Navigating Ethical and Practical Challenges in AI-Driven Visual Content Creation

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This thesis is a research-based development project exploring the ethical and practical challenges of generative artificial intelligence in visual and audio-visual content creation within communications and marketing. The primary objectives were to investigate typical concerns regarding AI-driven content creation and how ethics, regulations, and industry guidelines shape this process.

The theoretical framework draws on Henrik Rydenfelt's perspectives, addressing key ethical questions in communication: the effectiveness of a message and the broader communication culture. Rydenfelt's cognitive perspective highlights truthfulness, justification, and honesty, while his functional perspective assesses the appropriateness of the communication process. Additionally, it incorporates Jukka Niittymaa & Vilma Luoma-Aho's focus on the impact of transparency about AI usage on an organization's value and trustworthiness. By integrating these insights, the framework addresses the ethical responsibilities of both individuals and organizations in the context of communications and marketing during the artificial intelligence era. This framework has been enriched with recent research on AI ethics, emerging topics, and regulatory considerations, providing a holistic understanding of ethical considerations in AI-driven visual content creation.

Semi-structured interviews with nine industry professionals provided practical insights into AI usage in content creation. The findings highlighted copyright issues as the top concern, the shift from visualizers to verbalizers as the changing skill required in the industry adopting the use of AI. They also emphasized the need for industry-wide guidelines to navigate AI-driven content creation ethically and transparently.

The research methodology involved an iterative, collaborative process using AI tools like ChatGPT for data refinement and analysis. Ethical considerations, such as anonymizing data and ensuring transparent AI usage, were prioritized to maintain the study's trustworthiness.

The empirical section focused on the practical development task, where insights from the interviews were synthesized to provide concrete recommendations for creating actionable guidelines for ethical AI practices. These include implementing transparent disclosure practices and considering sustainable AI practices in ESG policies.

The thesis concludes by advocating for a global approach to responsible AI use, addressing its diverse impacts on society, culture, and ecological resources. Future research directions proposed include themes such as job satisfaction, mitigating biases, transparency, and environmental impact, aiming for a comprehensive understanding of responsible and sustainable AI integration in communications and marketing.

Keywords
Generative Artificial Intelligence, AI Ethics, Visual Content Creation, Communications and Marketing, Copyright Issues, Sustainable AI Practices

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1 Introduction

This thesis explores the ethical and practical challenges of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) in visual and audio-visual content creation within the communications and marketing sectors. It aims to identify key ethical issues and understand how ethics, regulations, and industry guidelines shape AI-driven content creation.

However, I will begin this thesis with a sort of a personal pamphlet that sets the scene, so to speak, to paint a picture of AI´s omnipresence in our society and everyday lives. I will also take a moment to explain how I understand generative artificial intelligence and how the terms are used in this thesis.

1.1 The Trouble With AI

...is that it is everywhere.
It greets you from your Oura-ring created for “unlocking insights to improve your health everyday” (Oura 2024) to tailored, click-baiting headlines in online magazines to cutesy cat videos or pictures of the latest health drink accompanied with a belfie. Delivered directly to your phone, laptop or tablet, courtesy of social media channels algorithms, influencers, aspiring influencers or merely your friends. Artificial intelligence is even on this page I am writing on; correcting my grammar, spelling, and making scarily accurate predictions on what the next word is going to be.

...is that it is a truly double-edged sword.
Depending on the point of view – or the use case – AI (artificial intelligence) can offer endless possibilities for humankind, or it can be a true Pandoras box of problems if due diligence is not applied.

United Nations (UN) has launched an AI Advisory Body to wield the power of AI to combat climate change and to advance UN´s sustainable development goals (UN 2023). The city of Helsinki tested self-driving buses already in 2021 (HSL 2021) and anyone who has ever gotten lost in a strange city in recent year has more likely than not, relied on Google Maps to guide the way – and some of us orientationally challenged use those maps every day even on a city we live in!

Medicine sees exciting potential for AI in such areas as machine learning and image recognition technology, that can be used in diagnostics (radiology) and even intelligent robots in surgery (Rong, Yan & Zhehao 2020). True story: cancerous cells are now being detected using scanning technology developed for a Japanese bakery to help cashiers identify between different baked goods and then price them correctly. “Cyto-AiSCAN uses the same technologies that can differentiate a donut from a cream puff to identify cancerous urinary cells with 99% accuracy. By measuring

the nuclei of the urinary cells and picking out certain visual cues, the deep learning mechanisms can determine if the cell is diseased." (CES 2021.) That is pretty impressive, I must admit.

The more frightening aspects of AI can be seen in facial recognition technologies used for example in China to profile and track minorities (Ng August 2020). AI in military use is a massive market. According to one listing number one use for AI in warfare is autonomous weapons systems that can "autonomously identify, track, and engage targets with minimal human involvement to minimize collateral damage risks while improving military operations efficiency" (Market.us 8 November 2023.) This makes one wonder: what kind of ethical principles are in place in such systems and what kind of ethical guidelines steer those people "engaging with targets" – killing – from afar?

...is that it so easy to use for maleficent ends.

The filter bubbles of "intellectual isolation" created by website algorithms serving the content they assume the user want to see, also known as personalized search results or news streams, were named already in 2011 by Eli Parisier (Rouse 2018). The 2018 Cambridge Analytica scandal starkly illustrated the manipulative potential of digital bubbles. It came to light that approximately 32,000 US voters were incentivised with a nominal fee to complete a detailed personality test through their Facebook logins. The application not only assessed these tests but also harvested likes, personal information, and friends' data from participants' Facebook accounts, amassing data from over 50 million individuals. This information was paired with Facebook activities like page likes to deduce psychological profiles. Algorithms then integrated this data with voter records, producing a comprehensive dataset for about 2 million individuals across 11 key voting states, each profile rich with multiple data points. Consequently, these profiles enabled the targeting of voters with highly personalised ads tailored to their psychological leanings and probable political preferences. (Hern May 2018.)

The rise of extremely credible deepfake videos and audios are a veritable goldmine for criminals, hoaxers and political movers and shakers with clandestine purposes (Jackson October 2023). Generative AI makes it fast and easy to write convincing phishing emails and distribute misinformation via authentic-looking social media posts, creating significant cybersecurity risks for both public and private organizations, as well as individuals. (Neupane, Fernandez, Mittal & Rahimi 2023).

In early February 2024, a news story on CNN talked about a finance worker, who made a 25 million USD payment to criminals after a videocall with her/his boss. The video call turned out to be extremely credible deepfake (Chen & Magramo February 2024).

…is that it´s too lucrative to be shunned as a threat to humanity

According to a report by global management company McKinsey & Company (McKinsey 2023) use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) could add $2.6 trillion to $4.4 trillion annually to the global economy. McKinsey & Company had analysed 63 different use cases and while they see that all industry sectors can benefit from using GAI, they estimate that 75% of the value will be created in customer operations, marketing and sales, software engineering and research and development (McKinsey 2023).

The catchphrase of the day “AI is not going to take your job, the person using AI, is” suggests that the impact artificial intelligence on the work market is expected to be massive. Either it is seen as a tool to rid us of the boring stuff or just rid us of work – or pay – altogether. A recent example close to home: in February 2024, the Finnish consultancy Oturan advertised for an assistant to draft texts using AI support. The position paid 3 euros per text, with the anticipated output between 35 and 40 texts per month, thus equating to a monthly salary of approximately 120 euros. (Oturan 2024.)

...is that we need to run before we have learned to walk

Ethical codes of conduct are needed and ethics of AI needs to be discussed, but more importantly, legislation is needed even if the milk has already been spilled. A study from 2018 questions the impact of ethical guidelines on decision-making in software engineering. Involving 63 students and 105 professionals, the study assessed their responses to eleven ethical scenarios and whether the ACM´s (Association for Computing Machinery) ethics guidelines affected their decisions. The scenarios extended from “responsibility to report, user data collection, intellectual property, code quality, honesty to customer to time and personnel management.” The findings indicate that these guidelines had no significant effect on the ethical decisions whether the individual saw or did not see the ethical guide. The result challenges the effectiveness of ethical codes in influencing behaviour within the tech community. (McNamara et al. 2018, in Hagendorff 2020, 108.)

For example, bulk of the material used for training different GAI tools might have been ripped from the internet without consent or compensation for copyrights. Famed actor Stephen Fry discovered a historical documentary video, where his voice was re-created as a narrator by an AI system using audiobooks he had narrated as source material. “It could therefore have me read anything from a call to storm Parliament to hard porn, all without my knowledge and without my permission. And this, what you just heard, was done without my knowledge.” (Taylor September 2023.)

European Union´s Artificial Intelligence Act (EU AI Act) will be first comprehensive AI legislation in the world. The law “aims to protect fundamental rights, democracy, the rule of law and environmental sustainability from high-risk AI, while boosting innovation and establishing Europe as a leader in

the field.” The Members of The European parliament approved the AI Act on March 13th, 2024. (European Parliament 2024a).

Moreover, we must not overlook the inhumane and unethical conditions under which these AI models are trained. Companies often outsource the labour required for content moderation and data labelling to countries with lower labour costs, such as Kenya. The psychological toll on these workers is immense. For instance, content moderators in Nairobi, working for companies like OpenAI through subcontractors, have reported severe psychological trauma from reviewing graphic and violent content. These workers, often paid meagre wages, are exposed to the darkest corners of the internet, leading to significant mental health issues. Despite the companies' claims of providing psychological support, many moderators felt abandoned and inadequately supported. (Rowe August 2023). Those people are exposed to indescribable filth, so that people using AI for work or amusement, are not. This exploitative practice highlights the hidden human cost behind the development of AI technologies. As AI continues to evolve, it's crucial that the companies profiting from these technologies take responsibility for the well-being of their workers, ensuring fair pay and adequate mental health support. These ethical considerations should not be an afterthought, but a fundamental part of the AI development process and it should be something that organisations and society demands of these companies.

...is that generative artificial intelligence is just too enticing not to touch.
After OpenAI introduced ChatGPT to public in November 2022 the content created by different generative AI tools took on a meteoric rise. And it is easy to see why: ChatGPT can unclog a writer's block quicker than Mr. Muscle the kitchen sink and Midjourney can help a complete novice in the graphic design front create stunning pictures in the blink of a prompt. I too have relied on the magic that is artificial intelligence as a tireless research, analytics and editing assistant while researching and writing this thesis (see appendix 6).

The impetus for this study emerged from a personal observation: despite extensive coverage through blogs, newsletters, and social media posts on how to leverage tools for business gains in the communications and marketing industry throughout 2023 and into early 2024, discussions predominantly focused on maximising productivity and profit through generative artificial intelligence. Ethical considerations of using generative AI, particularly in communications and marketing, were less frequently addressed. Where ethics were mentioned, it was often as an afterthought, lacking specific and actionable guidance on tackling these ethical dilemmas.

Even the Ethical Guidelines for AI in Public Administration (2024) by Ministry of Finance Finland comprises of 6 headlines and 1 to 3 bullet points under each headline. The guideline can be summarised as follows: when using artificial intelligence, the user should acknowledge the effects of AI

technologies on citizens, society, and the environment, considers ethical perspectives throughout its lifecycle, and recognizes the accountability of authorities for the impacts of AI on their decisions and tasks. While I support these ambitions, I question their practical efficacy in guiding civil servants who are carrying liability for acts in the office. Specifically, how effective are these guidelines in assisting officials to decide when and how to appropriately deploy AI systems, and in choosing which systems to use? Given the Ministry of Finance's lack of specificity, it is hardly surprising that marketing and communication firms are primarily focused on outpacing one another to see who can first master these tools and achieve the best outcomes.

It seems it´s prompt or die -time, everyone!

1.2 Objectives of the thesis

This thesis explores the ethical and practical challenges of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) in visual and audio-visual content creation within the communications and marketing sectors. Although I do not engage in visual content creation professionally myself, I selected this area due to its interesting ethical questions and significant practical implications, such as the impact on concepts of authorship and copyright. This study specifically excludes other ethical concerns linked to marketing technologies like targeting and profiling. Instead, it concentrates on identifying key ethical issues related to generative artificial intelligence in visual content production and examines both the literature and insights from industry professionals to find out the state-of-the-art in practice and understanding of the said issues. This method allows for an exploration of how ethics, regulations, and industry guidelines shape the practical realities of AI-driven content creation, assessing the typical concerns that emerge both ethically and practically.

The research questions are:

Q1: What are typical concerns, ethical or otherwise, regarding AI-driven visual content creation currently?

Q2: Do ethics, regulation and industry guidelines shape the use AI-driven content creation in communications and marketing and if so, how?

1.3 Definitions: Artificial intelligence

In this chapter I will briefly explain my understanding of how generative artificial intelligence at the time of writing this thesis, works. It is important to understand the underlying principles as they affect the end-results and even how copyright laws were interpreted in spring 2024. In this study, the term generative artificial intelligence can be understood to mean generative pre-trained

transformers (GPT´s), diffusion models and multimodal systems. Also, term artificial intelligence is used as an umbrella concept that includes all models and systems belonging to generative artificial intelligence.

1.3.1 Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a general term for technology / computer systems that can carry out tasks that usually need human intelligence like understanding speech, making decisions, and recognizing patterns of recurring shapes, colours, or datasets for example (Bahn & Strobel 2023, 2). AI systems can perform these tasks on their own or combined with other systems and technologies such as robotics and geolocation services (IBM 2023).

The development of machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) has helped AI to move from making decisions, predictions, and classifications to also being able to create new, unique content. GAI (generative artificial intelligence) is a term that refers to technology that can be used for creating content, that did not exist before, such as text, image, video, and audio. GAI is also used for coding. GAIs' ability to “create” content from text prompts is based on its ability to “understand” and recognize patterns from large and high-dimensional datasets. (Bahn & Strobel 2023, 2–3).

Figure 1. The revolutionary power of GAI systems lies in their ability to "understand" natural language, transforming text into content such as new texts, images, audio, or video. These pictures were created using a simple text prompt: “Can you create a picture of a polka dancing Texan squirrel in the style of Harlequin novel covers / realistic / in the style of cubists.” While GAI is touted as unleashing creativity, whose creativity is it? I merely wrote the prompt with no special skills required; the tool made all other choices based on its coding and training data. Picture created with OpenAI’s DALL-E.

1.3.2 Deep Learning

Deep Learning is a division of machine learning. It´s programming paradigms, known as artificial neural networks, are inspired by how the human brain stores, layers and connects data, how humans learn, process, and create information. The central idea of deep learning is to empower computers to understand entities as hierarchy of interconnected or interdependent concepts. The intention is to process and analyse massive amounts of data accurately and efficiently and often independently without supervision. Unlike traditional, descriptive analysis that forms a mathematical model to describe observed phenomena, deep learning focuses on predictive analysis, discovering underlying rules to form models to minimize mistakes in prediction. Traditional programming paradigms operate by analysing problems, whereas in deep learning the system learns from a large number of training patterns to compute new patterns. (O'Mahony, Campbell, Carvalho, Harapanahalli, Hernandez, Krpalkova, Riordan & Walsh 2020, 2.)

1.3.3 Generative Pre-Trained Transformers

OpenAI's ChatGPT has become almost synonymous with generative artificial intelligence. However, there are several other systems using the same model.

GPTs (Generative Pre-trained Transformers) are artificial intelligence models that generate text by predicting subsequent words in a sequence. GPTs are based on large language models (LLMs). LLMs are evolved AI systems that have been trained on wide datasets to understand and generate human-like text, capable of completing prompts, answering questions, and creating content. "Pre-trained" indicates that GPT models are initially trained on a massive corpus of text data before adapted for specific tasks. (Bahn & Strobel 2023, 3.)

GPTs do not just recall and produce verbatim excerpts from its training data, but it is designed to generate content that is coherent and contextually relevant. GPTs synthesises information to produce novel responses (Bahn & Strobel 2023, 2.) This feature means that one can get different answers to the exact same question even when using the same GTP-based tool, especially if the questions are broad and not fixed in a context.

While it cannot be said that GPTs will not generate content that might resemble closely its training material, the primary function is not to create verbatim copies of the training data, but to predict the next word in a sequence. The generative nature of GPT means that while it may occasionally produce text that is like its training material, this is a by-product of its predictive capabilities and not an intentional feature of the model. (Banh & Strobel 2023, 3–8.)

1.3.4 Diffusion models

Midjourney and Stability AI are examples of GAI-systems that operate on diffusion models to create images. Diffusion models can be also used in text-to-audio creation, for example. Like large language models and generative pre-trained transformers, diffusion models are trained on enormous amounts of data. However, the logic of how diffusion models generate data (content) differs from GPTs. Diffusion models create data by starting with a pattern of random noise and then gradually learning to reduce the noise to create coherent and realistic data that resembles the original training data but is not identical. However, even if the diffusion model itself is not designed to create exact copies of the training data, the technology can be used in creating so called deepfake images, videos, and audio. (Banh & Strobel 2023,1,5-6.)

1.3.5 Multimodal systems

Multimodal AI systems integrate and process information from various data sources or modalities, such as text, images, audio, and video, to enhance understanding and functionality. These systems utilize different AI techniques like neural networks to analyse data separately and then combine them through methods like fusion networks. This integration allows the systems to perform complex tasks with higher accuracy and context sensitivity compared to unimodal systems. (Lisowski 22 July 2024.) The difference between generative AI and multimodal AI in practical terms is that flexibility in multimodal systems enables users to interact with the model using diverse types of inputs and to generate a wide range of content outputs. It allows for almost limitless combinations of input and output types, thereby enhancing the versatility and applicability of AI technologies. “For example, Google's multimodal model, Gemini, can receive a photo of a plate of cookies and generate a written recipe as a response and vice versa.” (Google Cloud 2024.)

2 Theoretical framework

“Ethics is the study of how people ought to live together.” It offers a framework for discussion about moral values and guiding behaviour of individuals and governing institutions, organizations, and states. It clarifies key concepts like equality and justice to foster communication and rational compromise among differing values. Additionally, ethics formulates principles for consistency in actions and understanding disagreements, addressing conflicts within one's own values. (London School of Economics and Political Science, online course on the Ethics of AI in Nov 2023.)

Henrik Rydenfelt identifies two central ethical questions in communication: the success of a message and the broader communication culture (Rydenfelt 2017). This thesis examines AI's ethical and practical issues in visual content production from cognitive and functional perspectives, treating visual content as a communicative act.

Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho emphasize AI's impact on an organization’s value and trustworthiness (Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho 2024, 21) highlighting the importance of transparency and indicating a need for ethical guidelines. Integrating insights from Rydenfelt and Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho, this framework addresses individual and organisational ethical responsibilities in communication during the artificial intelligence era.

Recent studies provide an overview of current ethical guidelines and issues in AI. Jobin, Ienca, and Vayena identified key ethical principles across numerous reports (Jobin et al. 2019). Hagendorff’s evaluations highlighted significant themes in AI ethics guidelines (Hagendorff 2020). In his 2024 review, Hagendorff identified several normative issues in generative AI. This chapter examines also how these ethical considerations have evolved with the rise of generative artificial intelligence, focusing on emerging topics like value alignment, bias, and transparency in AI-driven visual content creation.

The chapter on regulation discusses the legal context governing AI, particularly generative AI, focusing on copyrights of training data and AI-generated material The European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act is also discussed.

By integrating recent research on AI ethics, emerging topics, and regulatory considerations, this framework provides a holistic understanding of ethical considerations in AI-driven visual content creation, guiding the interviews, analysis, and discussion in subsequent chapters.

2.1 Communication Ethics

According to Henrik Rydenfelt (2017), there are two central ethical questions in communication: the first concerns when a message or communication output (such as visual content) is ethically successful and the second question relates to ethical communication culture (Rydenfelt 2017). In this thesis, I examine the ethical issues of artificial intelligence in visual content production through the cognitive and functional perspectives of the first question. For clarity, it should be noted that visual content production is treated in this work as a message/communicative act and output. The ethical requirements set for visual content can be evaluated in the same way as content related to written or oral communication is assessed.

2.1.1 Cognitive Perspective

In communication, it is important to distinguish facts from views, and the communicator must strive to present things as they are. The effort towards truthfulness is important because even well-founded conceptions can turn out to be incorrect in light of later information. If the requirement for content were to aim for complete certainty, according to Rydenfelt (2017), it would be impossible to present any claims; in other words, to communicate about anything.

Instead of absolutism, the reliability and justification of information are based on how well a claim is substantiated and consistent with other facts. This depends on the context and whether the presented claims are reliable and justified in relation to what is known about the subject. (Rydenfelt 2017.)

Communication is about building trust, and trust is built on honesty. Rydenfelt defines honesty in communication as the message (or communicative output) giving a true picture of things. Relying solely on facts and justified claims is not enough if the presentation distorts reality, for example, by exaggerating or selecting information. (Rydenfelt 2017.)

- Cognitively successful communication combines three factors:
- Truthfulness: meaning things are intended to be presented according to their true nature.
- Justification: meaning claims are substantiated within their context.
- Honesty: meaning the message gives the audience a truthful picture of matters. (Rydenfelt 2017.)

Cognitively unsuccessful/problematic communication has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Tailoring the message to others' interest - the message does not strive to be truthful.
- Carelessness, guessing, insufficient background information - is the claim sufficiently justified in its context?

- Bias, provocation, exaggeration - does the message give the audience a true picture? (Rydenfelt 2017.)

When considering whether a message or a communication output (such as visual or audiovisual content) is ethically cognitively successful, the content creator can reflect the outcome against the questions related to the problematic characteristics listed above. However, this alone is not enough to deem a message ethically sound: one has to also take into account the functional perspective of ethics (Rydenfelt 2017).

The use of artificial intelligence has added another layer into the cognitive perspective of successful communication. As generative artificial intelligence is based on statistical patterns learned from vast amounts of data, it may produce incorrect or nonsensical information known as "hallucinations." This requires communication and marketing professionals to develop a critical eye for identifying and correcting errors. While AI is often touted as a significant time-saver and efficiency booster, this should not come at the expense of factual accuracy. The fact-checking process, though sometimes time-consuming, is essential to ensure the reliability of the information generated by AI.

2.1.2 Functional Perspective

To evaluate communication as an action, according to Rydenfelt (2017), the evaluation must be based on normative ethics. Normative ethics investigates which actions are right or wrong, focusing especially on deontological ethics and consequentialism. Deontological ethics is based on the principle that the morality of an action is determined by whether it adheres to a set of rules or duties, rather than by the consequences it produces. These theories often prohibit actions that violate moral norms, such as the killing of innocents, regardless of the potential for positive outcomes. These theories allow individuals to pursue personal projects without the obligation to constantly act in a way that maximizes overall good. (Alexander & Moore 2021.)

Consequentialism is an ethical theory where actions are judged morally right or wrong based on their consequences. In other words, the outcomes or results of an action are the most important factors in determining its moral value. The most well-known form of consequentialism is utilitarianism, which holds that the best action is the one that maximizes overall happiness or utility. In utilitarianism, the ends can justify the means-if an action results in the greatest good for the greatest number of people, then it is considered the right action to take. Consequentialism can apply to a wide range of ethical decisions, from everyday choices to major policy decisions. (Sinnot-Armstrong 2023.) Rydenfelt proposes that deontological and consequential perspectives can be

combined into a model for ethical evaluation, which considers both the duties of the actor and the consequences resulting from the action (Rydenfelt 2017).

The difference between deontology and consequentialism is often described as the "trolley problem." The trolley problem is an ethical thought experiment where a person can divert a runaway trolley from killing five people to killing one by switching tracks. It explores the moral dilemma of action versus inaction and contrasts deontological ethics (following moral rules) with consequentialism (outcomes determine morality). Deontologists may see diverting the trolley as wrong due to the duty not to harm, while consequentialists might favour minimizing deaths. Various versions of the problem further examine moral intuitions about harm and the significance of action versus inaction. (Alexander & Moore 2021.) From the point of view of this study, this example illuminates the importance of actively contemplating both aspects of the decision-making process leading up to the action, in this case producing a "communication output".

Rydenfelt asserts that individuals have an obligation to act in ways that those affected by their actions would reasonably expect. The ethical importance of an action's consequences is measured by whether the outcomes are beneficial or harmful to those impacted. Both the actor's duties and the consequences serve as justifications for or against the action (Rydenfelt 2017). Rydenfelt indicates the most common reasons for conveying the message are duty to provide information in the name of transparency, relevance of information to the public, and visibility for the recipient. The most common reasons against conveying the message are confidentiality and harm either to the public or the recipient (Rydenfelt 2017).

