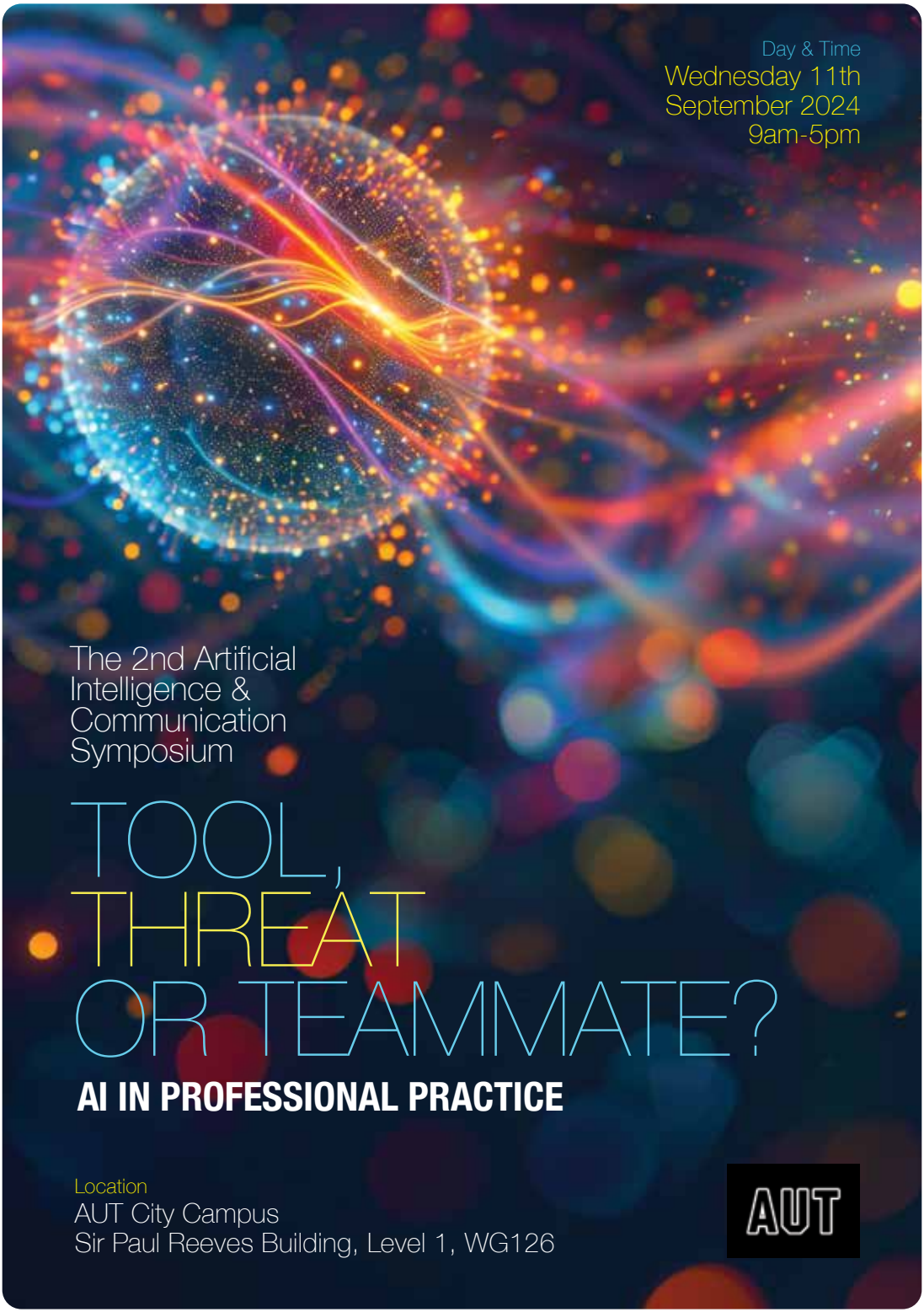
Day & Time
Wednesday 11th
September 2024
9am-5pm
The 2nd Artificial
Intelligence &
Communication
Symposium
TOOL,
THREAT
OR TEAMMATE?
AI IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
Location
AUT City Campus
Sir Paul Reeves Building, Level 1, WG126
AUT

LIVE STREAM INFO

WATCH THROUGHOUT THE DAY VIA THE LIVE STREAM

WATCH LIVE

SCAN ME

BOUGHT TO YOU BY

AUT

Welcome to

TOOL, THREAT OR TEAMMATE

AI IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The 2nd Artificial Intelligence & Communication Symposium

Presented by
School of Communication Studies
Auckland University of Technology
11th September 2024

AUT's School of Communications offers undergraduate and postgraduate studies for students across media and communication. Students develop professional capabilities in their chosen media area while building an understanding of all parts of the communication process. They will be able to apply this knowledge as critically reflective practitioners in fields including digital media, journalism, public relations, screen production, audio/radio and advertising and brand creativity.

