Topic

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

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) 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 profound legal, economic, and cultural challenges. Central among these challenges is AI governance, understood as the constellation of policies, ethical frameworks, and regulatory mechanisms that shape how AI systems are developed, deployed, and regulated. This paper examines the implications of AI governance for creative practice from African and global perspectives. It focuses on three interrelated domains: intellectual property and authorship, creative labour and economic equity, and cultural representation and algorithmic bias. Drawing on verifiable interdisciplinary scholarship and policy literature, the paper argues that inclusive, context-sensitive AI governance is essential to ensuring sustainable creative ecosystems, protecting cultural diversity, and supporting equitable participation in the global creative economy. The study positions creative practitioners as critical stakeholders in AI governance and contributes to ongoing debates on technology, culture, and global creative impact.

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

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a speculative or peripheral technology within the creative industries. From generative music and visual art systems to automated film editing, fashion design tools, and literary text generation, AI is actively reshaping how creative work is produced, distributed, and valued. Anantrasirichai and Bull (2021) argue that AI in the creative industries is most effective when used to augment human creativity, with applications spanning content creation, information analysis, content enhancement, information extraction, and data compression. They emphasize that maximum benefit is achieved through human-centric AI systems that collaborate with, rather than replace, human creatives.

Similarly, Jeličić et al. (2025) demonstrate how AI is transforming marketing within the creative industries by enabling personalization, content generation, market analysis, and process optimization, supported by case studies of successful AI-driven campaigns. Clarencia et al. (2024) further note that while AI significantly enhances efficiency and productivity in creative sectors, it also raises concerns around job displacement, underscoring the importance of ethical considerations.

As these technologies continue to evolve, questions of governance have become increasingly urgent. AI governance encompasses the policies, ethical standards, legal frameworks, and institutional arrangements that guide the development and deployment of AI systems. For creatives, cultural institutions, and policymakers, AI governance is not merely a technical concern; it is a cultural, economic, and political issue that will determine who benefits from AI-driven creativity, whose voices are amplified or marginalised, and how cultural value is preserved in an increasingly automated world.

These concerns are particularly salient in African contexts, where creative industries play a vital role in employment, identity formation, and global cultural exchange, yet regulatory

frameworks often lag behind the pace of technological adoption. This paper examines the impact of AI governance on creative practice, with particular attention to African and global creative ecosystems. It argues that governance frameworks will shape not only the trajectory of AI innovation but also the future of creative labour, authorship, and cultural diversity.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary research methodology grounded in conceptual analysis, critical literature review, and comparative policy examination. The research draws on peer-reviewed academic articles, policy reports from international institutions, and legal and governance-focused analyses related to artificial intelligence, creativity, and cultural production. Sources were selected based on their relevance to AI governance, creative practice, intellectual property, labour dynamics, and cultural representation, with deliberate inclusion of both global perspectives and African-context scholarship. Particular attention was given to literature addressing algorithmic bias, creative labour precarity, and intellectual property challenges in emerging digital economies.

The analysis applies a critical interpretive approach, examining how governance frameworks shape power relations, cultural visibility, and economic outcomes within creative ecosystems. Rather than generating empirical data, the study synthesizes existing research to identify structural patterns, policy gaps, and emerging governance tensions affecting creative practitioners.

This methodological approach is appropriate for examining normative and policy-oriented questions in AI governance, where the objective is to inform discourse, guide policymaking, and contribute to theoretical understanding of the relationship between technology, creativity, and cultural equity.

LIMITATIONS

This study is primarily conceptual and policy-oriented in nature and does not involve original empirical data collection such as surveys, interviews, or experimental analysis. As a result, the findings are interpretive rather than statistically generalizable. The analysis relies on existing academic literature, policy documents, and legal scholarship, which may reflect publication biases or uneven geographic representation within global AI governance discourse.

While deliberate efforts were made to include African-context scholarship, the availability of peer-reviewed research on AI governance and creative practice in some African regions remains limited. Consequently, certain local dynamics may not be fully captured. Future research could strengthen this work through empirical studies, creator-focused fieldwork, and comparative case studies across different creative sectors and regions.

DISCUSSION

Why AI Governance Matters for Creatives

AI governance defines the boundaries within which creative technologies operate. These boundaries influence artistic freedom, ownership of creative works, access to markets, and the sustainability of creative labour. In the absence of thoughtful governance, AI risks functioning as an extractive system, drawing value from existing cultural works without fair recognition, consent, or compensation for original creators (Afina, 2023).

Conversely, well-designed governance frameworks can empower creatives by protecting intellectual property, encouraging ethical innovation, and supporting equitable participation in the digital creative economy. Governance mechanisms that prioritise transparency, accountability, and creator rights can enable AI to function as a tool of augmentation rather than displacement. For artists and cultural practitioners, understanding AI governance is therefore essential to navigating the future of creative work.

