The AI Prism: Navigating Meaning, Relevance, and Strategic Value in Film Production

A Qualitative Study on AI-Sensemaking by Film Practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) evolves more rapidly than any prior technology, reshaping sectors towards an uncertain future. As one of the most expensive art forms, the established film industry is facing a potentially disruptive transformation. AI is believed to bring cost-efficiency, wide accessibility, and expanded creative boundaries, while it also presents challenges to artistic value, workforce stability, and ethics. This research sheds light on the current and expected implications of AI in film production. Through a practice-theoretical lens, the study explores AI's strategic management and meaning in creative processes from those that shape the industry.

As a qualitative study, in-depth interviews were conducted with industry practitioners and experts, from senior vice presidents of agencies to independent filmmakers to AI experts. Attaining a holistic view through the breadth of perspectives, the research aims to situate the deep complexity of a turbulent technology in an already turbulent media environment. The findings reveal that the meaning of AI in film production is an actively constructed negotiation shaped by their operational context, dominant values, and strategic responses.

The central contribution of this thesis is the ''Value Fit'' model. This model captures the ongoing process of practitioner context, AI's industrial impact, sensemaking, and strategic enactments negotiating in cyclical form. This leads to varied strategic responses, such as vision-led approaches that can include culture-enforcing methods, offering strategic practices that extend current strategic management research. The study showcases how strategy-as-practice provides a crucial lens from which to understand these emergent strategic ''doings'' in the media environment.

The implications of this research are twofold. Theoretically, it contributes to practice-theoretical strategy research by revealing new methods of strategic media management. It further deepens innovation theory by offering nuance to established perspectives on GPTs, doing justice to the ongoing evolution of AI technology. Practically, this research provides actionable insights for stakeholders in the film sector, highlighting how understanding their own sensemaking processes and dominant values can inform more effective context-specific AI strategies, and aid in consciously balancing innovation with artistic and ethical value preservation. Ultimately, the thesis underscores that the future of the film industry in the age of AI will be shaped by this ongoing, dynamic negotiation of meaning, value, and practice.

KEYWORDS: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Film Industry, Strategic Management, Content Creation, Practice Theory*

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Preface

''I don't know why people expect art to make sense when they accept the fact that life doesn't make sense.''

David Lynch to the Los Angeles Times, 1989

Sensemaking involves abstracting from reality. One could say that film has always been a channel of sense-making. An art form that marries existing arts, but is experienced to be so much more. John Mullarkey wrote an entire book dedicated to the ongoing interpretations and definitions of what the filmic medium actually is: movement, duration, or something that *thinks*? No answers, just perspectives.

Now there is AI, and we seem to face a similar wave of ongoing attempts to define what it actually means. Is it a tool, a robot, or a humanoid entity? Will Artificial General Intelligence arise? Will AI take over things we value? What strikes me is that many people continuously ask what it *could be*, before even fully understanding what it *is*. However, this goes with the assumption that AI can actually be captured within one coherent understanding.

This thesis is my attempt to bring sense into the relationship between these two complicated media. With my background in Film Studies, I know all about the history of film. The future, however, is as blank as it gets. The future of film starts with the ones making it: my reason to explore their strategic enactments. Gaining insights from the country's biggest directors, agencies, and production companies, I wanted to discover what AI means in their organizational context and how they manage it. Talking to independent filmmakers, industry consultants, and AI experts, this exploration turned into a full picture.

The question always remains: what *can* we know about the future? Futures Studies means breaking free from linear thinking, not extrapolating the present. However, by researching trends, discussing what futures could look like, and synthesizing perspectives, this thesis reveals the part of the future that *can* be uncovered: what would people do? And as I noted, asking about the future of AI should best involve understanding the present of AI. That is what I was after.

I want to pay explicit gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Sven-Ove Horst, for taking me through this process. Thank you for offering the best theoretical knowledge, the best critical lenses, and the best support to this project. I also want to thank all the participants, the ones that set apart their time when most others rejected. Thank you for sharing your knowledge, experiences, and values. I am happy to introduce you to a new framework of AI's meaning in the moving image, its industry, and its strategies.

1. Introduction

In 2024, one of the world's biggest digital marketing agencies, Monks, forcefully restructured to an artificial intelligence (AI) focused business model: a response to AI's disruption of content creation (*Campaignasia*, 2024, para. 1). In April 2025, they released a short film with the entire pipeline being AI generated, merely supported by human surveillance (Monks, 2025, para. 3). Only two weeks after its production, the Global CEO said at the Erasmus University Media Talks: ''If we had made it today, it would have been better.''

Although digital media have a short history, digital innovation has taken many shapes and forms. Croteau and Hoynes (2019) argue that throughout history, newly emerged (digital) media had not replaced their predecessor: radio had not destroyed print, television had not destroyed radio, and the internet had not ended television; making new technologies an accumulation of media (p. 56). They claim that the two prevailing beliefs, technology controlling humans versus humans controlling technology, are not opposites but exist within a continuum (pp. 57-58). They therefore believe that humans have an ambiguous relationship with innovation, where they are both in control of and controlled by technological evolution.

An example of this tension between humans and their relationship with digital innovation is the evolution of film. In the early 1900's, the U.S. film cartel that had priorly disabled competition got undermined: the French cartel-free model was adapted (p. 83). This way, surrounding forces eventually shaped a technology where its development and application was initially out of reach for U.S. independents and consumers (p. 84). This thesis investigates how this ambiguity manifests differently across the film industry, arguing that the nature of a practitioner's relationship with AI depends on one's role, resources, and values.

Although Croteau and Hoynes (2019) offer insights into how technological developments both shape and are shaped by human interaction, their scope is limited to the specific branches of media. Bresnahan and Trajtenberg (1995), on the other hand, focus on technologies that are not exclusive to one medium. In fact, whole eras of technological growth and economic progress are driven by these so-called general purpose technologies (GPTs) (p. 1). Think of the steam engine, electricity, and semiconductors (p. 1).[1] Rather than assessing such innovations through the lens of human autonomy vs determinism, the authors focus on how the process of GPT innovation can be rather tricky. Namely, this technology applies to so many sectors that coordination of development is hard: different stakeholders work on it separately (p. 3).[2]

[1] GPTs are characterized by their pervasiveness, their inherent potential for technical improvements, and their innovational complementarities (p. 1).
[2] Furthermore, the producer may be waiting for the sectors to innovate before investing in advancements, while the sectors wait for advancements before they innovate, slowing down the innovation (p. 5).

The development of AI sheds new light on these perceptions: it recently took the world by storm. What started as simple pattern matching algorithms in the 1960's developed into Artificial Intelligence Markup Language[3] between 1995 and 2000, and advanced in the early 2000's into deep learning, where computers could comprehend information beyond just text (Al-Amin et al., 2024, p. 2-3).[4] Then, the launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT in November 2022 made an impact that the world of AI had not seen before. Their ''super tool'' integrated language comprehension with text generation capabilities, backed up by Reinforcement Learning with Human Feedback (RLHF), acquiring one hundred million users within the first two months (Luchen & Zhongwei, 2024, p. 1). Bill Gates spoke of a revolution that is of historical significance comparable to the advent of the personal computer and the internet (p.1).

Since ChatGPT launched, AI is increasingly perceived as the new backbone of modern technology (Gupta et al., 2023, p. 1). Its advancements are so rapid that it has already affected the modern workplace significantly: more automation, improved decision making, and new possibilities for innovation (Daly et al., 2025, p. 1). As AI continues to infiltrate organizational processes, recognition of AI's potential to transform those processes increases (p.1). This integration affects firms immensely. With digitization, many media firms had already transformed from a duopoly of business and creativity into a triopoly of business, content, and technology; where technology became intrinsic to content and creative processes (Küng, 2017, p. 77); AI's role not even yet considered.

Generative AI (GenAI) is increasingly explored in the advertising industry, with brands like Coca-Cola releasing fully AI generated video advertisements (Horvath, 2024, para. 1-2). As a result, reduced need for location shooting expands creative boundaries (Yu et al., 2024, p. 4) and reduces production costs and time-consuming laborious repetitive work (Fang & Li, 2023, pp. 1-2). This lowers barriers to creating stunning visual effects for budget-constrained independents (Yu et al., 2024, p. 4), hinting at an emancipated film industry where anyone can enter with high quality works.

This thesis, therefore, focuses on what these developments mean for companies where film production is central to their business model. Rather than assessing technological advancements in isolation, this research investigates the perspectives of employees in this field. The aim is to generate understanding of how industry players act and feel around this technology. Through in-depth interviews with practitioners, this research aims to describe and reflect upon the use, potential, challenges, and current experiences of using AI in their work. The central research question is:

> *How do companies and practitioners in the film production industry manage the meaning and relevance of AI in strategic development and content creation?*

[3] (which was based on the principles of Pattern Recognition or Matching)
[4] (e.g. image, video, audio)

1.1.1 Practical Relevance

This research investigates the value of AI in film production. Literature already indicates multiple uses of AI in audiovisual production: it has potential in script preparation, pre-production, and post production, including automated editing (Sun, 2024, p. 4; Liu, 2024, p. 2).[5]

AI's value for production companies moves beyond purely content production. For instance, AI is a useful tool for scheduling shooting programs more effectively (Nassar, 2024, p. 207). Additionally, Warner Bros. shifted to Cinelytic AI based system to predict the achievement of its cinemas and box office revenues (p. 208).[6]

This thesis adheres to the practice-theoretical perspective of strategy, highlighting the roles of even entry-level practitioners as contributors to strategic development. In 2010, Ryan and Hearn noticed the ''next-generation filmmaking'' arising, referring to audiovisual content circulating the internet (p. 134). This led to new business models and opportunities that young, tech-savvy filmmakers could leverage, with potential results of entering the feature-film or television sector (p. 134). A blurred distinction between 'amateur' and 'professional' filmmakers resulted (p. 136). [7]

This research does not use the blurred distinction between professional and amateur filmmaking to argue that all filmmakers operate within the same market. However, as further supported by Motrescu-Mayes and Aasman (2019), the theory suggests that contemporary filmmaking is positioned in a playfield where different scales of audiovisual content creation are in some way interrelated (p. 1).[8] In other words, technological advancements create ways where existing business models are affected by new mergents. Therefore, perspectives from various players in the industry enable a more complete grasp on the actual practicalities of AI in film production.

1.1.2. Societal Relevance

As aforementioned, AI's promising opportunities do not come without challenges. The implementation of AI, for instance, leads to various controversies regarding media ethics, legal responsibilities, and copyright issues (Fang & Li, 2023, p. 5). Namely, GenAI is trained by vast amounts of copyrighted data to generate creative outputs, inducing heated discussion around intellectual property (Lucchi, 2023, p. 604). Proper use of copyright protection over AI generated and

[5] AI automated editing integrates a variety of AI models to make computer systems understand and edit film and television content (Liu, 2024, p. 2). This is done through simulating decision-making processes of human screenwriters and directors and automatically completing editing tasks in the form of labelling footage, analyzing content, cutting shots, and arranging time sequence (p. 2).
[6] However, such technology comes with high operational and maintenance costs, as well as required knowledge and potential unemployment (p. 208).
[7] More research and elaboration on a restructured industry are found in section A of the appendix.
[8] The authors claim that diverse sets of concepts of amateur media have merged with global visual narratives and everyday communication protocols, blurring the lines between amateur media practice and the canons of professional media and film practice (p. 1).

assisted works remain unsettled as the development of the technology invariably outpaces that of the law (Oberting, 2024, p. 125). With uncertain legal responsibilities, trust in AI should therefore not be overlooked. Trust, which can refer to many different elements of AI, determines whether individuals are willing to rely on AI, delegate tasks to it and work with AI tools (Daly et al., 2025, p. 1).

Another challenge associated with the ongoing rise of technological advancements, is the continuous pressure on media companies, forcing innovation to respond to societal demands (Küng, 2013, p. 78). They also need to sustain competitive advantage within these dynamic environments (Oliver, 2014, p. 58). Companies thus have to seek and sense opportunities (Oliver, 2014, p. 67). Before, commercial opportunities led to innovation, but nowadays, it is the other way round (Gambardella & McGahan, 2010, p. 267). This draws back to the example of Monks changing their organizational structure because of external pressure.[9]

1.1.3 Theoretical Relevance

Due to the unsettling environment that AI creates for audiovisual production businesses, it is crucial to assess AI in the film industry from a strategic perspective. Although existing studies perceive it as an indispensable force in the media and filmmaking sphere (Totlani, 2023, p. 973), revolutionizing content creation (Arora et al., 2024, p. 565), perspectives from film production leaders and entrepreneurs themselves have yet to venture into the academic research field. This while they are the ones that shape the industry; leading to this research' aim to investigate their experiences. After all, technological implications are only as relevant as their implementation.

Furthermore, this research aims to elaborate on the current issues on strategy-as-practice in the context of media management, particularly film. This adds value to ongoing discussions around strategy in the media field. Namely, the ongoing transformations of digital media are argued to enforce strategic management on immediate concerns, rather than rational planning, because the future is uncertain (Horst and Järventie-Thesleff, 2016, pp. 3-5). This perspective considers all staff that participate in shaping a company's future through local actions as contributors to its strategy (p. 5). This dynamic, continuous process within companies creates confusion and paradoxes, and is often managed by creating narratives of their process to make sense of their ungraspable journey (Horst & Moisander, 2015, p. 4). Such research, however, is mostly conducted on print media transitioning to digital, meaning that its implications for the complex and evolving mechanism of AI is understudied. Through gathering insights from different entrepreneurs, companies, and freelancers, this thesis will investigate what strategy implies for a sector undergoing procedural change, uncertainty, and a

[9] However, Gambardella and McGahan (2010) argue that investment in GPT's leads to high competition, uncertainty of the commercializable opportunities, and the overall risk that the next, more effective breakthrough in technology may be right ahead (p. 264). More on this in section 2 of the appendix.

changing competitive landscape. This thesis therefore makes a complementary contribution to both media studies and business studies.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework involves a practice-theoretical perspective on strategic media management. Within this broader concept, managing technology emerges as a subset, forming the second key concept. Further narrowing the scope, managing AI forms another subset, representing the final concept. This layered structure organizes various theories into a cohesive and accessible overview, guiding the interview questions.

2.1. Practice-theoretical Perspective

2.1.1. Changed Goal-Chasing

Media face uncertainty. For the past few decades, new digital technologies caused rapid changes in many business environments by undermining value propositions, strategies, and business models (Oliver & Parrett, 2018, p. 339).[10] Particularly media and entertainment were impacted by this digital transition (Imoh and Ifeanyi, 2023, p. 78).[11] For example, broadcasting required content transformation to remain relevant (p. 75). To actualize that, Imoh and Ifeanyi (2023) stressed understanding of various industry insights and practices, from budget adherence to incorporating analytics (p. 80): a list where planning is central.[12] However, their noticing of innovation like AI creating cost-effective, scalable solutions to current challenges makes them assert the cruciality of staying constantly up to date (pp. 86-87): a tension they overlook. Continuous adaptation and reconsideration challenges a comprehensive, mapped out strategy. After all, new technological opportunities that require investments complicate a scheduled, rigid budget adherence.

This tension highlights the inadequacy of strict planning models in a turbulent technological landscape, a problem addressed by researchers such as Oliver and Parrett (2018). They accordingly argue that changing dynamics and uncertainties in a business environment complicate a companies' long term vision (p. 340). The initial function of strategy (to provide long-term direction and competitive market positioning) is increasingly impacted by the need to consider new capabilities to gain competitive advantage (p. 340).[13] But since those future markets have not yet emerged, those considerations are troublesome (p. 340). They therefore propose a method that marries trends with

[10] I.e. the shift from traditional analog technology to digital technology.
[11] Internet adoption led to e-commerce, smartphones led to social media - allowing new ways of communication and self expression - and analog media were challenged by their digital substitutes (p. 78). This did not only introduce new business models by transforming consumer behavior, it laid the foundation for many technological innovations that have emerged since (p. 76-78).
[12] The full list entails: understanding target audience and competition; knowing which platforms to effectively use; adhering to the budget; creating a production schedule; planning promotion and distribution; and incorporating analytics (p. 80)
[13] They should consider new capabilities and their respective resource allocation and development.

imaginative thinking, offering a way to combine academics with the 'doing' of strategy: *strategy-as-practice* (pp. 341-342).[14]

Strategy as practice involves different, new conceptualizations of strategic activities are needed because of this increasing difficulty to visualize the future; be it by accelerating technological change, emerging business models, or shifting media consumption patterns (Horst & Järventie-Thesleff, 2016, pp. 3-5).

Research challenges the traditional view of strategy as something that an organization 'owns', highlighting how strategy is an organizing practice that its members (managers, editors, frontline staff) engage in to shape the future state of the organization: something people 'do' (p. 5). This contrasts *building mode*, where the strategist rationally plans towards a purpose that exists from their worldview, with the practice-focused *dwelling mode*, where the practitioner aligns immediate strategic action (i.e. local adaptations, situated practical coping) with the overall strategist identity (p. 4).[15] This makes strategy-*in*-practice a dynamic and evolving process of discovery towards an ambiguous future (p. 4). Thus, as recurring, unpredictable market transformations take hold of media firms, the practice-theoretical perspective looks for ways to perceive strategy as something that is untied to long-term intention. After all, when the environment shifts constantly, strategy may shift accordingly.

2.1.2. Roles of Strategy Shapers

If necessary organizational change leads to different actions which lead to different strategies, then what does strategy actually look like? Jarventië-Thesleff et al. (2014) zoomed in on how the roles of strategy practitioners flesh out in a continuously changing business environment. When comparing change management between firms, they defined *ambidexterity*: continuous exploration of new ways of doing business while exploiting existing capabilities (p. 134). On one hand, they investigated a company with exploitative strategy: a print magazine where strategy was tightly managed by senior executives to ''make things happen" (p. 131). On the other hand, they studied an exploratory company: an online magazine where 'trial and error' content production engaged even the editorial staff and consumers to not lose ground in the competitive, evolving digital space (pp. 131-133). Such expanded breadth of strategy made strategizing *intrapreneurial*: searching for business growth opportunities; questioning old ways of acting; and staying open to changes in their operating environment (p. 133).

[14] As a tool to create direction in an uncertain environment, the authors propose scenario-planning: a method of marrying trends with imaginative thinking (p. 341). As the authors therefore announce themselves, their article is one out of various ways to look at the strategy-as-practice domain: it combines academics with a focus on the practice (doing) of strategy (p. 342).

[15] With an unclear future ahead, immediate action is therefore what causes purposeful acting towards a future, potentially open goal (p. 4).

Balancing the two strategizing extremes is necessary to strategically survive the changing media market (p. 134). Exploitation enables efficiency, increased productivity, control, certainty, and variance reduction (p. 134). Exploration induces search, discovery, autonomy, innovation, and variation embracement (p. 134). The online company followed the turbulence of online media, the print company maintained traditional habits, and the authors propose to leverage the best of both worlds. It goes to show how collective, practice-based strategy intermediately gains relevance in established strategic media management.[16]

2.2. Strategic Management in Media Firms

Strategic management refers to the ways organizations align themselves with and respond to the demands of their external environment (Küng, 2017; Kosterich, 2019, p. 3). The previous section addressed how technological developments induced competition that pressured media firms into shifting strategic requirements, particularly the importance of practice-based strategy. Building on that, this section will enlarge the scope of strategic management in media firms by assessing the different changes and strategy approaches that media organizations undergo.

2.2.1. From External Demands to Institutional Change

Organizational change is driven by many(external) factors, which can be understood via an institutional framework. Institutional change examines the relationship between broader social, political, economic, and technological forces and organizational practices and structures (Scott, 1995; Kosterich, 2019, p. 4). Emerging professions, for instance, would impact the taken-for-granted understanding of who does what and when, as professions order, create, and provide meaning to distinct areas of an organization (p. 4).[17]

Institutional change happens in stages, from defining a problem to legitimizing its solution (p. 4). A justified adoption of change can ultimately be rejected or take form as the new taken-for-granted industry practice (p. 5).[18] Understanding this framework enables understanding of the crucial stages that ultimately determine organizational changes throughout an industry. The research concluded that new forces, like arising professions, initiate change; and organizations that change remain central (p. 12).

Considering that external forces can disrupt established industry recipes, causing organizations to modify, such intra-organizational modification comes with paradoxes. Namely, it

[16] An in depth overview is found in section B of the appendix.
[17] This way, emergence of new (and therefore less institutionally constrained) entrants introducing new possibilities can destabilize practices of an industry, potentially causing deinstitutionalization (p. 4).
[18] An in-depth paragraph on this study is found in section B of the appendix.

leads to different needs for managers versus employees: managers need to channel organizational change, exploration, and risk taking, while employees need stability, security, and self development (Horst & Moisander, 2015, p. 8).[19] Existing business models in mass media that no longer work require *strategic renewal*, challenging managers to deal with trade-offs and balancing competing needs; making paradox management another strategic activity on their extensive list (pp. 2-4). [20]

To deal with these intra-organizational paradoxes: managers can either accept or attempt to resolve them (p. 13).[21] Both routes boil down to day-to-day strategic practices of actively creating an organizational context where paradoxes are dealt with a sense of mutual trust, openness, and sensitivity, thus proper conflict management (p. 14). This reveals how strategic renewal as a response to technological/industry developments is not merely a matter of adaptation to market opportunities or pressure points. Rather, the pressure that media companies may face is the challenge of balancing such renewal with the intra-organizational culture and demands. This way, Kosterich (2019) examined the evolution of widespread practices, while Horst and Moisander (2015) deepened practice theory by examining practitioners' ongoing sensemaking in managing paradoxes: macro and micro-level lenses of strategic renewal that will help understand how widespread adoption of AI influences practitioners.

2.2.2. Emergent Strategies and Wayfinding

Given these institutional and organizational pressures, the question becomes: how do practitioners make sense of this constant transformation? Horst and Järventie-Thesleff (2016) propose the mechanism of narrative wayfinding.[22] The employees' struggle to change their identity and the managers' struggle to offer direction is a continuous process: something that benefits invaluably from using narratives (p. 4). Strategy-as-practice involves spontaneous actions that constitute strategy; the impossibility to plan such complex human interactions therefore results in emergent properties (p. 5).

As managers are well aware of their lacking capability to predict the future, their actions are immediate and their understanding of unfolding events comes from their engagement with the environment (p. 6). They use these past experiences to make an interpretation for the future, giving strategy a narrative form (p. 6).[23]

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[19] More on this in section B of the appendix.
[20] According to the source this includes: developing new technological capabilities, innovating business models, making decisions about collaboration in media production, or facilitating continuous change (p. 3-4).
[21] When accepting the paradoxes, they may adjust their expectations of linear progress and evolve towards more circular modes of thinking (p. 13). When trying to resolve the paradoxes, managers may either separate the conflicting poles across departments (spatially) or attend them at different times (temporally), or they might just develop a perspective that synthesizes the opposing poles (p. 14).
[22] As the practice-based lens of strategy entails that strategy emerges in firms going through transformational change, a changing environment leads to changing practices (Horst and Järventie-Thesleff, 2016, p. 4).
[23] The authors build on the definition of strategy emergence as an organizational pattern resulting from the interplay of local actions, practices, and intentions of all staff contributing to organizational strategy-making (p. 6).

The authors identify narratives in a journalism company on three levels: the employee, the manager, and the market (p. 10).[24] These narratives function as an anchorpoint from which to think further, structuring the meaning of events and offering a surface of reflection (p. 16). Understanding what is similar and different between the narratives helps understand specific needs and therefore lay the foundation of action (p. 16).[25] This way, the authors revealed how structuring the past can help structure the future. This thesis aims to explore how such strategic frameworks of sensemaking are managed with AI, a technology that potentially overwhelms practitioners' prior experience with change.

2.3. Managing Technology

The previous section highlighted how strategy is managed in media companies when undergoing change. To deepen the relevance for AI's innovative force, this section will specifically address change that is induced by technological innovation. It positions the concept of innovation in the modern, pre-GenAI media landscape to build up towards AI's implications.

2.3.1. General Purpose Technologies and Economic Progress

As explained in chapter one in this thesis, a technological development that is applicable to many different sectors (i.e. General Purpose Technology (GPT)) drives technological growth and economic progress on a wide scale (Bresnahan & Trajtenberg, 1995, p. 1). When a GPT arises, not only the technology itself innovates, but the wide applicability drives innovation across sectors (p. 2).[26] An example is when the introduction of electrical motors brought productivity gains that not only arose from reduced energy costs but also from efficient redesigning of factories (p. 2). This allows innovation to spread as a chain reaction.

[24] At the employee level, the narrative entailed a shift in competition, market dynamics, and working methods resulting in the open-ended question of who they are and what they are becoming (pp. 10-13). The managerial level faced the tension of concentrating on the things they know versus developing new practices for the digital age (p. 13). They are challenged to create a map of intra-organizational communication and collaboration while working through ongoing changes (p. 14). Their open-ended question is therefore about what their map is and where they are (p. 13). The market narrative involved the shift of new actors, products, consumer interests, and media consumption patterns, resulting in the open-ended question about what the terrain was in which the company worked (pp. 14-15).

[25] . Awareness of past experiences and their respective narrative provides the basis of shaping the future skilfully (p. 15).

[26] Also referred to as ‘’vertical externality’’ and ‘’horizontal externality’’.

2.3.2. Levels of Innovation and Media Firm Challenges

Before the AI era, media firms were already forced to innovate more than other sectors because technological advance and innovation are inextricably linked (Küng, 2013, p. 9). However, rather than driving growth, newly risen ways of audience engagement challenged established media firms to gain profit (p. 10). Innovation is therefore defined in three 'levels': incremental innovation, an improvement of existing processes that is easy to implement; architectural innovation, a modest advancement that may have complex ramifications but is easily graspable; and discontinuous innovation that causes a break within the system that makes it the most challenging level (p. 11). Discontinuous innovation brings new factors (e.g. knowledge, systems) that can destroy existing competencies and turn strategic assets into liabilities (p. 11). An example is when the recorded music industry transformed from cassette tapes to CDs to MP3 files (p. 11).

Discontinuous innovation is not new to the media sector. The advent of software caused new entrants to infiltrate legacy sectors (e.g. Uber in taxi services), necessitating established media firms to understand or even ''ape'' those organization's appeal (Küng, 2017, p. 78). A practical example is how journalism companies brought shorter headlines as a response to social media culture (p. 80). Innovation therefore made technology so dominant that it transformed from a carrier of creative content to a component of it (pp. 78- 81).[27] From a practice perspective, this transformation means the daily work and strategic 'doings' of creators are also fundamentally changed, requiring new skills and new forms of sensemaking. Rapid innovation, therefore, shortens the life expectancy of technological investments and increases demand for tech skills that complement field skills (pp. 79-80).[28]

In contrast to the previous sections on strategic renewal (where an organization makes strategic adaptations), technological innovation drives operational renewal, where a firm's entire business model has to suit the digital age (Lischka, 2019, p. 190) It does not occur from one day to the other but as a series of incremental changes (p. 191). When firms make sense of their environment, a pessimistic interpretation can hinder the reckoning of opportunities that lead to appropriate renewal (p. 182).

A hurdle for efficiently renewing strategic responses to environmental change is known as organizational inertia (p. 183). Inertia manifests in forms of (1) disrupted learning and interpretation of environmental information; (2) slowed or weakened responses to change; and (3) resistance among employees (p. 183). In companies where established structures and cultural norms create rigid path dependencies, inertia hinders renewal (p. 184). This hindrance can even be enhanced by residual market fit (i.e. the temporary market success of a company), which deteriorates awareness of the need to renew (p. 184).