SCHEDULE

09:00 KARAKIA, WELCOME + OPENING

09:10 KEYNOTE: SARAH COWARD

CEO, In the Room (From London, UK via ZOOM)

10:00 MORNING TEA

10:30 SESSION 1: THE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF AI

Chaired by Michael Bain

- **AI: Tool, threat, or teammate in the revitalisation of te reo Māori**
  Professor Tania Ka'ai, Dr Parma Nand & Huhana Moselen
- **Adapting to AI technology futures for professional practice learning**
  Associate Professor Sarah Baker, Associate Professor Vijay Devadas, Dr Mahsa Mohaghegh, Professor J. Fiona Peterson, Professor Roopak Sinha, Associate Professor Julie Bilby, & Dr Kate Delmo
- **Enhancing Educational Outcomes through AI Collaboration: The Noodle Factory Gen-AI Project**
  Associate Professor Dilani Gedera & Chris Griffiths

11:30 SESSION 2: REIMAGINING ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN THINKING

Chaired by Rachel Daniels

- **Back away from the written: AI and assessment**
  Associate Professor Rosser Johnson
- **Will humans replace AI? A Design Dilemma**
  Professor Charles Walker, Dr Dermott McMeel & Surendar Jayachandran

- **A Creative Black Box? Exploring Generative AI in Interaction Design Education**
  James Smith

LUNCH 12:30

SESSION 3: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF INNOVATION, WORK AND RESEARCH 13:15

Chaired by Hazel Abrams

- **From algorithms to artistry: a comparative exploration of heuristics in ai and creative inquiry**
  Dr Hossein Najafi
- **Leveraging AI for Thematic Coding and Clustering of Images**
  Dr Matthew Guinibert
- **An update from an international working group on the impacts of AI for IT professionals**
  Associate Professor Tony Clear & Associate Professor Alison Clear

SESSION 4: AI AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES 14:15

Chaired by Sarah Baker

- **The Role of AI in the Creative Processes of Advertising Agencies: Industry Perspectives and Concerns**
  Associate Professor Angelique Nairn, Justin Matthews & Daniel Fastnedge
- **AI in journalism – might it replace reporters and news editors? A look at experiments and wider concerns**
  Dr Louise Matthews

SCHEDULE

- **Exploring the Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Visual Effects: Industry Insights and Future Prospects**
  Exploring the Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Visual Effects: Industry Insights and Future Prospects.

15:15 AFTERNOON TEA

15:30 SESSION 5: AI AND CREATIVE PROCESSES

Chaired by Angelique Nairn

- **The role of AI in reshaping our understanding of narrative performance**
  Dr Jason Kennedy
- **AI and democratization of film-making, Hollywood for everyone**
  Amir Aziz Sarajy

16:10 KEYNOTE: HEMANT GAULE

The School of Communications & Reputation
(From Mumbai India via ZOOM)

17:00 CLOSING KARAKIA

NOTES

KEYNOTE

SARAH COWARD

BEYOND AI: PRESERVING HUMAN AUTHENTICITY IN DIGITAL CONVERSATIONS

Sarah Coward is Co-Founder and CEO of **In The Room**, a conversational SaaS company. She established In The Room to enable people to connect with unique individuals from all walks of life - integrating voice recognition, authentic media and Ai to allow you to have conversations with real people you will never get to meet.

In The Room's platform now allows businesses to create voice interactive encounters themselves, working across various industries including health, e-commerce and education.

In The Room has worked with companies large and small, including Universal Music, the UK National Portrait Gallery and McLaren F1 Team

► SEE ONLINE @
https://hereintheroom.com

KEYNOTE
HEMANT GAULE
(SCoRE School of Communications and Reputation, Mumbai India)

ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Hemant Gaule, since 2018, has delivered various keynotes and workshops internationally and in India, on AI; showcasing its evolution, and how to harness its power. In 2023, Hemant has trained over 1500 communications professionals, and over 200 students in the Power of AI. He has also delivered keynotes for Indian and Global audiences on AI, & has his insights published in Books on AI by global universities. His talks and workshops on AI reveal unique utilities of AI in general, and some commonly available abilities that existing and upcoming AI may possess. The insights focus on demystifying the domain, to empower participants to embrace AI possibilities of today and the future. He can be reached at @HemantGaule on X & as Hemant Gaule on LinkedIn.

Hemant Gaule, Dean of the School of Communications and Reputation, is an education leader based in Mumbai, India, and is passionate about education, artificial intelligence, and behavioural

psychology. After graduating from IIM-Ahmedabad, he has counselled several private, social, political & government initiatives. He was a Co-founder & Director of Citizens of Accountable Governance, a team that spearheaded the national election campaign of India's current Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi in 2014. After that, he has Co-founded (and is Dean of) India's only institute dedicated to education and research in public relations – School of Communications & Reputation. In 2019 he became the first Indian to be conferred as a Fellow Accredited Public Relations Practitioners by ASEAN PR Network. In 2022, he was named among 40 Young Turks of India by Reputation Today In 2023, he was recognised as Asia Pacific's Innovator 25, by PRovoke Media.IIM-Ahmedabad, he has advised private, social, political, and government initiatives. He co-founded and directed Citizens of Accountable Governance, leading the 2014 election campaign for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also co-founded India's only public relations institute. In 2019, he became the first Indian Fellow Accredited PR Practitioner by ASEAN PR Network, and in 2022, was named one of India's 40 Young Turks by Reputation Today. In 2023, PRovoke Media recognized him as Asia Pacific's Innovator 25

