Conference Session Report:
AI and the Ethics of Producing Digital Media

Context of the Session

This report refers to a conference session within the course **"Projektseminar Wissensmanagement und E-Learning" (Course ID 4377)**, held during the **Winter Semester 2025/2026**.
The presentation took place on **December 19, 2025**, in the context of the IPILM course conference session.

The session was delivered by a **five-member student group** and was based on a collaboratively produced **screencast contribution**. The group topic was **"AI and the Ethics of Producing Digital Media."** The screencast was designed as an Open Educational Resource and formed the core artefact of the conference presentation.

Main Aspects of the Presentation

The presentation examined how artificial intelligence is transforming the production of digital media and which ethical challenges emerge from this development. Its central aim was to connect scientific research with practical insights from artists in order to analyse how ethical questions surrounding AI are discussed both in theory and within creative practice. The guiding question was: *How can AI be integrated into digital media production in an ethically responsible way without undermining human creativity and trust?*

The presentation was structured around five key aspects. First, it addressed how generative AI challenges traditional concepts of creativity, authorship, and originality. Drawing on Das and Kundu (2024), it was shown that AI-generated outputs blur the distinction between human intention and machine production, thereby raising fundamental ethical concerns.

Second, the issue of copyright and ownership was examined. Based on the U.S. Copyright Office (2025) and Dentons (2025), it was explained that existing legal frameworks largely depend on human authorship and therefore struggle to accommodate AI-generated works, resulting in a legal grey zone for creators and users.

Third, questions of bias, fairness, and privacy were discussed. Referring to Al-kfairy et al. (2024), the presentation highlighted that AI systems often reproduce biases embedded in their training data and rely on extensive data extraction, frequently without explicit consent.

Fourth, the risks of misinformation and deepfakes were addressed. Using Karnouskos (2020), the presentation illustrated how synthetic media can undermine public trust, journalism, and democratic processes.

Finally, broader societal and economic impacts were considered, drawing on Lutz (2019) and Murugesan (2023). It was discussed how AI may intensify existing digital inequalities and create economic tensions within creative industries, while at the same time lowering barriers to creative participation.

As a practical component, the presentation included a case study of *Théâtre d'Opéra Spatial*, an artwork created using Midjourney that won a state art fair but was later denied copyright protection. In addition, qualitative interviews with artists from different disciplines and regions were introduced. Selected insights from these interviews were presented during the session, while the full interviews were made available via a linked YouTube video.

Discussion: Questions, Answers, and Reflections

Although the presentation concluded the conference session and discussion time was therefore limited, the exchange with the audience was highly engaged. Many questions focused on the future of art in the age of AI. Several participants discussed whether AI might replace human-made art in a manner comparable to how photography once disrupted painting, or whether it should instead be understood as an additive tool.

Ethical responsibility emerged as another recurring theme. The discussion addressed whether responsibility for ethical AI use should primarily rest with artists, AI developers, platforms, or regulators. Questions were also raised regarding labelling and transparency, particularly concerning how audiences can distinguish between AI-generated and human-created content. In this context, reference was made to emerging technical approaches such as the **C2PA standards (Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity)**, which aim to provide verifiable metadata documenting the origin, authorship, and modification history of digital content in order to support transparency and trust.

Further discussion focused on regulation and governance, including uncertainty about whether existing legal frameworks can keep pace with rapid technological developments. Together with Professor Dr. Tom Mackey, the group and audience discussed the tension between fostering innovation and safeguarding ethical principles such as fairness, transparency, and trust.

Overall, the discussion underscored that AI ethics in digital media remains an open and evolving field. While many risks are widely recognised, no single consensus on solutions has yet emerged. Future work would benefit from further empirical research, particularly qualitative studies involving both artists and audiences, as well as continued dialogue between creators, technologists, and policymakers.

References

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