AIhub

Science communication for AI researchers- a short introduction

AAAI 2025

Wednesday 26 February

13:00 – 14:00 Talk

14:00 – 15:00 Drop-in

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Science communication for AI researchers

Professor Michael Littman
Brown University

Dr Lucy Smith
AIhub.org

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news articles opinions education

- AIhub is a non-profit (UK charity) dedicated to connecting the AI community to the public by providing free, high-quality information
- We are supported by many leading AI organisations

What's coming up at #AAAI2025?

Lucy Smith 19 Feb 2025

Interview with Kayla Boggess: Explainable AI for more accessible and understandable technologies

Lucy Smith 14 Feb 2025

Hear from Doctoral Consortium participant Kayla about her work focussed on explanations for multi-agent reinforcement learning, and human-centric explanations.

Interview with Kunpeng Xu: Kernel representation learning for time series

Lucy Smith 11 Feb 2025

We hear from AAAI/SIGAI doctoral consortium participant Kunpeng Xu.

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What we'll cover

- Why science communication matters
- Different ways to do science communication
- Working with media
- Communicating via social media
- Writing a blog post
- Tips on explaining complex concepts
- How to find and use suitable images
- How to avoid AI hype
- Unconventional ways to do science communication

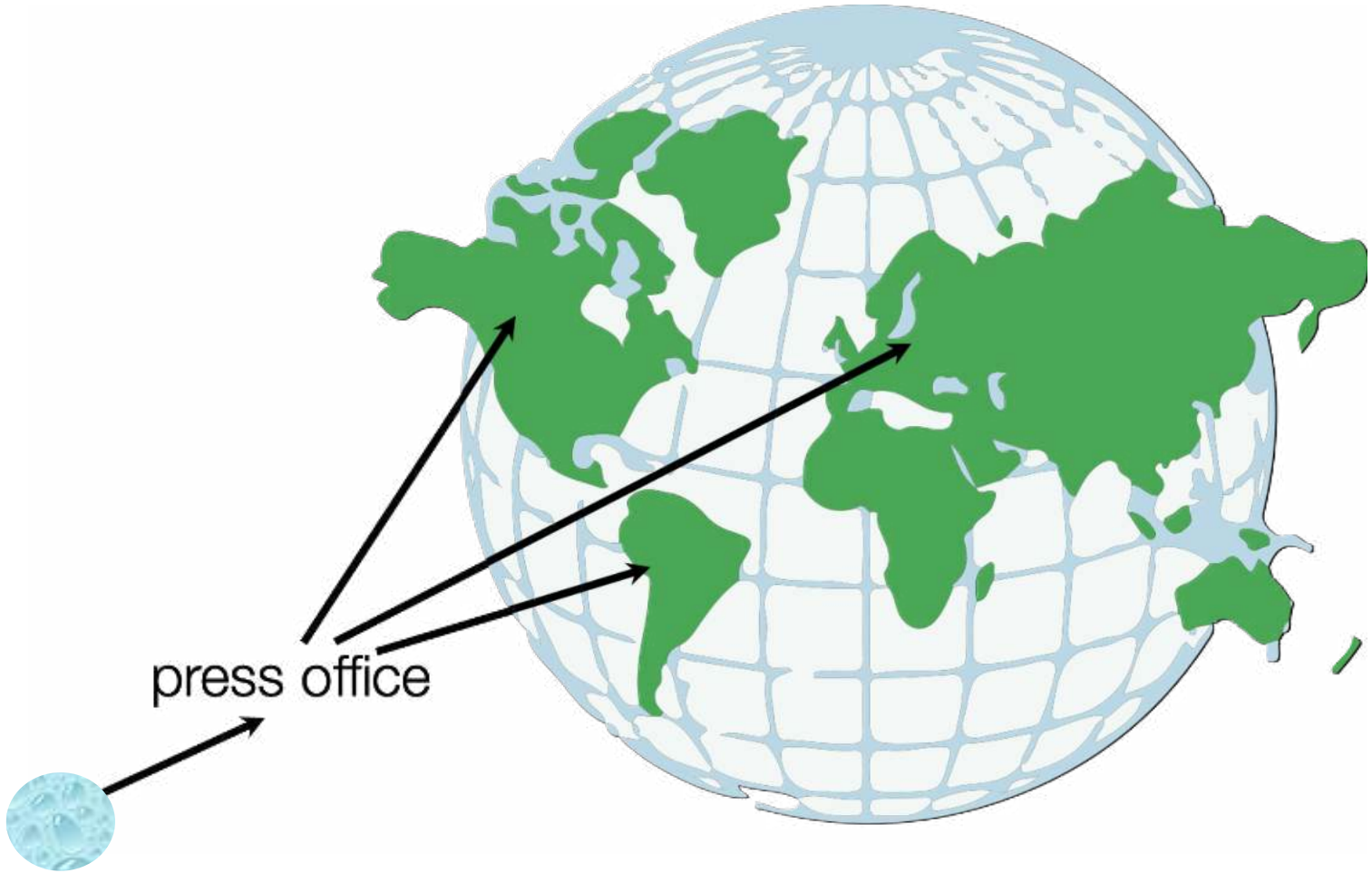
Aims

By the end of the session, you should be ready to:

- Communicate your work via social media
- Plan a blog post
- Choose images to illustrate your work

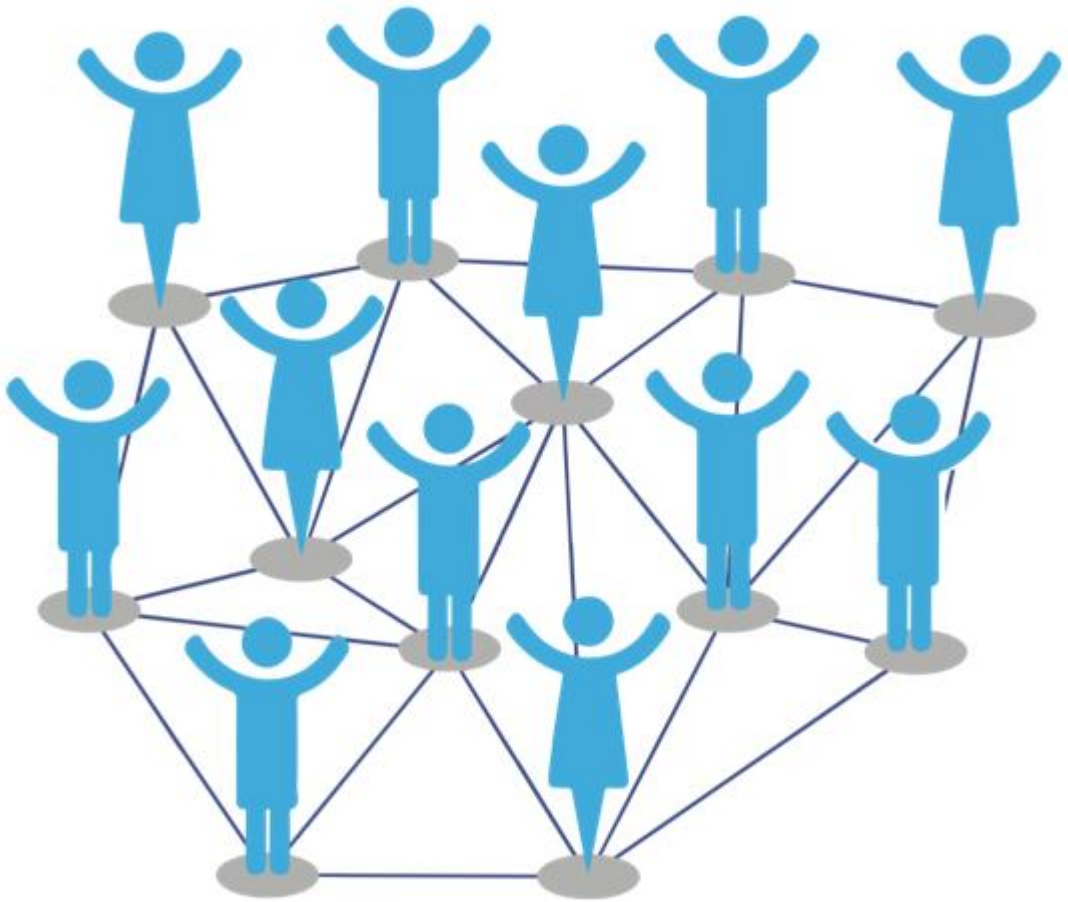
Why science communication matters

Why science communication matters



Why science communication matters

- Policymakers
- Users
- Investors
- Public



- Expert view
- Demystifying technology
- Inspire others
- Build the future

Benefits of sci-comm for you and your work

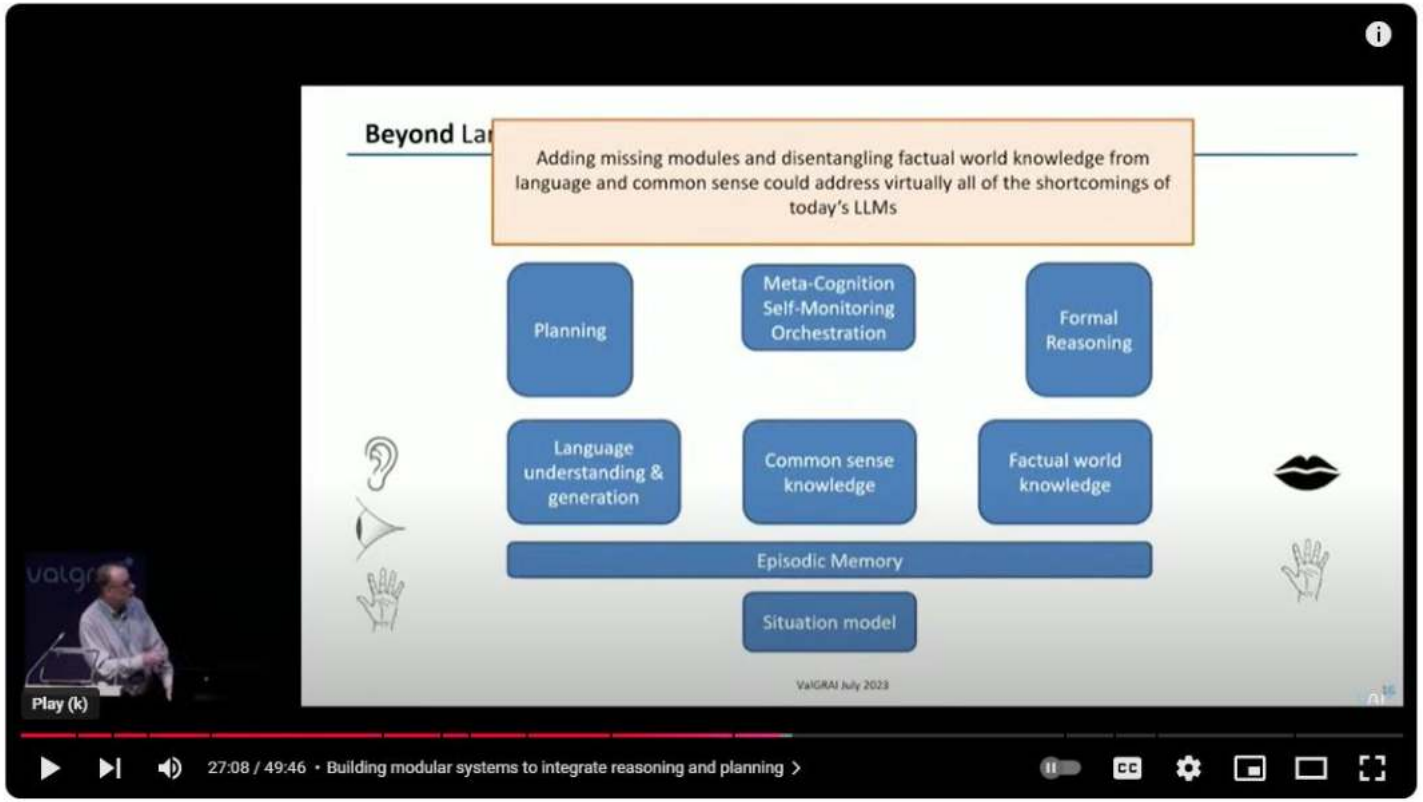
- Help build networks
- Find students, collaborators
- Help with grant applications
- Aid your understanding
- Improve your communication skills

Different ways to do science communication

- TV, public talks, radio
- Blog posts
- Collaboration with artists
- Workshops
- Competitions
- Social media
- Podcasts
- Exhibitions