ABSTRACTS

SPEAKER ABSTRACTS FOLLOW (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

01

SARAH BAKER,

Vijay Devadas, Mahsa Mohaghegh, J. Fiona Peterson, Roopak Sinha, Julie Bilby & Kate Delmo

ADAPTING TO AI TECHNOLOGY FUTURES FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE LEARNING

Aligning student learning and employability is a priority for many universities. While technology developments continue to outpace regulation, technology such as AI represents both challenges and opportunities for educators and students alike. Discussion of AI in higher education has been transitioning from aspects such as addressing 'cheating', to the potential benefits for students such as personalisation and learning support, to preparing for work futures where AI is already integral to professional practice within different disciplines. Yet, there are other opportunities to be explored further such as adapting traditional Māori approaches to collaboration for the use of AI tools in contemporary work practices across disciplines. This presentation then examines the problem that currently exists as an issue in the university adapting to the rise of AI and considers some models of case studies. We foreground the need for a different transdisciplinary and transcultural model to support student learning and assessment relevant to professional collaboration in an AI world.

Associate Professor Sarah Baker is based in the School of Communication Studies at Auckland University of Technology. She is a member of the AUT Communication for Social Change research centre, a member of the AUT Journalism, Media, and Democracy Centre (JMAD), and the co-founder of the AUT Popular Culture Centre and the AUT Media Observatory Group. She is a Senior Fellow and a member of the AUT Academy, and a PhD Convenor. Her research interests include current affairs and political economy, often exploring the intersections between television and film in mediated popular culture through the lens of Gothic, Horror, Sexuality, and Gender.

Associate Professor Vijay Devadas is Co-Director of the Communication for Social Change Research Centre at AUT and Associate Director of the New Zealand India Research Institute. He joined the School of Communication Studies in 2016 as Head of Postgraduate and now holds the Director of International Engagement portfolio. He is an internationally recognised scholar in the fields of race and ethnicity studies, South Asian cinema, and the sociology of technology. He has served as an Expert Panellist on the Marsden Council Fund, is editor of the journal Borderlands Journal: Culture, Politics, Law & Earth and is an Editorial Board member of a number of journals, including Communication, Culture and Critique and Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies–Technologies–Power. He is a recipient of several internal and external research grants from the Human Rights Commission and Education New Zealand.

Dr Mahsa Mohaghegh is a senior lecturer in the School of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences, and Director of Women in Tech for the Faculty of Creative

Technologies at AUT. Her areas of academic expertise centre on both the technical and societal dimensions of artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity and the Internet of Things (IoT). She is a well-recognised leader in AI, including researching how this field is revolutionising our future.

Professor J. Fiona Peterson was delighted to join AUT's Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies in 2019 as the Deputy Dean and Professor of Transdisciplinary Education. Previously she was Deputy Dean (Learning and Teaching), Media and Communication, RMIT University, Australia, 2009-2016. From 2017-2018 she was Principal Investigator and Leader of a Learning and Teaching Excellence project competitively funded by the Australian Technology Network of Universities, researching digital work practices with industry, students and educators in Design, Communication, Engineering, IT and Management (partners RMIT, QUT, UTS): https://sites.edu.au/digitalworkpractices/ Fiona has researched and published widely on employability, professional learning, studio teaching and pedagogy futures. Her book on creative leadership in higher education was published in 2013.

Professor Roopak Sinha is based at Deakin University and is an internationally recognised expert in systematically designing safe and secure industrial software, with interests in requirements engineering, design and architectures, code generation, formal methods, research commercialisation and industrial standards. He is a Senior Member of the IEEE, and has previously held research positions at Auckland University of Technology, The University of Auckland, New Zealand and INRIA.In Learning & Teaching, as a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK), Roopak has led several large community- and industry-connected teaching

initiatives nationally and internationally. Mentoring, culture change and innovation are hallmarks of Roopak's service and leadership. He has previously held senior roles, including Programme (Course) Leader, Head of Doctoral Studies, Head of Department, Research Group/Centre Director, Associate Head L&T, and Deputy Head of School

Dr. Kate Delmo is based at University of Technology Sydney and her research interests explore the intersection of data, technology, and people. Anchored in the UN Sustainable Development Goals on Sustainable Communities (11) and Climate Action (13), her projects examine the ecology of crisis, emergency, and disaster risk resilience.Her research in these areas embodies a multisectoral approach by examining resilience of both emergency and disaster responders and the communities that they serve. Kate has led multidisciplinary funded research projects such as cultural competency of emergency responders in emergency preparedness and spontaneous volunteerism in Australia. Kate is intrigued by the role that digital technology plays in encouraging stakeholder coordination and engagement across crises, emergencies, and disaster life cycles. She also investigates social media in reshaping cultures and empowering change. She teaches into the postgraduate (on campus and OPM) and undergraduate programs in Strategic Communication.

