



Hi ,

How comfortable are you with AI doubles replacing real workers in digital spaces?

At the Zurich Film Summit this month, [a new starlet made her debut](#): *Tilly Norwood*, an AI-generated actress billed as “the next Scarlett Johansson.” She posed for photos, gave interviews and delivered lines without ever existing as a real person. The spectacle may have seemed like a novelty, but it captures a deeper shift already unfolding across our economy.

Emily Blunt among Hollywood stars outraged over 'AI actor' Tilly Norwood

ALONG CAME TILLY

AI “Actor” Tilly Norwood Is Young, Ambitious—and “the End of the Industry as We Know It”

Two years after AI protections ruled the Hollywood labor strikes, an emerging production studio is introducing a computer-made movie star to rival Scarlett Johansson. And SAG-AFTRA isn’t happy.

Culture > Film > News

Creator of AI film star Tilly Norwood speaks out after facing backlash

Elaine Van der Velden, CEO of AI-focused production company Particle 6, has insisted that the AI-generated character is ‘not a replacement for people’

Canada has long worried about foreign takeovers of its industries, spurring protectionist policy responses and inspiring industrial strategies. But not all “invasion” threats are against territory or resources. Today, the creep of digital replicas has quietly begun to imperil our own individual sovereignties.

AI avatars are no longer science fiction. Computer programs now allow anyone to create a convincing digital version of a human that can read text, deliver speeches, or mimic customer service scripts. The New York Times [recently sounded the alarm](#) on the spread of AI avatars, detailing a “new era of commercial work fueled by generative artificial intelligence.”

For businesses, the lure is obvious: avatars are far cheaper than employees. Why pay a call centre worker, [a model](#), or even a mental health assistant when you can deploy a digital lookalike?

In the world of designer handbags, “dupes” — short for duplicates or knockoffs — have long been a way to save money, and their increasing popularity [continues to fuel](#) a micro-economy of its own in the fashion industry. But it’s one thing to proxy a popular shoe or a logo, and another thing to outright mimic a human being.

Some corporate uses of AI are subtle, like limiting new hires rather than directly replacing outgoing employees.

However, in other contexts, human replacement is stark: a synthetic “someone” selling online 24/7, a deepfake politician, a computer-powered customer service agent, or an AI voice screening you for a job interview.

At the same time, some workers are leaning into the technology, licensing their own avatars or building side hustles around digital doubles. There’s now a thriving micro-economy of “fake” humans earning real money — like the [Spanish AI model reportedly making up to €10,000 a month](#). The question is whether this represents a form of entrepreneurial empowerment, or just another way for markets to capture and commodify our likeness.

Replacing (or replicating) humans with AI avatars raises urgent policy questions. Where is the line between a licensed avatar and a counterfeit (or, more accurately, a sophisticated cartoon) human? Who owns the “likeness” of a worker: the employee, the employer, or the software provider? And what protections do Canadians have when we interact with a digital copy of someone rather than a real person?



Our regulators have not kept pace with generative AI, much less agentic AI (AI that can set specific goals with limited supervision). Right now, companies using chatbots to replace frontline workers in banks, telecom and airlines aren’t obliged to disclose that the “agent” is actually a cheerful program following a pre-programmed decision tree. As a result, consumers are left guessing whether they are dealing with a person or a machine. That opacity is creeping into hiring too, with avatars now [auditioning applicants for jobs](#).

If left unchecked, “counterfeit” humans could accelerate worker displacement in various sectors: call centres, marketing, and even teaching and health care.