Different ways to do science communication (https://youtu.be/Jb8eRfItOLE)

Talks



"What's wrong with LLMs and what we should be building instead" - Tom Dietterich - #VSCF2023

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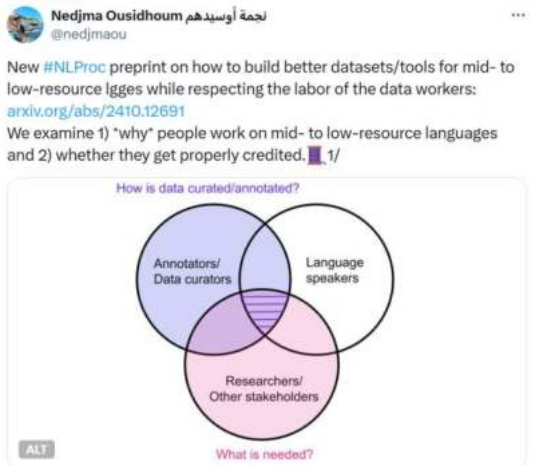
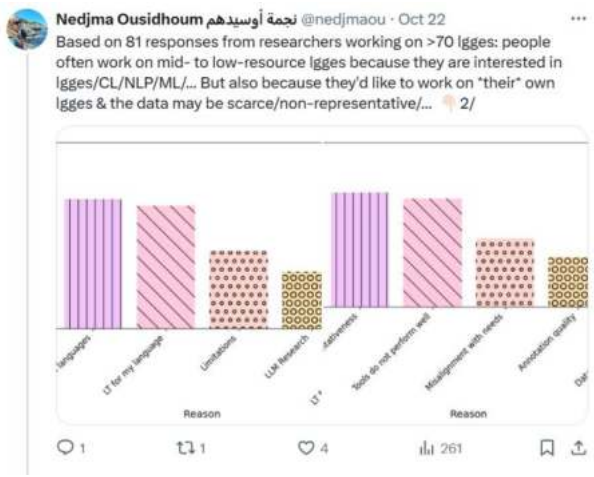
153K views 1 year ago VALENCIA

Threads about a research paper – Bluesky / X





Blog post

The Deep Learning Indaba participants, in Dakar, Senegal 1-7 September 2024

AfriClimate AI Participation at the Deep Learning Indaba 2024: From a Spark to a Community, Leading AI for Climate Action

AfriClimate AI
1,604 followers

September 13, 2024

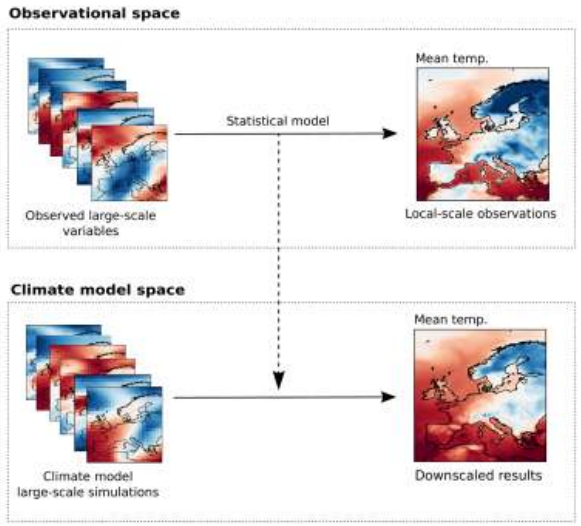
The Deep Learning Indaba 2024 was not just another event for us—it was a reunion. For AfriClimate AI , the Indaba represents our birthplace. It was at the Indaba 2023 in Accra, Ghana, that a pivotal conversation ignited a movement, sparking the creation of AfriClimate AI. As Rendani Mbuvha, one of our founding members, recalls:

> "Last year, I was invited to give a talk about my work on Uncertainty, AI, and Climate Science at the Deep Learning Indaba in Accra, Ghana. As is usual with invited talks, one tends to focus on the successful parts of the work. But for some reason, that morning, I decided to add a slide about the challenges of working in AI and sustainability in Africa, primarily driven by the pervasive data scarcity issues. It turned out that almost everyone in the room identified with

Generating physically-consistent local-scale climate change projections

by Jose Gonzalez-Abad

09 January 2024



Imagine a farmer in charge of several fruit crops located over a small village in the Spanish countryside. He is worried about the increasing temperature, especially under climate change conditions, as this could have devastating effects on his crops in the future. The only tools available to inform the farmer about the evolution of climate in future scenarios are climate models, which are numerical models simulating the dynamics of climate. However, due to computational and physical limitations, the simulations of these models have very low resolution, spanning hundreds of kilometers, so the farmer has no specific information for the region spanning his crops.

A popular technique to overcome this limitation is statistical downscaling (SD), which consists of learning a statistical model to map from th coarse resolution of climate models to the demanded local-scale. There exist several ways of performing this SD. We focus on the so-called *perfect prognosis* approach, which learns the mapping between large-scale variables (for example, humidity and winds) and the demanded local-scale variable (for example, mean temperature) on actual measurements (observational data) and then applies it to the simulations of the climate models. This approach can generate local-scale simulations in future scenarios. In the following figure we show a schematic vie of the perfect prognosis SD of the mean temperature.

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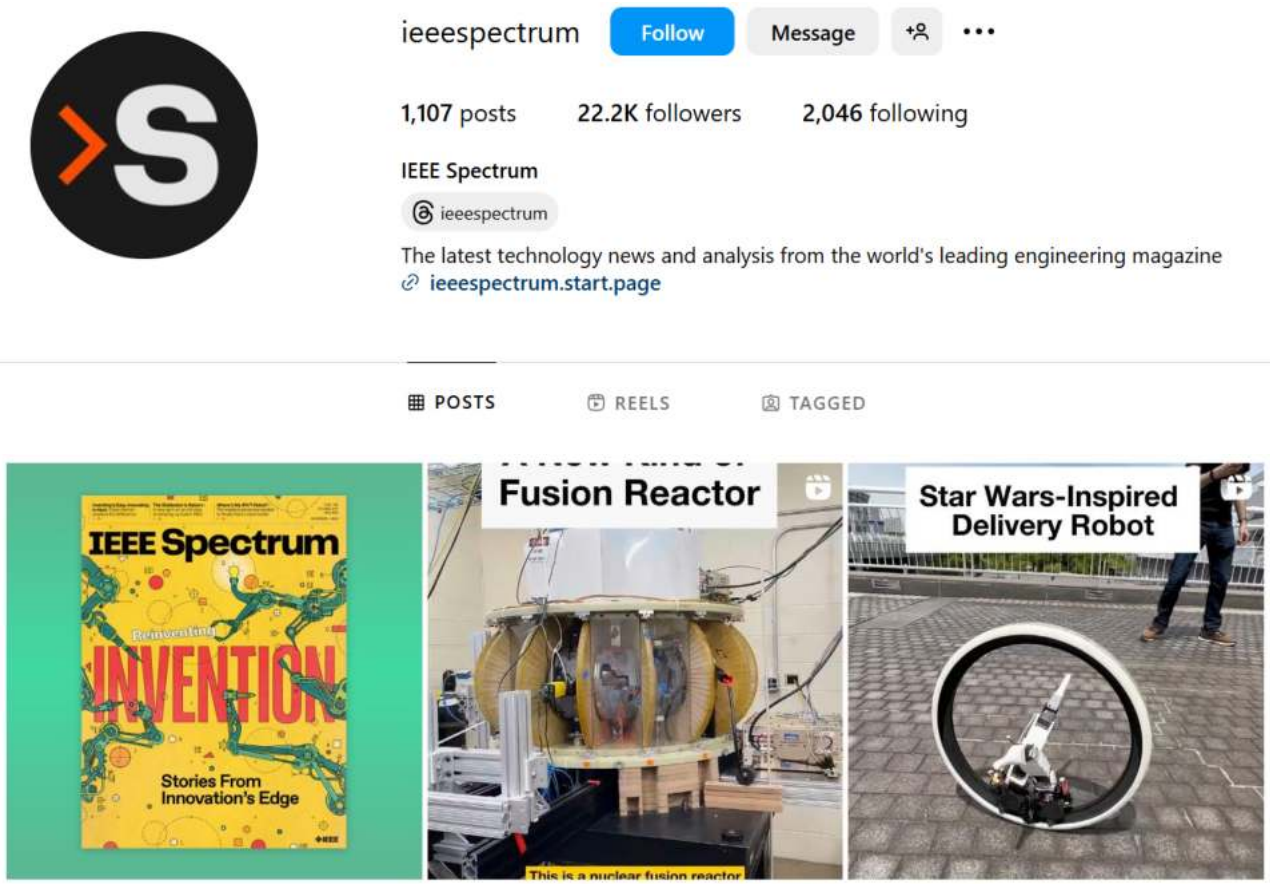
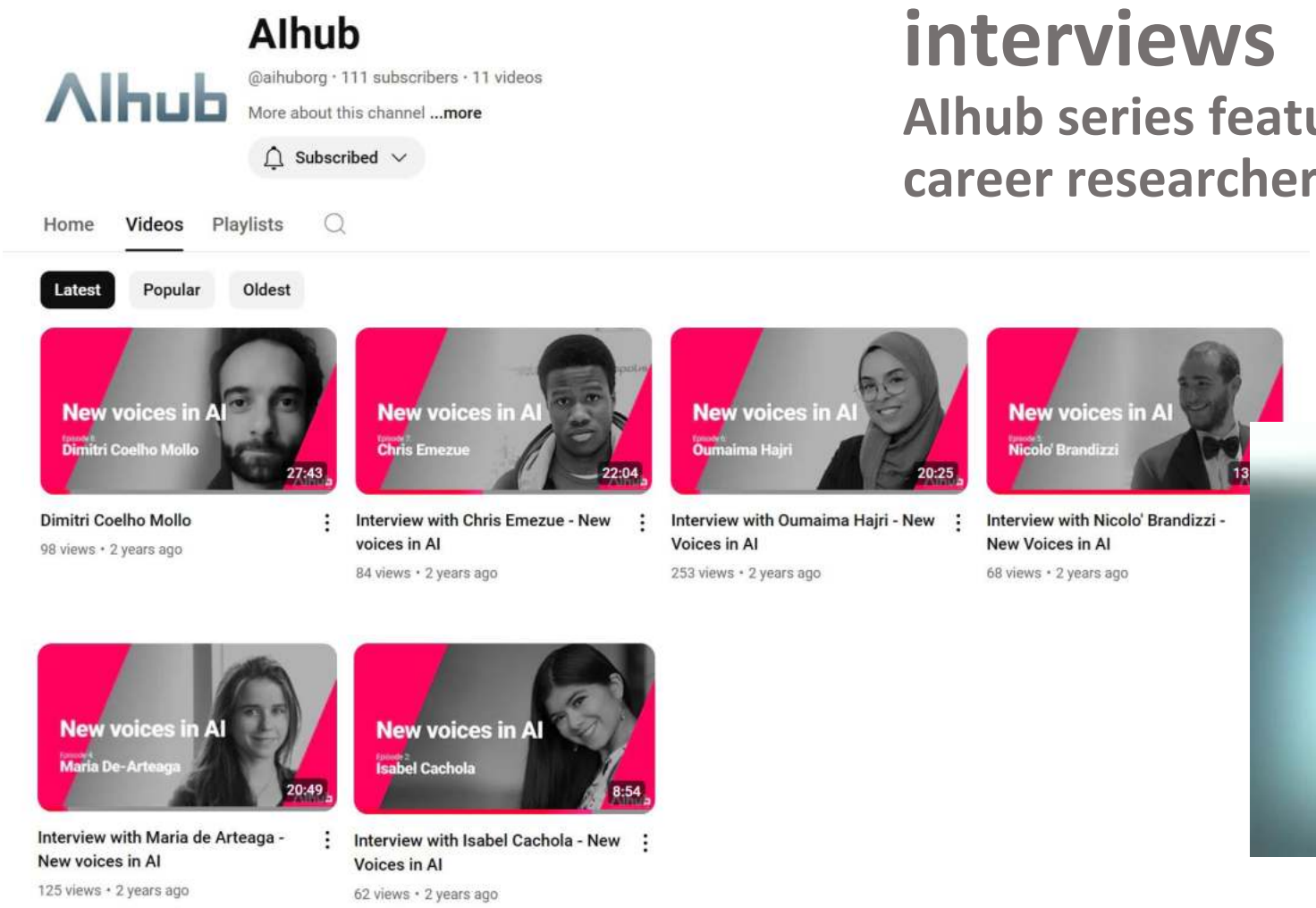
Short videos



