# Interdisciplinary Dialogues

## Rethinking Culture in the Age of AI

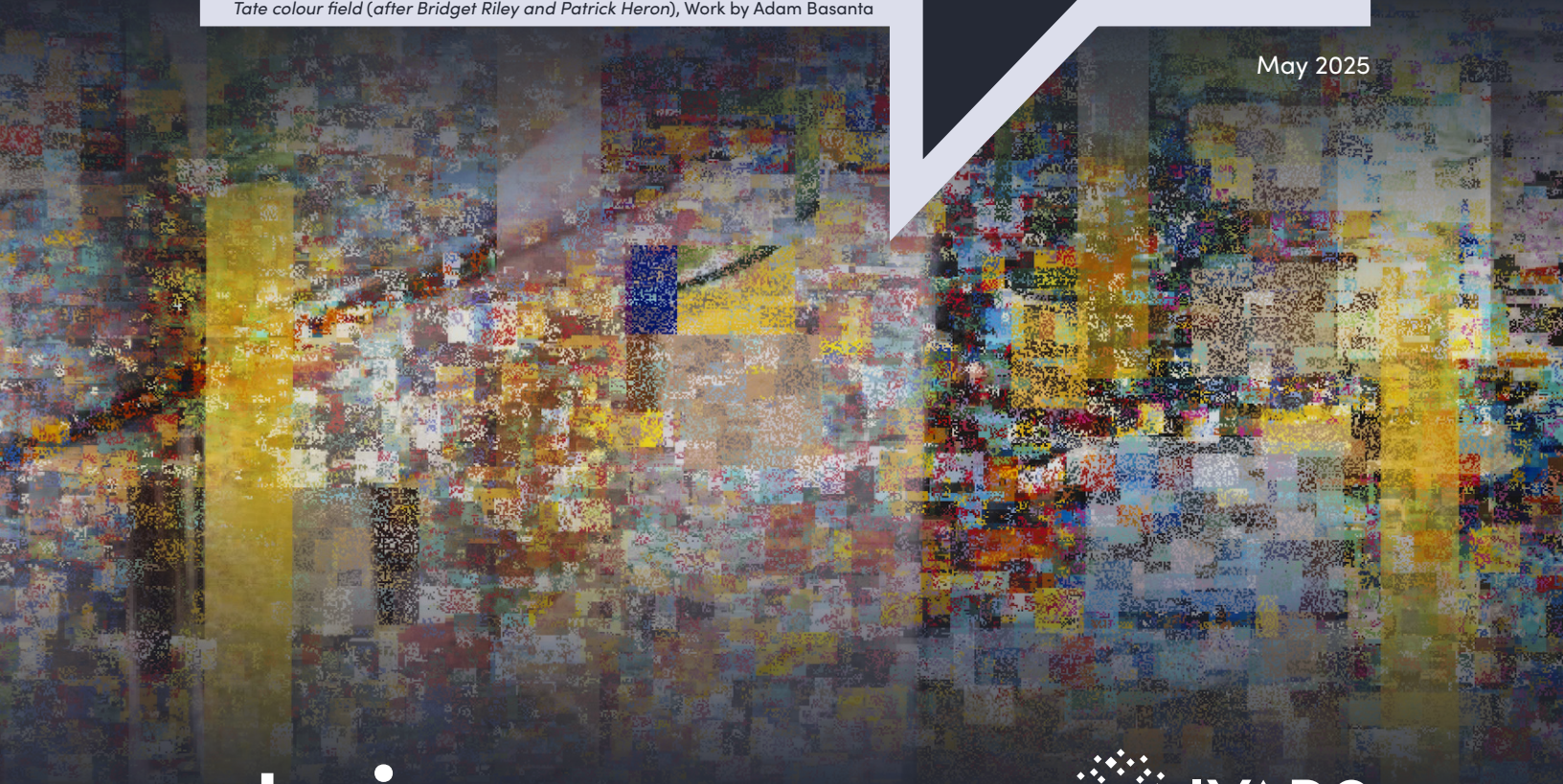
Guest: Octavio Kulesz

**Panelists:**

Jeremy Peter Allen
Adam Basanta
Alexandra Bensamoun
Colette Brin
Yves Jacquier
Véronique Rankin

**Moderator:**

Brian Myles



*Tate colour field* (*after Bridget Riley and Patrick Heron*), Work by Adam Basanta

May 2025

obvia

IVADO

# About the series *Interdisciplinary Dialogues*

In a captivating series of Interdisciplinary Dialogues on the societal impacts of AI, we invite a guest speaker and panelists from the fields of science and engineering, health, humanities and social sciences to discuss the advances, challenges and opportunities raised by AI.

The second edition of the series focused on the challenges and impacts of generative AI on the cultural and creative industries. Octavio Kulesz, a world-renowned expert on the subject, was guest of honor at the event, which took place in Quebec City on May 31, 2024. Moderated by Brian Myles, director of the newspaper Le Devoir, the panel brought together artists, professionals from the video game industry and cultural organizations, as well as specialists from various disciplines such as film, communications and law. Structured around the main issues raised during the panel, this document provides a summary of the presentations and discussions that took place during this second event in the Interdisciplinary Dialogues series.

Immerse yourself in these fascinating conversations, presented in a Q&A format that transcends disciplinary boundaries. The aim of these dialogues is to offer a critical and diverse perspective on the impact of AI on our ever-changing world.