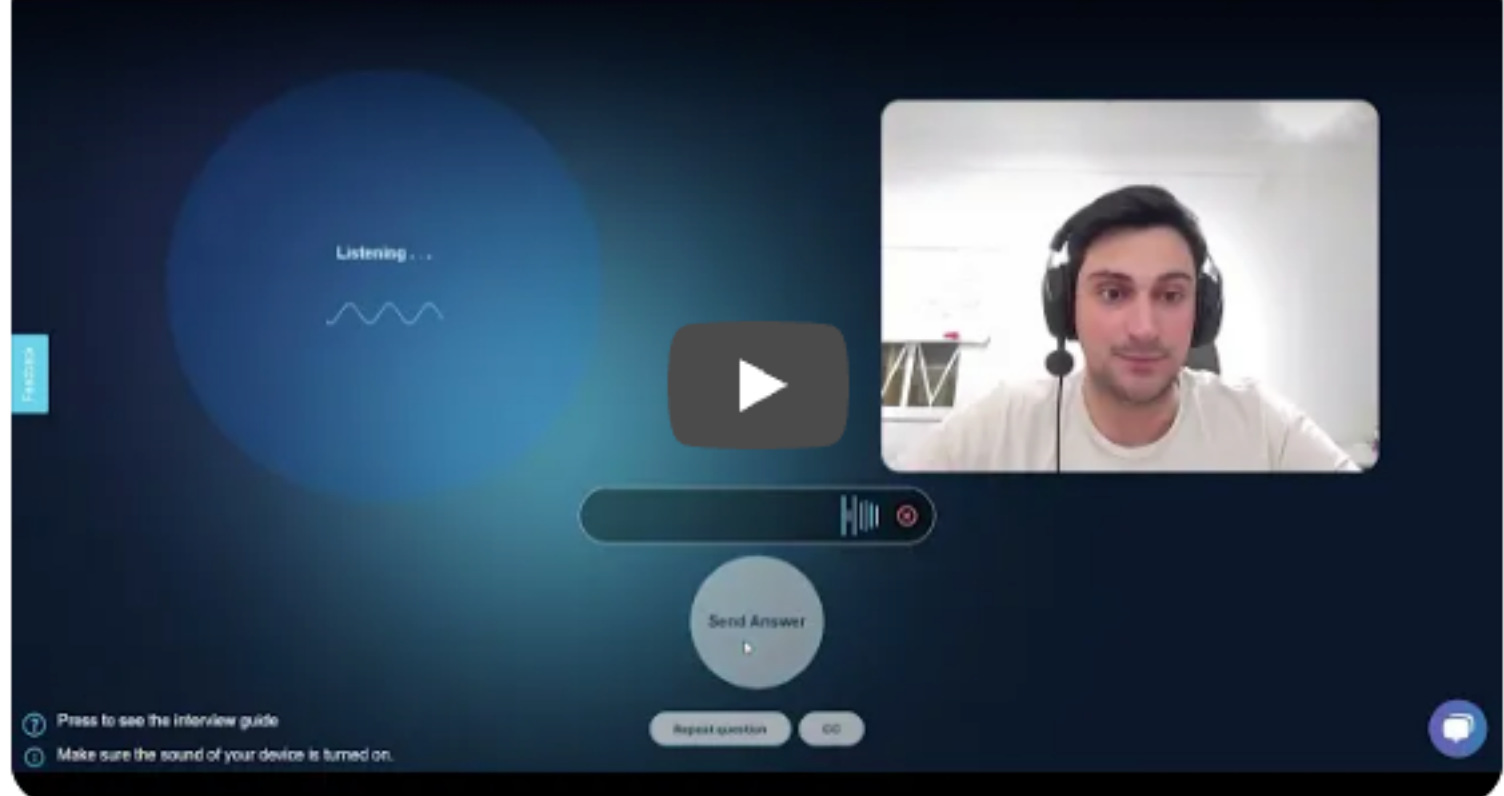
<

r/recruitinghell • 1 yr. ago

Stock412

...

Just had an “ai” interview (first round interview) that used the below service



Meanwhile, companies are being [formed around the concept](#) of companionship chatbots that supplement real-life friendships, thrusting us into a strange future where chitchatting with universally responsive algorithms could become the norm for many.

AI programs are even [resurrecting the dead](#).

CULTURE

AI 'deadbots' are persuasive — and researchers say they're primed for monetization

AUGUST 26, 2025 • 3:19 PM ET

HEARD ON ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

Chloe Veltman

4-Minute Listen

PLAYLIST

TRANSCRIPT



A digitally manipulated Fred Astaire appeared in a *Dirt Devil* commercial in 1962, a decade after the entertainer died. As researchers raise the alarm about the potential commercial exploitation of AI deadbots, they point out that the deceased have been promoting products on screen for decades. [YouTube/Screenshot by NPR](#)

At its most harmful, the same technology enables deepfakes, which can be used to fabricate political clips designed to mislead voters and create sexualized replicas, usually of women.

Canada has no clear legal framework to prevent or punish these abuses yet, beyond narrow privacy or defamation claims that place the burden on victims to bring lawsuits. It is not clear whether a new version of the federal government’s previously proposed Online Harms Act will materialize in the current Parliament.

Elsewhere, regulatory progress is happening. The [European Union’s AI Act](#) instituted labelling rules for content that is artificially generated or manipulated. Denmark has [proposed a bill](#) that would offer broad copyright protections to digital identities, giving victims of deepfakes or AI copies some recourse. Illinois [recently prohibited](#) the use of AI chatbots in mental health therapy. Advocacy groups like Common Sense Media are [calling for outright bans](#) on companionship chatbots for minors, citing the emotional vulnerability of that demographic.

Canadian law has yet to draw similar red lines.

Should we also require mandatory labelling when a service includes an AI-mediated interaction? Should individuals have the right to licence and protect their own likeness from being cloned? And what guardrails are needed to ensure AI avatars don’t become vehicles for fraud, exploitation, or manipulation?

[The Criminal Code of Canada](#) criminalizes counterfeiting money and forging fake documents. [The Trademarks Act](#) protects registered trademarks from being copied or imitated. [The Copyright Act](#) protects original works. And under common law, victims can sue for the misappropriation of their *personality*, allowing public figures control over their likeness being used for commercial purposes without consent.

There is no clear boundary for “fake” humans.

The U.S. is [attempting to reshore jobs](#) that were lost during a massive period of globalization — but at least those jobs went somewhere else. When and how will we “reshore” roles that get handed off to AI in the near future?

Beyond job losses, this masquerade erodes trust in digital spaces. A future where Canadians cannot easily tell if they are talking to a person or a program is one where both democratic debate and consumer choice are undermined.

If pipelines and patents are national assets, so are our faces and voices. And in 2025, those assets don’t just sit in contracts or court filings, they sit on servers.

Tilly Norwood’s acting career makes what AI technology can do overt: scrape likenesses and voiceprints, use them as inputs to create digital performers, and distribute them back to us as entertainment, convenience or gatekeepers.

The sovereignty question isn’t just about jobs anymore. It runs on two tracks at once: who owns the human inputs, and who controls the machines that capture, train and monetize them.

How these policy issues are addressed will define the character of our digital economy. Without deliberate rules, Canada risks outsourcing not just jobs, but trust.

These imitation humans are already becoming indistinguishable from the real thing. Our job is to quickly decide where the boundary should be between authentic human participation in digital economies and counterfeit digital imitation — before it is blurred entirely.

Two icons of Canadian music came together for this one: Montreal’s **Patrick Watson**—known for his cinematic, otherworldly songwriting and [losing his voice](#)—and **Martha Wainwright**, part of the legendary Wainwright/McGarrigle family.

House on Fire is a haunting, fragile track that feels both intimate and expansive, a reminder of how Canadian artists so often punch above their weight in crafting music that resonates far beyond our borders.

This song came from a reader (thank you, Christo). Send us the Canadian music you’ve been listening to lately!

SEND TO A FRIEND