02

TONY CLEAR & ALISON CLEAR

WG 2: A MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL-MULTI-NATIONAL STUDY INTO THE IMPACTS OF AI ON WORK PRACTICES OF IT PROFESSIONALS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPUTING STUDENTS

► SEE ONLINE @
https://iticse.acm.org/2024/working-groups/#wg2

This coordinated, multinational working group is dedicated to examining the ramifications of AI integration within the IT sector. Employing qualitative research methods and conducting thematic analysis on interview data gathered from IT professionals [i.e. industry practitioners such as software developers] representing diverse contexts, the working group endeavours to uncover profound insights into how AI impacts work engagement, socio-technical dynamics, and the cultivation of professional competencies.

It is anticipated that the outcomes of this collaborative endeavour will serve as valuable guidance for policymaking and curriculum development.

Associate Professor Tony Clear is based in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering at AUT, and is

an ACM Distinguished Member. He is also Co-Director of the Software Engineering Centre (SERC - https://serc.aut.ac.nz/) with Prof. Jacqueline Whalley. He holds positions as an Associate Editor for ACM Transactions on Computing Education (TOCE), for the journal Computer Science Education, and ACM Inroads for which he is also a regular columnist and Editorial Board member. He is a former practitioner and is active in research within the global software engineering and computer science education communities. Current collaborations include: with Professor Daniela Damian of UVic Canada on Software Ecosystems and forms of influence within software teams; and with Assoc. Prof Alison Clear, of Eastern Institute of Technology in NZ, Dr Roger McDermott of Robert Gordon University, Scotland and Profs Cajander and Daniels at Uppsala University on the impacts of AI on the work of IT professionals and emerging competencies. Tony supervises and has examined doctoral students in Global Software Engineering, CS Education and interdisciplinary topics, and has chaired or participated in several doctoral consortia including ICER 2023 and 2024. In global software engineering and computing education research venues he has served on steering committees, chaired or served on programme committees for several conferences such as ITiCSE, ICER, ACE, FIE, ICGSE, SIESC, and reviewed for journals such as TSE, IST, JSS, JSEP, IEEE Software, IJEE, CLElej.

Associate Professor Alison Clear is based at the Eastern Institute of Technology. She has an extensive academic and professional career that has involved academic leadership in research, scholarship, teaching and curriculum development nationally and internationally and an extensive publication record in national and international conferences and journals in computing

and information technology. Her research interests include computing curriculum development, Women and Computing, ICT in developing countries, e-learning implementation and the development of computing education. Alison is an invited international keynote speaker, has been a member of the international ACM Educational Council, Chair of the ACM Special Interest Group in Computer Science Education, (SIGCSE), Fellow of the Institute of Information Technology Professionals (ITPNZ) and Fellow of the Computing and Information Technology Research and Education in New Zealand (CITRENZ) and a Distinguished Educator of ACM. In 2020 she received the ACM SIGCSE award for Lifetime Service to Computer Science education. She recently led an international research project, Computing Curriculum 2020 (CC2020,) of 50 people from 22 countries to redefine the computing curricula for 2020 forward.

03

DILANI GEDERA & CHRIS GRIFFITHS

ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES THROUGH AI COLLABORATION: THE NOODLE FACTORY GEN-AI PROJECT

The Noodle Factory Gen-AI project at AUT investigates the impact of integrating a generative AI teaching assistant into university business courses. This research explores how AI enhances educational outcomes by personalising learning experiences and assisting educators with tasks such as knowledge-gap-based tutoring and providing responsive feedback. The study aims to determine if AI integration promotes a more engaged learning environment and improves student outcomes. Additionally, the project evaluates the implications on educators' workload, investigating whether AI assistants alleviate or exacerbate teaching responsibilities. Initial results demonstrate promising improvements in student engagement and learning outcomes, highlight the importance of educator skills for effective implementation, and suggest a more gradual return on invested time. This work-in-progress study evaluates AI's role as both a tool and collaborative partner in education, providing valuable insights into the operational integration of AI in professional settings and its potential impact on the future of education.

Associate Professor Dilani Gedera is the Director of Learning and Teaching at the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law at AUT. She leads the faculty learning and teaching portfolio. Dilani's research focuses on digital education and innovative learning and teaching practices. She is actively involved in collaborative research projects both within AUT and with other institutions. Her areas of expertise include online pedagogies, the use of technology in teaching and learning, including artificial intelligence (AI), Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK), video pedagogy, learner engagement, and Activity Theory.

Chris Griffiths has a passion for teaching, a strong affinity for digital technology, and a research interest in management and manufacturing. He is currently researching how tempered radicals navigate the hierarchical world of manufacturing, balancing their personal identity with their success in their organisations. Beginning his career in design and manufacturing, Chris transitioned into management through procurement and supply chain leadership roles before entering university in 2013. After completing an MBA specialising in operations and management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), he continued his learning with a Master of Philosophy, which he successfully transferred to a PhD. Chris is currently in the final year of his PhD. His topic centres on inclusion within New Zealand's manufacturing Industries. In recent years he has enhanced his passion for teaching through professional development and experience gained through program development and teaching at the tertiary level. His niche is teaching online from his green screen studio.