2.1.3 Impacts of AI on Communication Value and Trust

While in Rydenfelt's framework consequentialism was examined primarily from the perspective of the public or recipients, Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho (2024) demonstrate that the use of generative artificial intelligence can also have significant consequences for the organization itself based on how communication outputs are created. According to Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho, communication professionals can leverage AI to either enhance (value co-creation), maintain (value no-creation), or degrade (value co-destruction) the value of an organization or brand (Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho, 2024, 21). The ethical implications of AI use in communication, particularly whether to disclose its use, significantly influence these outcomes.

Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho (2024) categorize the potential impacts of AI on perceived communication value into three main categories: AI's impact on perceived value, AI usage communicated openly, and AI usage not communicated openly. AI can significantly influence communication value. Positively, AI enhances customer satisfaction and communication efficiency through its adaptability and

speed. In some cases, AI might not add notable value, resulting in a neutral impact. Negatively, unethical use of AI can harm an organization's reputation and reduce trust. Open communication about AI usage generally leads to better outcomes. Transparently discussing AI can normalize its use, leading to acceptance and positive perceptions. It helps address doubts and clarify expectations, providing a balanced perspective. Even if concerns arise, acknowledging AI use can reduce the risk of value destruction. Conversely, concealing AI usage can have mixed effects. It may temporarily boost perceived value, but if discovered, it can severely damage trust and future value. Hidden AI use creates expectations based on assumptions about human involvement, leading to potential misalignment. If revealed, concealed AI use can cause significant trust issues and reputational damage (Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho 2024, 26).

An incident demonstrating "the balancing act" relating to AI disclosure practices and the use of AI in general occurred when a communication professional at Vanderbilt University used ChatGPT to draft a condolence message for students following a school shooting at another university in the spring of 2023. The message included a note indicating that it had been generated by AI. While this could be seen as a commendable act of transparency, the sensitivity of the topic led to strong negative reactions and raised questions about the authenticity of the emotions behind the message (Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho 2024, 8). This example illustrates a discrepancy: despite the theoretical benefits of transparency, the act of openness in this sensitive context led to reputational harm. It remains unclear whether the transparency was deliberate or accidental. The use of AI, inherently incapable of conveying genuine empathy, resulted in perceived insensitivity, thereby degrading value (value co-destruction), particularly in emotionally charged situations. This incident also underscores the importance of strategic transparency, a concept discussed in the next section.

Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho (2024) also introduce the "GenAI transparency cube," categorizing organizations based on their transparency and AI use. This model aligns with Rydenfelt's ethical perspectives, emphasizing the importance of strategic transparency in AI use. The transparency cube categorizes organizations into:

- High transparency and high AI use: Organizations openly communicate their AI use and integrate it deeply into their processes, which generally fosters trust and acceptance. It can also paint a picture of the company being modern and innovative.
- High transparency and low AI use: Organizations are clear about their limited AI use, which can also build trust as stakeholders appreciate the honesty and the "human-powered" solutions and services on offer.
- Low transparency and high AI use: These organizations risk significant reputational damage if their undisclosed AI use is discovered.

- Low transparency and low AI use: Such organizations might avoid immediate scrutiny but might miss out on the benefits of using AI and being transparent about it. (Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho 2024, 26.)

This model emphasizes how strategic choices regarding AI use and transparency can significantly impact an organization's reputation and trustworthiness. The GenAI transparency cube aligns with Rydenfelt's (2017) ethical perspectives by combining both the cognitive and functional dimensions of communication ethics. High transparency aligns with Rydenfelt's cognitive perspective, which emphasizes honesty and accuracy in conveying information. By ensuring that AI use is openly communicated, organizations adhere to the principle of giving a true picture of things. On the other hand, the functional perspective is reflected in how these strategic choices about transparency impact the broader ethical implications and outcomes of communication, aligning with the duty to act in ways that are expected and beneficial to stakeholders.

Insights by Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho (2024) into the impacts of AI on communication value and trust complement Rydenfelt's framework by providing another layer of practical application of ethical principles in the age of AI. In the context of AI usage, the cognitive perspective underscores the necessity for communication professionals to ensure that AI-generated content is accurate and free from errors, as this builds trust and credibility. The functional perspective highlights the ethical considerations surrounding the transparency of AI use. Disclosing AI involvement in communication can mitigate potential negative impacts and enhance the perceived integrity of the organization.

While Rydenfelt's (2017) framework primarily focuses on the ethical responsibilities of individual communicators, Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho (2024) bring organizational responsibility to the forefront. They emphasize how strategic choices regarding AI use and transparency can significantly impact an organization's reputation and trustworthiness, indicating the need for ethical guidelines at the organizational level.

2.1.4 Integrity and Due Diligence as a Guiding Attitude

I propose that in order to successfully merge both cognitive and functional perspectives of communication ethics into practice, a guiding principle is needed. If we do not approach integrity as a virtue, moral purpose, or identity, for example (Cox, La Caze & Levine 2023), but rather as an attitude understood more closely to its thesaurus definitions, it is possible to avoid the rabbit holes of philosophical debates. As in everyday situations, it is likely that 'integrity' is chiefly understood in terms of thesaurus definitions. Merriam-Webster gives the following definitions to integrity:

- Morality – a conduct that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong.

- Honesty – devotion to telling the truth.
- Honor – faithfulness to high moral standards. (Quoted verbatim, Merriam–Webster 2024a.)

Confirmation to this line of thought can be seen in Stuart Rosenbaum's emphasis (Rosenbaum 2015, in Cox et al. 2023) that most people see integrity as crucial to morality, a view best understood through pragmatism. He believes that pragmatism offers a unified approach to the complex moral aspects of life. He criticizes the historical impact of Platonism for steering moral philosophy away from the real concerns of people. Rosenbaum defines integrity as a practical, context-dependent moral framework, grounded in one's autonomy and commitment to personal and communal values, asserting that integrity involves living up to one's values within the context of one's social and cultural environment. (Rosenbaum 2015, in Cox et al. 2023.)

Integrity as an attitude supports both perspectives of communication ethics, but especially the functional one. It requires the communicator/content creator to critically examine the content of the message against the context of it as well as reasons for and against conveying the message. If artificial intelligence has been used to create the communication output, the communicator also needs to weigh in whether to disclose the use of AI and what are the possible risks for disclosing or omitting the fact as shown by Niittymaa and Luoma-Aho (2024).

On an organizational level, integrity should be reflected in the policies and culture of the organization. Organizations can benefit from establishing and maintaining high standards of honesty and transparency in their communications. This includes developing clear guidelines for AI use and ensuring that all communication outputs, whether AI-generated or not, adhere to these ethical standards. Fostering organizational integrity can create an environment where employees are encouraged to uphold ethical standards and make decisions that reflect the organization's commitment to honesty and moral conduct.

A concept closely relating to integrity is due diligence, used in the language of law as "the care that a reasonable person exercises to avoid harm to other persons or their property" and in business as "the research and analysis of a company or organization done in preparation for a business transaction" (Merriam–Webster 2024b). I suggest that due diligence can also be understood as an alert attitude pertaining especially to cognitive aspects of communication ethics, reminding the communicator that when using AI-generated content, the fact-checking phase is of utmost importance.

For organizations, due diligence involves implementing careful processes to verify the accuracy and reliability of all AI-generated communication outputs. While AI can enhance efficiency, it is essential that employees do not feel pressured to cut corners to save time in order to increase profit

margins at the expense of factual accuracy and ethical standards. By emphasizing due diligence, organizations can aim to maintain trust and credibility with their stakeholders.

2.2 AI Ethics: Recent Research

This section synthesizes findings of recent research to provide an overview of current ethical guidelines and normative issues in AI. It first examines the ethical principles identified in major AI guidelines, followed by a focused discussion on generative AI and its unique ethical considerations, particularly in the context of visual content creation.

2.2.1 Artificial Intelligence

In their article The Global Landscape of AI Ethics Guidelines (2019) Jobin, Ienca and Vayena investigated 84 different reports and guidelines relating to ethical development and use of artificial intelligence systems. These documents are “non-legislative policy instruments” which means that they are not enforced by law but are instead “persuasive” in nature. These ethical guidelines are meant to help with decision making when using or developing AI. Guidelines analysed ranged from big global corporations such as Microsoft, Google, and Sony to government guidelines (e.g. Finland and UK), research (universities) to robotics and health and social care. (Jobin et. Al 2019.)

The analysis identified 11 principles in existing guidelines (table 1). Out of the 11 principles transparency, justice and fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility, and privacy are referred to in over 50% of all the sources. However, while their findings show that there is agreement on ethical principles for artificial intelligence, there are also significant differences in the definitions and applications of the principles. Analysis shows differences in interpretation, justification, context of use (domain), and how it is achieved.

For example, the most prevalent principle, transparency, is seen as an effort to increase explainability, interpretability and disclosure with applications in data use, human-AI interaction, and decision-making. Some guidelines underline its role in minimizing harm and fostering trust, while others link it to legal conformity and democratic principles. Recommendations for achieving transparency range from providing non-technical explanations to enabling audits, with different stakeholders advocating for technical or oversight-based solutions. Also, tools like stakeholder engagement and whistleblowing facilitation are suggested as ways to enhance transparency. When it comes to fairness, some guidelines prioritize ensuring AI does not have biases, while others talk about making sure AI is accessible to all. (Jobin et al. 2019)

Table 1. Ethical principles identified in existing AI guidelines (Jobin et al. 2019)

Ethical principle	Number of documents	Included codes
Transparency	73/84	Transparency, explainability, explicability, understandability, interpretability, communication, disclosure, showing
Justice and fairness	68/84	Justice, fairness, consistency, inclusion, equality, equity, (non-) bias, (non-)discrimination, diversity, plurality, accessibility, reversibility, remedy, redress, challenge, access, and distribution
Non-maleficence	60/84	Non-maleficence, security, safety, harm, protection, precaution, prevention, integrity (bodily or mental), non-subversion
Responsibility	60/84	Responsibility, accountability, liability, acting with integrity
Privacy	47/84	Privacy, personal or private information
Beneficence	41/84	Benefits, beneficence, well-being, peace, social good, common good
Freedom and autonomy	34/84	Freedom, autonomy, consent, choice, self-determination, liberty, empowerment
Trust	28/84	Trust
Sustainability	14/84	Sustainability, environment (nature), energy, resources (energy)

Ethical principle	Number of documents	Included codes
Dignity	13/84	Dignity
Solidarity	6/84	Solidarity, social security, cohesion

Thilo Hagendorff's The Ethics of AI Ethics (2020) semi-systematic evaluation of 22 notable AI ethics guidelines including those of Partnership on AI, which is an association that includes companies such as Amazon, Apple, Baidu, Facebook, Google, IBM, and Intel. Other guidelines included were by such organisations as Microsoft, European Commission, AI Now Institute, IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

Hagendorff categorised emergent themes into 22 issues (table 2), identifying same principles as Jobin et al. recognised. The three most prominent themes were privacy, fairness and justice, and accountability. Privacy was understood as the protection of personal data and the right to privacy in the development and application of AI technologies. Fairness and justice, focused on the design and operation of AI systems that are not discriminating or biased and that promote equitable outcomes for all individuals. Accountability indicated that there should be mechanisms in place to hold developers and operators of AI systems responsible for the functioning and impacts of the AI systems. (Hagendorff 2020,102–103).

Table 2. Key issues identified in 22 major AI guidelines (Hagendorff 2020)

Key issues	No. of mentions
Privacy protection	18
Fairness, non-discrimination, justice	18
Accountability	17
Transparency, openness	16
Safety, cybersecurity	16
Common good, sustainability, well-being	16
Human oversight, control, auditing	12
Solidarity, inclusion, social cohesion	11
Explainability, interpretability	10

Key issues	No. of mentions
Science-policy link	10
Legislative framework, legal status of AI systems	10
Future of employment/worker rights	9
Responsible/intensified research funding	8
Public awareness, education about AI and its risks	8
Dual-use problem, military, AI arms race	8
Field-specific deliberations (health, military, mobility etc.)	8
Human autonomy	7
Diversity in the field of AI	7
Certification for AI products	4
Protection of whistleblowers	3
Cultural differences in the ethically aligned design of AI systems	2
Hidden costs (labelling, clockwork, content moderation, energy, resources)	2
Notes on technical implementations	1/22[1]

Table 2 is a redacted version of the original for the purpose of this study. Original table included dimensions such as organisations, affiliations, and proportions of women among the authors.

Hagendorff´s (2020) study highlights several interesting notions about the guidelines that reflect

[1] In the original table the number of notes on technical implementations was marked down as 1. However, on page 104 of the article Hagendorff mentions that there were 2 guidelines containing notes on technical implementations.

the complex and multidisciplinary nature of artificial intelligence itself and ethics and different interest pertaining to artificial intelligence.

Even though accountability is mentioned in 17 guidelines, only 10 guidelines mention legislative framework. None of the companies belonging to Partnership of AI nor Microsoft had mentioned legislative framework in their guidelines, even though accountability was mentioned (Hagendorff 2020,102). This might naturally be because at the time of the writing of the guidelines there has not been any AI legislation in place, but one could also speculate that the business interest of said companies are protected better with just guidelines based on self-regulation.

Hagendorff remarks that “it is noteworthy that almost all guidelines suggest that technical solutions exist for many of the problems described. Nevertheless, there are only two guidelines which contain genuinely technical explanations at all – albeit only very sparsely” (Hagendorff 2020,104). This relates also to the observation made by Jobin et al. (2019) discussed earlier: differences in interpretation of principles, justification, context of use (domain), and how principles are achieved. Without exact, shared understanding of concepts we find ourselves in a situation where one talks about the fence, the other about the fenceposts.

According to Hagendorff the ethics of AI are predominantly discussed from the point of AI development, making ethical questions computing problems that can be solved technically (Hagendorff 2020,103). Hagendorff continues that historically men have shaped these norms, which reflect a justice-oriented ethical approach, as per suggested in psychologist Carol Gilligan's ground-breaking studies on the different responses of children to moral dilemmas and the development of moral reasoning and decision-making abilities (Hagendorff 2020, 103). This "rational and logic-oriented" ethics contrasts with the more empathic, care-oriented ethics often associated with women. A gender analysis reveals a male dominance in AI ethics discourse; for instance, excluding reports from the female-led AI Now organization, only 31.3% of guideline authors are women. AI ethics guidelines tend to overlook the role of AI in social responsibility, viewing technology as isolated systems needing optimization rather than as part of broader societal and ecological networks. Reports from AI Now contrast this by considering AI within such wider contexts. (Hagendorff 2020,103). This finding aligns with the lack of diversity in teams developing AI solutions. According to a report by McKinsey & Company, of the average share of employees developing AI solutions in respondents´ organisations only 27% identify as women and only 25% identify as ethnic or racial minorities (McKinsey 2022). This disparity shapes the AI systems themselves, as well as the biases in the systems and the ethics of the field.

2.2.2 Generative Artificial Intelligence

A recently published scoping review[2] Mapping the Ethics of Generative AI: A Comprehensive Scoping Review (Hagendorff 2024) analysed 179 documents published from 2021 onwards. The study identified 378 normative issues related to the ethics of generative artificial intelligence. These issues were then categorized into 19 topic areas.

Hagendorff notes that that the surge of generative artificial technologies has caused the debate around ethics of artificial intelligence to go through substantial changes. Before 2021 principles such as transparency, fairness, security, safety, accountability, privacy, and beneficence were commanding the top of mind. However, the technological advances surfaced novel issues like hallucination, alignment, harmful content, copyright and impacts on creativity.
(Hagendorff 2024,4).

Abridged depiction of topics according to the Mapping the Ethics of Generative AI: A Comprehensive Scoping Review (Hagendorff, 2024, 5–9).

Fairness- Bias. Fairness emerges as the most critical concern in AI literature, particularly with Large Language Models (LLMs) and text-to-image models, due to biases in training data that can lead to issues like racism, sexism stereotyping and marginalization. These biases not only pierce existing societal patterns but also risk being amplified in future models using synthetic data from their predecessors. Also, the risks of power centralization in major AI labs and the issue of unequal AI access, affecting developing countries and financially constrained groups. Concerns expand to workforce diversity within the AI research community and the imposition of specific cultural values through AI systems.

Safety. Preventing harm to humans / humanity from AI systems, including speculating the risks of developing human-level or superhuman AI known as Artificial Generative Intelligence.

Harmful content - Toxicity. The generation of harmful content, including unethical, toxic, and violent material, is a major concern in the context of LLMs and text-to-image models. Studies stress the dangers of these models in creating disinformation, fake news, and deepfakes, posing threats

[2] Hagendorff acknowledges in the limitations of the that the study included also non-peer-reviewed preprints, which may not have been of high quality. Also, the methodological choice of limiting the collection of papers to the top search results may have left relevant sources outside the analysis thus affecting the results. The writings often extend into speculating about risks associated with AGI, which may influence the assessment of current and near-future risks. (Hagendorff 2024). Naturally, as Hagendorff´s paper was published only on February 13th, 2024, it also waits to be peer-reviewed.

to public discourse and media trust. There are also concerns on the use of GAI created content in criminal activities, identity theft, and dangerous advice in critical domains like health, safety, and legal or financial matters.

Hallucinations. Concerns of Large Language Models unintentionally producing false or misleading information, including incorrect code. Due to the tendency of LLMs to generate flawed outputs with overconfident justifications and fabricated references, the importance of manually verifying and fact-checking their outputs is heavily emphasized.

Privacy. Safeguarding sensitive or personal data against unauthorized collection, leakage, or misuse by AI systems. Also concerns of AI systems used for surveillance purposes emerge.

Interaction risks. Interaction risks arise primarily from how humans engage with the GAI systems and content created using them. Key concerns include the difficulty in distinguishing AI-generated content from human creations – epistemic challenge of not being able to trust one's eyes and ears. The tendency to anthropomorphize AI, which can lead to misplaced trust, was also mentioned. Another risk is the potential of LLMs to manipulate human behaviour and prompt engagement in unethical or illegal activities.

Security–Robustness. Protecting AI systems from unauthorized access or other threats presented to these systems, for example jailbreaking[3] or model poisoning risks.

Education–Learning. Generative AI in education is discussed for both its potential to enhance learning and teaching methods and the challenges it poses, such as enabling cheating and potentially reducing student effort. A significant part of academic focus is also on promoting literacy about generative AI, including teaching prompt engineering skills.

Alignment. AI alignment focuses on training generative AI to be safe, useful, and truthful, aligning with human values. Challenges include determining who can legitimately input these values – or who is qualified to provide the guiding principles – and managing risks like deceptive alignment and reward hacking, which may lead to misdirected AI goals.

Cybercrime. Relating closely to conversations about security and harmful content, cybersecurity looks at how GAI can be – and is – used for dishonest online actions. In addition to investigation

[3] Jailbreaking refers to the act of manipulating prompts in Large Language Model (LLM) chatbots to elicit responses that are inappropriate or sensitive, violating the service policies and ethical guidelines of the chatbot providers. This is parallel to a cyber-attack, where the user intentionally tries to bypass the defensive mechanisms put in place by the service providers to prevent unauthorized or harmful outputs. (Gelei et al. 2023).

social engineering attacks such as impersonating humans or creating fake identities, also generation of malicious code or hacking is of concern.

Governance - Regulation. Papers call for legal regulation and governmental oversight of generative AI, emphasizing international coordination, binding safety standards, and sanctions for non-compliance. The need for regulators to understand AI research and development processes and evaluate risk management strategies is also stressed. However, there are also concerns that over-regulation might stifle innovation.

Labour displacement - Economic impact. Guidelines raises concerns about potential negative affects to the economy and employment. While GAI is seen creating new roles like prompt engineering, it is also seen as risk to worsening socioeconomic inequalities and leading to labour displacement and deskilling.

Transparency - Explainability. Transparency in AI encompasses both technical explainability and organisational openness. Technical explainability emphasizes the need for understanding generative models' internal mechanisms. Organizational openness involves informing users about model capabilities and limitations as well as adhering to standards for documenting data collection and risk assessment processes.

Evaluation - Auditing. Papers emphasize the need for evaluating generative AI systems through both technical analysis and broader sociotechnical impact assessments, including pre-release audits and post-deployment monitoring, ideally by independent third parties. Additionally, there is a noted deficiency in safety benchmarking for non-English languages in technical audits of language and text-to-image models. This cluster relates closely to safety, fairness, and harmful content.

Sustainability. Generative models have high energy demands, requiring substantial electricity, cooling water, and rare metal-based hardware, often sourced unsustainably. Papers underscore the need to reduce environmental impact by using renewable energy and energy-efficient hardware in operating and training GAI systems.

Art - Creativity. This cluster addresses concerns about text-to-image models impacting human creativity and the art industry. Criticism regarding financial harm to artists from mass-produced synthetic art and the use of their work in AI training without permission or compensation is present. The difficulty in differentiating synthetic from authentic images has led to calls for mandatory disclosure of AI-generated content, possibly through watermarking. While some argue these models lack genuine creativity or innovation, others see potential in accelerating human creative processes.

Copyright - Authorship. Literature of then pointed out that generative AI disrupts existing copyright norms, raising concerns about unauthorized use of training data, potential plagiarism by models, and debates over the ownership of AI-generated outputs and creative prompts, blurring traditional concepts of authorship.

Writing - Research. Topic cluster, intersecting with generative AI's impact on education, mainly addresses the adverse effects of LLMs on writing skills, academic writing and academia being flooded with subpar articles written with the help of AI. Concerns include the potential homogenization of writing styles, erosion of semantic capital, and suppression of individual expression.

Miscellaneous. The review found miscellaneous issues in the literature not fitting into specific categories or discussed infrequently, such as general references to trustworthiness, accountability, and responsibility in AI, and vague attributions of socio-political instability to generative AI. It also noted the need for responsible discourse about AI, including avoiding exaggeration of its capabilities and anthropomorphic descriptions. (Hagendorff 2024, 5–9.)

2.3 Emerging topics related to AI-driven visual content creation

In this chapter I will examine the topics closely relating to the research question that emerged in Mapping the Ethics of Generative AI: A Comprehensive Scoping Review (Hagendorff 2024) in more detail, both through recent research, articles and through industry specific guidelines where applicable. I have chosen topics that are in my view closely related to the AI-driven visual / audiovisual content creation thus leaving out topics relating to auditing for example. The topic of copyright and authorship will be addressed in a separate section about regulation.

2.3.1 Value Alignment

Value alignment ranked 9th as a topic in Hagendorff's 2024 scoping review of ethics of generative AI (Hagendorff 2024). Yet, in my opinion, it is the core issue in all ethical discussions about AI-driven content creation. This is because it centres on a crucial question: Whose values are represented in the GAI systems and in the content created using said systems, whether entirely or partially? This question permeates the whole discussion from biases to copyrights and creativity, therefore it is important to understand the different facets of the discussion: what we are talking about when we are talking about value alignment.

In his article Artificial Intelligence, Values, and Alignment (2020) Iason Gabriel explores the interrelation between normative and technical aspects of AI alignment. Technical challenges include creating AI that can understand and follow instructions without excessive literalism, avoiding unintended consequences like the King Midas scenario, and dealing with the complexity of real-world

objectives. The King Midas scenario highlights the dangers of AI interpreting instructions too literally, a notable issue in AI development. King Midas's wish for everything he touches to turn to gold backfires horribly. Thus, illustrating how literal interpretations can lead to harmful outcomes, such as the AI optimizing for unintended goals. For instance, an AI in a game might loop indefinitely to maximize points, missing the actual objective of finishing the race. (Gabriel 2020, 417.) A recent example of this is multiracial images of Nazi-Germany soldiers created with Google´s Gemini. It is speculated that Google Gemini has undertaken efforts to enhance diversity in response to the gaping shortage of it within generative AI. However, if this is a case of intentional ”diversifying” the good intentions placed in the code have created historically untrue outputs. Google apologised for the errors but did not confirm whether conscious decision to add diversity was behind the results (Robertson February 2024). These examples emphasize the difficulty in AI alignment: ensuring AI actions align with human values and intentions, not just literal commands, to avoid undesirable consequences.