## This Interdisciplinary Dialogues series is organized jointly by Obvia and IVADO

**Obvia**—International Observatory on the Societal Impacts of AI and Digital Technologies—is an open research network that brings together the expertise of over 250 researchers. Through critical interrogation, Obvia's mission is to identify the societal challenges of AI and digital technologies, and to contribute to solutions that place living beings and the biosphere at the center of their development and use. Obvia's research community, in collaboration with civil society, public actors, industry and developers, generates open knowledge and supports the strengthening of individual and collective capabilities.

**IVADO** is an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral research and knowledge mobilization consortium whose mission is to develop and promote a robust, reasoning and responsible AI. Led by Université de Montréal with four university partners (Polytechnique Montréal, HEC Montréal, Université Laval and McGill University), IVADO brings together research centers, government bodies and industry members to co-build ambitious cross-sectoral initiatives with the goal of fostering a paradigm shift for AI and its adoption.

## Scientific Direction

**Véronique Guèvremont**
Scientific Co-Director, Innovations and Societal Implications, IVADO; Co-Head, Arts, Media, and Cultural Diversity, Obvia; Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; Full Professor, Faculty of Law (Université Laval)

**David Hartell**
Strategic Advisor, IVADO

**Charlotte Tessier**
Coordinator, Arts, Media and Cultural Diversity, Obvia; Research Assistant, UNESCO Chair on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; Doctoral Student, Faculty of Law (Université Laval)

**Félix-Arnaud Morin-Bertrand**
Research Professional, Obvia

## Contributors

**Octavio Kulesz**
Director of Teseo and UNESCO expert

**Jeremy Peter Allen**
Filmmaker and Assistant Professor, Department of Literature, Theatre and Cinema (Université Laval)

**Adam Basanta**
Visual artist, composer and performer of experimental music

**Alexandra Bensamoun**
Professor of Intellectual Property Law (Université Paris-Saclay)

**Colette Brin**
Co-Head, Arts, Media, and Cultural Diversity, Obvia; Full Professor, Department of Information and Communication (Université Laval)

**Yves Jacquier**
Executive Director, Ubisoft La Forge

**Véronique Rankin**
Executive Director, Wapikoni mobile

**Brian Myles**
Director, Le Devoir

Produced with the financial support of the Fonds de recherche du Québec

Fonds de recherche Québec

ISBN : 978-2-925581-03-1
DOI : doi.org/10.61737/DQDB9915

To cite this document: Kulesz, O., Allen, J.P., Basanta, A., Bensamoun, A., Brin, C., Jacquier, Y., Rankin, V., Myles, B. and Guèvremont, V. (2025). *Interdisciplinary Dialogues: Rethinking Culture in the Age of AI.* Obvia. https://doi.org/10.61737/DQDB9915

# Introduction by Véronique Guèvremont

At the time of publishing this second edition of *Interdisciplinary Dialogues*, Hervé Le Tellier, author of "L'Anomalie," winner of the 2020 Goncourt prize, agreed to take part in an unprecedented writing contest. There were only two competitors. The instructions were simple: both had to write a short story of 3,000 characters; the first sentence had to be "He saw in his office the lifeless body of the writer"; the last sentence of the text had to be "All is forgiven, she thought, before disappearing." The blank space between the first and last sentences had to be filled in. Once the exercise was over, the writer looked at his rival's text and exclaimed "Holy cow, it's mind-blowing!" (Jacob, 2025).[1] He has just taken on a conversational tool: ChatGPT.

Generative AI is here. It produces texts, images, sounds and videos. It is making its way into every field—literature, graphic design, music, film, and many more. It competes with writers, illustrators, musicians, filmmakers, and other creators. It is easily accessible. It keeps improving, it is becoming more refined. It fascinates as much as it frightens. And it raises many questions.

To better understand the issues at stake, Octavio Kulesz begins by sharing his observations and thoughts. He discusses the opportunities AI offers artists, whose creative power is exponentially increased. The cultural and creative industries, as well as the media, are also benefiting from it, with AI enabling them to increase their productivity, among other things. Not to mention the new forms of cultural expression that are emerging and enriching diversity. However, AI is not without risk, and it raises numerous challenges. The issues are not only cultural; they are also social, economic, ethical, and legal. The stage is set for a genuine interdisciplinary dialogue with the six panelists who have agreed to take part in the discussion.

Everyone agrees that AI is a remarkable tool, while emphasizing one point: AI must remain at the service of creators and not replace them. But this interdisciplinary dialogue also expresses a conviction, namely that humans—whether creative artists or journalists—will always find a way to distinguish themselves from what machines can do. The conversation therefore paints an optimistic picture, as even the most recent advances in AI have not yet managed to shake this belief. That is not to say that the upheavals are not real—quite the contrary.

With great clarity, and without giving in to alarmism, the panelists share their experiences, perceptions, and at times even their predictions regarding the trajectory imposed by AI. Their discussions focus on the future of art, the evolution of cultural diversity, the transformation of creative professions, the remuneration of artists, the need to respect copyright, data sovereignty—particularly for Indigenous communities—the integration of AI into training programs, and the challenges AI poses for journalists and the media.

