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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Creatives Debate AI's Impact on Publishing Industry

Accessibility with AI

(Artificially) Intelligent Advertising

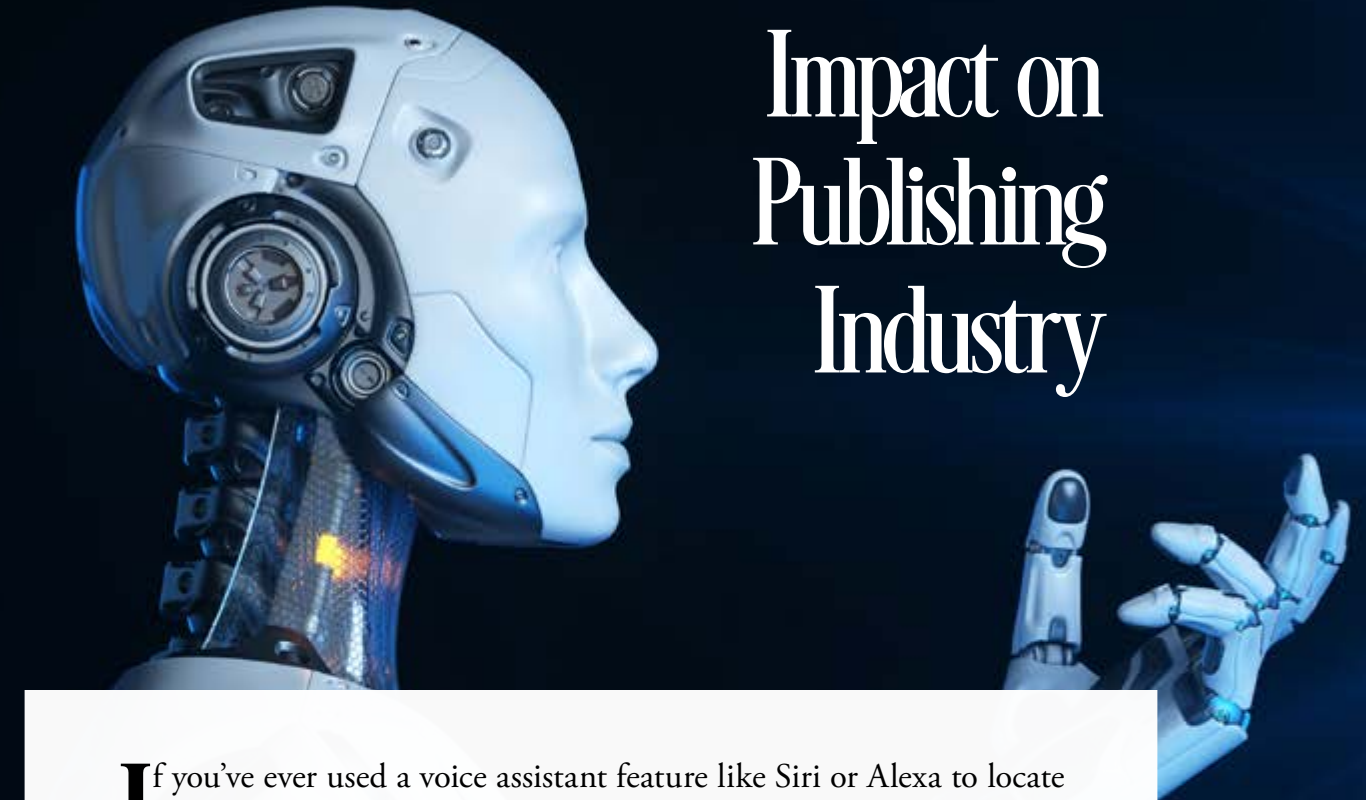
You've Used AI for Years ... And You Probably Didn't Realize It.

Seven Ways AI Art Can Improve Your Book Launch

Humans, Monkeys, and the Muddled Mess of Who Owns Copyright Over AI

Multiply Your Prosperity with AI

Creatives Debate AI's Impact on Publishing Industry




If you've ever used a voice assistant feature like Siri or Alexa to locate information, welcomed movie or podcast suggestions on a streaming service such as Netflix or Spotify, or accepted a suggested correction in a word-processing program, you've successfully interacted with artificial intelligence, or AI. For years, AI has touched nearly every aspect of our daily lives. However, recent AI technological advancements have caught the attention of publishing and creative professionals in particular.

WHAT IS AI?

AI is a computer program designed to imitate human behavior, using various machine-learning algorithms to simulate the cognitive functions of the human mind to automate tasks and provide convenience for its users.

The progressive use of AI in writing and self-editing processes has been a topic of interest for years in the independent writing community. These computer programs are designed to imitate human behavior



and use various machine-learning algorithms to automate tasks and provide convenience for their users. During a time when every penny saved holds significant weight, such cost-effective tools are worth a second—and third—look for authors. But when using creative services adjacent to the publishing industry, what's the best way to determine if AI tools and programs are the right option for your project? How do you know when you're trading cost-effectiveness for efficiency and quality?