According to Gabriel (2020) normative challenges involve determining whose values and interests the AI should align with, whether it be an individual, a specific society, or a global consensus, and how to manage the trade-offs between different interests. The central question is not to find an absolute moral truth for AI, but to find principles that are fair and can gain reflective endorsement from a diverse range of moral beliefs, recognizing that there is no single set of “true” moral principles universally accepted. Gabriel acknowledges that existing codes of AI ethics often contain vague concepts such as 'fairness' and 'human dignity', that may not be specific enough to guide action and do not reflect a meaningful consensus on 'good' AI development. The process of deriving ethical principles must be intercultural and inclusive, considering diverse cultural values if a more extensive agreement on AI alignment is to be reached. (Gabriel 2020, 413.)

In his 2023 article, Oliver Bendel discusses the manifestation of corporate ethics within the domain of generative artificial intelligence. He argues that the moral standards of the companies developing these technologies often dictate the operational boundaries of AI tools. Specifically, these organizations implement restrictions to prevent the generation of content they deem explicit, violent, or discriminatory, based on societal norms and legal frameworks or company specific values.

Bendel suggests that this regulatory approach may constitute a form of censorship, reflecting a uniform set of values that may not be universally applicable across diverse cultural and individual ethical landscapes. This is particularly evident in the realm of AI-driven visual content creation, where developer-encoded values lead to selective content restriction, sparking a debate on censorship and the imposition of corporate ethics on the user base. (Bendel 2023.)

Furthermore, the discussion extends to the formulation of ethical guidelines and legal statutes aimed at fostering innovation while mitigating potential harms. These efforts seek to navigate the complex interplay between promoting technological advancement and adhering to ethical considerations. However, Bendel notes the inconsistency in applying these moral standards across different content types, lead to ambiguity, and raise questions about the equity and objectivity of such restrictions. For instance, an image generator's refusal to produce nudity while permitting creation of potentially violent content exemplifies this discrepancy. (Bendel 2023.)

Figure 2. Prompt “Please create a picture of a mix-raced family in a traditional Finnish Sauna” produced a family of 6 persons, fully clothed in a pyjama like thick clothing. Only the supposed mother in the picture was showing some upper body skin. As nudity in Finnish sauna culture is asexual in nature, I wanted to test whether this is reflected also in DALLE´s concept of decency and the materials used to train it. It appears it is not. Also, the concept of how sauna actually works is both hilarious and hallucinatory in nature.

The ethical discourse surrounding these restrictions is part of a larger dialogue concerning user autonomy in interacting with generative AI and the influence of developers in sculpting the ethical framework for digital content creation. While the intention behind these moral regulations is to curtail misuse, it also prompts discussions on censorship and the impact of these guidelines on the creative process.

While manufacturers of image generators aim to prevent the generation of certain types of content like pornography to maintain the integrity of their platforms, the values embedded in generative artificial intelligence go beyond just moral and ethical considerations. The development of AI systems reflects not only societal norms but also the cultural biases present in the training data used for these technologies. Just as AI-generated images can perpetuate existing beauty standards by emphasizing features like youth and attractiveness, they can also inadvertently reinforce stereotypes and biases ingrained in the datasets they learn from. These biases may manifest in discriminatory depictions such as exaggerated feminine features or confident postures that reflect Western-centric beauty ideals, raising ethical concerns about diversity, representation, and the potential exclusion of varied perspectives in digital content creation. (Bendel 2023.)

2.3.2 Bias

As bias is seen as the most critical concern regarding generative artificial intelligence, it will be investigated at length. According to A Trustworthy AI: A Review by a group of researchers of Indiana University, the types of bias can be classified to data, model, and evolution bias. (Kaur, Uslu, Rittichier & Durresi 2022). For the purpose of this study, I will concentrate on data bias.

Data bias in AI systems occurs when the training data is not a true reflection of reality, either due to unequal representation of societal segments or because it mirrors existing societal biases, such as gender stereotypes. This can happen through representation bias, where not all societal segments are equally represented, or societal bias, where the data accurately reflects a biased society. Another cause of data bias is when the demographics of the training data do not match the target population, or due to issues like mismatched datasets, cases unaccounted for in the data, and manipulated datasets. (Kaur et al. 2022).

In their article Generative AI Feuerriegel, Hartmann, Janiesch & Zschech (2024) note that biases in GAI models are results of non-representative or imbalanced training datasets. Biases can also be introduced inadvertently by the people training the models during the reinforcement learning from human feedback RLHF[4] process (Feuerriegel et al. 2024,117). Labelling and annotation are crucial steps in the data preparation phase of artificial intelligence training, particularly for supervised learning and semi-supervised learning models. These processes involve adding informative tags or

[4] RLHF utilizes human feedback to learn sequential tasks like chat dialogues., distinct from traditional reinforcement learning. It trains a reward model based on human feedback, using this model to refine the policy with efficient and robust methods (Ziegler et al. 2019, Feuerriegel et al. 2024). Applied in conversational systems like ChatGPT (OpenAI 2022), RLHF generates chat responses that follow the dialogue's context and adhere to specific human preferences such as length, style, and appropriateness. (Feuerriegel et al. 2024, p. 114.)

labels to the data, which serve as indicators or descriptions of the underlying content, context, or classification. Each piece of data (such as images, text, or audio clips) is tagged with one or more labels that represent the target outcome, such as categories or numerical values. (Toloka 20 December 2023.)

This is essential for training models to perform tasks like:

- Image recognition: Photos are labelled with tags indicating the objects present.
- Sentiment analysis: Text is annotated with positive, negative, or neutral sentiments.
- Speech recognition: Audio files are transcribed and labelled with the token text. (Toloka 20 December 2023.)

Mistakes in this phase of the process can also result in skewed end-results. It is also worthwhile to note, that the AI systems learn from their users, thus us using the systems can be the sources of mistakes, biases or skewed value alignments.

In her book Atlas of AI, Kate Crawford (2021) illustrates how the uncritical use of biased data can perpetuate injustices, emphasizing the ethical implications of data utilization in artificial intelligence. In my view this example would fit both representational and societal biases. According to Crawford group of researchers developed an automatic system to classify crimes, focusing on gang-related violent crimes. They predicted whether a crime was gang-related using only four pieces of data: the weapon involved, the number of suspects, the neighbourhood, and the location. The Los Angeles Police Department provided a dataset that included thousands of crimes labelled by police as gang related. However, this gang data is criticized for being flawed and full of errors. However, the data is still used as a definitive source for training predictive AI systems like CalGang in California. CalGang's major inaccuracies were highlighted when a state auditor found that 23% of the records reviewed lacked sufficient evidence for inclusion, yet contained personal information on individuals, including 42 infants and 28 people who were never gang members. Black and Latinx individuals have been disproportionately added to this list, sometimes based on arbitrary and trivial criteria such as talking to a neighbour while wearing a red shirt. (Crawford 2021).

Even though this example is not directly related to visual content creation using GAI-tools, its related to similar prevailing biases found in the datasets used to train GAI-tools such as Midjourney and Stable Diffusion. In the article ”Humans Are Biased. Generative AI is even worse” (Nicoletti & Bass June 2023) published by Bloomberg, over 5000 images created by text to image tool Stable Diffusion were analysed. To do this, the team at Bloomberg generated images to represent 14 job titles, that were categorized into high- and low-paying categories as well as 3 crime related categories. The images generated were then classified based on skin tone, using the Fitzpatrick Skin

Scale[5] and gender. By analysing the average position and colour of pixels in images based on facial features like eyes, nose, and mouth, the team at Bloomberg created "average faces" for each occupation. This technique is often used in AI bias and ethics studies. It revealed that the AI model suggests certain jobs are associated with specific groups, indicating biases in job representation. The results showed a prevalence of lighter-skinned individuals in high-paying job images, while darker-skinned individuals appeared more frequently in low-paying job images. Men, particularly those with lighter skin tones, dominated the images across high-paying jobs. Gender analysis revealed a significant imbalance, with the AI generating nearly three times more male images than female, except in low-paying roles like housekeeper and cashier. As the writers of the article poignantly note ”the world according to Stable Diffusion is run by White male CEOs. Women are rarely doctors, lawyers, or judges. Men with dark skin commit crimes, while women with dark skin flip burgers“ (Nicoletti & Bass June 2023).

A thought experiment: commission is to create an imagined picture of a CEO of a large company for a) a state-of-the-art report and b) for an advertisement for a university. How should cognitive and functional perspectives of communication ethics guide the decision making relating to the end-result? According to data, in 2023, among the chief executives at the 50 leading Fortune 500 firms in the U.S.A. are six white females, one male and one female of Hispanic/Latino descent, three South Asian males, and one male and one female who are black (Qualtrics 4 August 2023).

For visuals in a report, choosing an image of a white male may seem appropriate, accurately reflecting the current, albeit biased, leadership landscape and satisfying the public's right to information. However, for a campaign promoting economic studies at a university, the decision shifts. Here, the question is whether to depict the current, biased reality (dominance of white males) or to emphasize diversity, displaying opportunities for women and people of colour, potentially attracting more diverse applicants. Opting for diversity in this context is not only ethically sound but also challenges societal biases, making it a considered and responsible choice. As shown, depending on the context, both choices can be deemed ethically sound. But in order to arrive these decisions, the person creating the visuals must be aware of the underlying biases, context, consequences, and desired outcomes. In short, they must approach the commission with integrity and due diligence. This attitude can also be seen supported by guidelines provided by ICCO (International Communications Consultancy Organisation) (Forsgård 2023) where it is stated that PR professionals must mitigate biases found in AI generated content and foster inclusivity, ensuring AI models

[5] The Fitzpatrick Skin Scale categorises skin shades into 6 skin types. Skin types 1 to 3 are regarded as lighter and 4 to 6 darker. This system is widely used by dermatologist and researchers. (Nicoletti et Bass 2023).

are trained on diverse data. Human oversight is also stressed to ensure fair representation and diversity (Forsgård 2023).

2.3.3 Art and Creativity

Hagendorff´s study (2024) highlighted criticisms related to the economic loss artists face due to the proliferation of mass-generated synthetic art, along with the unauthorized utilization of their creations in the training of artificial intelligence systems without due acknowledgment or compensation. While certain viewpoints criticize these models for their absence of authentic creativity or innovation, there are those who believe in their ability to expedite and enrich the creative processes. (Hagendorff 2024.) It is certainly true, that now, even people like me, can create convincing looking visuals with just typing a few words.

However, in my view art and creativity are also very much a continuation of discussion about value alignment and whose values are imbedded in the artificial intelligence systems.

In his article Image synthesis from an ethical perspective (2023), Oliver Bendell brings forth interesting notion of westernised beauty standards and kitschification of visuality.

AI-generated images often reflect and potentially reinforce existing beauty standards, which are based on societal preferences – quite often modelled after Western ideals – for certain physical attributes, such as youth and attractiveness, that are associated with health and reproductive advantages. Image generators can introduce new, artificial characteristics of beauty, which may be reinforced or rejected through user feedback, suggesting that the widespread use of these technologies could gradually lead to new beauty ideals. This can have actual effect on humans, as people, especially women, might feel pressure to meet the beauty standards set by machines. (Bendell 2023.)

Tomas Kulka (1993) has identified kitsch as a term often equated with subpar art or cultural garbage. It is clear, therefore, that those with an education in the arts tend to dismiss kitsch as lowbrow, while it paradoxically remains popular among the general populace who purchase it. Kulka suggests that kitsch's allure is rooted in its portrayal of universally admired or emotionally intense subjects, which are instantly and effortlessly identifiable. However, kitsch's deficiency lies in its inability to significantly enrich our associative thoughts related to the depicted subject, making its charm reliant on the subject itself (Kulka 1993, 243, 252). In a similar vein, the scholar Richards, who examined the culture of objects in the 19th century, discusses the concept of "charisma borrowing" (Gronow 1991, 86). This idea refers to the phenomenon where mass-produced goods, mimicking older designs and styles, also co-opt some of the allure intrinsic to the originals, such as that linked to the lifestyle of nobility. This process, however, trivializes the original, turning it into a

commodified object available for public consumption (Gronow 1991, 86). In its style, kitsch tends to recycle established and effective methods. Despite appearances that might suggest kitsch engages with the avant-garde or introduces something fresh, it does not innovate but rather appropriates a single aspect of a style, reducing it to a cliché, thus stripping away the original phenomenon's power of expression (Dorfles 1969, 35).

Bendel (2023) suggests that the rise of kitschy AI images may change how we view art by reducing the importance of expertise and refined taste, while also prompting a reassessment of established viewing habits. This transformation challenges traditional art categories and prompts a re-examination of what is deemed significant or stylish in visual culture. (Bendell 2023.) In my opinion the notion of kitschification especially in the sense of charisma borrowing, appropriation of a single aspect of a style and the tendency to emotionalise subjects and how the subjects are depicted, are interesting especially when contrasted with questions of creativity, originality, and skill, which are traditionally valued facets of enjoyment of art.

Creativity, “human touch” and free will (as in without restrictions and censorship, discussed in the chapter about value alignment) are intrinsically linked to the question of copyrights of material created using artificial intelligence. I will take a closer look at this question in the chapter concerning regulation and copyrights.

2.3.4 Transparency

The discussion concerning transparency before the rise of generative artificial intelligence has centred around technical transparency and transparency concerning automated decision making, particularly in sensitive areas like healthcare and criminal justice. Particular concern has been ensuring that systems are fair and do not perpetuate social biases. Transparency is not only tied to the clarity of AI processes, but it also involves the explainability of the technology. Explainability in AI refers to how well humans can understand an AI system's workings, from input processing to output generation. It is key to transparency and trust, offering insight into AI decision-making and helping spot biases or mistakes in the systems. Transparency is intrinsically linked to accountability. When AI systems are transparent, it means their actions can be traced and justified, making it possible to hold the creators and operators of these systems responsible for their outcomes. (Kirova, Ku, Laracy & Marlowe 2023, 46.)

Generative artificial intelligence has brought GAI generated content firmly into the discussion about transparency. In generative AI (GAI) transparency entails clear communication about system operations, data origins, and their application in services. It is essential for user trust, especially when disclosing GAI-generated content interactions. Balancing privacy with personalized content

presents a design challenge, requiring balancing transparency and confidentiality. (Bahn & Strobel 2023, 8.)

Challenges include the 'black box' nature of GAI models, necessitating explainability for decision-making insights. Intellectual property concerns, particularly with data sourced from internet scraping, complicate GAI deployment. Open-source initiatives promoting transparency suggest disclosure data origins and use watermarks in GAI generated content. Ensuring GAI transparency and accountability is crucial to the discussions, with strategies including clear GAI usage declaration and system designs that alert users to GAI content interactions. (Bahn & Strobel 2023,8.) Transparency relates also to interaction risks, and especially epistemic challenge, mentioned earlier in this study.

ICCO states that “PR professionals should transparently disclose when generative AI is used to create purely artificial content that might pose a threat of distorting the public’s perceptions of reality. Disclosing the use of AI-generated content is vital, especially in the age of deep fakes” (Forsgård 2023).

ICCO also gives concrete examples of when and how to disclose the use of generative AI:

- In creating content that mimics reality to prevent misinterpretation and uphold ethical transparency.
- Ensure users are unmistakably informed when they are engaging with an AI chatbot instead of a human agent.
- Transparently communicate to clients the circumstances and methodologies through which AI will be applied in public relations campaigns.
  (Forsgård 2023.)

The examples given are quite straightforward. However, I find the preceding expression of “purely artificial content that might pose a threat of distorting the public’s perceptions of reality” interesting and open to much debate. If one is to play devil’s advocate, then as long as generative artificial intelligence is not used to create deepfake content of actual people, but rather partly generated personae or content that shall not otherwise put people in harm's way or intentionally, maliciously deceive the receiver, there is no need to disclose the use of AI?

Transparency e.g. disclosure of AI generated content can also be defended from the point of view marketing legislation and of prohibition against marketing and unfair practices contrary to good practice (Koivumäki & Merilehto 11 March 2024). The Consumer Protection Act´s chapter 2, section 1 (38/1978) and Act on Unfair Business Practices, section 1 (1061/1978) mention prohibition against providing false or misleading information (Koivumäki & Merilehto 11 March 2024). The law

itself does not give any specific examples for providing said information and how to address them, but for example in the housing trade, homes are increasingly marketed using digitally styled, realistic images with an icon clearly indicating that the image does not reflect the actual situation in the property for sale (Svahn March 2022).

The new EU Artificial Intelligence Act mandates that users of generative AI must disclose when content is artificially generated or manipulated. Exceptions include cases authorized by law for criminal investigation and prosecution. For artistic, creative, satirical, or fictional works, the disclosure must not interfere with the enjoyment of the content. AI-generated text informing the public must also be disclosed unless it undergoes human review or is legally authorized. This rule also applies to AI systems creating deep fakes in image, audio, or video formats. (EU Artificial Intelligence Act, 52/2024).

Much like ICCO´s guideline, the EU Artificial Intelligence Act gives seeming leeway to communication and marketing professionals with the provision for content that is clearly creative or fictional (as sometimes the premises of the commercials might be, loaning for example from fairy tales), the disclosure of the generated content should be done in a way that does not interfere with the presentation or appreciation of the content created. These wordings leave a grey area into which communication and marketing companies should find their own solutions to satisfy the need for transparency. Transparency is sorely needed to harbour trust in a world where a likeness of persons appearance, voice and personality (the way one speaks, and what kind of words they use) are so easily falsified and the weight of evidence of photographs, videos and audios have dwindled next to nothing.

2.3.5 Likeness

Even though use of a person's likeness did not come up as a particular ethic concern as such in Hagendorff´s (2024) study, it can be linked to epistemic challenges and to harmful content, such as deepfakes. A deepfake is a type of AI-generated (synthetic) media where a person's likeness, including their face, voice, or both, is replaced with someone else's by using advanced artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies to create extremely realistic and convincing videos or audio recordings that appear to show individuals saying or doing things they never actually did (Digital Humans 15 May 2021). While deepfakes can be used with consent for legitimate purposes, such as in the entertainment industry for special effects, they also raise significant ethical concerns related to misinformation, privacy, security, cybercrime, and online bullying, in short, harmful content and toxicity.

Although I do not see deepfakes becoming a problem in the marketing and communications industry, the closely related concept of likeness merits a closer inspection. Merriam-Webster defines likeness as in image: “a two-dimensional design intended to look like a person or thing, replica or resemblance” (Merriam-Webster 2024c). Merriam–Webster´s definition of likeness is still very much rooted in the time before generative artificial intelligence, as in this age likeness has branched out to include voice and the style of speech and movement as well. However, likeness as a concept does not always necessarily refer to a likeness to a tee: it can also be used to describe a close resemblance.

To my understanding, using a complete or close likeness in visual communication outputs (images, videos, audios) created by artificial intelligence can happen either knowingly or accidentally, due to the logic with which the GAI-systems operate. By this I mean a situation where a media, whether an image or video, of an actual person is knowingly used to generate content, let´s say a video warning of the dangers of deepfakes. Similar video could be created using purely generated content where the synthetic “person” speaking on the video bears a striking or a close enough resemblance to an actual, living person. The second case leads to (at least) two ethical questions: who is responsible for the accidental generation of a “synthetic twin” and are there laws governing the use of likeness?

If the use of a likeness is deliberate, the responsibility clearly lies with the user of the generative AI system, or those who created or approved the output. However, if a likeness in a communication output is generated accidentally and is not a bug in the system, determining responsibility becomes complex. Is it the person generating the image or the company that developed the system? Is it reasonable to expect – even with the demand for integrity and due diligence – or will it be expected in the future, that creators of AI-generated images or videos verify that their creations do not resemble any real individual? This raises questions about how the likeness to a real person is determined, both systemically and technically. Who sets these threshold values: the companies developing the systems, the users, governments, or NGOs? For instance, is an AI-generated image that resembles Tom Cruise by 82 percent acceptable, but not at 89 percent? Although I do not have answers to these questions, they are worth considering.

In the U.S. persons likeness is protected by law. The right of publicity protects individuals from unauthorized use of their identity, such as names, images, or voices, and balances this protection with freedom of speech. This right, seen as particularly valuable to celebrities, regulates the commercial use of one's identity and offers legal resources against unauthorized commercial exploitation of one´s likeness. (Post & Rothman 2020, 86,108.)

In Finland, the use of a person's name or image in marketing is not specifically regulated by law. However, it can be addressed through the general clauses of the Consumer Protection Act and the Unfair Business Practices Act, which stipulate that marketing should not violate good practices, involve unfair methods harmful to consumers or other businesses, or use false or misleading statements that could affect market dynamics or damage another's business. The Trademark Act can also provide protection if the name or image has been registered as a trademark. Additionally, the international ICC marketing rules, which require prior consent for the commercial use of a person's image or reputation, are in place to complement national regulation. Protection applies to all identifiable individuals, and the assessment of identifiability follows objective criteria. (Koivumäki 2016.)

Time will tell whether videos or images of people, generated without malicious intent, will prove to be a legitimate concern legally (as in it will be tried in legal capacity) or ethically in communication and marketing. If one looks at the terms of service of OpenAI, Midjourney and Stability Ai for example, it comes clear that their stance on the matter is that the person or organisation using their system is solely and legally responsible for the content created or used (OpenAI 2024, Midjourney 2024, Stability Ai 2024) even if the underlying reason for let´s say “accidental synthetic twin” would be due to the system. This further emphasises the importance of vigilant human oversight, integrity, and due diligence while using AI generated content, especially when it comes to images of people. Although the question may currently seem purely academic, it would be beneficial to consider and establish the companywide practices and guidelines for using 'synthetic' humans in communications and marketing as there might be unexpected consequences.

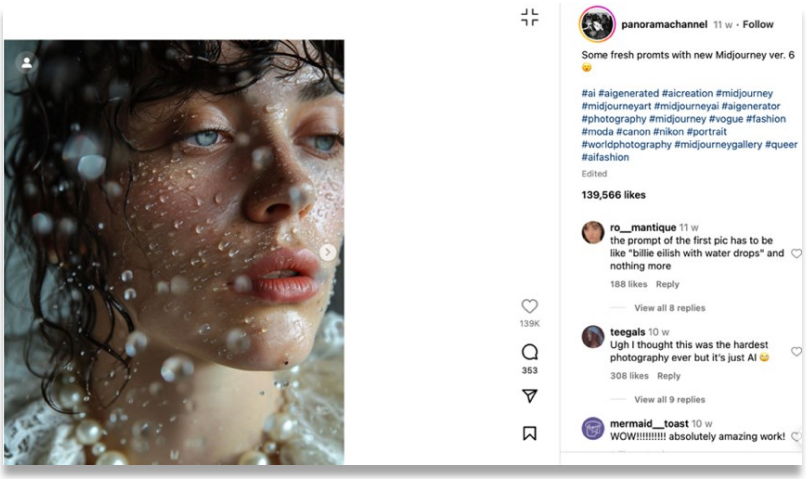

Figure 3. AI-generated image of a woman by Midjourney (Panoramachannel 22 December 2024) clearly shows edits but convincingly mimics a real person's likeness, drawing comparisons to singer-songwriter Billie Eilish from viewers. This image highlights key ethical concerns: the epistemic challenge of discerning artificial content, the ethical use of a person's likeness, and the need

for transparency, especially if the image is displayed beyond its original Instagram context where it is noted to be AI-created. Permission to use the image in this study obtained from the pseudonym Panoramachannel. However, as under the current interpretation of copyright law, images created using artificial intelligence are not granted copyright, the permission to use the image is not necessary.

2.4 Regulation

The European Union´s Artificial Intelligence Act is the first extensive law in the world to govern the development and use of artificial intelligence. The final draft of the law was published in January 2024 and the Artificial Intelligence Act was adopted by the Parliament in March 2024, and subsequently approved by the Council in May 2024 (European Parliament 2024b). The implications concerning AI driven content creation were discussed in the chapter about transparency. Article 53c of the said act requires deployers of artificial intelligence systems to "put in place a policy to respect Union copyright law in particular to identify and respect, including through state-of-the-art technologies, the reservations of rights expressed pursuant to Article 4(3) of Directive (EU) 2019/790" (EU Artificial Intelligence Act, 53/2024.)