Video and audio interviews

AIhub series featuring early-career researchers



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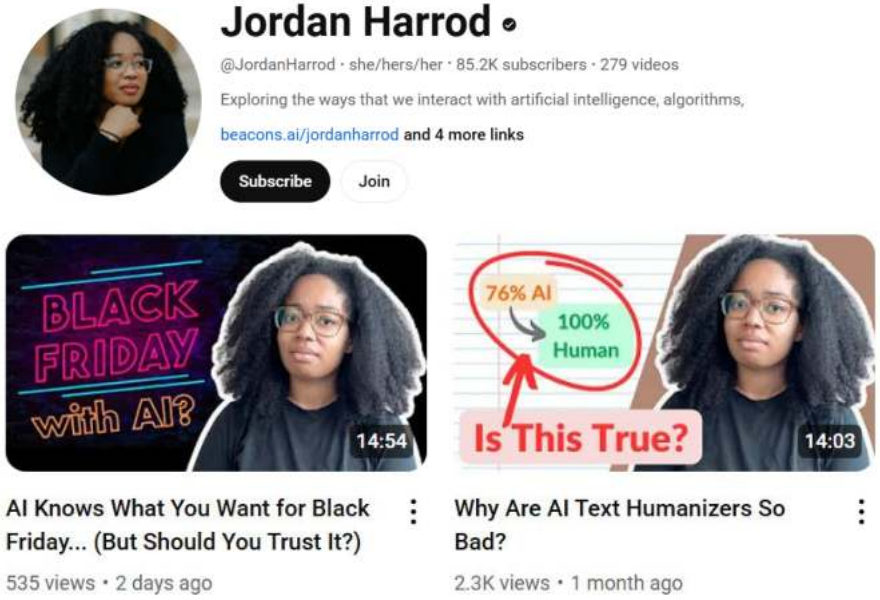
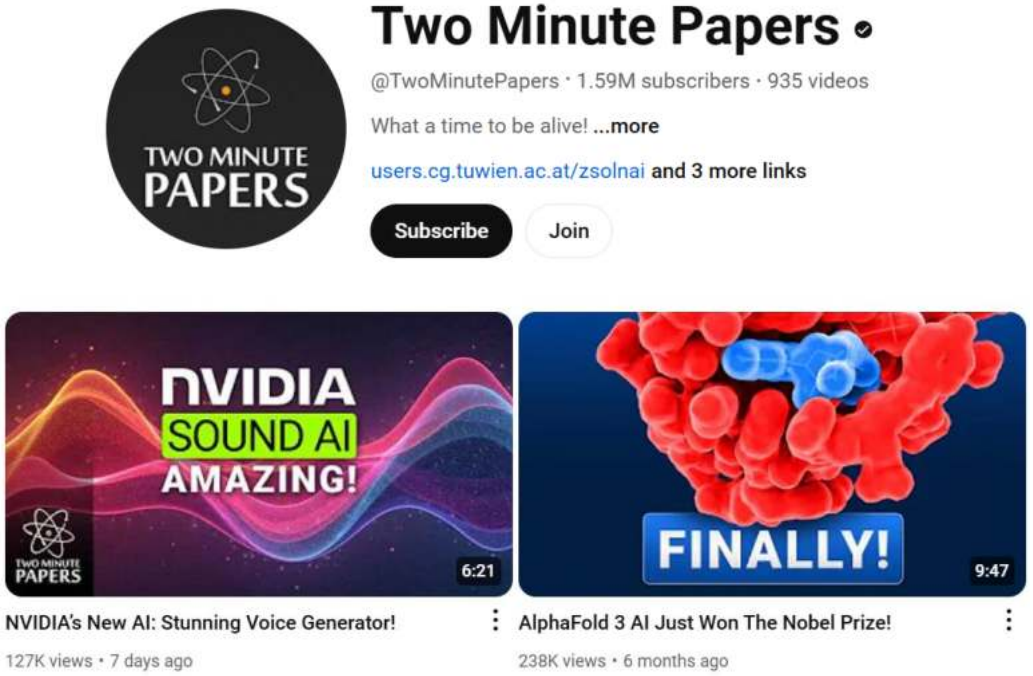
YouTube channel

News, opinions and explainers





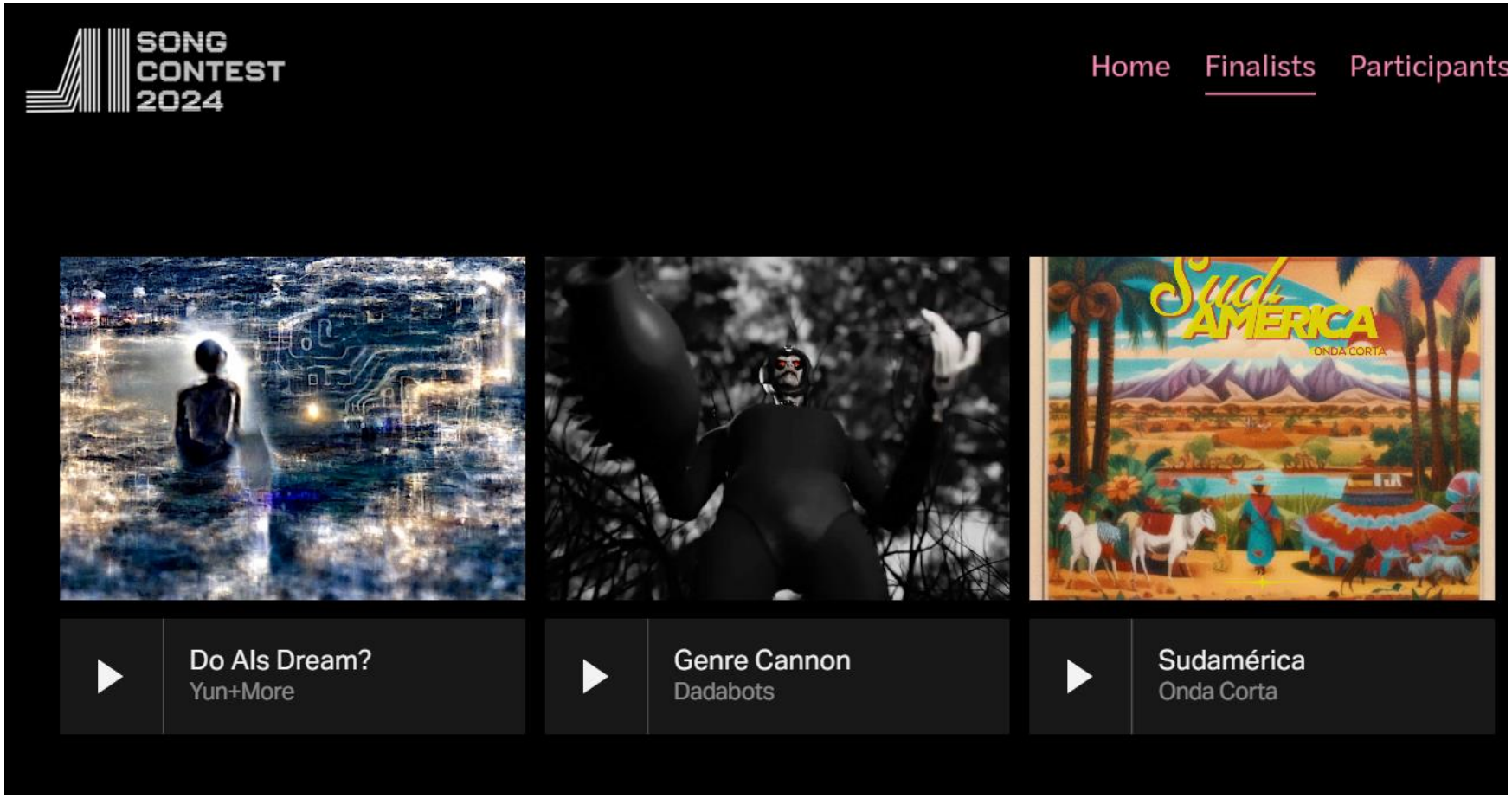
Short films

The Wizard of AI, Alan Warburton

Data Justice, The Alan Turing Institute

Competitions

AI Song Contest



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Camden Council data and AI workshops for residents

Workshop highlights 'pivotal moment' for future of AI in space exploration

The In-Space Physical AI Workshop, held recently at the Ion District in Houston, convened top scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs and government leaders to explore the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in space exploration — a domain poised to drive scientific discovery, economic growth and technological advancements.

Location: The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AG

An event from Responsible AI (UK)

Workshops

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Collaborations with artists

Better images of ai

Co-creating Better Images of AI

Journalists and musicians gather to hear a pianist perform parts of Beethoven's 10th Symphony. Ahmed Elgammal, CC BY-SA

Why don’t more people do science communication?

Don’t know how

Don’t have time

Don’t have an audience

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What’s the first step?

How do you want to communicate?

With help from external sources

- **Press office**
- **Media**

You control the communication

- **Social media**
- **Blog post**
- Podcast, videos
- **Unconventional sci-comm**

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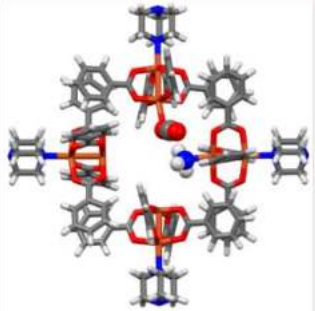
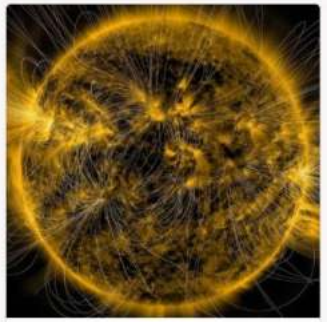
Using your press office

Oregon State University Newsroom



Chemical structure's carbon capture ability doubled by Oregon State University

New 3D printing approach means better biomedical, energy, robotics devices



Scientists make Wile E. Coyote observation, confirming theory of how solar flares are created

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

DECEMBER 3, 2024

MedInclude partners with Grand River Hospital to improve patient communication with AI

DECEMBER 2, 2024

Tech Horizons showcases AI, innovation for business leaders

NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Driving global social impact with innovative technology

EPFL NEWS

Stimulating hypothalamus restores walking in paralyzed patients

Could ChatGPT get an engineering degree?

Using your press office

- Does your Institute / company have a press office?
- Connect with them
- They can help promote your work
  - Quotes
  - Short summary
  - Images / photos

Working with the media - some tips

Pitching

- Tell a story
  - What are the broader implications of your work
  - Don’t just state the results
  - Do you have a hook?

- A video / image can be helpful in “selling” the story

- Try to connect with the journalist before sending your pitch

Working with the media - some tips

Types of questions a science journalist may ask

- Background to the research
  - Where did the idea come from?
  - What inspired you to work on this project?

- Context
  - What is the current state of the field?
  - Previous work
  - What are some of the main challenges in this field?
  - Plans for future work

Working with the media - some tips

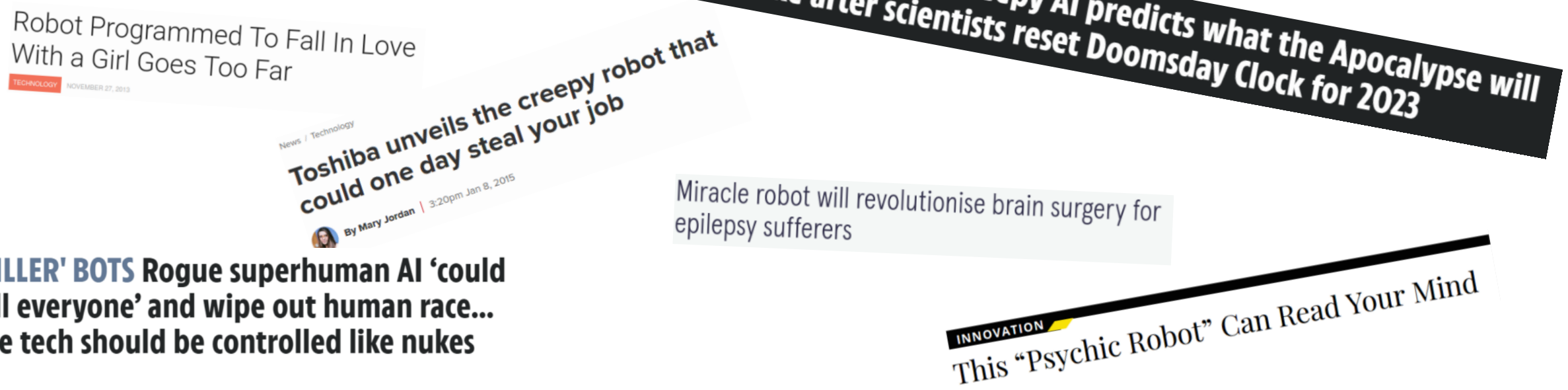
Tips for answering

- Make your answers accessible
  - Try to avoid jargon and acronyms
  - Try to avoid technical specifics

- Try to connect your research to them (and the reader)
  - How would this impact on people and their lives?
  - What are the [potential] applications?

