

AI News Digest

01/12/2026 - 01/18/2026

WEEKLY DIGEST: ARTS, MEDIA & PERFORMANCE

AI's Transformative Role in Creative Industries

This week, discussions around artificial intelligence (AI) in creative fields highlight its dual role as both a tool for innovation and a subject of critique. From the critique of AI's representation in speculative fiction to its strategic application in fashion design, the articles reveal a complex landscape where AI intersects with culture, trust, and activism. Notably, the partnership between Symbolic.ai and News Corp signifies a shift in how AI can enhance journalistic practices. As AI continues to evolve, its implications for media, art, and societal structures are becoming increasingly significant.

KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ AI in speculative fiction often reinforces colonial and gendered hierarchies.
- ✓ Generative AI is being strategically utilized in fashion design to create collections.
- ✓ Symbolic.ai's partnership with News Corp aims to enhance editorial workflows.

IMPLICATIONS

- The portrayal of AI in media may influence public perception and trust.
- AI's integration into creative industries could redefine traditional roles and processes.
- Activists' use of technology like Starlink highlights the importance of digital resilience in oppressive regimes.

1. The ghost in the gendered machine: AI, speculative fiction, and the illusion of inclusivity

Category: Policy & Ethics

Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Communication, Philosophy, Sociology & Anthropology

Topics: AI Ethics, Decolonial Perspectives, Feminist Frameworks, Narrative Analysis

Impact Score: 26.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4

Educational Value: 4

Innovation / Novelty: 5

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 5

Ethical / Policy Implications: 5

The article critiques the portrayal of artificial intelligence (AI) in Western speculative fiction, arguing that it reflects and perpetuates colonial and gendered hierarchies. It highlights how narratives surrounding AI often embody the Enlightenment ideals of mastery and individualism, reinforcing asymmetries related to race and gender. The author advocates for alternative frameworks from feminist, queer, and decolonial perspectives that reconceptualize intelligence as relational and collective, challenging dominant narratives that view AI as an extension of patriarchal control. By examining the interplay of literature, film, and political economy, the article underscores the need to recognize and elevate marginalized epistemologies in discussions of AI.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-026-02864-7>

2. Strategic use of generative AI in fashion collections: from creation to promotion

Category: Research

Departments: Computer Science, Marketing, Management & Supply Chain, Art

Topics: Generative AI, Prompt Engineering, AI-Assisted Design, Conversational Frameworks

Impact Score: 25.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4

Educational Value: 4

Innovation / Novelty: 5

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 5

Ethical / Policy Implications: 3

This study investigates the application of artificial intelligence in fashion design by simulating the creation of a luxury swimwear collection inspired by Brazilian fauna and flora. Utilizing Treptow's (2013) design methodology, the research developed structured prompts for each stage of collection planning-planning, design, development, and promotion-employing conversational frameworks to enhance prompt engineering. Illustrative personas, generated through a combination of human and AI-assisted reasoning, were used to represent various professional roles in the fashion workflow, ensuring a realistic simulation of stakeholder perspectives. The study employed tools such as ChatGPT-4o mini and DALL-E 3 for text and visual generation, respectively, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of AI's role in the fashion design process.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-025-02781-1>

3. Reflexive ecologies of knowledge in the future of AI & Society

Category: Research

Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Philosophy, Communication, Educational Leadership

Topics: AI Ethics, Generative AI Challenges, Interdisciplinary Knowledge Integration, Responsible Authorship, Transparency in AI

Impact Score: 25.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4

Educational Value: 4

Innovation / Novelty: 4

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 5

Ethical / Policy Implications: 5

The article discusses the journal AI & Society's unique approach to fostering interdisciplinary connections across various fields, including science, philosophy, art, and design. It emphasizes the journal's commitment to reflexivity and the idea that friction between different modes of knowledge can lead to new insights and transformations. The text highlights the challenges posed by generative AI systems in writing, advocating for a responsible approach to authorship that acknowledges the interplay between human creativity and technological tools. Ultimately, the journal aims to maintain a space for diverse ecologies of thought while promoting transparency and shared responsibility among contributors.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-026-02859-4>