Copyright automatically belongs to the creator once a work is created, provided it possesses a sufficient level of originality (i.e. surpasses the originality threshold) — meaning it's a unique and independent creation of the creator's own intellectual endeavour. The standard for originality is met when the work is distinctive enough that it couldn't be identically replicated by another's creative process. Neither the quality of the work nor the effort involved influences this originality criterion. In Finland, only individuals (natural persons) can hold copyright; corporations or organizations can assume copyrights only through a contractual transfer. Related rights, however, typically arise directly with corporations. (Tekijänoikeuden tiedotus- ja valvontakeskus 2024.)

Copyright is essentially a right to control publication, reproduction and distribution of a (creative) work (Hildebrandt 2020, p. 1994) and it thus protects the rights of the creator of the work to profit from the said work.

As the questions of copyrights are central to the use of AI generated content in communications and marketing, I shall briefly touch upon the question of copyrights of the training data and the copyrights of material produced by artificial intelligence.

2.4.1 Copyrights of the training data

According to Elina Koivumäki, at the moment it "is legally unclear whether AI companies are allowed to use copyrighted or related rights protected materials as training data for their AI without

permissions (e.g., texts and photos published online). It is also still uncertain when AI companies need the consent of the rights holders and when it is possible to collect and use the material without infringing on third parties' copyright and related rights.” (Koivumäki & Merilehto 11 March 2024). Parties or people, whose content has been used to train AI models without consent are now testing the validity of copyrights in courts around the world. For example, Getty Images filed a lawsuit against Midjourney in January 2023 for illegally scraping millions of copyrighted photographs to train its generative AI model (Vincent January 2023). A group of artists followed suit and filed a class-action complaint against AI generators Midjourney Inc, DeviantArt Inc (DreamUp), and Stability A.I. Ltd (Stable Diffusion), alleging that their artworks were used without consent to train algorithms, particularly using the LAION-Aesthetics dataset. 47% of the dataset's images are scraped from various online sources, including DeviantArt, impacting the artists' market negatively. The plaintiffs claim that the use of these images for training A.I. not only infringes on their rights but also devalues their original work. (Chen 2023.)

In Finland, the Copyright Law's Section 13 b, effective from April 3, 2023, permits legally accessed works to be copied for text and data mining, provided these copies are retained solely for this use, unless explicitly restricted by the author. This provision aims to facilitate data mining in commercial contexts, including corporate development. Text and data mining refers to automated methods for analysing digital text and data to uncover information like patterns or correlations, applicable in both academic and commercial settings. Having legal access to the material is essential for text and data mining activities. This means that the work must be authorized by the copyright owner or be freely accessible on the internet. Even content that is behind a paywall can be mined if there is a subscription or a purchase agreement in place, allowing for mining within this legal boundary. (Tekijänoikeuden tiedotus- ja valvontakeskus 2024.)

It is also important to keep in mind that the content one uploads to generative artificial intelligence can be used to train the models unless the user has explicitly opted out of this feature. Therefore, it is important to check the terms of service for each system one is using regularly.

2.4.2 Copyrights of the material generated by using artificial intelligence

There is ambiguity to the question whether works created using artificial intelligence could fall under copyright. The clauses in the copyright law (404/1961) that might allow for a copyright to be granted to an AI-generated work are according to Koivumäki (Koivumäki & Merilehto 11 March 2024):

> 1 § Subject of copyright
> The one who has created a literary or artistic work has copyright to the work.

> 4 § Modification and alteration of the work
> The one who has translated a work or adapted it into a different literary or artistic form has copyright to the work in this form, but they do not have the right to modify it in a way that violates the copyright of the original work.
>
> If someone has created a new and independent work by freely modifying it, their copyright is independent of the copyright of the original work. (Copyright Law 8.7.1961/404.)

Since only a natural person can be granted copyright, the individual who provides instructions or prompts to an artificial intelligence system should, in principle, be considered the author of the resulting output, as the AI system itself does not qualify as a natural person. However, the demand for unique expression i.e. originality, under current legislation and judiciary practices makes the question of copyright not as straightforward.

According to European Commission´s study on copyright and artificial intelligence (2022) even though copyright protection under European Union law does not explicitly require originality, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has derived such a condition, emphasizing free and creative choices in the selection, arrangement, and combination of elements as essential for a work to be considered original. The CJEU has clarified that for a work to be protected by copyright, it must be the author's own intellectual creation, reflecting a human effort or contribution and it expresses creativity in an original manner. The originality of a creation is also seen in the context of the author's free and creative choices in expressing their creative ideas, with the CJEU stating that it is both necessary and sufficient for the subject matter to reflect the personality of its author as an expression of these choices. Technical limitations can significantly impact originality by dictating the expression of a creation, where the presence of strict technical considerations, rules, or constraints leaves no room for creative freedom, thus potentially negating originality if these limitations prevent the author from making free and creative choices in the expression of their work. (European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology 2022, 151–153.) Due to the restrictions on what kind of content can be created, the biased training data, and limited control over the outputs, it can be argued that generative AI systems do not produce results through a free and creative process.

From a layperson's perspective an artwork generated by artificial intelligence might appear highly creative and original. It could impressively integrate influences from prior works, achieving a level of originality so distinct that not even another AI could replicate the outcome. Due to machine learning, AI can discern and incorporate characteristics from earlier creations that render them uniquely original and creative. Given sufficient data, AI can craft a piece so original and creative

that it might be mistaken for the work of a highly skilled human artist. However, the entity behind the creation lacks creativity itself. (Salminen 2020, 58.)

A well-known international example of this is Jason M. Allen´s efforts to copyright his award-winning work Théâtre D'opéra Spatial generated using Midjourney. Even though he maintained that the end result (digital painting) had required over 600 text prompts and revisions, the U.S Copyright Office has not granted copyright of the work to Allen (Knibbs September 2023).One of the reasons for not granting the copyright was mainly because U.S. Copyright Office requires disclosure of AI-generated content in copyright applications. The decision to not register a work containing significant AI-generated material, despite human modifications, underscores the principle that copyright protection is reserved for works that are predominantly the result of human creativity and effort, thereby distinguishing between original works and derivative modifications. U.S. Copyright Office also posited that Allen's role, characterized solely by the input of textual prompts to generate the Midjourney Image, does not suffice to attribute authorship to him as the actual generation of the image was dependent upon the processive mechanisms of the Midjourney system responding to his inputs. (U.S. Copyright Office 2023, 4-6.)

Figure 4. Théâtre D'opéra Spatial 2022, Jason Allen. Permission to use the image not sought, as it not necessary as per the current interpretation of copyright laws.

To my knowledge, to date, no copyright has been claimed in Finland for an AI-generated work, so we do not yet have a judicial interpretation of how strictly the right to modify is interpreted in Finland and whether it could be a ground for copyright.

Also, the generative AI systems might have clauses incorporated in their terms of uses regarding copyrights and the rights of the systems themselves to the content created.

2.5 Summary

This is an overview of the theoretical framework. It outlines the areas to be examined during upcoming interviews with visual/ audiovisual content creation professionals such as art directors, graphic designers, and video editors etc. Even though the theoretical framework addressed the need for organisational guidelines, I made a conscious decision of not asking about them directly as I was made aware that this might affect the number of willing participants. But more importantly, I was more interested in individual experience of navigating the practical and ethical challenges of AI-generated visual content creation.

1. Communication ethics: Creators must assess both the cognitive and functional aspects of communication ethics. Cognitively, the focus should be on truthfulness, justification, and honesty in content. Functionally, it's about the ethical ramifications of disseminating a message. Creators should approach their work with integrity and due diligence, critically examining content against the context and the reasons for and against conveying the message. Human oversight is essential (in the end, the responsibility always lies with the person using the systems).

2. Value alignment: The values embedded in AI systems should be scrutinized. Creators need to ensure that the values represented in AI-generated content are aligned with those of the intended audience and are mindful of biases. Questions should be asked about whose values are being represented and the implications of these on society.

3. Bias and representation: It is crucial to be aware of and actively mitigate biases in AI-generated content. This includes understanding the source and nature of biases within AI, such as data bias, and striving for fair representation across different societal segments.

4. Art and creativity: AI-driven content creation challenges creators to consider values that are embedded in AI-systems and how these might the works created using AI-systems. AI's tendency to echo current beauty ideals calls for careful consideration of its influence on societal standards. Additionally, the risk of kitschification of presentation and style should be acknowledged. This theme also ties into questions of value alignment in the sense of censorship and free choice of the creator / artist.

5. Transparency and disclosure: Transparency in the use of AI to generate content is essential. Creators should disclose (in line with regulation) the AI-generated nature of content, especially when it could impact public perception or mislead the public.

6. Likeness and deepfakes: The potential misuse of AI to create deepfakes or inadvertently generate synthetic twins of real individuals necessitates a careful and considered approach. This also relates to adhering to regulation concerning good marketing practices.

7. Regulatory compliance and copyright: Creators should be well-informed about the legal landscape, including copyright laws and regulations specific to AI-generated content and practices relating to good marketing practices.

3 Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to explore the ethical and practical challenges of AI-driven visual content creation in communications and marketing. The approach integrates qualitative case study methods, semi-structured interviews with professionals working in visual and audiovisual content creation in communications and marketing, and thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis was performed using ChatGPT-4, with iterative refinement of prompts to ensure accuracy and depth in coding the data. The analysis process, including its challenges, is described, and the chapter concludes with an example of initial coding results.

3.1 Research objectives and approach

This study addresses two primary questions: what are the typical practical and ethical concerns regarding AI-driven visual content creation, and do ethics regulations and guidelines shape AI-driven content creation in communications and marketing and if so, how?

The study was conducted as an exploratory and qualitative case study. While the primary goal was not to present concrete proposals for change or ready-made guidelines, the findings naturally led to preliminary suggestions for guidelines. These suggestions highlight areas with room for awareness-raising or development, justifying the case study approach. In the case study, the aim is to generate researched knowledge about the study's subject. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subject, case studies often employ multiple different data collection methods. (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2015, 37, 52–53.) As the material for this study is twofold, consisting of literature review and interviews, the approach is justified even further.

3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

The topic for my thesis sparked from the notion that when ad agencies and communications and marketing companies started to saturate the blogosphere and LinkedIn with posts and how-tos about the timesaving and efficiency increasing magic that is generative AI, they seldom seemed to mention the ethical questions relating to the matter. Thus, I conducted interviews within the focus group of this thesis, namely professionals working with visual and/or audio-visual content creation in communications and/or marketing to get visibility on how and if ethics of AI are discussed on workplaces, among colleagues or with clients or how ethical considerations shape their use of artificial intelligence.

According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000), the reason for conducting a semi-structured interview instead of a survey are for example the possibility to deepen the understanding of the topic by asking clarifying questions or follow-up questions or inquiring after the rationale behind the opinion

expressed. Semi-structured interviews also allow the emergence of possible new themes related to the subject from the interviewee (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 35). Semi-constructed interviews do not have a fixed set of questions. Instead, the interviews are based on the themes of the study. However, Hirsjärvi et Hurme (2000) suggest that in addition to the structured themes, it is useful to write down some specific questions in case the conversation does not start to flow. They also recommend considering whether it is necessary to include all the themes of the study in the interviews to allow for more flexibility in the interview situation. It is also important to formulate the questions in a way that allows the essence / meaning of the question to be clearly understood. Neutrality in the formulation of the questions is also recommended especially in the sense that the interviewee does not use negative terms in the formulation of the questions (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 103–105).

3.1.2 Participant selection and process

The 9 people participating in this study were contacted through my professional network. They all work in different communication and marketing companies or as in-house resources in the private sector. The titles of people interviewed pertained to visual or audio-visual design and / or content creation. They all had at least 5 years of relevant work experience as for the purpose of this study it was important the interviewees had work experience before generative artificial intelligence hit the market. No information was collected on the interviewees that would allow their identity to be derived. The identity of the interviewees was known only to the thesis researcher.

The interviews were conducted via Teams in April 2024. All the interviews were conducted in Finnish. An outline for the interview can be found in the appendix number 3. The interviews were 30 to 45 minutes long. All interviews were recorded. Initial transcription of the interviews was done securely with Sonix.ai, but the results were less than satisfactory, so they were re-transcribed almost entirely by hand.

The interview transcripts were stored in the secure Teams environment of Haaga-Helia, accessible only to the author of the thesis. Once the transcription was complete, the interview recording was destroyed. The transcripts of the interviews have been deleted upon the completion of the thesis.

3.1.3 Data analysis using ChatGPT

The method of qualitative data analysis was explorative with an applied thematic approach. Data analysed was interviews. According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) explorative qualitative data analysis is content driven and ask “what do x people think about y” rather than hypostatize “x people think z about y” as confirmatory approach does. Explorative data analysis also derives codes from the data and usually uses purposive sampling (Guest et al. 2012). As Guest et al. point out, the interaction between researcher and respondent drives the development of the codes and

identification of the themes. The skills of the interviewer can have a significant effect on the richness of the data collected and thus also the result of the analysis. (Guest et al. 2012).

After researching various analysis tools and testing their short free trial periods, I found that mastering these tools within the originally allotted timeframe was implausible. Having used ChatGPT previously and appreciating its ease of use, I decided to explore its potential for thematic analysis. During my search, I came across several sources, including YouTube videos by researchers testing AI tools for thematic analysis. While many sources suggested that analytics tools like NVivo were better, they also acknowledged the promise of ChatGPT. A set of particularly informative videos by Dr. Jarek Kriukow provided tips on how to write effective prompts and what to avoid when using ChatGPT for thematic analysis (Kriukow May 2023a, May 2023b, October 2023c). Subsequently, I discovered that Kriukow had developed his own GPT model, and after I had reviewed his credentials and expertise in the field, I deemed the model trustworthy for assisting with the analysis and especially prompt crafting. This further solidified my decision to use ChatGPT due to its promising capabilities and my tight schedule.

A thematic analysis of the interviews was then carried out using ChatGPT-4. The interviews were anonymized before being submitted to ChatGPT-4, with the “opt-out” feature chosen to ensure they were not used as training material for ChatGPT-4. The prompts used in thematic analysis were created with the guidance of Thematic Analysis with Dr. Kriukow –GPT (later referred to as Dr. Kriukow –GPT). Examples of initial prompts, along with some iterative prompts, can be found in appendices 4 and 5.

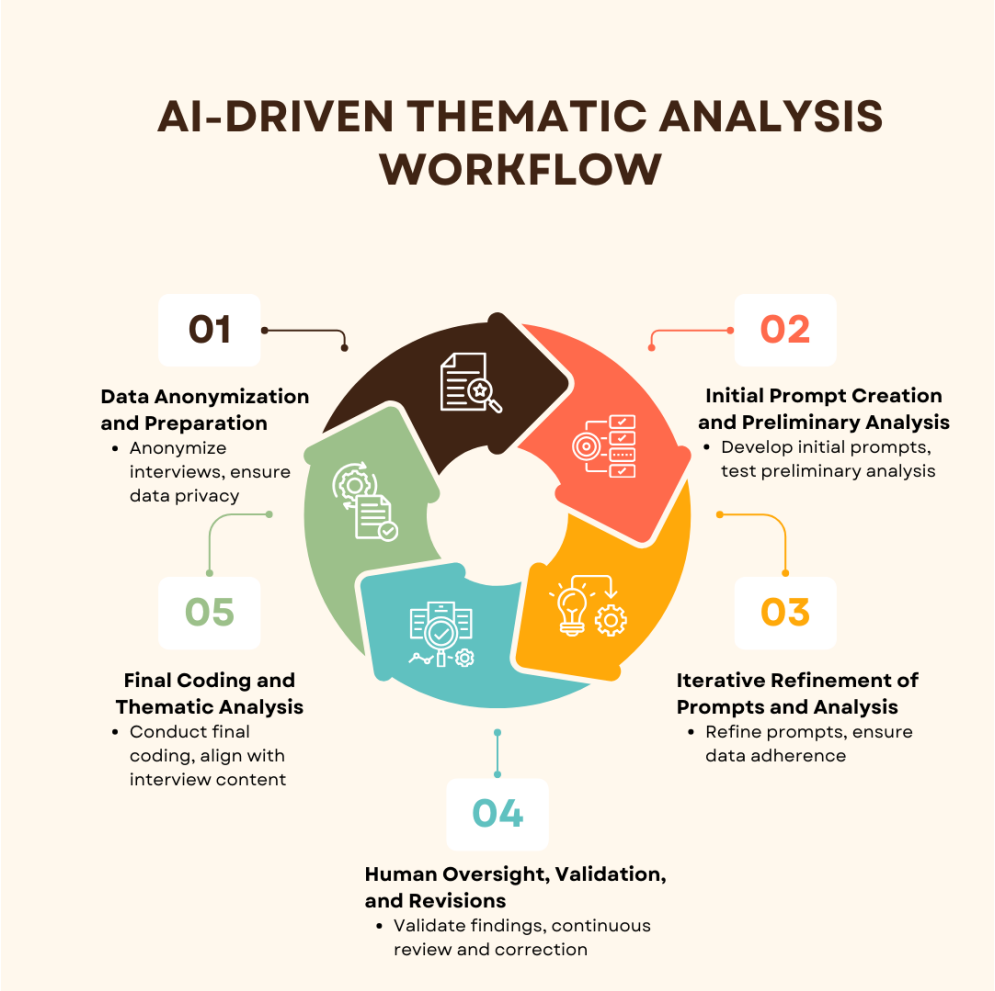

Figure 5. AI-driven thematic analysis workflow. Even though this visualisation is especially created to describe the thematic analysis workflow, it accurately describes the overall “iterative interaction” with GPT´s when using AI as research and writing aid.

I began the analysis and coding of interviews using Dr. Kriukow -GPT by initially simply asking how to code my interviews using ChatGPT. Dr. Kriukow -GPT provided useful answers, leading me to refine my question further for better precision. I tested the data analysis with a couple anonymised interviews, which showed promise initially. However, subsequent analysis attempts revealed discrepancies especially in how ChatGPT reported the results, indicating that the prompts needed refinement. I found out, that instead of trying to re-write the upgraded versions of the prompts myself, I yielded better results by describing the problem and the desired outcomes and asking what possible fixes to the prompt would be. When I was satisfied that I had been understood correctly, I asked the Dr. Kriukow – GPT to write the prompt in a manner that was tailored for ChatGPT. These iteration rounds were numerous.

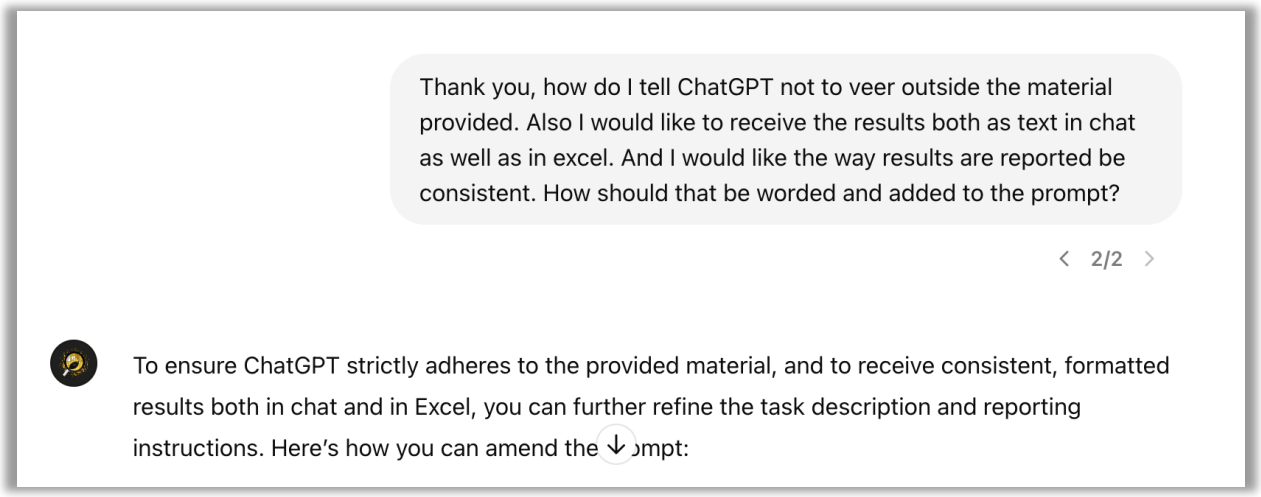

Figure 6. A snippet of ”conversation” with Dr. Kriukow –GPT. At some point of analysing the material, I noticed that ChatGPT started to branch outside the material provided. It also had the tendency to overgeneralize and exaggerate. In addition, structure with which it reported the findings varied. Thus, it was insufficient to merely request an analysis of the documents in the prompt; specifying constraints and the exact manner of reporting was also essential. In this case the restrictions were strict adherence to provided data and avoid overgeneralization and exaggeration. Full description of the restrictions can be found in appendix 5.

Each iteration of the prompt was tested with anonymised and transcribed interviews, the prompts evolving from a few lines to nearly two pages. Finding the right balance in the prompts between enough context and enough “interpretative freedom” was important. When the context was given exactly as in the interview outlines the results were quite thin and I knew there were interesting themes below the surface. Therefore, I did burn quite a lot of midnight oil to get the prompt to a “Goldilocks” level – which is just right–, with adjustments made for accuracy and coverage along the way. This was done as a continuous “discussion” with Dr. Kriukow –GPT.

One challenge I encountered during the thematic analysis was the inconsistency in ChatGPT's ability to process different document formats. At times, ChatGPT could seamlessly read PDFs, spreadsheets, and text files. However, on other occasions, it would fail to process certain formats or omit specific sections, such as entire sheets within an Excel file. This unpredictability required me to continuously adapt my approach—sometimes splitting each Excel sheet into individual PDFs or reformatting files in different ways to ensure successful processing. These inconsistencies, which could occur unexpectedly even within the same day, made the process more time-consuming and nerve-racking but not entirely unreliable. This led me to speculate whether these fluctuations might be influenced by external factors, such as the system's computational load during peak usage times globally or perhaps changes in the model itself. Despite these challenges, I managed

to obtain consistent results through careful adjustment and perseverance, though the process underscored the challenges of working with AI systems that operate as "black boxes," where the underlying processes lack transparency.

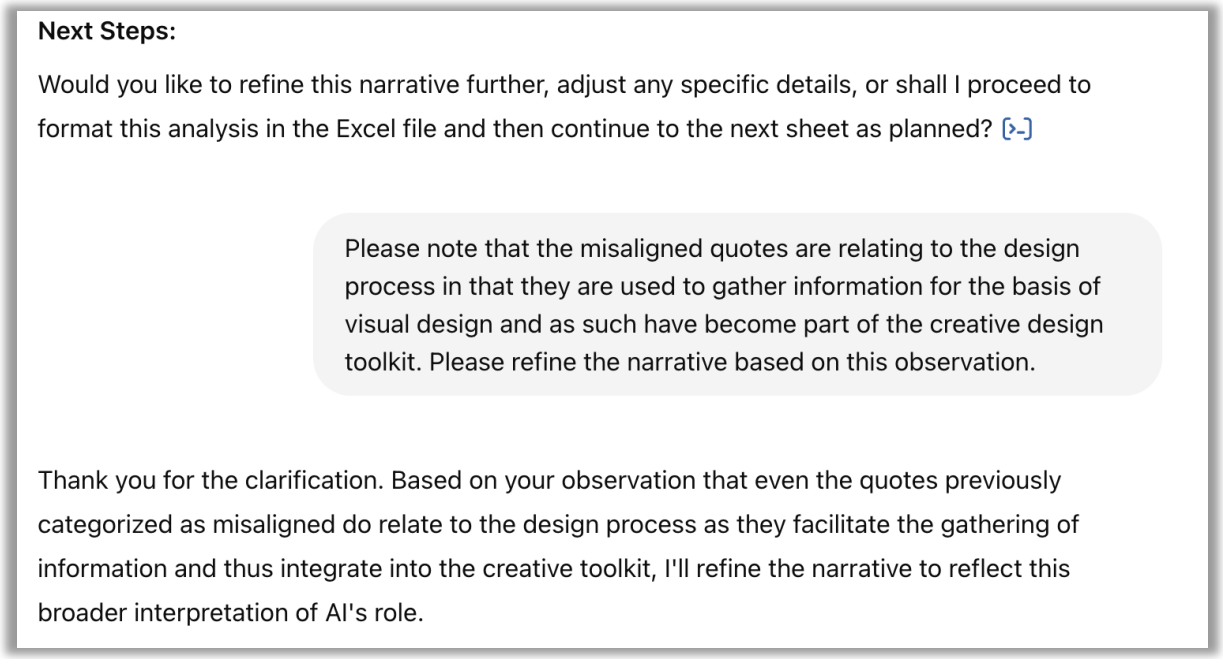

Figure 7. A screenshot of my “discussion” with ChatGPT about how it´s categorisation of certain quotes as misaligned was mistaken[6], and how the analysis needs to be refined taking this view into account. This is an example of how important it is to know the source material and apply human oversight at all stages of the process.