[27] Enlarging the scope of creativity (p. 81).
[28] This decreases the value of those at the top of journalism companies (p. 80). There is thus a growing commonality of flexible teams (i.e. multi-disciplinary units that work on a project basis) (p. 80).

To overcome inertia (specifically the weakened response to change), companies have to find the willpower (p. 185). This willpower is determined by the severity of perceived environmental pressure and the extent to which they sense benefits from change (p. 185). In this sense, Lischka's (2019) research identified three company personas: leaders (who make the first move in the industry and set the stage for the future), learners (who sense opportunities by looking towards the future and identifying trends), and learners who become leaders (who gradually turn from acknowledging the innovative challenges to active players seizing the opportunities) (pp. 193-194).

Companies with greater willingness to lead the industry adopt digital technology earlier (p. 194). This draws a direct relationship between digital renewal and industry leadership. This importance of willpower highlights the centrality of practice: how work is done and how opportunities are seized. This introduces a complementary frame to what previously has been discussed. Rather than innovation as a forceful pressure, innovation can also be a huge opportunity. This view would suggest that interpreting AI as an opportunity ultimately leads to competitive advantage: a hasty claim that this research will explore.

2.3.5. Business Model Innovation with GPTs

As Lischka (2019) stressed the importance of operational renewal for industry leadership, this section evaluates that perspective in regards to GPTs specifically. A business model means managers' vision of what customers want and how they can meet those needs in a profitable way (Gambardella & McGahan, 2010, p. 263). Business model innovation (which enables competitive advantage (p. 269)) occurs when a firm adopts a novel approach to commercializing underlying assets; specifically intangible assets like intellectual property (p. 263).[29] The essence of a firm's strategy accordingly becomes the continual adaptation and control of such assets to remain relevant to its customers and suppliers (p. 263). For creative companies, however, such disruptive dynamic capabilities are challenging in the content unit as it leaves employees feeling uncertain and confused (Mijanen & Jantunen, 2014, p. 156). This could become a challenge for AI in content creation for film companies.

GPTs further complicate business model innovation as today's industry goes through long and costly processes to make companies understand the appeal for a technical solution to an unrecognized problem (p. 269).[30] Although it regardlessly has great potential for significant market advantage (p. 267), a business-model innovation may only be as profitable as the technological breakthrough lasts. Commercialial viability of GPTs has been hardly predictable (pp. 267- 270).[31] Unexpected leaders might emerge as new industries arise, and new generations of modified business models will

[29] Because intellectual property increasingly grounds today's economy (p. 263).
[30] GPTs reversed the established order: commercial opportunities or technical problems priorly drove innovation, but now, new technical solutions seek out commercial opportunities to leverage (p. 267).
[31] Due to a lack of rapid testing methods, which complicated anticipation of opportunities across economic sectors (p. 267-270).

eventually solve problems and capitalize on opportunities from original breakthroughs (p. 270). Therefore, This could mean that leveraging an innovation is risky: what happens when it suddenly is not relevant anymore?

2.3.4. Diffusion of Innovations in Media

Although the previous sections addressed levels of innovative challenges, it portrayed innovation itself as something singular instead of dissecting its many facets, which is relevant for AI's vast variety of functionalities. Innovations arise in packages rather than one at a time (Ekdale et al., 2015, p. 939).[32] An innovation, be it an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by the one adopting it, communicates through certain channels among the members of a social system: a process known as 'diffusion' (p. 939). The following innovation attributes create understanding of why some ideas do or do not diffuse quickly: (1) relative advantage (how much better is the idea towards its predecessor?); (2) compatibility (how consistent is the idea with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters?); (3) complexity (how difficult to understand and use is the idea perceived to be?); (4) trialability (how much can it be experimented with on a limited basis?); (5) observability (how well are the results of an innovation visible to others?) (pp. 939-940).[33] Innovations where these factors are not resisted get routinized (p. 953).

This makes innovation not a one-size-fits-all concept: it is a multifaceted process that rarely arises in isolation. By understanding the different types of innovation that can diffuse, the attributes that build up to that, and the stages that take place, it becomes more manageable to comprehend the complex process, especially when making sense of AI. It allows for more directed analysis of where companies may struggle with adopting changes or where opportunities can be leveraged, all the while highlighting the relevance of organizational routine.[34] This way, innovation theory suggests a multifaceted adoption of AI in film production, with both technical and cultural obstacles. However, the implication for strategic enactment of handling this GPT remains underexplored.

2.4. Managing AI

2.4.2. Overview of AI in Film Production

The entertainment industry is constantly evolving and AI is transforming the way we create, produce and distribute films (Channa et al., 2024, p. 1). AI makes its mark in the film industry as both

[32] Or they overlap.
[33] More context on the study in section 2 of the appendix.
[34] This further justifies the practice-theoretical lens of this thesis.

an analytical and generative tool. AI-powered algorithms can examine a film's potential success by analyzing data such as script content, social media trends, and audience demographics; while GenAI can create virtual characters and backgrounds, reducing the need for costly special effects and set design (p. 2).

GenAI refers to a subset of AI that is focused on autonomously producing content that closely imitates human-created data (Totlani, 2023, p. 973). Currently, multiple public platforms that enable creators to generate visual content (animations, visual effects, texts) are already driven by AI (p. 973). [35] AI can not only deliver higher work efficiency and lower production costs (pp. 2-3), it is also believed to expand creative boundaries (Yu et al., 2024, p. 4). By generating new ideas and insights, filmmakers may explore new storytelling possibilities (Channa et al., 2024, p. 4).[36]

Table 1. Feature films using AI (Channa et al., 2024, p. 7).

Serenity (Knight, 2019)	AI was implemented to create replicas of the cast to reshoot changes in the film's narrative.
Mosaic (Soderbergh, 2018)	Interactive, choose-your-own-path film where AI analyzes viewer behavior to adjust the narrative.
Blade Runner 2049 (Villeneuve, 2017)	AI-created digital replicas of the cast in certain scenes for more efficient filming.

In film production, AI potentially infiltrates all stages: script preparation, preliminary preparation, and post production (Sun, 2024, p. 1).[37] A film script is 110 pages on average and semi-structured into scenes or structural units including dialog and description of action (p. 1).[38] Rather than the typical twelve weeks it takes to write a script, AI can either increase efficiency (assisting the writer with gathering facts and data for plot hints) or it can create an entire script on the spot (p. 1). Although it is also believed to make the narrative more compelling by exploring more

[35] Exemplifying the versatility and accessibility of GenAI and showcasing its creative potential in media and film. As of now, there are different models of generative AI that are constantly under development, which are: Generative Adversarial Networks ((GANs) for enhancing and upscaling); Variational Autoencoders ((VAEs) for new content generation); Diffusion Models ((e.g., Dall-E) for innovative content generation); and Transformer-Based Models ((e.g., GPT-3) for language tasks like scripts, dialogues and textual descriptions of scenes) (pp. 974-975).

[36] AI can furthermore significantly impact content generation and enhancement; visual effects and CGI; script writing and story generation; personalized content recommendations; and post-production and editing (including voice dubbing and music generation) (Totlani, 2023, p. 977).

[37] More implications discussed in section B of the appendix.

[38] More about script writing in section B of the appendix.

creative concepts, critics believe that AI's algorithmic nature limits human depth: it would not capture human emotions or complexity (p. 2).

Pre-production is the process of planning and executing each task that has to be finished before production (p. 2). Involving potentially twelve different steps, increasing efficiency saves both costs and time, which AI can enable (p. 2).[39] Particularly the most important step, the script break-down, can be automated, relieving the staff from manually disassembling the script into a lengthy Excel sheet (p. 2).[40]

In post-production, where footage is edited by means of, for instance, trimming, color-grading, and adding music, AI can significantly reduce the overwhelming load for the editing department to select the appropriate shooting materials (pp. 2-3). An example is when CCTV News completed a video of the National Day celebrations in 2019 through AI editing (p. 3). Although this does not fully relieve the director from the duty, it increases productivity (p. 3).[41]

2.4.3. AI in Creative Processes

2.4.3.1. AI and Scriptwriting

Script writing is not only the blueprint for structure and plot but also the film's literary core, making its quality a significant influence on the film's artistic success (Luchen and Zhongwei, 2024, p. 2). Writing a script with AI is therefore believed to only gain short-term efficiency benefits: society values emotionally rich and sincere work based on human experiences (p. 2).

Scholars therefore address the need for deep learning to make AI break free from its limited expression of human emotion (p. 2). Luchen and Zhongwei (2024) argue there's a long way to go before AI can achieve such independent work (p. 2).[42] For the future, some scholars and developers believe that high-quality creativity will be possible for large-scale productions (p. 3). They believe that the creative process of scriptwriting involves methods, techniques, and logic that constitute an

[39] The full list of steps entails: locking the shooting script, finalizing the budget, forming an new company, hiring key department leads, breaking down the script, storyboarding, scouting and securing locations, casting actors and hiring crew, getting permits and insurance, scheduling shoot days, performing a tech scout, and arranging equipment rentals (p. 2)

[40] AI can furthermore assist production to adhere to budget by keeping track of spendings and prompt the team to steer clear of financial hazards using multi-level association forms (including props, clothes and other data) (p. 2). Additionally, AI can help filmmakers choose more suitable actors (p. 2). Currently in Hollywood, actors are chosen via a wide range of criteria, going from physical features to experience and honors (p. 2). AI can compress the criteria into a sizable database that connects the similarity between the actor and audition labels (p. 2).

[41] An additional example of AI in post-production is, logically, the creation of digital special effects (p. 3), which the next section will give a more in-depth overview on.

[42] They reveal four stages of AI in script-writing: pseudo-original stage (mechanical character substitution), auxiliary creation stage (formulaic and routinized creation), proposition stage (deep learning based on event models, character relationships, specific elements), and fully automatic stage (machine-independent completion of content creation) (p. 2). By the time of writing the article, they position the status of AI to be between the proposition and fully automatic stage (p. 2).

existence that can be structured mathematically, enabling AI to write scripts and evaluate them using numerous, specific, quantifiable metrics (p. 3).

A rising concern, however, is that current language models rely on data analysis, prioritizing high frequency vocabulary and sentence structures from the database, resulting in a high dependence on quality data, which may deplete in a few years causing a standstill in AI development (p. 4). And since AI content increases and copyright concerns may challenge substantial data expansion, this concern may even become more threatening (p. 4).

2.4.3.2. AI and Post-Production/Editing

Current literature predicts increasing AI use in the creative field but that with AI remaining an assistant rather than replacing the human mind (Liu, 2024, p. 2). Particularly because the film industry is known as the ‘’dream factory’’, where infinite creative imagination is central (p. 2). [43] Research showed that AI editing had a significant promotion effect on creative freedom, content and theme-fit, cost-effectiveness and diversity of content in film and television works (p. 1). An impact-analysis on AI and human edited film concluded that AI-edited content performed better in dimensions of interactivity, interestingness, readability, informativeness and behavioral change (p. 16). Furthermore, the analysis showed that audience’s participation was stronger in AI-edited film and TV works (p. 16).

Besides Liu’s (2024) findings on AI automated editing, the author proposes the technology as an assistant rather than an autonomous agent.[44] Sun (2024) and Luchen and Zhongwei (2024), on that note, acknowledge the incompatibility of AI with human creativity, but also propose possibilities for AI to dominate roles in film production.

2.4.4. Barriers to AI Adoption

As innovation barriers reinforced the vision of the previous chapter, research by Yu et al. (2024) identified barriers to AI adoption in video.[45] Perceived innovation was a detrimental barrier to the study’s participants. GenAI’s retrieval mechanism generated videos too similar in style and theme, therefore lacking true innovation (p. 12). However, when regarding AI as an assistant to human innovative thinking, trust in AI’s future innovative capabilities was high (p. 19).

The market demand of GenAI formed a cyclical barrier with technological readiness and reliability, both influencing the level and direction of the other (pp. 18-19). Cross-disciplinary collaboration determined the perceived accessibility and convenience of the tool: how well do

[43] More on AI in editing in section B of the appendix.
[44] Rahman and Ali (2024) (appendix section B) align with this view, suggesting AI’s potential impact on script writing being particularly useful for brainstorming.
[45] Those are: innovation, market demand, technological maturity, cross-disciplinary collaboration, ethics and privacy, public acceptance, data security and copyright, and global versus local perspectives (p. 11-12).

different fields of AI tools interconnect (p. 19). Societal trust linked to ethics and privacy, with data security and fair copyright leading to public acceptance (p. 19). Finally, crucial for wide-range-adoption was the adherence of the tool to regional cultures rather than exclusively global culture (p. 19).

The research by Yu et al. (2024) does not list these barriers merely to frame AI as an undesirable asset in film production. Rather, it aims to reveal which aspects are critical to ensure future AI adoption in film production and how those aspects are interconnected.

2.4.5. Ethical, Legal, and Humanistic Implications

2.4.5.1. AI and Authorship

GenAI represents copyright law's latest disruption: it raises unanticipated questions about the proper scope of copyright authorship (Oberting, 2024, p. 138).[46] Because GenAI outputs are derived from specific training data, it is unclear whether copyright sustains effective protection when AI is used beyond only assisting human control (p. 141). AI itself cannot be recognized as an author in current copyright law, complicating instances where film productions have potentially incorporated copyrighted material into their AI-generated content (p. 142).

Another challenge in regards to copyright infringement is that it is not automatically processed and requires proof that the alleged infringer had direct access to the source material and used it without permission (pp. 157-158).[47] Therefore, a copyright infringement claim, even of an entirely identical work, will fail if direct access and unauthorized use is not proven (p. 158). This complicates copyright infringement with GenAI as the training data of the model is not accessible (with many online materials being public domain as well), making it impossible to identify the contribution of the exact works that created the output (p. 158).

On the other hand, the sole purpose of copyright, to enforce viability, would be contradicted if GenAI use gets so restrictive that it hinders innovation, particularly for independent creators (p. 142).[48] Hence, the Copyright Act expressly supports the opportunity for protection over creative work including those by machines, making AI fit that flexible framework appropriately (p. 142).[49] Oberting (2024) additionally argues that for the motion picture industry, GenAI applications where human control is still dominant (e.g. using AI as a tool) make it easier to copyright and that generally, the

[46] And the circumstances of rightful ownership (Oberting, 2024, p. 138).
[47] This is to avoid coincidences of similarity (Oberting, 2024, pp. 157-175).
[48] The author argues that GenAI has a democratic implication: it could lower the barriers for independent filmmakers to create high quality content (p. 139).
[49] As filmmakers rely on copyright to own, market and protect their work for profit (p. 142).

result of more people being able to enter the creative field only allows for more creative, copyrightable content (pp. 143-148). [50]

Oberting (2024) therefore calls for a flexible copyright framework that can protect work with dominant human control without hindering innovation that might hinder opportunities for independent filmmakers, even at the cost of full protection (p. 166). Authorship requirements will depend on the level of human control (e.g. a mere prompt would not suffice for that) which motion pictures meet by default: they require so many processes and complex decisions that human control will be sufficient for authorship requirements (p. 165).[51] That being said, agreements need to be made on compensating authors for their work to ensure fair use and indirectly encourage innovation (p. 169).[52]

2.4.5.2. A Humanistic Lens on AI

Yumeng and Xiao (2025) argue that AI implementations into script creation are a threat to creativity, as scripts and characters are based on big data analysis and algorithmic prediction, risking film to become homogenized, lacking new ideas (p. 2). Data bias enhances this, generating content based on the training data that lacks diversity, resulting in content with specific tendencies (p. 2).

The authors furthermore address that AI implementation in the film sector threatens jobs like animators and editors (p. 2). This results in an unequal shift in the labor market, where those who master AI technology will get higher income and better career development opportunities while people who do not adapt face the risk of unemployment and marginalization (p. 2). They add that film is an expression of human nature, and that AI implementation will diminish emotional connection with the audience (pp. 3-4). They do believe that this threat to humanistic care can be balanced with innovation through responsible AI implementation that would require transparency on AI usage and training data, as well as a new agency that reviews ethical uses of AI in film (p. 4).

Daly et al. (2025) researched the relationship between trust in AI and organizational adoption. Since trust is crucial in AI implementation, understanding the factors that influence trust in AI is vital for organizations hoping to realize its potential (p. 1). Attitude is an example of such a factor: an employee that perceives AI as a threat to jobs or privacy hinders trust and adoption, while positive attitudes towards AI's reliability and performance enhance trust (p. 1).[53]

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[50] The 2023 WGA and SAG-AFTRA agreements set groundbreaking standards for generative AI use in studio productions following lengthy negotiations and strikes. These agreements mandate transparency, consent, and compensation, suggesting self-regulation within industries can address AI concerns effectively. The film industry's approach provides a framework for other sectors and highlights the need for flexible, case-by-case assessments of authorship and intellectual property in the age of AI. (p. 155-157)

[51] Additionally, the author claims that film studios have the unique position that they can train GenAI models with their own vast amounts of material (p. 166).

[52] Compensation perhaps via blockchain integration.

[53] Attitudes toward AI differ from those toward other technologies due to AI's complex decision-making, perceived usefulness and ease of use, perceived benefits and risks, context, and ethical considerations (p. 2). Factors influencing attitudes include age, gender, education, job displacement concerns, perceived benefits, user

Paradoxical reactions occur when individuals have both positive and negative attitudes towards AI depending on the context, revealing a dynamic nature in trust on AI (p. 2). Organizational context and leadership is also a big influence on trust and acceptance on AI, as it was shown that large and AI supportive firms, positive attitudes towards this technology were more common (p. 2). Their research found that the more informed people were about the technology, the higher the positive attitudes and trust levels (p. 5). Context of operation also affected this (pp. 5-6).[54]

The research showed that higher trust was associated with higher organizational AI adoption, but that organizational context also influenced trust, think of healthcare or financial services, where the stakes are higher (p. 6).

Singh (2024) challenges the notion of ethical AI use by addressing the uncontrollable rise of deepfakes, fake news, and hoaxes (pp. 134-173). As these implications are widely discussed, an anti-deepfake law was proposed in the U.S. (p. 175).[55]

These perspectives considered, Murgia (2024) zooms out and proposes the prevailing approach of ‘’AI ethics’’ to be problematic.[56] The criticism lies in the idea that ethics do not exist in isolation: AI is a reflection of an unethical environment (p. 1). This perspective aligns with recent developments of big tech companies (Meta, X, and Microsoft) disbanding their entire ethics teams (p. 1-2). Murgia is concerned with the larger power-dynamics that AI ethics are related to. Namely, prevailing ‘ethics camps’ focus solely on moral principles which hinders proper understanding of ethics’ normative political nature, like how these principles can overshadow more pressing political concerns, such as the regulatory capture of the field by the big-tech industry (p. 2). Murgia’s (2024) paper therefore offers a new and critical lens that suggests a much broader scope of where AI ethics are most crucial. In particular, if AI is a reflection of larger power dynamics, how does that boil down to an individual user? This thesis aims to uncover this underexplored territory where AI’s opportunities, limitations, and ethical considerations are synthesized within practitioners’ strategic vision.

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control, prior exposure, understanding of capabilities versus risks, and ethical concerns, all shaping AI perception (p. 2).

[54] Positive attitudes drive trust in AI, particularly among self-perceived experts and those open to new and future-oriented approaches (p. 6). Increased AI knowledge fostered realistic views and calibrated trust in this group (p. 6). Conversely, negative attitudes, stemming from perceived threats or lack of agency, reduce trust (p. 6). However, experiencing personal benefits can shift negative attitudes to positive ones, lower perceived threat, and increase trust (p. 6). Instrumental attitudes also increase trust upon demonstration of AI's utility, leading to positive attitudes (p. 6).

[55] More elaborate explanation in appendix section B.

[56] She makes a distinction between ‘’ethics camps’’ within AI ethics discourse. The first camp involves the broader framework (by public organizations or corporations to temper the perceived dangers of AI) that typically notes terms as fairness, privacy, and explicability (p. 1). The second camp critiques and scrutinizes the previous camp for ‘’ethics washing’’, a term alleging them to appear ethical while engaging in unethical practices (p. 1).

Table 1. Theoretical Concepts

Article	Concepts
Practice-Theoretical Perspective & Strategic Management in Media Firms	
Oliver and Parrett (2018)	Strategic Uncertainty; Scenario-Planning; Strategy-as-Practice.
Horst and Järventie-Thesleff (2016)	Strategy-as-Practice; Dwelling Mode vs. Building Mode; Emergent Strategy; Narrative Sense-Making.
Jarventië-Thesleff et al. (2014)	Print vs. Online Strategy; Ambidexterity (Exploitation/Exploration); Interactive Strategizing.
Küng (2017)	Intrinsic Technology in Media; Media Firm Adjustment to New Entrants; Shifting Expertise Needs.
Kosterich (2019)	Institutional Change Framework; Deinstitutionalization.
Horst and Moisander (2015)	Intra-Organizational Paradoxes; Strategic Renewal Needs; Paradox Management.
Managing Technology / Innovation	
Bresnahan & Trajtenberg (1995)	General Purpose Technologies (GPTs); GPT Characteristics; Innovational Complementarities.
Küng (2013)	Media Innovation Pace; Innovation Types (Incremental, Architectural, Discontinuous).
Lischka (2019)	Technology-Driven Renewal; Organizational Inertia; Renewal Willpower.
Nambisan (2016) (Appendix)	Digital Entrepreneurship; Generativity; Evolving Value Proposition; Opportunity Rescoping.
Ekdale et al. (2015)	Innovation Diffusion Theory; Innovation Attributes (esp. Compatibility); Resistance to Cultural Change.
Gambardella and McGahan (2010)	GPTs & Business Model Innovation; Market for Technology; Solution-Seeking Innovation.
Managing AI (including Definition of Film & Ethical/Legal/Humanistic Implications)	
Channa et al. (2024)	AI in Film Transformation; AI as Analysis/Generating Tool.
Totlani (2023)	Generative AI Definition; GenAI Models; AI Impact Areas (Film).
Yu et al. (2024)	AI & VFX Accessibility; AI Adoption Barriers; Trust in AI Tools (as assistant).
Fang and Li (2023)	AI & Production Costs; AI Implementation Controversies (Ethics, Legal, Copyright).

Nassar (2024)	AI in Production (Scheduling, Box Office Prediction); Future AI Implications (Cliché Avoidance, Creativity Enhancement).
Sun (2024)	AI in Production Stages (Script, Pre-Prod, Post-Prod); AI Script-Writing (Efficiency/Limitations).
Liu (2024)	AI Automated Editing; AI as Assistant; AI Editing Applications & Impact.
Luchen and Zhongwei (2024)	ChatGPT; AI Script-Writing Stages & Debate; AI Data Dependency.
Rahman and Ali (2024)	AI Script Brainstorming; AI Creativity Limitations.
Singh (2024)	Deepfakes; Fake News.
Oberting (2024)	GAI & Copyright Disruption; AI Authorship; WGA/SAG-AFTRA Agreements; Flexible Copyright Law.
Yumeng and Xiao (2025)	AI Scripting Threat (Homogenization, Bias); AI & Job Displacement; Responsible AI.
Daly et al. (2025)	Trust in AI; AI Adoption; AI Attitudes; Organizational Context & Trust.
Kamali et al. (2024)	Ethical AI Frameworks; Context-Specific AI Ethics.
Murgia (2024)	‘’AI Ethics’’ Critique; ‘’Ethics Washing’’; AI Ethics & Power Dynamics.
Saeidi (2025) (Appendix)	Emotionalized AI (EAI); EAI & Meaning of Life.

3. Research Design and Methods

3.1. Qualitative Research

To explore the meaning of AI in the film industry, this research follows a qualitative approach. Qualitative research aims to understand human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena by exploring the ‘’why’’and ‘’how’’behind them, rather than relying on numerical data (Agarwal, 2019, p. 79). The complexity of contemporary surroundings, be it a business world or any aspect of life, requires such research methods to uncover deeper meanings, perspectives, and contexts that shape individuals’ actions and interpretations (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Agarwal, 2019, p. 79; Awashty, 2020, pp. 145-146).

This qualitative design is particularly aligned with the study's practice-theoretical framework, which emphasizes understanding the situated actions, sensemaking, and emergent strategies of individuals within their specific contexts. It also aligns appropriately with the research’ purpose to investigate the turbulent environment of AI in audiovisual production. Attaining insights from those that shape this sector is essential for understanding and making meaning of the impact and implications that AI actually has, particularly for a business environment, where an impact is context and firm-dependent. Therefore, complying with the inherent flexibility of qualitative research, this research remains open to unanticipated insights from the data collection. Considering that qualitative research best suits under-researched topics (Moriarty, 2011, p. 1), and that innovation theory, strategy theory, and pragmatic filmmaking theory lack the contemporary implications of AI, this method enables the best grasp on the research topic.[57]

3.2. Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

This research investigates management of AI by film practitioners: an exploratory stance that identifies key themes and practitioner perspectives for building an initial understanding, rather than tests pre-defined hypotheses. When focused on such experiences, values, and perspectives, in-depth interviews enable to uncover ‘‘deeper’’ meanings and knowledge than what a survey can obtain (Johnson, 2001, p. 100). In-depth interviews typically consist of long one-on-one interviews with good connection with the participant, capturing meaning behind phenomena with dispersed perspectives (‘what’ and ‘how’ questions) (pp. 99-101). It is therefore best suited for exploratory research (p. 101), further justifying this research’ openness towards unprejudiced AI insights: to not exclude relevant AI perspectives prematurely.

[57] More on qualitative research in section C of the appendix.

The interviewer's personal lack of experience allows for a more open-minded reception of the participant's perspective; with the aim being to reach a similar level of understanding of the topic as the participant (pp. 101-103). The theoretical framework was used as the basis for the interview questions, as shown in table 4. Most interviews took place on Google Meet for participant's convenience, sustaining the benefit of perceiving gestures.[58] One interview was at the office of the company.[59]

3.3. Sample and Data Collection

Qualitative research involves small scale sampling that is purposely selected on the basis of salient criteria (Moriarty, 2011, p. 2).[60] The practice-theoretical perspective, aligned with the interactive playing field of different scale film industry practitioners, calls for a breadth of different industry perspectives. In this research, different business models, say, a director depending on funding of millions of euros (Vitkauskaitė, 2017, p. 259) versus a freelancer being paid upfront for a brand video, are not a threat to validity but an enrichment.[61] As filmmaking practices do not exist in a vacuum, perspectives from different actors all affected by this same overarching (AI) disruption induce the inclusive overview that does justice to the research question and practice-theoretical lens. [62]

At least eight in-depth interviews suffice for valid qualitative research (Johnson, 2012, p. 108). This research contains twelve interviews. The researcher's social circle was leveraged to interview practitioners directly or via the snowballing method.[63] Other potential participants were searched via relevant key terms on LinkedIn and Instagram, with the intent to include different genders, age groups, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds.[64] Messages or emails were sent to potential participants, mentioning the Master's programme and University, thesis topic, interview duration (15-30 minutes), in person and online interview options, and their value to this research. To ensure the sample diversity was not dependent on respondents, poorly represented fields were contacted more along the way of the participant collection. [65]

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[58] Most of them were either short on time, were not at the office, or lived far away. Face-to-face interviews are shown to be more effective than telephone interviews since the researcher can report the participants' gestures (Moriarty, 2011, p. 9). Because telephone interviews typically last shorter than in-person meetings, the need for the researcher to say ''mmm'' and ''yeah'' is crucial for making the participant elaborate on their answer (Moriarty, 2011, p. 9). These 'back-channeling' communicative efforts were naturally applied by the researcher, which is therefore useful for online meetings where the two individuals are obviously not in the same room.
[59] Elaboration found in section C of the appendix.
[60] Purposive sampling is further discussed in section C of the appendix.
[61] See also: *3.5.1. Validity*
[62] More on the sample in section C of the appendix.
[63] Snowball sampling involves finding suitable participants by recommendation of participants (from the researcher's social circle) that were already included (Parker et al., 2019, p. 3).
[64] Examples of key terms: ''AI'', ''Production'', ''Film'', ''Television'', ''Videography''.
[65] More on participant acquisition in section C of the appendix.

