

AI and Human Obsolescence

Introduction

Picture this: a sudden leap in technology has allowed AI to seep into the entertainment industry rendering the screenwriter job market completely obsolete. While this puts millions of writers out of a job, it allows for film and television to be produced faster than ever before all while factoring in data from across the globe that can be used to better cater to their audience. Pushing past the obvious environmental issues and mass-layoffs a situation like this would cause, the integration of this technology into our society still presents several benefits to our rapidly growing society. In this essay, I will evaluate this scenario using the common good approach and from a utilitarian perspective as well as define what impacts this dilemma would have on our society, and finally develop a series of practical guidelines that could ease the consequences of AI taking over an entire industry.

Ethical Rubric

Before diving into the ethical concerns within this situation, I would like to define both ethical frameworks used within this argument to eliminate as much personal bias as possible:

The common good approach is an ethical framework that weighs the well-being of a community against all other concerns. More specifically, this approach views individuals as interconnected and interdependent, meaning the good of the community is also the good of the individual. This framework strives to create a society where everyone has the opportunity to flourish and live together peacefully, rather than prioritizing individual self-interest alone.

The utilitarian approach evaluates the morality of an action based solely on its consequences. This framework chooses one action over another based purely on what does the most good or the least harm. Moreover, in this standard, everyone's happiness and suffering are considered equally, regardless of who they are. This ethic allows us to view this situation in a very black and white context, removing faces and backstories from the situation entirely and view the situation as either ethical or unethical.

Social and Cultural Implications

Beneficiaries:

Data-Driven Demographic Hyper-Personalization: As mentioned as an introductory augment in the beginning of this paper, with the mass amount of data taken in by AI systems, storylines

could easily be tailored to meet different demographics. Not only is this a benefit to the production company, but this benefits our society by creating something to meet each individual perspective. From a utilitarian perspective, creating a specialized storyline for each demographic that meets social expectations like pace, tone, dialogue, allows for a much larger representation in the media. Along with this, AI allows for interactive storytelling like in Netflix's *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*. In this movie, users have the option to make several choices throughout the film that affect the female outcoming, fully immersing viewers within the storyline as well as directly giving them a say in the plotline of the film that stays current with the times no matter when it is viewed. In this specific context, when viewed from a utilitarian perspective, there is not really any harm being done, rendering this point ethical.

Improved Quality: AI also excels at identifying plot holes within storylines which can lead to much more coherent stories. While human writers have the ability to produce scripts that contain a ton of depth, they also have the ability to overlook major plot holes within storylines which can later be criticized by onlookers as seen in YouTube channels like *Cinema Sin* and *WatchMojo.com*. With AI-driven scripts however the chances of major holes within storylines are majorly decreased. This can not only be beneficial to viewers of said content but helpful for film makers as well as more cohesive and coherent storylines can easily be produced. One could easily make the claim here that when using a common good approach, this benefit is in the name of the greater good of the community (community being fans of the show) therefore making it ethically sound.

Democratization: Although this would have to mean AI isn't completely in control of the entire screenwriting industry, limiting human tasks to the point where they are only involved in the prompt creation process can lower barriers for new writers to develop their skills while also producing professional-quality scripts. By incorporating this process, production timelines could also rapidly be increased meaning more money for film corporations as well as more media for consumers. This point especially from a utilitarian point of view passes as ethical. Given that humans were somewhat involved in the production process (ex: writing prompts, overseeing final outputs, etc.) the consequences here are generally good. By cutting out some of the tedious writing process, script writers have more time to add in the creative details that make a film or TV show feel special.

Sufferers:

Loss of diverse voices: While AI has the ability to generate diverse scenarios, it fundamentally relies on patterns learned from past content, not personal experience. Humanistic virtues are built upon the experiences and lessons we experience. Without these foundational and unconventional moments, we would lose novel perspectives that challenge day-to-day norms that allow us to feel seen and see others in a different light. Not only would this make the media we consume come

off as stale, but, when viewed from the perspective of the common good approach, this dilemma is a direct attack on the well-being of our society. By eliminating diverse voices and perspectives, the idea of a community where everyone can flourish is covered up by one blank storyline that represents very few instead of a multi-dimensional human-driven plot that celebrates people from all walks of life.

