

How AI startups can work with creators in an ethical way

Whether it's the risk of deepfakes spreading disinformation online or concerns over weakening copyright protection, AI is generating anxiety over its role in the creator economy.

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AI has the power to transform how content is created, so it's natural that creators are worried about their livelihoods. However, when used ethically and responsibly, I believe AI presents a huge opportunity to unlock creativity and new experiences.

At BLOOM Stories, we started using generative AI to power an interactive erotic AI chatbot feature on our platform last year. As a company that prides itself on its work with writers and actors, getting our deployment of AI right was our utmost priority.

Here are some of the things I've learnt about how to implement AI in a safe, responsible and ethical way that supports human creativity.

Set clear licensing parameters

Many creators - from voice actors and copywriters to photographers and designers - are understandably hesitant when it comes to agreeing for their work or likeness to be used in AI content creation. It can feel like giving up ownership; but this shouldn't be the case. Creators need to be assured that they are in control of what happens to the content or assets they provide, and that they are comfortable with how these will be used by AI.

As innovators, we can provide this assurance by establishing clear licensing parameters. This should include agreeing how long a creator's assets can be used for (don't just assume they can be used indefinitely!), identifying any use cases the creator is not comfortable with, and outlining how involved the creator will be in the design of the final product.

At *BLOOM Stories*, we built a number of different licensing options for the voice actors involved in our AI BLOOM Chat feature, enabling them to select terms they were happy with before their likeness was used to create our AI voices. We then worked closely with them to ensure that the characters their voices were used to create were produced in a nuanced, authentic way. Forming clear, mutually-agreed guidelines from the get-go helps to ensure that all content is produced responsibly, with creators' full understanding and consent.

Prioritise fair pay

While AI certainly presents creators with new opportunities for commercialising their work, it also leaves them open to exploitation. One of the biggest risks for creators is having their content or likeness used without receiving any (or sufficient) compensation. It's paramount that AI startups that intend to use others' content to produce AI features take responsibility and commit to paying creators fairly.

Through the development of our AI BLOOM Chat feature, we worked closely with our contributing voice actors to establish a model that ensured everyone was properly compensated. One of the provisions we made was that our voice actors would be paid residuals every time their likeness is used on the platform, for example.

When working with human creators to produce AI content, there will always be an underlying transaction at play. Being transparent about this

commercial element and setting clear expectations around how and what creators will be paid is key to building trust and ensuring that every participant receives fair and ethical compensation for AI-powered projects.

Be selective about where you use AI

AI is a fantastic tool for optimising content creation, but not everything needs to be AI-driven. In fact, it can pay to be selective over when we do - and don't - use AI, to ensure content retains a certain level of human input. This not only helps to keep content unique and relatable, but also ensures that we continue to support vital creative talent.

At BLOOM Stories, we have made the conscious decision to only use AI to produce features that would be impossible to facilitate using human input alone, like our interactive BLOOM Chat feature (because our voice actors have busy lives and do not want to be on call 24/7).

Wherever it is possible to use real voices, we continue to use human voice actors: all of our audio stories are, and will always be, written and voiced by humans. This is because AI is there to enhance creativity, not to replace humans within the creative process. As creative partners, it is our responsibility to take steps to maintain this balance by mindfully tailoring our use of AI and continuing to actively champion human creativity and talent whenever we can.

Creativity is part of what makes us human. While AI is an incredibly valuable tool for the way we build and design new products, we must proceed with caution to ensure it never negatively impacts real-life creators. Until regulation catches up with the speed of AI development, the responsibility falls to us as innovators to get this balance right. I see it as an opportunity. We have the chance to help lay the foundations for a future where AI supports and amplifies human creativity, without ever

replacing or diminishing it. We must commit to working mindfully with AI, setting and following guidelines that protect every human involved.

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