Authorship, Ownership, and Intellectual Property in the AI Era

One of the most pressing issues in AI-driven creativity is authorship. Traditional copyright systems are premised on human creativity and originality. Generative AI systems, however, can now produce music, images, and texts that appear original, complicating established legal definitions of authorship and ownership. This raises critical questions regarding who owns AI-generated content and what rights original creators retain when their works are used to train AI models.

Existing legal frameworks struggle to provide clear answers to these questions. Yang and Zhang (2024) argue that without adaptive copyright regimes, creators risk losing control over their work and sources of livelihood. In African contexts, where copyright enforcement is often uneven and legal infrastructures remain under development, these challenges are particularly pronounced.

Empirical research focused on Nigeria highlights growing concerns about the unauthorised use of local creative works in AI training datasets, frequently without consent or compensation (Yohanna & Suleiman, 2024). These dynamics underscore the need for AI governance frameworks that prioritise transparency in data use, informed consent, attribution, and fair remuneration models that recognise the human creativity underpinning AI systems.

AI, Creative Labour, and Economic Equity

Beyond issues of ownership, AI governance has significant implications for creative labour. While AI tools can increase efficiency and lower production costs, they also risk displacing creative workers or saturating markets with low-cost, AI-generated content. Without regulatory safeguards, this dynamic may devalue human creativity and intensify precarity within creative professions (Lin, 2025).

These risks are particularly acute in Africa, where many creatives operate within informal economies characterised by limited social protections and weak labour regulation. Governance approaches that incorporate collective licensing mechanisms, revenue-sharing schemes, and labour protections can help ensure that AI adoption supports, rather than undermines, sustainable creative livelihoods. Such measures are essential to preventing the concentration of value within large technology firms at the expense of individual creators and local creative ecosystems.

Cultural Representation and Algorithmic Bias

AI systems learn from data, and data reflects existing power structures. When training datasets are dominated by Western cultural outputs, AI-generated content often reproduces Western aesthetics, narratives, and value systems. This can marginalise indigenous, local, and non-Western cultural expressions, contributing to cultural homogenisation and digital exclusion.

Research demonstrates that algorithmic bias systematically distorts cultural representation by privileging dominant global narratives and marginalising local creative forms. Paquette (2025) shows that discoverability algorithms often favour English-language content and productions from large global corporations, limiting the visibility of diverse cultural expressions. Ghozali (2025) further reveals how AI systems deployed in the Global South are shaped by Western data and epistemologies, reinforcing patterns of digital colonialism.

Additional studies indicate that algorithmic bias perpetuates social inequalities by limiting the visibility of underrepresented groups and reinforcing existing power hierarchies (Okoronkwo, 2024). Ketere (2025) specifically highlights how AI systems rooted in Western epistemologies marginalise African languages and cultural identities, contributing to the systematic erasure of local cultural expressions. Addressing these challenges requires AI

governance frameworks that promote diverse datasets, community consent, and respect for cultural heritage.

Global and African Policy Responses

Globally, governments and institutions are increasingly engaging with the implications of AI for creative industries. Policy debates in Europe and other regions have focused on copyright reform, transparency obligations, and ethical standards for AI developers, signalling a growing recognition that creative sectors require tailored governance responses.

In many African countries, however, AI policy development remains at an early stage. There is a risk that governance models imported from the Global North may fail to address local realities, cultural contexts, and economic conditions. Context-sensitive governance approaches are therefore essential. Such approaches must align AI governance with Africa's creative economies, cultural priorities, and broader developmental goals, ensuring that creative practitioners are not marginalised within global AI value chains.

Implications for the Future of Creative Practice

AI governance will shape the future of creativity as profoundly as the technology itself. Creatives cannot afford to be passive recipients of governance decisions made by governments or technology firms. Instead, artists, cultural leaders, and creative entrepreneurs must engage actively in policy conversations, advocate for fair governance frameworks, and experiment responsibly with AI tools.

Creative practice itself plays a critical role in shaping AI governance. Through artistic expression, critique, and innovation, creatives can interrogate power structures, challenge extractive technological models, and imagine alternative futures grounded in equity, inclusion, and cultural respect.

Conclusion

AI governance is ultimately about values, whose creativity matters, whose culture is preserved, and who benefits from technological progress. For Africa and the global creative community, the challenge is to develop governance frameworks that protect human creativity while embracing innovation.

If approached thoughtfully, AI governance can enable a future where technology amplifies cultural diversity, strengthens creative economies, and supports sustainable global creative impact. The task ahead is not only to govern AI, but to ensure that creativity remains human-centred in an increasingly automated world.

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