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Creative AI and the Experience of Stories

Creative AI and Responses to Narratives

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For many decades, digital technologies have assisted humans in producing artworks and entertainment products. The role of digital technologies in these fields, however, is not limited to serving as a tool to implement human ideas. Artificial intelligence (AI) could lead to technology becoming a creator itself. Our focus here is on stories created by AI. We assume that the information that a fictional story was created by AI leads to a distancing response. This psychological distancing should go along with feelings of eeriness and should prevent recipients from being transported into the story world and from sharing the story with others. We conducted two experiments and examined user responses to fictional stories supposedly written by AI (versus a human author). Results of Experiment 1 (N = 321) suggest that the information that a short story was written by an AI has no significant effect on eeriness or the willingness to share. However, it reduces the recipients' experience of being transported into the story world. Experiment 2 (N = 489) replicates this finding within a 2 (author: AI vs. human) x 2 (genre: contemporary fiction vs. science fiction) design. Again, AI as an author reduced transportation. This effect was qualified by an interaction with story genre. The authorship effect disappeared when the narrative was a science fiction story.

Keywords: creative AI; narratives; transportation; attitude towards AI; authorship information

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