The importance of owning your sci-comm

- When someone else reports on your work you may lose control over the content



How?

With help from external sources

- **Press office**
- **Media**

You control the communication

- **Social media**
- **Blog post**
- Podcast, videos
- **Unconventional sci-comm**

A starting point to communicating directly: social media

A starting point to communicating directly: social media

- Ways to use social media for your research:
  - Passive
  - Active

How using social media can benefit your research - passive

- Follow other researchers in the field
  - Who do they follow?
  - Follow their followers.
  - Build your network.

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- Find out about grants / positions / opportunities

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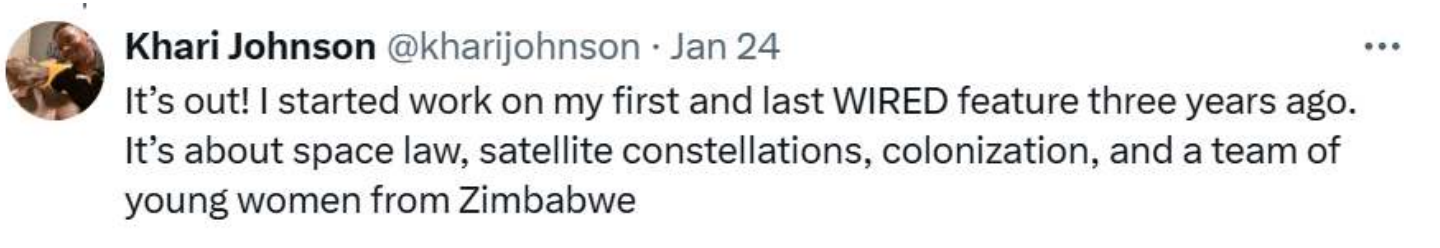
- Follow journalists



How using social media can benefit your research - passive

- Follow other researchers in the field
  - Who do they follow?
  - Follow their followers.
  - Build your network.
- Find out about events / workshops / other interesting content
- Find out about grants / positions / opportunities
- Follow journalists
- Read constructive discussions

How using social media can benefit your research - active

- Use to promote your research
  - Can be a great tool for refining your message
  - How would you compress your research into a social media post or thread?
- Engage in constructive discussions
- Build connections with other researchers, journalists, organisations
- Feel part of a community
- Amplify the voices of others

Caveats

- Can be easy to get sucked into controversies and arguments
- Short-form of social media posts often not conducive to in-depth discussions

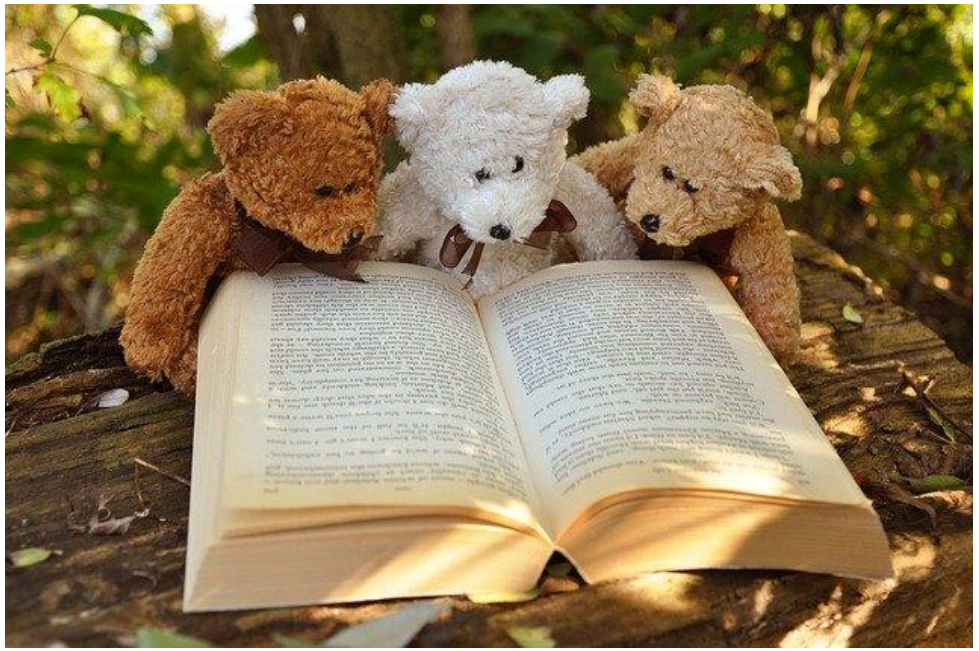
Using social media to communicate your work

Finding your story

- Which aspect of your research would you like to tell people about?
- How are you going to tell them?

What makes a good story?

- Pitched at the right level for the audience



What makes a good story?

- Pitched at the right level for the audience
- Connects with the audience:
  - Contains a link to application(s) from the real world
  - Touches on a lived experience / passion / problem

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- Connects with the audience:
  - Contains a link to application(s) from the real world
  - Touches on a lived experience / passion / problem
- Takes the readers on a journey
- Has a structure and natural flow

Your story on social media

- What problem are you trying to solve? *
- Why is it important?
- How does this relate to people's lives?
- What is the current state of the field?
- What's the contribution of your research? *
- What are the implications of your findings?
- What challenges did you face?
- What are the limitations of your contribution?
- What are you planning next?

(* minimum starting point for communication on a social media platform)

Example from a ML research paper

IOP Publishing Mach. Learn.: Sci. Technol. 3 (2022) 045034 https://doi.org/10.1088/2632-2153/aca23d

MACHINE LEARNING
Science and Technology

PAPER

Self-supervised learning of materials concepts from crystal structures via deep neural networks

Yuta Suzuki[1,2,6], Tatsunori Taniai[3], Kotaro Saito[2,4], Yoshitaka Ushiku[3] and Kanta Ono[1,2,5,*]

[1] The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), Ibaraki, Japan
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[3] OMRON SINIC X Corporation, Tokyo, Japan
[4] Randeft, Inc., Tokyo, Japan
[5] Department of Applied Physics, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan
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[*] Author to whom any correspondence should be addressed.

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Keywords: materials informatics, deep metric learning, crystal structure, self-supervised learning

Supplementary material for this article is available online

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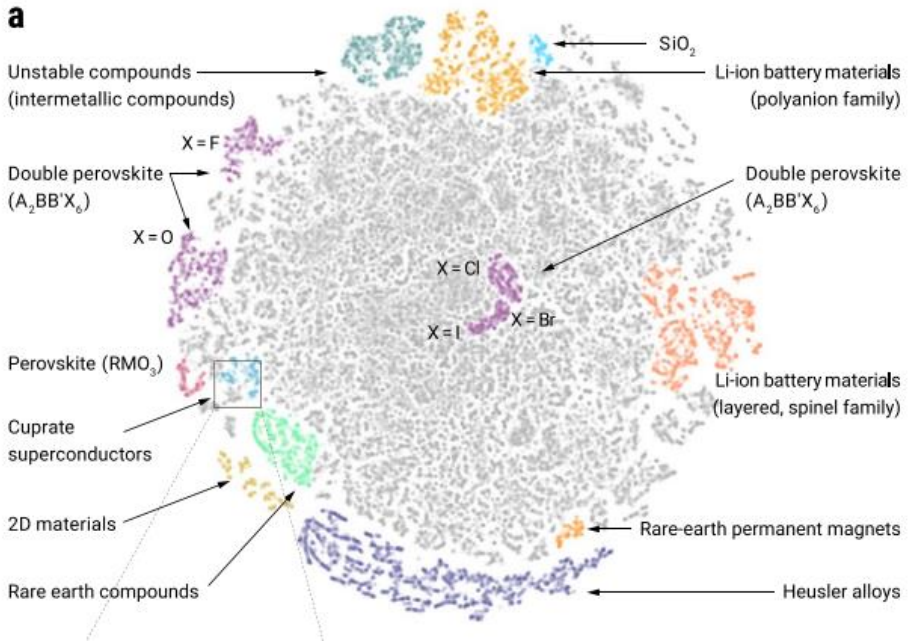

Your story as a social media post / thread

The questions:

- What problem are you trying to solve?
- Why is it important?
- How does this relate to people's lives?
- What is the current state of the field?
- What's the contribution of your research?
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Materials discovery is a slow process that involves searching through a vast space of potential structures. Key to accelerating this process is understanding how the structure of a material affects its function. Suzuki *et al* have used ML to better understand, and map, this relationship.

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Turning your social media summaries into a blog post

Our example research paper

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MACHINE LEARNING
Science and Technology

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Turning your social media summaries into a blog post

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Imagine you are working on developing a new material for an efficient battery. Where do you start? How do you go about finding that material? What structure would give you the properties you are looking for?

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Imagine you are working on developing a new material for an efficient battery. Where do you start? How do you go about finding that material? What structure would give you the properties you are looking for? In the past, this would have involved a time-consuming experimental fabrication process, most likely informed by theoretical models. Given the sparsity of materials in a vast search space, the process of discovering and fabricating a new material could take many years.

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Now, imagine you could accelerate part of this process and narrow your search. The key to doing this is through an understanding the relationships between the structures of materials and their functional properties, as the diverse properties of materials are determined by their structures.

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Now, imagine you could accelerate part of this process and narrow your search. The key to doing this is through an understanding the relationships between the structures of materials and their functional properties, as the diverse properties of materials are determined by their structures. In their research, Suzuki *et al* used machine learning (ML) techniques to create a map of the materials space and measure the similarity between materials.

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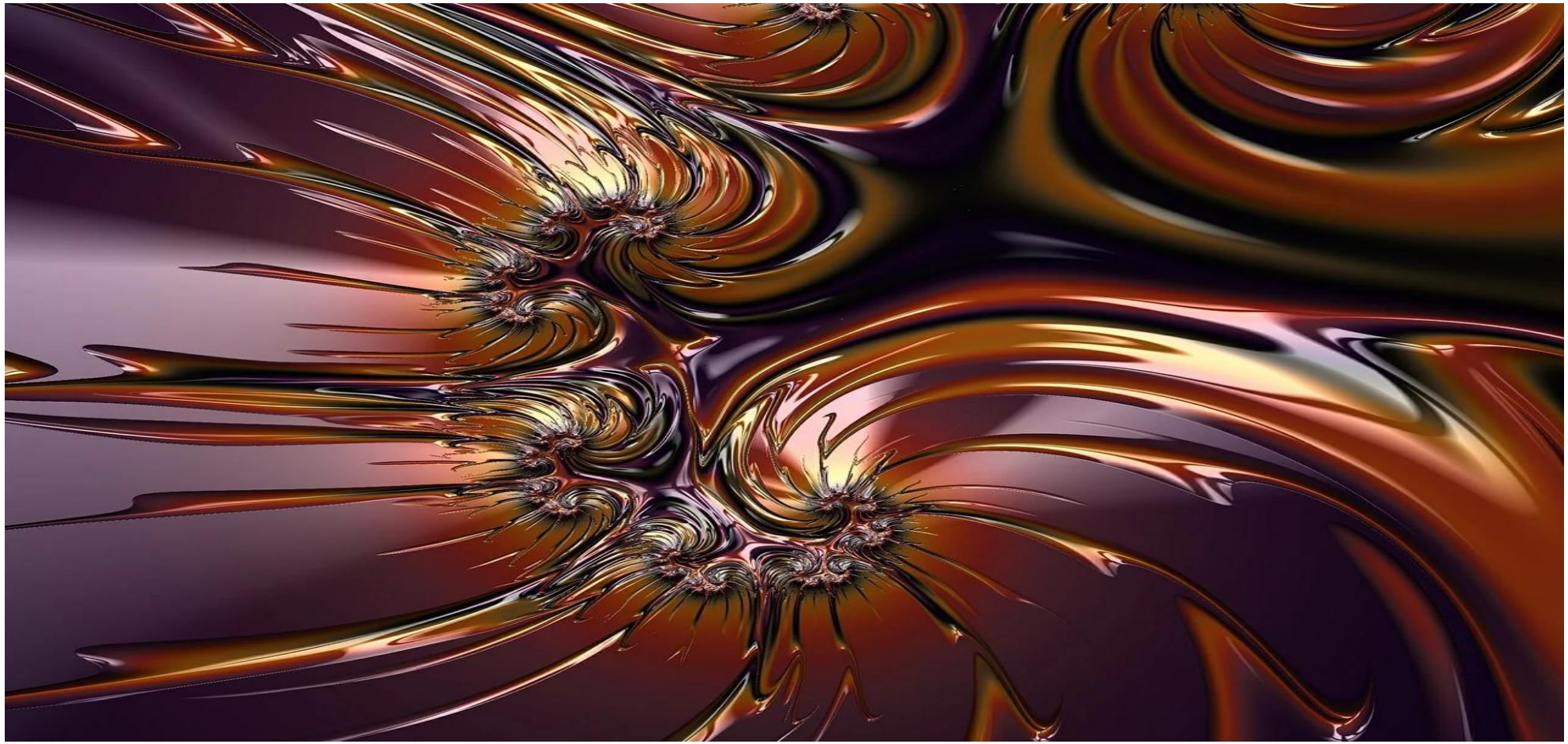
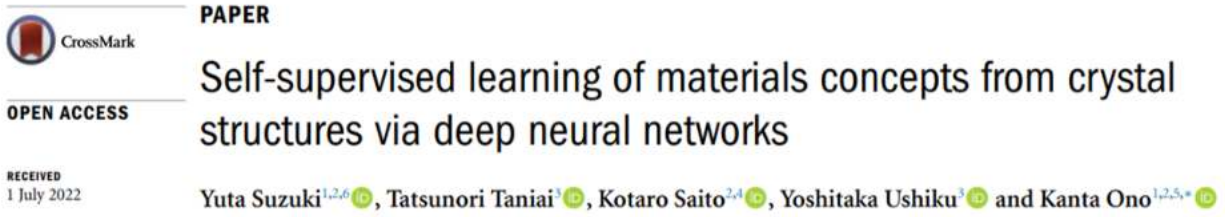
Simplifying complex concepts



