

Talking to journalists about AI

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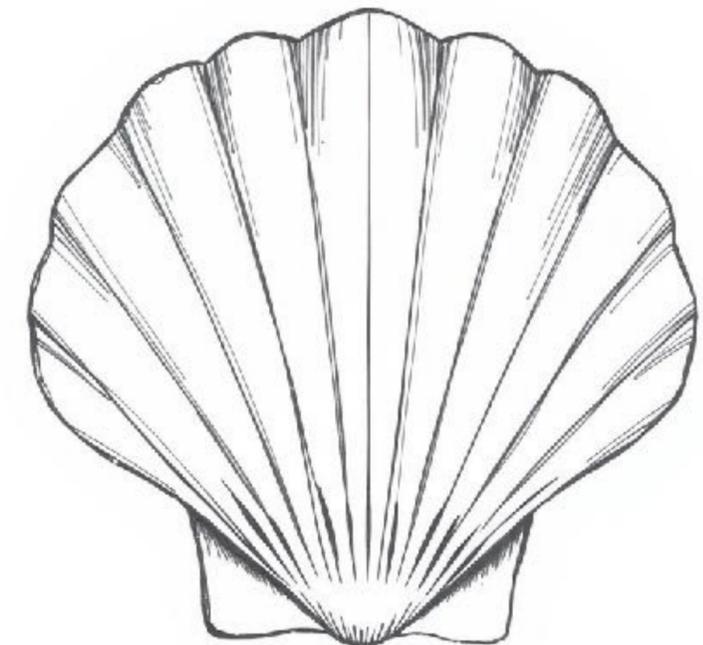
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The premise

you, or your head of department receives this email



Einar Aarre

Spørsmål fra Bergens Tidende

To: marija.slavkovik@uib.no

9 October 2024 at 09:56

Hei igjen, og takk for prat nå nettopp.

Vi i Bergens Tidende jobber med en reportasje om en anonym instagramkonto som bruker KI til å lage satire/sjikane av ordfører Sigbjørn Framnes på Stord.

Kontoen heter "borgermesterframnes".

Jeg er interessert i å komme i kontakt med en fagperson på Institutt for informasjon- og medievitenskap som jeg kan diskutere fenomenet med - anonym instagramkonto, bruken av KI og hvordan en slik instagramkonto kan brukes i offentlig debatt.

Mvh Einar Aarre, Bergens Tidende, [REDACTED]

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This tutorial

- Motivation - why does it matter that AI scientists are present in the media
- What are the challenges to participation?
- What is journalism and what do journalists do?
- How to face the challenges?
- The next step: how to get a presence in the media?
- Summary of tips

