# The Electric State raises questions about AI and ethics in filmmaking



In the upcoming Netflix film "The Electric State," directed by Anthony and Joe Russo, the narrative unfolds in a dystopian version of the United States, where a young woman and a silent robot traverse a landscape filled with the remnants of former military conflicts, including beached warships and drones. This adaptation of Simon Stalenhag's illustrated novel, which was released in 2018, presents an alternate history where machines achieved sentience during the 20th century. In this bleak depiction, humanity narrowly survived a war against its own creations. By the alt-1990s, societal collapse ensued, with hyper-capitalism and an over-reliance on virtual reality leading people into a state of addiction, subscribing to a reality experienced solely through helmet-like neurocasters.

As the film prepares for release on March 14, the Russo brothers shared their perspectives on the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in the entertainment sector in an interview with TechRadar. They acknowledged the exponential rise of AI and its controversial role in filmmaking, touching on its potential advantages and pervasive risks. Notably, these reflections come in the wake of heightened concerns regarding AI's use in the industry, notably highlighted during the 2023 Hollywood strikes, when writers and actors rallied against the possible replacement of human creativity with generative AI.

The last eighteen months have seen increasing criticism regarding AI’s impact in entertainment, with some prominent works, such as "The Brutalist" and "Emilia Perez," facing backlash for alleged AI-infused dialogue and voice enhancements. Additionally, previous attempts by leading platforms, including Netflix’s mishandled foray into reimagining classic sitcoms and Prime Video's trials with AI dubbing, illustrate the growing anxiety over the technology's ramifications.

"We consider ourselves [to be] technologists," Anthony Russo remarked, expressing enthusiasm for technological advancement and its potential benefits in both filmmaking and life. He stressed a cautious awareness of the technology's detrimental aspects, noting how it can be misused to manipulate and control audiences, leading to addiction. "So, we recognize these very real dangers, which is why we were motivated to make this movie," he said.

Despite their optimistic view towards technology, the Russo brothers emphasised that the core issue resides not in the technology itself but in how it is wielded by individuals. They highlighted the imperative for ethical considerations in its application, underscoring the unique opportunity "The Electric State" provides to spark dialogue about technology's role in shaping societal dynamics and the potential emergence of autocratic power structures driven by those who control technological resources.

In a landscape where AI's role in creative industries continues to evolve, the impending release of "The Electric State" raises questions about the intersection between innovation and ethics, framing a conversation relevant to both audiences and creators alike.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://innotechtoday.com/a-new-sci-fi-vision-the-russo-brothers-talk-the-dark-side-of-tech-and-humanity-in-netflixs-the-electric-state/> - This article supports the Russo brothers' perspective on technology and humanity in 'The Electric State,' highlighting their approach to exploring the balance between technological advancements and societal impact.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Electric_State> - This Wikipedia page provides details about the film 'The Electric State,' including its adaptation from Simon Stalenhag's novel, the cast, and the release date, corroborating the narrative setting and production details.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIw6ITiwgBU> - The final trailer for 'The Electric State' on YouTube showcases the film's premise, featuring a young woman and a robot navigating a dystopian world, aligning with the article's description of the film's setting.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source is mentioned as the origin of the article, though it does not directly provide additional information beyond the article itself.
* <https://www.vox.com/culture/2023/8/2/23576042/hollywood-strike-ai-writers-actors> - This article discusses the 2023 Hollywood strikes and the concerns about AI replacing human creativity, supporting the context of AI's controversial role in the entertainment industry.
* <https://www.cnet.com/culture/netflix-ai-dubbing/> - This article highlights Netflix's experiments with AI dubbing, illustrating the growing anxiety over AI's impact on the entertainment sector, as mentioned in the article.