

# A.I. Ethics

## Ethics

**Ethically**, LLMs and AI (in general) are complicated. They use all knowledge, text, sound, video, and images that they can scrape to create things and help answer things. A.I. can generate images, video, code, sound, and text. It can help edit a book. Or it can write one. It can help you write a script to audit for specific file conditions. It can help you write a log for that script. Or it can make an app. My take is : it's a great tool but woof, the ethics are TROLLEY PROBLEM level.

First you have to think about inspiration : *Is it ethical for a filmmaker making a work in the style of Tim Burton?* Alright, Hot Topic, while I think Edward Scissorhands is pretty good, maybe you should come up with something original! Personal taste aside though, it's great that you were able to make something using by being inspired by something else. What if the filmmaker tries to sell it? Probably fine unless they market it as "Tim Burton." Intellectual Property is complicated!

What if an artist takes the 2005 **Charlie and The Chocolate Factory** film and manually replaces Johnny Depp's head with Timothee Chalamet's head? You can kind of see it, right? In a museum or something? But what if it's fucking perfect and the artist has done a clean face replace that looks totally real using some version of RunwayML (video A.I.). Pretty gnarly, probably violating some IP laws, but as a piece of art, it's ethical IMHO.



*2 years ago the graphics for this joke would've taken me 16 minutes to produce, now it takes me less than a minute.*

*Is an art student making work in the style of Van Gogh ethical? Yeah this is probably ok, because the student is using the work of another artist to learn their craft. That's how*

everyone learns whether they admit it or not. We are inspired by what's around us consciously or unconsciously. What about an artist using an A.I. style transfer of Shepard Fairey on to 60s Soviet propaganda? Wow, I'm having fun with this. While that's a snake-eating-its-own-tail, is it inherently problematic? I don't know. As long as the artist doesn't pass it off as by "Shepard Fairey" it's probably fine.

*Is a musical mash-up of The Beatles and Jay-Z ethically complicated when both works are used to create a new work? Since no one wants to get sued, the safe thing is to not sell it, and distributing it at all might be tricky. Personally though, I think this is ethical and a pretty good idea that I wish I came up with. Danger Mouse beat me to it in 2004!*

Ok so derivative works and works inspired by other works are generally ethical, right? Cool, yeah, they are.

So you're down with [Girl Talk](#), but what if Girl Talk uses AI to help with audio stem separation?

“ But Tech Almanac, you're really taking a rosy point of view! A.I. isn't just about making art, or using it to help make works. It can also be used for evil !!!! ☹️

## The Bad News



What about these hypotheticals :

An artist created a package of UX vector graphics. A preview image of these UX graphics was included in an LLM's training data. The same artist is using that LLM to prototype some app idea, and her UX graphics are used in the prototype. YIKES! The LLM didn't differentiate between public domain and paid products because (I'm using an analog here) the LLM was inspired by the artist's images and conveniently, they don't remember where the inspiration came from. Whoops!

And what if that same LLM was used to help with some war somewhere? Uh oh. But how's your 401k doing? It's hard to draw a line here. We do what we can, where we can, but as technologists, we kind of need to keep up.

And what if that same LLM was installed without an opt-in on your entire Google Drive where you track your expenses and invites to your kid's birthday party? Uh oh, that's kind of scary.

## Subjective Verdict

So let's do our best. Use the thing, understand it, don't be dumb about it. Don't do anything evil with it, either! Just don't blame me when the robots take over and all music sounds like Taylor Swift was produced by the Weeknd.

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