

KEY FINDINGS

FUTURE TALKS

JUNE 2023

AI: FRIEND OR FOE?



HereEast



plexal

AI: Friend or Foe?

In June 2023, we were delighted to convene the second instalment of our Future Talks series, which focused on the 'Now, Near and Next' of AI. To debate this fascinating topic, we brought together experts from across government, academia, technology and the business community to share their perspectives on the use cases for AI and to answer the question, 'AI: Friend or Foe?'.

With AI accelerating at an exponential rate, we asked attendees to consider its impact, the extent to which governments should regulate the technology and whether international cooperation can prevent possible misuse on a global scale.

Moderated by Flavilla Fongang, the Founder of 3 Colours Rule, the discussions sought to cover the broad scope of the emerging technology, from its impact on the workforce across different sectors - including the creative industries, the investment landscape and education - and how likely it is to become a tool that we all use in our daily lives and what its use cases are, spotlighting the ways in which AI should be regulated, legislated and monitored to ensure a bright future and bolstered economy.

The roundtable discussion teed up the large open evening event which followed, where over 150 guests gathered in Plexal Park on our campus for an afternoon of sessions exploring the 'Now, Near and Next' of AI. This included a keynote from, Charlie Muirhead, Founder of CogX; a panel discussion between Suhair Khan, Chair of Studio Wayne Mcgregor and Emma Wright, Head of Technology, Data and Digital from law firm Harbottle & Lewis; a firechat chat between Jimmy McLoughlin OBE, host of the Jimmy's Jobs podcast and Michael Stein, CTO of Framestore.

Charlie Muirhead, Founder of CogX
opens the AI event with a keynote



OVERVIEW

We find ourselves in the age of AI. The Prime Minister recently announced his ambition for the UK to be the geographical heartland of this emerging technology - an exciting proposition as we all seek to examine how this technology can not only enhance our day to day lives but solve pressing global problems and transform the world as we know it today. Indeed, the tectonic plates are shifting but now is the time to ensure the ever-evolving presence of AI sits beside us as a partner, helping rather than hindering humanity's progress. How can we make sure AI is our friend, rather than a foe?"

Gavin Poole, CEO of Here East

Gavin Poole discusses how AI can help rather than hinder humanity's progress



AI as a tool



AI is not going to fix having lots of unmanaged data or not enough data. It's going to be a tool which will function if you've got your data in a good place, AI can then learn from the data, model it and detect those patterns. It's not going to kill creativity. AI will not mould people who are not creative into artists, they are not going to become artists just because they have access to this thing. And it feels like, at least for me, right now, on the creative side, there's more parlour tricks than useful solutions or tools. But there is a lot of promise and opportunity and it's still very early."

Michael Stein, CTO, Framestore



Michael Stein, CTO, Framestore in discussion with Podcaster Jimmy McLoughlin OBE

Prejudices against AI



Pictured: Over 150 attendees gather in Plexal Park at Here East for the event

“Coming back to the consumer, in the future it is likely you could go to the cinema to see an entirely AI-generated film. Maybe it’s written by AI, maybe it features human actors and possibly it’s written by a human but generated with AI as an animator. As a consumer, if I read the credits at the end of the film to find out it’s written by AI, I would feel a little put off. I value human creativity. So as a consumer, that’s a prejudice I have at the moment.”

Henry Whorwood, Head of Research & Consultancy, Beauhurst

Legislating AI

One of the great opportunities in this moment is to find pathways for young people to feel empowered and to feel as if they have a stake in the story and in the ground. As we contemplate the role of everyone at this table, we must consider where intellectual property lies. What is the role of the law in defining who owns these outcomes? When we talk about “artificial intelligence”, it’s important to set clear roles for stakeholders, and to platform conversations to define what exactly this intelligence is or should be - outside of the purely cognitive, and beyond the desired outcomes and incentives of large tech corporations and a handful of governments.”

Suhair Khan, Founder & Director of open-ended



Suhair Khan, Founder & Director of open-ended talks about empowering young people

Regulating AI

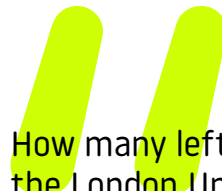


Gavin Poole, CEO at Here East explores the knock-on effect of regulation

There is a knock-on effect when you're looking at territory regulation. From an investment point of view, companies are now going to have to think about where they're going to base themselves to exploit regulatory systems and remain profitable. If you think about it, we were once eight steps behind [AI], and now we are 24 steps behind. Does this mean we will observe a dearth of AI companies?"

Gavin Poole, CEO, Here East

Bias in AI



How many left-handed ticket machines are on the London Underground? Zero. Yet TfL will tell you how accessible their system is. That is just what one type of bias in tech looks like. If you ask Google what a successful Professor looks like, it will give you images of men and eventually it will give you a select few images of women - but the issue here is the equation. The equation behind the men is miles more complex than the equation behind the women. That's what bias looks like."

Emma Wright, Head of Technology, Data and Digital from law firm Harbottle and Lewis



Emma Wright discusses bias in AI with event attendees



WHO IS INVOLVED

The Guests

octopus
ventures

MiShcon de Reya

 CogX

 Loughborough
University
London

 plexal

 Mesh-AI

Harbottle & Lewis

ANTENNA
GROUP

 HereEast

 Beauhurst

TLA

deel.

 FRAMESTORE

M O
V E

 LABOUR:
WOMEN
IN TECH

 ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

ENYAMCGREGOR

3 colours rule.


The Phoenix
Village Project

sevenHILLS

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Conclusion

It was a privilege to bring together experts and leaders from across the UK - many with a global footprint - for an extremely timely debate on the emergence of AI, posing the question, is it a friend or a foe? The conversation was lively and certainly educational, reflecting the often polarising nature of the subject matter itself. We talked about the importance of regulation, explored the power AI holds in future-proofing the economy and what its rising popularity means for business and humanity more broadly.

We have never shied away from facilitating an energetic debate at Here East, and this was no exception. My primary takeaway was that, rather than viewing this emerging technology as an opposing force, we should view AI through the lens of a partner or a tool to accelerate growth. In my view, a major element of its successful implementation comes down to education - and we should be advocating for AI studies to be on the school curriculum.

As we approach the first major global summit on AI safety this Autumn, it is imperative that as the host nation, we seize the Prime Minister's vision to become the pace setters when it comes to AI and work together to create the conditions for its safe adoption globally.

There are still many unanswered questions around the technology - such as bias in AI databases and global accessibility. Fortunately, a benefit of elevating these conversations to an international scale is the fast-tracking of solutions. If we as a collective work to harness AI in the right way, medical, scientific and climate breakthroughs are what await us. Immeasurable opportunities are at our fingertips."



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Here East is owned by clients of Delancey, a specialist real estate investment advisory company. There are 37 organisations based on the campus, including Plexal, Here East's innovation and consulting centre.