In the face of inevitable change and the resulting impermanence of the arts, culture, and media, the dialogue gradually reveals a set of values that the panelists believe are essential to preserve. These include human creativity, artistic freedom, creators' rights, sovereignty, diversity, and pluralism.

1 Didier Jacob, Le prix Goncourt Hervé Le Tellier s'est mesuré à l'IA et le match a été à la fois surprenant... et terrifiant, Le Nouvel Obs, 16 March 2025, online: https://www.nouvelobs.com/bibliobs/20250316.OBS101513/le-prix-goncourt-herve-le-tellier-s-est-mesure-a-l-ia-et-le-match-a-ete-a-la-fois-surprenant-et-terrifiant.html

# Reflection by Octavio Kulesz

Over the past decade, artificial intelligence (AI) has profoundly transformed every aspect of our lives—and culture has been no exception. On the contrary, the recent emergence of generative AI has irreversibly accelerated transformations in the cultural sectors.

Let's start with the book industry: the advent of large language models and conversational bots such as ChatGPT, Claude, and others has marked a turning point for professionals in writing, editing, translation, and proofreading. In the visual arts, the impact is equally considerable: diffusion models such as DALL-E (OpenAI) and Midjourney allow anyone to generate illustrations and photographs of a very high technical quality. In the field of music, a growing number of applications, such as Udio, are proving extremely effective at composing songs from very simple parameters, even without any knowledge of musical arrangement or orchestration. In the audiovisual sector, tools such as Sora are capable of generating amazing videos with just a prompt. And clearly, the video game industry has been profoundly transformed by AI (and more specifically by generative AI): it is now possible to use synthetic voices, interact with non-player characters, create immersive scenarios, and more.

This influence of AI, which is noticeable across all cultural sectors, has also penetrated every link in the value chain within each sector—creation, production, distribution, access, and even participation.

The use of AI technologies offers great opportunities for the various actors in the chain. Many artists explain that these tools greatly amplify their inspiration and creative power. There is also a clear reduction in barriers to entry—in other words, a kind of democratization of creation—as today anyone can generate works of art using the applications referenced above, and many others.

For cultural and creative industries, particularly in the production and distribution stages, these technologies represent a significant leap in productivity: it is now possible to do much more with fewer resources. At the same time, new digital professions are emerging, leading to the creation of skilled jobs.

In the final stages of the value chain, when we consider the public, the integration of AI will undoubtedly lead to an explosion in supply. For example, while today we have access to a catalog of several million different books, in the future we will probably have billions of works at our disposal.

The picture is not entirely rosy, however, as there are many pitfalls in the current situation.

First, and this is a major problem, all cultural sectors lack technical skills when it comes to deep learning, but also when it comes to using the most basic AI tools. They also lack the abundant, high-quality data they need to train their own AI systems.

Then there is the thorny issue of copyright. At present, it is not clear who owns the copyright to a work created by or with AI systems. It is important to note that the main generative AI tools currently in use have been trained using cultural expressions without offering any compensation or recognition to the artists who created them, which is a cause for concern.

Moreover, the fact that generative AI systems have no real understanding of the meaning or values underlying their creations often leads to the production of erroneous content (the notorious "hallucinations") and the expression of various biases (gender, ethnic origin, religion, among others), most often due to imbalances in the training datasets.

Furthermore, the extraordinary versatility of AI tools enables the large-scale creation of fake news and hateful content, with an increasing degree of personalization. All these trends pose major challenges in terms of social cohesion and may call into question the idea of a shared culture.

The widespread incorporation of AI systems also risks exacerbating various inequalities on a global scale. Resource-rich languages, such as English—already dominant in terms of dissemination and referencing—benefit from far more training data than those that are less digitized, which further undermines linguistic diversity. The same applies to imbalances between the Global North and the Global South: the digital divide we already see today could turn into a creative divide, which would be much more difficult to bridge.

Although new skilled jobs are being created, various studies conducted among content writers, illustrators, and photographers show that in many cultural sectors, the destruction of the professional fabric is evident. The lack of fluid exchange between the cultural world and the tech scene is another issue that exacerbates this situation.

At the same time, economic concentration in the hands of large tech companies has consolidated to unprecedented levels, and governments in most regions of the world are showing worrying signs of paralysis.

In this context, what strategy could we implement to capitalize on opportunities while managing the risks? The situation does not seem straightforward, but certain approaches could prove essential. First, an awareness campaign on the impact of AI on culture needs to be launched across all creative sectors. There is a need for more training, more open data, and increased networking between the fields of culture and technology. From a government perspective, we need laws that protect the rights of creators whose works have been used to train AI systems, along with a new generation of cultural policies that are less grounded in the idea of a top-down state and more focused on horizontal collaboration.

Beyond concrete actions—both in the cultural market and in public policy—it is also essential to challenge the dominant narratives about the role of culture in the age of AI. In national AI agendas and at technology conferences, we often observe a certain disinterest when it comes to addressing the fields of art and culture, as if they were secondary, almost incidental, and useful only insofar as they serve to train deep learning systems. The major problem with this approach, so common in the world of AI, is that it leads to significant impoverishment, even in scientific terms. It would be unwise to forget how many technical inventions were conceived by artists, or how many scientific revolutions were first inspired by poets and philosophers before being taken up by engineers.