Comparison of the results with my understanding of the interviews was crucial. This allowed for iterative questioning and re-analysis to ensure the alignment of results with interview content. Occasionally ChatGPT also highlighted perspectives I had not initially considered, necessitating further validation with the source material. For example, I had not asked for policy recommendation in my prompts, but ChatGPT offered them on occasion (see next chapter and the example of initial coding phase results). Some recommendations were sound, while others had a whiff of ”americana” in them, in other words: those recommendations had a quality that is hard to describe but is easy to recognise as not fitting into local culture (therefore one can suspect they came from the training data) while other recommendations felt forced, as if ChatGPT had tried to please me by providing

[6] However, as the interviews analysed were in Finnish, I can not rule out a language barrier as the source of this misalignment.

policy recommendations[7]. So called sound recommendations I kept, the ones I could sign off as verified based on the interviews, but the others were simply deleted from the narratives.

I also found out, that it was especially important to remind ChatGPT not to reach outside the material provided for analysis. Therefore, it was important to remind ChatGPT to ”follow the plan” at regular intervals, otherwise after some time it could start to veer outside the original parameters and deliver results in a non-uniform fashion.

Equally important was the notion, that when I dumped all the materials for analysis at once, the results were much more superficial than when I submitted the interviews to be analysed one by one especially in the initial coding phase.

As described, the process involved continuous revisions and corrections, with suggestions for better expressions sought when needed. Although some suggestions were accepted as-is, others required modification. This iterative process, combining automated and manual adjustments, ensured a thorough analysis that aligned with source the material. By integrating the structured approach with oversight and revision, I believe the process can be characterised as rigorous and adaptable, ensuring credible outcomes in the analysis and coding of the interviews.

3.1.4 Example of Initial Coding Phase Results

Theme: Ethical Considerations and Transparency
Focused Code: Nuances of AI Disclosure
Sub-codes: Context-Dependent AI Disclosure Practice
Relating codes: Consumer Trust and Ethical Engagement, Challenges in Identifying AI-Generated Content and Trust
Definition Summary:
This focused code examines the subtleties and complexities of disclosing AI involvement in various contexts. It highlights the ethical and practical challenges associated with transparency, particularly what, when, and how much should be disclosed about AI contributions.
Alignment Analysis:
The quotes and context provided discuss various perspectives on the ethics and strategies of AI disclosure:
RD09, 82–85: “But intuitively, I would say that using it does not necessarily require telling people

[7] I am fully aware, that ChatGPT is not an actual thinking or feeling entity, and thus is not trying to get into my good books. This description of my interpretation of ChatGPT´s non-existent motives is a prime example of anthropomorphism.

that AI has been used. It's the end result that matters, and that's where I see AI as just one tool among others. However, it is ultimately the human being who has made the decision to publish this particular material as it is."The respondent considers the necessity of AI disclosure, arguing that the result justifies the means, which might obviate the need for full transparency.

RD01, 210–217: "Personally, I tell clients about AI because I don't want to find myself in a situation where I have to produce an image that I can't do." This quote discusses the importance of being transparent about using AI to manage client expectations and maintain integrity in their professional output.

RD05, 165-167: This quote raises concerns about the potential shame associated with using AI, suggesting that some may hide their use to maintain credit for the work's perceived originality.

RD05, 162–165: Highlights the importance of recognizing AI's role in content creation, focusing on intellectual property and the appropriate credit for work.

RD02, 191-193 & RD02, 216–219: Discusses when it might be appropriate to disclose AI involvement, with emphasis on maintaining honesty in situations where AI significantly alters content.

RD02, 165-167: "I think it should (be disclosed), because it has to do with the earning logic and the appreciation of our industry and the appreciation of authorship." Respondent talks about the necessity of disclosure from a professional integrity standpoint, linking transparency to the respect and valuation of human creators in the industry.

RD04: 139-142: Differentiates between commercial and communications of public organizations, suggesting that while it might be acceptable in commercial contexts not to disclose AI use, in public communications, transparency is more crucial.

Narrative Summary:
The analysis reveals a spectrum of opinions on AI disclosure practices. There is a general push towards more explicit disclosures, particularly in environments with significant public impact. However, there is also a nuanced debate regarding the necessity of such disclosures, with views ranging from advocating complete transparency to favouring context-dependent disclosure. One respondent pondered how the disclosure could be done so that it does not hinder the visuals themselves. These discussions reflect broader concerns about maintaining trust and ethical standards, and the practicalities of implementing such standards in diverse operational environments.

Policy Recommendations: Formulate recommendations for crafting effective AI disclosure policies that balance transparency, consumer protection, and practicality in implementation.

4 Findings

The research aimed to explore typical concerns, ethical considerations, and regulatory impacts of AI-driven visual content creation, guided by the following questions:

Q1: What are the current typical concerns, ethical or otherwise, regarding AI-driven visual content creation?

Q2: How do ethics, regulation, and industry guidelines shape the use of AI-driven visual content creation in communications and marketing?

It is important to note that the sample size for this study consisted of nine participants. As such, the findings primarily reflect the perspectives and experiences of these individuals and may not be representative of the broader industry. However, the insights provided by these professionals offer valuable viewpoints on the current state and future trajectory of AI-driven visual content creation.

While the initial intent was to follow a structured outline based on the interview questions, the actual reporting does not adhere to this format. In the semi-structured interviews, questions were designed to guide the discussion, but responses did not always directly address the questions or initially provided very limited information. As conversations progressed, interviewees' thinking and processing evolved, revealing significant themes. Respondents also shifted back and forth between themes.

Several themes emerged that were not initially considered within the proposed analysis structure. The conversation often veered outside the strict framework of communication ethics into broader industry practices and personal experiences with AI tools. This added a rich layer of insights that would have been missed if confined strictly to the initial structure. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for a more fluid and dynamic exploration of topics, leading to a better understanding of the subject matter.

Consequently, the reporting structure reflects these emergent themes and their interconnections, offering a comprehensive view of the ethical and practical challenges in AI-driven visual content creation. This aligns with the iterative and reflective nature of qualitative research, ensuring that the findings are contextually grounded.

The findings are organized into several major themes, each corresponding to a specific aspect of the research questions. These themes – and their sub-codes are:

1. Adapting Skills and Roles for the AI-Driven Future
    a. Shift from Visualizer to Verbalizer

2. Strategic Responses to AI in Professional Practices
    a. Balancing AI Integration with Maintaining Human Elements
3. AI Integration in Visual Content Creation
    a. AI as a Core Component of the Creative Toolkit
4. Efficiency and Productivity Enhancements
    a. AI as a Creativity Support
    b. Gains in Early Design Phases
    c. Automation of Routine Tasks
5. Ethical Considerations and Transparency
    a. Nuanced Views on AI Disclosure Practices
    b. Potential for Misinformation
    c. Ownership and Control of Data
6. Consumer Trust and Ethical Marketing Practices
7. Immediate and Long-term Impacts of AI
    a. AI's impact on Employment and Sector Attractiveness
    b. AI's Negative Impact on Professional Valuation
    c. Environmental Impact
8. Navigating Challenges in AI Integration
    a. Brand Risks with AI-Generated Imagery
    b. Customer Awareness and Misconceptions
    c. Limited Use Due to Perceived Value and Professional Integrity or Skills
9. Inherent Values and Biases in AI
    a. Internal Values Built into AI Systems
    b. Stereotypical Representations or Biases in AI-Generated Visuals
10. Visual Culture Influenced by AI
    a. AI's impact on Creativity
    b. AI's Role in Defining and Homogenizing Visual Aesthetics
    c. Blurring of Authorship in AI-Generated Content
11. Ethical, Regulatory, and Copyright Frameworks for AI Integration
    a. Uncertainty About Copyrights
    b. Need for Clear Regulatory Frameworks and Industry Guidelines

The following sections will look at each of these themes. Some, especially multifaceted themes, are enriched with subcodes. These findings give insight into the current state of AI integration in visual content creation and reflect on the broader implications for the industry. The analysis underscores the importance of balancing technological advancements with ethical considerations and

regulatory frameworks to ensure that AI's role in creative practices is both innovative and responsible.

4.1 Ethical and Practical Challenges in AI-driven content creation

1. Adapting Skills and Roles for the AI-Driven Future

Interviews showed that AI integration necessitates an evolution in professional skills and roles. In the era of generative artificial intelligence, it is not enough to be good at visualizing one's visions and ideas using traditional tools; now, visual content creators must also be able to verbalize their visions. “In the future, it will be even more important to be able to verbalise things, to describe a picture in words when giving prompts to AI” (RD02). One respondent ponders that those visual professionals who actively develop their skills are likely to succeed and thrive within their field. They also suggest that individuals who may not initially be visually oriented but possess strong skills in crafting prompts can also effectively leverage artificial intelligence for creative (visual) purposes. **The shift from visualizer to verbalizer** was seen as the most important skill to grasp to be able adapt to this new era of visual content creation.

2. Strategic Responses to AI in Professional Practices

As artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly seeps into visual content creation; professionals are actively shaping their engagement with AI to maintain a distinct professional identity while integrating new technologies into their workflows.

Balancing AI integration with maintaining human elements

Some respondents are strategically adopting AI to enhance efficiency, yet they consciously balance this integration with efforts to preserve the human elements that define their professional outputs. This balance is not just about maintaining job relevance in the face of automation but also about leveraging human-centric skills as a competitive advantage.

For example, some professionals selectively incorporate AI tools to augment their capabilities, while others emphasize human-generated content to distinguish themselves from AI-driven outputs. Additionally, there is a tendency to increase human interaction within professional roles to mitigate the impersonal aspects of AI, ensuring that professional identity and human touch remain integral to their careers.

“I've been thinking a lot about whether I should focus more on interactive activities, like live workshops. Human presence can't be replaced yet. Should I aim for more interactive tasks to ensure future work opportunities?” respondent RD02 ponders.

This theme reveals a dynamic where AI's role is critically assessed rather than passively accepted, ensuring that professional values and human elements remain at the forefront of professional practices despite the technological advancements.

Out of the nine persons interviewed for this study, only one had wholeheartedly embraced the use of generative artificial intelligence, couple said they were actively using it for certain kinds of creative tasks, and the rest of the interviewees veered a little bit more on the cautious side especially when talking about generative artificial intelligence use outside so called automated tasks in image editing. However, they all agreed that this is a wave that you cannot swim against but must somehow swim along with. Some respondents speculated – or rather hoped – that the use of AI could also increase the appreciation of human-made content.

3. AI Integration in Visual Content Creation

All professionals agreed that artificial intelligence is growing into a role of a **core component of the creative toolkit** in visual content creation. AI tools are increasingly seen as indispensable for enhancing creativity and efficiency in the design process. For instance, designers utilize AI for tasks ranging from background research to idea generation, as evidenced by their integration into popular design software like Adobe Photoshop, which now features AI-driven automatic adjustments. Respondents appreciate AI's capacity to augment creative expression and streamline design phases, viewing these tools as natural extensions of their existing resources.

“It is just a tool” and as such it does not pose any ethical concerns, was the most prevailing first response to a question about what kind of ethical concerns have the respondents come across when using generative artificial intelligence. However, as the interviews progressed some hesitation was elicited, acknowledging potential issues. There was an ongoing tension between recognizing AI as a standard tool and acknowledging the complexities it introduces, including potential disruptions to work and concerns about creativity, authenticity, and especially copyright infringement.

4. Efficiency and Productivity Enhancements

According to the respondents the integration of artificial intelligence into creative processes can enhance both efficiency and productivity. The three key aspect of AI´s role are: supporting creativity, streamlining early design phases, and automating of routine tasks.

Respondents noted that AI especially enhances automated tasks like editing images into different formats without manual intervention, linking it with also job satisfaction. AI has also been effectively used as a brainstorming partner and assistant. Many consider ChatGPT a key tool in the visual toolkit, useful for generating better prompts for other AI tools. AI is mainly used in initial tasks such as developing quick prototypes and layouts. However, the technical quality of AI-produced

materials and copyright issues still limit its use in final products. While AI saves time in early stages, achieving a high-quality final product often requires traditional methods like organizing photography session. Economic savings are possible, but may not be as substantial as expected, as quality outcomes still demand both “brain work” and manual effort.

AI as a Creativity Support

Professionals said that AI-tools can act as a creative support by generating ideas and concepts that might not have been easily conceived otherwise. AI serves as an ideation partner or as a “sparring partner” as one respondent described, and supports the mental processes involved in creative work, possibly expanding the scope and depth of creative projects.

Early Design Phase Gains

In the early stages of design, AI contributes to substantial efficiency gains according to those respondents who have embraced the use of generative artificial intelligence. By automating initial design tasks and facilitating rapid conceptual developments, AI allows designers to focus on more complex aspects of their projects. This not only speeds up the design process but also enhances the quality of the outputs by allowing more time for refinement and creative exploration.

“Instead of searching for tulips, setting up a photo studio, and tossing tulip petals in the air to test if the pictures are usable, I can use AI to validate the visual concept” respondent RD05 described how AI enables the design work to be done with fewer resources.

Automation of routine tasks

AI's role in automating mundane and repetitive tasks is undeniably beneficial. This frees up professionals to devote more time to strategic thinking and high-level creative activities, thereby optimizing workflow and reducing the time typically consumed by less creative, "numbing” repetitive tasks, as respondent RD05 described.

5. Ethical Considerations and Transparency

Transparency as a theme was approached from different angles by the professionals interviewed, from the question of disclosure to transparency and trustworthiness of AI system providers.

Nuanced views on AI disclosure practices

The analysis revealed a spectrum of opinions on AI disclosure practices. There is a general push towards more explicit disclosures, particularly in environments with significant public impact. However, there is also a nuanced debate regarding the necessity of such disclosures, especially in marketing contexts, with views ranging from advocating complete transparency to favoring context-dependent disclosure. Human oversight was also stressed: “But intuitively, I would say that its use does not necessarily require stating that AI has been used. The result is what matters, and in that, I

see AI as one tool among many. Ultimately, it's the human who has made the decision to publish this material exactly as it is" (RD09). One respondent pondered how the disclosure could be done so that it does not hinder the visuals themselves, while another pointed out that transparency can also be used as a means to emphasize the prestige of human-created visual content and preserve professional integrity. One respondent (RD01) pointed out that they always disclose to their client if they have used AI because they do not want to be in a situation where they must produce an image that they cannot reproduce. Transparency can thus be seen as essential in managing customer expectations.

As noted, there is a consensus on the importance of transparency concerning AI-created content, but opinions differ on how it should be implemented, whether through voluntary ethical practices or enforced by law. The narrative underscores a growing recognition of the need for clear industry-wide guidelines about AI disclosure. Interestingly, this perspective aligns closely with the EU AI Act, which similarly allows context-dependent transparency for AI-generated content, with specific exceptions based on the nature of the content and its intended use. Although the respondents were not explicitly aware of this legislation, their instinctive preference for flexible transparency practices mirrors the legal standards being developed at the EU level.

Potential for Misinformation

All respondent shared the view that the potential for AI to generate misleading or deceptive content, such as fake news or manipulated images, poses significant ethical risks. The misuse of AI-generated content can lead to the dissemination of false information, thereby harming public perception and trust in both the media and AI technologies.

This theme, along with the use of AI created human-like imagery, was perceived as disconnected from traditional marketing practices. In marketing, it is customary to promote products that are either in prototype phases or to present an idealized version of reality (think of the stark contrast between advertised McDonald's hamburgers and their real-life counterparts). Furthermore, AI-generated human-like images were often compared to stock photos. Essentially, while there was recognition of the potential for misinformation, particularly in political or social contexts, or in "real life" situations, within marketing, as long as the intention was not malicious, most respondents felt it was acceptable to use AI-generated human likeness without disclosing its origins. However, many also noted that the lack of authenticity in these images ultimately rendered them unusable in final products.

Ownership and Control of Data

The ethical considerations extend to data governance and ownership of AI systems. A couple of respondents expressed substantial concern over who controls the data used and produced by AI

systems and the implications for user privacy and security. Questions about data governance, such as "Who monitors that information?" and "Where does the data go?" highlight the need for robust oversight mechanisms to ensure data privacy and ethical usage. One respondent also questioned the reliability of the information provided by, for example, ChatGPT, arguing that we cannot know what materials it is trained with and whether the training materials are curated in any way. The control and transparency of training data are paramount to maintaining public trust and confidence in AI technologies.

6. Consumer Trust and Ethical Marketing Practices

Theme closely related to transparency and AI disclosure is consumer trust and ethical engagement and marketing practices. When talking about ethics of marketing and communications in general, some of the respondent maintained that honesty is key to trust, with one respondent tying its importance up also with brand management stating, “how openly and honestly you communicate will have a big impact on how consumers perceive your brand" (RD06). One respondent stressed that the angle at which products are sold and marketed, including the target audience, is crucial. They mentioned sensitive groups like teenagers as an example and pointed out that ethically sustainable marketing practices avoid exploiting low self-esteem or creating the impression that individuals are incomplete or unhappy without the product. A third respondent emphasized that at some point, the actual product or service must fulfil the promises and impressions created by the marketing. Therefore, it is important that marketing does not mislead.

7. Immediate and Long-term Impacts of AI

While AI may enhance the efficiency of certain processes, it also presents challenges such as ecological sustainability and the potential displacement of jobs, requiring a balanced view of its benefits and drawbacks.

AI's Impact on Employment and Sector Attractiveness in Visual Production

The impact of AI on employment within the visual production sector is multi-dimensional. Concerns about job losses and the diminishing value of traditional skills are prominent. However, there's also an acknowledgment of the need for adaptability and the emergence of new job roles. Ethical considerations are central to the discussion, including fair compensation and the responsible integration of AI into creative processes. One respondent raised ethical questions about using AI to exploit existing visual content without proper compensation, casting doubt on the sustainability of such practices. Another expressed concern about AI's effect on the sector's appeal to young people, questioning whether careers in visual content creation might lose their allure as AI becomes more prevalent. Several interviewees specifically mentioned illustrators, speculating whether they might be among the first professionals affected by AI in the industry.

AI's Negative Impact on Professional Valuation

There was a significant concern within the respondents about AI's role in devaluing specialized skills. As AI tools become more capable of performing tasks that once required extensive training, there is a fear that the professional worth and the perceived value of these skills will diminish. This can lead to broader implications for job security, compensation, and the overall attractiveness of certain professions.

RD03 expressed the sentiments of couple of other professionals with this experience: “It bothers me that I've often encountered people saying, "Oh, you're a graphic designer, anyone can do that," or assuming that anyone can be a really good visual content creator. So now this is a new wave where once again we must prove where real professional skills are needed, and that the tool itself is not the solution to high-quality visual content or the products being created. It requires professional skills and a different kind of vision, which we have been trained in, lived through, learned, and grown into. There is something justified and real expertise behind it.”

Environmental Impact

Ecological sustainability was an emergent theme. Three interviewees brought up the growing concern about the environmental sustainability of AI. As AI technologies become more integrated into our daily lives and industries, their impact on energy consumption and natural resource depletion becomes a critical area of scrutiny. This shows that discussion is moving towards not only how AI can drive progress but also how it must be developed and used responsibly to mitigate its ecological footprint.

“Something I’ve also been thinking about is whether my prompt experimentation is ethically right in terms of natural resource usage” (RD05).

8. Navigating Challenges in AI Integration

The integration of AI into professional practices is not without challenges. These include maintaining brand identity, professional integrity, and addressing the skills gap that may arise due to rapid technological advancements. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning and the adoption of AI with a view toward augmenting human capabilities rather than replacing them.

Brand Risks with AI-Generated Imagery

There is concern among some respondents about the implications of AI-generated imagery on brand reputation. As AI technologies become more advanced, brands must consider how these tools are used to maintain authenticity, ethical standards, and consumer trust. The discussions highlight the importance of aligning AI-generated content with brand values, identity and the potential risks of not doing so, including the erosion of consumer trust and brand identity.

Customer Awareness and Misconceptions

One of the challenges identified in the interviews were customer misunderstandings or incorrect assumptions about AI's capabilities and applications. A primary issue is that clients frequently overestimate AI's abilities, expecting it to deliver professional-quality visual content. Many clients hold a mistaken belief in the capabilities of AI, expecting outputs that far exceed the current technological reach, which challenges professionals to manage these expectations while striving to deliver satisfactory results.

Another respondent emphasized AI's current limitations in the field of visual arts. While AI can support aspects of content creation, it still lacks the ability to fully replicate the creativity and nuanced understanding that human professionals bring to visual elements. This depth of professional expertise in the visual arts points out that although AI tools are useful, they cannot yet match the creative insights and nuanced appreciation that human artists embody.

“It’s about the ability to see the art of composition and light in a picture. When I talk about lighting, I mean that the same image can look different depending on the illumination. A good photograph always has a contrast between light and shadow, which brings out the shape. An image can be static and still full of movement, even if its elements don't physically move. It's important to understand the content of the image and thoughtfully select its elements. Not just randomly picking something and thinking, "Oh, that’s a nice picture”. There should always be a purpose and a reason why the image is visually the way it is. I believe that a picture can tell a lot without words” (RD03).

These observations show the importance of addressing these misconceptions to foster realistic customer expectations. While AI can be a powerful tool in aiding visual content creation, it is crucial to recognize its limitations.

Limited Use Due to Perceived Value and Professional Integrity or Skills

Reasons for not actively using AI in professional capacity were varied. There was a strong focus on maintaining professional integrity. There was also scepticism regarding the true value of AI, driven by its struggle to consistently produce high-quality, authentic content that meets both personal and professional standards.

Professionally, there was significant concern about AI’s ability to align with personal aesthetic values. Often, substantial human intervention is necessary to tailor AI outputs to meet these standards, pointing to a gap in the technology’s ability to understand and replicate the nuanced preferences of professionals. Alongside these quality and consistency concerns, ethical issues also arise. Professionals worry about the ethical implications of using generative AI tools, fearing that

an over-reliance on AI could diminish the value of human-crafted work and potentially homogenize creativity.

Economic and accessibility barriers also play a significant role, particularly affecting freelancers and small businesses who may not have access to advanced AI functionalities due to cost constraints. Additionally, two respondents pointed out that the user interface of AI tools also proves to be a deterrent for widespread adoption among professionals. Language barriers can lead to poorer prompting and thus present further obstacles in using AI effectively.

The complex reality of AI integration in professional settings paints a picture of a scepticism about AI's role, current and future, in professional contexts, driven by concerns over quality, authenticity, ethical use, and the overarching need for a more human-centric approach both in AI development and use.

9. Inherent Values and Biases in AI

Internal Values Built into AI Systems

There´s a dual perspective on the influence of internal values built into AI systems. On one hand, there's recognition amongst the respondents that developers embed specific ethical guidelines within AI, shaping its operational boundaries and behaviour. On the other hand, there's an acknowledgment that the impact of AI also heavily depends on how users interact with and deploy these technologies, suggesting a shared responsibility between developers and users. However, only one respondent said that they had purposefully tested to see if there are such limitations. Others said that they suspected that there are such limitations but had not come across any within their own work. This might be due to the limited experience of using generative AI tools or the nature / content of the work they have used generative AI for. One respondent was of firm opinion that the values represented in the outputs came only from the uses, highlighting human oversight.

Stereotypical Representations or Biases in AI-Generated Visuals

Most respondents said that they had heard of or read of stereotypical representations in AI created materials, however most said that had not come across it firsthand with the tasks that they had use AI for. The classical stereotypical representations, particularly in relation to gender, race, age, and other demographic attributes influenced by the biases in the data used for AI training were mentioned as examples.