04

MATT GUINIBERT

LEVERAGING AI FOR THEMATIC CODING AND CLUSTERING OF IMAGES

Recent advancements in AI and machine learning have paved the way for innovative approaches in qualitative visual analysis. This study introduces Computer-assisted Qualitative Visual Analysis (CQVA), a novel approach utilizing GPT-4 Turbo, Google Cloud Vision, VGG16 and K-Means Clustering to automate the thematic analysis of visual datasets. Focusing on a pilot study analysing the top 1000 advertisements from the “adPorn” subreddit, CQVA successfully identified prominent themes and advertising preferences among Reddit users. The method demonstrated a significant reduction in time and cost compared to traditional manual coding while maintaining the depth and richness of insights. Although human intervention was required for guiding AI outputs and validating clusters, CQVA’s potential to revolutionize qualitative visual analysis through scalability and efficiency is evident.

Dr Matt Guinibert is head of digital communication, advertising and public relations at AUT’s School of Communication Studies. His background in digital media encompasses a diverse range of fields, including visual communication, UX and interface design, technology-enhanced learning, data science, and the strategies that underpin the use of digital media. Current research projects explore interdisciplinary topics within the field of digital media.

05

ROSSER JOHNSON

BACK AWAY FROM THE WRITTEN: AI AND ASSESSMENT

Given the enormity and speed of the development of artificial intelligence models and tools, reactions from academics and institutions have ranged between resigned acceptance and moral panic. For obvious reasons, the major location for concern is assessment. Here, the temptation to enter into a technological arms race is a significant and ongoing risk where the only realistic outcome is a massive increase in academic integrity hearings.

In this presentation I argue that one potential avenue for dealing with artificial intelligence tools is to revisit and reimagine assessment tasks. Using the example of an annotated bibliography, I will work through one possible strategy to adjust the way learners demonstrate their skills and competencies while at the same time keeping the focus on the reasons why these skills and competencies remain vital for research students.

Associate Professor Rosser Johnson is Associate Dean Academic at AUT's Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies. His research focuses on promotional culture, media literacy, and curriculum and assessment design.

06

TANIA KA'AI, PARMA NAND & HUHANA MOSELEN

AI: TOOL, THREAT, OR TEAMMATE IN THE REVITALISATION OF TE REO MĀORI

The lack of fluent Māori speakers results in approximately 80% of tamariki (Māori children) growing up without effective Māori language models. To change this picture we need innovative language acquisition and revitalisation solutions. We hypothesise that a culturally trained AI-assistive language tool or 'teammate' integrating computational, linguistic, neuro-social scientific and mātauranga-Māori holds great promise. In the wake of powerful language processing and generative pre-trained transformer systems like ChatGPT, Anthropic, Gemini, LAMA we also see potential threats. Whilst these systems can translate text and context between languages, including Māori, they are overwhelmingly trained on data from mainstream contexts. This poses significant risk to the appropriation and homogenisation of indigenous languages and cultures. To explore the promise and mitigate the risks we have assembled an international, interdisciplinary team operating on the ethos of 'mahitahi' or cooperation. Mahitahi holds that all contributions are equal and integral to our future success in AI research.

Professor Tania Ka'ai, a renowned leader in Māori language revitalisation and education, is joined by **Dr Parma Nand** a leading researcher in computational linguistics, natural language processing, machine learning and data mining and **Huhana Moselen**, a Te Ipukarea Masters student, exploring the relationship between traditional Māori communication and language acquisition.

07

JASON KENNEDY

THE ROLE OF AI IN RESHAPING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF NARRATIVE PERFORMANCE

Text-to-video generative artificial intelligence models can now produce compelling visual results of characters interacting with their environments across a broad range of artistic/filmic styles. However, these portrayals of characters should not be confused with narrative performances: the semantic models used to produce such videos lack the ability to semantically understand their own results. This presentation explores why meta-understanding is a crucial component of narrative performance for both philosophical and practical considerations. In particular, the approaches used by current video generation models (VGMs) do not provide artists with the means to direct the resulting imagery without fully re-rendering a shot, which violates the understanding that restored behaviour is a necessary element of performance. This presentation demonstrates how specific types of outputs from VGMs will be essential for serious adoption by filmmakers and animators, and how this relates to our understanding of what constitutes narrative performance.

Dr Jason Kennedy is a senior lecturer of animation in AUT's School of Art & Design, Animation, Visual Effects & Game Design. He combines his experience as an animator and actor in his professional practice. He is dedicated to helping animators better see, understand, and apply performance within their work. His research examines the constructed nature of performance within animation, as well as communication strategies for supporting scientific visualisations.