In 1417, Italian humanist Poggio Bracciolini discovered in a German monastery a copy of a text that had been lost for about a millennium: *De rerum natura* ("On the Nature of Things"), written by the Latin poet Lucretius in the first century BCE. After its rediscovery, the book began to circulate widely in European intellectual circles, first in manuscript form and then in print, and had a decisive influence on scientific advances in the following centuries. Lucretius' vision, based on the ancient atomist idea that the world is composed of particles that collide randomly to form different entities, had an undeniable impact on the thinking of Giordano Bruno, Galileo, Newton, Einstein, and many other scientists.

The story of this lost poem, which reappeared by pure coincidence (almost like the random collision of atoms in the universe) and ended up playing a significant role in the scientific advances of the modern age, is in itself a fascinating anecdote. But it is also significant for another reason, one that becomes particularly relevant in the age of generative AI. Although Lucretius' poem presents a materialistic worldview, it begins with a hymn to Venus, whom he invokes under the name *Aeneadum genetrix*: the progenitor or mother of the Romans, the goddess whose creative energy sets the world in motion and without whom nothing beautiful would exist. Two thousand years later, as generative models critically depend on cultural expressions to function, we could also argue that it is not AI that is truly *generative*, but that this capacity comes from a force that transcends mere applied science: it is, ultimately, the infinite creative power of culture.

# Q1

## How do we define define art in the age of AI? Are AI-works considered art? Can art survive AI?

### Adam Basanta

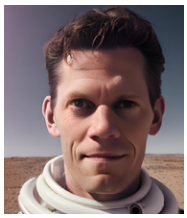
I don't believe AI is transforming art in such a significant way. It's undeniable that AI brings new possibilities and economic advantages. However, intelligence is not what makes art interesting or not. What makes it interesting is that images are, in reality, more than just images; there is something about them that goes beyond the literal material—whether it's a painting, a photograph, or an AI-generated image. And it's precisely this something, this dialogue with the image, that becomes art. Otherwise, it is just an image!

### Yves Jacquier

When it comes to creativity, we need to draw on our singularities as strengths to offer products that are different in the cultural sense of the term; in other words, products that stand out. Take a look at the Spotify top 10 in the United States over the last few months: it is interesting to see, for example, that some artists have returned to simple "voice/guitar" song formats. This may reflect a desire for more identity-based music, for targeted, highly local, and distinctive cultural products. AI has a natural tendency to smooth things out through the way it works. Social tensions, on the contrary, suggest a more marked singularization. Capitalizing on these singularities and using AI as a tool to offer something different seems to me a reasonable and indispensable path.

AI is criticized in much the same way that photography once was by painters, who believed that photography was not art and that painting would disappear. Not only has painting not disappeared, but photography is now considered an art form in its own right.

### Jeremy Peter Allen



AI can serve as an amplifier of the imagination. In my case, I work with still images or video. However, even though you can generate an incredible number of images and experiment with many variations on a concept in a very short time, there is still a lot of sorting to be done, which is where we need to push AI further. I follow the work of artists from all over the world thanks to social media. The majority of artists, after working with these generative tools for a while, come to the same conclusion: AI does not eliminate the need for human intervention. The basic idea behind a film is a script. And when you ask AI to generate a script, the result is worthless, unusable. It has to come from humans. I'm not worried about the place of humans in the creative process. You can become lazy when using AI tools; you can become overly dependent on them as a creator. However, the human element will not be eliminated from creation.

### Adam Basanta

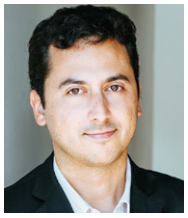
The case of music is interesting. Most pop songs have been written collaboratively, by 40 to 50 people in a room (and usually the same people). That's the reality of music today. We did exactly the same thing as AI: we took a large corpus and slowly narrowed it down to very specific measurable impacts. We can stop doing that; we can let AI compose music and also, as humans, we can continue to produce it—thanks to humans.

# Q2

Early adopters of AI who have generated images report that as usage increases, quality declines because the *prompts* from people with less visual knowledge tend to be less sophisticated, and AIs adapt to the average. As a result, they produce "consensus" content.

## Can we expect a certain deterioration of content in the long term, and even an impoverishment of the diversity of cultural and linguistic expressions?

## Octavio Kulesz

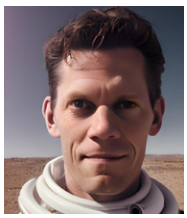


The question of the decline or degradation of AI models is highly relevant. It echoes what is known in AI research as "model collapse." As we know, an AI model can generate text and images. It is estimated that, in the near future, 90% of content on the web will be synthetic—that is, generated by AI. We also know that an AI system fed with synthetic content runs the risk of collapsing after a certain number of successive iterations. It would therefore be essential to continue relying on human creativity to prevent the otherwise inevitable decline of these inanimate models.

In this regard, we could once again invoke Lucretius: this poet, renowned for his melancholic nature, was particularly sensitive to the inevitable decline of all things.

Referring back to the image of *Venus Genetrix*, one could argue that only the creative power of life (nature or culture) is capable of reinjecting the vitality that machines lack.