4. Algorithm literacy as a moderator of media trust: a theory of planned behavior approach

Category: Research

Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Communication, Sociology & Anthropology

Topics: AI Ethics, Algorithm Literacy, Media Trust Dynamics, Misinformation Mitigation

Impact Score: 23.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 4

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 4

Ethical / Policy Implications: 5

This study investigates the relationship between news literacy, algorithm literacy, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the context of mainstream and social media in China. It highlights how trust in state-controlled media is linked to political trust, while exposure to less regulated media can lead to skepticism. The research emphasizes the distinct roles of traditional and social media, noting that traditional media often reinforce official narratives through centralized governance, whereas social media facilitate diverse information flows but are also associated with misinformation. The findings suggest that news literacy and algorithm literacy significantly influence trust in both media types, providing insights into the complex dynamics of media consumption and trust in the Chinese context.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-025-02848-z>

5. How Activists in Iran Are Using Starlink to Stay Online

Category: Other

Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Communication

Topics: Consumer AI, Digital Resilience, Satellite Internet Systems, Communication Blackouts

Impact Score: 17.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1

Educational Value: 2

Innovation / Novelty: 3

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

Activists in Iran have strategically prepared for potential communications blackouts by smuggling in Starlink satellite internet systems. This initiative aims to enhance digital connectivity and resilience against government-enforced shutdowns. The efforts reflect a proactive approach to maintaining communication channels during periods of state-imposed restrictions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/15/technology/iran-online-starlink.html>

6. Jonathan Haidt Strikes Again + What You Vibecoded + An Update on the Forkiverse

Category: Business

Departments: Psychology, Political Science & Public Administration, Communication

Topics: AI Policy & Regulation, Social Media Influence, AI Communication Strategies, Public Engagement in AI

Impact Score: 17.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 2

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 2

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 4

Ethical / Policy Implications: 3

In a recent statement, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt emphasized the challenges of competing in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI) without a strong presence on social media. He argues that success in AI development and deployment is closely tied to effective communication and engagement through social media platforms. Haidt's comments highlight the interconnectedness of social media influence and advancements in AI technology.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/16/podcasts/jonathan-haidt-strikes-again-what-you-vibecoded-an-update-on-the-forkiverse.html>

7. Wikipedia at 25: Can its original ideals survive in the age of AI?

Category: Other

Departments: Communication, Political Science & Public Administration, Sociology & Anthropology

Topics: AI Ethics, User-led Content Governance, Collective Intelligence Models, Volunteer Editorial Systems

Impact Score: 17.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 2

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The article discusses the evolution of Wikipedia as a key example of the web 2.0 paradigm, emphasizing its role as a user-led platform that encourages participation and collective intelligence. Co-founded by Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia transitioned from a for-profit model to a non-profit organization under the Wikimedia Foundation, which now oversees its operations and maintains editorial independence. The platform relies on volunteer editors to review and authenticate content, showcasing a model of self-governance that has been instrumental in its development. As of 2024, Wikipedia has been accessed by approximately 4.4 billion people, highlighting its significant impact and the extensive human effort behind its content creation and maintenance.

<https://techxplore.com/news/2026-01-wikipedia-ideals-survive-age-ai.html>

8. AI journalism startup Symbolic.ai signs deal with Rupert Murdoch's News Corp

Category: Business

Departments: Computer Science, Communication

Topics: Enterprise AI, Editorial Workflow Automation, AI-Enhanced Fact-Checking, SEO Optimization Techniques, Audio Transcription AI

Impact Score: 17.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 2

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 3

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 2

Symbolic.ai has entered a significant partnership with News Corp to implement its AI platform within the financial news hub Dow Jones Newswires. The platform aims to enhance editorial workflows by improving processes such as newsletter creation, audio transcription, fact-checking, and SEO optimization, reportedly achieving productivity gains of up to 90% for complex research tasks. This collaboration reflects News Corp's ongoing commitment to integrating AI into its media operations, following a previous multi-year partnership with OpenAI for licensing its content.

<https://techcrunch.com/2026/01/15/ai-journalism-startup-symbolic-ai-signs-deal-with-rupert-murdochs-news-corp/>