08

LOUISE MATTHEWS

AI IN JOURNALISM – MIGHT IT REPLACE REPORTERS AND NEWS EDITORS? A LOOK AT EXPERIMENTS AND WIDER CONCERNS

The use of AI in newsrooms is not new but in recent years its 'roles' and potential have increased dramatically. Views on its place include positive concepts such as freeing up journalists from mundane tasks, including generating stories from data eg stock market reports and youth sports stories (Kent, 2019), to focus their skills on "high-impact work" (Associated Press, 2024). Elsewhere its abilities can augment the work of investigative journalists. Contrasting views are that economising is a main driver, meaning there is a risk it will replace some human roles. There are more immediate concerns about the plagarism, and even cannibalising, of human-produced journalism. The idea that it can never replace journalists is frequently voiced, with varying reasons given, especially from mainstream news outlets, which adhere to ethical guidelines and are concerned about traditional values, such as retaining credibility. Some newsrooms have conducted experiments to test how well, or not, AI replaces journalists. While these organisations may hold AI needs a human in the loop (just for now), it could boost the work of bad actors focused on propaganda or misinformation masquerading as "news"

Dr Louise Matthews, a senior lecturer at AUT's School of Communication Studies, has worked as a journalist since 1984 in the UK, NZ, and briefly in Germany. She has worked as a print/online reporter (UK, NZ, Germany); TV reporter and producer (NZ) and magazine writer (UK, NZ, Germany). She liked crime reporting the most, especially at NZ Herald. She also worked in media liaison role for NZ Police and in media for the NZ Department of Conservation. She has lectured in journalism since 1998, at AUT and Bournemouth University, UK. At the same time she continued freelancing, including at TVNZ, and as NZ corrie for The Sunday Times (London) until she left NZ in 2003, continuing freelancing in Europe and initially while starting lecturing in the UK before her PhD subsumed her. Her MA thesis identified the NZ 'home invasion' reportage which resulted in rapid law changes, later rescinded, as a moral panic. Her doctoral research looked at the communication dynamics of online protest, mainly via Twitter, within a case study of activist UK police officers amid sweeping political reforms.

09

ANGELIQUE NAIRN,

Justin Matthews & Daniel Fastnedge

THE ROLE OF AI IN THE CREATIVE PROCESSES OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES: INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES AND CONCERNS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to significantly impact the creative processes within advertising agencies. Its capabilities extend beyond task automation and audience engagement assessment, potentially transforming the relationship between creatives and their work. AI-driven computational creativity offers new avenues for innovative and creative practices. Recent studies highlight that many creatives believe AI will revolutionize the development, execution, and dissemination of advertising content. However, the rise of AI also brings concerns about job displacement and ethical issues, causing unease among advertising professionals about the technology's role in their field.

A key area of concern is how AI will affect client-agency relationships. This research, based on data from five focus groups with advertising creatives in Aotearoa, New Zealand, sheds light on current practitioners' views on AI's role and potential impact on creative production processes. The findings suggest that most participants believe AI's rapid content creation capabilities will increase the pressure on agencies to meet client demands. Additionally, there

is apprehension that clients might use AI for their creative endeavors, potentially undermining agencies' financial stability and reputation. Furthermore, conflicts may arise between agencies and clients regarding aesthetic decisions influenced by AI.

Dr Angelique Nairn is an associate professor in communication studies at Auckland University of Technology, where she specializes in teaching public relations and intercultural communication. Her research interests include identity and identification, religion, morality and creative industries. Her passion for understanding identity, particularly in public communications, has been an underlying theme in all her research.

Justin Matthews is a senior lecturer in the Digital Communication Department within the School of Communication Studies at the Auckland University of Technology. His research is primarily focused on the area of user interfaces and experiences, future studies, gaming studies and narrative design and popular culture. He is currently completing a Ph.D. exploring speculative user interface designs from science fiction moving image and their relationship to contemporary technology experiences.

Daniel Fastnedge is a lecturer in the School of Communication Studies at the Auckland University of Technology where he teaches advertising and brand communications. He is currently completing master's research involving social media and controversial advertising.

10

HOSSEIN NAJAFI

FROM ALGORITHMS TO ARTISTRY: A COMPARATIVE EXPLORATION OF HEURISTICS IN AI AND CREATIVE INQUIRY

My research delves into the application of heuristic inquiry in the seemingly disparate realms of artificial intelligence (AI) and artistic research. This is a comparative study to unveil the intricate ways in which heuristic methods, often perceived as quick but imprecise problem-solving shortcuts, are employed in both fields to navigate complex, creative challenges. The research explores the evolution of heuristic methods from simple algorithmic approaches to advanced machine learning and deep learning techniques. It highlights the role of heuristics in addressing NP-hard problems like the Traveling Salesman Problem, where exact solutions become impractical due to combinatorial explosion. The discussion extends to the application of heuristics in antivirus software, search optimization problems, and decision-making processes under uncertainty, illustrating the critical role of these methods in developing adaptive, efficient AI systems capable of dealing with real-world complexities.

