AI News Digest

10/12/2026 - 10/18/2026

WEEKLY DIGEST: ARTS, MEDIA & PERFORMANCE

Hollywood Weighs AI: Creative Boosts vs Ethical Boundaries

Actor Mark Wahlberg told TechCrunch Disrupt that he would embrace AI for visual enhancements-such as digitally recreating stadiums-in his upcoming Pete Rose biopic, but he draws a firm line against AI-generated scripts or replacing performers. His stance reflects a broader industry caution about preserving storytelling integrity while leveraging new tools. At the same time, UC Santa Barbara is hiring a tenure-track Assistant Professor to study AI as a media-industry phenomenon, signaling growing academic focus on the technology's infrastructure, economics, and cultural impact. Together, these developments illustrate the entertainment sector's attempt to balance creative opportunity with ethical responsibility.

KEY FINDINGS

✓ Wahlberg is open to AI-assisted visual effects but rejects AI-written scripts and AI-generated actors.

✓ He emphasizes protecting narrative authenticity and personal legacy when considering AI tools.

✓ UC Santa Barbara announced a tenure-track Assistant Professor role dedicated to researching AI's role in media industries.

IMPLICATIONS

→ Film studios are likely to adopt AI for VFX while keeping human writers and actors at the core of storytelling.

→ Academic research will shape best-practice frameworks and possibly influence industry standards for ethical AI use in entertainment.

→ The convergence of industry caution and scholarly inquiry may accelerate the development of guidelines or regulations governing AI in film and media.

1. Mark Wahlberg on using AI in film 'the right way' and being open to an AI clone carrying on his legacy

Category: Applications
Departments: Computer Science, Art, Communication
Topics: Generative AI, AI-driven VFX, Digital Likeness Replication, AI Script Generation

Impact Score: 12.0
Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 0	Educational Value: 1	Innovation / Novelty: 1
Practical Impact: 3	Interdisciplinary Potential: 3	Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

Mark Wahlberg told TechCrunch Disrupt that he would consider using AI to enhance visual elements, such as stadium settings, in his upcoming Pete Rose biopic but rejects using AI-generated scripts or replacing actors. He emphasized that storytelling should remain central to filmmaking and distinguished his interest in effects-driven projects from narrative focus. Wahlberg said he has not yet visited the CAA Vault that creates AI replicas of performers but would be open to allowing future AI versions of his likeness for legacy projects, including a potential long-running animated series.

https://techcrunch.com/2026/10/16/mark-wahlberg-on-using-ai-in-film-the-right-way-and-being-open-to-an-ai-clone-carrying-on-his-legacy/

2. Job Announcement: Assistant Professor in Media Industries and AI

Category: Education
Departments: Communication, Political Science & Public Administration, Sociology & Anthropology, Art
Topics: AI Policy & Regulation, AI Media Infrastructure, Algorithmic Labor, Generative Media

Impact Score: 10.0
Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1	Educational Value: 1	Innovation / Novelty: 1
Practical Impact: 1	Interdisciplinary Potential: 3	Ethical / Policy Implications: 3

The Department of Film and Media Studies at UC Santa Barbara is hiring a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Media Industries and AI. The position seeks scholars who examine artificial intelligence as a media industry phenomenon, including its infrastructures, labor, political economy, regulation, and cultural, artistic, and social implications. Candidates may focus on any global region and employ any critical, historical, or empirical methodology, such as production studies, platform and infrastructure studies, STS, critical algorithm studies, labor studies, cultural and industrial history, or practice-based research on generative media.

https://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2026/10/assistant-professor-in-media-industries-and-ai-jpf03168-recruit/