## Jeremy Peter Allen



The content generated spontaneously by AI tools is very often too consensual. This is where the human artist must step in to pull the generating system out of the rut of bland art that targets the average viewer. No matter the era, in every artistic discipline throughout human history, there have always been works that stand out, as well as a larger body of less interesting works. It's the same with AI. Some artists use it very well and create exceptional works. Most, unfortunately, produce mundane, easy pieces that are a bit lazy and overly referential. AI is just a tool: some people use it well, others don't. Where it becomes a problem is in AI's ability to auto-generate content. That's a real problem. I hardly ever go on YouTube anymore because there are so many auto-generated videos that are clearly devoid of any human intervention, where only AI is at work. It's no longer interesting. There is actually a theory about this: the "dark forest" theory, which suggests that the speed at which AI generates content will flood the web with meaningless works that will discourage humans from going online. That may be a danger. But as long as there is human involvement in AI creation, I believe there will always be interesting works to discover.

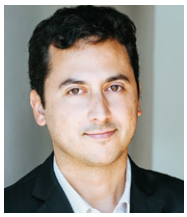
## Yves Jacquier

Discoverability is really the main issue. This leads us to wonder what public authorities can do about it. We also need to consider the power we have to promote more local, minority cultures. Working on the discoverability of works to avoid ending up in this kind of dark forest described earlier—that's where the challenge lies, in my view. Around 100,000 new tracks are uploaded to Spotify every day. Around 100,000 manuscripts are published on Kindle every month. Of course, not all of them are masterpieces. The ease with which this content can be created can only exacerbate the issue of discoverability, which is becoming a priority and strategic issue.

# Q3

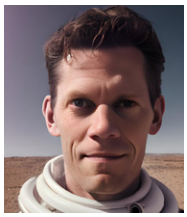
## Given the rise of generative AI in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), how do you see the future of creative professions? What will these professions look like in 10 years? Which ones will disappear, and which ones will survive?

### Octavio Kulesz



The impact of generative AI systems on employment is undeniable, to the point that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warns of an impending "tsunami" affecting many roles and professions, both in the Global North and South. Many people working in creative sectors (illustration, photography, writing, editing and translation, among others) are seeing demand for their services decline and, when they do remain employed, they are often relegated to simply reviewing what has been produced by machines. This results in widespread precariousness for all those involved. This is compounded by the weakening of the cultural SME ecosystem, which is also at risk of being marginalized by the rapid adoption of AI tools. This situation inevitably leads to increasing concentration of the cultural market in the hands of tech companies: AI startups, of course, but first and foremost Microsoft, Amazon, Meta, Alphabet, and other tech titans, which constantly inject funds into these startups to keep them afloat despite the lack of viable business models. When one of them collapses, it is usually absorbed by its main investors, as seems to have been the case recently with Inflection, which was ultimately integrated into Microsoft.

### Jeremy Peter Allen



Video generators like Sora or Runway, audio generators, story generators—none of these replace the need for human input. For example, AI still doesn't reproduce emotions very well. The artificial aspect remains very noticeable. Generative AI is improving, there's no doubt about that, but I don't think humans will be replaced or excluded from the creative process. That said, jobs in film and television will disappear—dubbing, for example. From just twenty phonemes, AI is capable of reproducing anyone's voice and making them speak any language, with any accent, almost perfectly. Some AI systems are also beginning to modulate emotions on demand. Imagine a Hollywood star digitizing their voice and then licensing it to dubbing studios around the world. There will always be a need for humans to control quality, but the group of voice actors who make a living dubbing French works in Quebec is at risk. It is up to us to decide whether this industry has value, whether it should be preserved, and whether legislative intervention is necessary. Because if we let AI take over, this much cheaper and more flexible alternative to the traditional methods is bound to sweep the industry. Dubbing will be one of the first sectors of the film industry to fall. Others are also under threat, particularly everything related to post-production.

## Yves Jacquier

There will undoubtedly be major transformations. One of the industries that has undergone the most disruption in recent years is music. We went from an economy where musicians would play in venues to a record-based economy. These people have had to readjust to an economy where records no longer sell. Recording an album used to be extremely expensive because you had to rent a studio. Now, anyone can do it at home. Does that mean there are fewer musicians today? No. We have access to much more variety. So, there is still music being produced with musicians. However, there are challenges when it comes to how professions are changing. What does it mean to be a musician today? And what does it mean for those who want to make a living from it? It's all about the economic model behind it; it's also the economic model between technology—the use of tech to deliver a creative product—and fair compensation for creators.

We often hear about responsible AI, which I believe is a misnomer: AI is not responsible. It is up to us to use it not only responsibly, but above all sustainably. This sustainability depends on our resource and energy constraints, but also on ensuring that the creator retains control. Otherwise, we risk being overwhelmed by uninspired cultural products, which would be nothing more than clones of each other.

The term AI carries with it a Promethean fantasy. We call all these systems "artificial intelligence," and I think we're wrong to do so. We talk about "hallucinations" when these systems produce content that is coherent but false, and again, we are wrong to do so. Because these are words that suggest we're dealing with consciousness, with a being. There is no consciousness, only probabilities and statistics. Take the example of spell checkers. When I use one, I call it a feature. Back in Gutenberg's day, it might have been called witchcraft. And somewhere in between, we might have called it a virtual editor or AI. The day it serves a purpose, we stop calling it AI. If we think of these systems as tools, then we need to learn how to master them, develop our agency—our control over what comes out of them. Otherwise, we can become lazy.