Parallelly, the research delves into heuristic inquiry within artistic research, emphasizing its roots in humanistic and phenomenological traditions. It showcases how creative

researchers employ heuristic methods to incorporate personal experiences, intuition, and emotional engagement in the knowledge creation process. The research argues that heuristic inquiry in artistic research is not merely a methodological choice but a deeply immersive, introspective journey that fosters innovation and personal insight.

I argue that despite their distinct disciplinary backgrounds, both AI and artistic research share a common foundation in heuristic inquiry. The research concludes by emphasizing the interdisciplinary potential of heuristic methods, suggesting that insights from each field can enrich the other, fostering a deeper understanding of creative problem-solving and innovation.

Dr. Hossein Najafi is a lecturer and Visual Effects Pathway leader at AUT. Hossein is a practicing artist and a film maker as well as a scholar who examines media language and aesthetics. Many of Hossein's students has worked on the visual effects of big blockbusters like "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" and "Avatar: The Way of Water".

11

AD NARAYAN,

Duncan Caillard, Justin Matthews & Angelique Nairn

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON VISUAL EFFECTS: INDUSTRY INSIGHTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

This research investigates the changing dynamics of the visual effects (VFX) industry with a particular focus on the integration and impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI). By engaging with professionals in the industry, the study aims to reveal the practical applications of AI in VFX, exploring how these technologies are being used in everyday operations and their influence on creative processes. It also seeks to understand industry experts' expectations regarding AI's future role in VFX, including potential changes in industry entry points, training methods, and adjustments to current production workflows. By examining existing tools and predicting future developments, this study provides a detailed overview of the anticipated changes in the VFX industry as AI becomes more prevalent and advanced. The goal is to anticipate the future of VFX in an AI-driven era, emphasizing how VFX work is evolving with these technological advancements. This research adds to the broader discussion on the intersection of technology and creativity, offering valuable insights into how AI is set to transform the VFX industry and redefine the creative process.

AD Narayan is a lecturer in digital communication at the Auckland University of Technology. He has a background in visual effects and has worked across several major film and television productions. He is currently completing a PhD exploring the role of extended reality technologies and interactional communication within safety-critical industries.

Dr Duncan Caillard is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Communication Studies at Auckland University of Technology. He holds a Ph.D. and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Screen and Cultural Studies from the University of Melbourne, where his dissertation presented the first systematic study of the screen works of Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul. His research investigates on the intersections of narrative art cinema, film philosophy and experimental filmmaking in the Asia-Pacific, with particular interest in works of anti-authoritarian and decolonial art practice in Thailand and Hawai'i. His current research project investigates the history of independent filmmaking in Hawai'i, with a focus on how Indigenous and diasporic communities use moving images to negotiate politics, place and identity. His first monograph, Apichatpong Weerasethakul: Contemplation and Resistance, is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press.

Justin Matthews is a senior lecturer in the Digital Communication Department within the School of Communication Studies at the Auckland University of Technology. His research is primarily focused on the area of user interfaces and experiences, future studies, gaming studies and narrative design and popular culture. He is currently completing a Ph.D. exploring speculative user interface

designs from science fiction moving image and their relationship to contemporary technology experiences

Dr Angelique Nairn is an associate professor in communication studies at Auckland University of Technology, where she specializes in teaching public relations and intercultural communication. Her research interests include identity and identification, religion, morality and creative industries. Her passion for understanding identity, particularly in public communications, has been an underlying theme in all her research.

12

JAMES SMITH-HARVEY

A CREATIVE BLACK BOX? EXPLORING GENERATIVE AI IN INTERACTION DESIGN EDUCATION

Generative AI is rapidly reshaping creative and pedagogical processes in design practice and education. As creative industries increasingly embrace AI alongside the development of new software and technology, understanding generative AI and integrating it into design pedagogy is crucial for preparing students for the future of design practice. Furthermore, the opaque nature of how generative AI develops and 'learns', poses challenges and unknowns, making it crucial for practitioners, educators and students to explore its potential.

This paper presents case studies from a bachelor of interaction design course, showcasing student experiments and reflections on generative AI. The presentation proposes a theoretical framework for teaching with and for AI in collaborative design processes, aiming to prepare the next generation of designers for this techno-sociological shift.

Overall, this research contributes to the literature on AI in design education, offering practical insights for practitioners and educators in interaction design and beyond.

James Smith-Harvey is a lecturer in interaction and communication design in the School of Art and Design, the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies at AUT. His practice-based research focuses primarily on design for new and emerging technologies, embodied and enactive design approaches, intercultural co-design, new forms of interactive storytelling, and Global South epistemologies and methodologies.

13

AMIR AZIZI SARAJY

HOLLYWOOD IN EVERYONE'S POCKET

The introduction of AI video generation is revolutionizing the entertainment industry, making Hollywood-level production accessible to everyone. It is democratizing content creation and allowing individuals to produce professional-grade videos using just their smartphones or personal computers.

Companies like Open AI, Runway ML, Kling, Pika and Deep Brain have effectively put “Hollywood in everyone’s pocket,” empowering creators with unprecedented creative freedom and efficiency. This paradigm shift not only enhances individual expression but also has the potential to disrupt traditional media production, media distribution and consumption, fostering a more inclusive and diverse media landscape.