The interviewer's phone's integrated recorder app automatically transcribed the interviews, which were manually corrected for errors afterwards. Johnson (2012) asserts one hour-long interviews (p. 107). Participant's time constraints and lack of engagement with longer proposed interview requests resulted in an average length of 30 minutes: where interviews fell into repetition. Dutch people were interviewed in Dutch and translated afterwards.[66] Considering the value of digressing to unexpected perspectives (Johnson, 2012, p. 107), follow-up questions to new insides accompanied the prepared questions.

Table 3.

Participant	**Profession**	**Agency**	**Language & Location**	**Interview Duration**	**Experience Example**
Luca (LC)	Entrepreneur, Allround Filmmaker	Co-Owned Film Agency	Dutch - Google Meet	30 min.	Documentary Projects, Personal Projects
Elie (EL)	Freelancer, Content Creator	Personal Brand	Dutch - Google Meet	25 min.	Music Videos (established artists), Brand Videos
Timothee (TH)	Freelancer/Entrepreneur, Content Creator	Personal Brand	Dutch - Google Meet	25 min.	Brand Videos (established brands), Personal Content
Marc (MA)	Film Director		Dutch - Google Meet	45 min.	Featured Films (international, multi award-winning, A-list Hollywood cast)
Florian (FL)	Freelancer, Content Creator	Personal Brand	Dutch - Google Meet	25 min.	Brand Video's, Personal Content
Justin (JU)	Creative Director	Dutch Film Production Company (7 employees, top 3 production firms of south-Netherlands)	Dutch - Company's Office	55 min.	Brand Video's (established brands), Creative Projects
Jari (JA)	Entrepreneur/Student	Co-Owned Film Agency	Dutch - Google Meet	35 min.	Documentary Projects,

[66] See also ''Ethics'' section.

Participant	Profession	Agency	Language & Location	Interview Duration	Experience Example
	Cinematography				Film Academy Projects
Jasper Jesse (JJ)	Senior Vice President Growth and AI Transformation	International Advertising & Digital Media Agency (7000 employees)	Dutch - Google Meet	30 min.	Brand Campaigns, Brand Video's, Brand Distribution (A-list Brands)
Joselyn (JO)	AI Technologist	Own AI Company	English - Google Meet	25 min.	AI Development, AI Research
Frank (FR)	AI Researcher, Technologist, and Lecturer	Dutch University	English - Google Meet	35 min.	AI Research, AI Development
Joseph (JH)	Strategy Consultant for Screen-related Industries	Screen-related Consultancy Agency	English - Microsoft Teams	40 min.	Strategizing for Production Companies
Dina (DI)	AI Developer	Dutch Bank	Dutch - Google Meet	25 min.	AI Development

Table 4. (Highlighted questions were most asked)

Source	Concept	Question
Horst and Moisander (2015)	Strategic Renewal/ Paradoxes	-How do you see your company/work develop in the future? -Which pressures create a necessity for change? -How do you feel about this change? -How do you balance your personal values with this (need for) change? -What are tensions that you notice when envisioning development in your company/work?
Horst and Järventie-Thesleff (2016)	Wayfinding	-How would you describe strategy in your own words? -Is strategy something that you consciously implement in your work? -Who do you consider responsible for strategy? -What do you do to shape the future of your organization/work? Who do you do it with? -What are the biggest challenges right now? -Which practices, routines or aspects are most important to be successful at this moment?
Oliver and Parrett (2018)	Scenario Planning	-How do you envision the future of your work? -What do you do to manage such uncertainty?
Kosterich (2019)	Institutional Change	-What do you do to adapt to the ongoing changes in your work and context? -Do you see a possibility in new professions rising in your workfield?
Mianen and Jantunen (2014)	Dimensions of Strategic Renewal	-Is there a secret recipe for developing well? How would you describe that?

Küng (2017)	Managing Technology & Innovation Managing AI	-What are the biggest challenges with AI in your work right now? -Do you notice any objections (in your team) when it comes to the usage of AI in production? In what fields? -What is the role of management in supporting, fostering or hindering the use of AI in your work? -How do you perceive AI supports or hinders creativity? -What can you do to get the most out of the current application and tools of AI for your work? How do you use it? -Do you wish to have more skills (within your organization) around AI implementation?
Ekdale et al. (2015)	Adoption of Innovation Working with AI	-How does using AI in production resonate with the values of you(r organization)? -Which values are important for working with AI? -Which values are an obstacle for working with AI? How would you balance these extremes in your daily work? -Where do you think will AI be most useful in your work? -What do you think is the role of AI in content production? -How do you perceive AI's potential in your work to develop? -Is it easy to work with AI in your work right now? Can you describe that a bit?
Küng (2013)	Pressure to Innovate	-Which values do you think your audiences want from you? -Which values does society currently values and want? Have you noticed a shift in that? -How do you respond to these values of society? -Which values would you like to see more? -What can you do to foster and practice them? -Do you have a trick or best practice for how to fuse your values with the use of AI? -What would you like to learn or do to feel ready for anything that comes? -What do you think your colleagues would say about this? What do you think they need or want?

		-If you could give one advice to yourself or to others, what would that be?

3.4. Data Analysis

To find patterns, connections, and concepts in the interview data, thematic analysis (TA) was conducted as it is an effective way to construct themes that do justice to the pile of qualitative data (Terry et al., 2017, p. 3). The construction of themes enables answering the research question (Vaismoradi, 2016, p. 101). Open coding was conducted on the transcripts using Atlas.ti. Open coding involves carefully reading, then summarizing the data and dividing them into fragments (Boeije, 2010, p. 96). There's no selection made between what's relevant or not, the code just represents the meaning of the data (Boeije, 2010, p. 96). All that were similar but with different names were merged. Merging of codes involves a cycle in the first stage of initial coding that cleans up the code list (Friese, 2012, p. 24). Continuous cycles of reassessing the data resulted in 547 total open codes being refined to 126 codes. The codes were broadly categorized with prefixes for oversight (see also: Friese, 2012, p. 29): AI related codes having ''AI'' in the name, industry related codes having ''INDUSTRY'' in the name etcetera.[67] After merging, handwritten mind maps were made, including all codes and their respective citations, assuring full capture of the nuances and interconnectedness. This was to avoid errors in the merging process and lay the foundation for later mind maps.

Open coding was followed by axial coding, making connections between categories derived from the codes (Boeije, 2010, p. 108). Second-cycle coding involves further classifying codes to develop conceptual organization (Friese, 2012, p. 31). The small, specific mind maps for first cycle coding laid the foundation of broader mind maps for this second cycle. This was crucial as constant reassessment of interrelatedness is key to proper axial coding (Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 52). After 4 large mind maps were made, axial coding was fully conducted on Atlas.ti by naming codes under categories and sub-categories. This resulted in some more merged codes, and some codes that were categorized under 'excess' (as they did not reflect larger meanings), leaving with 85 total codes.

Finally, selective coding was conducted to draw larger concepts and themes from the codes. This step further allows the researcher to select and integrate the extracted categories into cohesive and meaning-filled expressions (Williams and Moser, 2019, p. 52). This involves further abstraction from the data towards thematic specificity and ultimately developing theory and meaning (p. 52).

[67] This is still part of first-cycle coding, which is still part of the initial process as coding is never linear (Saldaña, 2009, p. 45; Friese, 2012, p. 30).

3.5. Reflexivity, Quality Criteria, and Ethics

Because this research combines diverse perspectives on new and uncertain technology, it is crucial to address the reliability. Namely, turning a volatile topic into academically relevant insights may not fall victim to a lack of transparency and clarity in its research process. This section is therefore concerned with clarifying the validity and reliability of this research, including a section where ethical implications are evaluated.

3.5.1. Validity

Validity in qualitative research is a ‘’contingent construct’’ that ensures findings are credible, trustworthy, and reflective of the studied phenomena (Golafshani, 2003, p. 602). Table C1 in the appendix shows how this thesis aligns with Tracy’s (2010) quality criteria. Another view of trustworthiness in qualitative research is the reliance of multiple perspectives on a single reality (p. 603). Another view considers different realities to exist in people’s minds and that research should aim to gain a deeper understanding of how meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices and interactions (pp. 603-604). This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of different perspectives, facilitated by people from different backgrounds within the overarching theme of film production and AI. Franklin and Ballan (2001) state that purposive sampling, intentionally selecting different (possibly divergent) cases, enhances the validity as it tests the transferability of findings and on which characteristics the transferability depends on (p. 13).

3.5.2. Reliability

Reliability revolves around the replicability of the study and its results (p. 360).[68] Silverman (2011) refers to Moisander and Valtonen’s (2006) notion of transparency. Namely, reliability in qualitative research requires detailed description of the research strategy and data analysis methods, as well as explicating the theoretical stance and its influence on interpretations (p. 360). This research explains the interpretations and structure of concepts in the theoretical framework and how they reflect the interview questions. Furthermore, the methodology is explained in detail with all additional documents available to the reviewers of this thesis. Finally, results are reflected against the established theoretical framework, enforcing clear connections within this research.

[68] Silverman (2011) explains the distinction between reliability and validity in research by Kirk and Miller’s (1986) metaphor of a thermometer; which states that a thermometer showing the same temperature in boiling water each time is reliable but not valid, while a thermometer that gives readings on series of widely different measurements would be valid but unreliable (p. 360).

3.5.3. Ethics

This research implemented informed consent on recordings of transcripts. Participants accepted recording and anonymized processing of the interview data.[69] No sensitive (company) information was brought up during the interviews. Some interviewees explicitly supported the use of LLMs for transcription processes, so those interviews were translated for efficiency. ChatGPT was used because OpenAI enables model training to be turned off, adding privacy protection beyond anonymization. All transcripts were given one last critical check before coding. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants with recognizable names. Before publishing the thesis, each participant was sent an overview of their (planned to be incorporated) citations to allow them to object.

[69] Only some addressed the avoidance of brand names in the quotations, which is, of course, complied with.

4. Results

The results of this research are shown in table 5, revealing the overarching themes, their respective concepts, and the supporting components. The findings are discussed in each section of this chapter, holding back theoretical reflection as that will take place in chapter 5. However, the last theme (4.5) will include theoretical reflection as it resembles an overarching tendency throughout this research that already synthesizes themes. Direct theoretical connections therefore bring flow to this interwoven reality: situating the complexity of impacts, perspectives and contexts that build up to the discussion. This section bridges findings with discussion to create understanding of AI's fragmented implicated meaning that will form the lens from which to understand the discussion section.

Table 5.

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
• AI can increase cost-efficiency of production • AI can save time on demanding manual tasks • AI can aid ideas & brainstorms • AI is accessible for people to use	AI as a Tool	**Practical Opportunities and Limitations**
• Advanced AI can be time consuming • It can be challenging to have control over the output • Output can have inconsistencies • AI can hallucinate	AI's Performance Limitations	
• AI can democratize filmmaking for the common user • Mastering AI can be a competitive advantage • AI can enable mass production in media • AI can flatten production value	New Competitive Dynamics	**AI's Unavoidable Force towards a Fast-Paced, Disrupted, and Uncertain Industry**
• Tech investments may soon be outdated • Sticking to traditional filmmaking can become irrelevant • Market demands can shift unexpectedly	Future Risks	
• Agencies charging for output rather than hours • AI is not everywhere eligible for tax rebates • The innovation of AI is dependent on the policies • AI can change current workforce structures	Reinventing the Model: Tarifs, Taxes, and Workforce	

• Value propositions that are AI-resilient can be a strategy • Being flexible to use more AI when required can be a strategy • Being aware of where AI is going can be a strategy	AI-Agnostic Strategy	**AI Infiltrating Strategy Practices**
• Creating an organizational culture to embrace AI as a strategy • Abstracting end goals to make room for potential changes as a strategy • Establishing clear values to only allow that which fits as a strategy	Vision-Lead Strategy	
• Best practices of strategizing sustains while the content shifts • Implementing AI-directed strategies • Spontaneous strategy to manage uncertainty	Planned Strategy vs. Spontaneous Strategy	
• Preparation given more attention adaptation • Strategy being context dependent • Explorative strategizing	Two-Fold Strategy & Fluid Strategy	
• AI as a support for creativity • Necessity to maintain ownership over AI • Using AI is not always satisfying • AI should not mean plainly copying	AI Enhancing & Diminishing Creativity	**AI's Compliance with Human Values**
• Fear of AI causing loss of Creativity & Artform • AI inducing dystopian prospects • AI creating authorship concerns	Fear of AI Development	
• Client resistingAI due to ethics or loss of joy • Makers resisting AI due to ethics or loss of joy • The value of enjoyment in physical production • When does film remain film? (ontological concern) • The value of what is real	AI Resistance	
• AI's impact on music videos • How mass production via AI is perceived • How AI can induce fierce competition • Perceived pressure and buzz from other users • How personal style is valued	AI's Navigation by Content Creators	**AI's Impact Dependent on Genre, Culture, and Business Model (within a wide range of actors)**

• How AI mainly brings opportunities • How documentary is AI-resilient • Their perceived trust in the future of their work	AI's Navigation by Independents	
• AI is unavoidable, even when not desired • AI potentially diminishes the value of cinematic craftsmanship • AI complicates funding on projects	AI's Navigation by Film Directors	
• Client culture hinders the companies' development • Employees are split in terms of their reception of AI • The implemented strategy is two-fold with conscious and spontaneous actions • Preparation for AI demands has higher priority than adapting towards an AI-first company	AI's Navigation by Production Companies	
• Highly is highly disruptive for their business model • AI pressures them to innovate • They undergo fierce competition from other firms with AI infrastructure • The market demands shifts towards cheaper, AI alternatives to physical production • The future outlook on the relevancy of agencies is uncertain	AI navigation by Agencies	

4.1. Practical Opportunities and Limitations

Understanding AI's pragmatic implications and best practices from an insider's perspective is a key first step into answering the research question. It captures tangible experiences of how AI is managed.

4.1.1. AI as a Tool

Film practitioners deemed AI as a support to their work, inducing efficiency rather than major replacements.

> ''I often get endless long documents sent to me with employer branding and all sorts of other things and because of that I have to reduce 70 pages to a voice-over text that lasts 30 seconds or so. I find it fantastic for that, to just be able to funnel a lot of very complex information back.'' ~JU

AI can be a time saver. It speeds up preparation and relieves the creator from surrounding manual tasks. But the 'supportive' function of AI goes beyond time efficiency. It can be used to level up their preparation quality: it enhances the creation of visual concept art. Instead of hand drawn moodboards, tools like MidJourney create more comprehensive visuals than they had ever before.

> ''With one click, you can make ten different drafts. And with one click, you can go from your sketchiest sketch to something real, tangible…'' ~TH

It channels highly detailed communication of one's vision, which was priorly less achievable due to time or skill. GenAI, this way, frees the creator from their own drawing limitations. It catalyzes their artistic expression from an idea to something tangible, enabling them to quickly explore various ideas.

Further in the preparation stage, AI helps generate or develop ideas and concepts.[70] It is suitable for brainstorming, turning AI's supportive qualities to an extension of one's thinking: a tool augmenting human thinking rather than replacing it. But this, of course, is only as true for how the tool is being used.

Another aspect of AI as a tool taps into two facets simultaneously: cost-efficiency and accessibility.[71]

[70] ''I can throw parts of my scripts into AI and ask specific questions, specific ideas… So it helps you think.'' ~MA

[71] Later sections will showcase how it will be more than two facets.

> ‘’The interfaces are often simplified to the point where you don’t necessarily have to be technically proficient anymore. It’s basically just like any other software system. For example, even when you’re not using AI, you often don’t notice that, for example, there’s noise reduction built in.’’ ~LC

AI tools are generally experienced as very user friendly. They are accessible and cost-effective since they simplify tasks that priorly required specification. Examples are noise reduction, color grading, or removing impurities. In fact, the user does not even manually hand over these tasks to AI, the technology is, sometimes unnoticeably, integrated into the software applications. AI’s accessibility therefore supersedes a merely user friendly interface: it shows to become a taken-for-granted practice.

4.1.2. AI’s Performance Limitations

Besides the practical benefits that AI brings about, there are limitations: either in terms of lacking quality (e.g. scripts) or the difficulty of controlling AI. GenAI cannot process feedback properly:

> ‘’[72]So you now sometimes have to tell a client quite often, ‘Yes, I understand what you're saying, but I can't adjust anything in it anymore’, because it's as if you're pulling a kind of slot machine. Random things just come out on the left, even if I go into details and try to change things there." ~JU

This lack of control extends into a lack of consistency. If you did manage to adjust that one thing from the AI output, chances are that something else got changed in return, like the ‘’trash can that was on the left first, that’s suddenly no longer there’’.[73] For independent filmmakers, this means that replacing shots with GenAI does not necessarily save time.[74] The way AI can be a catalyst for concept art or a taken-for-granted practice for certain software qualities, GenAI can just as much hold back the creative expression of the creator. Its responsive limitations show how AI is not a one-size-fits all technology, and that its use cases must be considered by the creator. [75]

[72] ‘’Um, when it comes to using AI to create an end result, the main problem is that it's not yet, uh, focused on being able to give feedback.’’~JU
[73] A quote from JU.
[74] ‘’You’re spending more time on Sora than actually shooting real life, uh, but yeah, I think that in a few years, there will definitely be possibilities to create a fully AI-driven pipeline’’ ~ LC
[75] The nuances of AI-generated content will be elaborated on in upcoming sections.

4.2. AI's Unavoidable Force towards a Fast-Paced, Disrupted, and Uncertain Industry

> ''If I had two buttons in front of me right now, where one button would say: 'We stop it now and there's absolutely no one who could ever use AI again,' and the other button is 'No, we continue developing it' Then I'd choose the button 'I stop it now and no one remembers it and everyone's memory is wiped.' The annoying thing is, if there were also a third button that would say: 'You're the only one who gets to use it.' Then I'd probably press that third button. And that's the problem. That's why it continues.'' ~MA

This theme is focused on how and why AI is perceived as unavoidable: a force where its effects are ambiguous, but its presence is non-negotiable.

4.2.1. New Competitive Dynamics

AI is experienced and believed to bring changes in the competitive field in film production. While AI's competitive influence differs for each practitioner archetype, it is assured to affect every competitive market within film production.

The accessibility of AI tools is considered a reason to democratize filmmaking to a certain extent, turning filmmaking into a less monopolistic industry.[76] However, some doubted this prospect.

> ''That was with CGI also said, that it would work democratically. Or digitization in general was supposed to work democratically. Well, that hasn't really proven to be the case. On the contrary, actually.'' ~MA

The director's historical knowledge creates skepticism. To him, AI reflects the established timeline of new technologies rising, meaning that the failure of previous technologies to democratize provokes reason to not assume the same prospect with this technology. This reveals how industry sensemaking influences one's future prospects of AI's impact, a reflection of narrative wayfinding.[77]

Beyond these opposing views, the screen industry consultant was more in the middle.[78] His expertise in the production industry reveals to him how different jobs can be affected in different ways. Where one may gain easier access, the other one's job may be replaced. Even he himself questions the outcome, showcasing the (ungraspable) complexity of AI's democratic implications.

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[76] ''It [film] is one of the, I think, along with architecture, the least accessible and most expensive art forms there are.[...] Um, so it [AI] also democratizes or, to a certain extent. '' ~JU

[77] See also: Horst and Järventie-Thesleff (2016).

[78] ''So in some ways the software is more accessible now, and people can use it. However, I think in terms of actual job opportunities, there's a big question mark.'' ~JH. This quote relates to the job market for production companies and studios. A more detailed explanation of this statement will be given in further in this section when the job market is addressed.

Although the extent to which democratization of filmmaking arises, remains to be seen, what it would mean for competition was already concerned.

> ‘’The question is, then a tsunami of content comes and how are you then still going to be able to pick out the beautiful things?’’~JU

If a lower threshold for filmmaking brings many new entrants, how would one position themself as a filmmaker? This further nuances the democratic implications, as higher accessibility does not equal more opportunities. This may sustain competitive challenges for entrants.

AI was also deemed a catalyst for fast and consistent content production, like daily mass production on TikTok.[79] Not all participants experience this as a threat. The lower threshold either compensates for the previous barriers of entry; the competition either pushes or inspires one towards better productions; or many entrants will not be as good as the experienced producers anyways.[80]

Leveraging AI for competitive advantage could influence the competitive dynamics. A tangible example was the following:

> [On AI moodboards] ‘’Yeah, if you have a big production somewhere and you can use that to either convince the client or show your whole team what you have in your head... yeah, that’s gold.’’ ~TH

The improved communication that AI-generated moodboards enable can directly impact client appeal. This ties in well with what two of the AI experts addressed: that mastering AI tools creates a competitive advantage.

But competitive advantage can also be under pressure. Exactly the rising advantage of new mergents impacts agencies’ value.

> ‘’You make a TV commercial that is so massive that only [brand] could do that. You know, just really stellar production value. But actually now with AI, the local brewery around the corner has almost access to the same resources apart from the concept then. So the value of craft and of production is completely turned upside down by that.’’ ~JJ

The commercial advantage of leveraging AI supersedes the user’s current market position. Their commercial expression can now compete with that from a brand that previously enjoyed superior production value. Competitive production quality used to be dependent on the scale of one’s operating market. Now, that appears to be dispersed.

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[79] ‘’TikTok for example. A lot of AI is used there. It’s also kind of being pushed, you see that mass production of content, posting something every day. AI helps a lot with that, man.’’ ~EL

[80] More on this in the final section.

4.2.2. Future Risks

Future risks appear in many forms; from concerns about job security and market relevance to the financial precarity of new investments. Uncertainty of future developments enforces AI's perceived risks. As independent and studio films are undergoing investment struggles for years, a feature film director observes the following:

> ''I think that also everyone is a bit scared of it [AI]. [...] That because of large investments, people don't dare to make them [films], because they're afraid that in two years, or in a year, or when the film comes out, so much will have changed that you could say the film is outdated. Or that you could make it for a quarter of the money.'' ~MA

As the director also understood himself, multiple factors cause the poor investments in films. The screen strategy consultant stressed that one of the factors was the Hollywood strikes.

Furthermore:

> ''There's been quite a lot of, I think, understandably, resistance towards mass adoption of AI because the quality wasn't there. They also want to protect jobs that people do currently.
> …
> But because there's this real focus on affordability, and if the costs get a little bit more extensive, and I think they will be just like, 'If we want to make this film, we're going to have to use AI, otherwise the film won't be made''' ~ JH

This showcases the tension of AI investments. Studios investing in traditional filmmaking practices may sacrifice affordability, while full AI embracements may induce insufficient quality or lost job opportunities. As AI becomes more crucial for a film's realization, the industry is forced into a reckoning with the technology, giving strategic perspectives on AI a growing importance.[81] What this illustrates is that AI's infiltration in the film industry induces conscious management of investment risks.

For an individual filmmaker, this risk is perhaps less detrimental, but tangible. Namely, investments in a camera, which nowadays has AI functions integrated, may outdate fairly quickly, leading to uncertainty about the strategic validation of the investment.

[81] A point further explored in the next section.

Current studies on AI suggest that the job market in film production can be affected. The screen consultant showcased a CNC study that predicted entry-level jobs to be most affected, rather than artistic, managerial roles.[82]

The participants reflected on this finding the following way:

> ‘’So, then, if those roles are going to change or disappear? What else do we need to be offering those people to be? What are the new entry-level roles for them to work in?[83]’’ ~JH

This relates to the mixed picture of the democratic effects of AI. People may start independently more easily, but a pathway into the production companies may become increasingly difficult. This ties back to the previously addressed initial resistance that production companies had, wanting to protect jobs. The additional difficulty with this trend is that it is tricky to generalize. This study was based on the CNC situation. The consultant pointed out that AI opportunities are not as readily available in each studio, giving an example of the Philippines where technological advancements are not yet as implementable as in France.[84]

Sustaining traditional methods of filmmaking will become a larger topic in the next sections, but already tabs into the inevitability of AI. The screen consultant does not see a future with any pure non-AI company.[85] Many of the participants addressed this pressure. The production studio thinks of it this way:

> ‘’I also think the danger is that I now keep thinking for too long, ‘The client isn't waiting for it, so never mind, so we don't do too much with it,’ and that in two years we suddenly find out, ‘Sh*t, we're f*cking lagging behind and now we're being overtaken on all sides.’ That could be a risk.’’~JU

The uncertainty whether traditional filmmaking can remain profitable and competitive creates perceived risk of not adopting, or at least preparing for AI. In other words, sensing and seizing shifting market demands have disruptive potential.[86]

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[82] ‘’So they're saying that essentially, um, more technical roles are going to be affected the most, particularly at the entry level, while the more kind of artistic and managerial roles will be affected less.’’ ~JH

[83] ‘’And, or, if those are completely removed, what effect will that have on the pathways of people into the industry?’’

[84] One of the other participants stressed that the animation industry gets disrupted and that people are starting to lose jobs. The mixed picture of the job market leads to plenty of uncertainty around which jobs will stay and how studios and governments will handle this shift.

[85] ‘’I also feel like if we're talking about having this conversation in 10 years time, any pure non-AI company? They wouldn't exist in my mind. So, you think about, for example, like, this is like when film went digital, then when it was analog. There were the kind of purists who would be like, "No, this is the destruction of film… to films" and now those... I mean, you get like a handful of kind of, very kind of crafted, manual filmmakers, which is great. Very, rare, very, niche, and like everything else is digital. I think there will be two camps in the short term. By much in the longer term, I think there will... AI will just win out.’’~JH

[86] Section 4.5 explores in more detail how these experiences differ between different roles in the industry.

4.2.3. Reinventing the Model: Tarifs, Taxes, and Workforce

AI automation enables faster output with less manual work. Agencies who typically charge their clients with hours spent on the campaign are thus in some headlock.

> [87]‘’ You also see a trend that brands pay more for an output. So, what is the price of a TV campaign or a social asset or a localization of an e-commerce asset? You know, that it becomes a kind of menu item, which is a combination of partly people, talent, but also technology’’ ~JJ

AI induces a trend of output as a ‘‘menu item’’ rather than a summation of working hours and materials, meansing agencies reinvent their pricings. The hours spent on output may decrease, but a team of talented people with advanced technology enables that. Although the agency manages this shift, an inherent paradox seems to appear. On one hand, they charge more for value rather than workload, on the other, production value flattens as AI enables small companies to compete with the output. Though no details around their charging model were discussed, an assumption would be that their technological and talent assets need to be thoroughly communicated with the client to justify the price.