One respondent compared AI imagery to stock photo libraries and said that the same societal biases can be found on them, it is not a stand-alone feature of AI. This can also be seen revealing something of the source material used to train AI models. This realization broadens the discussion from AI-specific issues to a more systemic problem of bias perpetuation in visual media.

10. Visual Culture Influenced by AI

As artificial intelligence permeates the visual arts and visual landscape in general, it brings with it a complex array of questions that significantly affect creativity, authorship, authenticity, and aesthetic norms.

AI's Impact on Creativity

AI is reshaping the creative landscape by providing tools that both stimulate and challenge traditional creative processes. While some fear that AI may homogenize creative outputs, diminishing the diversity of visual expressions, others see it as a catalyst that enhances the creative capabilities of professionals. At best cases AI can introduce new elements and accelerates creative processes, expanding the possibilities for innovation. However, the technology's capacity to mimic human cognitive processes—combining old concepts to create new ones—raises questions whether AI processes and outputs differ so much from the human processes except by the speed they churn out content or ideas.

AI's Role in Defining and Homogenizing Visual Aesthetics

The democratization of content creation through AI is seen as both beneficial and harmful. While AI facilitates the production of visual content, enabling more creators to express their visions, it also risks leading to a cultural landscape where unique artistic expressions are overshadowed by widely accessible, homogenized visuals. Respondents expressed concerns that the ease of generating content may reduce overall creativity and uniqueness within the visual arts, potentially leading to a uniformity in visual media that lacks depth and personal touch. “I somehow fear that this world will just fill up with such pointless images” view expressed by RD04 was echoed by many respondents.

Also, the easiness with which a truly individual style or expression can be emulated so easily and widely was found troubling. “There is a risk that someone's unique style or even their entire life's work might be plagiarized, turning it into something banal... a surface without deeper meaning. A good example is director Wes Anderson, whose style is now very commonly replicated in images” (RD05).

Blurring of Authorship in AI-Generated Content

AI-generated content complicates traditional notions of authorship, challenges traditional notions of authorship, potentially eroding the personal touch and craftsmanship that have long been valued. It raises questions about ownership and responsibility.

Respondents expressed a strong interest in maintaining the integrity of authorship, advocating for it to be respected and recognized even when AI plays a significant role in the creative process. The discussion often centred on how to ensure that human creators receive due credit for their

contributions, a concern that becomes more pressing as AI tools become more capable and autonomous in generating content.

One of the more complex issues arising from the use of AI in creativity is the question of ownership and copyright. As AI assists or sometimes leads in content creation, questions emerge about the rights that creators retain over such works. RD08, for instance, highlights the need for clear legal frameworks to define and protect intellectual integrity and property rights in AI-generated content. This necessity becomes evident as AI blurs the lines between human and machine contributions, making it difficult to determine where human creativity ends, and AI augmentation begins.

“At what point can I say that this is my work if the whole job is done by artificial intelligence?” RD05 sums up the discrepancy between the traditional notions of authorships and AI-assisted content creation and the need to be granted copyrights.

This debate underscores the delicate balance required between leveraging AI´s capabilities and ensuring that human artists receive the recognition and rights they deserve.

11. Ethical, Regulatory, and Copyright Frameworks for AI Integration

The need for clear regulatory frameworks and industry guidelines is essential to manage AI's use effectively and ethically was expressed in all the interviews. These frameworks should address the ethical, legal, and professional challenges posed by AI, ensuring that its integration supports creative use of the tools while respecting existing norms and practices.

Uncertainty About Copyrights

The most prevalent theme under regulation was the question of copyrights. All respondents mentioned it to be the most pressing question in their minds and confessed, that they did not have a clear understanding on whether there is a threshold after which AI-created content could be granted copyright. Couple of respondents revealed that their employers had prohibited the use of generative artificial intelligence mainly because of the ongoing legal cases and overall legal uncertainty concerning the matter of copyright infringements and copyrighting AI-created materials

Need for Regulatory Frameworks and Industry Guidelines

There was also a clear call for creating specific guidelines that can govern AI's integration across various sectors, particularly in ensuring ethical practices and transparency. This was seen as something that would so to speak level the playing field and provide a support structure when using generative artificial intelligence. The emphasis is also on the need for systems that can monitor and enforce these regulations effectively.

4.2 Experiment: Family Vacations According to Generative Artificial Intelligence

One respondent suggested an intriguing idea: I should write a prompt and ask each participant to create an image using the same prompt. The underlying concept was to prove that generative artificial intelligence cannot produce the exact same image twice. Therefore, concerns about copyrights could, in a sense, be considered null and void.

I spent considerable time contemplating the prompt as I was interested in other factors besides the question of can AI produce exactly the same image twice. I knew I wanted the image to depict people and a place, and perhaps even some form of action, interaction or a concept. Initially, I considered the prompt "a happy family mushroom hunting" or “CEO relaxing and hiking in wilderness” but then decided to exclude any emotional attachment or specific action. I was curious to see how artificial intelligence would interpret a more neutral prompt, reflecting the world as it is portrayed in the training data. I was also interested in identifying any biases that might emerge.

Thus, the final prompt was simply "family on vacation." As all the respondents had already generously contributed their time with the interviews, I asked them to quickly generate an image using a generative artificial intelligence tool of their choice and send the result without any edits to me. I also asked them to reflect their images as professionals and in the context of the interview, and not use more than 5 to 10 minutes with this task.

I received five sets of images. If we overlook the fact that some of the depictions of people were often quite disturbing, appearing not entirely human, several trends emerged. The concept of family was mostly heterosexual and predominantly white / Caucasian, with a couple of exceptions. Vacations were invariably depicted on exotic, sandy beaches, with people standing and looking at the camera, showing little action. Also, according to these images, vacationing is mostly reserved for young, fit, and middle-class (or high middle-class) people who have conventional tastes and suitable financial means. So even if the tools did not produce exactly the same image twice, they were movingly uniform in their concept of family and vacation.

This exercise provided an intriguing worldview, revealing not only how we reflect ourselves into the visual world but also how the companies developing these tools influence this reflection. I wondered if a tool developed in Scandinavia or the Nordic countries, or Switzerland, would have depicted scenes with winter sports. What I also found interesting was the lack of action in the images; people were primarily posing for a camera. This seems to mirror the world of social media, which I suspect has heavily influenced the training (read: the images downloaded from social media) of these generative artificial intelligence models.

Reflecting this visual experiment further, it is evident that while generative AI cannot produce identical images, the outputs still mostly reflect a narrow view of concepts like "family" and "vacation" and the social class associated with vacationing. This experiment also brought out the complexities surrounding the question of copyrights even if these works were not intended to be enjoyed as art. The homogeneity of the AI-generated images raises questions about the originality and creative freedom required for copyright protection: if the images are created by estimation calculations of an AI, whose vision are these systems actually realising? In short, this test highlighted the inherent issues in both the training processes and the data used for generative artificial intelligence.

While the preceding reflections are my own, the following analysis of the images is directly based on the insights provided by the respondents in this study.

Figure 8. Family on vacation, created by RD08 using Adobe Firefly.

RD08 conducted a quick test using Adobe's Firefly AI, finding it very easy to use. However, according to them the results were not impressive. Despite using a Finnish prompt, the images had a distinctly "American" feel. Visually, none of the images were appealing, resembling cheap and dull stock photos with a slight AI twist. The lighting on the individuals was peculiar, and the rendering of

hands was consistently problematic. Also, in the upper left image, the young girl's leg appeared concerning, and in the bottom left, the faces of the young girls were unsettling. The characters suggested an unconventional polyamorous family model, which, while not something RD08 judges, resulted in odd compositions. Although this exercise was amusing, RD08 highlighted that creating satisfactory images would require extensive prompt refinement and editing. Even then, RD08 was doubtful that the final results would surpass basic stock photos in quality.

Figure 9. Family on vacation, created by RD05 using Krea.ai.

RD05 observed several positive aspects in the generated image. Notably, the family depicted is not white, offering diversity. The image captures a typical tourist photo pose, with the family positioned in front of a scenic background. The presentation of genders is not traditionally straightforward, particularly the second person from the left. The facial expressions are realistic, avoiding the

uniform American smile pose. Additionally, the family's appearance could be genetically plausible, and the bodies are not overly sexualized. The poses are believable, with correct anatomy, and there are no distracting issues. The clothing fits credibly on the individuals, and the landscape provides a Finnish viewer with a sense of a holiday destination. The scenery looks realistic, not utopian, and the lighting and material textures are sufficiently believable.

However, RD05 also identified some challenges. The age distribution of the family seems somewhat implausible, as the parents appear too young. The people's appearance is advertorially perfect, which can be unrealistic. If this image were used to advertise tourism to Finns, the family might appear to be in a domestic setting, though the image might work well for markets in Asia. The clothing might exhibit a slight male gaze. RD05 noted that if the image had been created through photography, the lighting on the people would have been subtly enhanced with artificial light or reflective surfaces.

Figure 10. Family on vacation created by RD02 with Dream.ai.

RD02 provided an image developed by the Dream application with the prompt "Family on vacation," using the default settings. Several observations were made regarding this image. Firstly, the depiction of the family is a white heterosexual couple with children and what appears to be grandparents. RD02 noted that in Finnish culture, it is not typical for grandparents to be included in a family vacation photo, suggesting a cultural difference in the AI's representation.

Secondly, the vacation setting features a turquoise sea and sandy beach but notably lacks palm trees, which RD02 found curious. Additionally, while all the adults are wearing sunglasses, the

child's eyes are left unprotected, raising concerns about realism and attention to detail. Lastly, RD02 highlighted the overall quality of the image, pointing out that it was generated using a rather mediocre free program, resulting in images that are quite unusable even for modelling purposes. This is evident from the strange appearance of the characters' faces, which detracts from the image's credibility. In my view, these observations reflect the limitations and cultural biases inherent in the AI-generated images.

Figure 11. Family on vacation created by RD03 with Runway.

Figure 12. Family on vacation created by RD03 with Runway.

Figure 13. Family on vacation by RD03 created with Artbreeder.

Figure 14. Family on vacation by RD03 created with DeepDreamGenerator.

Figure 15. Family on vacation by RD03 created with DeepDreamGenerator.

Respondent RD03 had tested 3 different tools, sending 5 pictures. If one looks past the obvious deformations in most of the images, all picture a heteronormative and most likely Caucasian family, with perhaps one exception. “It is delightful that there was one image depicting different body types. Otherwise, the images are quite dismal to look at. AI has not yet replaced real photography. It leaves one speechless” RD03 described the results of their experiment.

Figure 16. Family on vacation by RD04 created with Shutterstock. This is the only image with suggestions on action other than walking (authors note).

RD04 observed that one of the most distracting aspects of the image, as with many current AI-generated images, is the style, which falls somewhere between a photograph and a drawing. Despite

this, RD04 found the image to be quite pleasant and warm-hearted, with nothing particularly strikingly wrong with it. Due to the lack of specific definitions for the image, Shutterstock randomly generated an Asian heterosexual family.

Figure 17. Family on vacation by RD06, created with Photoshop.

RD06 used Photoshop's Generative Fill AI to create an image with the prompt "Family on vacation," given clearly in Finnish. RD06 chose this tool over Midjourney due to its lack of active use in their work. The resulting image was quite wild and amusingly clumsy. At a quick glance, it could pass as a basic stock photo featuring a rainbow family and possibly children with special needs. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that the image is strange – not merely "uncanny," but clearly a poorly produced artificial creation, RD06 described the contents.

One of the main issues identified by RD06 was the difficulty the AI had with rendering hands and fingers, which were noticeably awkward. Additionally, the parents in the family were both men and almost identical in appearance, reflecting a somewhat progressive yet increasingly common theme in current stock photos. This observation suggests that AI has some awareness of contemporary trends or that it is trained using stock photos (latter is authors note).

RD06 found it interesting that the use of AI and the creation of prompts require a specific skill set. The image produced could have been made by anyone without any visual experience, highlighting both the accessibility and limitations of AI-generated imagery.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I will synthesize the key findings of this study, address the research questions, and draw conclusions based on the results. I will also discuss the theoretical implications and practical applications of the study. The limitations and trustworthiness of this study are reflected in this chapter along with possible avenues for future research.

The primary research questions addressed in this thesis were:

Q1: What are typical concerns, ethical or otherwise, regarding AI-driven visual content creation currently?

Q2: Do ethics, regulation, and industry guidelines shape the use of AI-driven content creation in communications and marketing and if so, how?

5.1 Key Outcomes

The study found that AI is primarily perceived as a tool among professionals. Ethical concerns such as bias were acknowledged but not seen as directly impacting everyday work. Copyright issues emerged as a pressing concern due to legal complexities and uncertainties. Transparency was identified as a significant issue, with respondents advocating for industry-wide guidelines. A notable shift from the role of visualizers to verbalizers was observed, indicating a significant change in the nature of professionals' work due to the integration of AI tools. Additionally, sustainability concerns were raised, illustrating the need for environmentally responsible AI practices.

Respondents identified several practical challenges, including language barriers and economic constraints. Additionally, there was a highlighted necessity for professionals to adapt from being visualizers to becoming verbalizers, representing a significant change in job roles due to AI integration. This shift underscores the evolving nature of professional skills required in the industry, as AI tools necessitate a new set of competencies in prompt creation. The respondents' experiences reveal the broader challenges and adaptations faced by professionals in integrating AI into their workflows.

Transparency and the disclosure of AI use emerged as significant points of discussion, with a clear call for industry-wide best practices on how and when to disclose the use of AI. Some respondents mentioned refraining from using generative AI in their work due to corporate policies, indicating the need for companies to develop internal guidelines for discussing AI usage with customers.

As discussed earlier in the thesis, the concept of integrity, understood as a guiding principle for ethical communication, plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges. Integrity, as brought up in the theoretical framework, is seen not merely as a virtue but as a practical attitude that informs ethical decision-making, supporting both the cognitive and functional aspects of communication ethics. This is particularly relevant when professionals must critically examine the content and context of AI-generated outputs and decide whether to disclose the use of AI. Respondents implicitly reflected this by stressing the importance of maintaining honesty, transparency, and ethical standards—key elements of professional integrity. Importantly, the study found that most respondents advocated for context-dependent transparency, recognizing that the appropriateness and level of disclosure may vary based on the nature of the content and its intended audience.

For example, the focus on maintaining the integrity of authorship—where respondents advocated for human contributions to be recognized and valued even when AI plays a significant role in content creation—aligns with the broader organizational responsibility to ensure that AI-generated outputs adhere to high ethical standards. Moreover, the emphasis on organizational integrity suggests that companies should establish clear guidelines for AI use, fostering an environment where ethical standards are upheld across all communication outputs.

Although due diligence was not discussed by the respondents, it is a crucial principle that should complement the commitment to integrity. Organizations are encouraged to implement processes to verify the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated content to ensure that the efficiency gains provided by AI do not compromise factual accuracy or ethical standards. By prioritizing both integrity and due diligence, organizations can maintain trust and credibility with their stakeholders while navigating the complexities of AI-driven content creation. This focus on due diligence is a key recommendation arising from the theoretical framework and analysis, underscoring the critical role of accuracy, transparency, and ethical communication in the integration of AI in professional practices.

The study’s findings also reveal that the respondents' advocacy for context-dependent transparency aligns well with the principles found in the EU AI Act. This connection, however, does not imply that industry practices are driven by legal mandates. Rather, they are evolving organically in ways that are consistent with both the ethical considerations and the practical realities of the sector.

This alignment illustrates that context-dependent transparency is not merely a response to regulatory pressures but a sustainable and practical approach that is inherently suited to the demands of the industry. This approach provides the flexibility necessary to maintain trust and credibility in AI-

generated content, ensuring that transparency is applied in a way that is both ethical and contextually appropriate.

Moreover, the respondents' instinctive preference for flexible transparency practices reflects a broader trend within the industry—a natural movement towards practices that can be maintained over time, aligning with the sector's values and operational needs.

5.2 Theoretical Implications of the Findings

This section looks at the alignment and misalignment of current industry practices with communication ethics theory outlined by Henrik Rydenfelt (2017). It also introduces other theoretical constructs that emerge from the findings, providing a refined ethical framework for navigating challenges in AI-driven visual content creation. Additionally, the insights of Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho (2024) regarding strategic transparency and its impact on organizational trust and communication value will be considered.

5.2.1 Cognitive Perspective

When examining Rydenfelt's (2017) theoretical framework from the perspective of communication or marketing output such as visual content, the discussions highlighted the importance of truthfulness from a cognitive perspective. The aim was to present information accurately and disclose that it was created using artificial intelligence. However, the interviews also revealed a strong attitude that AI is merely a tool. At this time, based on these interviews, AI is mostly used in the early design phases. This means that visual outputs created using AI do not typically reach target audiences directly. Therefore, this aspect of Rydenfelt's framework may not be fully applicable to the topic of this thesis, at least according to the interview findings.

Truthfulness: The findings highlight the importance of presenting information accurately and being transparent about AI's role in content creation. This approach promotes transparency and honesty and aligns with Rydenfelt's (2017) emphasis on presenting things as they are. However, some respondents advocated for context-dependent disclosure, which can be seen pointing at more practical disclosure practices and steering away from full transparency.

Justification: The interviews did not manage to reveal anything relating to justification regarding communication outputs. However, if one looks at this from the point of view of why AI tools are used, justification as a principle can be found: they can be timesaving and act as a tireless sparring partner.

Honesty: Being honest about the capabilities and limitations of AI tools is a recurring theme. Professionals recognize the need for transparency to build and sustain trust with clients and audiences, reflecting Rydenfelt's (2017) principle of giving a truthful picture. However, it must be noted that this is not only and directly relating to communication outputs but to client relationship management as well. And as such, it also yielded suggestions of context-dependent disclosure practices.

When considering honesty and truthfulness in marketing communication in general, there is often – or perhaps even usually – an effort to make things look more attractive. Marketing can also involve promoting ideals like a romantic holiday in Paris where a young couple have the Eiffel Tower all to themselves or things that do not yet exist, like prototypes of a sports car. Therefore, it is understandable that there was a more practical attitude to the matter while core commitment to truthfulness and honesty remained important.

5.2.2 Functional Perspective

The functional perspective of the theoretical framework aligns quite seamlessly with the findings from the interviews. However, it must be noted that the point of view was not reasons for or against conveying the message but rather how AI tools are used in visual content creation and what kind of consequences there might be.

Deontological Ethics: The duty to act ethically is a prominent consideration among respondents, who often express concerns about maintaining integrity and adhering to ethical standards in AI use. This aligns with the deontological aspect of Rydenfelt's (2017) framework, which emphasizes adherence to moral rules and duties. For instance, one respondent from an in-house design team emphasized that their company's strict guidelines on AI usage were motivated by a commitment to uphold copyright laws and avoid any potential infringement. This reflects a deontological approach where the emphasis is on adhering to established ethical norms and legal standards regardless of the outcomes.

Consequentialism: The evaluation of AI's impact on job roles, creativity, and consumer trust indicates a consequentialist approach among respondents. They consider the outcomes of AI integration, striving to balance technological benefits with ethical implications, which is consistent with Rydenfelt's (2017) functional perspective. Several respondents highlighted concerns about AI potentially displacing human jobs within the creative industry. They discussed the possible long-term impacts of AI on employment, creativity, authorship, and the visual landscape. Sustainability concerns were also raised. This shows a consequentialist perspective where the focus is on the outcomes of AI integration. Another example is an agency-side designer who mentioned always

informing clients when AI tools are used in their projects. This practice stems from a practical concern about being in a situation where they need to produce something that they technically cannot do based on AI-created images. By being transparent, they aim to manage client expectations and avoid potential issues, aligning with a consequentialist approach that focuses on the outcomes of transparency.

Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho's framework highlights the importance of strategic choices regarding AI use, particularly around transparency in impacting an organization's reputation and trustworthiness (Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho 2024, 24). This consequentialist framework can be applied to the findings in this study, particularly in the context of brand risks:

Transparency and Trust: Respondents consistently advocated for industry-wide guidelines to ensure transparency in AI usage. This reflects the importance of strategic transparency to build and maintain trust. Organizations categorized as Mediators benefit from being open about their AI use, which enhances trust and signals innovation.

Copyright Concerns: The findings revealed that some companies implement strict guidelines regarding AI usage to avoid copyright infringement. This practice aligns with the Guardian category in Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho's (2024) framework, where transparency about not using AI builds trust by emphasizing ethical compliance. One respondent mentioned their company's policy of prohibiting AI-generated content to prevent potential legal issues, reflecting a commitment to ethical standards.

Shift in Professional Roles: The transition from visualizers to verbalizers represents a significant change in job roles due to AI integration. This shift could impact job satisfaction and professional pride, linking to the concept of value co-creation in professional settings. This shift can also affect brand perception, as it involves new skills in prompt creation and content refinement. Ensuring that AI augments rather than replaces human skills is crucial for maintaining the integrity and value of creative work, which in turn affects the brand's authenticity and trustworthiness. Brands and organizations should manage this transformation strategically to maintain customer and consumer trust and uphold their reputation.

Brand Risks with AI-Generated Imagery: There is concern among some respondents about the implications of AI-generated imagery on brand reputation. As AI technologies become more advanced, brands must consider how these tools are used to maintain authenticity, ethical standards, and consumer trust. Discussions highlighted the importance of aligning AI-generated content with brand values and identity and the potential risks of not doing so, including the erosion of consumer

trust and brand identity. This underscores the need for strategic transparency and ethical management of AI to safeguard brand reputation.

Environmental Impact, Responsibility, and Corporate Transparency:
Some respondents raised sustainability concerns related to the high energy consumption of AI technologies. They stressed the need for industry standards to promote environmentally responsible AI usage, aligning with Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho's (2024) emphasis on strategic choices impacting an organization's reputation. The European Union's Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) regulations provide a framework for companies to integrate sustainability into their business practices. Although, to my knowledge, the current ESG regulations do not explicitly mention AI, the principles of transparency, accountability, and sustainability are applicable. Companies that proactively address these concerns by adopting sustainable practices in line with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) can enhance their trustworthiness and appeal to environmentally conscious customers and consumers (European Commission 2023, European Commission 2024). The EY discussion paper underscores that while AI can improve resource efficiency and environmental monitoring, its high computational demands, especially in training large models, lead to significant carbon emissions. This dual impact necessitates the use of AI in an environmentally responsible manner. Additionally, the EY paper emphasizes the importance of transparent AI practices for enhancing corporate governance and stakeholder trust, highlighting the need for clear reporting and accountability measures (EY 2023).

5.2.3 Other Theoretical Constructs Present in the Findings

Beyond the cognitive and functional perspectives, several other theoretical constructs emerged from the findings:

Context-Dependent Ethical Decision-Making: This emphasizes flexible disclosure practices that adjust based on the situation and audience. It recognizes that the ethical implications of AI use can vary depending on the context. For example, full disclosure might be essential in public sector communications but less critical in certain marketing scenarios where the primary focus is on the (visual) outcome rather than the process.

Ethical Pragmatism: This involves balancing the practical benefits of AI with ethical considerations, preserving human elements in the creative process. This pragmatic approach includes making strategic decisions about when and how to use AI. It emphasizes the practical benefits of AI, such as increased efficiency, while ensuring that ethical standards such as transparency and authenticity are not compromised.

Consumer-Centric Ethics: This focuses on maintaining consumer trust through honest and transparent communication about AI use. This model prioritizes the consumer's right to know how AI is used in creating the content they engage with. Implementing transparency labels or markers to indicate AI involvement can foster trust and ethical engagement, ensuring that consumers are well-informed.

Environmental Ethics: This promotes sustainable AI practices that minimize environmental harm. This model encourages the development and use of AI technologies that are energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. This was an emergent theme and, as such, not necessarily yet a principle that is put into practice but rather something that is gaining a foothold in the minds of the respondents.

Data Governance and Privacy Ethics: This focuses on ensuring ethical data use, ownership, and privacy in AI systems. This addresses the management of data used by AI systems, including who owns the data, how it is used, and ensuring that data practices respect privacy and security standards. It promotes transparency in data governance and robust oversight mechanisms to protect user privacy and data integrity.