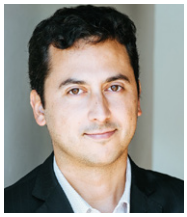
## Colette Brin

In the field of information, we knew before the advent of ChatGPT that it was no longer possible to make journalistic content profitable, because advertising was no longer a sufficient source of revenue to sustain production. So we have already seen many job losses, and it's not over yet. We are living through a transformation. I'm not a futurist, but what I would tend to predict is that we may end up with a mass of journalists who have a basic knowledge of the simplest AI tools; and then we'll have a small number of AI experts, much like the relatively rare data journalists we have in Quebec. And perhaps there will also be a niche for what could be called artisanal journalism, which does not use AI at all—a bit like vinyl records in music, which are resisting the technological onslaught. I have a feeling that the industry could fragment in this way.

# Q4

## We know that works produced by artists are used to train AI systems. How we ensure that artists receive form of compensation for the their works?

### Octavio Kulesz



In a context rich with opportunities but also marked by numerous pitfalls, the role of public authorities is essential. Some global initiatives already offer promising paths forward. I contributed to the drafting of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence adopted in 2021 (UNESCO, 2021), the first global document on this subject, which includes a section entirely dedicated to the cultural sector. The text calls on States to invest more in strengthening the capacities of cultural sectors, while emphasizing the importance of recognizing and fairly compensating artists and intellectual property rights holders when their creations are used to train AI systems. The Recommendation also highlights the risks of concentration in the cultural market and calls for greater transparency throughout the life cycle of AI systems, among other crucial points. Both the diagnosis and the tools needed to design more virtuous policies have been available for some time now. However, compared to other sectors, the cultural sector is struggling to develop long-term programs with a coherent vision. It is therefore imperative that policymakers act without delay and implement bold, dynamic policies. Perpetuating inaction will only exacerbate economic and cultural concentration.

### Adam Basanta

The music world is one where artists cannot make a living, and yet intellectual property law is rock solid. Spotify does pay people, but very little. I think there is some impact. Compensation is a very important issue, but I don't know if it has much to do with the artistic opportunities that AI brings. It's more of a technical question: are we heading toward a society where the data we produce is used in a product? If so, then artists should be paid. We have a model in the music industry where, at the moment, we can consider the AI integrated into Spotify as a problem. Does this AI respect the copyright of the artists whose data was used as the basis for its learning? Probably not. But if we solve this problem, we end up in a world of robotized music creation.

The legal mechanisms currently in place can undoubtedly be adapted. But the question of how far they can be adapted is beyond the control of artists. We should first ask ourselves: what can we adapt today, in the short term? What can't we adapt in the long term? We need to start thinking about alternative models today.

## Alexandra Bensamoun

The role of the jurist is to say what can and cannot be done. So where does that leave AI? Generative AI feeds on works without authorization and without compensation. There are currently about twenty lawsuits pending in the United States. Legal action has also been taken in other countries. And all these lawsuits raise many questions. First, regarding the inputs, upstream: what should be done with all this cultural content that has been used without the authors' authorization and without compensation? Then, regarding the outputs, downstream, i.e., the AI-generated productions: are they considered works, and how do we determine this? Or is the generated cultural content unprotected?

There are real concerns among rights holders about the current legislative framework and the use of content to feed the machine. There is a stranglehold on content, which is beyond the control of its creators. There is also a trend towards unifying, harmonizing, or even deconstructing the cultural content in question. In Europe, there is an exception to copyright law for AI training—the text and data mining exception—which suspends copyright for the purposes of text mining. However, certain conditions must be met in order for this exception to apply. First, there must be lawful access to the protected content.

Second, the right holder must be able to opt out of the use of their content. But the issue is that even when an author exercises their right to opt out, there is no way of knowing whether their work continues to be used by AI systems. So, in Europe, lawmakers have chosen to make this information public by creating a transparency obligation. This means that when protected content is used to train AI models—like ChatGPT, Sora, or others—the content that was used during the training process has to be disclosed. That's what the transparency obligation is all about.

The European legislative framework therefore prevents things from happening quietly, without anyone being able to do anything about it. It requires disclosure of what is being done, which makes it possible to verify that the opt-out mechanism is being properly applied, or to negotiate some form of compensation for rights holders. The French Minister of Culture has tasked me with looking into this issue and proposing a compensation model for the use of artificial intelligence systems.

If there has been such a mobilization of cultural industries in France, and in Europe more broadly, to ensure that the AI Regulation enshrines this transparency obligation, it's because the cultural sector sees it as an existential issue. Do we want a world where artists can no longer make a living from their art, a world where we no longer need artists, no longer need culture? This is a fundamental question, one that everyone must answer. Perhaps there are advantages to a world where everything is free and open. For my part, I believe that you can't build a market by crushing such a valuable part of the value chain.

# Q5

## For some groups, particularly Indigenous communities, AI raises real issues of sovereignty over their data; how should this sovereignty be protected?

### Véronique Rankin

That's a big question. It should be made clear from the outset that within the Indigenous community, some Indigenous groups are in the process of reclaiming their languages. This raises the question: how can we feed a system when the language is no longer spoken? In other cases, the language is alive and in use, but other issues may arise. These issues relate to how we can feed a system while respecting dialects and local characteristics. Indigenous languages have developed as a function of the territories and local culture of the groups. This means that there can be significant differences between the dialects of a single nation that shares the same language but is spread across different territories. So, if some creations are generated by artificial intelligence, what do we do with all these elements of culture that are tied to humans, identity, language, and territory?