For production companies, AI implementation complicates tax rebates (information based on UK studios). Namely, tax rebates for VFX work the following:

> [88]‘’If AI did edit the clip, you can't claim a rebate on that expenditure. [...] It wouldn't be eligible for the VFX tax rebate because they don't have human-induced tax expenditure.’’ ~JH

This example showcases that the efficiency of AI in VFX is hindered by the tax policy.

> ‘’...VFX has involved AI for like 20 years. And it's basically one and the same. So, it may be that actually, in reality, the terms of the incentive will have to change to be able to be basically aligned with how film happens now.[89]’’ ~JH

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[87] ‘’...The legacy model is: agencies earn their money by selling hours. You know, that's just the price. So, uh, time and material it's called. So you, you do a project, you just sell hours of people who, who are needed for that project, to deliver that project. If that is of course partially automated, that whole commercial model changes.’’~JJ

[88] ‘’That’s the way that incentives work, you will have eligible expenditure that you can claim tax incentives on. And things like just salaries, transfer, various costs. But, um, they were like, "But it can't be AI costs."’’~JH

[89] ‘’ So it's actually kind of like... we can’t… the VFX incentive... won’t work if they're not allowing any sort of AI production. Because it's almost impossible to separate out what was human-generated and what was AI-generated.’’~JH

The deep infiltration of AI in VFX, therefore, necessitates a fundamental reconsideration of these policies. The profitability of AI is thus partly dependent on government regulations, not even considering that the EU has extremely restrictive data privacy regulations keeping industries on hold.[90]

4.3. AI Infiltrating Strategy Practices

4.3.1. AI Agnostic Strategy

Some creators stay open to AI without jumping in completely. This section therefore assesses an agnostic approach to AI in strategy. As aforementioned, AI's inevitable presence disables AI avoidance. However, AI resilience is for a part considered strategic.

> ''I think that if you stay in the film-making profession, you should focus on documentaries. Documentaries will never be replaced by artificial intelligence. That's just not possible. Let's say you've filmed a war, AI cannot replace that.'' ~LC

Documentary is perceived as a strategic choice, leveraging AI resilience for job stability. However, this view is genre-centred without considering market dynamics. Though strategically choosing an AI-resilient genre, opportunities are to be discovered considering potentially increasing competition.[91] Accordingly, finding a niche or unique advantage was considered both AI and competition resilient, proposing anchor points as strategic backbones in a turbulent environment.

Some independent filmmakers aren't particularly focused on an AI-resilient path, but embrace their flexibility: they are on their own so they can change strategy instantly. With AI's accessibility, these flexible creators find it doable to increase AI use when required. AI, to them, is therefore a technology that allows for responsive strategic enactment.

4.3.2. Vision-Led Strategy

Companies with more people under them may not be as flexible as an independent filmmaker: pivoting requires a team to go along. Their approach to strategy thus has to include ways to direct their team through the transformation. They achieve this by a strategy that emphasizes the vision of personal development.

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[90] ''And especially for EU, like, is extremely restrictive about data privacy, so it's usually the companies need to wait for the regulations, and then they would really take actions into evolving.'' ~JO
''For example, filming and drawings might be sensitive to AI. So I noticed a lot of individuals using AI to inspire them, but I don't think companies are doing that. [...] The tradeoff between responsible AI usage and stimulated innovation is a tension. More on this later in the sections. Generally, this showcases that continuous reconsideration of policies is essential for enabling effective AI development. ''~JO

[91] As previously discussed, if there is a tsunami of people jumping in on the practice, how does one stand out?

‘’But you still have to have clear direction and vision. And that is very difficult because the technology is changing so quickly. And I think everyone is also reinventing the wheel a bit. So what is the best thing you can do? Activate and inspire the entire workforce to use these tools.[92] [...] Because it is valuable for everyone in the company to ensure that they master this, it simply determines the future of your own role. It's as simple as that. So it's also creating value, you know, for yourself as a person.’’ ~JJ

In order to motivate the team, they must realize what’s in it for them. Therefore, the agency stimulates their experience of creating value by, for instance, enabling them to bring their own ideas to the table. The production company does the following:

‘’At the moment, we've also freed up one employee so that he could spend half a day per week just fiddling with AI, seeing what you could do. [...] So stimulating people's interests. Making sure we stay busy with it and don't actively close our eyes, because where it's not a problem now, it can of course be completely different in a few years.’’~JU

Rather than framing AI as mainly a threat, they stimulate the employees to experience its opportunities. Although the agency and production company have vastly different organizational structures and AI use cases, they both enforce a culture where AI can be exciting, where it can add value to the team. The agency has to balance inspiration with urgency. The jobs of their workforce are at risk, but they may not get discouraged. This involves a very active approach to creating an inspired culture. It addresses a top-down effort to relieve the confusion that creative content units typically experience during disruption.[93] For the production company, this works quite the contrary. They do not experience pressure and the team values traditional filmmaking. This means that the approach is slow and steady: easing the workforce into the technology without overblowing them.

Independent filmmakers do not enforce a culture, but some still take a vision-led approach to strategy. They do this by setting abstract goals.

‘’ I think it mostly develops along the way but I always have in the back of my mind where I want to go and, yeah, I do incorporate that a bit in the choices I make every day in my company.[94]’’ ~FL

For content creators, their own style is a priority to maintain. This resembles a practice-based approach, where strategic actions are part of an overarching, generalized goal that aligns with the values of the practitioner. They consider their work as a personal expression and any form of AI that interferes with their own brand is not used.

[92] This is, interestingly, a top-down approach to engaging practice-based methods.
[93] See also Mijanen and Jantunen (2014, p. 156).
[94] ‘’... uhm things I buy, things I do, clients I accept, clients I reject uhm with my goal in mind where I want to go.’’~FL

Directors apply a reminiscent vision-led strategy by means of value-compliance. They establish a clear picture of their profession and only allow AI use when it fits.

> ‘’The only thing I have is my ideas about what film is and what film should be, and my taste. And every new technique or every new thing has to fit within that.[95]’’~MA

Instead of AI creating vision for agencies, AI fitting within a vision is the approach for the director. Although their strategy is both vision-led, it works fairly the other way round.

4.3.3. Planned Strategy vs. Spontaneous Strategy

Planned strategy, where conscious future roadmaps are constructed, versus spontaneous strategy, where strategy involves less predetermined actions, both appeared in this study.

> ‘’I think the approach is probably the same, which is essentially primary, secondary research, then testing. […] I think probably the main difference is just what people need. […] It’s changed completely to what used to be when obviously it was manual, then it was digital, and now it is AI.[96]’’~JH

The consultant considers the practice of strategy to be similar, but the content to be different. Consultants still do research, consider the client needs, and construct recommendations. Strategy is thus consciously implemented, but this time with an AI perspective: AI technology, training programs and AI skills become part of studio feasibility.

In contrast to some independent filmmakers perceiving AI resilience as strategic, consultants perceive AI implementation as strategic. Otherwise, building a studio may not be feasible. The budget and profitability requirements of a studio necessitate leveraging AI’s cost efficiency.

The production company, on the other hand, adopts a more responsive, ongoing approach to strategy.

> ‘’ No, that's [strategy] something that comes along the way a bit. Because we of course respond to the needs of a client, so we are often not leading. [...] If you had asked this two years ago, [..] then I would have indeed said, ‘Yes, we have to go all in. We might have to free up a quarter of our people to explore AI workflows, to do a lot with that.’

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[95] ‘’That’s actually what it comes down to.’’~MA

[96]‘’So I think the approach is pretty much the same, which is a best practice, but the actual content and the recommendations would be different now than they would have been even like five years ago.’’ ~JH

> But because of that resistance I still felt from clients at the time, that has weakened a bit for us, because we actually notice, 'Yes, this is not the plan at all.' We can do it, we can do it much cheaper, but if they don't want it, it doesn't make much sense.''~JU

The disruptive effects of AI have, for this company, forced a shift in strategic thinking; moving from a fully planned approach to a more flexible one that can react to uncertain market demands. They have embraced the unpredictability of AI's profitability. For them, AI's cost efficiency has yet to translate into superior profitability. The company does not take the risk to wrongly predict the market demands and therefore acts responsively.

4.3.4. Twofold Strategy & Fluid Strategy

Two-fold strategy in this research represents non-exclusive use of the previously distinguished planned and spontaneous strategy. Various participants explained how they stay informed about AI opportunities.

> '' I'm mostly just focused on hey. What's all new and how can I maybe also apply that to the things I do. But whether I have a routine to deal with that pressure uh no cigarettes and coffee I think.''~FL

Rather than plainly using all tools, this part of the participants make sure to know where it's at. This resembles a form of preparation that supersedes adaptation. It is a way to understand the current dynamics of the playing field and to seize which tools might be of added value for them. This is a form of an everyday practice that takes part in an overall strategy(goal) to stay in the race. As section 4.2.2 showed, the production company deliberately applies such a two-fold strategy to leverage spontaneity of AI experimentation as a strategic preparation.[97]

For some, strategy is context dependent, where every company and project needs its own approach. The content creator points out an ''overarching bit'' of strategy and client-specific strategy. This resembles a more fluid form of strategy. Namely, it suggests conscious implementation that takes different forms. Client-specific strategy is a more interactive approach that resembles a shared goal where the overarching strategy resembles the goal of the content creator's own brand.

The film student takes on strategy in a rather exploratory manner.[98] As a cinematography student, collaboration is typical. The strategy can thus be broader than a client-specific strategy: it involves a team also. Therefore, what comes out as a strategy depends on numerous interactions. This way, strategy is more so an outcome for the student. It was not predetermined.

[97] More on this in section 5.3.
[98] ''For me it's usually something that comes along the way. I'm not very much into making a plan beforehand for ways of interacting or those kinds of things.'' ~JA

These forms of strategy resemble an inception-like practice-based approach. Their everyday routines and spontaneous enactments build up towards a larger, sometimes open goal, but within that strategic development there are clusters of strategy. As their work is project and client based, localized strategies form within the larger scope of their profession. One project (goal) may involve conscious strategic roadmapping while other projects may develop through flexible and spontaneous enactments.

4.4. AI's Compliance with Human Values

4.4.1. AI Enhancing & Diminishing Creativity

Participants valued creativity in their work: AI must support, not hinder, their creative expression.[99] AI's compliance with creativity is partly reliant on ownership.

> ''And in the end, at the end of the day: look, maybe they have access to AI, but they still don't have the creativity to tell the AI: "I want this." You know what I mean?
> They still need a guy who knows how to do that.[100]''~EL

Human ownership is not just a value, but a necessity to produce good creative work. This proposes the persisting importance of creative filmmakers. As was earlier argued that mastering AI enables competitive advantage, this perspective highlights the competitive advantage of traditional skills. In fact, it highlights the synthesis of those skills.

Human agency is also a desire tied to the intrinsic satisfaction of the creative act itself.

> '' I find it interesting on the one hand, but I'm also sure that in 10 years we will look back with a lot of nostalgia to the period when we actually went to locations to film.'' ~JU

The physical practice of filmmaking leaves the filmmakers feeling satisfied. Practitioners where enjoyment is one of their top values may thus implement AI differently than, say, high end studios where profitability is the top value. It could potentially trigger uncertainty for the industry's future consistency, where filmmaking enthusiastic practitioners perhaps transition to becoming hobbyists rather than profitable creators.

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[99] ''In my opinion, it's a support. [...] I think it should be an addition to or an improvement of what you have in your head.''~TH

[100] ''Yeah. So if the computer really takes over everything, then I'd sooner be a kind of middleman for that… instead of doing it myself. But I hope it doesn't go in that direction, man.''~EL

Some found that the predictive mechanism of AI homogenizes the look of content, which bores them and raises questions around originality.[101] Another participant nuances this perspective by stating that humans also create ideas from other people's work, showing resemblance with AI's mechanism.[102]

Both viewpoints acknowledge that AI generates output that is extrapolated from other people's work. However, the extent to which that aligns with human creativity is thought of differently.

4.4.2. Fear of AI Development

Some participants expressed their concerns around AI's development. Its rapid and unpredictable development induces fear for its perceived potential. For instance, what may happen to the appreciation of the art form.

> ''In the past, when you saw movies with stunts in them, and you knew that it was just really someone hanging on an airplane or something. That made more of an impression than today, where anything is possible.[103]'' ~MA

The participant senses a 'numbing' effect that occurs when digital tools remove all practical boundaries. Precisely the boundaries of real life challenges that drove novel solutions to practical effects are what he finds appreciative. There is thus somewhat of a fear that this will all go away when AI develops to take over.

The fear of AI development even leads to dystopic prospects.

> '' I'm thinking a lot about how we'll soon be living in a world where we can't trust our eyes anymore.'' ~MA

When the real can no longer be distinguished from the artificial, visual evidence may no longer be. This raises concerns around public trust in the media, enforcing popularity of conspiracy theories. It ties back to the prospect that documentaries may become a popular choice for filmmaking.

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[101] '' It all has its own look, those are all things that may change over time, but in the meantime, the fact is that I think it all looks the same. And that starts to bore me at some point. It starts to annoy me. Because the whole idea is that it's kind of a predictive thing, right? So that it actually looks for the most logical next step of what should happen.''~MA

[102] '' Because people just always look at other people's work, also for their own ideas. It's always a kind of combination of what you've seen before and that's exactly what AI also does. AI also just takes what it has seen before and creates ideas from that and so in that respect it's not very different from a human.'' ~JA

[103] ''So you just know: if you throw enough money at it, then you can get a kind of rush from the spectacular visuals, but you don't have the same appreciation for it''~MA

Because when real cannot be distinguished from artificial, what can be achieved by filming real things?

AI's development also worries participants in terms of authorship. One participant referred to China, where AI policies lack.[104] Besides authorship concerns, lacking policies result in very messy markets.

Copyright concerns are not only experienced by authors of the original work, but also influence the participants who work with AI.

> ''[...][105]
> But also stopping at your own limit where you say like 'Hey, here I can't really put my name under it anymore, because I didn't make it myself''' ~FL

This citation bridges the concerns around AI ownership and copyrights. Having AI take over critical tasks in filmmaking questions the level of authorship by the creator, which is further complicated by the fact that the output exists from other people's works. This can be a boundary for filmmakers of integrity.

4.4.3. AI Resistance

New possibilities that AI brings to filmmaking are not at all times valued.

> ''So it's very much split between, on the one hand, excitement about what's possible, and on the other hand, a kind of resistance, because people think, 'Oh, but this is going to take away all the fun of my work.'''~JU

Filmmakers want to sustain the joy that traditional filmmaking brings. One videographer, for instance, expressed to not see the point of the profession if joy dissipates. Remarkably, enjoyment of filmmaking not only leads to resistance from the filmmakers' side.

> ''[106]Suppose I were to say, 'I can do it for a tenth of the price and then we don't need to have shooting days,' we've done that sometimes too, what I hadn't realized is, you then also take away the pleasure of the clients and the marketers. These are their favorite days, the shooting days, when they're on set and

[104] ''They [Chinese filmmakers] are panicked because they see works published on websites and copied by AI. So I see a reason for EU to be cautious about this.''~JO
[105] ''Yeah, I think using AI. Like you already said, uh the efficiency.''~FL
[106] ''What I hadn't expected is that there's a lot of resistance to that from clients.''~JU

that sort of thing. [..] So so far, nine out of ten times, they don't want an AI solution, knowing that it visually delivered the same thing and also for a fraction of the price.'' ~JU

The client resistance of pleasure gives hope for practitioners that want to enjoy traditional filmmaking practices in their profession: a perspective that pin-points the supplementary quality between Ekdale et al.'s (2015) and Lischka's (2019) theories. Ekdale et al.'s notion of compatibility relates to AI's poor diffusion: remaining values of pleasure prevail. Lischka (2019) points out how established structures, cultural norms, and the temporal market success of a company deteriorates the awareness to renew (p. 184). In other words, current compatibility hurdles must not be taken for granted.

Resistance to AI was not only a form of rejecting certain applications, it also involved boundaries to which generative AI falls under the definition of 'film'.[107]

''... if I were to arrive on a Monday morning and say, '[..] We're now going to fully commit to making 3D scans instead of traditional recordings,' […]
I think you then move much more towards the practical reality of a game studio, much more than the practical reality of a film production company.[108]'' ~JU

This results in an ontological discussion around AI in filmmaking. If generative imagery replaces best practices of filmmaking as it was known before, is it then still filmmaking, or is it a different/new medium? Some participants hypothesized that this could be the case: AI as a new medium.

Resistance against AI is significantly grounded in the value of what's real.

''Recently had to do a voice-over and that was a Dutch voice, who had to pronounce a Polish name perfectly. Then I think, yes, we can now endlessly mess around together, but you can also just ask Marco to duplicate that voice. 'Say that name in Polish, make a Polish sentence.' Use her voice, then we take a piece where she pronounces the name correctly, paste it in between and it works perfectly. But still they find it unacceptable, feels unethical or something. Well, then you go again with four people here, free up two hours for it in a studio. Well, it makes no sense. And that sounds less good than what we would've made, but then it's still the emotional thing of it being real which they prefer.''~JU

[107] '' I think that in a few years, there will definitely be possibilities to create a fully AI-driven pipeline, from creating the story to post-production, where you could definitely make a fully AI-driven film. But yeah, that would probably also be related to animation, right? Or to some extent.'' ~LC
[108] ''Which traditionally meant: always being in different places, with different people in the environment, new challenges, having to solve crazy little things.''

Not only do clients not value artificial imagery, creators and audiences also value what is human. A recurring analogy by participants is that nobody would enjoy playing or watching a sport when it was only robots performing. Even though they may be better, people would care for what is human and feels personal. However, whether this value remains for generations to come was uncertain for some participants. They believed that they may be accustomed to enjoy artificial works. Others still doubt that will ever be the case.

4.5. AI's Impact Dependent on Genre, Culture, and Business Model

Table 6. Overview of the meaning of AI for each category or practitioner/company.

Content Creators/Videographers	Tool (Effects, Efficiency, Ideas) Pressure (Competition, Mass Production, ''Keep Up'') Differentiator (Personal Style, Client Relationships vs. AI Mastery) Hype (Tool Overload, Skepticism)
Independent Filmmakers (Emerging/Student)	Empowerment (Accessibility, Quality, Opportunity) Enhancer (Efficiency, Better Output) Optimism (Coexistence, Resilience, Value of ''Real'') Catch to Optimism (Challenged Entrance to Production Firms)
Featured Filmmakers (Established Directors)	Pragmatic Tool (Cost-Saving, Idea Generation) Artistic Threat (Craftsmanship, Value, Appreciation) Industry Risk (Funding Uncertainty, Visual Truth)
Production Companies (National)	Underutilized Tool (Client-Limited, Efficiency Potential) Strategic Imperative (Future-Proofing, Balancing Act) Internal Dichotomy (Staff Enthusiasm vs. Resistance) Ontological Question (Redefining ''Filmmaking'')

Agencies (International, Large-Scale)	Existential Disruptor (Business Model Overhaul) Competitive Engine (Reinvention, ‘’Best Engine Wins’’) Mandate (Cultural Shift, Forced Adoption, Skill Development)

4.5.1. AI for Content Creators/Videographers

> ‘’If you look at music videos or so, someone who uses a lot of After Effects, that just appeals more. [...] Especially with music videos it’s used very often, man. They often lead the way in the new things in the scene, so to speak.” ~EL

Music video’s channel new AI effects for videographers. As software already induced new entrants to compete with legacy companies across industries (Küng, 2017, p. 78), AI integration in existing, accessible software resembles incremental innovation: easily implementable improvements of existing processes (Küng, 2013, p. 11). Videographers quickly gain access to enhanced possibilities.

AI, however, is not only a tool for effects, but also drives mass production on TikTok, for instance.[109] With many new entrants noticed, two routes of coping are perceived: keeping up or becoming resilient.

Easy special effects, mass production, and enhanced visual communication via AI moodboards drive competition, even affecting the structure of one-man agencies.

> ‘’Yeah, there’s either an Alex or a TH who’s starting an agency, but that could be one agency for everything I want to make. But I also see it happening more often that an Alex has three agencies under him, one for weddings, one for festivals and one for cars. So I see so incredibly many kind of mushrooms popping up everywhere because everyone feels like: I need to grab a piece of that market.’’~TH

Creators experience this pressure of highly productive and dispersive competitors differently: it pushes and inspires one to better work or threatens one to fall behind.[110] This creates encouraging or

[109] ‘’TikTok for example. A lot of AI is used there. It’s also kind of being pushed, you see that mass production of content, posting something every day.” ~EL

[110] ‘’ Well it... it pushes everyone of course to put out better work. That’s really good for that. And I think a whole lot of people inspire each other.’’~TH

‘’Uhm, you already notice that you're handing over a lot more to AI and that you kinda have to work with it because otherwise, you’re just falling behind on on your competition.’’~FL

threatful pressure. Nambisan (2016) states that rapid technological evolution forces entrepreneurs to continuously reevaluate their value proposition and opportunity (p. 6). The videographers show awareness of this necessity by either staying on top of new opportunities or evaluating their market distinction in this increasingly competitive field. However, the extent to which 'keeping up' is mandatory seems largely defined by how the participants perceive the outside buzz.

> ''60, yeah, tools, yeah. And that's even just the tip of the iceberg, just about marketing or content creation. So one tool after the other is literally popping up like mushrooms.''~TH

Some participants seemed to be really struck by the amount of tools that others use or showcase online. In contrast, two of the AI expert participants addressed that often, buzz is just buzz.[111]

> ''... everyday when I wake up, there's a lot of new applications. But I will say 90% or even higher of them are not that useful. A lot of vendors who are marketing use to make you think they are useful, but actually not.''~JO

At the end of the day, for videographers, their work is personal. This means that they should preserve their individual style, and provoke productive, intimate client relationships. In terms of Ekdale et al.'s (2015) diffusion theory, this means that AI for videographers has the most friction with compatibility. Existing values on originality and client demands of a suitable work companion hinder AI's compatibility with the current state of the art.

> ''In what I do, you might not even be the best, but people rather work with you 'cause they know you and feel comfortable with you.'' ~EL

Videography is people's work, decompressing AI's innovative power.

[111] Although the participant is not directly referring to filmmaking tools, it is still to consider that social media overhype the tools. Particularly considering that many people invalidly advertise themselves as AI Specialists: ''Because now everyone, well yes, you've surely seen it on LinkedIn: everyone who gets up and thinks 'today I am an AI specialist''~DI

4.5.2. AI for Individual Filmmakers

New independent filmmakers experience increased opportunities with AI's rise: accessible assets for high-quality output. [112] Their concern for losing their profession is rather low: they think traditional and AI filmmaking will coexist.[113] Even if fiction becomes GenAI dominant, they believe in the resilience of documentary, capturing the real, something that the film student is particularly focused on.

> ''And I think that I won't necessarily notice a lot from AI in my field, since AI does come into play quite quickly with things that are fiction. [..] And I make a lot of real things.''~JA

Like with videographers, AI resembles incremental innovation for them: enhancing existing practices. However, this optimistic view only reflects their current experience with AI. As theme 2 addressed, the consultant stresses the prospective challenge for film students or young entrants to step into the production sector considering loss of entry-level jobs. This may mean that the independent filmmakers need to maximize their entrepreneurial opportunity or establish their value sufficiently for entering high positions at production firms. It is thus tricky to apply Küng's (2013) framework of types of innovations, as AI is not done innovating. This requires a more turbulent approach that the discussion section will further touch upon.

4.5.3. AI for Established Directors

An industry scarcely funding projects creates difficulty for directors to actualize their films.

> [114]''I can maybe do a bit more than, for example, say: 'I'd like this editor.' And he's more expensive than the other editor. That's about the power I have. But to reject entire techniques, that luxury I don't have.''~MA

Even the established director does not experience the privilege to liberally choose expensive filmmaking methods, increasing consideration of AI solutions. However, this creates friction with the values of the director.

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[112] ''I just mostly notice a lot of advantages. Since with the equipment I'm using now, I just notice that I can make more and better things. I don't specifically notice anything in terms of clients leaving, or anything like that.''~LC

[113] ''Yes, it's a bit, one person does the work like this and the other does it that way and if I choose to eventually never use it [AI] either, that's just my way of working and I think there's also, also room for that in society eventually. I think it will just coexist.''~JA

[114] ''Look, if you're Quentin Tarantino, then you can, nicely say like: " I want it all to be done for real, and I choose not to do CGI, and I shoot it on film," and whatever else. [...] But, yeah, that just makes such a film a whole lot more expensive. I'm not in the position that I can just say that, you know?''~MA

‘’What you also often see with new techniques, is that it has a positive side, because it brings things closer and all that, but in some way it also means a form of impoverishment. Because there was a time, of course, when many things required a kind of craftsmanship and specialization, right? And I find that really beautiful. [...] With new techniques we often just find ways to do things cheaper. And that’s not always a good thing.’’ ~MA

AI implementation is not a no-brainer. It requires trade-offs to balance affordable alternatives with filmmaking values. The uncertain future of AI solutions creates complexity: how can one invest properly when tomorrow’s technologies may be cheaper?

4.5.4. AI for National Production Companies

Production companies have more AI capabilities than their clients generally demand. This hinders development.

‘’People don't like change and things that have to be different. And I really think that it's hindered more by that than by the possibilities.’’~JU

Technological innovation hits the company differently than prior theory implies. For instance, Küng (2017) remarks the necessity for established companies to adapt to new technological capabilities in ways that may lead to aping new competitors (p. 78). These implications are based on innovations that directly transformed market demand. Ekdale et al.’s (2015) notion of compatibility is therefore more relevant in this context: GenAI does not yet comply with all existing values, causing resistance in its routinization.[115]

The hindered development is twofold, it complicates preparation for future market demands but sustains enjoyment of the work.

‘’[116]I think half are more enthusiastic about it and half feel resistance because it might take away the fun of tinkering and fiddling on a set, trying to make something.’’~JU

The split reception creates a twofold strategy.

‘’Suppose we wanted to make a shot of a house and at some point a fire has to break out. Then the fun on the one hand is that you then have to figure out, ‘Okay, then we need a pyrotechnician here. All sorts of things have to be checked there.’ [...] And then all going there together, bringing specialized

[115] This does not apply to AI usage of manual or administrative tasks, which are very much integrated in the company’s workflow.
[116] ‘’I notice with some people, they show a lot of enthusiasm about it. A kind of, well, it's a bit of a playful exploration of what is all possible, what can be done. ‘’

people there to do it properly. All standing there together and watching like, ‘Oof, this is f*cking cool, those flames coming out.’
That's one way of working. The second way of working is basically just thinking, ‘Okay, well, we can do this very easily with AI. If we have a static shot, we can also have flames coming out of here just fine. It won't take days, it won't take weeks.’
[..] and depending on the project, you choose one of the two routes.’’ ~JU

Flexibility in their approach prevents discouragement. So far, they benefit from GenAI avoidance because their clients prefer that, and their impressive portfolio gives them a competitive advantage. However, the creative director bewares a market shift.

‘’The pressure is mainly on me in that I think, ‘We really have to keep an eye on all of this, otherwise you will be overtaken at some point.’[117]’’~JU

The approach for the company is a balance between old-school methods and AI-methods, with the latter ensuring they stay up to date. This is, therefore, a manner of preparing for an AI-demanding market rather than committing to AI production.

4.5.5. AI for International Agencies

Large-scale digital agencies experience extreme disruption.