Levels of complexity



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Self-supervised learning of materials concepts from crystal structures via deep neural networks

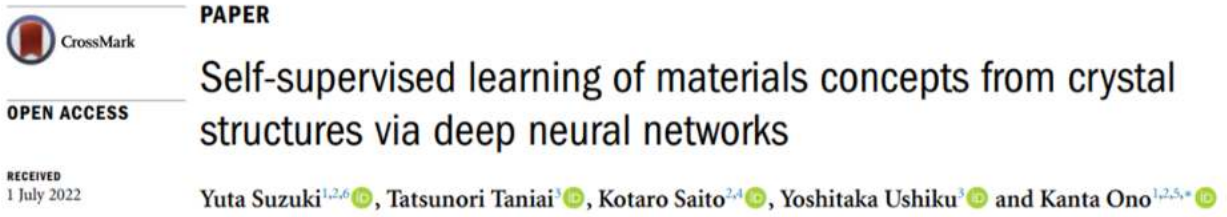
Yuta Suzuki[1,2,6], Tatsunori Taniai[3], Kotaro Saito[2,4], Yoshitaka Ushiku[3] and Kanta Ono[1,2,5,*]

Using a couple of sentences about their method and contribution as an example.

Level 1: suitable for a ML/physics audience.

- Suzuki *et al* have used a self-supervised deep learning approach to learn material embeddings from crystal structures of over 120 000 materials. This enabled them to capture relationships between the structure of a material and its properties.

Levels of complexity



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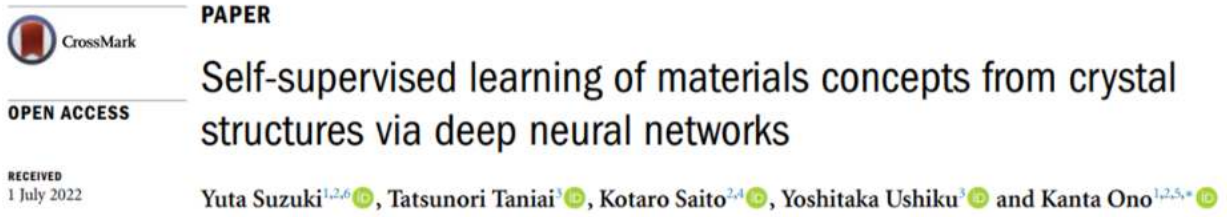

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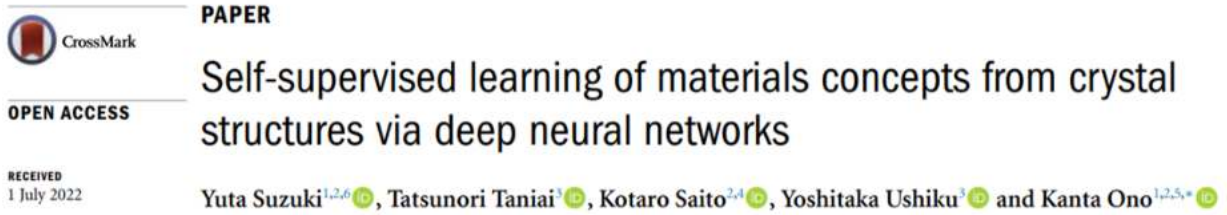
Level 2: suitable for a tech/science-savvy audience (e.g readers of Wired of MIT Tech Review)

- Suzuki and colleagues have used a deep neural network (a type of machine learning algorithm) to better understand relationships between the structure of a material and its properties. Such properties could include superconductivity, or magnetism, for example. The researchers trained their model on 120 000 known materials and the algorithm learned the key features of each material, then mapped that material to a point in a multi-dimensional space. The closer two materials are to one another in this space, the greater the similarity between their properties.

Levels of complexity



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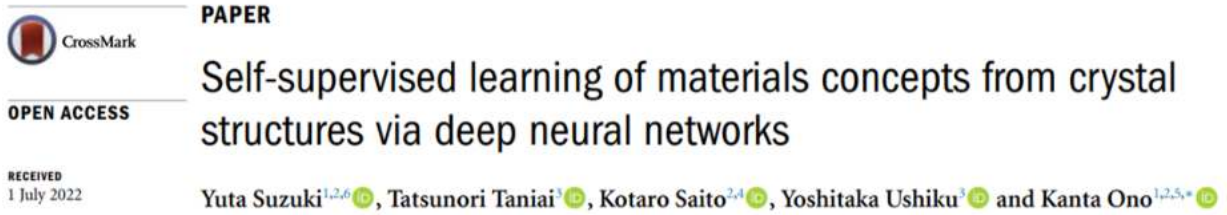
Self-supervised learning of materials concepts from crystal structures via deep neural networks

Yuta Suzuki[1,2,6], Tatsunori Taniai[3], Kotaro Saito[2,4], Yoshitaka Ushiku[3] and Kanta Ono[1,2,5,*]

Level 3: suitable for a more general audience.

- Researchers have used a machine learning algorithm to better understand materials and their properties. Such properties could include superconductivity, or magnetism, for example. The algorithm was trained on data about over 120 000 different materials and used this information to group the materials according to the similarity of their properties. The method for clustering similar materials is like that used for recommender systems (“you’ve seen this film, so here’s another you may like”). However, instead of the algorithm suggesting films similar to those you’ve seen before, it can indicate materials with similar properties.

Levels of complexity



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Self-supervised learning of materials concepts from crystal structures via deep neural networks

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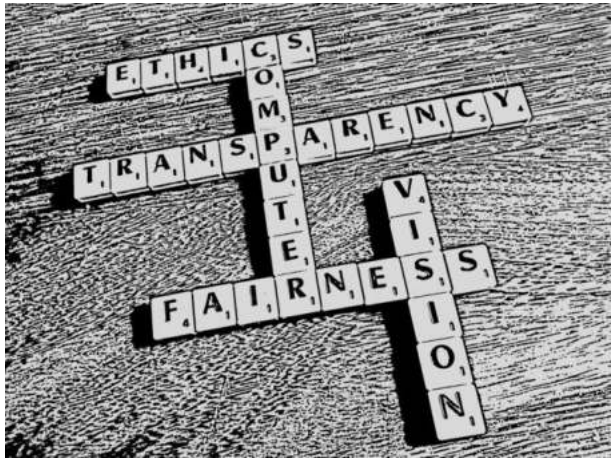
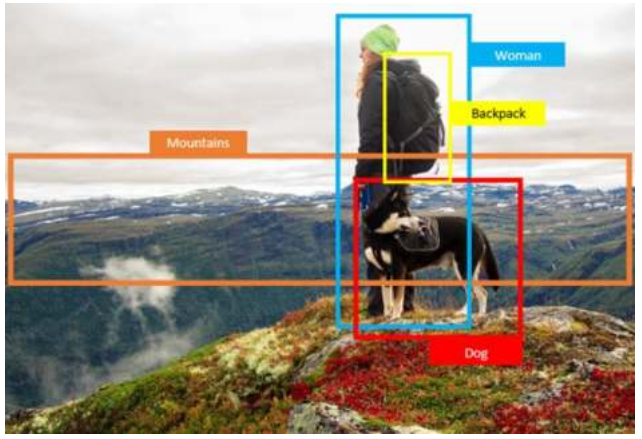
rewrite this so that a 14-year old could understand it: Suzuki et al have used a self-supervised deep learning approach to learn material embeddings from crystal structures of over 120 000 materials. This enabled them to capture relationships between the structure of a material and its properties

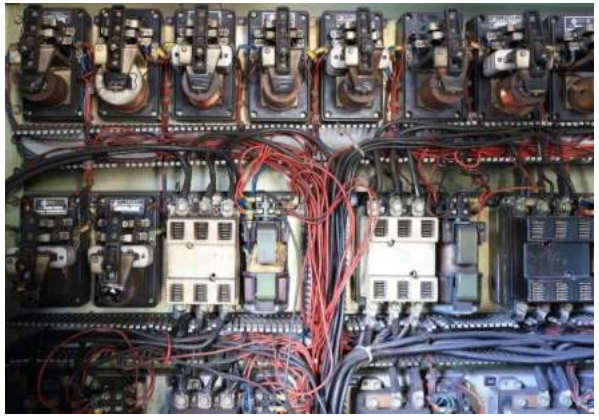
Imagine you have a giant puzzle with over 120,000 pieces, each representing a different material. Each piece has a unique shape and color, showing how the atoms in the material are arranged. Scientists used a super smart computer program to learn the patterns in these shapes and colors. This program, called a deep learning model, got better and better at recognizing the patterns by looking at lots of different puzzle pieces.

AIhub

Creating a portfolio of media



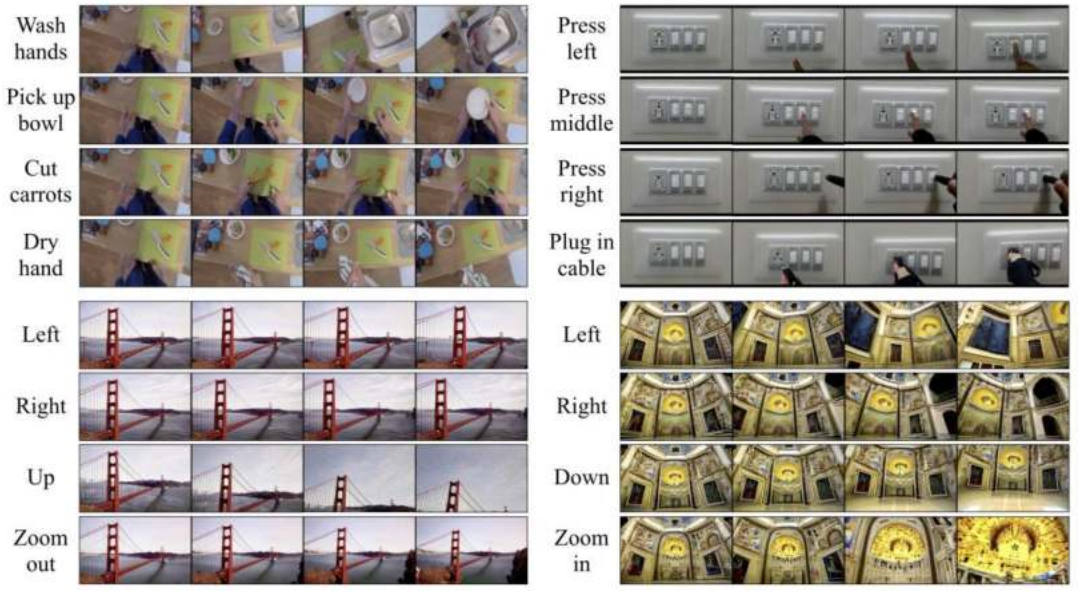




Creating a portfolio of media

Enhancing your blog posts with images and videos can:

