

ADOPTING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBMISSION OF THE MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS ALLIANCE (MEAA) TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPACTS FOR AUSTRALIA ARISING OUT OF THE UPTAKE OF AI TECHNOLOGIES

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The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) inquiry into the opportunities and impacts for Australia arising out of the uptake of AI technologies.

MEAA is the largest and most established union and industry advocate for workers in the creative and cultural industries, with a history going back more than 110 years.

Introduction

Australia has a unique culture, beginning with the world's oldest continuing culture of our First Peoples, to the rich and vivid melding of the cultural and artistic expressions of those who have come to these shores since colonisation. The storytellers, artists, actors, dancers, musicians, and technicians who form the heart of our country's culture are respected around the world for their creativity, talent, and imagination. The health of our democracy and civil society is reliant on the commitment and tenacity of our journalists who deliver public interest journalism that scrutinises power and informs the public.

Since the beginning of human history, technological change has influenced how we engage in artistic and cultural expression and how we tell stories. While this has always been the case, we must be conscious that these creative processes have always required the imagination and technical skill of the person at their centre.

The challenge that AI presents is that it has the potential to dislocate and devalue the work of artists, creators, and journalists, bringing about the most profound change in the relationship between work and production since the advent of the Internet. As with the Internet's rise, policymakers have been slow to respond to the profound challenges that AI presents to our cultural and working lives.

As British singer, songwriter, and dancer Tahliah Debrett Barnett, better known as FKA Twigs, recently told a US Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing on "The No Fakes Act":

"Three decades ago, we did not realise that the internet would embed itself so deeply into the core of our everyday lives. Policies and controls to keep pace with the emergence of technology were not put in place to protect artists, young people and those that are vulnerable, and it ran away with us.

Al is the biggest technological advancement since the internet. You know the saying: Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. If we make the same mistake with the emergence of AI, it will be a shame on us."¹

What has been largely missing from government policy development are plans for protecting work from devaluation and assisting workers who lose their jobs due to companies adopting AI tools. Also missing has been any consideration of the impacts that the widespread adoption of generative AI tools will have on arts, culture, and music.

MEAA is also concerned about the push by industry operators to downplay the case for creators to receive compensation for the use of their work to train Large Language Models (LLMs). The arguments being put forward imply that these commercially owned LLMs require large amounts of reliable data to ensure they are free from bias and to ensure that Australia can develop its own AI industry. While this might be the case from a technical aspect, such arguments ignore the fact these LLMs are commercial ventures and are being developed for commercially driven purposes. They are not public goods, nor are they publicly owned. Therefore, they should be obligated to compensate

the creators of training data and be required to adhere to basic copyright laws, the same as any other commercial operator who relies on using the work or intellectual property of others to develop their products. If creators are not compensated for the use of their work and intellectual property, then this raises serious questions for the future viability of Australia's creative and cultural industries. Similarly, the production of content that mimics the style and/or likeness of a particular musician, artist, writer, or actor should be subject to consent and compensation – without which, we will effectively place creatives in competition with their digital selves, undermining the viability of their work.

In order to properly confront the challenges posed by AI, our union believes that governments must hold to a series of principles that puts people at the centre of any response. MEAA believes that everyone has the right to human-led culture and artistic participation and that this is fundamental to a thriving democracy. This is ensured by maintaining sustainable arts, culture, and media sectors where all workers are treated with respect and are afforded fair pay and conditions. When considering regulation for AI, governments must ensure that it will benefit society, and not be used as a tool for exploitation, to entrench inequality or make the world a less safe and unsustainable place. Regulating AI necessitates transparency, accountability, and hierarchies of responsibility, and companies that develop and use AI must be held to binding and enforceable standards. Additionally, workers must have a seat at the table and the development of regulations must be worker-led. Guaranteeing worker consultation will help ensure that AI will not be used to unnecessarily replace work or undermine conditions.