Creators who regularly collaborate with authors and contribute to the book creation process, such as editors and audiobook narrators, have felt the impact of AI's recent technological progression. There are mixed reactions and opinions among industry professionals about what the use of AI in creative industries may mean for the future of these professions. Some see AI as a valuable tool that can help streamline workflows and save time and money. But where they believe professionals can delegate mundane tasks to AI programs and focus on honing their craft, others are concerned that AI can negatively affect the quality of a finished product because of performance restrictions and spur a loss of jobs in the creative industry by providing quicker and cheaper options for writers looking to save time and money.

I think that the biggest concern at the moment is the way the AI is trained ... And how to compensate the people writing or generating the training pieces. I would like to see more opportunity to train on your own work.
-Sharon Markatcheff

EDITING

AI can perform basic editing tasks like grammar and spell check, and make suggestions for writing style improvement. Since 2009, software such as Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and PerfectIt have been popular AI software options for writers who seek a first line of defense against grammar errors without greatly affecting jobs in the editing sphere. This service is supplied instantaneously for a fraction of the cost of a line editor or proofreader's fee. On the other hand, despite the latest additions to its features and offerings, AI cannot replicate the deductive reasoning skills, emotional intelligence, and human experiences that an editor can bring to a project, according to those in the industry.

While surveying five copyeditors, the group confirmed they have all used AI editing software in the past for a first line of defense on personal and professional projects before starting their own editing processes. The consensus was the group had little faith in the algorithm's ability to stand alone because of its inability to portray suggestions that encompass the knowledge, expertise, and authority of a qualified editor.

"Personally, I don't feel threatened by the new advances in artificial intelligence editing programs," says developmental editor and former copyeditor Shaundale Rénā, of S. Rénā & Co. Editorial Boutique, LLC. "In my past use of several editing software programs, I've noticed that they provide suggestions based on

human data input that isn't always accurate or applicable to a specific project, especially for Black writers. My experiences have taught me that manuscript editing is all about relationships. Instead of paying for software updates and annual subscriptions, it's a better investment for writers to hire an editor who is reliable, knowledgeable, and has taken the time to be fully in tune with their individual needs."

AUDIOBOOK NARRATION

AI narration services have dramatically improved over the past year, especially in their ability to simulate human speech's cadence and pacing. For those who use the programs, AI audiobook narration can offer authors cost-efficiency, prompt turnaround times, and creative control over their projects, with options for authors to provide detailed, line-by-line feedback during development. The average rate for a professional narrator ranges from \$200 to \$400 per finished hour of audio; by comparison, Draft2Digital currently offers free digitally narrated audio for e-books in partnership with Apple Books. Still, narrators argue AI programs haven't surpassed humans in terms of the artistic talent, creativity, and emotions that skilled narrators can lend to a project.

Voice actor Lisa Stroth, owner of Vocally Yours, LLC, says she is in the middle of the road regarding her support of the growing presence of AI in the creative industry. She values the



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spark of creativity AI provides in inspiring the written content for her business. Still, she feels as if AI in general can be a creative crutch that prevents her from thinking outside of the box with certain projects.

For voiceover projects, however, Stroth believes AI can present a challenge for professionals in her field. She touched on the mistrust of AI in the voiceover community. Her personal concerns were partially due to a lawsuit that was settled in 2021 involving Bev Standing, the voice actor whose voice was originally used without consent by TikTok for its text-to-speech narration option, ads, and user videos.

“Voices are created uniquely,” Stroth says. “One of our greatest strengths is our ability to uniquely present information by naturally changing our inflection and tone for emphasis. That’s difficult to replicate. I believe that voice actors can still earn a living among AI narrators, but we must learn to adapt and protect the rights to our own voices.”

In December 2022, Apple Books began offering “digital narration” services for books with primary categories in Romance and fiction, with both of its featured simulators Madison and Jackson based on human narration. The feature has garnered some controversy since its release. According to *WIRED* magazine, in mid-February, Apple Books and Findaway Voices, owned by Spotify, paused an agreement that allowed Apple to use Spotify’s audiobook files for machine-learning purposes after back-

lash from narrators who argued they’d not been properly informed of the contract clause.

Stroth believes AI narration for e-learning and corporate training projects presents the biggest challenge for voice actors, since human characteristics such as emotion and emphasis are not usually a high priority, and cost-efficiency is paramount. She doesn’t believe that AI can synthesize the nuances in human talent that are necessary for projects such as memoirs, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Stroth recalled a project she performed for a grieving mother who had written an inspirational journal after the loss of her son. Stroth became so emotional while recording the project that listeners of the audiobook believed the author had narrated her own project.

“Regardless of how AI advances, there should always be a place in the world for natural human voice. We still need this kind of benevolence in the world,” Stroth says. “When we start to lose our humanity, we’re truly losing out.”

Despite the mixed reactions of industry professionals regarding whether AI is an invaluable, cost-effective, time-saving tool to help them reach their goals or a posed threat to the creativity and economic advancement of the creative industries, AI is undoubtedly here to stay. The exact role AI will play in the future of publishing-adjacent industries will likely be determined by its use, specifically by professionals and consumers. ■

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