‘’Now with the advent of AI, you know, that whole model is turned upside down.’’[118]~JJ

As mentioned in section 4.2.3., the production value flattens: local companies have access to similar production quality; let’s say, a Formula 1 commercial that was previously only accessible to an A-list brand. This pressures the agency enormously.[119] They have to remain relevant and sustain value.

‘’ I think the biggest challenge is that technology is moving faster than people can adapt. [..] So from an organization, how do you ensure that you indeed create a culture and an infrastructure in which you apply AI the fastest and best in practice? Because that's ultimately where the key lies. [..] And that is very difficult.’’JJ

[117] ‘’Also make sure that the people who are interested in this, that they can just fiddle with it and tinker with it. And the people who are not so into it, that they don't necessarily have to do that either. And I think that there, that it keeps a good balance that way.’’~JU
[118] Elaboration on their model in section D of the appendix.
[119] They are also pressured by their disrupted model of providing efficiency gain to clients.

In contrast to other archetypes in this thesis, it is not only competition, but also market demand that threatens the company.

> ‘’Yes, and people get quite nervous about that, and I understand that too. [..] Because the genie is out of the bottle. There's no turning back. [..] And we see that already, when we pitch for very large assignments, then there is just a demand for expected... procurement and those big brands: ’How are you going to ensure that you make maximum use of technology to make faster, more efficient, better work?’’’~JJ

Not even the participant is sure where this will lead to, ‘’time will tell’’. Just as there are reasons for an agency to stay, there are reasons to let it go. This necessitates staying at the top of the industry with AI advancements, creating value. They have to develop to stay in the game, making AI, for them, a different entity than a tool. As the interviewee expressed: ‘’The best engine wins.’’

As Chapter 2.3 addressed the shortened life expectancy of technological developments, with the risk of their investments becoming irrelevant after a new disruption, the question is: is there a next disruption to appear soon? The AI developer presumes so.

> ‘’You think that AI is now groundbreaking, then I guarantee you within 5 to 10 years [...] Then quantum supremacy will be proven and then you can really think of when the internet came out in the year 2000. [...] It's really just life-changing.’’~DI

The potential of quantum computing may have tremendous results for upcoming AI investments in the next few years, enlarging the uncertainty.

5. Discussion

5.1. Value Fit

As this research revealed the fluid infiltration and influence of AI on the film production sector, current frameworks on innovation and strategy are insufficient to fully capture the dynamic realities observed in this research. The findings of this study, therefore, were used to establish a new framework that captures AI's meaning and relevance for strategic development and content creation in the film production industry.

Table 7. Value Fit Table.

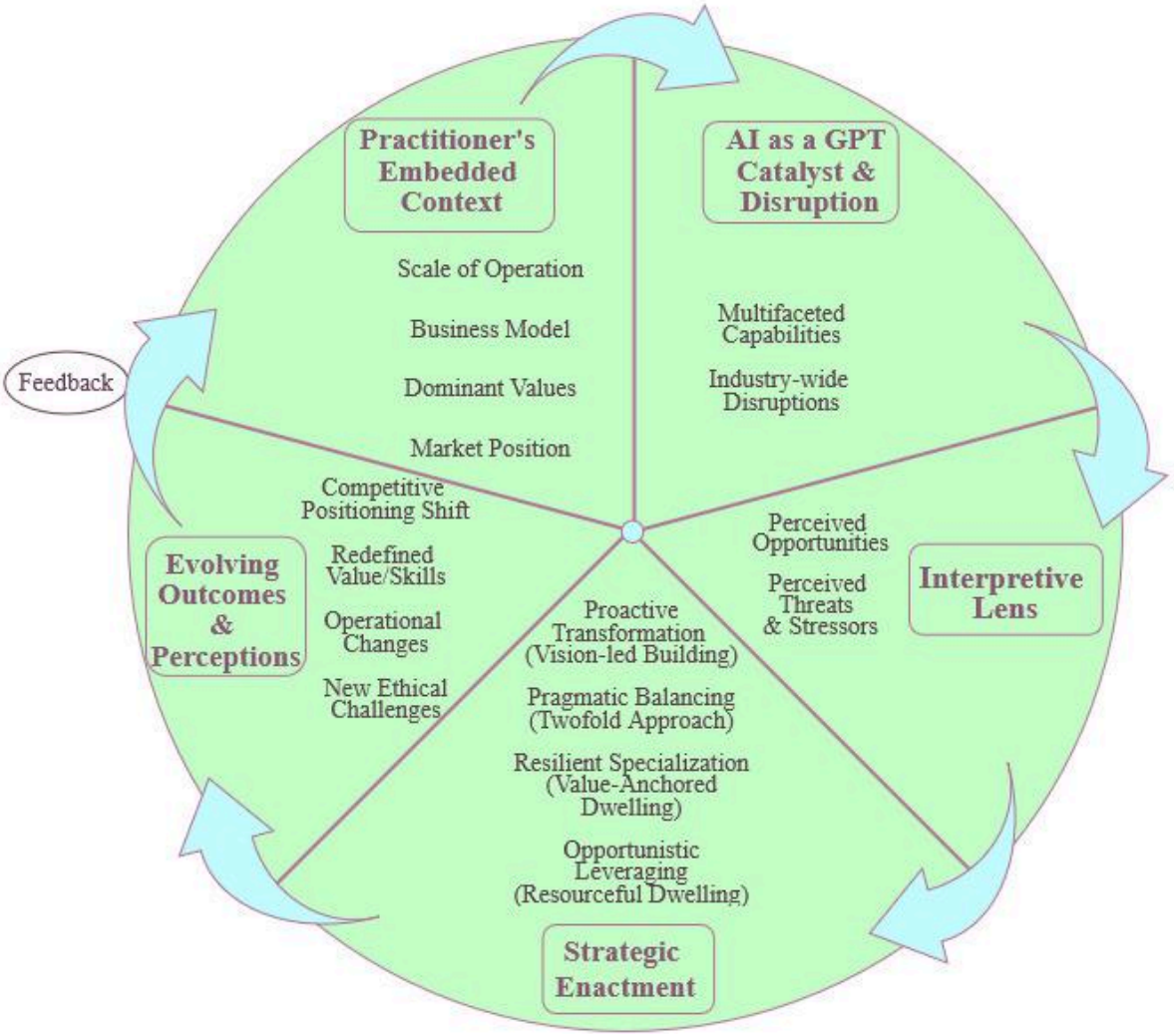
Practitioner Archetype	**Core Strategic Drivers**	**Primary AI-Induced Disruptors/Stressors**	**Observed AI Value Proposition & Adaptive Strategy**
High-Scale Digital Agency	Maintain market leadership, Achieve innovation and efficiency.	Rapid business model shifts, Intense competition; workforce upskilling demands.	**Value:** AI as an ''engine'' for competitive advantage. **Strategy:** Aggressive AI adoption for drastic efficiency, cost reduction, and enabling new service/pricing models.
Film Director	Secure funding, Preserve artistic integrity and the craft of filmmaking.	Funding uncertainties (partly due to AI's impact), Potential diminishment of craftsmanship by AI.	**Value:** AI as a targeted creative and efficiency aid. **Strategy:** Tactical AI use for specific tasks (e.g., pre-visualization, select post-production efficiencies) while emphasizing and maintaining human artistic control.

Videographer / Content Creator	Acquire and retain clients Enhance productivity Maintain a distinct personal style	Increased competition (from AI's accessibility) Pressure to use new tools; risk of stylistic homogenization	**Value:** AI as an efficiency and ideation tool. **Strategy:** Integrating AI for productivity and creative assistance while actively cultivating and emphasizing unique human creativity, personal branding, and client relationships as key differentiators.
Independent Filmmaker	Produce quality films on limited budgets, Achieve industry sustainability and recognition.	Intensified competition, Difficulty in standing out as AI democratizes production tools.	**Value:** AI as a democratizing force for production capabilities. **Strategy:** Leveraging AI resourcefully to access advanced tools, enhance production value on lower budgets, and compete in a crowded field.
National Production Company (Mid-Level)	Balance client acquisition/satisfaction, market relevance, and employee passion/values.	Market shifts due to AI Managing diverse client/employee expectations regarding AI and traditional craft.	**Value:** AI as a flexible option to be balanced with established practices. **Strategy:** Cautious and flexible AI adoption (twofold strategy), adapting to AI based on specific client demands and employee attitudes, thereby balancing innovation with established values and workflows.

The diagram below shows the cyclical nature of this process, where the innovation is in continuous dialogue with its impact. Starting with the context of the practitioner (e.g. production company at mid-scale of operation, client-based business model etcetera), it transitions into capabilities of the firm in relation to their market shift. These trade-offs between external and internal

context are filtered into how the strategy contributors perceive such contexts. This perception forms the basis of their strategic enactment. The outcomes of their actions form the basis of their embedded context, again, creating a feedback loop of this process.

Model 1. Value Fit Model.



5.2 Unpacking the Model (Part 1): Context, Disruption, and Interpretation

5.2.1. Context

Different archetypes experience different pressures. The agency needs generative imagery capabilities that outperform competitors while the production company needs to beware that their residual market fit may shift. Independents may prioritize market distinction or optimizing AI skills to stay ahead of rising competition, requiring proper navigation of 'AI-buzz'. As entry-level positions may disappear in film studios, those that aim for such positions may struggle. They may rely on governmental or studio interference to find pathways into the industry. Established directors have to consider AI solutions to realize budget adherence of their project as high budget acquisition is increasingly challenging. But this may not impoverish the filmmaker's artistic values.

5.2.2. Disruption

AI can support film practitioners. It makes for a cost-efficient tool that enhances ideas and effects, removing technical limitations and increasing accessibility. Simultaneously, it can be hard to control, give unsatisfactory results or impoverish the traditional craft or joy of filmmaking.[120] The participants also found that AI lacks truly original output, homogenizes content, and excludes human complexity.[121] This aligns with Yu et al.'s (2024) perspective where AI supports rather than replaces innovative thinking, and where the retrieval mechanism leaves generic results (p. 19). The authors' mentioning of the suspected innovative future of AI in film, where human-centred thinking still prevails (p. 2), matches the consultant's finding of the CNC study, where mostly the more easily automatable, entry-level position disappear. Although this shows a deep infiltration of AI processes in film industry best-practices, some participants believe more in a future coexistence of traditional and AI supported filmmaking. The level and dispersion of AI-infiltration in the industry therefore has no one-size-fits all prediction.

Besides threatening entry-level jobs, there is tension between AI and authorship. Some creators even doubt their ownership when using AI. This perceived unclarity of authorship, particularly with generative imagery, induces concerns of theft. Training data of copyrighted material results in untraceable use of other's works: a challenge of identification that was addressed by Oberting (2024, p. 158). As a solution, the author proposes continued use of this technology to channel innovation, but with proof of sufficient creative control (pp. 165-166). The practitioners' perspectives naturally align with that as creative control underlies their joy and integrity, but a definite 'border' on control is not yet defined.

[120] More elaboration in section E of the appendix.
[121] The participant that found AI's retrieval mechanism is similar to human inspiration still found AI content to lack human value.

The integrity of filmmakers does not safeguard the currently ill-defined copyright policy from extreme use of generative imagery. Agencies compete with high GenAI use, sustaining authorship concerns as long as the copyright law stays as flexible as it currently is. However, a more defined copyright law could constrain agencies' current workflows. They potentially would have to use GenAI solely trained on their own data, or continuously prove sufficient creative control: an uncertainty that would value from contingency plans like Oliver and Parrett's (2018) scenario planning method.

The tension between AI's functionality and authorship concerns plays into larger discussion around human control on ethical AI use. The practitioner relationship to this innovation therefore bridges interest and resistance. Croteau and Hoynes (2019) examine how media innovation both shapes and is shaped by humans. This research somewhat reflects that, but reveals a more detailed scope on power dynamics. Considering AI and GenAI models as GPTs, functioning across many media and industries, their development, as Bresnahan and Trajtenberg (1995) point out, various stakeholders develop it separately (p. 3). AI takes many different shapes, whether it is auto-focus in a camera, noise-reduction in editing software, or image generation via MidJourney. Croteau and Hoynes' (2019) notion that technologies are an accumulation of media (p. 56) is therefore not as straightforward with AI: it infiltrates. This complicates the level of human control on technological innovation. As the participants stated, the big companies steer the wheel of AI development. And with AI integrated in gear and software to the point that it is not always noticeable at first glance, it is increasingly challenging to avoid using it.

Furthermore, avoiding AI becomes less realistic when the film industry market is considered. One of the reasons why the film industry nowadays invests poorly in films has to do with the Hollywood strikes, as the consultant addressed. This increasingly pressures productions to implement AI for cost savings to realize sufficient funding. Ironically, one of the drivers for the Hollywood strikes was the perceived threat of AI exploiting actors' likeness without compensation (Lowe and Williams, 2023, para. 15). Although the situation has more facets, AI adoption seems to play a role in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Particularly when considering that the director suspects AI's development towards cost-effective filmmaking possibilities to play a role in the hesitant funding behavior of the industry.

From the agency's perspective, improving their AI infrastructure is necessary to outrun competitors. As Gambardella and McGahan (2010) argue, innovating resources is a way to outperform rivals in terms of profit, more efficiently balancing operating costs and revenue (p. 263). In regards to GPTs, the authors notice higher competition between those that aim to develop GPTs (p. 266). Although the agency is not necessarily in direct competition with leading AI development companies like DeepMind or OpenAI, their high productivity in infrastructure development competes with all rivals that also productively develop AI solutions for advertising.

The relationship between human control and technology control of innovation as Croteau and Hoynes (2019) describe it seems thus to be more complex when power dynamics are considered. The vast amount of stakeholders of AI development induce innovation that outpaces human adaptation.[122] A sign of human resistance, the actors striking against a perceived threat of AI, seemed to not ultimately hinder all AI use cases. Although productions so far aimed to protect jobs, AI-free productions in the future seem unrealistic. This is enforced by the wide variety of AI applications. Actors may strike against unfair use of their likeness, but that is separated from vastly different types of AI implementations, like noise reduction or what have you. The human relationship between AI in the film industry is thus not merely 'ambiguous', but like a prism. AI is too broad of a technology and industrial force to capture in one or two cause-effect relationships.

The notion that AI will democratize film production is revealed to be a complex and contested issue. Accessible, user-friendly tools and integrated features in affordable software and cameras are promising: any aspiring filmmaker may create professional-looking work. However, this may induce an overflow of content that transforms the former barrier of getting into the industry to the barrier of standing out in the industry.

Skepticism around democratization was also grounded in the formerly made prospects that digitization would democratize the industry, which has not happened: big production companies still lead the scene. Zooming out on AI in film production and returning to Murgia's (2024) notion that AI is bound to large, unethical power dynamics, creates a critical lens. AI is predicted to replace entry level jobs in film production within 5 to 10 years, threatening job opportunities for film students that start their journey in the industry.[123] As the production sector is highly profit focused,[124] Murgia's framework may therefore suggest that the most benefit of AI in film production will be allocated to larger stakeholders. As an easy entrance to producing content may thus be compensated by the reduced opportunities within production companies, a pure democratized environment remains uncertain. But both extremes would suggest a shift in the underlying dynamics of how competition is distributed and what barriers there are.

International agencies strongly experience shifting competitive dynamics. They have to sustain high production value, knowing that generative imagery enables costly productions to be imitated with cheaper AI solutions. Typically, big brands like car or food brands have more visually abstract campaigns that allow perfectly to be artificially generated.[125]

[122] The agency participant remarked that technology nowadays develops faster than humans can adapt.
[123] Those students are mostly not yet eligible for managerial roles, challenging their opportunity to get their foot in the door.
[124] As stated by the consultant.
[125] According to the creative director of the production company.

5.2.3. Interpretation

Nobody would watch a soccer team of robots play the way they watch Real Madrid. Participants show strong belief in the societal value of human creation, more than the literature clarified. Clients of national production companies disapprove of AI avatars even when offered at lower costs. A promotional video of a real place, like a hotel, furthermore, has no point of being artificially generated.

Ekdale et al.'s (2015) framework helps understand where AI adoption may deteriorate, but does not offer conclusions. For instance, production companies' clients avoiding AI is a compatibility hurdle, but their lack of knowledge about the technology could be an underexplored barrier.

> ''There are clients who do find it interesting, but I'm still surprised when I look on LinkedIn now and there are still people who seem to have only just discovered ChatGPT. And I think with many technological developments, it just goes slowly because it bumps into people and processes are sluggish.''~JU

According to Daly (2025), the better people are informed on AI, the higher their trust and adoption of the technology (p. 1), implying that more AI-knowledgeable clients could spark AI adoption. The creative director showed awareness but had expected this sooner. This example stresses a slight nuance in Ekdale et al.'s framework; namely that of perception. The attribute to poor diffusion may not be the low compatibility itself, but the attribute that creates a perception of low compatibility.

5.3 Unpacking the Model (Part 2): Strategic Enactment in Practice

As with different perceived pressures, different strategic responses to AI were found. The agency perceives strategy as a way of giving direction: a tough task considering AI's uncertain outlook on an agencies' relevancy. They add value by applying the best AI infrastructure, a continuous process with hardly predictable directions. Their prioritized dynamic capability is precisely their capability to abruptly adapt to technological advancements. To guide the team through such an ongoing, partly ungraspable transformation they stimulate their workforce: emphasizing cultural encouragement as a strategic response. Horst and Moisander (2015) pointed at the burden of taking employees through the increasing complexity of disruption, addressing the tension between employee self-improvement versus workforce collaboration (p. 8). The agency therefore enforces a culture of inspiration, where personal developments and ideas are enabled, emphasizing value-enhancement. The authors proposed the employees' self-improvement need versus the organizational need for collaboration as a paradox that can be resolved by accepting it (i.e. adjusting expectations of linear progress) (p. 13). The agency, however, embraces, perhaps even exploits it.

Namely, supporting their employees in this paradox spurs their other organizational needs of transformation, learning, and risk-taking, which paradoxically clashed with employees' needs in Horst and Moisander's (2015) research. This is their way to balance values that lead to progression of the company.

This research defines this approach as 'vision-led strategy': where vision outweighs roadmaps. As AI surprisingly turned their business model upside down, (part of) their strategic response was envisioning the threat as an opportunity. The interviewee considered AI as an ''engine''. This 'engine' metaphor becomes particularly striking when considering that, as Küng (2017) illustrated, technological investments have increasingly lower life expectancy in the modern environment. Constant iteration of having to 'catch up' could therefore lead to chronic organizational stress, highlighting the importance of an encouraging work ethic.

At a vastly different scale, the established director also shows features of a vision-led strategy. The director only implements techniques that fit within his definition of 'film', which comes with a reckoning of inevitable or valuable AI use cases. In contrast to the agency inducing a vision of turning AI into a value proposition, the director induces the vision of maximizing *responsible* AI use. This means staying as much informed on the technology while carefully considering the use cases.

This represents proactive avoidance of inertia.[126] According to Lischka's (2019) notion, the director resembles a 'learner who becomes a leader', meaning a shift from acknowledging innovative challenges to actively seizing the opportunity (p. 194). This strategy is rooted from a passion for cinema, combined with pragmatic considerations around budget allocation. As AI becomes inevitable for getting a film made, the director's vision will determine how to navigate that.

Independent creators have an AI-agnostic strategic response to the technological force. They focus more on their own creativity or filming documentary, therefore merely using AI where it is undetectably integrated or convenient. What typifies the AI-agnostic strategy is that the participants have a high perceived flexibility. Besides trust in market demand for low-AI productions, their independence and the user-friendly property of AI creates confidence for them to adapt to the technology if required.

The production company applies a twofold strategy. While their internal dichotomy and client resistance necessitates perseverance of practical filmmaking, potentially falling behind feels haunting. This way, they incorporate practice-based and conscious strategy. Interestingly, the distinction made between ''building'' and ''dwelling mode'' by Horst and Järventie-Thesleff (2016) seems therefore to be non-exclusive here. Building mode is a conscious and rational plan towards an envisioned future, and dwelling mode represents spontaneous strategic actions that comply with the strategist's identity and work towards an open goal (pp. 4-5). The production company does both, for two main reasons. One is the surprise of lacking AI market demands. The second is that full building mode would

[126] In this case not 'organizational', but 'individual' or 'creative' inertia.

demotivate the workforce. The company combines these two strategic approaches by continuously exploring AI possibilities while maintaining the possibility to shoot traditionally. By letting them fiddle around, the creative director aims to gradually stimulate the employees' interests.

The company therefore aims to resolve the paradoxes of organizational versus employee needs by synthesizing building and dwelling. This closely relates to Järventie-Thesleff et al.'s (2014) notion of ambidexterity: balancing exploitation (efficiency, increasing productivity, control, certainty, and variance reduction) with exploration (search, discovery, autonomy, innovation, and embracing variation). However, ambidexterity more so focuses on organizations exploiting their established best practices to safely explore new ones through trial and error. ‘’Exploration’’ therefore refers to a pursuit of something new, while‘’exploitation’’ functions as the backbone to ensure sufficient stability. The company is ‘’building’’ by consciously developing (including motivating workforce towards) AI capabilities, while exploiting their practical filmmaking best practices when relevant. They ‘’dwell’’ in terms of AI exploration: evaluating if a project requires an AI or practical approach. This has added benefits because it appeals to current market demands and develops workforce skills in both domains. Understanding filmmaking leads to better AI direction, while better AI capabilities and understanding stimulates efficient decision-making on choosing an AI versus practical approach. Furthermore, this strategy enjoys sustainable competitive advantage for a future where both practical and AI filmmaking coexist.

5.4 The Model's Dynamism: Cyclical Change and Theoretical Implications

Across Kosterich's (2019) institutional change framework, AI is dispersed. Its institutional stage depends on the type of AI and type of user. For agencies, AI's impact is positioned between legitimization and reinstitutionalization. Moral legitimacy is found within the shift in agency culture, pragmatic legitimacy is found with the shifting financial model strategy, and cognitive legitimacy is found with agencies being eligible for AI creative pioneer awards by The One Show (2025). But AI is not yet at the taken-for-granted stage, as the output-driven charging model is not yet established as the norm within the entire industry. Production companies are in the stage of theorization, they progress to reckon the inevitability of AI. However, AI as a solution is not fully justified. Studios have to find ways to sustain jobs, and production companies aim to sustain the employees' enjoyment of the job. Moral legitimacy is therefore not fully crystallized. Some content creators are still in the stage of pre-institutionalization: they notice the force of AI and try to keep adapting to new technologies. This is therefore an exploratory stage where they try new things ad-hoc. However, other content creators and independent filmmakers seem to be not much affected by AI in their working methods; they implement the tools here and there, but have not considerably restructured their workflow.

Kosterich's (2019) framework is challenged in this research by the necessary continuous reevaluation of this technology. This means that AI's established meaning can change from day to another, requiring constant redefinition of the external forces that Kosterich (2019) addresses. Strategically building and maintaining competitive advantage by routinizing rising industry-wide norms, as Kosterich (2019) proposes (p. 2), is more challenging with AI in film production. The consultant does strategize with AI in the picture for sustainable resilience and profitability, but is still bound to current knowledge, and practitioners particularly struggle to grasp what awaits them. Kosterich (2019) focused on external forces with relatively static meanings. But as AI continues to evolve, labelling it as ''external force'' can be limiting in this context: it does not address the force's turbulence.

This research therefore exemplifies how institutional change does not linearly lead from external forces to sensemaking to change, but involves a circular motion where sensemaking and change are in dialogue with the respective external forces.[127] The 'force' of AI is not one-sided for them. Their coping with the technology can influence their perceived pressure. If they aim to be at the forefront of AI implementation, new pressure of rising tools befalls them continuously. If they aim to distinguish themselves through niche or documentary projects, pressure may only arise when shifting market demands impacts their business model. This makes the theorization stage of institutional change not only a result but also, ultimately, a predictor for the external force in certain contexts.

5.5. International Applicability

The Value Fit model is based on Dutch and international insights. The international operations of various participants reflected insights that cross Dutch national borders. The CNC study on the French industry; participants' experience in Hollywood and the Philippines; and the wide intercontinental breadth of the agency, for instance. As these examples laid the foundation for the research outcome, the international applicability is exactly what the Value Fit Model enables. The model integrates the embedded context from each practitioner. In the UK, where tax rebate rules around AI and VFX may be different than, say, China, the embedded context component of the model will therefore be different. Similarly, a Hollywood production would undergo a different embedded context than a European production due to different funding models.

[127] For instance, the production company continuously reevaluates its own readiness, the employees' interest, and the market appeal for AI adoption. The film director tries to remain informed on AI, explores the beneficial versus undesired use cases, and considers ways to actualize financing (whether AI related or not). A content creator or filmmaker may choose to jump in on AI or to discover ways to become AI resilient. They experience flexibility to adapt when they feel they desire or need to.

6. Conclusion

This research showcased the cruciality of sensemaking and value trade-offs in AI and strategic development in the film industry. As AI is a broad concept with vastly evolving qualities, the impact on film production is experienced in different ways. The context of each practitioner was the first level of influence on how they manage AI. Different business models, prioritized values, operating scales, and market positions translate in AI's infiltration into their practices, resulting in different extents and forms of impact. Their sense-making filters this impact towards how they actually manage the tool. Sense-making includes their perceived opportunities, limitations, threats and value stressors. This impacts their strategic response, which loops back to new organizational context and perceptions. The Value Fit model captures how AI's ever evolving technology induces more cyclical conceptualizations of strategic development, highlighting the crucial relationship between external pressure and perception.

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

This research reveals several insights that contribute to the academic field.

6.1.1. Refining Practice Theory in a Tech-Creative Context

This study reveals the strategy-as-practice perspective in a context where rapid technological developments evolve in the creative industry. This creates different strategic enactments for different archetypal contributors to the film industry. ‘‘Building’’ and ‘‘dwelling’’ mode can be combined as a more resilient and effective strategic enactment for navigating turbulent technological change rather than as a ‘coping’ method (which ‘ambidexterity’ mainly points towards). Conscious development of AI capabilities lay the foundation for potential future market relevance, while spontaneous decisions on working methods ensure the most suitable market response in the moment. Both the conscious and spontaneous capabilities enforce each other, understanding each method enforces understanding for the other. The value fit model is a framework that operationalizes practice-based strategy.

6.1.2. Advancing the Understanding of Evolving GPTs

Current theories on GPTs lack the ever-evolvement that AI defines. The static property of, say, the steam engine impacts an industry differently. This research revealed the necessity of reevaluation of the same technology in order to understand its market implications. Additionally, it showcases how a GPTs purpose is not only distributed across different industries, but how its exhaustive application properties serve vastly different purposes within the same industry. In the film

industry, the adoption and strategic relevance was therefore reliant on human values, context, and perception, which may be less central in other sectors.

6.1.3. Proposing a Dialogical Model for Innovation Adoption

This research proposes a more dialogical structure of Kosterich' (2019) institutional change framework. A new technology that continuously improves itself cannot be captured under a singular disruptive impact. The perceived pressure of AI seems to be both a predictor and an outcome of institutional change; it pressures certain industry players to change, while industry players trying to leverage AI's opportunities (thus change) experience its accompanying pressure. Perception therefore makes a nuance that would also improve Ekdale et al's (2015) diffusion theory. It is not always a matter of how well the technology itself holds up to attributes that drive innovation, but the interpretation of the technology can be the actual bottleneck. Ultimately, this research contends that the future of the film industry will not be determined by the capabilities of AI alone, but by the ongoing, deeply human process of negotiating its meaning and value.