Key Findings

- The work of Australian creatives is being systematically scraped to train AI, without their knowledge, consent, or compensation. It is impossible to ascertain the extent of this use due to a lack of transparency.
- All is generating content that mimics the style and/or likeness of creatives (e.g. musicians, writers, artists, and actors) without compensation, credit, or consent. This practice places performers in competition with synthetic versions of themselves, undermining their livelihoods and the sustainability of the media and cultural sector.
- The artistic style of First Nations creatives is being reproduced by AI and sold for profit. This
 adds to the competition Indigenous artists already face from the fake 'Indigenous art'
 market.
- If left unchecked, it is conceivable that the increased use of AI tools in the media and creative industries could lead to a loss of jobs and the degradation of conditions in creative and journalistic work. Whilst AI advocates spruik the technology's capacity to improve the productivity of workers and "democratise" the production of creative content, the reality is that businesses are utilising AI tools to replace their workforce with automation products.
- The introduction of AI is occurring in digital media markets already subject to intense consolidation, in which workers have low bargaining power. This undermines workers' capacity to demand that any potential benefits of AI (e.g. productivity gains) are shared.
- The spread of AI-generated misinformation has the potential to exacerbate the crisis of trust in journalism by reducing the transparency, objectivity, and accuracy of news media.
- The capacity to utilise AI technology to create "deepfakes" of individuals has the potential to undermine trust, sow social discord, and increase exploitation, blackmail, domestic violence, bullying, sexual abuse, and scams.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Enforcement is best achieved through legally binding mechanisms, and the Government should be mindful of its role in establishing compulsory minimum standards to supplement and support any voluntary codes.

Recommendation 2: The use of content to train generative AI models should be subject to consent and compensation. Creators must be able to opt out of their data being used for training generative AI. Text and Data Mining (TDM) exceptions should be strictly limited.

Recommendation 3: Implement laws that require the public disclosure of data used to train AI.

Recommendation 4: Copyright protection should not be extended to works predominantly or exclusively made by AI.

Recommendation 5: Government should legislate the moral right of creators to own the rights to their image, voice, movement, and likeness.

Recommendation 6: Establish a parliamentary inquiry into the impact of AI on copyright and intellectual property.

Recommendation 7: Develop a regulatory framework to protect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Indigenous stories, characters, music, imagery, and other cultural information or knowledge.

Recommendation 8: Adopt an 'AI Tax' on businesses that replace human workers with AI tools.

Recommendation 9: Government include workers' representatives on consultative committees in regard to forming policy on AI.

Recommendation 10: Update industrial relations laws to ensure that workers are consulted on any use or intended use of AI in the workplace.

Recommendation 11: All Al-produced content should be watermarked and/or otherwise labelled.

Recommendation 12: Al-generated content should be subject to human oversight, e.g. fact-checked and/or monitored for bias, misuse, and other errors.

Recommendation 13: Social responsibility for content produced by AI should lie with companies that oversee its production, as well as with AI developers.

Recommendation 14: The use of AI should be limited or curtailed based on the risk categories of the EU AI Act (e.g. in the generation of explicit and harmful content).

Risks and Harms associated with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

This submission is informed by a recent survey of MEAA members regarding their attitudes towards AI. Survey results show that about one in five (22%) MEAA members are already using AI in their everyday work. MEAA members are very concerned about the rise of AI and its potential social and industrial impacts. A majority of members (56%) are extremely concerned about the rise of AI, whereas only one in fifty members (2%) are not at all concerned about the rise of AI. The majority of members are also extremely concerned about the potential spread of misinformation (74%); theft of intellectual or creative work (72%); proliferation of deliberately harmful content (70%); potential loss

of human-led creativity (66%); a lack of transparency regarding AI (59%); potential AI-related job losses (59%); and AI-related data privacy violations (57%) (see attached appendix for full results). The following sections of this submission canvass these industrial and social issues in greater detail, along with key recommendations.

Use of creative work without consent or compensation

Generative AI models are trained on huge sets of data – including books, films, photographs, and musical compositions. These are often scraped from the internet and used without the permission, consultation, or compensation of creators. It is only through the digestion of such 'training materials' by AI, along with their creator's technical skill, creative vision, intellectual labour, and even – in the case of actors and models, their physical likeness – that AI can 'learn' to produce synthetic content.

Many creatives do not know the extent to which their work has been scraped by AI. For some, the first time they realise that their content has been used to train AI is when they see AI-generated content that bears an uncanny resemblance to their own work.² The lack of transparency surrounding AI programs – often labelled 'black box' systems – means that it is often difficult to tell what training materials have been used. This makes it near-impossible for many creatives to know if their work has been scraped.

