eNCATC
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF CULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

TYPE Special Issue Editorial
PUBLISHED 11 July 2025
DOI 10.3389/ejcmp.2025.15030

OPEN ACCESS

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RECEIVED 04 June 2025
ACCEPTED 16 June 2025
PUBLISHED 11 July 2025

CITATION
Murphy O and Franklin M (2025) Editorial: Artificial intelligence: cultural policy, management, education, and research.
Eur. J. Cult. Manag. Policy 15:15030.
doi: 10.3389/ejcmp.2025.15030

Editorial: Artificial intelligence: cultural policy, management, education, and research

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KEYWORDS

cultural policy, artificial intelligence, AI, digital labour, standard industry classifiers, cultural sector, creative and cultural industries, cultural ecosystems

Editorial on the Special Issue
Artificial intelligence: cultural policy, management, education, and research

Times of great change offer significant opportunities for research as often hidden practices and assumptions are uncovered by the fracturing impacts of new challenges. Structural weaknesses become more pronounced, demands for innovation increasingly desperate, threats are crystalised and new opportunities are pursued in plain sight. Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI), broadly conceived, have recently and increasingly driven such change in the Creative and Cultural Industries.

The less productive corollary to opening such a window into these artistic worlds, is the way we respond when our attention is oriented towards emergent questions. These issues are regularly approached with either "wait and see" reticence regarding the drawing of conclusions, or futurology with sufficient leeway to avoid being proven wrong. Typically, this comes with an attendant avoidance of meaningful contribution.

Consequently despite there being fundamental issues at stake, researchers' interactions with industry and policy can fall into the trap of stating or at least agreeing that "it's too early to tell" and then very quickly "it's too late to do anything about it" (Zittrain, 2024). The reshaping of Creative and Cultural Industries globally is underway, it is thus incumbent on researchers to contribute meaningful analyses to enable stakeholders to act in an informed manner. Such actions may pertain to ongoing and uncertain engagements in legal, regulatory, and economic spheres, but the continuous nature of events should not preclude well developed positions. For instance, to make an argument in relation to technology companies' activities and power dynamics in the Creative and Cultural Industries, stakeholders should be able to productively consider when "can" implies "ought" (Zittrain, 2017) regarding AI giants' influence on setting terms for creators' rights and remuneration, and how to articulate preferred directions.

Whilst there are studies on AI and creative practice (Hunt and McKelvey, 2019; Miller, 2019; European Parliament, 2020; Zylinska, 2020; Hageback and Hedblom, 2022;

Members of the Smithsonian AI & ML community, 2022; Wallace, 2023), to date there has been very little research into the impact of AI on Cultural Policy, or on Cultural Policies' impact on AI. The work on discipline specific creative AI practice is rich, however the gap in knowledge in the context of Cultural Policy limits the ability of artists, policymakers, managers and educators to support the responsible adoption, or strategic non adoption of AI technologies in the Creative and Cultural Sector.

History has shown us that creative practitioners can help us identify new ways of seeing the world, define new ethical principles, critique social norms and interrogate emerging technologies in ways that generate both economic and social value. In many ways artists help us to know what questions we should be asking when it comes to thinking about the ethics of AI, but to do this important work, they need cultural policies, and funding ecosystems that value their contribution to making advanced technologies (in this case, AI), better for society.

The value of the papers presented here equate to more than the sum of their parts and define a new area of policy studies, that of - AI and Cultural Policy, Practice and Management. This Special Issue makes practical analytic contributions through direct considerations and proposals for understanding across a breadth of creative fields. These articles do so by presenting evidential data drawn from embedded fieldwork by academics, policymakers and practitioners from creative hubs in the UK, China, and Europe.

Such advances include grasping the lived experience of cultural workers (Frost and Vargas), examining the impact of AI technologies on both creative practice 'artwork' and the working conditions of artists' 'art work' (Duester), developing clear frameworks to organise understandings of change drivers and mechanisms for spillover and growth from the Creative and Cultural Sector to the wider creative industries (Andrews and Hawcroft), mapping the dichotomy between sector ending or sector sustaining AI adoption practices in British TV (Connock), analysing the use of Generative AI technologies in the workflow process of design (Bertola and Rizzi), and the application of existing and emerging legal frameworks for the management of copyright in the context of AI technologies in the Cultural Heritage sector (Westenberger and Farmaki).

The questions raised in these papers connect to key issues, that are fundamental to AI in the wider Creative and Cultural Industries, questions about the nature of creativity (Bassett, 2024; Gaut, 2010) and the role of data (Terras et al., 2024), but with a framing to consider the practical infrastructure arranging current activity. Potential implications of policy on AI influenced creative practice is subject to much debate, but the intersection of different domains of policy development (from management to education, labour to public institutions), as well as interrelations across regulatory regimes and markets are much more rarely considered (Buckweitz and Noam, 2024).

This issue, came at the invitation of ENCATC, the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy, who commissioned the editors to consider the impact of AI technologies on the Creative and Cultural Sector. The invitation to edit this Special Issue followed the Keynote address by Dr. Oonagh Murphy to the 2023 *ENCATC Summit* in Helsinki, in which she established the pressing need for empirical research to empower policymakers to make evidence-based decisions around the use of AI technologies in the Creative and Cultural Sector.

This issue's examinations of AI are informed by a wealth of disciplinary perspectives and serve as a starting point for thinking about the challenges and opportunities of AI in the Creative and Cultural Sector from an ecosystem not projects perspective. Cultural Policy is the top-level mechanism by which funding is allocated, and ecosystems are built. The papers presented in this Special Issue begin to fill the gap in knowledge concerning AI in the Creative and Cultural Sector from a policy standpoint. In doing so we hope that they can also support the development of robust, innovative and applied approaches to Cultural Policy that empowers the Creative and Cultural Sector in its relationship with AI technologies and those that develop them.

We wish to extend a special thanks to the reviewers, leading authorities in their fields, who so kindly provided their expert insights and made this collection possible. Their hard work and dedication is invaluable.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

Funding

The author(s) declare that no financial support was received for the research and/or publication of this article.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declare that no Generative AI was used in the creation of this manuscript.

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