6.2. Practical and Societal Contributions

6.2.1. Implications for Practitioners

Agency leaders and strategists need an AI focused strategy where high-value, cost-efficient output leverages AI as an ‘‘engine’’. This strategic shift must endorse selling output rather than hours, and invest in technological infrastructure on the immediate terms. This requires a top-down effort to foster a culture and offer personal development for the workforce. Their disruptive yet forward-facing approach to strategy requires contingency-plan methods. With the prospect of quantum computing inducing the next disruption, they must optimize their dynamic capabilities.

Established national production companies must enforce a twofold strategy where operational modes are balanced. This preserves the craft, client relationships, and enjoyment of practical filmmaking, while simultaneously building AI capabilities. Residual market fit (e.g. client resistance) must not be taken for granted or it will be a long-term risk for their market relevance.

Filmmakers must primarily focus on what AI cannot replicate: unique artistic vision, emotional storytelling, and social collaboration. They should tactically consider AI's added value (e.g. saving costs, automating repetitive tasks, enhancing ideas), while strategically positioning their market distinction (e.g. documentary, personal style, client relationships). They also need the capability to filter out the durable tools from the ‘AI buzz’. Film students must strategically consider their entry into the industry and explore entrepreneurial opportunities beyond entry-level studio positions.

6.2.2. Implications for Governments and Audiences

Change Financial Incentives: To support rather than hinder technological progress, governments should review and redefine criteria for tax credits to reflect contemporary, AI-integrated production practices.

New frameworks are required to respond to entry-level job loss. Guilds, unions, and governments must collaborate to create new training programs and pathways into the industry.

Aligning with Oberting (2024)'s view, the rising concern around authorship demands clarification of copyright law. A supporting solution could be that big studios train models on their own data.[128]

Sustaining the value of human creation enables the existence of the current profession and craftsmanship. It allows human creative expression and may preserve original, complex art. However, with the increasing difficulty to separate real from artificial, new media literacy has to be promoted. This involves skills that need to be enforced by education, journalism, and public discourse. Otherwise, new conceptualizations of visual evidence need to arise as a response to undetectable deep fakes.

6.3. Limitations

There are certain limitations to this study that have to be concerned. Firstly, as a qualitative study that provides depth derived from twelve participants, no statistical generalization is applicable. The perspectives are primarily from the Dutch or broader European context, with some internationally active agency and consultancy insights. Direct insights from Hollywood, Nollywood, or Bollywood studios would have increased this thesis' rigor by offering organizational-level perspectives from global industry-leading feature film companies.

Secondly, the sample was diverse in terms of nationalities, the male-female balance was off. In particular, no female practitioners of film production were interviewed due to lack of response. The only female participants were therefore AI experts. Whether this may or may not have influenced the outcome of perspectives, further research could aim to gather more representative perspectives.

Additionally, the study's reliance on participants' reported experiences and perceptions vitalizes the researcher's interpretation of that data. While in-depth interviews provide rich data for creating meaning, observational methods could complement those insights by analyzing the actual day-to-day enactment of AI-related strategies and subtle negotiations within teams.

[128] See also: Oberting (2024, p. 166).

Next, this research made clear that AI is rapidly evolving, which not only makes technology outdated quickly, but potentially this research as well. This is a snapshot in time (early 2025) that may lose relevance within years or months. For instance, one of the AI-experts doubted the likelihood of AI's future capability of inventing new innovations. In the meantime, Google launched Alpha, a model that improved a 50 year standing record of a mathematical model, by means of trialling new solutions autonomously (CodeScrum, 2025, para. 1). Another example of new developments is AMC Networks (known for Breaking Bad and The Walking Dead) signing a pact with AI company Runway for more cost-effective solutions to fierce streaming services competition (Zeitchik, 2025, para. 5), introducing new dynamics of AI implementation in the industry. The last example of this evolution is Google's recent release of Veo 3 and Flow, GenAI tools that allow the user to prompt and connect fully AI generated shots and sound, bringing new standards of AI generated film to the public (Werth, 2025, para. 1-12).

The last limitation to mention is the assessment of AI ethics while excluding AI's environmental impact. None of the practitioners raised comments about this. Therefore, the environmental concerns around AI were not included in the research concepts. However, as the AI developer supported, these issues are highly relevant. Therefore, AI's environmental impact is a real but under addressed concern in this research.

6.4. Directions for Future Research

Future research could directly compare the influences of cultural context on the Value-fit model (e.g. Europe versus America versus Bollywood) to extend its depth and cultural transferability.

Furthermore, research that specifically investigates one of the defined archetypes in this study. This could solidify the Value Fit model by introducing more robustly grounded and detailed attributes that apply to the archetype.

Moreover, rather than solely exploring AI's relevance, therefore constantly running behind the facts, research should begin to investigate the potential disruption of quantum computing, which could fundamentally change AI's capabilities. Specifically what this could mean for creative industries where investment in AI is continuously increasing.

Finally, further research is needed to develop robust and practically applicable ethical frameworks for AI use in creative industries, addressing issues like authorship, data bias, environmental impact, and the preservation of human creative agency in collaboration with AI.

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Appendix

A. Introduction

Practical Relevance: Elaboration on Film Industry's Blurred Borders

Technological development is strongly related to innovation in the film industry, think of the emergence of color and sound (Orankiewicz and Bartosiewicz, 2024, p. 3). Technological advantage, in this way, traditionally meant competitive advantage (p. 3). However, new digital forces (think of the internet, digital file compression, streaming media) affected three critical stages of the motion picture value chain: production, distribution, and exhibition (p. 3). Digital evolutions not only resulted in more affordable production entries but also restructurings of the industry (p. 3). The emergence of streaming platforms, for instance, forced big changes in the film distribution market, such as required flexibility and innovation for remaining competitive (Orankiewicz and Bartosiewicz, 2024, p. 2).

B. Theoretical Framework

The Definition of Film: This Thesis' Lens

This thesis takes the definition of 'film' rather broadly. Namely, film is such a diverse medium that entire books are written on finding its definition (see also: Mullarkey, 2009). From a market perspective, film is a complex product where each film has its own business model (Vitkauskaitė, 2020, p. 44). Although an ontological perspective on 'film' is a whole topic on its own, I combine Canudo's (1975) definition of film as a synthesis of existing arts (p. 253) - involving narrative, sound, and aesthetic - with Remeselnik's (2012) argument that film is inextricably linked to duration (p. 14). Thus, all (audio)visual media with a fixed timespan are deemed relevant for this research. This means that the research is not limited to featured films, but also includes commercial forms such as brand videos, music videos etcetera.

Roles of Strategy Shapers - In Depth

In print magazines, strategy work was tightly managed by senior executives: hierarchical practices were considered necessary to ''make things happen'' (Jarventië-Thesleff et al., 2014, p. 131). This results in top-down monitoring, limiting collective actions of strategizing (p. 131).

In the online context, however, the companies' strategic approach was inverted. Driven by the fear of losing ground in a fiercely competitive digital space, they moved to rapidly adopt the latest technological developments (p. 131). As the development of online and mobile operations faced such uncertainty, their need to attain readiness for what may be coming resulted in online investments that sometimes surpass the speed of customers adapting to the new solutions (p. 132).

Online strategizing meant for the companies a ‘’trial and error’’ approach in contrast to the strict brand identity of their print publications (p. 132). Online development entailed tolerating incompleteness and correcting it the next time, as well as increasingly interactive strategizing: the urge to form a community with the readers (p. 132). This blurred the boundaries between production and consumption, expanding the breadth of strategy practitioners to the editorial staff and even the users of the media content (p. 132-133). Therefore, online strategizing was deemed more intrapreneural: searching various opportunities for business growth; questioning old ways of acting and thinking; and staying open to changes in their operating environment (p. 133). Editorial staff was perceived as stimulating and inspiring, enabling the organization to better recognize and meet new market demands (p. 133).

Institutional Change - In Depth

Using news nerds (i.e. new professional journalists that bridge the initial gap between traditional journalistic positions and technologically-intensive positions) as the backbone of her study, Kosterich (2019) explores the shift in the journalistic profession through an institutional change framework (p. 2). This framework enables examination of how industry-wide norms, such as these new professional forms, become taken-for-granted routines, highlighting the ways in which news organizations can strategically build and maintain a competitive advantage (p. 2). For Kosterich (2019), the changes of industry processes and personnel brought about by news nerds reflect the necessary strategic responses that confront news firms as they adapt to disruption and innovation (p. 3).

The stages of institutionalization are the following: First, an exploratory stage called preinstitutionalization (e.g. legacy companies independently restructuring ad-hoc when facing organization problems) (p. 4). Following is the stage of theorization (e.g. when a problem is specified and an effort to further adoption of new structures takes place): it presents and justifies a new alternative as a solution (p. 4). This justification transitions into legitimacy (i.e. how appropriate the idea is socially perceived), which can take forms of normative approval, self interest, and taken-for-grantedness, depending on the audience and context (p. 4). When ideas are compellingly specified and justified, they get adopted until they are either reinstitutionalized as the taken-for-granted or ultimately rejected (p. 5).

As deinstitutionalization introduced new entrants, those entrants (the news nerds) were indeed part of organizational strategy during preinstitutionalization: the news nerds (in more abstract terms: those with a broader, technologically relevant background) were wanted by news companies (p. 12). Although the companies adapted to change, they also maintained a strategic tendency towards existing norms: established routines and past experiences (p. 12). In the stage of theorization, moral legitimacy was evident with the integration of news nerd courses into journalism education and a shift in newsroom culture, while pragmatic legitimacy (i.e. self interest) was evident with news nerd

managers strategizing financial gains and cognitive legitimacy was evident with external news nerd awards (p. 13).

Strategic Renewal - In Depth

Research from Horst and Moisander (2015) found three main paradoxes: (1) employees' need for stability versus organizational need for change (p. 8). Although the journalism firm is accustomed to disruption as a characteristic of their workfield, the constant pressure, ever-increasing complexity, and overwhelming communication were too much to bear for the employees (p. 8). Managers, on the other hand, experienced the market change and acknowledged the necessity to change accordingly, without knowing exactly which strategic decisions to make (p. 9). Although both managers and employees experience the pressure to renew, they experience it contradictorily.

(2) employees' need for security and tradition versus organizational need for learning and taking risks. The journalists cared about their heritage and feared that their position was under attack by the turbulency of the industry, resulting in rivalry across departments (p. 10). However, at the organizational level the needs of strategic renewal call precisely for taking risks and learning (p. 10). This means that the need for security among employees conflicts with the organizational need to become more turbulent.

(3) employees' need to focus on oneself versus organizational need to collaborate (p. 8). In order to understand new technologies and evolutions, the employees wanted to work individually: focus on their own being and working methods (p. 11). On the other hand, the organization requires inter-department collaboration to renew effectively, creating the third paradox (p. 11).

Diffusion of Innovations in Media - In Depth

Ekdale et al." (2015) study was based on news media companies transitioning to the digital space. The following innovation attributes create understanding of why some ideas do or do not diffuse quickly: (1) relative advantage (how much better is the idea towards its predecessor?); (2) compatibility (how consistent is the idea with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters?); (3) complexity (how difficult to understand and use is the idea perceived to be?); (4) trialability (how much can it be experimented with on a limited basis?); (5) observability (how well are the results of an innovation visible to others?) (p. 939-940). In research, innovations where these factors did not face resistance got routinized (p. 953).

These attributes presented positive implications for the news companies entering social media. Cross-platform storytelling induced relative advantage and was compatible with journalistic goals. Relational change, however, faced noticeable resistance. As community members were producing content, were having greater input on coverage decisions, and newsworkers were practising a conversational approach to journalism, many feared tension of the community not complying with journalistic principles (p. 953).

Changes to professional culture diffused the least out of the three innovations, as most newsworkers experienced too many changes without properly communicated missions and evaluation time (p. 954). They could therefore not understand what the relative advantages or compatibility implications are (p. 954). Therefore, instead of requiring clarification (which relational change did), changes in professional culture required interpretation, negotiation, and consent; making acceptance unlikely at this stage (p. 954).

AI in Post Production - Elaboration

The system framework of an AI intelligent editing platform consists of four parts: (1) media management (including a variety of media resources - such as movies, TV shows etc. - to meet diverse video editing requirements); (2) video content understanding (where characteristics of video shots, data frames and cross-model content are combined to understand the video); (3) video content retrieval (where cross-modal retrieval and fast retrieval of multi-granularity content - such as keywords, natural statements, and video frames - are achieved); and (4) video content generation (which creates scripts, learns editors or editing methods for top-streaming short videos) (p. 3). An AI intelligent editing platform's technical structure involves a CDL database for video storage, intelligent semantic analysis for feature extraction and categorization, and intelligent editing encompassing video acquisition, feature and keyframe extraction, and video generation (p. 3).

The AI intelligent editing platform is composed of three primary functional modules: the business system, video analysis, and basic resources (p. 3). The business system comprises key components such as news networks, production networks, and media libraries (p. 3). Video analysis capabilities within this system encompass intelligent auditing, identification, and editing (p. 3). The basic resources include host, storage, network, and database modules (p. 3).

The author points out four specific applications of AI editing in film and Television post-production:

Automated Editing: AI analyzes video to identify themes, to generate clip sequences, and to produce final edited clips using computer vision and natural language processing.

Human-Computer Collaborative Editing: Editors can refine AI suggestions, providing them with feedback that helps the software improve future recommendations, creating a partnership between human creativity and AI assistance. Tools like Adobe, for instance, are integrating AI for auxiliary editing functions.

Knowledge Base-Driven Autonomous Editing: AI can independently edit video by leveraging large databases of film knowledge and machine learning to extract editing rules and to generate programs without direct human input.

Avatar-Driven Automation: In virtual environments, such as the metaverse, AI integrated with motion capture and avatars automates editing of virtual movie scenes based on pre-set parameters, like camera angles. (p. 5-6)

Business Model Innovation - In Depth

Gambardella and McGahan (2010) examine GPTs in relation to business model innovation. A business model, as they argue, is what management thinks customers want, how they want it, and how an enterprise can best meet those needs while getting paid to do so (p. 263). A business model generates profit when their activities and resources make the balance between operating costs and revenues more efficient than rivals (p. 263). Today's economy is increasingly grounded in intangible assets like scientific knowledge and intellectual property. The essence of a firm's strategy, therefore, becomes the continual adaptation and control of these resources to ensure ongoing relevance to the customers and suppliers of the firm (p. 263). When a firm adopts a novel approach to commercializing such underlying assets, the authors define this as business-model innovation (p. 263).[129]

For developers, their way of business-model innovation involved avoiding the risk of developing technologies that are too niche and rather exploiting applications that were commercially viable across a range of markets (p. 265). This way, the supplier is less vulnerable and dependent upon one licensee, and can attain revenue via the number of licensees rather than only one application (p. 265). Ironically, however, the increase in GPTs resulted in higher productivity among those aiming to develop them, creating higher competition (p. 266).

Another challenge of developing a GPT is the predictability of commercializability for downstream licensees (p. 267). The ability to accurately forecast commercial viability has been constrained by a lack of rapid testing methods that can determine how a licensed idea will work in practice, as opposed to in theory (p. 267). Previously, commercial opportunities or technical problems drove innovation; today, technological solutions often seek out commercial opportunities to leverage or problems to solve (p. 267). Therefore, such breakthrough products and services go through long and costly processes of making companies understand what the technology can be used for and why they need it (p. 267).

The authors argue that business-model innovation to take advantage of new markets has the potential to lead in developing knowledge-exchange industries, and that developing resources rooting from knowledge capital can lay the foundation of sustainable competitive advantage (p. 269). Yet, they also warn that it may be difficult or impossible to anticipate opportunities across economic sectors (p. 270). Namely,

[129] They draw an example of the market for technology, where firms sell intellectual property and services rather than commercializing products themselves (p. 263). However, this approach faces issues, such as convincing licensees to buy a technology the supplier is not using themselves or gaining sufficient compensation from the licensees (p. 263).

Digital Entrepreneurship and Evolving Value (Section 2.3.3.)

Nambisan (2016) builds on Küng's (2017) multidimensional perspective on innovation through an entrepreneurial lens. The infusion of digital technologies fluidized boundaries between product life-cycle and development: the product evolves even at/after launch, like when Tesla provides new features after having their cars already delivered to customers (p. 5). These fluid boundaries are further realized through generativity: a digital platform's capability to have its functionality extended by outside developers (p. 5). For instance, when Apple infuses new capabilities into its digital platform (iOS), a ripple-effect (like app development) takes place, resulting in cumulative and path-dependent innovation trajectories (p. 5). This affects entrepreneurial processes: new product ideas and business models can be rapidly implemented and scaled (p. 5). Because of the continuous evolution, entrepreneurial success is no longer an enactment of a predefined opportunity, but oriented toward facilitating a continuously evolving value proposition (p. 6). Entrepreneurs thus have to constantly rescope their opportunity (p. 6). This reinforces the practice perspective, highlighting how embracing change recurrently involves evaluation.

AI's Implications for Film - Elaboration

Nassar (2024) assesses some future implications for AI in film production. First of all, he argues that AI identifying conventional patterns in scenarios can help avoiding such clichés, allowing creativity to be enhanced (p. 208). The author continues to describe how the current challenge of accurately predicting box office success can be resolved. Namely, AI tools offer subjective and more robust analytics on the commercial value of films to make the human decision more informed and accurate, as well as easing access to these tools for independent film companies (p. 209). IBM's Watson robot, furthermore, selected the appropriate scenes for the trailer of horror film Morgan (Scott, 2016) based on visual, audio, and scene composition analysis (p. 210). Although an editor still creatively montaged the scenes into a trailer, the process that typically would have taken 10-30 days was reduced to 24 hours (p. 210).

AI and Script Writing - Elaboration

After receiving commission from the studio or producer, a professional script writer typically takes 12 weeks to write the script (Sun, 2024, p. 1). In 2016, however, AI expert Andy Herd created an AI-automated script-writing software which he trained on the entire script of popular sitcom Friends (Crane and Kauffman, 1994-2004) (p. 1). Through script analysis, the bot automatically generated a new episode script of the sitcom (p. 1). AI script-writing can therefore increase efficiency, but also gather relevant facts and data which assists the author in uncovering deeper plot hints (p. 1). It further aids in making the narrative more compelling by inspiring the artist to explore more original creative concepts (p. 2). That being said, some perceive AI as lacking human depth due to the

limitations of algorithms, and AI may struggle to handle the characters' complexity and emotions as it may not capture human nature properly (p. 2).

Today's fierce competition for screenwriters allows for AI to assist with recurring issues, such as a lack in realistic foundation, insufficient story content, and inadequate background research (p. 3). Reconstructing a spatial context of a specific era is a difficult task where AI can assist screenwriters through its unique advantages in data provision, in-depth investigation, helping to visualize possibilities and assist creators in getting started (p. 3). Especially AI's capability to overcome writer's block is key to saving time (Rahman & Ali, 2024, p. 54). This makes it a highly considerable tool for brainstorming that could also help outline the plot to the desired tone and suggests character arcs (p. 54). But again, with the limitation that it cannot decipher intricate storylines, nuanced feelings or irony, for example (p. 54).

AI Ethics - Additional Literature

Singh (2024) argues the balance between AI implementation and human control to be a complex and ongoing challenge (p. 134). Will AI remain a tool or develop to have its own creative agency? (p. 134). The author also stresses the challenge of deepfakes (i.e. deep neural networks that create manipulated media, like an audiovisual replica of a real person) raises concerns about permission, privacy, and misinformation, as it can be used to produce incredibly realistic but deceptive content (p. 172). This can have disastrous results as it can produce fake news, fake proof or confessions, retaliation pornography, hoaxes, and financial fraud (p. 173). These implications are still widely discussed, but an anti-deepfakes law in the US was proposed (p. 175).

Research by Kamali et al. (2024) investigates what a framework for ethical AI usage in education should look like. General AI ethics lack universal applicability, necessitating the development of context-specific guidelines tailored to diverse nationalities, cultures, and individual institutions. An educator emphasized the necessity of AI ethics in AI development, asserting its potential to prevent misbehavior, misinformation, and misconduct stemming from hidden agendas. (Kamali et al., 2024, p. 7)

Although Kamali et al.'s (2024) research revealed that AI implementation in education should be ethically safeguarded, the interviewed educators were confused and had opposed views when revealing their concerns about AI ethics (p. 14).[130]

Saeidi (2025) examines Emotianalized AI's (AI systems that recognize and influence users' emotions and exhibit emotions themselves (p. 3)) impact on the meaningfulness of human life in a philosophical way. The author claims that EAI is ethically unjustifiable because it deteriorates the meaning of life by, for instance, deceiving users into having emotions (they perceive emotions even

[130] For education, the research proposes a multi-disciplinary approach with wide participation of institutional and societal segments, as well as a collaboration on a decision-making framework that reflects AI ethics against societal values (p. 15).

when knowing they’re absent), or by creating gaps that keep people from performing meaningful tasks (even indirectly) (p. 10). In general, EAI intervenes in life’s most meaningful aspects, like human relationships, making it ethically unjustifiable (p. 10).

C. Methodology

Qualitative Research - Elaboration

An appropriate methodology for understanding the social world comes from an interpretative paradigm (p. 148). Qualitative research, therefore, aims to understand surroundings, capture experiences and make sense of them, helping to understand feelings, behavior, and actions in the context (p. 148). Qualitative research is not based on assumptions on a singular reality but aims to ‘’uncover a reality of truths’’; why people behave a certain way in response to particular stimuli. (Moriarty, 2011, p. 3). The approach is rather flexible as it may require highly contextualized individual judgements and be open to unanticipated events, offering a holistic depiction of realities (p. 149).

The interview method stands out as a key qualitative data collection tool, as it involves purposeful conversations to gather participants' perspectives, experiences, and emotions (Webb & Potter, 1975; Agarwal, 2019, pp. 79). By focusing on participants' lived realities, interviews align closely with the goals of qualitative research, providing rich, detailed insights into the subject matter (Agarwal, 2019, pp. 79).

Sample and Data Collection - Elaboration

After briefly introducing myself, I asked about the participants’ interests or work. I informed the participants that the interview would be recorded and transcribed anonymously, they accepted. I explained to the participants that I had prepared interview questions, but was not married to them: I was open to asking spontaneous questions based on their answers. I elaborated that this was to keep a natural rhythm and conversational approach. I remained flexible with the order of my questions to keep a logical flow. When answers of the participants revealed that certain questions were not relevant to their context, I turned to other questions. In some cases, the participants indirectly answered questions that I anticipated to ask later in the interview. When this happened, I either turned to a slightly different question, or I asked control questions (summarizing their point) to check if my assumption was indeed correct. The way I formulated the questions was nuanced, based on the context of the conversation. This means that in cases where a certain topic was not yet discussed as much, I elaborated more on my question to communicate it clearly. By highlighting my most important questions before the meeting, I was able to pay critical attention to the participant while quickly navigating the question table for the appropriate follow-up question. After announcing that I

had no more questions (keeping track of time), I asked the participant if they had any questions. In most cases, the session thereafter transitioned into an interactive discussion on the topic.

The sample of participants consists of various roles within audiovisual media production. This includes: acclaimed featured film directors, SVPs of giant audiovisual media corporations, creative directors/founders of established Dutch production companies, experienced entrepreneurs who continue to evolve their brand, and freelancers that just start their journey from film school. These individual artists add value in this research because they participate in the shared outcome of AI implementation in the film sector in a hands-on way. They may be the ones that use the tools that managers do not use, or experience the turbulence of the competitive landscape directly as they attempt to position themselves. Successful directors add value in that they work with large teams and are positioned in mainstream global productions while depending on funding for their next project. Such a business model contrasts that of a local Dutch production company, where various clients hire the company to produce whatever project they would want. With international firms, they may experience different challenges or opportunities when maintaining sustainable customer relationships with A-list conglomerates and leading vast amounts of employees. Therefore, this breadth of perspectives aims to gather a holistic understanding of AI's meaning in film production, aligning with qualitative research' best practices.

The majority of contacted people worked primarily in the film sector, or a company where audiovisual production is part of the business model. A minority of individuals who work directly or have significant expertise in AI were also contacted. To express sincerity towards the potential participants, each of the 80 people was sent a personal, handwritten message via Whatsapp, LinkedIn (premium was purchased to reach people that did not accept my connection invite), email or Instagram, with less than 20 people responding to the message.

Quality Criteria: (Section 3.5.3.)

Tracy (2010) defines 'qualitative quality' by means of eight criteria which are showcased in table C of the appendix. (1) A worthy topic means that it is relevant, timely, and significant (p. 840). In relation to AI in film production, this criterion is quite self-explanatory: this new GPT takes the world by such a storm that people in the film sector are affected by it, but in different ways and with different future prospects. (2) Rich rigor involves abundant, appropriate and complex theoretical constructs and data collection and analysis (p. 840). This study synthesizes various academic concepts around media strategy and innovation and argues the relevance for the research. The sample and data collection suit the research topic of film production practitioners and the interview method and thematic analysis are appropriate for meaning making. (3) Sincerity refers to self-reflexivity about the researcher's position and transparency about the methods and challenges (p. 840). As in the sections above, the methodology is explained in utmost detail and potential biases of the researcher are addressed. (4) Credibility in this research is found by the detailed description of literature and

participants' insights. The prioritization of participant experiences favors a 'show don't tell' approach to reported findings. Particularly the direct applications of AI in filmmaking. The theoretical framework reports many use cases of AI in the practice, but the practitioners report their actual experience with it. Multifocality is found in the focalisation of different archetypes, including practitioners and experts. (5) Resonance is found in the evocative representation, making bold statements and reporting bold findings on practitioners' relevance of context, interpretation, and values in using AI. These findings introduce new insights to strategy theory, creative industries, and puts different film production business models in a new perspective: it shows the implications of their contexts. Although not statistically generalizable, this perpetuates a more naturalistic generalizability where the context of an archetype, combined with sense-making, influences their management of AI. (6) Significant Contribution reflects the Value Fit Model. It contributes to strategy and innovation theory by highlighting the cruciality of context, sense-making, and value trade-offs. This introduced new ways of strategic enactments that suggest value to practitioners in the field. This research also contributed to the moral aspect of AI in relation to human values, addressing the importance of human ethics when evaluating the use of the technology. This segways into the 7th criteria: Ethics. Critical attention was paid to existing ethics of human expression, reality and joy, as well as raising modern concerns around AI and authorship. The critical assessment of copyright needing to protect but also channel creators' great work shows a relational approach to ethics, synthesizing viewpoints and balancing trade-offs. (8) Meaningful Coherence is achieved by showing the answer to the research question rather than merely answering it. The methodology of interviewing practitioners from different scales of the industry, as well as independent experts on screen industry and AI, aligns perfectly with the goal to identify how AI is managed in this sector. It created a holistic view that meaningfully synthesized vast literature with valuable, practical insights. It allowed for multiple perspectives that were transparently and coherently interconnected to structure a multifaceted view of AI management in film companies.