This issue has already prompted allegations of copyright theft. One high-profile case involves a group of Australian authors who have alleged that up to 18,000 books were pirated by the Books3 Altraining dataset. Renowned Australian author Richard Flanagan has referred to the incident as "the biggest act of copyright theft in history". Similarly, a group of Australian artists, including celebrated artist and Archibald finalist Kim Leutwyler, have claimed that their work has been stolen for training purposes by Al-training dataset LAION-5B. In comments to the Guardian, Leutwyler described her feelings of frustration upon discovering her work had been used without consent: "It's frustrating and it feels like a violation. We've not been compensated, we've not been credited". The issue is also live in journalism, with recent revelations that Al companies have been using "proprietary content" in training.

Even in cases where there is no existing copyright claim over a work, creators have expressed frustration that it has been used to train AI. Many have argued that they did not consent for their work to be used to train AI, because they did not – and could not have – anticipated that their work would be used in this way when it was placed in the public domain. One example of this is the use of the Flickr Creative Commons photograph series to train AI. Some photographers have argued that they could not have anticipated such use under a Creative Commons licence and should be asked for consent.⁷

It is unfair that work by creatives is being exploited by AI developers in ways that they could not reasonably have anticipated. In such cases, the ongoing and prior use of creative work must be subject to consent and compensation, as well as the ability to opt out. Text and Data Mining (TDM) exceptions should be strictly limited, and any existing exemptions should be revised around this new technology and require informed consent by owners of IP rights, particularly with any content being used for self-training purposes. This should include voice and sound data including music and visual art. For this to be possible, it is crucial that summaries of training datasets are made publicly available so that creatives can ascertain whether their work has been used in the training process. If not, it will not be possible to know the extent of use.

Recommendation 2: The use of content to train generative AI models should be subject to consent and compensation. Creators must be able to opt out of their data being used for training generative AI. Text and Data Mining (TDM) exceptions should be strictly limited.

Recommendation 3: Implement laws that require the public disclosure of data used to train AI.

Digital replicas and the mimicry of style, composition, and likeness

Generative AI models produce outputs in response to given prompts. These outputs are meant to be synthetic – in other words, they are not meant to closely resemble the materials they themselves were trained on. However, in some cases, AI models have been known to produce outputs that closely resemble training data. In particular, several audit studies have shown that AI models – through the use of selective prompts – can generate copyrighted material originally used in training.⁸

The tendency for AI to reproduce copyrighted material has already resulted in several lawsuits. The New York Times, for example, is suing OpenAI and Microsoft over the alleged use of copyrighted work. Their lawsuit claims that "millions of articles…were used to train chatbots that now compete with it". They were able to show that AI models can reproduce "near verbatim" sections of text from their articles as outputs.

Another issue occurs when the output is not directly reproduced from training materials but clearly mimics the style or likeness of a creator or performer. For example, many are concerned about the capacity of AI to produce work 'in the style of' particular actors, performers, musicians, artists, or writers. Musicians are particularly concerned, with several well-known examples of AI-generated songs using the voice and recognised style of established musicians. For example, in April 2023, an AI-generated song using the voices of Drake and the Weeknd went viral on social media. Other examples include an AI-generated rendition of Kanye West singing 'Hey There Delilah' and an AI-generated version of Rihanna singing a Beyonce record.

This is also happening with AI-generated art. Artist Kim Leutwyler, for example, claims that self-portrait AI Lensa replicated core aspects of her work, including "brush strokes, colour, composition – techniques that take years and years to refine".¹³ Writers, too, have been targeted by the technology. In August 2023, well-known author Jane Friedman found several AI-generated books being sold on Amazon under her name.¹⁴ Other authors and journalists have reported similar issues. This practice raises important concerns about a possible future where writers, musicians, artists, and content creators may be gradually replaced by their digital selves. Jane Friedman, for example, has stated that she "worr[ies] there's going to be this kind of downward competition to use AI to replace human creators".¹⁵

Actors are particularly concerned about this issue, with the production of 'Recognisable Synthetic Performers' now possible with AI tools. These synthetic performers have the same appearance, voice, and likeness as existing performers. This also applies in the case of voice artists/actors, whose voices can be copied and synthetically replicated.

One obvious issue that arises from this practice is the fact that creators may be forced to compete with synthetic versions of themselves, called replicas, which may be able to be produced at a much lower cost than it would be to pay the actor to perform. This practice takes from an artist the basis of what makes their performance valuable and unique – something built on hard work and personal investment, without compensation or consent. This is a threat not only to the artist's income but to their agency as performers.