It has the potential to give voice to creators from across the globe and all walks of life, and we can be hopeful to see movies from people and places that had no chance of being made if they had needed approval from a Hollywood producer. The video generation technology is improving at a staggering rate and the implications for entertainment, education, marketing and social media are vast, and we will examine how AI-driven videos will integrate seamlessly into everyday daily life.

Amir Azizi Sarajy has over twenty years of experience as a screenwriter, director, editor, and color grading specialist. He has been nominated nine times in different film festivals and has been on the panel of judges for best color grading and best editing, at the Hollywood Professionals Association film festival for six years. He is an active educator with two published books and thirty-six training series for filmmaking.

14

CHARLES WALKER

Dermott McMeel & Surendar Jayachandran

WILL HUMANS REPLACE AI? A DESIGN DILEMMA

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a burgeoning field of study in design, yet its discourse is highly polarized. Advocates emphasize liberation from menial tasks and assistance in solving complex problems, while critics caution against the potential for super-intelligence to replace humans. Some view AI as part of the established—and predictable—arc of automation that has progressed since the industrial revolution, while others see it as a paradigm shift in our interaction with machines, rendering existing lessons obsolete. This paper seeks to reframe the discourse, challenging binary arguments and advancing the conversation. Firstly, drawing on the philosophical insights of Wittgenstein and Marx, this paper situates creativity and 'design' within a hermeneutic cycle of externalization and playfulness, two characteristics problematic for AI. Secondly, by examining specific examples of AI-sponsored design through this framework, we argue that AI primarily provides cognitive labour rather than creativity, aligning it firmly with a Marxist paradigm of machine automation. This lays the groundwork for further discussion on machines, automation, and creativity. Ultimately, we propose that design consists of complex, multi-objective problems suitable for AI-assisted resolution, while practices rooted in

play, repetition, and externalization remain predominantly human domains. Thus, human expertise will continue to be essential in AI-supported design, albeit with a shifting landscape that demands new skill sets and reshapes the human-computer relationship within the sector.

Professor Charles Walker is the Head of School of Future Environment & acting Head of School of Communication Studies. His research, teaching, and design practice spans over 30 years. He aims to co-create educational experiences that build on the global history of ideas and to help students design informed, optimistic "imaginable futures" for the 21st Century. He suspects that many of the individual discipline-based educational models we have inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries are no longer viable for the new world that new graduates will inhabit. Before becoming a full-time academic in Aotearoa New Zealand, Charles was a registered architect practising in multicultural societies in the UK, Oman, Turkiye, and the USA. His personal teaching philosophy is to invite, support - and challenge - students to embrace and direct their own education, to discover their individual pathways within a planetary community. This necessitates an appreciation of the ethical obligations and connections between people, other living beings, objects, and their environments. Charles is currently the inaugural Fletcher Construction Chair of Future Environments at AUT, an industry partner-funded initiative to support innovation, research, and regenerative practice across the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) sector.

Dr Dermott McMeel is a senior lecturer at AUT's School of Future Environments. His research and teaching focuses on understanding how emerging technology changes social,

organizational and cultural aspects of our lives. He has a particular interest in this in relation to the design and construction sector. He has received over NZ$ 250,000 as Principal Investigator in external funding since 2015. The use of technology in design originally attracted Dermott to research, specifically the subjects of cross-disciplinary communication, information usage and the impact of new technology on organizational and cultural change; as seen in his PhD thesis and early publications. Demott's research has since broadened to embrace the changing conditions impacting on processes in design and construction, including publishing papers on the impact of blockchain, mobile phones, the relevance of virtual environments, ICT and language in creative and complex processes. His research now focuses on cultural aspects of technologies (blockchain, AI, robotics) where it intersects complex challenges such as waste reduction, capitalism, social justice and resilient communities.

Surendar Jayachandran is currently a PhD candidate and teaching assistant at AUT's School of Future Environments. Surendar is an Architect and graduate of Thaigarijar College of Engineering, India and the Politechnico di Milano, Italy. As well as investigating the impact of AI on the future of design, his PhD is exploring making novel reciprocal structures. Creating deployable and shape flexible prototypes that makes shell fabrication modular and easier than current techniques.

NOTES

NOTES

THANK YOU

The School of Communication Studies would like to offer a special thank you to **Karen Donovan, AD Narayan, Justin Matthews & Nicola Igusa** for their valuable contributions in the lead up to, and on the day of, the symposium.

Thank you also to the AI + Communication Symposium Committee members: Dr Deepti Bhargava, A/P Sarah Baker, Sara Song, Michael Bain, Dr Hazel Abraham, and Rachel Daniels.

We would also like to thank the Research Week Team for their support in putting this event together.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without the excellent leadership of our Associate Head of Research Dr Angelique Nairn :)

LIVE STREAM INFO

WATCH THROUGHOUT THE DAY VIA THE LIVE STREAM

WATCH LIVE

SCAN ME

BOUGHT TO YOU BY

AUT

AUT.AC.NZ