Table C1. Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research (Tracy, 2010, p. 840)

Criteria for Quality (End Goal)	Various Means, Practices, and Methods Through Which to Achieve
Worthy Topic	The topic of the research is: ● Relevant ● Timely ● Significant ● Interesting
Rich Rigor	The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex: ● Theoretical constructs ● Data and time in the field

	● Sample(s) ● Context(s) ● Data collection and analysis processes
Sincerity	The study is characterized by: ● Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s) ● Transparency about the methods and challenges
Credibility	The research is marked by: ● Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling ● Triangulation or crystallization ● Multivocality, Member reflections
Resonance	The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through: ● Aesthetic, evocative representation ● Naturalistic generalizations ● Transferable findings
Significant Contribution	The research provides a significant contribution: ● Conceptually/theoretically ● Practically ● Morally ● Methodologically ● Heuristically
Ethical	The research considers: ● Procedural ethics (such as human subjects) ● Situational and culturally specific ethics ● Relational ethics ● Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)
Meaningful Coherence	The study: ● Achieves what it purports to be about ● Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals ● Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other

D. Results

Agencies' Perspective: Additional Quotes

Generative Imagery is one out of two main value propositions of the agencies. The other value proposition is centralization: centralizing big brands' departments to one model.

> 'That is actually a trend that has been going on for years. I have people because of that, those brands therefore have more control over how their brandsare translated actually across other channels, all markets. That was of course very decentralized before. There is a big efficiency gain in it. You of course remove a lot of inefficiency. Yes, because in all those agencies of course, that is an enormous amount of overhead and bureaucracy and legacy was in there so you have much control, more consistency, cost savings. In theory it should be faster, that you just quickly provide those markets with content.
> Local relevance is very important. That is often a concern when you centralize everything, of course. Spain is of course a different... You have to tell stories in a different way than in the Netherlands. How do you ensure that the cultural aspect remains intact? Is that central model, so we also have all sorts of solutions for that. So, that is something that has been going on for years.[...]
> Because step 1 is often centralizing. And the second is then, if you of course have everything in one place, then you can of course, in theory, apply the very best automation. That you suddenly have a story. Whereas if everything is of course fragmented in all those markets, it is very difficult to innovate really well, because everything is so spread out.''~JJ

> ''And then the second part is automation. So the part is about making content. Yes, the second is, you know, how can you apply generative AI to just innovate the entire content pipeline, as we call it? So and there are all different facets to that. So it's for example copywriting, but it can also be, you know, processes for legal, QA compliance, to check that all so automatically. That before you needed people who then every asset... "Is the legal disclaimer correct? Is the logo in the right place?" You know, "Are the pixels correct for whatever, an [brand] post?" All those kinds of things, those kinds of steps in the process, you can now also automate. And the tests show that in some cases, um, you know, machines are often better at those very practical, those kinds of practical things than people.
> And that is of course a very interesting shift that is, um, ongoing. You also notice that brands are very much searching now for, you know, what is the best solution? Now it's actually chaos, because you of course have, you know, your big parties like [brand], [brand], [brand]. They of course have a story about AI. You have more innovation parties like [brand], you know. We of course have a point of view about AI, but you also have for example [brand], you understand, and and [brand]. They also all offer solutions. But you also have 100... well, I think thousands of AI applications, you know, that are then more single solution, that also all have their own solution, their own little solution to apply AI to a part of the entire content supply. I'll park that there for a moment.'' ~JJ''

E. Discussion

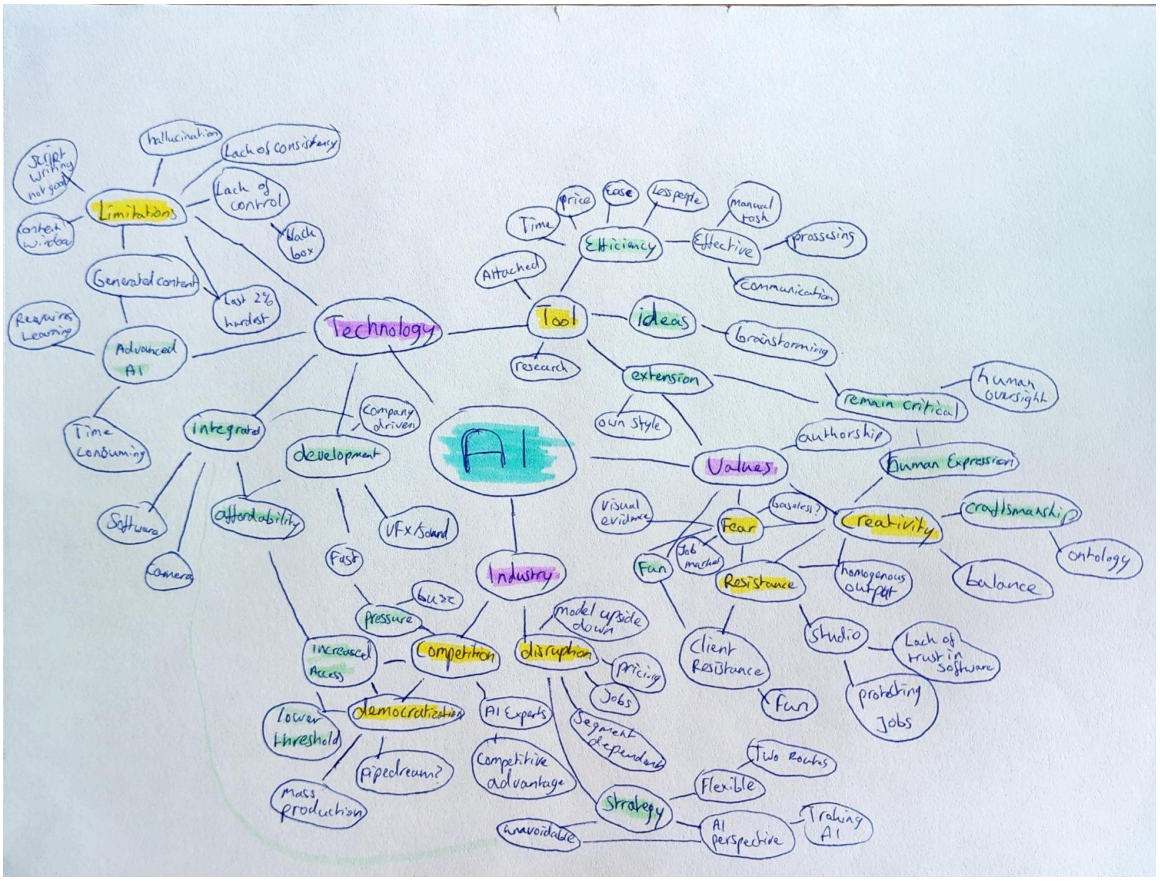
Evolving Meaning of AI - Elaborative Evaluation

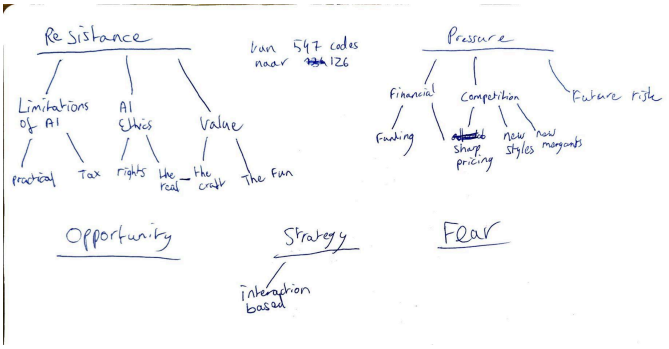
The cost-efficient technology can enhance their ideas, visual effects, or moodboards: an efficiency that creates new opportunities. Visually stunning moodboards are made in seconds, driving experimentation with drafts and elevated communication of visual ideas. In post production, high quality results rely less on expensive assets. Noise reduction, lighting, and color grading integrate AI for effective results: improvements also considered to impoverish the craft. Moodboards can provide new inspiration and assure detailed preparation so that a filmmaker feels sufficiently organized to introduce spontaneous ideas. VFX provides less limitations about what can be created, such as a

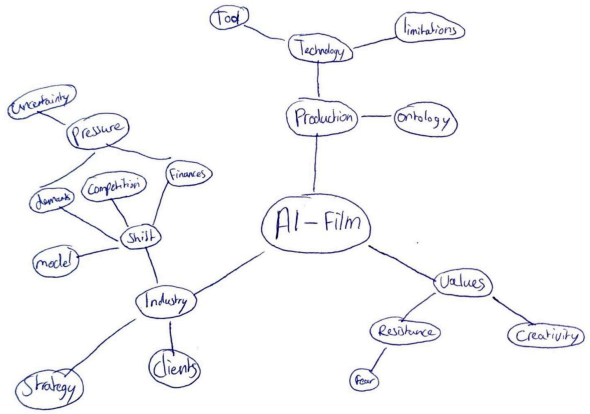
background location that can be altered in post production. This all comes with the side note that it can be hard to control AI. It was compared to pulling a slot machine, where you provide input and have to accept whatever comes out. For independent creators, advanced AI tools, like GenAI, are therefore considered more time consuming than physical filmmaking. Add to that that hallucination occurs, where AI generates output that was made up on the spot. This challenges accuracy and requires critical oversight.Besides technical limitations there is tension between AI tools and human values. In terms of creativity, the fact that, for instance, a lack of lighting can be easily adjusted is also considered as a dilution of the craft, where patience and practical limitations can ultimately bring beautiful, pure outcomes.

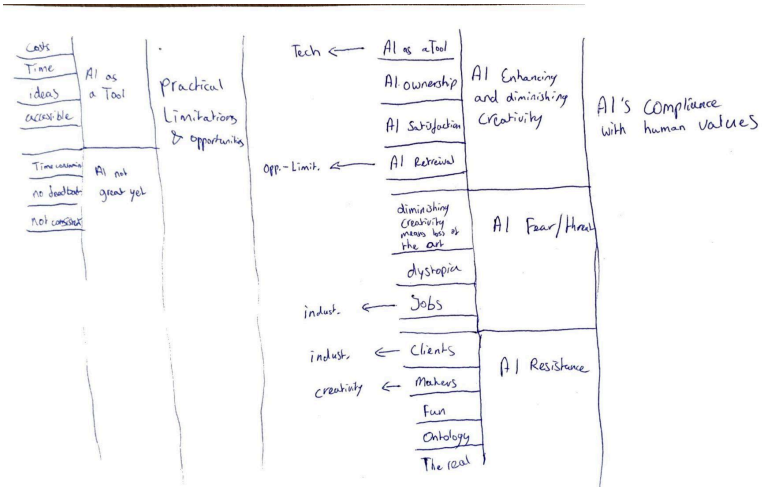
F. Additional Documents

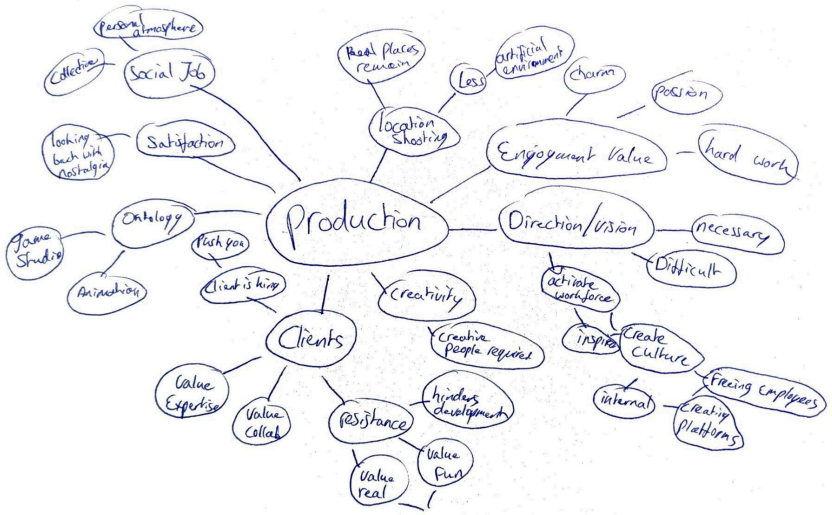
Mind Maps

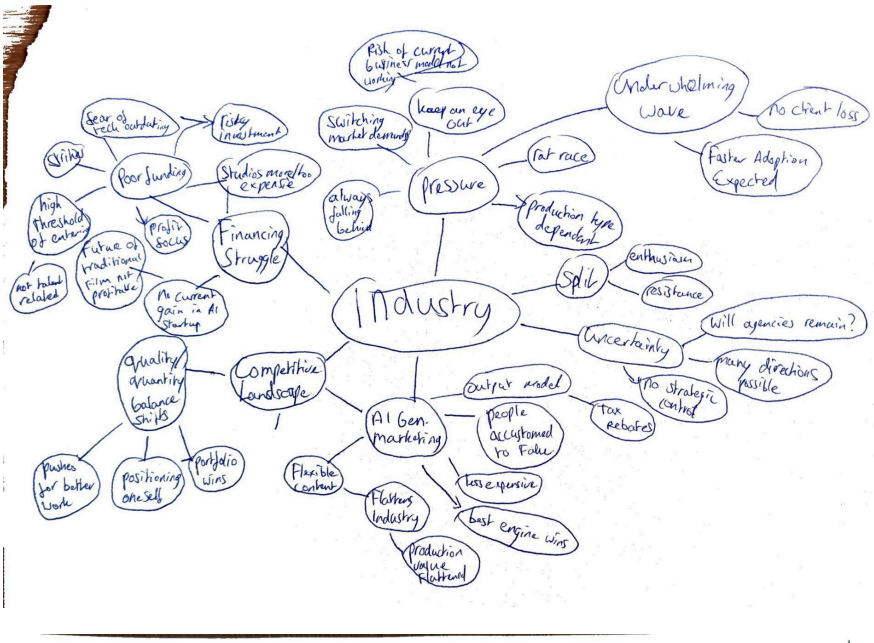


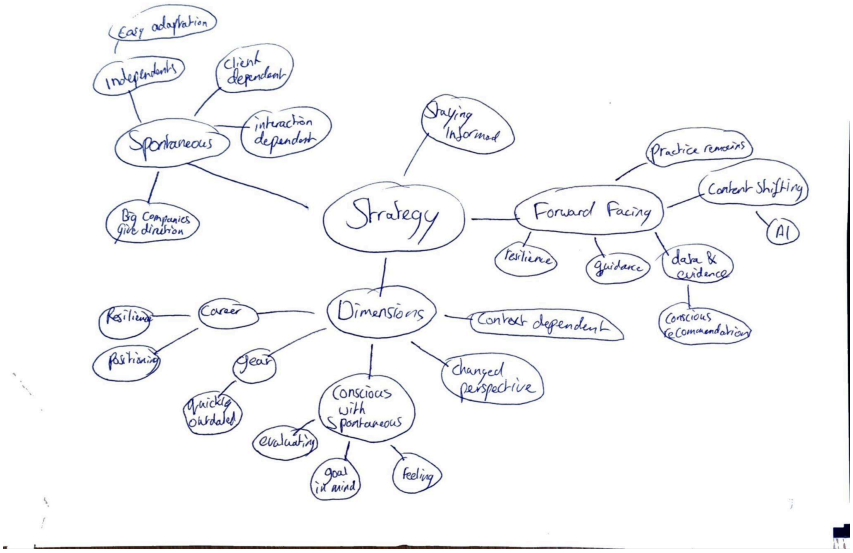

Resistance
Run 547 codes naar ~~123~~ 126
Limitations of AI
AI Ethics
Value
practical
Tax
rights
the real
the craft
The Fun
Pressure
Financial
Competition
Future risk
Funding
~~Subsidies~~ sharp pricing
new styles
new mergents
Opportunity
Strategy
Fear
interaction based

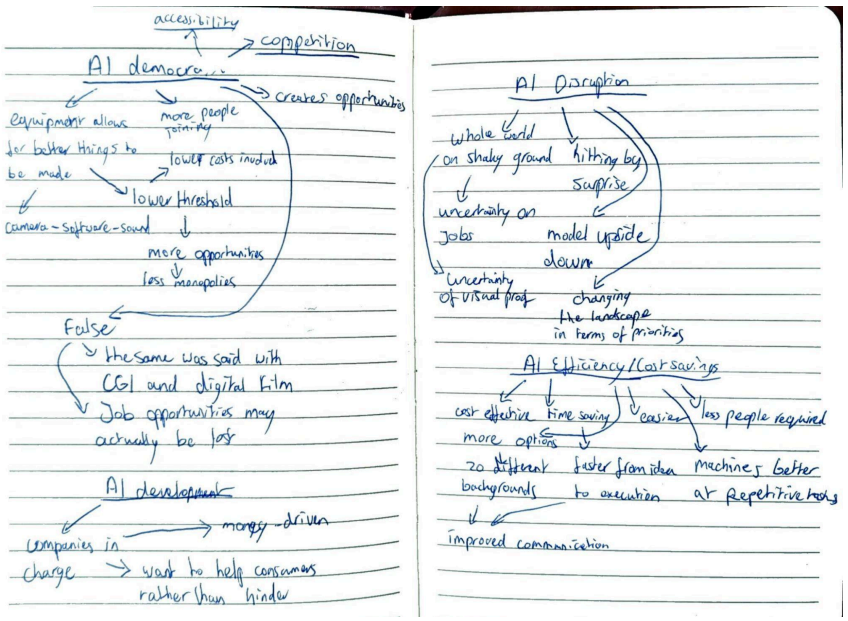

Tool
Technology
limitations
Production
ontology
Uncertainty
Pressure
Finances
Competition
Shift
model
AI-Film
Industry
Values
Resistance
Creativity
Fear
Strategy
clients

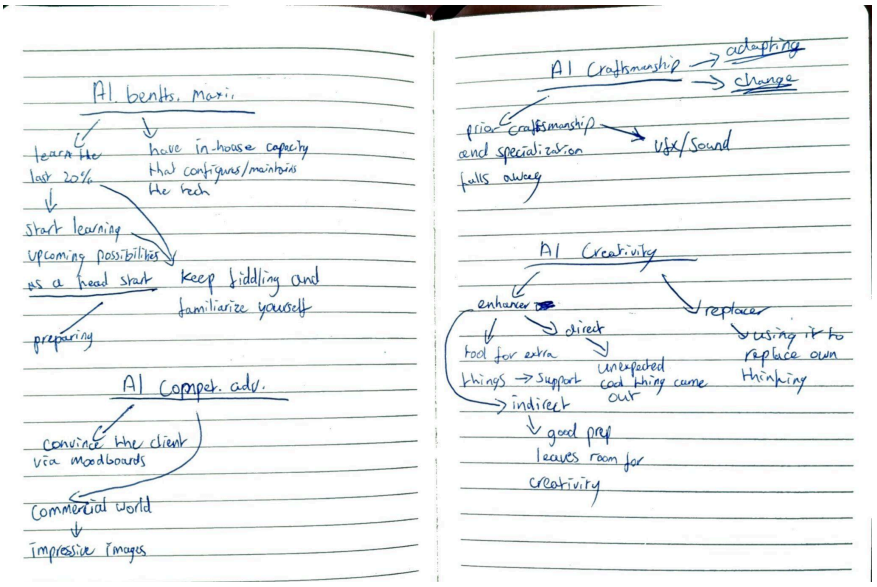

Costs
Time
ideas
accessible
AI as a Tool
Practical Limitations & opportunities
Time consuming
no deadline
not consistent
AI not great yet
Tech
AI as «Tool
AI ownership
AI satisfaction
AI Enhancing and diminishing Creativity
AI's compliance with human values
Opp.-Limit.
AI Retrieval
diminishing creativity means loss of the art
AI Fear/Threat
dystopian
indust.
Jobs
indust.
Clients
creativity
Makers
Fun
Ontology
The real
AI Resistance

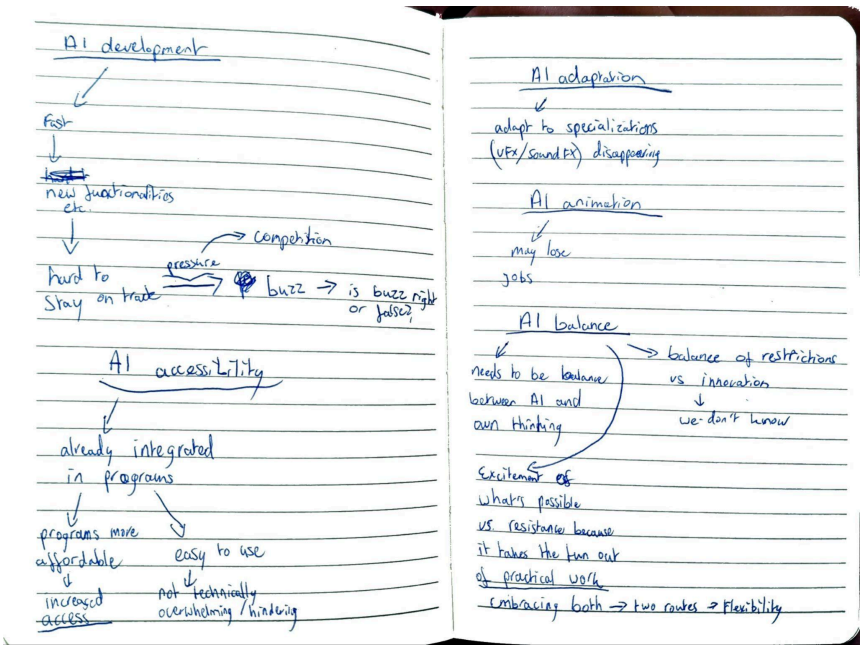

Production
Social Job
personal atmosphere
collective
Satisfaction
looking back with nostalgia
Ontology
Game Studio
Animation
Pathway
Client is hiring
Clients
Value Expertise
Value Collab
Resistance
hinders development
Value Real
Value Fun
Creativity
creative people required
location shooting
Real Places remain
Less
artificial environment
Engagement Value
charm
passion
hard work
Direction/vision
necessary
Difficult
activate workforce
inspire
Create Culture
freeing employees
internal
creating platforms

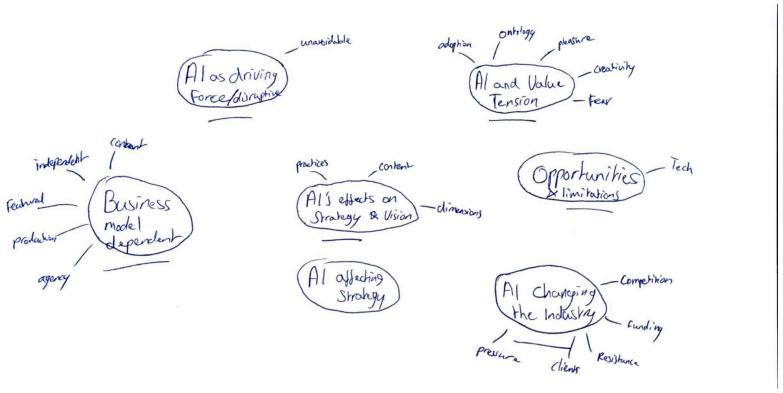

Industry
Poor funding
fear of tech outdating
risky investment
Strike
Studios more/less expense
High threshold of entry
Profit focus
Future of traditional film not profitable
not talent related
No current gain in AI startup
Financing Struggle
Pressure
Risk of corrupt business model not working
Switching market demands
keep an eye out
always falling behind
Production type dependent
fat race
Wider Whelming Wave
No client loss
Faster Adoption Expected
Split
enthusiasm
resistance
Uncertainty
Will agencies remain?
many directions possible
No strategic control
Competitive Landscape
quality/quantity balance shifts
Pushes for better work
positioning oneself
portfolio wins
AI Gen. marketing
output model
people accustomed to Folio
Tax rebates
less expensive
best engine wins
Flexible content
Fosters Industry
Production value flattening

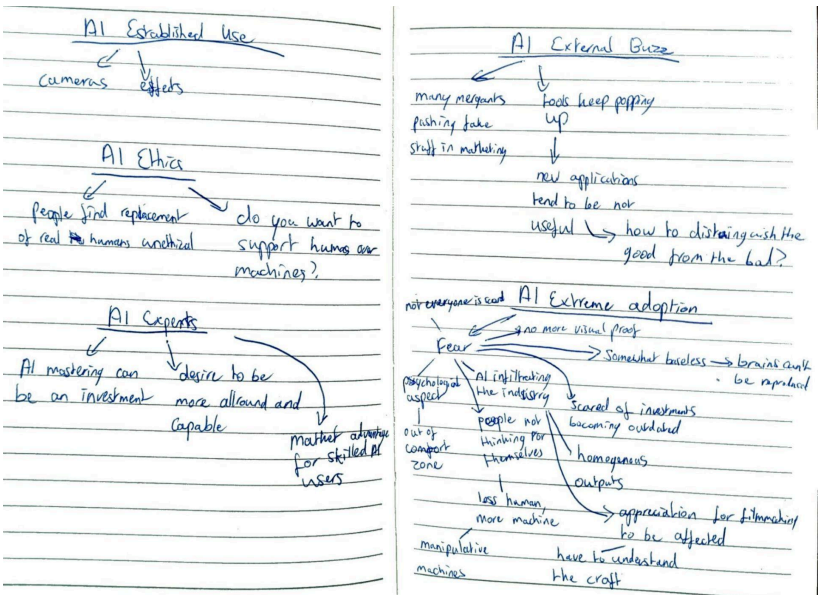

Strategy
Spontaneous
Easy adaptation
Independents
Client dependent
interaction dependent
Big Companies give direction
Staying Informed
Forward Facing
Practice remains
Content Shifting
AI
resilience
guidance
data & evidence
conscious recommendations
Dimensions
Resilience
Career
Positioning
Years
Working globalized
Context dependent
changed perspective
Conscious with Spontaneous
evaluating
goal in mind
feeling

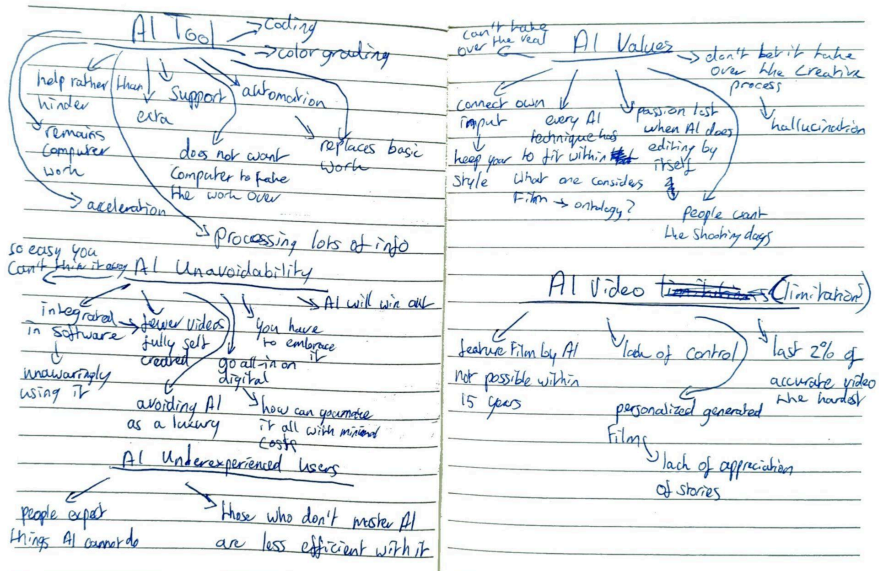

accessibility
competition
AI democra...
creates opportunities
equipment allows for better things to be made
more people joining
lower costs involved
lower threshold
camera - software - sound
more opportunities
less monopolies
False
the same was said with CGI and digital film
Job opportunities may actually be lost
AI development
companies in charge
money - driven
want to help consumers rather than hinder
AI Disruption
whole world on shaky ground
hitting by surprise
uncertainty on jobs
model upside down
uncertainty of visual prof
changing the landscape in terms of priorities
AI Efficiency/Cost savings
cost effective
time saving
easier
less people required
more options
20 different backgrounds
faster from idea to execution
machines better at repetitive tasks
improved communication