Regulatory Compliance and Ethical Oversight: This involves adhering to legal and ethical standards and advocating for clear guidelines to govern AI use. This model emphasizes the importance of ongoing discussions about the need for regulation and the establishment of clear frameworks to guide the ethical use of AI. Ensuring compliance with existing regulations and ethical guidelines is crucial for maintaining public trust and promoting responsible AI practices.

Niittymaa & Luoma-Aho's (2024) insights into AI's impact on communication value and trust further extend these theoretical constructs, emphasizing that ethical AI use involves strategic transparency to safeguard an organization's reputation and consumer trust. Their categorization of AI's impact into value co-creation, no-creation, and co-destruction highlights the importance of deliberate and transparent AI deployment.

The integration of artificial intelligence in visual content creation presents an interesting mix of ethical considerations and everyday practicalities. While the cognitive and functional perspectives of communication ethics provide a strong foundation, the findings reveal that it alone does not and cannot act as a guiding light. By incorporating flexible but justifiable disclosure practices, prioritizing consumer and client trust, integrating environmental ethics, ensuring data governance, and advocating for regulatory compliance, the theoretical framework can be enhanced to better align with practical realities. I advocated for integrity and due diligence as key components to support ethical practices in implementation. While professional integrity was frequently discussed, due diligence

was notably missing from the dialogue. This absence does not imply that respondents neglect due diligence in their work ethics; rather, it suggests that it was not a focus during these interviews, potentially indicating that it does not currently preoccupy professionals in this context.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations aim to guide AI usage responsibly and transparently. These include developing AI disclosure policies, increasing knowledge of AI regulations, and reducing the environmental impact of AI. The recommendations are categorized for individuals, organizations, and the industry to ensure that each stakeholder can take actionable steps towards ethical AI integration. However, as this study focuses on AI-driven content creation in professional settings, I would like to stress that while each individual should use AI responsibly, it is ultimately up to organizations and the industry to create guidelines and foster an environment where the rush to adopt AI does not undermine these ethical aspirations.

Recommendations for AI Disclosure Policies

Comprehensive Guidelines: Comprehensive guidelines for AI disclosure should be developed to effectively balance transparency, consumer protection, and practical implementation. These policies should ensure that AI usage is clearly communicated while also being feasible for companies to adopt.

Open Dialogues: It is crucial for companies to engage in open dialogues about their use of AI and to communicate this transparently to clients. This openness is essential for maintaining customer trust. Additionally, companies should equip their employees with clear guidelines on the application and communication of generative AI usage. This includes defining how AI can and cannot be used, as well as addressing potential misconceptions about AI's capabilities and limitations.

Processes for Client Communication: Organizations should create detailed instructions on how to address AI-related issues with customers, especially within communications and marketing, to ensure transparency and build trust. Establishing processes for discussing AI usage with clients can help manage expectations and avoid misunderstandings.

Individual Recommendations: Understanding and adhering to AI disclosure policies can help maintain professional integrity and foster trust with clients and stakeholders. For example, professionals should be transparent about using AI in their work to avoid potential misrepresentations and to manage client expectations effectively.

Organizational Recommendations: Developing clear and consistent AI disclosure policies can help manage legal risks and enhance reputation. Organizations should designate responsible

individuals to regularly review and communicate relevant legislation and ethical guidelines related to AI usage.

Industry Recommendations: Establishing industry-wide standards for AI disclosure can promote transparency and ethical practices across the field. Industry bodies should work towards creating comprehensive guidelines that address both regulatory requirements and ethical considerations.

Increasing Knowledge of Regulation Pertaining to Artificial Intelligence

Awareness of Regulatory Landscape: All interviewees acknowledged ongoing discussions about copyright issues, noting that the current regulatory landscape is quite unclear, including the EU AI Act. Therefore, it is important for both individual companies and the industry to engage in more in-depth conversations about regulation.

Educational Initiatives: Initiatives aimed at increasing the knowledge of AI users regarding copyright and other regulatory issues should be encouraged. These initiatives should provide users with the necessary understanding to navigate legal requirements and use AI responsibly.

Individual Recommendations: Staying informed about regulatory changes and understanding their implications can help professionals navigate legal risks associated with AI usage.

Organizational Recommendations: Engaging with regulatory bodies and legal experts can ensure compliance and mitigate potential legal risks. Companies should consider appointing dedicated personnel to monitor AI-related legal developments and communicate these to the organization.

Industry Recommendations: Promoting continuous education and dialogue about AI regulations can help create a more informed and compliant sector. Industry standards should reflect both current legislation and best practices to guide ethical AI usage.

Guidelines for Reducing Environmental Impact of AI

Environmental Responsibility: Adopting AI technologies with a focus on energy efficiency and sustainability aligns with the environmental aspect of ESG. Companies should aim to reduce their carbon footprint and minimize the environmental impact of their AI operations. This aligns with broader corporate sustainability goals and can enhance the company's reputation as a responsible and forward-thinking organization.

Corporate Transparency: The social and governance aspects of ESG emphasize transparency and accountability in business practices. By disclosing their AI usage and its environmental impact,

companies can build trust with stakeholders and consumers. This transparency not only supports ethical business practices but also helps in mitigating potential brand risks associated with the misuse or misunderstanding of AI technologies.

Organizations, industry, and individuals should critically examine the actual value created by AI usage. For instance, is replacing Google searches with AI searches sustainable, or is using AI for image editing more sustainable than traditional methods involving manual editing software? While saving time and potentially cutting costs are benefits, it is essential to evaluate the bigger picture and whether these reasons justify the environmental impact. Not all AI applications and use cases are sustainable, and it is crucial to determine which uses genuinely add value and align with sustainability goals.

Recommendations for Aligning with ESG Regulations

Individual Recommendations: Being aware of the environmental impact of AI usage and advocating for sustainable practices can contribute to more responsible AI usage. Professionals should consider the energy consumption of their AI tools and seek out more sustainable alternatives when possible.

Organizational Recommendations: Implementing sustainable AI practices and complying with ESG regulations can help enhance reputation and meet stakeholder expectations. Organizations should adopt energy-efficient AI technologies and integrate environmental responsibility into their AI strategy an encourage their personnel to adhere to these standards.

Industry Recommendations: Developing and promoting standards for sustainable AI usage can help reduce the overall environmental impact of AI technologies. Industry guidelines should include recommendations for reducing carbon footprints and improving the energy efficiency of AI operations.

5.4 Evaluation of Objectives and Key Findings

The main objectives of this thesis were to explore the ethical and practical challenges of generative artificial intelligence in visual and audio-visual content creation within communications and marketing and to determine how ethics, regulations, and industry guidelines shape AI-driven content creation. These objectives have been met through a literature review and qualitative case study.

The literature review outlined the current state of AI ethics in content creation, identifying issues like bias, transparency, and value alignment. The semi-structured interviews with industry professionals provided practical insights into using AI in content creation. The findings indicate ethical concerns such as biases in AI systems, transparency challenges, and the need for industry-wide

guidelines on AI usage. Recommendations on how to address these issues have been provided to guide future practices.

The study highlighted a significant shift in job roles from visualizers to verbalizers due to AI integration. This change underscores the evolving nature of professional skills required in the industry, as AI tools necessitate a new set of competencies in prompt creation and content refinement. Additionally, sustainability concerns were raised, highlighting the need for environmentally responsible AI practices.

The results show that ethics, regulations, and industry guidelines do influence AI-driven visual content creation, but the impact varies. Some professionals strictly follow guidelines while others are more flexible depending on the context. This suggests a need for clearer, standardized guidelines across the industry to ensure consistent ethical practices.

The research uncovered a network of ethical constructs influencing how professionals use AI and how they navigate practical and ethical challenges. In addition to Rydenfelt's (2017) framework of communication ethics, these constructs include:

- Context-Dependent Ethical Decision-Making: suggesting flexible disclosure practices based on the situation.
- Ethical Pragmatism: balancing practical ways of implementation with ethical considerations.
- Consumer-Centric Ethics: prioritizing consumer trust through transparency.
- Environmental Ethics: advocating for sustainable AI practices.
- Data Governance and Privacy Ethics: ensuring ethical data use and privacy.
- Regulatory Compliance and Ethical Oversight: stressing the importance of adhering to legal and ethical standards.

Additionally, Niittymaa and Luoma-Aho's (2024) framework emphasizes the importance of strategic choices regarding AI use, particularly around transparency in impacting an organization's reputation and trustworthiness. Their insights support the need for strategic transparency and ethical management of AI to safeguard brand reputation.

In conclusion, the thesis has answered the research questions and met its objectives, providing insights into the ethical and practical challenges of AI in visual content creation. The study also introduced new viewpoints and constructs, contributing to the existing knowledge in the field.

5.4.1 Reflections on AI in Professional Practice

Several key points resonate with my own experiences and insights gathered throughout this research process even though I have mostly used generative artificial intelligence as an aid in

research and textual content creation. The integration of AI into visual content creation – or any other content creation - presents both opportunities and ethical dilemmas. From the practical advantages of efficiency and “creativity aid” to the complex issues such as transparency, bias, and sustainability, my journey mirrors many of the concerns and hopes expressed by the professionals I interviewed.

The Shift from Visualizers to Verbalizers: The transition from visualizers to verbalizers reflects a broader shift in the skills required in the creative industry. This change has been evident in my own work, where prompt creation and content refinement have become essential skills. This has highlighted the evolving nature of job descriptions in the age of AI. It seems unavoidable that professionals need adapt to these changes, developing new competencies to remain relevant and effective. At the same time, I agree with respondents who expressed a wish that generative artificial intelligence would be used when it provides actual added value to the content, not just to cut costs.

Even though I can see why the shift from visualizer to verbalizer was the most important new skill to be learned according to the respondents, I was also a little surprised as I had convinced myself that more academic skills like a broad general education, knowledge of history and art history, or an understanding of diverse cultural sensitivities would emerge as significant during the interviews. I had even pre-emptively written a small note stating, "the future hot commodity is humanistic generalists!" Several reasons might explain the lack of these perspectives. For instance, based on the interviews, generative artificial intelligence is primarily used in professional settings as an aid in ideation and to enhance and accelerate the early design phase. Also, the interviewees had not encountered biases or historical inaccuracies in their own design work significant enough to bring this issue to light. This might be due to the nature, context, or their commissions' concepts. A third possible reason could naturally be that the researcher was projecting her own hopes for the increased value of humanistic knowledge and skills.

AI as a Tool: The study found that AI is primarily perceived as a tool without ethical concerns among professionals. However, further discussion revealed changing and context dependent attitudes and unearthed complex issues. This ebb and flow of opinions was interesting as it showcased a dualistic view of AI's impact in professional settings. In my view, this also reflects the stage we are at in the use of artificial intelligence and the discussion revolving around it. Until now, the focus has been on finding the best ways to utilize it, or just beginning to learn how to use generative artificial intelligence, while questions related to other concerns beyond effects on employment and copyright issues have been on the back burner.

Early Design Phase Gains: Most professionals interviewed noted substantial time savings in the early design phase. This aligns with my personal experience, where AI has served as a valuable

assistant in handling repetitive and time-consuming tasks. By automating these mundane activities, AI has allowed me to focus on more critical and creative aspects of my work. However, I cannot definitively say whether this thesis would have been better or worse without the use of AI; at least I now have personal experience with it.

From my perspective, the time savings are proportional. If one is willing to overlook the quality, consistency, and validity of the AI-assisted outputs, the time savings are notable. Naturally, the level of required precision or quality depends on the task at hand. For more ambitious tasks, the time savings might not be as significant as one would expect or hope. While the exact time saved in writing this thesis is hard to quantify, the greatest benefit often seemed to be the comfort in offloading mundane tasks like technical reorganization to ChatGPT.

Still, I suspect I would not have been able to complete the thesis in this time frame without the technology. For example, the time saved by using AI, namely SciSpace, for tasks like sorting potential source materials and note-taking has been substantial. I also acknowledge the practical benefits of AI, especially considering my physical limitations, which limited the time I could spend writing. Using AI for dictation, transcribing, and editing has been a concrete example of how technology can alleviate physical strain and improve efficiency.

However, in my opinion, it still remains to be seen how much AI will truly enhance operations in communications and marketing unless there is a shift in prioritizing quantity and speed over quality. While studies suggest productivity gains in certain type of tasks up to 40% (Somers 2023), it's crucial that employers set realistic expectations for AI use and productivity enhancements.

Transparency and Trust: Throughout this research, the importance of transparency has been a recurring theme. My use of AI tools for analysis and content creation in this thesis underscores the necessity of being open about AI's role. Transparency not only builds trust with clients and audiences but also ensures that ethical standards are upheld. The interviews confirmed that open communication about AI's capabilities and limitations is crucial in managing expectations, whether those expectations come from clients or management.

At the same time, I agree that context-dependent disclosure practices are more feasible. This became apparent as I discovered that to truly harness GPT as a digital colleague, one must engage in an iterative discussion. For example, I considered whether writing notes on source material using the Copilot feature was significantly different from jotting down notes by hand on paper or copying and pasting passages into a Word document to the extent that it merited step-by-step reporting. Keeping track of and reporting each interaction in a way that wouldn't negate the time saved by using AI, and in a manner that would not require vast amounts of pages in the appendices, seemed

quite frankly impossible. After consulting Haaga-Helia AI guidelines, I opted for an upper-level disclosure practice.

Potential for Misinformation: All respondents agreed that AI's potential to generate misleading content, like fake news or manipulated images, poses significant ethical risks, harming public perception and trust. In marketing, while recognizing these risks, most felt it was acceptable to use AI-generated human likeness without disclosure if not done maliciously. However, the lack of authenticity often made these images unusable in final products.

I found this discrepancy intriguing. It seems there wasn't much acknowledgment amongst the respondents of the potential issues with using AI-generated content in professional settings, particularly how it can make it harder to distinguish authentic content from generated content. Even if the use isn't malicious, its adoption in commercial settings, especially in using human likenesses, could unintentionally exacerbate the problem. Personally, I was quite invested in exploring the concept of human likeness from various angles, such as aspects relating to cognition and ethical question of “one's right to oneself.” However, in the group interviewed, this issue seemed almost esoteric, possibly because they saw it akin to using stock photos, which in itself is a valid point of view. Nonetheless, it was a significant area of interest for me during the theoretical phase of the study, although the theme did not find much resonance with respondents.

Hallucinations did not emerge as a significant theme in the interviews with visual content professionals, except where visual hallucinations were sometimes seen positively as an extension of imagination. However, hallucinations were mentioned in a few comments specifically related to ChatGPT, particularly in how ChatGPT is used for information retrieval and the trustworthiness of the information provided. As discussed in the methodology chapter, ChatGPT tends to present AI in a highly positive light or use grandiose language if not moderated. This is a critical issue when using AI in professional contexts or as a learning aid.

In my own experience, I did not use AI to create content from scratch by posing academic research questions and asking the AI to produce text. Thus, I did not encounter hallucinations in that context. However, some hallucinatory cases arose during the analysis phase before refining the prompts, where the AI sought answers from outside the input material. This issue is directly related to misinformation and underscores the challenge of ensuring accuracy in AI-generated content.

Bias and Ethical Considerations: The potential for bias in AI systems became fully apparent to me while reading the source materials. My own experiences with ChatGPT and DALL-E have shown that AI tools can exhibit inherent biases, which must be carefully managed. This has reinforced my belief in the need for continuous monitoring and adjustment of AI systems to mitigate

these biases. The ethical use of AI requires a commitment to fairness and accountability, ensuring that the technology benefits all users without perpetuating existing inequalities.

Sustainability: The environmental impact of AI technologies is a significant concern for both myself and the respondents. The high energy consumption of AI systems raises important ethical questions about natural resource usage. One respondent, RD05, poignantly asked, “Something I’ve also been thinking about is whether my prompt experimentation is ethically right in terms of natural resource usage.” This question highlights the broader issue of how much more we are globally willing to consume natural resources and energy just to speed up some tasks in visual and textual content creation[8].

While the time and cost savings may be immediate, there is a long-term environmental price to pay. Perhaps, or hopefully, in a not-so-distant future, we will start to measure AI's carbon footprint and include it in sustainability metrics and ESG reporting. As someone who values environmental responsibility, I advocate for integrating sustainability into AI development and usage. This includes adopting energy-efficient technologies and promoting industry-wide guidelines to reduce the carbon footprint of AI operations.

Navigating Challenges: Navigating the challenges of using AI in research and content creation has been a learning experience. The initial difficulties in refining AI prompts and managing the tool's biases required a meticulous and iterative approach. Through these challenges, I have learned the importance of adaptability and resilience in leveraging AI technologies effectively. The insights gained from these experiences have informed my recommendations for future research and industry practices, emphasizing the need for ongoing dialogue and development in AI ethics.

Homogenization of Visual Culture: The homogenization of visual culture was not a concern for all respondents, but I see it as a worrisome feature. The widespread use of AI tools can lead to a sameness in visual outputs, reducing the diversity and richness of visual culture, and at worst, robbing authors and artists of their livelihood and unique vision and voice. While none of the respondents explicitly referred to kitsch or kitschification, I interpret comments about surface and visual

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[8] Respondent RD04 emphasised the importance of innovations that genuinely benefit business and public health, questioning the need for AI-generated images. I tend to agree, appreciating the benefits of AI in my own work, while recognising AI’s potential in critical fields like healthcare and diagnostics, where its impact can be profound. This is especially relevant given the significant environmental costs of AI technologies. For example, training a single AI model can consume as much energy as five cars over their lifetimes, with substantial water usage needed to cool the supporting data centres (Crawford February 2024). Additionally, AI's energy demands are expected to increase 50-fold by 2030, raising concerns about long-term sustainability (Kindig June 2024). Given these impacts, it may be more prudent to prioritise AI applications with substantial societal benefits rather than those that merely generate additional digital content.

trash through the lens of borrowing charisma and appropriating a single aspect of style. Naturally, visual arts and commercial visual content borrow from previous generations or contemporaries and can intentionally contain visual meta levels. However, artificial intelligence often, at best, steals and, at worst, cannibalizes visual expression.

Reflecting further on the discussions with respondents, **the issue of skill erosion** was brought up by one interviewee and has become a significant point of consideration for me. What happens when we have a generation of graphic designers who have not learned to put their vision into proverbial paper themselves, but have only – or at least mostly – relied on AI-generated estimations of their ideas? As I worked on this thesis, I have pondered whether my use of AI tools has diminished my learning experience or made learning process or this study less valuable. Or will continuous use of AI in my work diminish my own capabilities to process information and understand and emulate the subtleties of living language? Could it make tasks that once seemed easy feel difficult if I were suddenly without AI?

Additionally, some respondents considered the possibility that the use of AI could also enhance the appreciation of human-made content. I found the speculation of possible increased appreciation of human-made content interesting, with ideas of “AI did not do this, I did” - disclaimers or stamps differentiating man-made content from AI-generated content. This can perhaps be seen as foreshadowing a time when most visual content will be determined to be produced by AI. It also relates to the question of transparency in AI ethics, i.e., whether the use of AI should be disclosed.

5.4.2 Trustworthiness of the Thesis

In conducting this thesis, I utilized various AI tools, particularly large language model-based tools like ChatGPT and SciSpace, for tasks such as information gathering, note-taking, and text production. This research employed an iterative and collaborative AI-augmented process, with all processes and requests conducted by me, the researcher. The strategy involved multiple rounds of feedback and refinement, where I created the original content and then used AI tools like ChatGPT to modify and analyze it based on my instructions. This iterative feedback loop ensured continuous improvement and alignment with research objectives. AI tools acted as collaborators, providing suggestions, refining ideas, and enhancing text clarity and coherence while I maintained control and direction.

A significant aspect of this thesis involved using ChatGPT for analysis. The details of this usage are explained in a separate section. It's interesting to ponder whether similar results could be achieved using other tools or if another person could obtain the same results with the same or different AI tools. The answer is both yes and no. If another person were as familiar with the interview

material and decided to follow the path of emerging themes, they would likely achieve similar results. However, if the findings were reported strictly based on the interview framework, the outcomes might differ. This discrepancy would stem not from the AI as an analysis tool, but from the choices made by the thesis author during the analysis process. Additionally, due to the nature of generative artificial intelligence, naming conventions might vary. I have also revised and updated names to be more accurate or clearer.

It's also important to note how the prompts are formulated for analysis, the number of times texts are processed through the AI, and the careful consideration given to corrections and the inclusion of perspectives can affect the end result. For example, ensuring the analysis strictly adheres to the material and being vigilant about introducing new content not present in the theoretical framework or interviews is crucial. There is always a risk of contamination of results, which can happen in any analysis method. Over time, one might form an imbalanced impression of the findings, and if not cross-checked with the original data, it could lead to inaccuracies.

AI tools like ChatGPT have inherent values and biases that can impact the reliability of the analyses. For instance, I noticed that ChatGPT tends to look at AI and its effects in positive terms unless specifically reminded to also take a critical look, likely due to its training data or values embedded in the system by the developers. I also observed that in the analyses, ChatGPT often used more “inflated” adjectives and imagery than typically used in Finnish academic writing[9]. I took note of these tendencies and made necessary corrections, such as moderating the language and adjusting the prompts to be very exact and limiting. Recognizing and monitoring these aspects is vital when using generative artificial intelligence for research and analysis. I have endeavoured to minimize the impact of biases or inherited values on this work, and I believe I have succeeded. Nevertheless, it is impossible to be entirely certain that biases or attitudes—personal or inherited via AI tools—have not influenced research without some sort of double-blind process in place. By openly discussing how AI was employed, I hope to enhance the trustworthiness of this thesis.

The use of AI tools in this thesis was conducted with several ethical considerations in mind. All interview data were anonymized prior to analysis to protect participant confidentiality. During the analysis, coding, and revision processes, the opt-out mode was activated, ensuring that the interviews, resulting codebooks, and thesis chapters were not used to train AI models. Transparency

[9] I find this notion almost humorous: I’m well aware that my writing style is a bit more expressive than what is typically expected in academic work. Yet, I criticize ChatGPT for being pompous and overly positive. The distinction, however, is clear: my choice of words reflects my personal expressive style, not some inherent bias or value.

was also a key principle; full disclosure of AI usage was maintained throughout the study. Major prompts were included as examples, though after careful consideration not all prompts or iteration rounds were described or attached to avoid cumbersome documentation.

5.4.3 Limitations of the Thesis

The ethics of artificial intelligence in general have largely concentrated on the development of AI and the technical solutions pertaining to the matter. The ethics of AI cannot be considered without looking at the laws and regulations surrounding its development and use. However, as I am neither a developer nor a legal expert, the technical and legal descriptions might be lacking.

Even though generative artificial intelligence emerged on the scene already in the 1960s in the form of chatbots and generative adversarial networks (GANs) have been used in image creation since 2014, the real game changer in the field happened with text-to-image tools like OpenAI's DALL-E in 2021, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion in 2022, and text-to-text tool ChatGPT in March 2023. These tools became available to wider audiences and required no previous knowledge about image editing or coding (Toloka 22 August 2023).

This has led to a massive surge of papers concerning the ethics of generative artificial intelligence from 2023 onwards. However, academic research pertaining exclusively or even mostly to my specific interest was harder to come by. From the point of view of this study, this means that a substantial number of sources are not yet peer-reviewed or fall into the category of grey literature. As new research guidelines or industry-shaping lawsuits are emerging rapidly, I have had to set a best-before date for the material used in this study: the research papers and grey literature pertaining to my specific research question, or industry-specific guidelines have had to be published earliest 2019 and latest March 2024. Consequently, this might cause parts of this study—or perchance the whole thesis—to become outdated sooner than the researcher would like.

5.5 Evaluation of the Process and Personal Learning

This section provides a critical reflection on the research methodology and the process undertaken in this study. It discusses the strengths and limitations of the chosen methods, the challenges faced, and the personal growth gained throughout the research journey. By evaluating these aspects, I aim to provide an understanding of the study's rigor, and the lessons learned, which can possibly inform future research in the field of AI-driven content creation.

5.5.1 Methodology Evaluation

The methodology chosen for this study, particularly the use of semi-structured interviews, played a significant role in shaping the findings. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a flexible yet focused exploration of the ethical and practical challenges in AI-driven visual content creation. This enabled the collection of in-depth insights from professionals, providing a rich dataset that might not have been achievable through more rigid quantitative methods. However, this flexibility also introduced variability in the data, which was both a strength and a limitation. This required an adaptation to the analysis approach.

