

AI News Digest

08/31/2026 - 09/06/2026

WEEKLY DIGEST: ARTS, MEDIA & PERFORMANCE

AI Impact on Creative Industries and Journalism

The intersection of AI and creative industries is making waves, from AI-generated restaurant menus to virtual reality learning facilities. However, this technological advancement also raises concerns about job displacement and copyright infringement. Recent lawsuits filed by publications such as The Seattle Times and Newsday against OpenAI and Microsoft highlight the growing tension. As AI assumes a more prominent role, various sectors are grappling with its implications.

KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ Generative AI models are producing flawless, symmetrical, and smooth illustrations for restaurant menus, which can evoke a sense of unease.
- ✓ The rise of AI has reduced demand for human-written essays, causing a significant decline in income opportunities for Kenyan writers who previously made a living from this work.
- ✓ Publications such as The Seattle Times and Newsday are suing OpenAI and Microsoft, alleging the unauthorized use of their journalism to train AI models.

IMPLICATIONS

- As AI assumes a more prominent role in creative industries, there may be increased job displacement and a need for workers to adapt to new technologies.
- The use of AI-generated content may lead to further lawsuits and regulatory pressures on tech companies.
- The integration of AI in education, such as virtual reality learning facilities, may revolutionize the way we learn and interact with information.

Key Metrics: 2450: square footage of the virtual reality learning facility at Montclair State University; 26: number of seats in the classroom at the Dreamscape Learn Lab; 360: degree of freedom in the free-roam pod at the Dreamscape Learn Lab

1. The sameness problem behind those unappetizing AI-generated menus

Category: Research

Departments: Computer Science, Communication, Art, Counseling and Special Education

Topics: Generative AI, Training Data Homogenization, Model Convergence Mitigation, Aesthetic Dataset Bias

Impact Score: 16.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 2

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 2

Practical Impact: 2

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

Generative AI models trained on narrow aesthetic datasets are producing flawless, symmetrical, and smooth illustrations for restaurant menus, which can elicit a sense of unease. These models, often trained on vast quantities of data, identify patterns to predict user requests, but can result in "Lovecraftian food horrors" and homogenized styles. The issue arises from training on AI-generated content, which can lead to model convergence or collapse, degrading output quality. This convergence reinforces a cycle of similar-looking outputs, further homogenizing styles.

<https://techcrunch.com/2026/09/03/the-sameness-problem-behind-those-unappetizing-ai-generated-menus/>

2. Montclair State U Partners with Dreamscape Learn on New VR Facility

Category: Education

Departments: Communication, Computer Science, Educational Leadership, Engineering Education & Leadership, Counseling and Special Education

Topics: Virtual Reality, Immersive Learning Environments, XR Educational Technology

Impact Score: 15.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 3

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 4

Ethical / Policy Implications: 1

Montclair State University has partnered with Dreamscape Learn to open a 2,450-square-foot virtual reality learning facility in its College of Communication and Media building. The Dreamscape Learn Lab features a 26-seat classroom and free-roam pod with 360-degree motion capture and haptic feedback technologies, providing immersive educational experiences across academic disciplines. The facility will offer hands-on training in virtual reality production, design, coding, and content creation, initially offering Dreamscape Learn's "Biology in the Alien Zoo" course. The project was partially funded through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's New Jersey Film Works Grant Program.

<https://campustechnology.com/articles/2026/09/04/montclair-state-u-partners-with-dreamscape-learn-on-new-vr-facility.aspx>

3. Prediction Market Betting Is Getting People Banned and Arrested

Category: Policy & Ethics

Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Computer Science, Communication, Criminal Justice & Security Studies, Sociology & Anthropology

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, Rogue AI Agents, AI Misuse Detection, Prediction Market Regulation

Impact Score: 14.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1

Educational Value: 2

Innovation / Novelty: 1

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The podcast episode discusses recent incidents in prediction markets, including a lifetime ban for George Santos from Kalshi and a Google engineer accused of insider trading on Polymarket. Reporters also reverse-engineered Flock's AI-powered person-search tool, which has been misused by police officers, and discussed its accuracy with experts. Additionally, the hosts addressed the controversy surrounding the discussion of "rogue" AI agents and their potential to coordinate attacks on other systems. The episode covers the current state of these technologies and their potential implications.

<https://www.wired.com/story/prediction-market-betting-is-getting-people-banned-and-arrested/>

4. Seattle Times and Newsday are the latest publications to sue OpenAI and Microsoft

Category: Policy & Ethics

Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Communication, Computer Science

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, Generative AI Litigation, Media Copyright Protection, AI Journalism Impact

Impact Score: 12.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 0

Educational Value: 2

Innovation / Novelty: 0

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The Seattle Times and Newsday have sued OpenAI and Microsoft, alleging use of their journalism to train AI models. The lawsuit describes generative AI as a threat to the journalism industry, claiming it consumes and imitates human-authored content for commercial gain. This lawsuit follows a similar case filed by The New York Times in 2023 and others that have followed. Microsoft responded, expressing surprise and openness to exploring solutions.

<https://techcrunch.com/2026/09/05/seattle-times-and-newsday-are-the-latest-publications-to-sue-openai-and-microsoft/>

5. Kenyans Made a Living Writing College Essays. Then A.I. Arrived.

Category: Applications

Departments: Communication, Sociology & Anthropology, Economics & Finance, Computer Science

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, Gig Economy Disruption, AI Impact on Workforce

Impact Score: 10.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 0

Educational Value: 2

Innovation / Novelty: 0

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 2

Ethical / Policy Implications: 3

Thousands of Kenyans made a living writing essays for overseas students through online gig work. The rise of AI has reduced demand for this work, causing a significant decline in income opportunities for these writers. This shift serves as a warning for the sustainability of online gig work that has been a global lifeline for many people.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/05/technology/kenya-college-essays-ai.html>

6. Court Filings In A.I. Suit Invoke Copyright Law, Culture and Sports

Category: Policy & Ethics

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

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, AI Lawsuits & Litigation, Copyright Law in AI

Impact Score: 10.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 0

Educational Value: 1

Innovation / Novelty: 0

Practical Impact: 2

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The New York Times has made filings in its lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft, involving copyright law and cultural references. The lawsuit is closely watched and filings were made on Friday. Details of the filings include a range of copyright law and cultural references. The case is ongoing.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/04/technology/openai-microsoft-new-york-times-lawsuit.html>