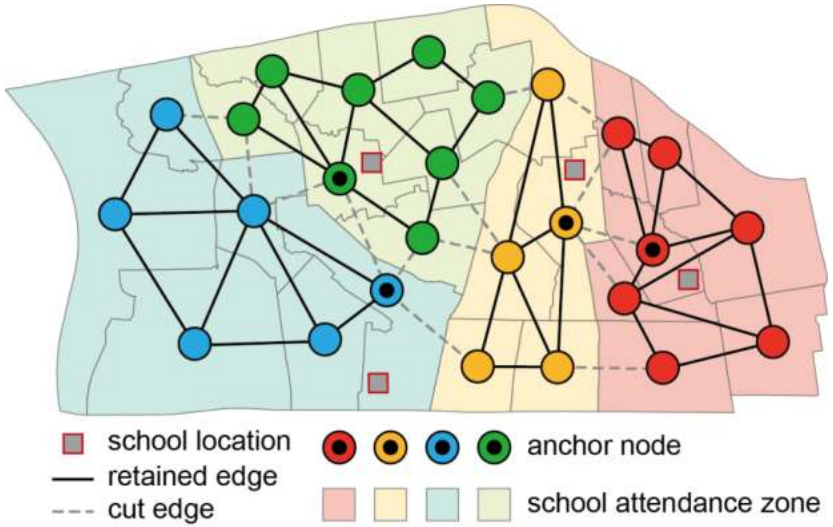
- Help increase the visual impact of your work
- Aid the understanding of concepts you are describing



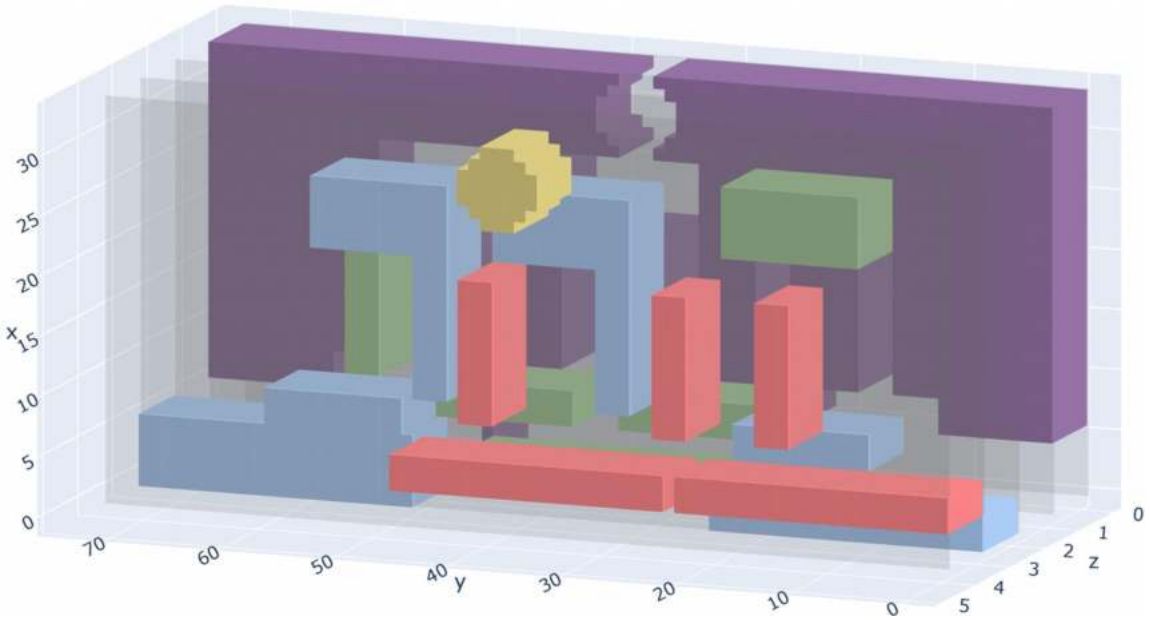
Credit: Sherry Yang

Creating a portfolio of media

- Option 1: use photos, graphs, images from your own research



Credit: Fanglan Chen

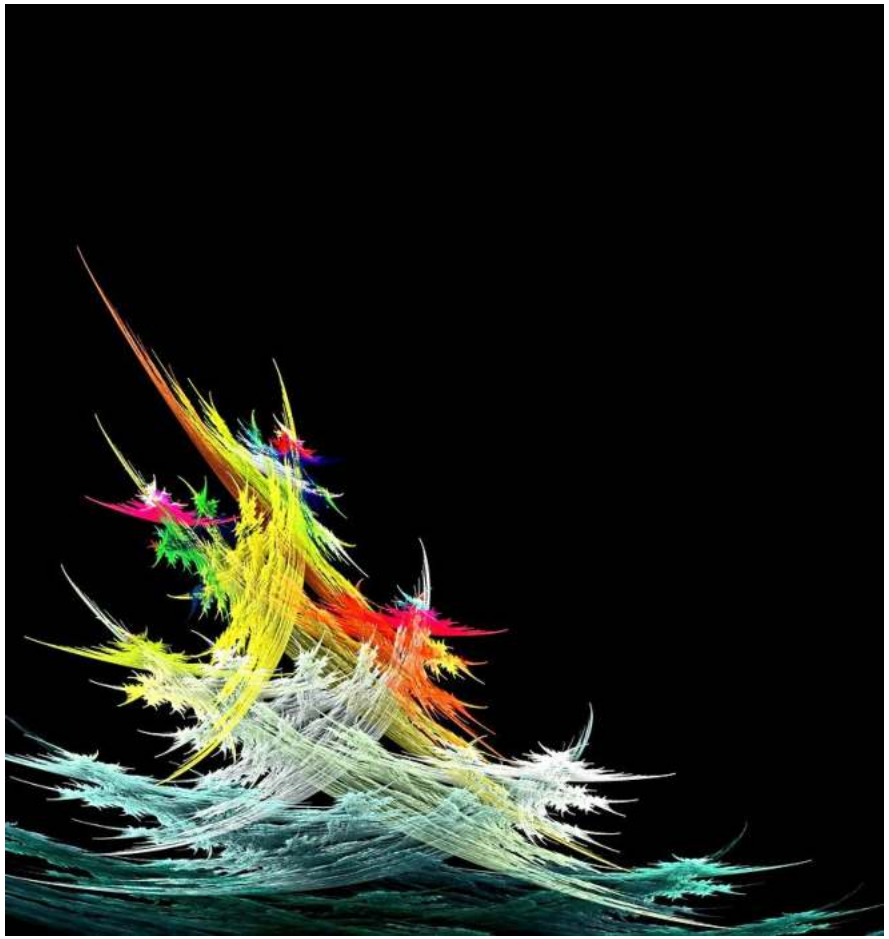


Credit: Matthew Stephenson and Frederic Abraham

Credit: Guillem Alenya

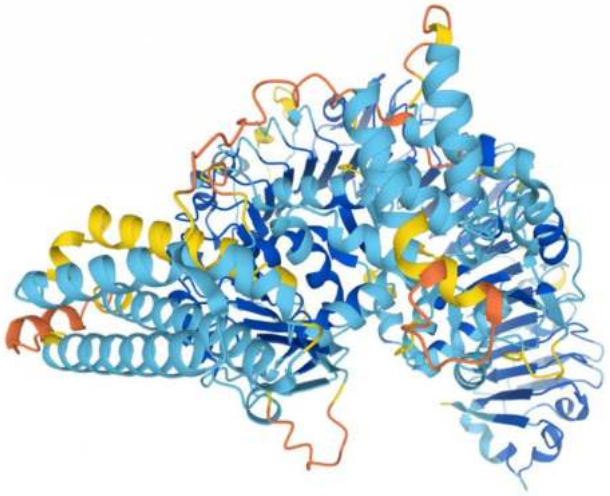
Creating a portfolio of media

- Option 2: Use stock images. Either bought…



Creating a portfolio of media

- Option 2: Use stock images…. or free to use
- Be sure to check the license conditions for reproducing the image.



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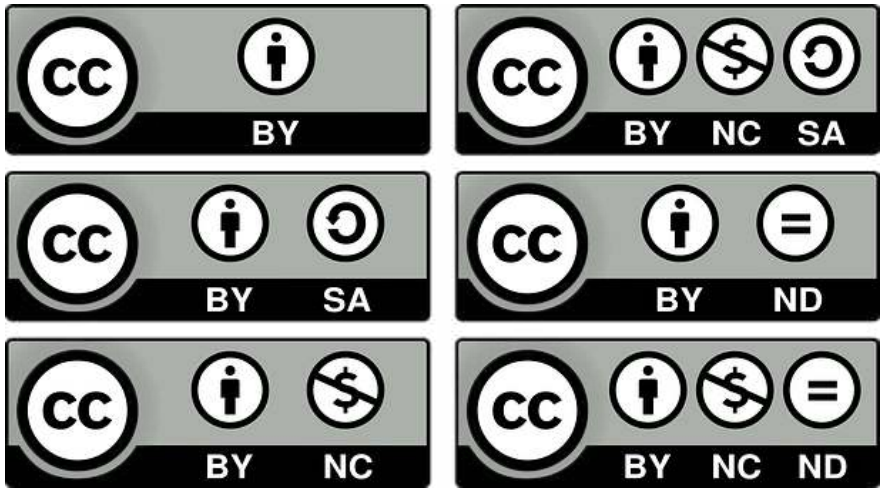

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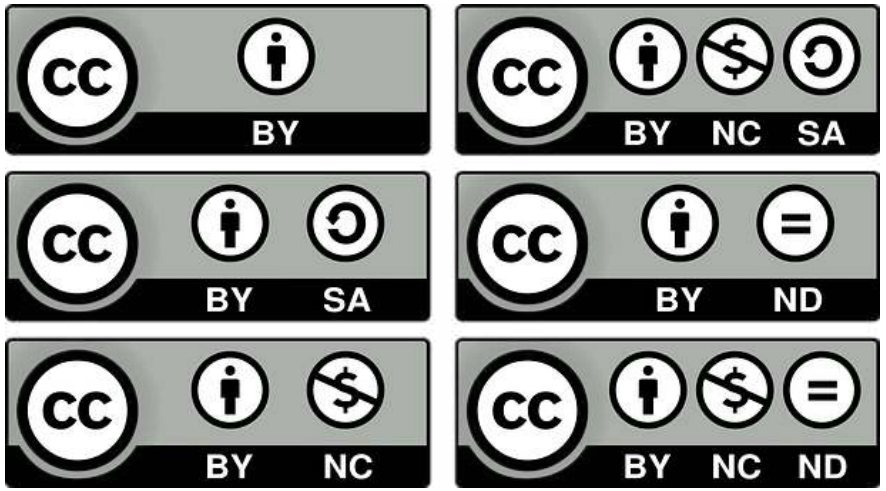
- **Non-commercial.** You cannot reproduce for commercial purposes.

- **No derivative works.** You cannot change or remix the content.