We need to establish protections to prevent this practice from continuing. National legal frameworks protecting personal biometric data, including the voice and likeness of creators, should be put in place, with the exploitation of such content requiring informed consent. There should be fast and accessible (non-costly) avenues for redress, including financial compensation, where these rights are violated. A register should be set up listing all authorisations expressly granted by performers and other right holders for AI usage and training.

In the US, this option has been explored in some detail. The 'Nurture Originals, Foster Art, and Keep Entertainment Safe Act' aka the No Fakes Act¹⁶ aims to protect actors, musicians, and other performers from unauthorised digital replicas of their faces or voices, explicitly prohibiting the "production of a digital replica without consent of the applicable individual or rights holder".

The law will give rights holders the ability to file a civil case to enforce their right over a copied or faked video, image, or audio product, including voice acting and singing. Digital duplicates for parodies, satire, and criticism will be exempted from the Act. The No Fakes Act is an attempt to federalise similar state laws that have been recently enacted which include laws in New York, California and Tennessee¹⁷. While SAG-AFTRA – the union for screen actors and radio and television artists – has endorsed the No Fakes Act¹⁸, some industry observers have raised concerns about the draft bill giving too much control of digital replicas to production companies and record labels.¹⁹

Additionally, concerns have been raised that by including a right for deceased performers, the Act will have the unintended consequence of incentivising the use of deceased performers over living performers, creating a bizarre competitive environment whereby living artists are competing for work against those who are deceased.

It is imperative that there are also more general protections for any creators from their style being copied or 'passed off' without authorisation or payment. Copyright and intellectual property law should protect against Al-generated outputs that clearly connect to a discernible artist, writer, or musical style. As an example, Al making music that mimics an existing creator should be in breach of that copyright (unless an agreement has been made with that musician). In addition, copyright protection should not be extended to works predominantly or exclusively made by Al – it should only protect any human-based creation, voice, or work. A parliamentary inquiry into the impact of Al on copyright and intellectual property protections is required to address these issues.

MEAA is aware that, currently, under Australian copyright law, works qualify for copyright protection if the author is a human who has contributed "Independent intellectual effort". ²⁰ This means that unless there has been substantial human involvement in the creation of a work that has been produced using Al tools, then it will not be afforded copyright protection. Just how substantial the human involvement is required in order to satisfy copyright laws is a matter of debate. It is our strong view that a very high threshold must be set before any work that is created with the assistance of Al tools can be afforded copyright protections, and even then, that copyright protection should not be extended to any aspect of a work that has been generated using Al in part or whole.

Recommendation 4: Copyright protection should not be extended to works predominantly or exclusively made by AI.

Recommendation 5: Government should legislate the moral right of creators to own the rights to their image, voice, movement, and likeness.

Recommendation 6: Establish a parliamentary inquiry into the impact of AI on copyright and intellectual property.

The copying of artistic style is particularly concerning in the case of First Nations work. There are now numerous reports of AI-generated 'Indigenous art' being commodified and sold online.²¹ As in the cases above, the AI had been trained on datasets of Indigenous artworks without their creator's permission. Such images are now flooding the market – appearing for sale on a range of different websites, including Adobe, Etsy and eBay. These are adding to the competition Indigenous artists already face from the fake 'Indigenous art' market, threatening to further undermine their livelihoods.

In such cases, it is critical that indigenous data sovereignty is recognised. Indigenous Data Sovereignty is "the right of Indigenous Peoples to own, control, access and possess data that derive from them, and which pertain to their members, knowledge systems, customs, resources or territories". There should be a development of a regulatory framework to protect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Indigenous stories, characters, music, imagery, and other cultural information or knowledge. Any Al-produced content containing indigenous data should be monitored.

Recommendation 7: Develop a regulatory framework to protect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Indigenous stories, characters, music, imagery, and other cultural information or knowledge.

Loss of work and negative impact on working conditions

If left unchecked, it is conceivable that the increased use of AI tools in the media and creative industries could lead to a loss of jobs and the degradation of conditions in creative and journalistic work. Almost all work that requires the use of digital tools including image generation, audio and music production, photography, video production the production of written work including scripts, musical scores, run sheets and news media can – to some extent – be achieved by using generative AI tools. For example, ChatGPT can produce written news content; Canva's Magic Media and Adobe's Firefly products can generate images and video content; Speechify can generate text-to-voice files; and MuseNet can generate musical compositions. This means that the jobs of those working in the production of these kinds of digital content – including journalists, actors, photographers, set and costume designers and voice artists – are under significant pressure.

