

AI News Digest

02/09/2026 - 02/15/2026

WEEKLY DIGEST: ARTS, MEDIA & PERFORMANCE

AI's Growing Influence on Culture and Society

Recent discussions highlight the transformative impact of artificial intelligence across various cultural domains. From the emergence of AI companions in social settings to the evolving narratives in cinema, the societal understanding of AI is shifting. The intersection of AI with digital humanities and open access raises critical questions about data ethics and user experience. As public sentiment evolves, the implications for industries like publishing and social media are becoming increasingly significant.

KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ Socio-technical imaginaries shape public perceptions of AI.
- ✓ AI companions are being integrated into social experiences, such as dating.
- ✓ User experience practices in digital humanities need to adapt to complex content.

IMPLICATIONS

- Increased awareness of AI's societal implications may influence policy and governance.
- The rise of AI in social interactions could redefine human relationships.
- Digital humanities projects may require new UX methodologies to engage users effectively.

1. Imagining AI futures in mainstream cinema: socio-technical narratives and social imaginaries

Category: Policy & Ethics

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

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, Socio-Technical Imaginaries, Public Perception of AI, Cinematic Narratives in AI

Impact Score: 25.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4

Educational Value: 4

Innovation / Novelty: 3

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 5

Ethical / Policy Implications: 5

The article discusses the concept of socio-technical imaginaries, which are collective visions that shape societal understanding and governance of technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI). It argues that these imaginaries influence public perceptions and ethical debates surrounding AI, framing it as either a beneficial ally or a potential threat. The role of popular cinema is highlighted as a significant medium for constructing and disseminating these imaginaries, providing templates for interpretation that affect societal expectations and actions regarding technology. The analysis emphasizes that these imaginaries are co-created with technology, influencing institutional legitimacy and risk management in the context of AI.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-026-02880-7>

2. DHNow Newsletter, February 11, 2026

Category: Policy & Ethics

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

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, AI Bot Scraping, User Experience Heuristics, Cultural Heritage AI

Impact Score: 24.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4

Educational Value: 4

Innovation / Novelty: 3

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 5

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

This curated issue addresses the intersection of open access and AI bot scraping, highlighting the challenges posed by automated data collection. It also theorizes the emergence of AI bot accounts on social media platforms. Additionally, the issue proposes heuristics aimed at enhancing user experience (UX) best practices in digital humanities. Furthermore, it includes job announcements and resources related to AI applications in cultural heritage and crowdsourced data.

<https://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2026/02/dhnow-newsletter-february-11-2026/>

3. Inside the New York City Date Night for AI Lovers

Category: Applications
Departments: Psychology, Sociology & Anthropology, Educational Leadership, Communication
Topics: Consumer AI, AI Companionship, User Experience in AI Dating, AI Relationship Normalization

Impact Score: 23.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 3	Educational Value: 4	Innovation / Novelty: 4
Practical Impact: 5	Interdisciplinary Potential: 3	Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

EVA AI conducted an experiment by setting up a pop-up café in Manhattan, allowing users to engage in "in-person" dates with AI companions via text or live video calls. This event, held on February 11 and 12, featured speed dating with 100 available AI characters, aiming to normalize AI relationships as part of the company's long-term strategy. Research from Indiana University's Kinsey Institute indicates that 16% of singles are using AI as romantic partners, reflecting a growing trend in seeking companionship through AI platforms. User experiences varied, with some participants expressing interest in conversation rather than traditional dating.

<https://www.wired.com/story/inside-the-new-york-city-date-night-for-ai-lovers/>

4. Editors' Choice: User Experience (UX) Heuristics for the Digital Humanities

Category: Research
Departments: Computer Science, Educational Leadership, Communication
Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, User Experience Heuristics, Digital Humanities Accessibility, Audience Engagement Strategies

Impact Score: 22.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 4	Educational Value: 4	Innovation / Novelty: 4
Practical Impact: 3	Interdisciplinary Potential: 5	Ethical / Policy Implications: 2

The article highlights the importance of user experience (UX) practices in digital humanities (DH) projects, noting that traditional UX methods frequently fail to accommodate the complexities of humanities content. To address this gap, the authors propose a set of ten UX heuristics designed to enhance accessibility and audience engagement in DH initiatives. The article advocates for increased collaboration between UX professionals and DH teams to better integrate these practices into project development.