Furthermore, the way we represent ourselves as Indigenous peoples is very important. Because of the impacts of colonization, we are working hard to reclaim, relearn, and regain mastery of our cultures. Cultural techniques and practices are passed down from person to person. When we talk about techniques, such as those used in handicrafts, you learn them from your mother, by watching her. The world of handicrafts is highly complex, with designs, patterns, and colors specific to each nation and even each community.

Systems like AI bring us back to a certain level of generality and are not necessarily capable of generating information that captures the diversity and detail found in Indigenous cultural transmission. In fact, it's the opposite of cultural transmission practices.

As for data sovereignty, I think I would lean toward requiring consultation with Indigenous communities to understand the position of Indigenous peoples regarding the use of data that concerns them. There is still a great deal of apprehension about sharing information about ourselves, because there remains a wound among Indigenous communities toward the research community, which for a time took advantage of communities to obtain information and knowledge without giving anything back to those communities. Indigenous communities remain very sensitive to this issue. There's a fear that our knowledge and expertise will be stolen again. With this in mind, it's not up to lawmakers to say whether or not certain information can be shared with artificial intelligence systems. It's up to the bearers of culture, traditions, and knowledge to decide how AI should be used and what information should be included in it.

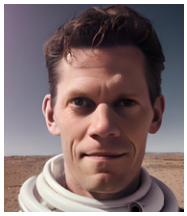
# Q6

## AI will need to find its place in training programs relating to the various fields of the cultural and creative industries; how should this integration take place?

## Véronique Rankin

I believe that the key to the inevitable integration of AI into training programs is to start by raising awareness among the general public, but especially young people. People need to understand what this tool is, because it can be intimidating. Older people also need to be made aware. They are far removed from this digital reality, and yet in Indigenous traditions, elders are recognized as knowledge keepers. If knowledge is to be shared through AI, they too must be well informed about this new reality and included in the conversation around integrating AI into training programs and the transmission of Indigenous knowledge.

## Jeremy Peter Allen



This is a question that concerns me greatly. I have been working on setting up a new university-level film training program since 2022. While my classes still focus mainly on the more traditional practices of filmmaking, I'm very open to the use of AI. I ran an interesting experiment in my screenwriting course, in which each student is required to write a 15-page short fiction screenplay. I began the first class by announcing that the use of generative AI was entirely permitted for the term's assignment. Then, in front of the class, I gave ChatGPT the instructions for the assignment. Less than a minute later, a script came back, and we read it aloud together. Aside from numerous technical formatting errors, the content itself was so strange that it made us laugh. It was as if an alien with only a very partial understanding of human nature had attempted to write the story. With some effort, you could recognize the beginnings of a classic three-act dramatic structure, but the emotional progression of the characters was random and subject to sudden, nonsensical changes. The dialogue was functional, but there was absolutely no distinct voice for each character. After five pages, the story had become so muddled that ChatGPT simply decided to stop halfway through a scene without finishing it. The exercise was meant to show my aspiring screenwriters that using generative AI requires close human supervision. In trying to save themselves the effort of biological creation, they risked ending up spending even more time cleaning up, adjusting, and rewriting. I have no doubt that generative AI tools can be used to assist creation in interesting ways, but my students saw that it couldn't be a quick fix. When the human element in creation is lacking, a human reader or audience member quickly picks up on it.

## Adam Basanta

What follows will focus on the younger generation, I suppose. I teach at a CEGEP, and this is a question that preoccupies me all the time. We need to build a foundation for critical thinking, using ChatGPT while reflecting on what it means to use such a tool. If I succeed in developing this critical ability, then I will have accomplished my job.

# Q7

## Do the issues raised by the deployment of AI in the field of culture and creativity also apply to the information and media sector? For the information industry, what are the consequences of the deployment and growing influence of big tech companies that are developing generative AI systems?

### Colette Brin

Yes, these issues also apply to the media. But journalism also faces specific challenges, for example in terms of disinformation and fact-checking. The growing use of generative AI to produce content raises questions about the ability to discern accurate information in an environment saturated with machine-generated data.

The first charters on the use of AI in the media are very recent, dating back less than a year, which shows that the field is still in its infancy. However, some practices are already well established, and the issue of public trust in the media and journalism is becoming increasingly crucial. Another important issue is that of the imagined audience. In the past, marketing research was approximate, but today, data allows content to be personalized with great precision. This raises questions about filter bubbles and the autonomy of the public in its relationship to information, as individuals receive content tailored to their needs and desires, without necessarily having a say in the matter.

When it comes to the influence of big tech companies on the information industry, tensions already exist between media outlets and companies such as OpenAI. Some media groups have entered into agreements with OpenAI, while others—such as *The New York Times*—have chosen to protect their data and develop their own AI systems. Local media, such as those in Canada and Quebec, are struggling to compete with these tech giants. Their strength lies primarily in their local character and organic connection with the public.

It's also worth noting that AI tools such as ChatGPT can be used as assistants for text editing and fact-checking. Other AI systems, such as voice reading, image description, and translation tools, are already integrated into newsrooms and used without major controversy.