Al is already being used to cut jobs and wages across a range of industries. Whilst Al advocates spruik the technology's capacity to improve the productivity of workers and "democratise" the production of creative content, the reality is that businesses are utilising Al tools to replace their workforce with automation products. The finance, banking, advertising, administration, and customer service sectors are all using Al to reduce their workforce, and we know in the media and entertainment sectors that businesses and publishers are about to roll out Al tools that will affect employees and contractors.²³

The main risk posed by this development is not that it will necessarily create a mass class of unemployed workers (though these fears are not unfounded), but rather that it will flood the pool of workers competing for low-skill and low-wage work, further driving down wages and conditions of an already precarious sector of the economy. The IMF, for example, estimates that 60% of jobs in advanced economies will be impacted by AI, and about half of these will be negatively impacted.²⁴ Another way to put this is to say that the IMF expects that nearly one-third of currently existing jobs will be negatively impacted by the rise of AI.

Recommendation 8: Adopt an 'AI Tax' on businesses that replace human workers with AI tools.

Al also brings with it the risk of further entrenching economic inequality.²⁵ The creative and media industries are already subject to intense market consolidation. Big Tech has monopolised a range of different markets through the control of critical points in the supply chain. For example, Amazon and Spotify have effective control over the market for audiobooks through their platform interface with consumers. In some cases, these companies have also achieved market dominance in the form of monopsony (or oligopsony).²⁶

The introduction of AI into digital media markets thus occurs in a market in which workers often already lack bargaining power. Indeed, many of the same companies that currently control crucial chokepoints in the digital media market are at the forefront of AI development (e.g. Google, Amazon, Meta), and so are well-placed to further consolidate their industrial power. The introduction of AI therefore risks further exacerbating existing issues of market concentration. It also means that workers may be less able to demand that the benefits of AI uptake (for example, productivity gains) are shared.

To provide some measure of balance to this situation, governments must ensure that workers in the media, arts, and entertainment industries are consulted and involved in the development of industry and ethical frameworks around AI content use. Industrial relations laws should also be updated to ensure that workers are consulted on any use or intended use of AI in the workplace. In short, workers need to be included in decision-making bodies at all levels.

Recommendation 9: Government include workers' representatives on consultative committees in regard to forming policy on AI.

Recommendation 10: Update industrial relations laws to ensure that workers are consulted on any use or intended use of AI in the workplace.

Misinformation

A major concern relevant to our industries is around truth in content — be it the creation of content outside human control, or the regulation of errors or fake news. This is especially pertinent where Al is used in place of journalists to produce news content. Al cannot meaningfully be relied upon to report facts, dates, and information correctly, and, as a result, has been known to routinely produce misinformation. Unfortunately, audiences are often unable to tell between human-generated and Algenerated content — and as Al-generated content is not currently required to be watermarked or otherwise labelled, audiences are left without the ability to discern the source of the information. This development has the potential to exacerbate journalism's crisis of trust by reducing the transparency, objectivity, and accuracy of news media. For example, MEAA journalist members have raised concerns about what the use of generative Al for editorial and production purposes in newsrooms will have on their ability to comply with the *MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics* which obligates members to "report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy fairness and disclosure of all essential facts" 27.

It is imperative that any legal regulations deal with this issue and promote truth in content, the verification of AI-generated content and the appropriate disclosure of the role of AI in the generating of such content. All content produced using AI tools must be subject to human oversight to guard against the spread of misinformation. It must also demonstrate that it does not entrench bias (such as racial and gender bias) and must be fact-checked by human editors. For this to be enforced,

responsibility for the production of such content must lie with the companies that oversee its production, as well as with AI developers themselves.

Recommendation 11: All Al-produced content should be watermarked and/or otherwise labelled.

Recommendation 12: Al-generated content should be subject to human oversight, e.g. fact-checked and/or monitored for bias, misuse, and other errors.

Recommendation 13: Social responsibility for content produced by AI should lie with companies that oversee its production, as well as with AI developers.