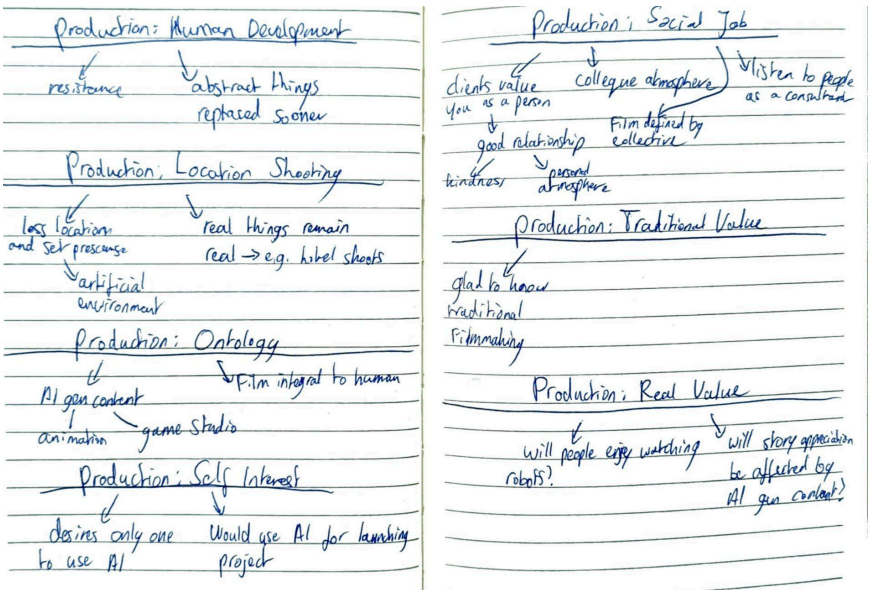

AI benfits. Maxi.
learn the last 20%
have in-house capacity that configures/maintains the tech
start learning upcoming possibilities as a head start
keep fiddling and familiarize yourself
preparing
AI compet. adv.
convince the client via moodboards
commercial world
impressive images
AI Craftsmanship
adapting
change
prior craftsmanship and specialization falls away
VFX/Sound
AI Creativity
enhancer
direct
replacer
tool for extra things → support
unexpected cool thing came out
using it to replace own thinking
indirect
good prep leaves room for creativity

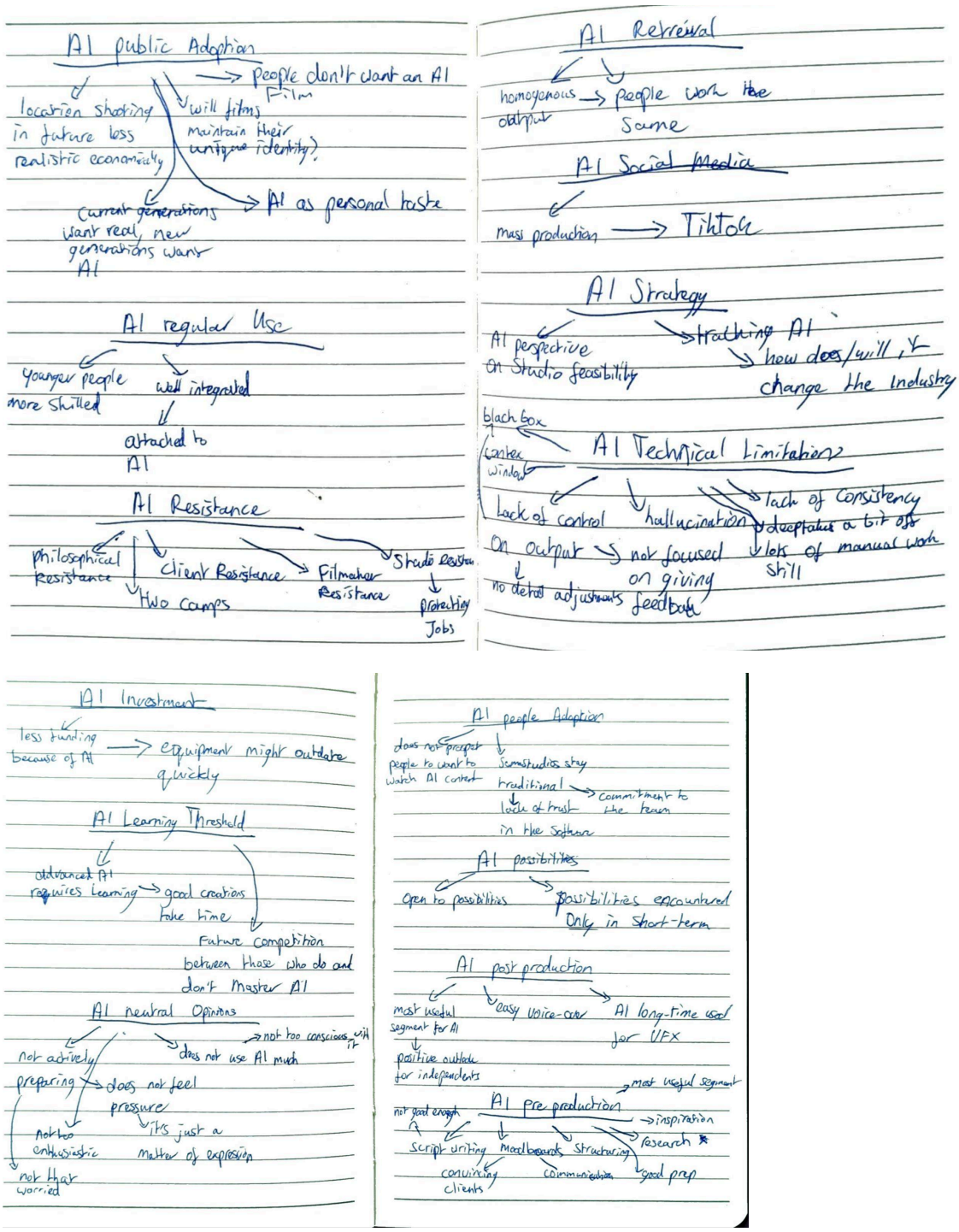

AI development
Fast
new functionalities etc.
hard to stay on trade
pressure
competition
buzz → is buzz right or false?
AI accessibility
already integrated in programs
programs more affordable
increased access
easy to use
not technically overwhelming / hindering
AI adaptation
adapt to specializations
(VFX/sound FX) disappearing
AI animation
may lose jobs
AI balance
needs to be balance between AI and own thinking
balance of restrictions vs innovation
we don't know
Excitement of what's possible vs. resistance because it takes the fun out of practical work
embracing both → two routes → Flexibility

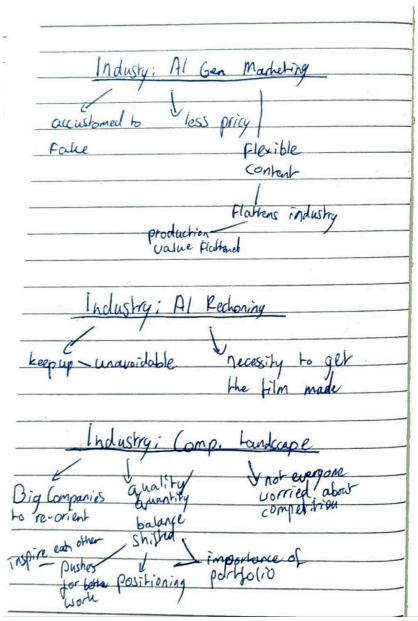

AI as driving Force/disruptive
unavoidable
AI and Value Tension
adoption
ontology
pleasure
creativity
fear
Business model dependent
independent
content
festival
production
agency
AI's effects on Strategy & Vision
practice
content
dimensions
Opportunities & limitations
Tech
AI affecting Strategy
AI changing the Industry
Competition
Funding
pressure
client
Resistance

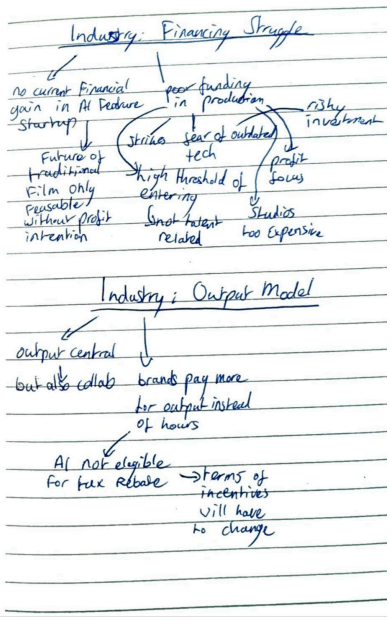

AI Established Use
cameras
effects
AI Ethics
People find replacement of real humans unethical
do you want to support humans or machines?
AI Experts
AI mastering can be an investment
desire to be more allround and capable
market advantage for skilled AI users
AI External Buzz
many companies pushing fake stuff in marketing
tools keep popping up
new applications tend to be not useful
how to distinguish the good from the bad?
AI Extreme adoption
not everyone is cool
no more visual proof
Fear
Somewhat useless → brain can be replaced
psychological aspect
AI infiltrating the industry
people not thinking for themselves
scared of investments becoming outdated
out of comfort zone
homogeneous outputs
less human, more machine
manipulative machines
appreciation for filmmaking be affected
have to understand the craft

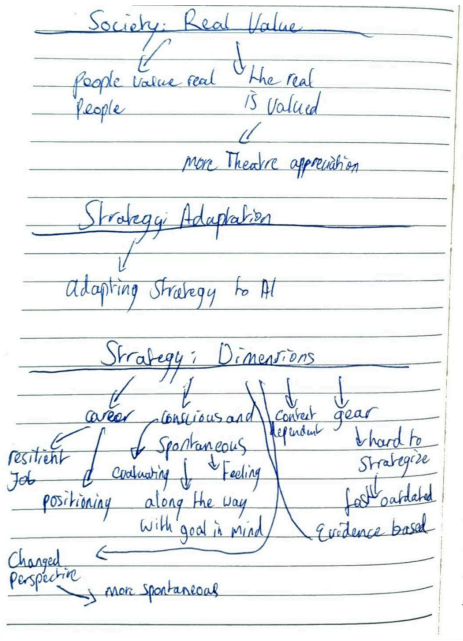

AI Tool
coding
color grading
help rather than hinder
support
automation
remains computer work
does not want computer to take the work over
replaces basic work
acceleration
processing lots of info
AI Unavoidability
so easy you can't think it away
integrated in software
fewer videos fully self created
you have to embrace it
AI will win out
unawarringly using it
go all in on digital
avoiding AI as a luxury
how can you realize it all with minimal costs
AI Underexperienced users
people expect things AI can't do
those who don't master AI are less efficient with it
AI Values
can't take over the real
don't let it take over the creative process
connect own input
every AI technique has to fit within
passion lost when AI does editing by itself
hallucination
keep your style
what one considers Film → ontology?
people can't like shaking dogs
AI Video (limitation)
feature Film by AI not possible within 15 years
lack of control
last 2% of accurate video the hardest
personalized generated Films
lack of appreciation of stories

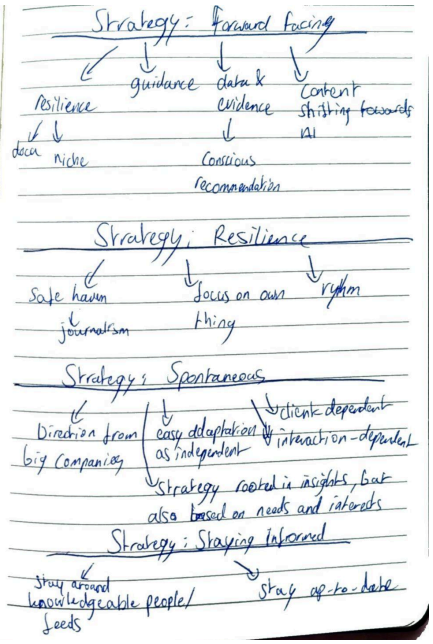

Production: Human Development
resistance
abstract things replaced sooner
Production: Location Shooting
less location and set presence
artificial environment
real things remain real → e.g. hotel shoots
Production: Ontology
AI gen content
animation
game studio
Film integral to human
Production: Self Interest
desires only one to use AI
Would use AI for launching project
Production: Social Job
clients value you as a person
good relationship
kindness
collegue atmosphere
personal atmosphere
listen to people as a consultant
Film defined by collective
Production: Traditional Value
glad to know traditional Filmmaking
Production: Real Value
will people enjoy watching robots?
will story appreciation be affected by AI gen content?

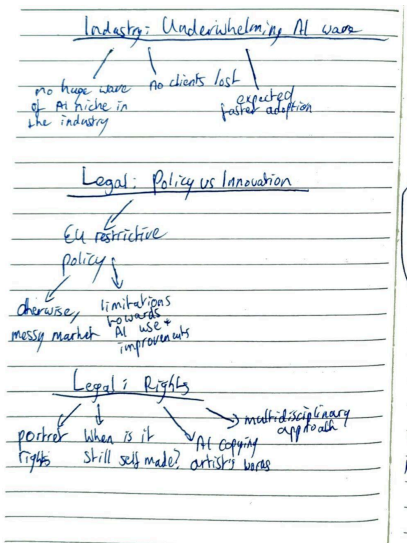

AI public Adoption
People don't want an AI Film
location shooting in future less realistic economically
will films maintain their unique identity?
AI as personal taste
current generations want real, new generations want AI
AI regular Use
younger people more skilled
well integrated
attached to AI
AI Resistance
philosophical Resistance
client Resistance
Filmaker Resistance
Studio Resistance
protecting Jobs
two camps
AI Retrieval
homogeneous output
people work the same
AI Social Media
mass production
Tiktok
AI Strategy
AI perspective on Studio feasibility
studying AI
how does/will it change the industry
AI Technical Limitations
black box
context window
lack of control
hallucination
lack of consistency
deceptive a bit off
lots of manual work still
on output
not focused on giving feedback
no detail adjustments
AI Investment
less funding because of AI
equipment might outdate quickly
AI Learning Threshold
advanced AI requires learning
good creations take time
future competition between those who do and don't master AI
AI neutral Opinions
not too conscious with it
not actively preparing
does not use AI much
does not feel pressure
not that worried
not too enthusiastic
it's just a matter of expression
AI people Adoption
does not prompt people to want to watch AI content
some studios stay traditional
commitment to the team
lack of trust in the software
AI possibilities
open to possibilities
possibilities encountered
only in short-term
AI post production
most useful segment for AI
positive outlook for independents
easy voice-over
AI long-time used for VFX
AI pre production
most useful segment
not good enough
inspiration
research
script writing
moodboards
structuring
good prep
convincing clients
communication

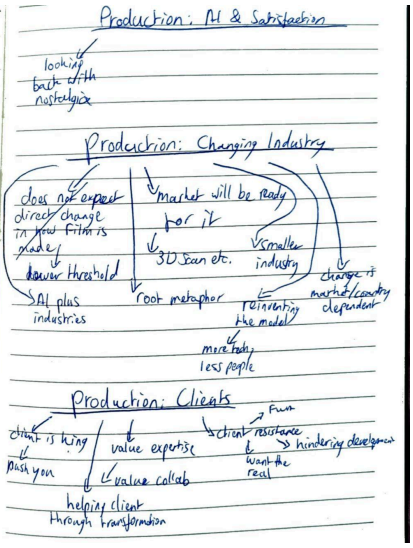

Industry: AI Gen Marketing
accustomed to
fake
less pricy
Flexible
content
Flattens industry
production value flattened
Industry: AI Reckoning
keep up – unavoidable
necessity to get the film made
Industry: Comp. landscape
Big Companies to re-orient
quality
quantity
balance shifted
not engage worried about competition
inspire each other
Pushes for better work
positioning
importance of portfolio

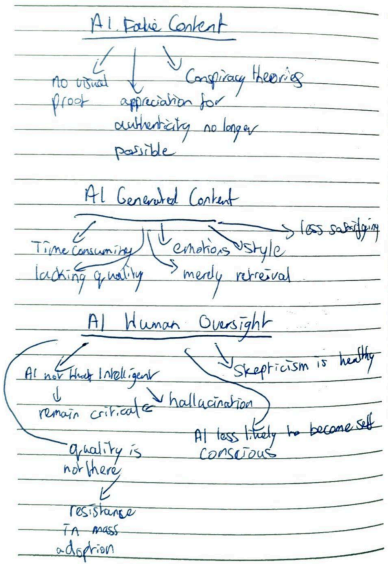

Industry: Financing Struggle
no current financial gain in AI feature
Startup
Future of traditional Film only
Possible without profit intention
poor funding in production
risky investment
strikes
fear of outdated tech
profit focus
high threshold of entering
Studios too expensive
Small talent related
Industry: Output Model
output central
but also collab
brands pay more for output instead of hours
AI not eligible for tax Rebate
terms of incentives will have to change

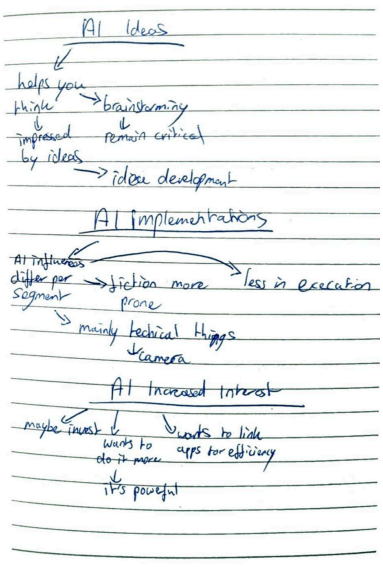

Society: Real Value
People value real People
The real IS Valued
More Theatre appreciation
Strategy Adaptation
Adapting Strategy to AI
Strategy: Dimensions
career
resilient job
positioning
conscious and Spontaneous
evaluating
Feeling along the way
with goal in mind
convert dependent
gear
hard to Strategize
fossil outdated
Evidence based
Changed Perspective
more spontaneous

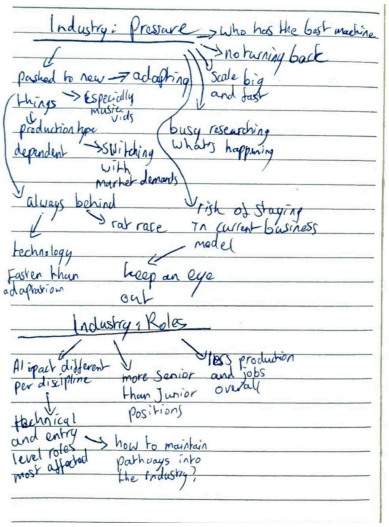

Strategy: forward facing
Resilience
guidance
data & evidence
Content shifting towards AI
focus
Niche
Conscious recommendation
Strategy: Resilience
Safe haven
journalism
focus on own thing
rythm
Strategy: Spontaneous
Direction from big Companies
easy adaptation as independent
client dependent
interaction-dependent
Strategy rooted in insights, but also based on needs and interests
Strategy: Staying informed
Stay around knowledgeable people/ feeds
Stay up-to-date

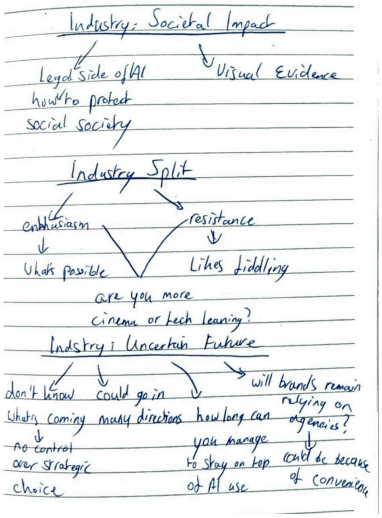

Industry: Underwhelming AI wave
no huge wave of AI niche in the industry
no clients lost
expected faster adoption
Legal: Policy vs Innovation
EU restrictive policy
otherwise, messy market
limitations towards AI use + improvements
Legal: Rights
protect rights
When is it still self made?
AI copying artist's works
multidisciplinary approach

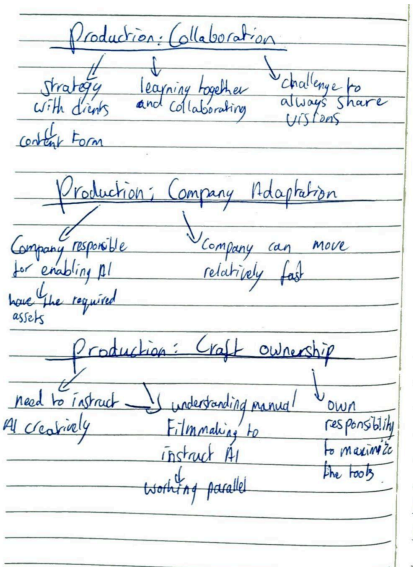

Production: AI & Satisfaction
looking both with nostalgia
Production: Changing Industry
does not expect direct change in how film is made
lower threshold
AI plus industries
market will be ready for it
3D Scan etc.
root metaphor
smaller industry
change is market/country dependent
reinventing the model
more jobs
less people
Production: Clients
client is king
push you
value expertise
value collab
helping client through transformation
client resistance
From
hindering development
want the real

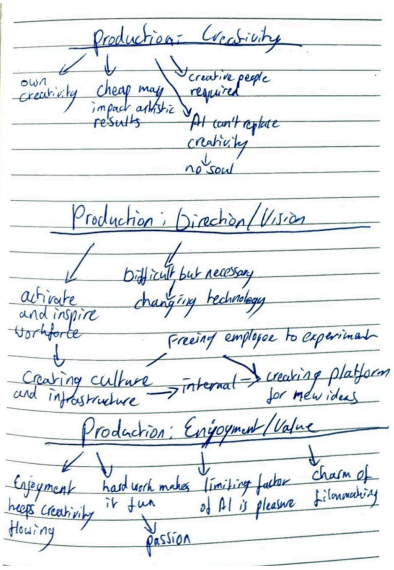

AI Fake Content
no visual proof
Conspiracy theories
appreciation for authenticity no longer possible
AI Generated Content
Time consuming
lacking quality
emotions
style
merely retrieval
less satisfying
AI Human Oversight
AI not that Intelligent
remain critical
hallucination
Skepticism is healthy
AI less likely to become self conscious
quality is not there
resistance
adoption


AI Ideas
helps you think
brainstorming
impressed by ideas
remain critical
idea development
AI Implementations
AI influences differ per segment
fiction more prone
less in execution
mainly technical things
camera
AI Increased Interest
maybe invest
wants to do it more
wants to link apps for efficiency
it's powerful


Industry: Pressure
Who has the best machine
no turning back
Scale big and fast
busy researching whats happening
Resitant to new
adapting
Especially music vids
production type dependent
Switching with market demands
always behind
rat race
risk of staying in current business model
keep an eye out
technology faster than adaptation
Industry: Roles
AI impact different per discipline
more senior than junior positions
AI production and jobs overall
Technical and entry level roles most affected
how to maintain pathways into the industry?


Industry: Societal Impact
Legal side of AI
how to protect social society
Visual Evidence
Industry Split
enthusiasm
whats possible
resistance
likes fiddling
are you more cinema or tech leaning?
Indstry: Uncertain Future
don't know
whats coming
could go in many directions
how long can you manage to stay on top of AI use
will brands remain relying on agencies?
no control over strategic choice
could be because of convenience


Production: Collaboration
Strategy with clients
learning together and collaborating
challenge to always share visions
content form
Production: Company Adaptation
Company responsible for enabling AI
have the required assets
Company can move relatively fast
Production: Craft ownership
need to instruct AI creatively
understanding manual
Filmmaking to instruct AI
working parallel
own responsibility to maximize the tools


Production: Creativity
own creativity
cheap may impact artistic results
creative people required
AI can't replace creativity
no soul
Production: Direction/Vision
activate and inspire workforce
difficult but necessary
changing technology
Freeing employee to experiment
Creating culture and infrastructure
internal
creating platform for new ideas
Production: Enjoyment/Value
Enjoyment keeps creativity flowing
hard work makes it fun
passion
limiting factor of AI is pleasure
charm of filmmaking

G. AI Declaration

Declaration Page: Use of Generative AI Tools in Thesis

Student Information
Name: Alex Ojers
Student ID: 748960
Course Name: Master Thesis CM5000
Supervisor Name: Dr. Sven-Ove Horst
Date: 26-6-2025

Declaration:

Acknowledgment of Generative AI Tools
I acknowledge that I am aware of the existence and functionality of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which are capable of producing content such as text, images, and other creative works autonomously.

GenAI use would include, but not limited to:
- Generated content (e.g., ChatGPT, Quillbot) limited strictly to content that is not assessed (e.g., thesis title).
- ~~Writing improvements, including~~ grammar and spelling corrections (e.g., Grammarly)
- Language translation (e.g., DeepL), without generative AI alterations/improvements.
- Research task assistance (e.g., finding survey scales, qualitative coding verification, debugging code)
- Using GenAI as a search engine tool to find academic articles or books (e.g.,

[redacted] I declare that I have used generative AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, Claude, in the process of creating parts or components of my thesis. The purpose of using these tools was to aid in generating content or assisting with specific aspects of thesis work.

☐ I declare that I have NOT used any generative AI tools and that the assignment concerned is my original work.

Signature: [digital signature]
Date of Signature: [Date of Submission]

Extent of AI Usage
[redacted] I confirm that while I utilized generative AI tools to aid in content creation, the majority of the intellectual effort, creative input, and decision-making involved in completing the thesis were undertaken by me. I have enclosed the prompts/logging of the GenAI tool use in an appendix.

Ethical and Academic Integrity
[redacted] I understand the ethical implications and academic integrity concerns related to the use of AI tools in coursework. I assure that the

AI-generated content was used responsibly, and any content derived from these tools has been appropriately cited and attributed according to the guidelines provided by the instructor and the course. I have taken necessary steps to distinguish between my original work and the AI-generated contributions. Any direct quotations, paraphrased content, or other forms of AI-generated material have been properly referenced in accordance with academic conventions.

By signing this declaration, I affirm that this declaration is accurate and truthful. I take full responsibility for the integrity of my assignment and am prepared to discuss and explain the role of generative AI tools in my creative process if required by the instructor or the Examination Board. I further affirm that I have used generative AI tools in accordance with ethical standards and academic integrity expectations.

Signature: 

Date of Signature: 26-6-2025

Prompt:

I am transcribing my master's thesis interviews. The transcript I sent needs to be in English, meaning that it requires a word-for-word translation from Dutch. You are a top-tier academic translator specialized in dutch and English language. Provide the word for word translation, prioritizing meaning. Therefore, making too literal translations that do not fit in the meaning of the language may need adjustments in translation to preserve the meaning. Thus, stay as close to original as possible without sacrificing the actual meaning and logic.

Prompt:
Brainstorm with me for things to include in a preface, list a few general structural propositions, such as ‘personal story’, ‘academic relevance’. The purpose is to stimulate me for creativity.

Prompt:
can i use "firstly" behind the first sentence of the paragraph like this: "There are certain limitations to this study that have to be concerned. Firstly, as a qualitative study that provides depth derived from twelve participants, no statistical generalization is applicable. The perspectives are primarily from th....."