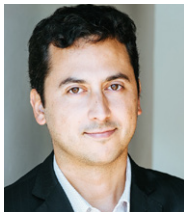
# Q8

## Is the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions suited to the challenges raised by AI in the field of CCIs? Should this legal instrument be updated? Can the law respond to concerns about the risks and threats posed by AI to the diversity of cultural expressions?

### Alexandra Bensamoun

To ensure the diversity of cultural and linguistic expression in the age of AI, regulation will be necessary. At the national level, legislators will have to step in and impose requirements. UNESCO can also take action in this regard. We discussed these issues with Véronique and Octavio during the meetings of the Reflection Group on the diversity of cultural expressions in the digital environment, drawing on UNESCO's expertise and on what is already being done in the context of the implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005).

### Octavio Kulesz



UNESCO also has other relevant instruments that can be implemented. For example, the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (UNESCO, 2021) includes a chapter on information and communication, and another on culture, both of which clearly address the risks of disinformation and of failing to respect artists' intellectual property rights. All countries around the world can adopt this instrument and try to adapt it to their own territory.

With regard to the 2005 Convention, the Reflection Group on the diversity of cultural expressions in the digital environment carried out its work throughout 2024 and formulated eleven recommendations, which were forwarded to the Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention (UNESCO, 2024). These recommendations should encourage Parties to adopt further measures to protect the diversity of cultural expressions online, and also to raise public awareness of these issues and build capacity, particularly among artists and cultural professionals.


# Conclusion by Brian Myles

The conference began with a presentation by our guest of honor, Octavio Kulesz, who introduced us to the human dimension of AI. It concluded with a reminder: humans control AI. They decide what to do with AI and what prompts to use. Humans are also capable of providing feedback, depending on what we collectively choose to do with these systems. Therefore, rather than fueling fears about AI and viewing it as a technological risk, we should perhaps be more concerned about our humanity, or rather our lack of humanity. The issue is not so much what AI will do to us, but what we will do to ourselves with these tools of unparalleled power.

Nevertheless, some conclusions are clear. First, we will have to come to terms with the disappearance of certain creative professions. A few were named by the panelists, particularly in the fields of journalism and film. Dubbing, translation, and even proofreading are examples of professions that are likely to disappear. However, AI also holds promise for the arts. Adam Basanta and Jeremy Peter Allen discussed the possibilities offered by AI in the creative process. There was talk of a desire to take creativity further, as well as the need to distinguish between convenience and true creative experimentation. Furthermore, although AI has undeniable creative potential, this potential comes with inequalities. Big companies seem better equipped than small ones to face the challenges posed by AI and put the right structures in place. We may therefore have a duty to help smaller companies or cultural industries.

We will also need to focus on fundamental issues that we have not yet managed to resolve. In this regard, we can think of the challenges arising from the fact that large language models are trained on two or three major languages, while smaller and minority languages and nations are underrepresented. An even more pressing concern is that of Indigenous cultures fighting for their linguistic and cultural survival. Their communities are struggling to ensure their discoverability in the digital environment and are wondering how they will achieve this without being dispossessed or deprived of their own histories once again. This concern, conveyed by Véronique Rankin during her remarks, will undoubtedly resonate with many people. In fact, it is likely that minority nations and Indigenous peoples in other countries around the world are asking themselves the same questions right now.

On another note, it is often said that content is king, but distribution is emperor. How can we ensure that, in the age of AI, the "AI emperor" does not become a "mega-emperor" that will permanently drive the creative industry out of the value chain? A few ideas were put forward, notably by Alexandra Bensamoun, who stressed the importance of legislators and democratic governments stepping up and regulating AI giants. This raises an issue because countries with strong democracies will have the luxury of doing so, while despotic states, where democratic practices are non-existent or virtually non-existent, will perhaps have AI tools that, rather than bringing emancipation, will bring a new form of obscurantism.

I would like to conclude by noting two points which, while not blind spots, are issues that we have not been able to explore in depth today and which could prove to be avenues for future reflection. First, there is the question of the environmental footprint of AI. Octavio Kulesz spoke to us about water. Why are we talking about water? Because it takes a staggering amount of water to produce the "superchips" that power computers and to extract the minerals needed to manufacture and operate AI systems. These minerals, like oil, are a finite resource. While there is a finite supply of minerals on Earth, there seems to be no end to our appetite for AI-driven innovation and experimentation. On top of this is electricity consumption, which is something that deserves more consideration. We don't hear much from environmentalists about the carbon footprint of AI, and we should be hearing more from them.

Lastly, we have barely touched on disinformation and polarization, perhaps because we are tired of hearing about it. I think this is a revealing oversight that shows how weary we are of this issue. That said, in 2024, more than half of humanity voted in elections, and in all of these elections, we witnessed polarization, deepfakes, and political debate that was completely contaminated by foreign actors who had invested in AI platforms. The 2005 UNESCO Convention (UNESCO, 2005) and the 2021 Recommendation (UNESCO, 2021) both mention the importance of protecting democracy and empowering the media, but solutions have not yet been found, and we have not explored the issue much today either.

In closing, I would like to thank all the panelists for contributing their time, insights, and unique perspectives to this fascinating discussion.

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*Reina Sofia Faces (after Gary Hill)*, Work by Adam Basanta

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