Disinformation

This issue further compounds in the case of disinformation. The potential to utilise AI technology to create "deepfakes" of people – particularly public figures, often for political and exploitative reasons – has already been proven. In a salacious example, two Italian men have been charged with creating deepfake pornographic videos of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Another example includes the reported use of deepfake images and videos for propaganda purposes in the Israel-Palestine conflict to bolster support on either side. One SAG-AFTRA representative spoke of how a deepfake video had been made of him in which he (falsely) urged members to vote against a contract. He recalled that "there [were] no federal rights protecting [him]...and tens of thousands of people were misled". In such cases, the cynical use of generative AI has the potential to undermine trust and sow discord in democracies and society, as well as being used as a tool for the harmful exploitation of people through blackmail, domestic violence, bullying and intimidation, sexual abuse, and scams. In addition, this technology has already demonstrated the potential to undermine democracy and further erode trust in governments and the media through its use in attacking political opponents.

Women are particularly vulnerable to deepfake abuse, with an estimated 90% directed at the production of non-consensual pornographic content.³¹ MEAA is particularly concerned about the targeting of prominent women in the media, entertainment, and music industries by deepfake campaigns, and its potential impact on their reputation and careers. In one example, a high-profile investigative reporter for the *Washington Post* Rana Ayyub was targeted by a deepfake pornography campaign in 2018.³² What began as a misinformation campaign featuring a range of defamatory fake tweets evolved into doxing and deepfake pornography abuse. Ayyub was no doubt targeted by this campaign because of her extensive work on corruption and police violence in her home country of India. This story has become increasingly common, with the technology used to discredit and silence women – gaining momentum as a key tool of online misogyny.

MEAA welcomes the Government's commitment to introduce legislation to ban the creation and non-consensual distribution of deepfake pornography. This is a necessary first step in regulating the highly exploitative potential of generative AI. It is our view, however, that further action is required to mitigate the risks associated with deepfakes.

MEAA believes that users of AI generating or manipulating text, audio or visual content that would falsely appear to be authentic or truthful and featuring depictions of people appearing to say or do things they did not say or do — whether with or without their consent — should be subject to mandatory timely, clear, and visible labelling obligation. Use of such content in the context of creative, artistic, or fictional audio-visual production should always be based on informed consent with effective means of redress available to sanction or remove any non-consensual use. This would need to be regulated through legal statute or developed by copyright or common law and moral

rights. In addition, where the use of AI presents clear harms (for example, in the generation of explicit and harmful content) it should be curtailed based on the risk categories of the EU's AI Act. In such cases, it is clear that the potential harms outweigh any other considerations in favour of use.

Recommendation 14: The use of AI should be limited or curtailed based on the risk categories of the EU AI Act (e.g. in the generation of explicit and harmful content).

Appendix

From March to April 2024, MEAA surveyed 394 members about their attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence (AI). The results can be taken as representative of the views of MEAA's membership, subject to a margin of error of ±5%.

Figure 1: Responses to 'How concerned are you about the rise of AI?' (%)

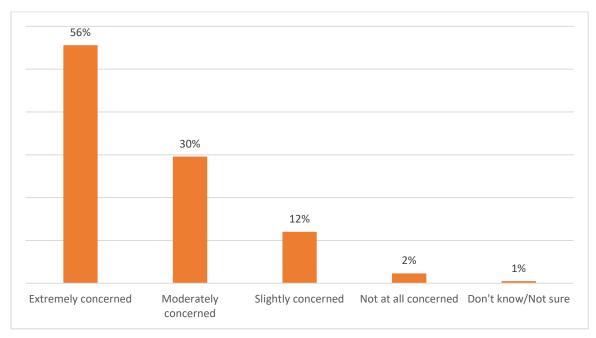
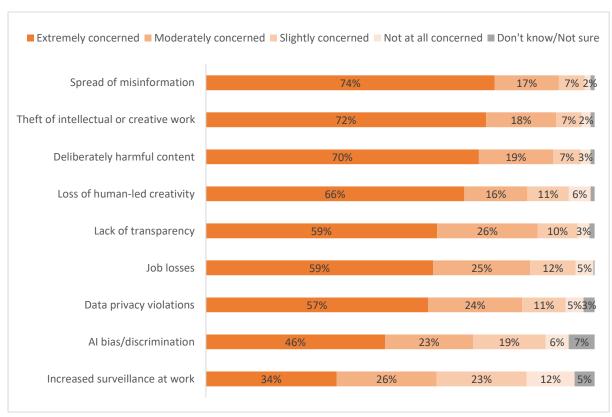


Figure 2: Concern about potential Al-related issues (%)



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