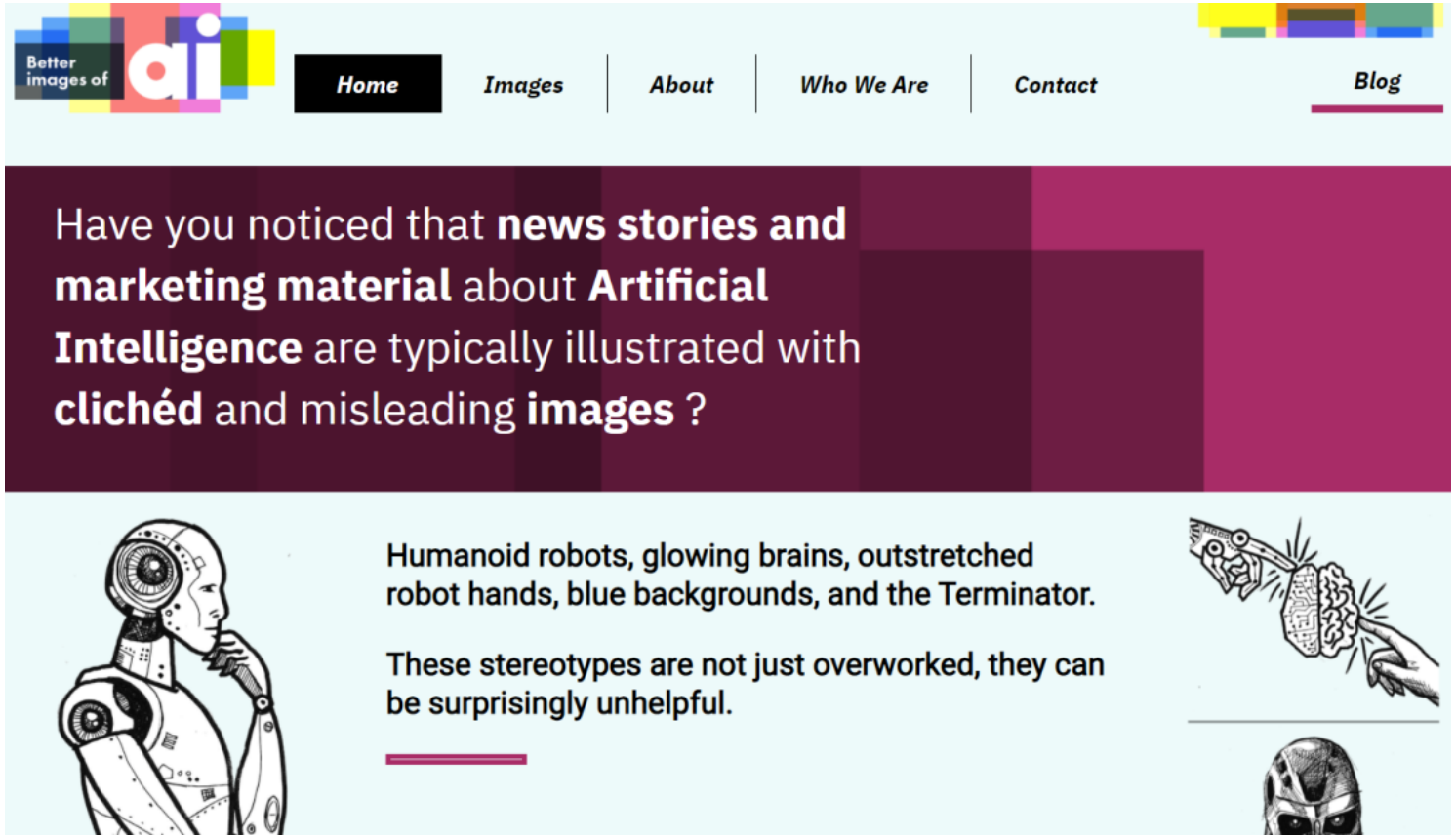
Creating a portfolio of media

- https://pixabay.com/
- https://unsplash.com/
- https://snappygoat.com/
- https://www.pexels.com/
- https://burst.shopify.com/
- https://www.flickr.com/
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Better Images of AI

Better Images of AI

https://betterimagesofai.org/



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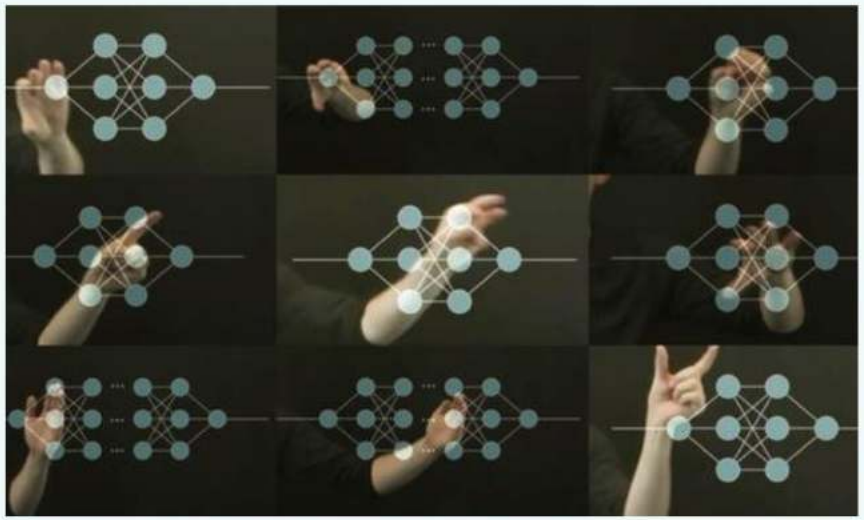
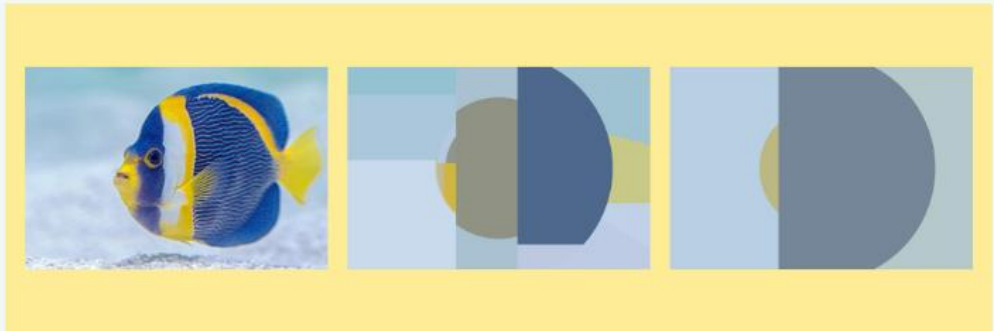


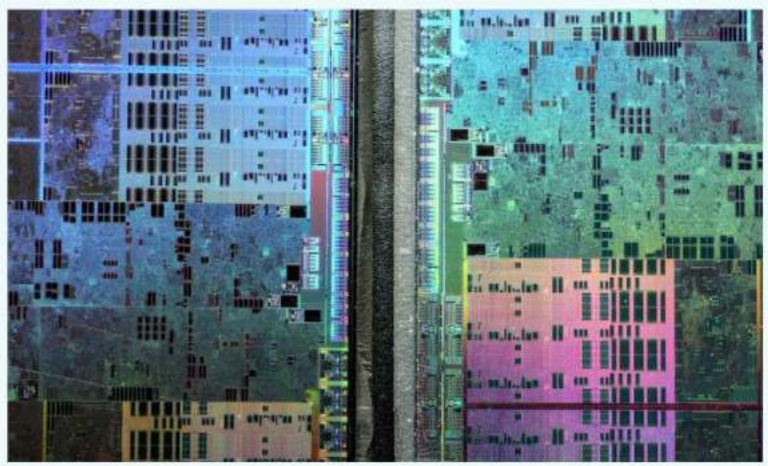
Explainable AI - Alexa Steinbrück



Fish reversed - Rens Dimmendaal & David Clode

Autonomous Driving - Anton Grabolle

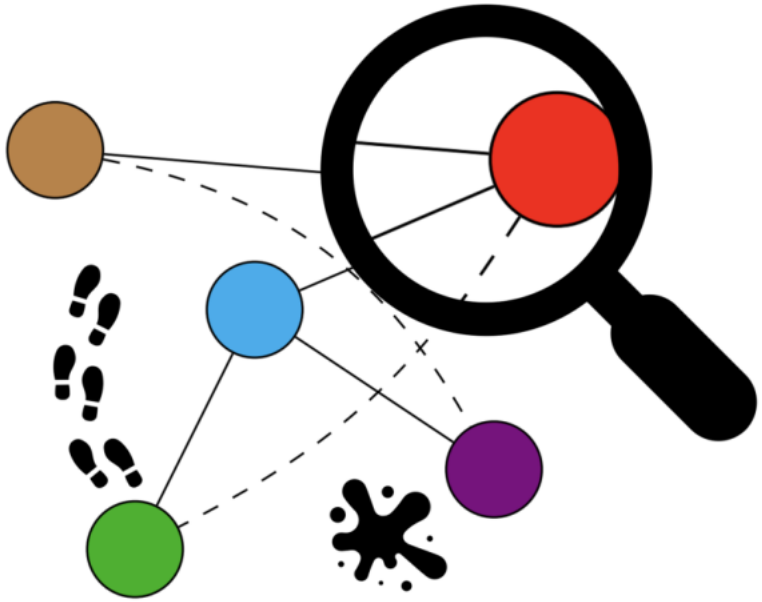
Quantified Human - Alan Warburton



GPU shot etched 5 - Fritzchens Fritz

Creating a portfolio of media

- Option 3: create your own images



Credit: Ramon Fernández Mir and Lauren Nicole DeLong

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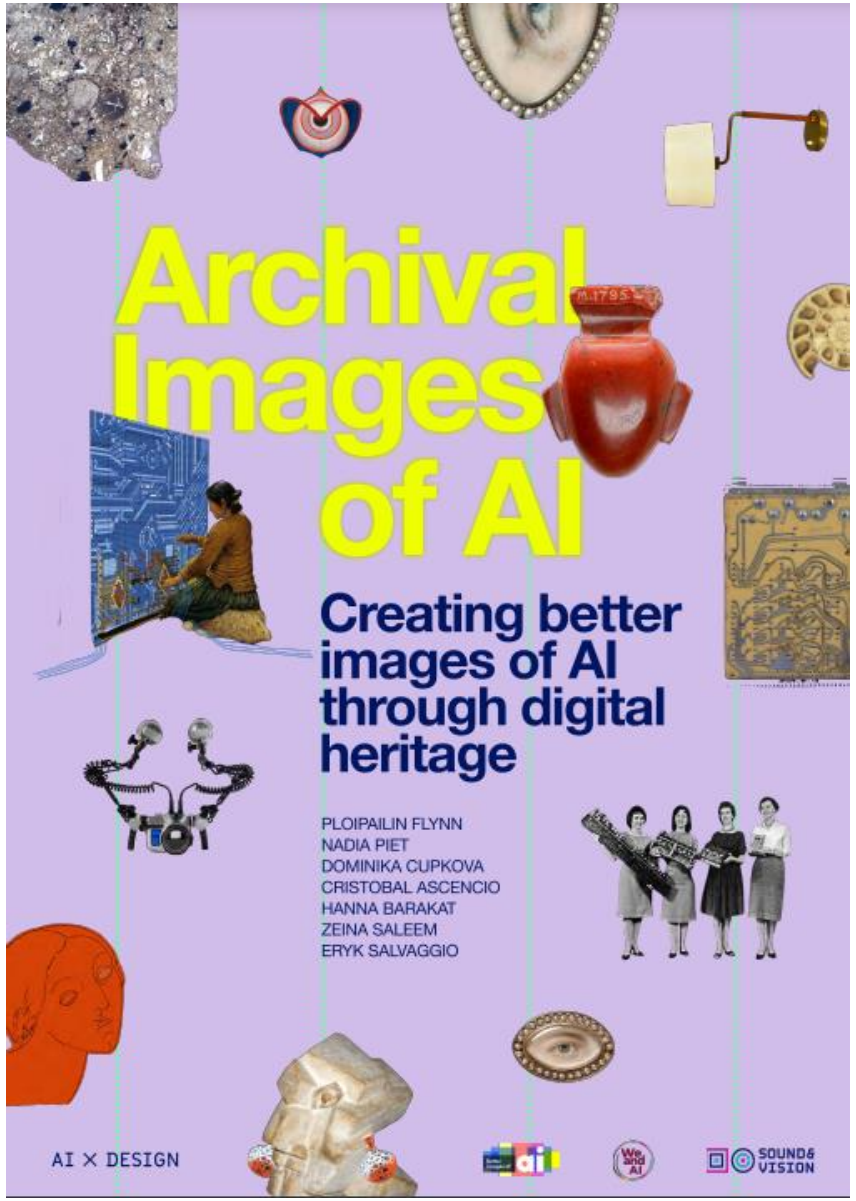
https://aixdesign.co/posts/archival-images-of-ai



Creating a portfolio of media

- Option 4: AI-generated images

  Try to include your prompt

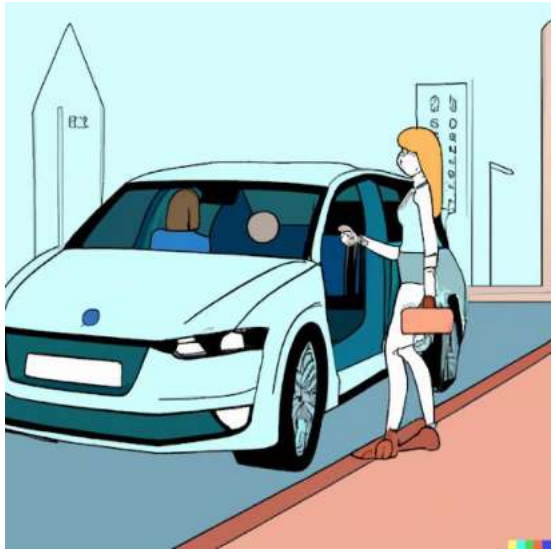


Image created by author using DALL.E. Prompt: "A woman getting into a self driving car. Cartoon style"

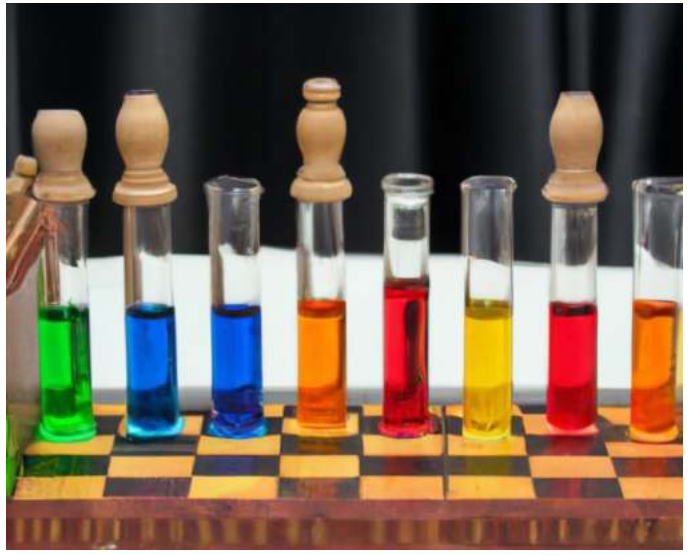


Image created using DALL-E with the prompt "Games, Chemistry, Artificial Intelligence".

