

IAA TALKS: AI - Innovation, Ethics, and the Future of Creativity

Barely a day goes by without Artificial Intelligence hitting the headlines. So our most recent IAA TALKS proved a dynamic forum to turn the spotlight on AI's rapidly growing applications in media, marketing, and the creative industries.

The event brought together two expert speakers, **Dr Alex Connock**, Senior Fellow at the University of Oxford and Professor of Media and AI at the University of Exeter Business School, and **Helen Bentley**, Global Digital Strategy, Innovation, and Experience Leader and Consulting Partner at EY, to guide us through the opportunities and challenges AI presents for our industry.

The discussions were wide-ranging, from how AI is transforming content creation and marketing, to ethical concerns about bias, intellectual property, and morality. It was a chance for attendees to gain, and contribute, practical insights, and it certainly left us with plenty to consider.

AI's Role in Media: Changing the Creative Process

Alex Connock opened the session with an in-depth look at how AI is being used across the media landscape. He explored how AI has already made a big impact on content **distribution** - think Netflix, YouTube or Spotify - with AI trained to recommend content tailored to our tastes, using data to predict what we want to watch or listen to next. Alex emphasised how these technologies have completely changed how companies reach and engage their audiences, with some brands even using synthetic audience models - what Alex refers to as "Brand Brains" - to assess products before testing on real customers, saving time and costs.

He then moved on to the creative side, showing how AI is shaking up content **production**. With tools like Adobe Photoshop now integrated with generative AI, and platforms like Udio enabling advanced audio generation, media teams can produce everything from synthetic voices to visually striking ads, with increasing speed. Brands are already using AI to produce custom product visualisations and even entire commercials, making it clear that AI isn't just an assistant but a real creative partner.

However, Alex raised an important question: **Who owns AI-generated content?** This is where it gets tricky. As AI models use a mix of different creative sources, they blur the lines



of ownership. Is the work owned by the person who gave the AI its prompts, the company that built the AI, or the creators whose work was part of the AI's training data? This is a challenge the industry must tackle.

Alex also touched on a key issue many of us have concerns about: **bias in AI systems**. As AI is trained on existing data, there is a danger of reflecting existing biases, which could be harmful if left unchecked. He emphasised that companies need to be aware of this risk and take steps to minimise biased outputs. In our creative industry, representation matters.

Going further, Alex talked about the importance of making sure brands are positively represented within AI-driven recommendation systems, coining the phrase “**optimising your share of the model**.” In other words, companies need to think about how AI sees and promotes their brand, not just how it ranks in Google search results.

And finally, Alex talked about the **future of jobs** in the creative industry. While some worry that AI will replace human roles, Alex offered a more hopeful perspective. Rather than taking over jobs, he believes AI can help enhance creativity by handling repetitive tasks, allowing creative professionals to focus on strategy and innovation.

AI in Marketing: Practical Use, Ethical Dilemmas, and Inclusion

After Alex's engaging session, Helen Bentley lead a discussion on how AI is transforming **marketing**. The audience contributed in real time, either in person or anonymously on screen.

Beginning by asking attendees what they mainly use AI for, Helen gathered that for most, AI is primarily used for simplifying tasks like generating copy, conducting research, and summarising information – making it easier for marketing teams to focus on bigger-picture planning. However, she was quick to note that AI isn't a guaranteed cost-saver if teams remain the same size, especially when additional AI subscriptions are added to the company's expenses.

Next, Helen asked the audience to share their biggest concerns about AI adoption. The responses were telling: many echoed the industry-wide hesitation around **intellectual property** and **data privacy**, with fears that proprietary data could be misused or



that AI-generated content might infringe on copyrights. Beyond these legal risks, **moral responsibility** emerged as a significant barrier, particularly concerns about job displacement. Attendees also cited a lack of knowledge and overwhelm when considering AI's vast potential, unsure of where to begin to meet the high expectations of driving efficiencies with AI. Helen acknowledged these concerns and underscored that while AI may introduce risks, it also creates opportunities for those willing to adapt. She encouraged companies to involve executives and employees early, making AI adoption a collaborative effort rather than a threat - fostering transparency and easing anxieties.

Helen also introduced a thought-provoking angle: AI's potential to create more inclusive work environments, especially for **neurodivergent individuals**. She shared examples of how AI tools can be a force for good when customised to support people with cognitive differences, enabling them to thrive in creative and professional settings.

Wrapping Up: AI's Impact on the Future

IAA TALKS: AI shed light on just how transformative AI has become and what's still to come. The technology has already changed how we create, distribute, and market content, but there are plenty of questions left to answer.

The big takeaways? AI offers huge opportunities for creativity and efficiency, but it also requires careful handling, particularly when it comes to ownership, bias, and morality.

The IAA is committed to driving these important conversations forward. As AI continues to evolve, it's crucial for our industry to stay informed, engaged, and ready to adapt. We're excited to see how AI shapes the future of media and marketing.

To share your views or contribute to IAA TALKS, please contact:.

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