<https://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2026/02/user-experience-ux-heuristics-for-the-digital-humanities/>

5. 'Something Big Is Happening' + A.I. Rocks the Romance Novel Industry + One Good Thing

Category: Policy & Ethics

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

Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, Public Sentiment Analysis, AI Implications Awareness, Societal Attitudes Towards AI

Impact Score: 18.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 2

Educational Value: 3

Innovation / Novelty: 2

Practical Impact: 4

Interdisciplinary Potential: 3

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The article discusses a perceived shift in public sentiment regarding artificial intelligence, suggesting that individuals are increasingly aware of its implications and future trajectory. This inflection point indicates a growing recognition of both the potential benefits and challenges associated with AI technologies. The commentary reflects a broader trend in societal attitudes towards AI, emphasizing the importance of understanding these evolving perceptions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/13/podcasts/something-big-is-happening-ai-rocks-the-romance-novel-industry-one-good-thing.html>

6. Homeland Security Demands Social Media Sites Reveal Names Behind Anti-ICE Posts

Category: Policy & Ethics

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

Topics: AI Policy & Regulation, Social Media Surveillance, Misinformation Detection, Public Discourse Analysis

Impact Score: 13.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1

Educational Value: 2

Innovation / Novelty: 1

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 2

Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has issued hundreds of subpoenas to major tech companies, including Google and Meta, seeking information on accounts that monitor or comment on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This action aims to gather data on social media activities related to ICE, as officials seek to understand public discourse and potential misinformation surrounding immigration enforcement. The initiative reflects ongoing efforts to scrutinize online narratives and their impact on immigration policy.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/13/technology/dhs-anti-ice-social-media.html>

7. Job Announcement: Digital Archivist at National Library of Ireland

Category: Other
Departments: Educational Leadership, Communication
Topics: AI in Digital Archiving, Digital Forensic Tools, Rights Management in Archives, Digital Preservation Practices

Impact Score: 13.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1	Educational Value: 2	Innovation / Novelty: 2
Practical Impact: 3	Interdisciplinary Potential: 3	Ethical / Policy Implications: 2

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) is seeking a Digital Archivist to enhance the Born Digital Archives (BDA) Team's ability to acquire, preserve, and provide access to digital archival materials that document contemporary Irish life. The role involves pre-acquisition assessment, rights management, and collaboration with donors, creators, and various library departments. The Digital Archivist will utilize digital forensic tools and software to manage workflows and will focus on refining archival procedures while committing to ongoing professional development in digital preservation practices. This position also offers opportunities to propose and implement initiatives to improve the NLI's digital collecting capabilities.

<https://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2026/02/job-announcement-digital-archivist-at-national-library-of-ireland/>

8. What George Washington Can Teach Us About Grace in the Wake of Violence

Category: Education
Departments: Political Science & Public Administration, Communication, Educational Leadership
Topics: AI Ethics & Safety, Civic Discourse, Constitutional Governance, Political Communication

Impact Score: 13.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1	Educational Value: 2	Innovation / Novelty: 1
Practical Impact: 2	Interdisciplinary Potential: 3	Ethical / Policy Implications: 4

The article reflects on the significance of George Washington's leadership qualities, particularly in the context of contemporary challenges to civic discourse in the United States. Following the assassination of Charlie Kirk, a survey indicated that many college students feel less comfortable expressing their views on controversial topics, highlighting a growing tension in academic environments. The author argues that Washington's commitment to the rule of law and constitutional governance serves as a model for navigating political disagreements, emphasizing the importance of constitutional fidelity as a foundation for American citizenship. Washington's ability to communicate across divides and maintain civic virtue is presented as a relevant example for current and future generations.

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2026-02-11-what-george-washington-can-teach-us-about-grace-in-the-wake-of-violence>

9. Job Announcement: Supervisory Digital Collections Specialist at Library of Congress

Category: Other

Departments: Communication, Educational Leadership

Topics: Consumer AI, Digital Collections Management, Workflow Optimization, Digital Services Enhancement

Impact Score: 10.0

Rubric Scores

Research Relevance: 1

Educational Value: 2

Innovation / Novelty: 1

Practical Impact: 3

Interdisciplinary Potential: 2

Ethical / Policy Implications: 1

The Library of Congress is seeking a Supervisory Librarian for the Digital Collections Workflow Section within its Digital Services Directorate. This position involves collaboration with the Section Head and oversight of work conducted in the Digital Collections Workflow. The role is part of the Digital Collections Management & Services Division, focusing on enhancing digital collections and services.

<https://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2026/02/supervisory-digital-collections-specialist-at-library-of-congress/>