Image generated with DALL-E. Prompt: "An AI learning to crack tough puzzle (with no text on the image)"


HAPPY

Hype

Whilst it can be good to create a buzz around your research, too much hype tends to:

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Hype

Whilst it can be good to create a buzz around your research, too much hype tends to:

- Set inflated expectations about the technology

11-19-2024 | DESIGN

This AI taught itself to do surgery by watching videos—and it's ready to operate on humans

The new smart robot developed by Johns Hopkins and Stanford University researchers learned by watching videos of surgeries. Now it can perform procedures with the skill level of a human doctor.

Technology

Housework robot can learn to do almost any chore in 20 minutes

A robotic assistant can learn to do household jobs like opening cupboards, pulling out chairs or taking a towel off a rail after a bit of training using a stick with an iPhone on it

Hype

Whilst it can be good to create a buzz around your research, too much hype tends to:

- Set inflated expectations about the technology
- Drive unnecessary fears in the general public


NEWS / CAR TECH

Self-Driving Cars Could Steal 300,000 American Jobs a Year, Goldman Sachs Says


THE STANDARD

LIFESTYLE

Is the AI apocalypse actually coming? What life could look like if robots take over

From job losses to mass extinction events, experts are warning that AI technology risks opening a Pandora's Box of horrors if left unchecked — are they right to be sounding the klaxon? Katie Strick reports

Hype

Whilst it can be good to create a buzz around your research, too much hype tends to:

- Set inflated expectations about the technology
- Drive unnecessary fears in the general public
- Detract from meaningful discussions about the actual aspects of the technology that we need to be concerned about

How the Other Half Lives: The Hidden Labor Behind ChatGPT | Karen Hao

Tips for avoiding hype in your sci-comm

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Tips for avoiding hype in your sci-comm

- Don’t exaggerate the impact of your work:
  - Be specific about your contribution
  - Make any limitations clear
  - Try to avoid superlatives: “best, first, …” etc (unless you can back up your claim)

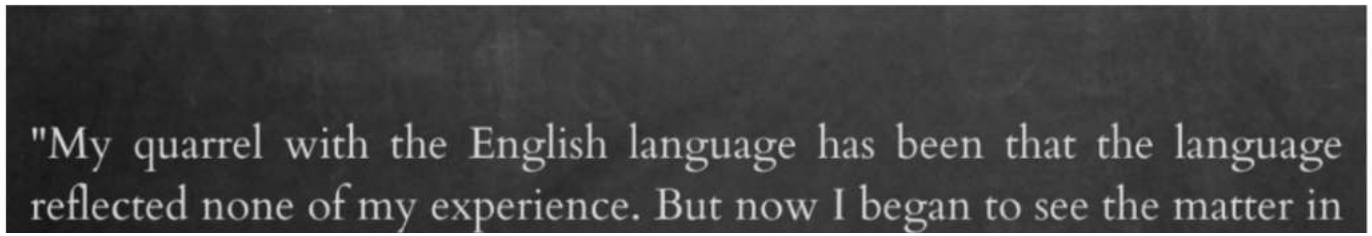
- Try to avoid anthropomorphism

    - “decides”, “judges”, “understands”

Artifice and Intelligence

EMILY TUCKER / MAR 16, 2022

Emily Tucker is the Executive Director of the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law..



AUTHORS

EMILY TUCKER

Emily Tucker is the Executive Director at the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law, where she is also an adjunct professor of law. She shapes the Center's strategic vision and guides its programmatic work. Emily joined the Center after serving as a Teaching Fellow and Supervising Attorne...

Starting today, the Privacy Center will stop using the terms "artificial intelligence," "AI," and "machine learning" in our work to expose and mitigate the harms of digital technologies in the lives of individuals and communities.

(1) Be as specific as possible about what the technology in question is and how it works. For example, instead of saying “face recognition uses artificial intelligence,” we might say something like “tech companies use massive data sets to train algorithms to match images of human faces.” Where a complete explanation is disruptive to our larger argument, or beyond our expertise, we will point readers to external sources.

(2) Identify any obstacles to our own understanding of a technology that result from failures of corporate or government transparency. For example, instead of saying “employers are using AI to analyze workers’ emotions” we might say “employers are using software advertised as having the ability to label workers’ emotions based on images of them from photographs and video. We don’t know how the labeling process works because the companies that sell these products claim that information as a trade secret.”

Artifice and Intelligence

EMILY TUCKER / MAR 16, 2022

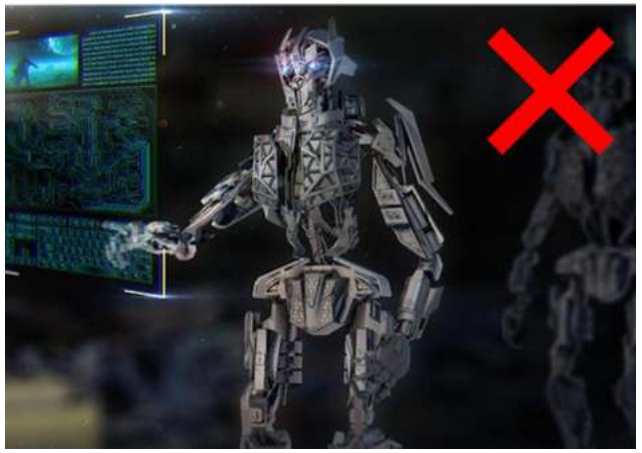
(3) Name the corporations responsible for creating and spreading the technological product. For example, instead of saying “states use AI to verify the identities of people applying for unemployment benefits,” we might say “states are contracting with a company called ID.me, which uses Amazon Rekognition, a face matching algorithm, to verify the identities of people applying for unemployment benefits.”

(4) Attribute agency to the human actors building and using the technology, never to the technology itself. This needn’t always require excessive verbiage. For example, we might substitute “machine training,” which sounds like something a person does with a machine, for “machine learning” which sounds like a computer doing something on its own.

Tips for avoiding hype in your sci-comm

- Choose relevant images: avoid stereotypical images of robots from science fiction!

- Title: this can by catchy, but try to prioritize scientific accuracy



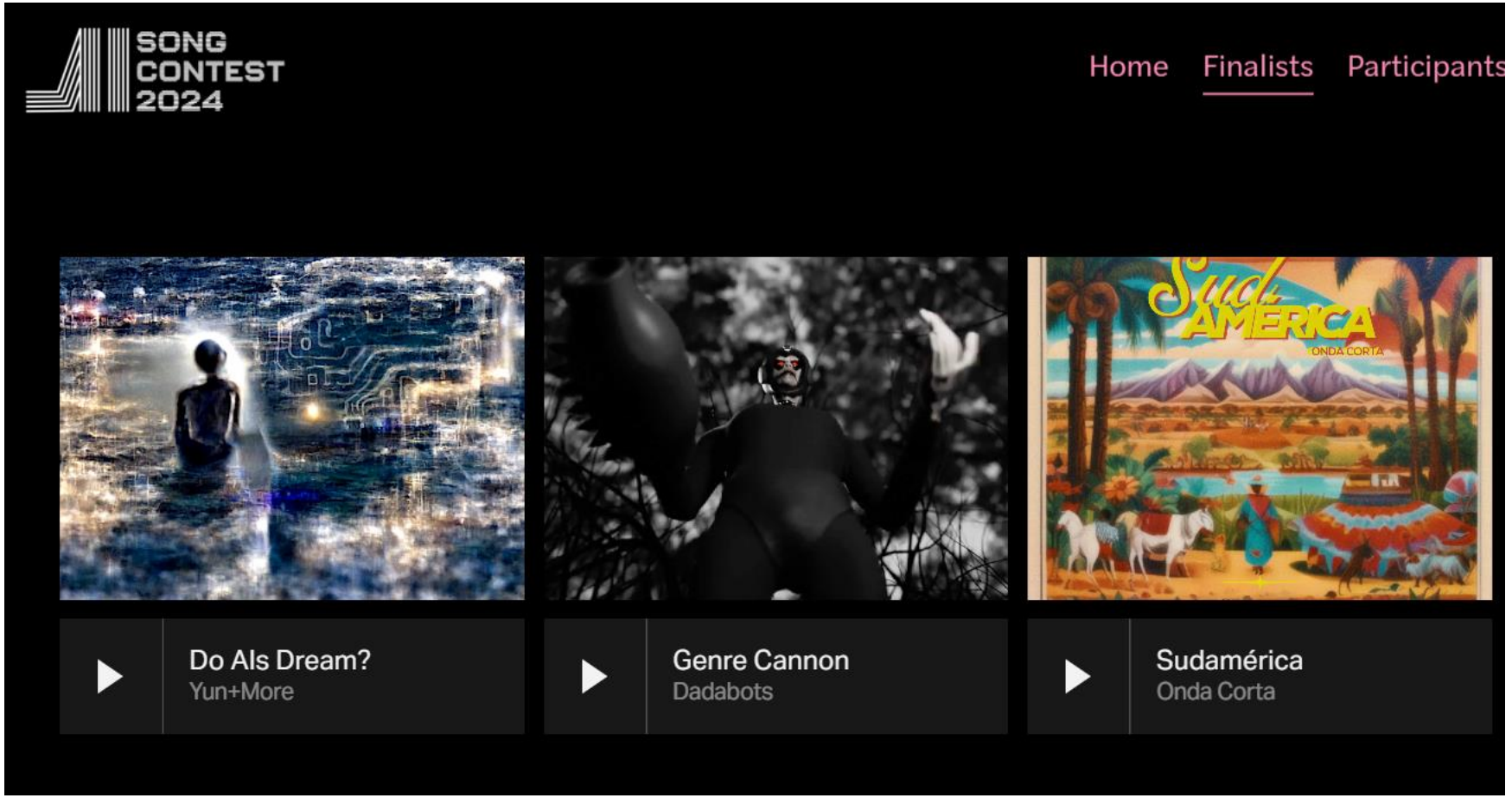
Unconventional ways of doing sci-comm

Swarm escape

Swarm escape

Immersive theatre

The AI Song Contest



TV / film discussion

- AI researchers discuss Westworld!
- Commenting on the AI, machine learning and computer science ideas in the show

Other unconventional ways of doing sci-comm

Some examples to think about:

- Photograph essay
- Comic
- Stand-up monologue
- Short film
- Sci-fi book
- Food dish
- Escape room
- Sitcom
- Dance
- Theatre play
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Music festival performance
- Children's book
- Video game
- Tik tok

Who is your audience, and could any of these formats help you communicate better?

Are there any aspects of your research that work with any of these formats?

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Next steps

- Try out some of the exercises from this talk
- From 2-3pm: an informal session to discuss any ideas you have regarding sci-comm
- Interested in covering AAAI for AIhub?
- Reach out to us - we can work with you to help you shape your story

- https://aihub.org/science-communication-for-ai-researchers-an-introduction-at-aaai2025/

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news articles opinions education


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Questions?