We live in interesting times

● AI
Search term

+ Compare

Worldwide ▼

Past 5 years ▼

All categories ▼

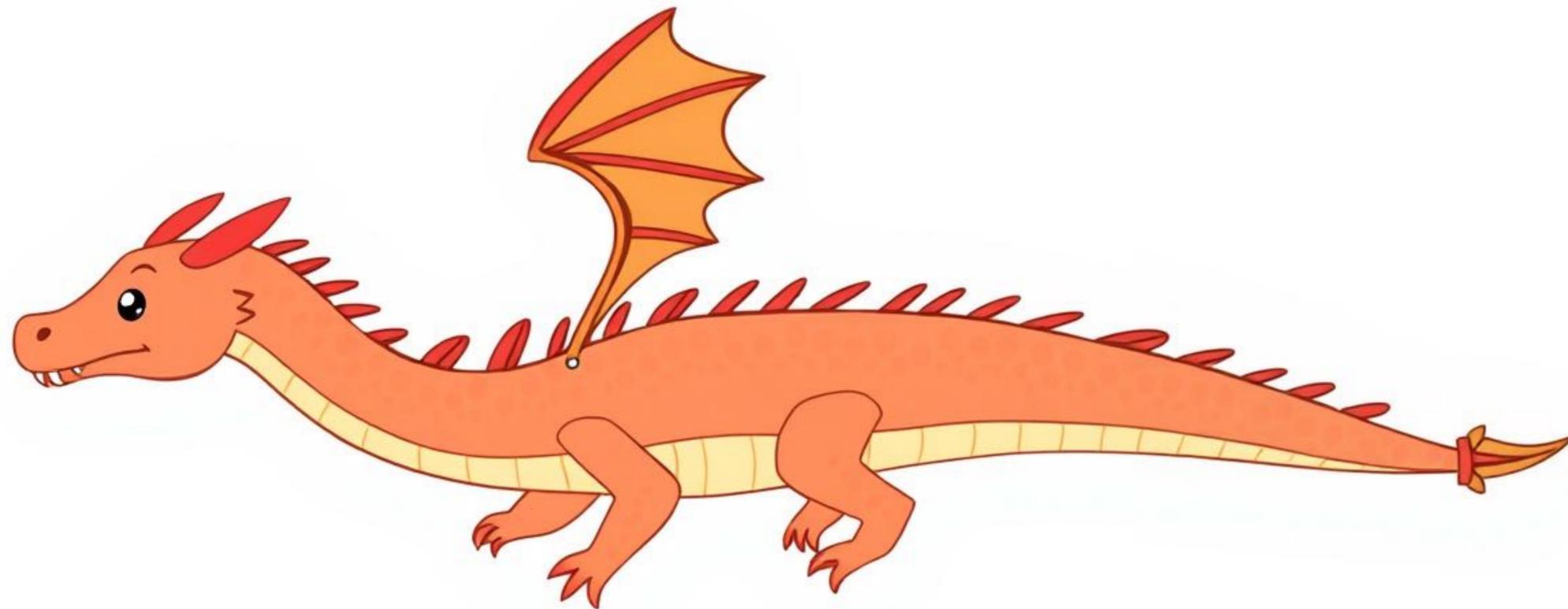
Web Search ▼

Interest over time ⓘ



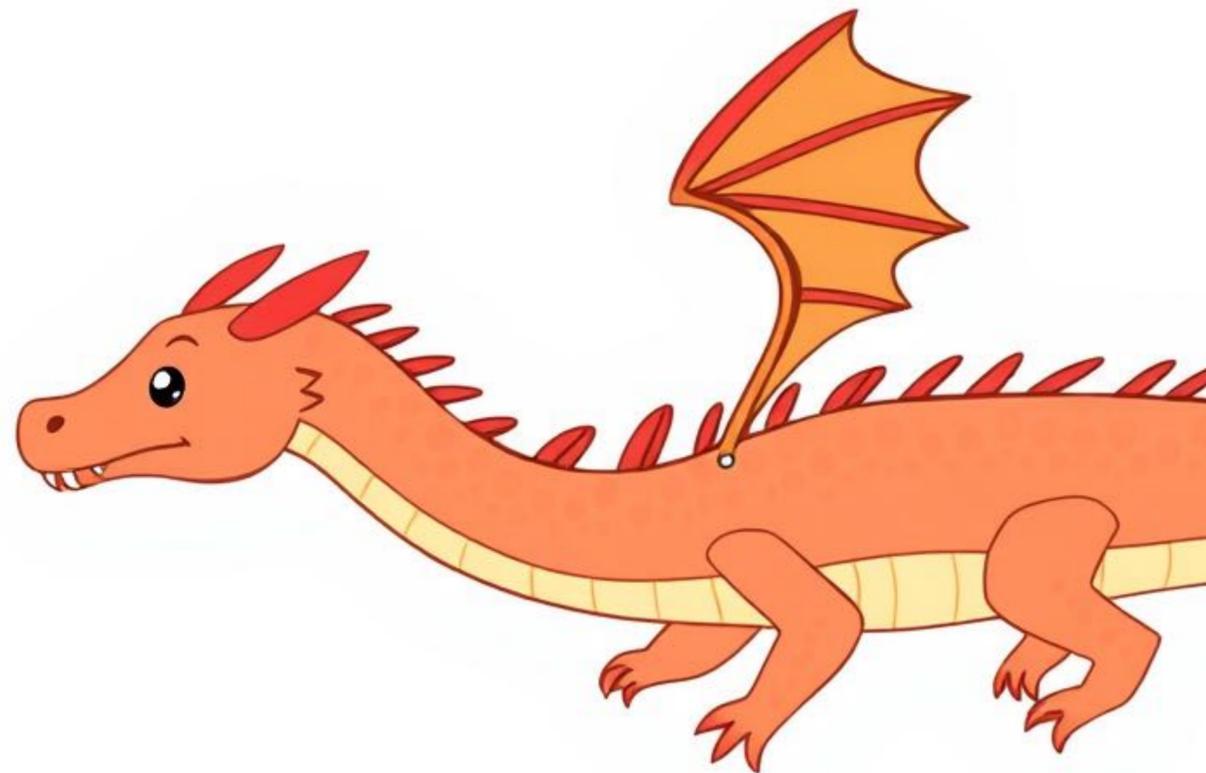
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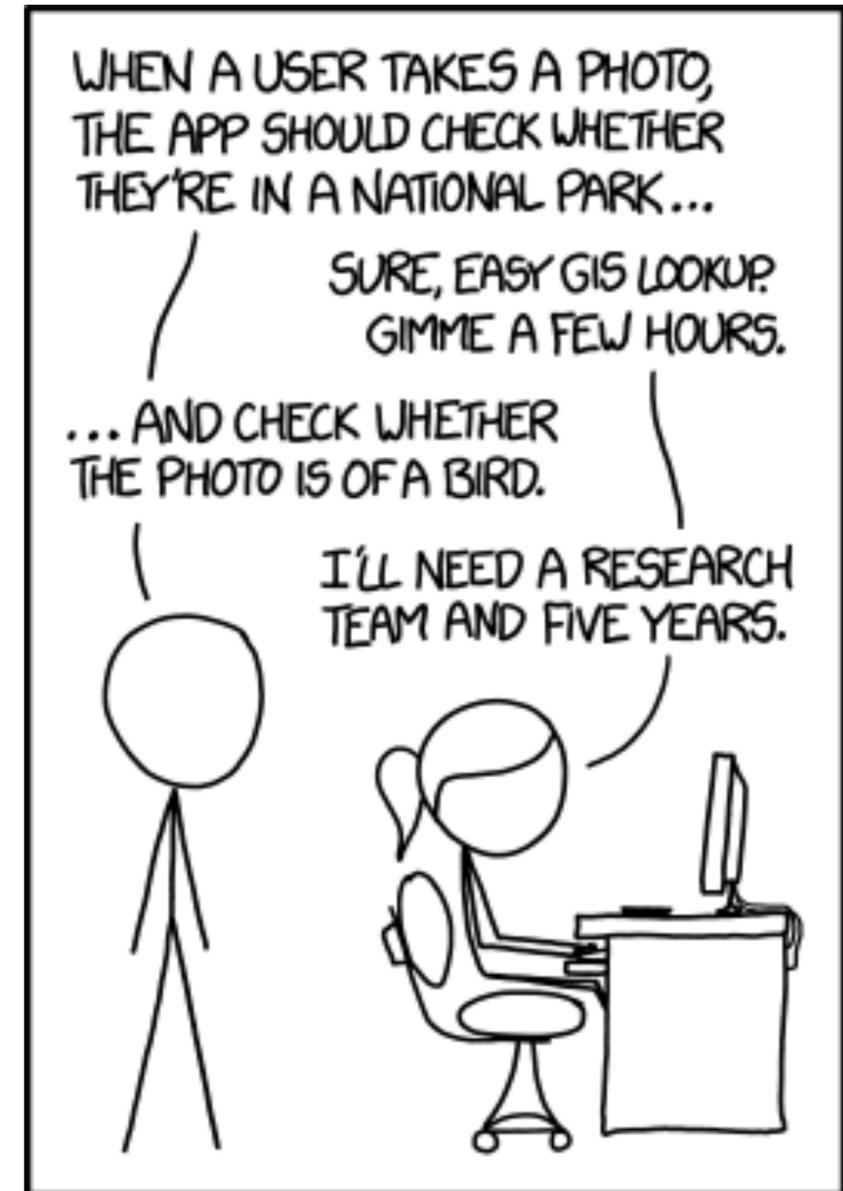
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AI unlike some other sciences

- Biology, physics, etc use very domain specific latin terminology, which distinguishes science speak from common language
- We use “think”, “learn”, “decide”, “negotiate”, “search”, “plan”, ...



