creative directing, right? And that does help you talk about your vision to express. Like, you're only going to get that outcome if you're putting in the right prompt.

MacArthur: Many people hope AI will save them be more efficient or spend less. So how could that ultimately affect the bottom line for agencies?

Guimaraes: I'd go as far as to say with confidence that the increase of AI's prevalence in advertising will put a premium on human creativity. Sure, it might replace some roles, like lower-funnel asset creation from marketers who believe they'll get a higher yield at lower cost. But AI's lack of originality and hindered ability to really respond to what's happening in culture — understanding nuances and relatable, authentic language of any given demographic — in real time, will have marketers calling in humans all day long.

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future.



You can take some shortcuts, but I don't believe in using AI to create the idea."

Why understanding and empathy inspire better ads

In advertising, creativity is the secret sauce that turns heads and captures hearts. Ipsos' global ad testing data reveals that ads that break convention are over 20% more likely to command brand attention. But there's a catch: The most daring and disruptive ads can leave the average viewer scratching their head, taking sides, or simply shrugging, "not for me."



67%

of Americans expect advertising to be truthful.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Apr. 22-23, 2024, among 1,119 U.S. adults.)

This elusive balance between bold originality and broad appeal keeps ad execs up at night. Creativity can get attention, but ads powered by creativity *and* empathy can turn that attention into a connection.

Ipsos research shows that empathy can be triggered in creative through three key dimensions: **Context** (taking inspiration from real-life situations or cultural moments); **Tension** (portraying an honest struggle that the brand can credibly pay off) and **Expectations** (depicting or playing on people's expected behavior with the brand or product).

Advertisers need to know what people expect before they can surprise them. And audiences need to relate to an ad to care about it. That's why an understanding of consumers and their context is nonnegotiable for advertisers. It's only with deep research on people, their emotions and their attitudes that marketers can identify the specific themes that drive relatability and relevance.



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Tensions that will drive change:

Will AI make human-built ads more truthful or not?

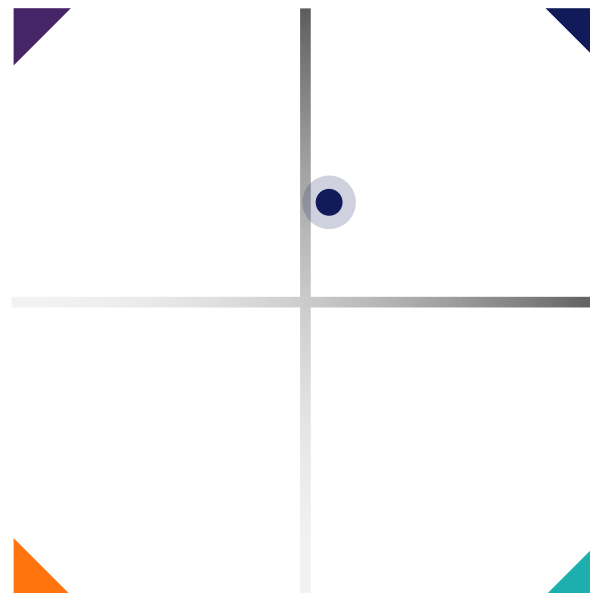
The future is always in tension. We can measure those contradictions today with forced-choice questions. And we can plot them against each other in a classic 2x2 grid. That allows us to visualize where we are today, but also to imagine what the possible futures are if those tensions shift over time – and how far they would have to move to get us to a different future from our baseline.

I EXPECT ADVERTISING TO BE TRUTHFUL

This world is mixed. People want their ads to be truthful, but they distrust the tools agencies will use to create them. Brands will have to lean into paying off their promises and demonstrate their trustworthiness to their customers.

COMPANIES USING AI TO CREATE ADS ARE DISHONEST

Functionally, this world isn't too different from the one across the axis. Consumers don't really trust ads. But here it's a matter of degree. Ads may be even less trusted than if people approved the use of AI because AI use will happen anyway. Marketers will have to lean into branded content and relationships with influencers who have built trust with their audiences.



In today's world, we expect our ads to be truthful, and we're leaning toward thinking that using AI to create them is smart. In the short term, expect to see marketers and agencies promoting their use of AI in creative. Moves will be made toward transparency and labeling. But longer term, AI will be like CGI: ubiquitous, expected and just another tool. Then it's just the truthful part that will need continued monitoring.

COMPANIES USING AI TO CREATE ADS ARE SMART

In this world, all bets are off. AI can create anything, and consumers don't have any faith or trust that something is real. Advertisers will have to double down on authenticity and trust-building. Brands will struggle to break through. People will turn to other sources to find information and discover new products and services. Friends and family have always ranked as a top referral source. Will new avenues gain traction?

I UNDERSTAND ADVERTISING MAY SAY
WHATEVER IS NEEDED TO SELL A PRODUCT

Tensions that will drive change:

Screen time vs. caring about AI authorship?

The future is always in tension. We can measure those contradictions today with forced-choice questions. And we can plot them against each other in a classic 2x2 grid. That allows us to visualize where we are today, but also to imagine what the possible futures are if those tensions shift over time – and how far they would have to move to get us to a different future from our baseline.

I CARE WHETHER ART, FILM, MUSIC,
ETC., IS CREATED BY AI

To wind up in a world with fewer screens one of two things would have to happen. There's a slightly plausible but unlikely future where we decide to be less digital. Or screens as an interface to our digital lives get replaced by something else. If we are caring about AI as a tool, it lends more credence to the future with less digital. This would be a fascinating, neo-Luddism future with broad implications for tech and society.

