# The evolving narratives shaping public attitudes towards AI reveal deep societal divides



The polarisation of attitudes towards technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), is largely shaped by the discourses we encounter in our daily lives—discourses that are deeply intertwined with prevailing power relations. From the media to educational institutions, various entities wield considerable influence over how technology is perceived, creating narratives that are often reflective of elite interests rather than the nuanced reality. As Dr. Laila Abdel Aal Alghalban notes, the dominant narratives surrounding technology dictate social relations, establish permissible boundaries for discourse, and channel ideological power.

An examination of prominent media outlets, such as the BBC, reveals a historical trajectory of AI discourse laden with fear and uncertainty. Early 2000s coverage was dominated by headlines that suggested dire consequences, such as job displacement and existential threats posed by advancing technologies. A seminal article in The Guardian highlights that myths and exaggerated claims about AI's capabilities have persisted since the 1940s, suggesting that narratives often take on a life of their own, framing technology in a light where dangers are foreseen more readily than benefits.

This trend began to shift by 2018 and 2019, as a surge in news coverage began to highlight the potential benefits of AI. Reports discussing AI's role in cancer treatment, supporting elderly care, and enhancing productivity represented a growing recognition that AI could serve the common good. Nonetheless, this optimistic lens was not without its caveats; the conversation often remained balanced by acknowledging ongoing threats, such as misinformation and biased algorithms affecting law enforcement. This duality in AI discourse illustrates a broader cultural ambivalence toward technology—a reflection of society's grappling with both opportunity and risk.

In Hollywood, the depiction of AI plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception. Characters like HAL 9000 from '2001: A Space Odyssey' and Skynet from 'The Terminator' have indelibly coloured cultural narratives around AI, often presenting dystopian futures where machines dominate their creators. Today, as a recent report observes, the entertainment industry is at a crossroads where the integration of AI raises complex ethical questions and threatens to displace human artistry. Writers and actors are increasingly vocal about their anxieties surrounding AI's role in their professions, particularly during ongoing strikes that emphasise the need for protections in a rapidly evolving landscape.

This sentiment is echoed in discussions about the labour implications of AI in Hollywood. Concerns over job displacement not only highlight the uncertainties regarding future roles for writers and performers but also raise significant questions about the very nature of creativity. As AI-generated content becomes more prevalent, fears loom that this technology may undermine the human touch that is essential for genuine artistic expression. Furthermore, as unions strive to negotiate fair terms in a climate whereAI's influence looms large, the potential for dehumanisation within the creative process has become a crucial point of contention.

Interestingly, some cinematic narratives offer a more optimistic view of AI, showcasing its capabilities to enrich human lives rather than replace them. Films featuring technologies such as smart assistants or automated vehicles highlight the efficiencies AI can introduce, enabling individuals to devote more time to creative and fulfilling pursuits. This progressive framing suggests that an emphasis on AI's benefits could foster greater acceptance among the public, encouraging a more informed dialogue around its integration into daily life.

Nevertheless, underlying all these discourses is the question of motivation. The enthusiasm for AI within various sectors, particularly among elites and dominant groups, often aligns with their interests, raising questions about whose narratives are being prioritised. While advances in AI promise numerous advantages, it is essential to maintain a critical perspective and assess the implications for all stakeholders involved, particularly those who may find themselves marginalised or at risk due to relentless technological advancement.

As we continue to navigate the intricacies of AI—its cognitive dissonance reflected in both anxiety and excitement—there remains a pressing need for responsible discourse that prioritises transparency and ethical considerations. This cultural reflection could help society better embrace technological advancements while ensuring that the human factor remains at the heart of innovation.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 5
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## Bibliography

* <https://egyptian-gazette.com/op-ed/beyond-the-tech-hype/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2023/artificial-intelligence-ai-hollywood-movies-characters/> - This article explores how Hollywood films have depicted artificial intelligence (AI) over the years, highlighting characters like HAL 9000 from '2001: A Space Odyssey' and Skynet from 'The Terminator.' It discusses the evolution of these portrayals and the public's perception of AI as a result. The piece also touches on the real-world implications of AI in the film industry, including concerns about job displacement and the ethical use of technology in storytelling.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/26/hollywood-writers-strike-artificial-intelligence> - This article delves into the concerns of Hollywood writers and actors regarding the increasing use of artificial intelligence in the entertainment industry. It highlights the potential threats AI poses to workers, including the risk of job displacement and the dehumanization of art. The piece also discusses the ongoing writers' strike and the industry's struggle to balance technological advancements with the preservation of creative professions.
* <https://www.wired.com/story/hollywood-actors-strike-ai-future-distruption/> - This article examines the impact of artificial intelligence on Hollywood, focusing on how AI is disrupting traditional filmmaking processes and the entertainment industry's business models. It discusses the challenges faced by labor unions in negotiating fair compensation in the age of streaming and AI-generated content. The piece also explores the broader implications of AI on creativity and the future of the film industry.
* <https://www.axios.com/2024/05/06/hollywood-generative-ai-disclosure-labeling> - This article addresses the challenges Hollywood faces in disclosing the use of generative AI in film and television production. It highlights the lack of standardized regulations on AI disclosure, leading to concerns about authenticity and job displacement. The piece also discusses the broader implications of AI in the entertainment industry and the need for transparency and ethical considerations.
* <https://www.wired.com/story/hollywood-actors-artificial-intelligence-performance/> - This article explores the growing concerns among Hollywood actors regarding the use of artificial intelligence in replicating performances. It discusses the potential for AI to replace human actors, the ethical implications, and the challenges labor unions face in negotiating protections for their members. The piece also examines the broader impact of AI on the entertainment industry and the future of creative professions.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/9b06423f-6aa4-46e4-84f5-5be7f83abfc3> - This article discusses the impact of artificial intelligence on the film industry, focusing on the potential for AI-generated content to disrupt traditional filmmaking processes. It highlights concerns about job displacement, the ethics of AI training data, and the need for legal and contractual protections. The piece also explores the broader implications of AI in the entertainment industry and the future of creative professions.