AI Governance and the Future of Creative Practice: African and Global Perspectives

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence is increasingly transforming creative practice across music, visual arts, film, fashion, literature, and digital media. While these technologies offer new modes of production and dissemination, they also generate significant legal, economic, and cultural challenges. Central among these challenges is AI governance, which refers to the policies, ethical frameworks, and regulatory mechanisms that guide the development and deployment of artificial intelligence systems.

This policy paper examines the implications of AI governance for creative practice from African and global perspectives. It focuses on three key areas: intellectual property and authorship, creative labour and economic equity, and cultural representation and algorithmic bias. The paper argues that inclusive and context-sensitive AI governance is essential for sustainable creative ecosystems, the protection of cultural diversity, and equitable participation in the global creative economy. Creative practitioners must be recognised as important stakeholders in shaping governance frameworks that influence the future of cultural production.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, AI governance, creative practice, creative economy, Africa, cultural policy

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence is no longer a speculative or peripheral technology within the creative industries. Generative music systems, visual art tools, automated film editing software, fashion design platforms, and text generation systems are reshaping how creative work is produced, distributed, and valued.

Research on AI in the creative industries shows that artificial intelligence can enhance creative production when it is designed to support and augment human creativity rather than replace it (Anantrasirichai and Bull 2021). AI technologies are increasingly used for content creation, market analysis, and production efficiency within the cultural and creative sectors.

Despite these opportunities, the rapid expansion of AI technologies raises urgent governance questions. AI governance refers to the policies, legal structures, and ethical frameworks that guide how AI systems are developed and deployed. For the cultural sector, governance is not simply a technical matter. It is also a cultural and economic issue that determines who benefits

from technological innovation, whose cultural expressions are represented, and how creative value is recognised.

These issues are particularly significant in African contexts where the creative industries contribute to employment, cultural identity, and international cultural exchange. However, regulatory frameworks in many regions remain underdeveloped in relation to emerging technologies. As AI adoption expands globally, policy frameworks will play an important role in shaping the future of creative labour, authorship, and cultural diversity.

Policy Challenges in AI and Creative Practice

Intellectual Property and Creative Ownership

One of the most significant challenges associated with AI-driven creativity concerns authorship and intellectual property. Traditional copyright systems are built on the assumption that creative works originate from human creators. Generative AI systems complicate this assumption because they can produce music, images, and written content that appear original.

Legal scholars have noted that without adaptive copyright frameworks, creators may lose control over how their works are used within AI training systems (Yang and Zhang 2024). This concern is particularly relevant in regions where copyright enforcement mechanisms are still developing.

For many African creators, unauthorised use of cultural materials within AI datasets raises concerns about consent, attribution, and economic participation. Policy frameworks must therefore ensure that creators retain meaningful rights over the use of their works in emerging technological environments.

Creative Labour and Economic Equity

AI technologies have the potential to improve productivity within the creative industries. However, they may also reshape labour markets by automating certain forms of creative production or by increasing the availability of low-cost AI-generated content.

Without effective governance, these changes could undermine the economic sustainability of creative professions. Research on algorithmic economies suggests that automation may intensify labour precarity in creative sectors if appropriate safeguards are not implemented (Lin 2025).

In many African countries, creative practitioners operate within informal or semi-formal economies with limited labour protections. Governance strategies that include collective licensing systems, fair remuneration mechanisms, and support for creative entrepreneurship can help ensure that technological innovation supports rather than weakens creative livelihoods.

Cultural Representation and Algorithmic Bias

Artificial intelligence systems are shaped by the data used to train them. When training datasets are dominated by Western cultural materials, AI-generated outputs may reproduce existing cultural hierarchies and marginalise local creative traditions.

Research on algorithmic bias has demonstrated that digital platforms and algorithmic recommendation systems can reinforce dominant global narratives while limiting the visibility of diverse cultural expressions (Okoronkwo 2024). Similarly, studies of digital governance in the Global South highlight how AI systems can reproduce forms of digital inequality when local knowledge systems and languages are underrepresented in technological development (Ghozali 2025).

For African cultural sectors, these challenges raise important questions about cultural representation, linguistic diversity, and digital cultural sovereignty. Governance frameworks must therefore encourage inclusive datasets and support the representation of diverse cultural perspectives in AI development.

Policy Implications for Cultural Governance

The rise of artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and challenges for cultural policy. Governments, cultural institutions, and international organisations must consider how governance structures can support innovation while protecting creative rights and cultural diversity.

For African creative economies, policy approaches should prioritise the following objectives:

- Protection of intellectual property rights in AI-assisted creative production
- Fair economic participation for creative workers in digital markets
- Representation of diverse cultural expressions within AI systems
- Inclusion of artists and cultural practitioners in technology governance discussions

These measures can help ensure that technological innovation strengthens cultural ecosystems rather than concentrating value within a limited number of technology platforms.

Conclusion

AI governance will shape the future of creative practice across the world. The policies adopted today will influence whose creativity is recognised, whose culture is represented, and who benefits from technological change.

For Africa and the global cultural sector, the challenge is to develop governance frameworks that balance technological innovation with cultural protection. Inclusive governance approaches can

support sustainable creative economies, strengthen cultural diversity, and ensure that human creativity remains central in an increasingly automated digital environment.

Creative practitioners must therefore play an active role in policy discussions surrounding artificial intelligence. Their participation is essential for shaping governance systems that reflect the realities of cultural production and protect the future of creative expression.

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