The selection criteria for participants ensured relevant and informed contributions, providing a nuanced view of the current state of AI integration into workflows and the ethical and practical questions surrounding it, though it might have also introduced a bias towards certain perspectives. Additionally, the participant base was limited to nine individuals, which, while providing valuable insights, may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and viewpoints in the field. Future studies could benefit from including a larger number of participants to enhance the robustness of the findings. However, this could prove challenging, as the specific methods or principles of AI use in content creation could be considered sensitive or proprietary by many professionals and organizations.

Reflecting on these factors, broadening the participant base to include a wider range of roles and experiences or increasing the number of interviewees could help address potential biases and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ethical and practical challenges in AI-driven visual content creation.

The initial coding phase, facilitated by ChatGPT, was critical in organizing the data into meaningful themes. This process required several iterations to refine the prompts and ensure the accuracy and relevance of the codes. Challenges such as managing the AI tool's inherent biases and ensuring that the coding process strictly adhered to the interview data were addressed through rigorous cross-checking and prompt adjustments.

Using AI tools influenced the data analysis process, offering both advantages in efficiency and challenges in maintaining objectivity. The iterative nature of the analysis, involving continuous feedback and refinement, underscored the importance of critical engagement with AI-generated insights to maintain the study's trustworthiness.

5.5.2 Challenges Faced and Personal Learning

I began this process with almost zero knowledge on the subject but with many opinions. Initially, the subject of my thesis was broadly focused on the ethics of generative AI. It took time to narrow it

down to the current subject and in hindsight, further narrowing might have yielded deeper insights and made the process easier. Nevertheless, I am to a core "more is more" type of person and as such found the process of “killing my darlings” very difficult. I am grateful for my thesis supervisor, Hanna Rajalahti, for sternly directing me away from the deep blue sea of “general ethics of generative artificial intelligence” toward a smaller pond of ethical and practical questions of AI-driven visual content creation in communication and marketing.

A significant aspect of this thesis involved using ChatGPT for analysis and as a research assistant. This process was more complex than initially anticipated. When planning the analysis phase, I believed the hype that AI would greatly enhance productivity and efficiency, assuming I would complete the analysis within a week. I was mistaken; it took over a week just to refine the prompts and achieve consistency in the analysis of the interviews. Moreover, the various stages of analysis took at least double the time I had originally planned.

Incorporating AI tools like ChatGPT introduced both efficiencies and challenges. While there was an expectation of significant time savings, particularly in data analysis, the process of refining prompts to achieve consistent and accurate results proved time-consuming and iterative. This experience underscored the importance of managing expectations regarding the productivity gains AI can offer and the need for realistic planning when integrating AI tools into research methodologies.

The use of AI in analyzing interview data required meticulous oversight to ensure accuracy and minimize biases. While AI tools provided valuable assistance in organizing and coding data, they also introduced potential biases due to their inherent programming and training data. Ensuring that the analysis remained true to the original data required meticulous oversight.

The limitations of this thesis are partly due to the nascent state of AI ethics literature concerning generative artificial intelligence and the swift advancements in AI technologies. Consequently, finding current peer-reviewed literature specific to my research questions was challenging.

Through this process, I have gained valuable new skills and tools as a researcher. Despite my personal inclination towards preferring the gigantic picture, I have come to understand the importance and value of defining one's research questions more rigidly and focusing on specific details. This experience has taught me that a more targeted approach can yield deeper insights and more manageable research outcomes

Overall, I now have a better and more nuanced understanding of the matter. I feel better equipped to use AI in my professional life as a communications professional and, more importantly, to address both practical and ethical questions relating to AI usage with clients. Furthermore, as I began this process with limited knowledge on the subject, my understanding and perspectives evolved

significantly throughout the research period. Some of my initial opinions were confirmed while others were challenged, demonstrating the reflexive nature of this study.

5.6 Future Research

The study suggests several areas for future research, from environmental impact to the impact of AI on job satisfaction and professional pride. Future studies could explore:

Job Satisfaction and Professional Pride:

- Research Question: How does AI integration affect job satisfaction and the sense of professional pride among employees in communications and marketing? Does the shift from visualizers to verbalizers impact their engagement and fulfillment?
- Potential Methodology: Conduct longitudinal surveys and interviews with professionals in AI-augmented roles to assess changes in job satisfaction over time. Compare these findings with those in non-AI-augmented roles.

Transparency in AI Usage:

- Research Question: How do companies in communications and marketing disclose AI usage in creative processes to clients and stakeholders? What are the best practices for transparency in AI usage?
- Potential Methodology: Conduct qualitative interviews and document analysis to examine disclosure practices in various companies. Develop and test transparency guidelines.

Biases and Value Alignment:

- Research Question: How are biases and value alignment mitigated in AI-driven content creation in communications and marketing?
- Potential Methodology: Examine the presence of biases in AI-generated content through qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Develop frameworks and guidelines for mitigating biases and ensuring value alignment in AI applications.

Authorship and Originality:

- Research Question: How is authorship attributed in AI-generated content and what are the policies on originality in the communications and marketing industries?
- Potential Methodology: Investigate authorship claims through case studies, qualitative interviews, and document analysis. Assess client perceptions of AI-generated content.

Environmental Impact of AI:

- Research Question: What is the environmental impact of AI technologies used in communications and marketing, and what are the best practices for sustainable AI use?

- Potential Methodology: Conduct life cycle assessments (LCAs) of AI technologies to quantify their environmental footprint. Develop and test sustainability guidelines through pilot projects in collaboration with industry partners.

Personally, if I were to conduct this study again or extend it further considering the knowledge I have now, I would be particularly interested in exploring the responsible use of artificial intelligence. Specifically, I would investigate what responsible AI usage consists of. However, I would not conduct it as one study but instead split the research into smaller focused studies on specific aspects like biases, transparency, authorship, and environmental impact as proposed above. Each study would allow for a more in-depth exploration of the topic, leading to more comprehensive findings. After conducting these focused studies, a holistic view could be synthesized, providing a well-rounded understanding of responsible AI usage. Additionally, examining whether there has been skill erosion among communications and marketing professionals due to widespread adoption of AI and exploring strategies to combat this erosion would be valuable area for future research.

5.7 Conclusions

My fascination for generative artificial intelligence began in earnest when social media channels were suddenly flooded with very credible images of people and places, all seemingly done with much skill. They also had a troubling feeling that I can only describe as “unheimlich” – uncanny in its Heideggerian sense. This feeling stemmed from the blatantly borrowed charisma and from not being able to trust one’s eyes. The idea that generative artificial systems could easily produce results within seconds from a simple prompt was—and still is—very discerning.

I am fully aware of the contradiction in this thesis: during the process of writing this thesis, I have become a proficient user of artificial intelligence and benefited from it as a research assistant who was most of the time up for “having a change of ideas” with me, giving me a critical pair of eyes when I so requested. I also delighted in its capabilities of unburdening me from the tiresome tasks such as copy-pasting interview contents to Excel to create a codebook. At the same time, I am worried about the consequences of the use of artificial intelligence on my intelligence, the job market in general, on creative industries, on art and artists, and the ever-increasing need for energy to feed the hungry servers AI systems are running on. I am advocating for the responsible use of systems that are basically built on theft of training materials and, in part, on highly questionable labor practices used to train the models. I worry about the effect of generative artificial intelligence on natural resources, yet I have no way of measuring my AI carbon offset, and I would be hesitant to give up its use completely.

Despite my misgivings and wholehearted adoption of AI into my workflow, this study shows the need for more research and discussion on the ethical dimensions of generative AI in communications and marketing. There is a clear demand for industry-wide guidelines to navigate client work ethically and transparently. Companies can adapt these findings by implementing transparent disclosure practices with clients, considering sustainability in their ESG policies, and setting realistic expectations for AI's impact on workload and job roles.

The responsible use of AI is an all-encompassing question that touches on many facets of our society, culture, and ecological resources. It is not merely a personal or local issue dictated by individual ethics or national legislation. It is a global question that requires a broad, inclusive approach to address the diverse impacts and implications of AI technologies. Understanding and defining responsible AI use is essential for guiding ethical practices and policies worldwide, ensuring that AI benefits society while minimizing potential harms.

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Figures:

Tables:

Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Announcement

Research Announcement
The research announcement will be distributed to the participants of the study as a printed or electronic document along with the survey cover letter and the consent form.

Title of the Thesis:
AI-Driven Visual Content Creation and Ethics
– Exploration of Ethical Considerations in Communication and Marketing

Student's Name and Contact Information:
Marja-Leena Lehtimäki, tel.xxxx

Supervising Teacher's Name and Email Address:
Hanna Rajalahti

Commissioning Party: not applicable.

Objective of Data Collection: State of the art concerning the ethics of AI-driven content creation.

Method and Phases of Data Collection: Individual interviews via Teams.

Duration of Participation: Approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Preparation Prior to Participation: No need to prepare for the interview.

Handling, Storage, Recipients, Potential Disposal, and Future Use of Data:
The interviews will be conducted via Teams. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed after the interview. The materials will be stored only in the secure Teams environment of Haaga-Helia, accessible only to the author of the thesis.

Once the transcription is complete, the interview recording will be destroyed. The transcript of the interview will be deleted when the thesis is completed. A thematic analysis of the interviews will be carried out and used in the thesis section, which examines the views of the target group on the topic of the thesis. The thesis may be used in the future, for example in the development of an ethical code, but even then, only the analysis that ends up in the thesis will be used in the development work.

No information will be collected on the interviewees that would allow the identity of the interviewees to be derived. The identity of the interviewees is known only to the thesis researcher.

Dissemination of Results: The thesis report will be published in the Theseus online library.

Funding and Potential Conflicts of Interest: The researcher has not received any funding.

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Consent Form

I hereby give my consent to participate in the research *AI-Driven Visual Content Creation and Ethics* according to the research announcement provided as an attachment.

The content of the research announcement has been explained to me, and I understand the nature of the study, what participation entails for me, how the data I provide will be used, and how it will be stored. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all my inquiries.

I understand that participation in the research is voluntary. I am aware that I can withdraw this consent at any time without giving a reason, and for instance, I can discontinue the interview if I so desire.

Consent can be withdrawn by written notification by e-mail. Please note that once the research results have been analyzed, the contribution of a single participant cannot be retrospectively removed.

For additional information about the research, the thesis author Marja-Leena Lehtimäki, tel.— e-mail: — can be contacted.

With my signature, I confirm that I give my consent to participate in the research.

_____
Name of the Consent Giver

_____ _____
Date Signature

I have reviewed the research announcement and the content of the consent form, and I give my consent to participate in the research.
o Yes. Consent can also be given by-email stating the above mentioned.
o No. Completing the form requires giving consent.

Appendix 3: Outline of the Interview

The beginning of the interview
Thank the participant for their time and welcome them to the interview.
Explain that the interviews are handled confidentially and that no identifiers or quotes that could reveal the interviewee's identity will be used in the work.
Inform that the interview will be recorded for transcription and analysis purposes.
Ask if there are any questions the participant would like to ask before the recording begins.
Clarify, that in the interview, visual content production also covers videos and animations, not just static images.
Start the recording.

"Warm-up questions"
- What AI tools has the interviewee used in visual content production and for what purposes?
- How has the use of AI changed visual content production, that is, the work?
- Positive effects?
- Negative effects?

AI and ethics
- What challenges have you encountered in using AI?
- What ethical questions regarding the use of generative AI in visual content production have you faced in your work?
- Or what kind of ethical questions related to the use of AI have you read about or discussed with colleagues?
- Value alignment in AI
- Biases
- Ask about strategies used to identify and mitigate biases.
- Values embedded in systems
- Censorship (may also come up in the art/creativity section)
- Western beauty standards / unilateral beauty concepts
- Art, creativity, and censorship
- Creativity: What do you think about creativity in the context of using AI?
- What opportunities for creativity does the interviewee identify?
- What threats to creativity does the interviewee recognize?
- Homogenization of beauty standards
- Homogenization of style
- Artistic freedom when using AI tools (censorship):
- The "evidential power" of an image, video, or audio, has AI changed this?
- Transparency and disclosure about using AI
- What does transparency mean to you in the use of AI in visual content production?
- What does the interviewee think about whether AI usage should always be disclosed to a) clients and b) the public, or are there situations in which the interviewee believes it is not necessary to inform these groups?
- Likeness and deepfakes
- What does the interviewee think about the use of synthetic humans in communication and marketing?
- Does the interviewee recognize any related risks?
- Regulation and copyright
- What kind of regulation and legislation guide the use of AI in visual content production?
- Marketing regulations
- Copyright
- EU AI Act
- How does regulation guide interviewees work?
- Sources of information

- Where do interviewees obtain additional information on ethical issues or legislation related to AI?
- E.g., blogs, news, discussions with colleagues, LinkedIn
- The future
- How will AI affect visual content production in the future?
- Impact on the job market/employment?
- What new knowledge or skills will, according to the interviewee's view, be required from AI users in the future?
- What themes or topis relating to ethics and AI would you like to know more about?
- If you think about the ethics of marketing and communication in general, what kind of ethical reflection should the industry engage in? (This is optional)

Ending the Interview

- Is there anything else you would like to mention about the topic of the interview?

Stop recording.

Thank the interviewee for their participation.
Review how the material will be used.

Appendix 4: Prompt for thematic analysis and coding

Conduct a thematic analysis on a set of interview transcripts that are part of a research study on AI-driven content creation. Each transcript is associated with a unique respondent code. I will add each interview to the chat individually.

While I am interested in themes of regulation, bias, transparency, style, use of likeness and sustainability, please ensure to explore and propose additional themes that might not directly fit into these categories but are evident in the data. It is also important to identify and to highlight any other themes or patterns that emerge from the data, regardless of these initial themes.

Please note that the basis of each analysis is the interview itself. Do not add themes, codes, facts, ideas, or analysis that are not directly drawn from the interview currently being analysed.

Objective: Conduct a comprehensive thematic analysis of several interview transcripts focused on AI-driven content creation. The analysis should be structured to uncover both explicit and latent themes reflected in the interview dynamics.

Procedure: Holistic Reading: Begin by reading each transcript thoroughly to grasp the full context of the discussions, noting both the interviewer's prompts and the interviewees' responses.

1. Initial Coding:
Code Generation: For each transcript, identify key segments that vividly illustrate the themes of AI-driven content creation. Develop initial codes that encapsulate a broad range of insights from these segments. Each code should reflect the complex dynamics between the interviewer's questions and the interviewee's answers. Look at each response in detail and suggest codes based on the content, even if it appears tangential or peripheral to the main question asked.

Quotes and Context: Extract direct quotes supporting each code, ensuring parts of the interviewer's question that clarify the response are included when necessary. Carefully document the exact line numbers and respondent ID for precise referencing. Double-check each line number against the transcript to ensure accuracy before finalizing. Provide at least 1 or 2 quotes for each code.

Contextual Analysis: Provide brief explanations for each code, detailing how the selected quotes and their contexts support the identified themes. This explanation should consider the interplay between the question posed and the response given, highlighting how it informs the understanding of AI-driven content creation.

2. Code Refinement and Expansion
As you analyze each transcript, remain open to discovering new codes that capture unexpected insights or divergent viewpoints, beyond the initially pinpointed themes. Ensure that these findings are also documented with the same rigor as the expected themes.

3. Deliverables:
Individual Coding Results: Present a detailed list of initial themes and codes for each interviewee, including:
- Direct quotes that support each code.
- Line references and respondent ID for each quote.
- A brief explanation of each code's relevance to the overarching research themes.

Deliver the results in this order:

- Theme
- Code
- Quotes
- Line reference
- Context and Explanation.

Please add respondent ID before each line reference and context/explanation for organization of data. Do not translate quotes to English.

Line Number Verification: After coding each transcript, review all documented line numbers to verify their accuracy against the original text. Correct any mismatches or errors in line numbering to ensure the integrity of references in the analysis.

Deliver the results as text in chat as well as in excel. Please include all the results in the excel.

4. Iteration
Based on these initial codes, can you identify any secondary themes or patterns that are emerging from less direct answers? Also explore the text freely and suggest any themes or patterns that you notice, regardless of their direct relevance to the pre-set questions or themes. Ensure that these findings are also documented with the same rigor as earlier findings.

Please, do one more round of iteration and look for more codes. Explore the text freely and suggest any themes or patterns that you notice, regardless of their direct relevance to the pre-set questions or themes. Ensure that these findings are also documented with the same rigor as earlier findings.

Please, do one more round of iteration and look for more codes. Explore the text freely and suggest any themes or patterns that you notice, regardless of their direct relevance to the pre-set questions or themes. Also, I am interested to see if there are any codes alluding to [...]. I am also interested in codes relating to marketing ethics in general. Ensure that these findings are also documented with the same rigor as earlier findings.

Please, do one more round of iteration and see if there are any new codes. Explore the text freely and suggest any new themes or patterns that you notice, regardless of their direct relevance to the pre-set questions or themes. Ensure that these findings are also documented with the same rigor as earlier findings.

Appendix 5: Refined Thematic Analysis Prompt

Objective: I am conducting a thematic analysis to refine themes and ensure alignment of quotes with focused codes related to AI use in marketing. The dataset includes over 200 quotes organized under various themes and codes, formatted in an Excel spreadsheet where each focused code is on its own sheet.

Data Structure: The Excel is structured with multiple sheets, each corresponding to a specific focused code:

- Each sheet includes columns for:
    - **Theme**: The overarching theme the focused code relates to.
    - **Focused Code**: The name of the focused code.
    - **Definition**: Definitions for each code.
    - **Inclusion Criteria**: Criteria that quotes must meet to fall under this specific code.
    - **Exclusion Criteria**: Criteria that exclude quotes from falling under this specific code.
    - **Quotes**: The actual text of quotes.
    - **Context**: Additional information or background for each quote.
    - **Respondent ID and Line Numbers**: For citation purposes.

Task Description:

1. **Comprehensive Quote Review**: Review each sheet sequentially, ensuring that all quotes per focused code are analysed. Focus your analysis on the quotes and context provided within each sheet.
2. **Quote Alignment and Analysis**: Verify that each quote aligns well with the focused code based on the provided inclusion and exclusion criteria. Suggest realignments if necessary.
3. **Detailed Narrative Development**: For each focused code on its respective sheet, develop a compelling narrative that includes:
    - At least three different quotes from different respondents, or all quotes if fewer than three are available.
    - Analysis of possible links to other focused codes and identification of subcodes where applicable.
    - Please take into account also differentiating or opposing viewpoints and include them in the analysis for a more nuanced understanding on the matter.
    - Specific quotes with respondent IDs and line numbers to substantiate your narrative.

Reporting Instructions:

- **Format Consistency**: Maintain a consistent reporting format for each focused code:
    - **Theme Title**: [Theme Name]
    - **Focused Code**: [Code Name]

    - **Definition Summary**: A brief summary of the code definition.
    - **Alignment Analysis**: Analysis of how well the quotes align with the focused code, including specific examples and citations.
    - **Narrative Summary**: A concise narrative that ties the quotes to the focused code, highlighting key insights and implications, including direct citations.
- **Clarity and Precision**: Ensure clarity and precision in language to avoid ambiguity.
- **Delivery of Results**: Provide the results as text directly in the chat for immediate review. Additionally, summarize the findings in an Excel format, with each narrative and its corresponding analysis placed in the respective sheet for each code. Please upload the excel to chat after each updated sheet.

Phased Approach:

- **Sequential Processing**: Proceed to analyse the next sheet only after receiving feedback and approval for the previous sheet, ensuring a controlled and systematic review process.

Restrictions:

- **Strict Adherence to Provided Data**: Use only the data provided, strictly adhering to the text and context given without extrapolating beyond the provided information.
- **Avoid Overgeneralization and Exaggeration**: Do not make assumptions or generate findings that extend beyond the explicit content of the provided quotes and respondent information.

Expected Outcome:

This structured approach will ensure that the thematic analysis is accurately reflective of the data, adhering closely to the specific requirements of each focused code. The dual delivery of results in chat and Excel will facilitate both immediate review and structured documentation of the findings.

Appendix 6: Declaration of the use of AI

Declaration of the Use of AI

In the creation and refinement of this thesis, several AI tools and technologies were employed to aid in various aspects of the research and writing process. These tools include SciSpace, ChatGPT, OpenAI's DALLE, Microsoft Word, and Sonix.ai. The use of these tools is detailed below:

SciSpace
- Search for Source Material: Assisted in finding relevant articles and summarizing their contents to help in the inclusion/exclusion process.
- Format Citations: Automated citation formatting to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Understand Technical Concepts: Utilized the Copilot feature to grasp essential technical concepts related to generative artificial intelligence.
- Notetaking: Used the Copilot feature to make notes on source material. I asked questions about the material, and Copilot wrote answers based on the source material. These notes were reviewed against the original materials for accuracy.

ChatGPT
- Brainstorming Interview Outlines: Generated initial outlines for semistructured interviews on AI ethics in communication and marketing. These outlines were modified and refined to fit the specific needs of the study.
- Summary Creation: Assisted in creating summaries. The summaries were modified by me by reviewing, deleting, editing, and adding text to ensure clarity and completeness either manually or through iterative prompting.
- Thematic Analysis and Code Development: Helped in developing initial coding and thematic and theoretical analysis. This included iterative prompting and corrections to refine the coding and analysis. The process is described in detail in the Methodology section.
- Naming the Thesis: Provided ideas for thesis titles based on the working title, which were then modified and selected.
- Visual Representation: Assisted in creating the basis for visualization of AI driven thematic analysis workflow (Figure 5). Initially, I provided a detailed description of the workflow, which ChatGPT helped to break down into key steps and stages. The final step involved ChatGPT providing a fitting name for the visual and crafting detailed alt-text to ensure accessibility and a clear understanding of the content.
- Dictation: Transcribed verbal insights accurately and organized them into structured text. I provided feedback and clarifications during the transcription process. ChatGPT assisted in the revision and refinement of transcribed content.
- "Collaborative" Thesis Refinement and Enhancement: I conducted a proofreading and second opinion exercise with ChatGPT to ensure there were no glaring omissions or hard to understand sections, with continuous human oversight. Key aspects included:
- Content Review and Revision: I asked ChatGPT to review some of the content and suggested specific areas that needed clarification, paraphrasing, or reorganization based on my direction. Sections were revised for logical flow, coherence, and conciseness, ensuring academic rigor was maintained. Throughout this process, ChatGPT provided insights and feedback when requested to enhance clarity and thoroughness, to ensure the thesis addressed all critical points. All revisions were made under my supervision to maintain academic integrity and coherence.
- Content Paraphrasing: Paraphrased complex content where needed, based on my specific instructions for clarity while maintaining an academic tone.

- Refining the Declaration of AI Use: ChatGPT was used to refine this declaration to ensure it accurately reflects the use of AI tools in the thesis development process. This was done by me asking ChatGPT to describe the interaction processes and then streamlining the answers for readability and conciseness.

OpenAI's DALLE
- Image Creation: Used to generate images.

Microsoft Word
- Editing and Dictation: Utilized the Editor and Dictate features to improve the writing process, ensuring grammatical accuracy and facilitating the transcription of verbal notes.

Sonix.ai
- Transcription: Transcribed interviews from video to text, streamlining the data analysis process.

Appendix 7: Compliance with Haaga–Helia AI Usage Guidelines

My use of AI in this thesis complies with Haaga–Helia's AI usage guidelines as follows:

1. Purposeful and Supportive Use: AI tools were used to support various aspects of the research and writing process, such as finding sources, summarizing content, improving text clarity, and creating visual aids.
2. Student Responsibility: I take responsibility for the final content, ensuring all AI generated content was reviewed and refined by me.
3. Text Improvement: AI was used to improve the clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy of the text.
4. Disclosure: I have disclosed how each AI tool was used in this thesis.
5. Respecting Privacy: All interview data was anonymized before analysis, respecting privacy guidelines.
6. Following Instructions: I did not receive any explicit instructions from my supervisors restricting AI use. Therefore, I adhered to the general guidelines from 2023 provided by Haaga–Helia.
7. Avoiding Unverified Claims: I ensured all AI assisted content was reviewed for accuracy and reliability.