I SPEND VERY LITTLE TIME ON SCREENS

In this world, screens have likely been replaced by something else. And that something is so pervasive that we want All the Content and could care less how it's made. This is likely higher resolution, more interactive and more immersive entertainment and art. There are implications in this future for tech, certainly, but also everything that goes with that, including server space, natural resources, platforms, creators and more.

If today's world persists, creators will use caution in how they use AI or risk alienating some of their audience. But there's a big audience for digital creators, given how much time we spend on our screens. Maybe they can afford to lose viewers? Opportunities open for artists and studios who can help people get over their disdain in the short-term. In the long term, it's hard to see people caring. No one complains about CGI, right?

MOST OF MY DAILY ACTIVITIES ARE DONE VIA SCREENS

This world opens a lot of potential for new forms of art and emerging creators using new tools for scale. We consume a lot of content, and we don't care how it's made. The problem will be that content could become infinite variations on limited themes. The problem of curation will grow exponentially alongside the opportunity for limitless customization.

I DON'T CARE WHETHER ART, FILM,
MUSIC, ETC., IS CREATED BY AI

Tensions that will drive change:

Teach AI or the arts?

The future is always in tension. We can measure those today with forced-choice questions. And we can plot them against each other in a classic 2x2 grid. That allows us to visualize where we are today, but also to imagine what the possible futures are if those tensions shift over time – and how far they would have to move to get us to a different future from our baseline.

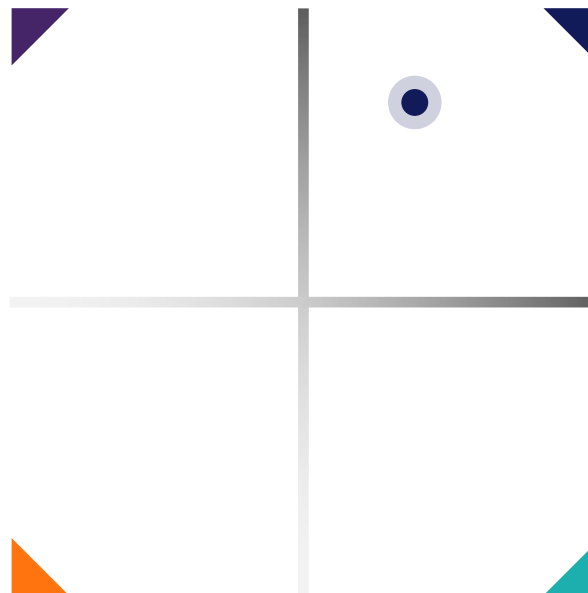
THE ARTS SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAUGHT
IN SCHOOLS

This side of the grid is just short-sighted. The genie here has left the bottle in 2024 and is unlikely to be put back. The arts are just one place where AI should be incorporated into the classroom/studio. But tech brands will be looking to be the tools in the classroom, much as they did with computers and internet tech in the '80s and '90s. Get the kids used to your tools and build a customer base for life.

AI TOOLS SHOULD BE BANNED IN SCHOOLS

This is kind of a scary future. We don't value arts and we want to ban AI in schools, too. So what's left in this educational system? And what kind of citizens and workers are we cultivating if we are teaching neither arts nor technology?

Thinks about this in terms of the American competitive advantage in these huge sectors of our economy, and it looks like a bleak future. Thankfully, it's opposite our baseline.



The arts should always be taught in schools. And discussions of AI in the classroom will seem so antiquated in the near future that it's hard to imagine that the other futures are really that plausible.

SCHOOLS SHOULD TEACH HOW TO RESPONSIBLY USE AI

There's an expression from a Notre Dame business professor: "Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me your books, and I'll tell you what they are." So while we strongly believe the arts should be taught in school, those programs are often underfunded and on the chopping block.

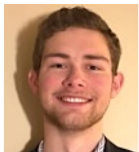
THE ARTS ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN
OTHER SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Future Jobs to Be Done

Ipsos spins the traditional “Jobs to Be Done” framework forward with *future Jobs to Be Done (fJTBD)*. This builds on the theory that people consume to fulfill certain needs or accomplish specific tasks. For example, we don’t just watch Super Bowl ads, we hire a brand’s communications team to provide us with an entertaining experience to add creativity to a sporting event.

To bring it into the future, we envision powerful and plausible scenarios through strategic foresight. While many needs are enduring and do not change over time, the context of that job will change along with the potential solutions and alternatives. These scenarios help us define the circumstances in which people may find themselves, like considering whether an ad created by artificial intelligence is trustworthy compared to one designed and produced by a team of humans.

We use fJTBD to tie these scenarios to actions that organizations can take to help people meet future needs. While it’s typical in foresight to create fJTBD clusters, we’re sharing one scenario here as an example.



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Help me trust AI ads

In a world where creativity becomes increasingly intertwined with artificial intelligence, marketers to consumers to ad executives will learn to navigate authenticity alongside the explosion of AI-generated and hyper-personalized content.

Potential fJTBD:

- Help me as a creative professional to develop compelling and impactful content using trusted new technology
- Help me as a consumer to understand the role companies will hold in ensuring their communications are authentic
- Help me as a consumer to understand how AI and AI-produced advertisements will be held accountable for claims referenced within
- Help me as a consumer to find media and advertising sources I can rely on for accurate and unbiased information

Imagine a world where ... it’s mandatory for personalized ads to denote both when the content was created by AI and what data of yours was used to train the model that created the campaign.

For full results and methodology, visit future.ipsos.com
and [subscribe to our newsletter](#) to receive our next issue of **What the Future**

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Graphic designer

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Copy editor

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Web

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Survey execution

Melissa Kordik,
Rachel Franz,
Loren Mastracci *she/her*