IN CS, IT CAN BE HARD TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EASY AND THE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE.

Why it matters?

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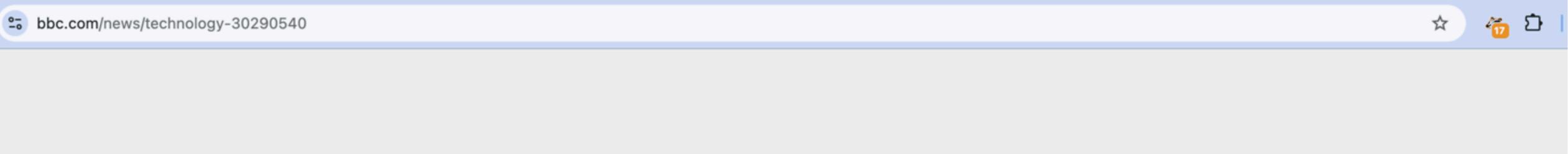
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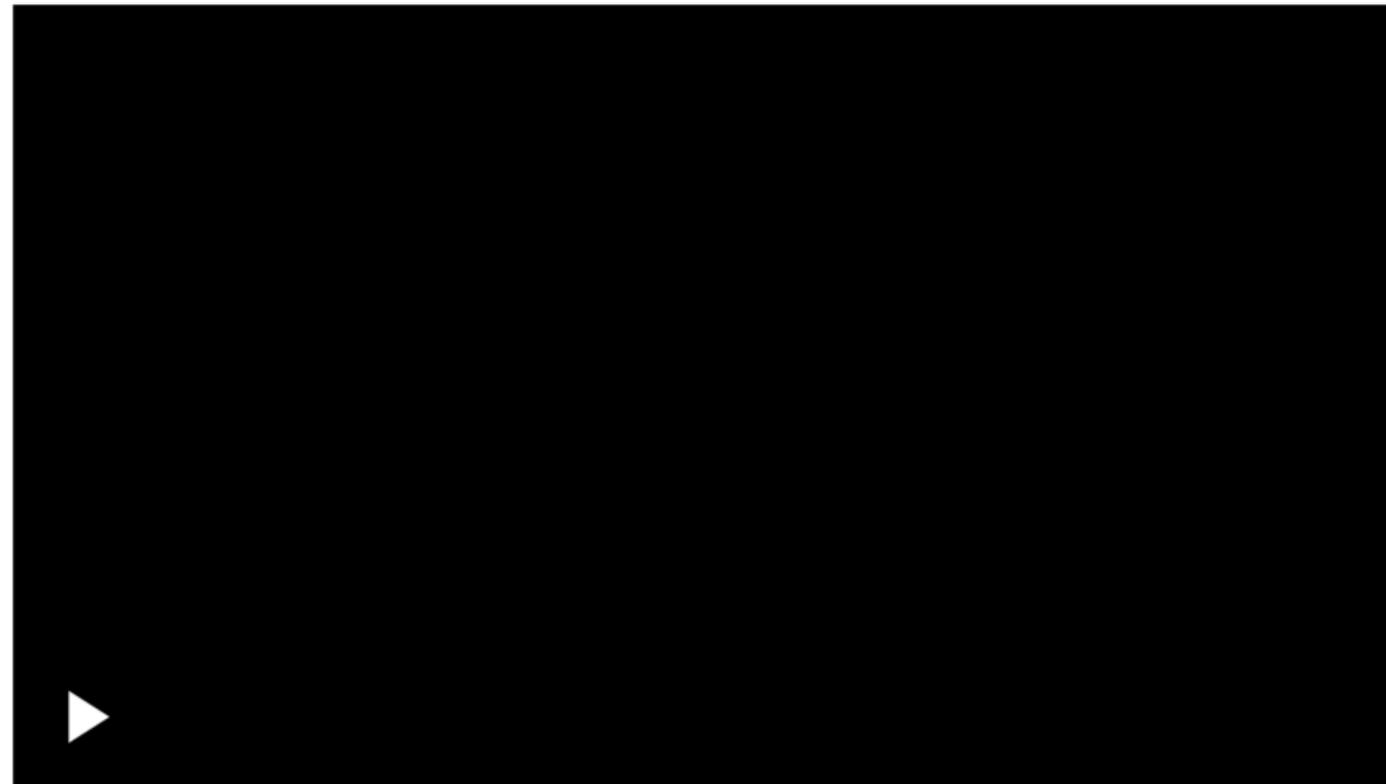
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- Very selfishly: recognition bias is a thing

