Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance: National Media Section

DRAFT Position Statement on Artificial Intelligence:

The rapid advancement and distribution of Artificial intelligence (AI) – in particular, generative AI – holds remarkable promise for societies, businesses and individuals, but also poses unique threats to our members' work, income, rights and creative agency, and to the continuation of Australian voices in a sustainable media and entertainment industry.

This Policy Position outlines our response.

1. Definitions

Artificial intelligence (AI) describes the machine simulation of human cognitive processes like synthesising, learning and solving problems, and includes machine and deep learning, natural language processing, chatbots, image and voice recognition and machine vision.

Generative AI involves tools based on artificial neural networks, using large volumes of existing data to create or synthesise text, images, music, or videos that resembles (rather than duplicates) the information on which it is trained.

2. Position

The MEAA believes that responsibly designed AI has the potential to usefully supplement, extend and enhance the work of our members, but also has far-reaching consequences needing careful consideration, consultation and regulation.

We argue that:

- Australia's AI Roadmap and AI Ethics Framework should both consider and guide the introduction of appropriately-regulated AI tools in the media industry, and also contain mechanisms for update to keep pace with fast-changing technology
- Moral rights and copyright must be considered in the development of publicly available AI tools including where these rights may be diminished by AI
- AI tools which profit from the work of media professionals must introduce a method to compensate the creators whose work is used to train these tools
- Content produced for public consumption by AI tools must demonstrate that it does not entrench bias (including racial, gender, class etc)
- Content produced for public consumption by AI tools must be labelled and fact-checked by human editors
- Media professionals need to be consulted and to have mechanisms and opportunity to opt-in or opt-out where their work is used as training data for AI
- Media professionals must be represented when publishing broadcast organisations and other employers make decisions about integrating AI into workflows

- Media at all stages of the career cycle will need new skills to work with AI and keep pace with rapid developments in this field, so organisations employing and contracting media professionals must support retraining, upskilling and reskilling

3. Opportunities

We acknowledge a range of potential benefits to the use of AI in media:

- Reducing repetitive and tedious administrative tasks
- Processing large datasets to quickly identify anomalies and newsworthy trends, potentially revealing data that it is in the public interest to convey
- Improving efficiencies and providing accurate information that informs journalism
- Potentially uncovering fakes and false information
- Broadening the reach of journalism and entertainment media to wider audiences through better recommendation systems
- Providing opportunities for new storytelling techniques

4. Threats

We are concerned about the following threats posed by the use of AI in media:

- Reduced demand for media content and professional writing, image, video and audio creation services in many areas
- Potential job losses, and reduced demand for media workers
- Threats to editorial independence and control
- "Black Box" issues of low transparency around AI training and operation
- Produces errors that can be difficult to identify
- Potential bias in decision-making algorithms, exacerbated and reinforced with reuse
- Problems in verifying the authenticity of AI-generated content
- Ethical concerns including privacy, freedom of speech
- Commercial imperatives that drive for-profit AI tools could result in proprietary systems that lack transparency
- Issues around liability and defamation may be harder to unpack
- Repetition of existing material may entrench bias, exacerbate low diversity and accelerate unequal representation of minority groups
- Low job satisfaction by people who work with AI tools if these don't allow creative freedom
- Potential for AI tools to create unnecessary, low-value work for media professionals such as reviewing and editing automated text
- Potential for AI to exacerbate journalism's crisis of trust by reducing transparency, objectivity and accuracy of news
- Potential for AI to assume and entrench audience preferences, needs and values, reducing opportunities to broaden world views and entrenching filter bubbles

5. Conclusion:

MEAA encourages publishers and broadcasters to direct efficiencies introduced by AI so journalists and other media professionals can expand their original coverage and production and address poorly-served sectors and communities – for example, to regional courts and local government reporting.

Introducing AI quickly before assessing its impact may burden people working in an already under-resourced sector and contribute to burnout.

Media professionals, as both end-users and facilitators of this technology, must be consulted and involved in the design, implementation and regulation of AI and work in partnership with AI developers, to prevent anticipated and unforeseen harms, manage its disruption and have a say in guiding and overseeing the integration of AI to avoid systems or products that do not benefit either viewers or producers.

The MEAA also has a role in bridging the gap between the profession and industry and government bodies to facilitate knowledge sharing in AI.

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