Algorithmic Bias and Stereotypes: Similar to the last point, AI systems are made up only of existing data. This causes issues given the historical biases, stereotypes, and underrepresentation of marginalized communities which crowds a ton of data that AI does not have the capacity to sort through ethically. Although the algorithms created for these systems are becoming increasingly powerful, there is no way to replicate a human brain and the moral judgement that comes along with it. This puts scripts at a much higher risk for amplifying these harmful narratives and turning them into new content, further embedding hurtful biases in potentially influential media. Not only would this situation undo hundreds of years of things we have been working for, from a utilitarian perspective, this specific consequence could easily be enough to render the lack of human involvement in script writing unethical.

Copyright and Ownership Disputes: In more recent years, the idea of intellectual property has become an increasingly hot topic in news and politics. Determining who owns the intellectual property of an AI-generated script quickly raises questions regarding the legality and ethical soundness of characters and plotlines, especially if the AI is trained on existing works. The output created by these systems have a high chance of infringing upon human authors' copyrights which can make fair compensation and attribution both impossible to track and easy to take advantage of. Similarly to the last point, from a utilitarian perspective, the consequences of blurring the lines on human intellectual property and involvement would leave a lasting scar on our society that could easily bleed into other sectors of life.

Practical/Policy Recommendations

Although completely overthrowing screenwriter's jobs and replacing them with AI may feel morally wrong and ethically concerning, there are ways in which this technology can be integrated without completely damaging our society. By limiting our use of this technology and incorporating the following policies, this technology could be used for the better while limiting its harmful impact on our world.

Human Oversight & Control: AI should assist with brainstorming, outlining, or polishing, but humans must shape the final creative expression, ensuring unique voice and emotional depth. Implementing more human interaction with this technology can help avoid the algorithmic bias and stereotype risk this technology holds as explained above.

Transparency: Clearly disclose when AI tools were used, especially in collaborative projects, so audiences and collaborators understand the process. Not only will this help with credit issues, providing full transparency into what materials were used in the production process can affirm important humanistic virtues that most consumers are looking to major corporations to uphold.

Fair Compensation & Credit: Establish clear WGA-aligned guidelines where human writers receive credit and compensation for AI-assisted work, as AI isn't a writer itself. Integrating this policy can help prevent the copyright and ownership issues as described above, preventing large corporations from taking advantage of screenwriters and their role in the production process regardless of the technology used. Companies should also maintain human ownership over AI-assisted scripts by ensuring significant human input, with clear IP laws addressing AI-generated content to easily define who did what throughout the production process and compensate them fairly.

Bias Mitigation: Actively train and audit AI to prevent the perpetuation of societal biases present in its training data, ensuring sensitive storytelling. As one can most likely infer, by enforcing this policy companies relying heavily on AI can avoid algorithmic bias and stereotyping already marginalized groups.

Job Protection: Although one of the more obvious policy recommendations, companies should prioritize hiring human writers, editors, and artists. AI should be used to augment rather than displace skilled professionals, especially in roles requiring nuanced human understanding. This policy can diminish the need for mass-layoff protecting the jobs of those working within this field.

Futuristic Speculations

Overall, if AI were to completely take over the job of being a screenwriter without incorporating the policies above leaving this line of work completely obsolete across the globe, the results would mean a world of change for both those in the field working hard to produce their art, and to the consumers sitting at home just looking for a source of entertainment. A full reliance on AI within this field would significantly harm humanity given its unfortunate habits to perpetuate harmful biases, lack of moral thinking, and difficulties crediting those involved in the script production process. Although the world wouldn't completely collapse under these circumstances, allowing this technology to completely take over could send us deep back in history, rewriting all of the ideas we have fought so hard to protect. As it stands right now, there is no way for AI to be in complete control of the production process while also remaining ethical.

Works Cited

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