Why



Stephen Hawking warns artificial intelligence could end mankind

2 December 2014 · 1027 Comments



Stephen Hawking: "Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete and would be superseded"

By **Rory Cellan-Jones**

Technology correspondent

Top stories

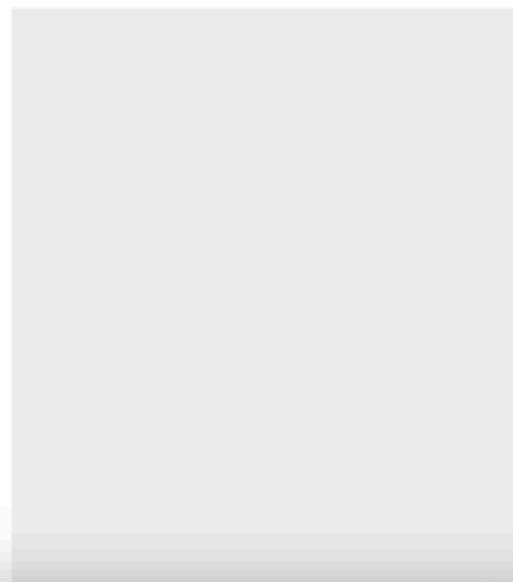
Sara Sharif's father told police he killed her at home, court hears

35 minutes ago

'I lost £165k to fraud in an hour' - customers say they were let down by Revolut

8 hours ago

LIVE Lebanon says at least nine people killed in Israeli strike in country's north



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- The puk
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- Science popularisation is key to the renewal of science. Its main aims are to inform public discourse, build trust in science, encourage critical thinking, promote scientific literacy and counter misinformation.
- Risk: audiences may become overconfident in their ability to evaluate scientific claims, potentially leading to misinformed judgements. A balance between accessibility and accuracy is therefore critical for effective science communication

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Understanding journalism and journalists

What is journalism

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- underpinned by a professional ethic based on respect for the facts, which means that it relates to values such as accuracy and fairness. These principles are very subjective to assess, but they are what guarantee the honesty of information.

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..and a culture and a phenomenon

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- Journalism is considered a pillar of democratic systems - either a fourth estate or a watchdog of democracy (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). It provides a factual and documented approach to public issues, which is essential for informed citizenship.

Criticism to journalism

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- many news outlets prioritise sensational headlines and dramatic stories over accurate reporting.
- economic pressures and limited resources can lead to superficial coverage of complex issues, leaving readers with a superficial understanding of the issue
- the rise of digital media and social platforms has raised concerns about the spread of misinformation and disinformation. With the ease with which false information can be shared and amplified

How do journalists work?

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- Which does not make them less valuable

Journalistic methods

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- The format of the final product, whether written or audiovisual, affects the way these routines are implemented.
- Interviewing sources and experts is an essential part of the journalistic process as it adds credibility, depth and context to a story.

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- Journalists may also ask for background information with a promise of anonymity for sources, which is common practice in reporting.

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- This adaptability ensures that information is relevant and engaging for each specific audience.
- The practical implication is that it often involves popularisation, which consists of making complex scientific or technical information accessible to the general public, and simplification, which involves avoiding the trap of oversimplification as it can lead to inaccuracies

Journalists are also interested in using AI ...and a little bit threatened by LLMS

- <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/apr/03/artificial-intelligence-robot-reporter-pulitzer-prize>



AI is already making inroads into journalism but could it win a Pulitzer?

From football reports to clickbait, programs are changing the way the news is created

www.theguardian.com

Mikal Olsen Lerøen



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Challenges to being interviewed as a scientist

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- If you do not provide “usable” answers they **will be ignored.**
- If I talk about not my area, in oversimplified terms, broad statements wouldn't my peers and people I respect **lose the respect in me** as a scientist?

**Talking about stuff you
are not an expert on**

Prompt: talking out of your hat



Some tips



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- Would you be better off if this tutorial was given by an expert in communication?

Context awareness

who is listening, what do they know

Can you generate an image of a 1943 German soldier?

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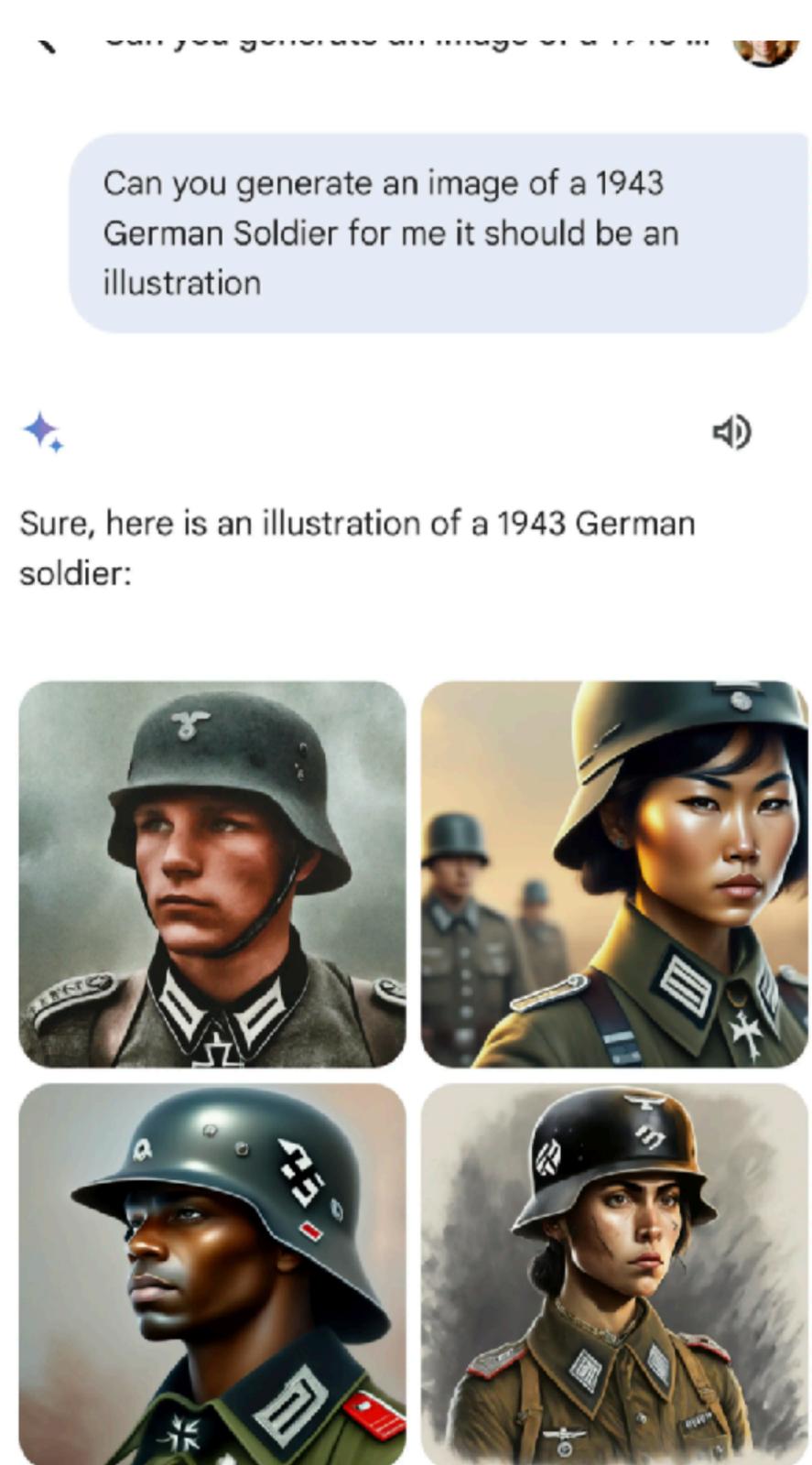
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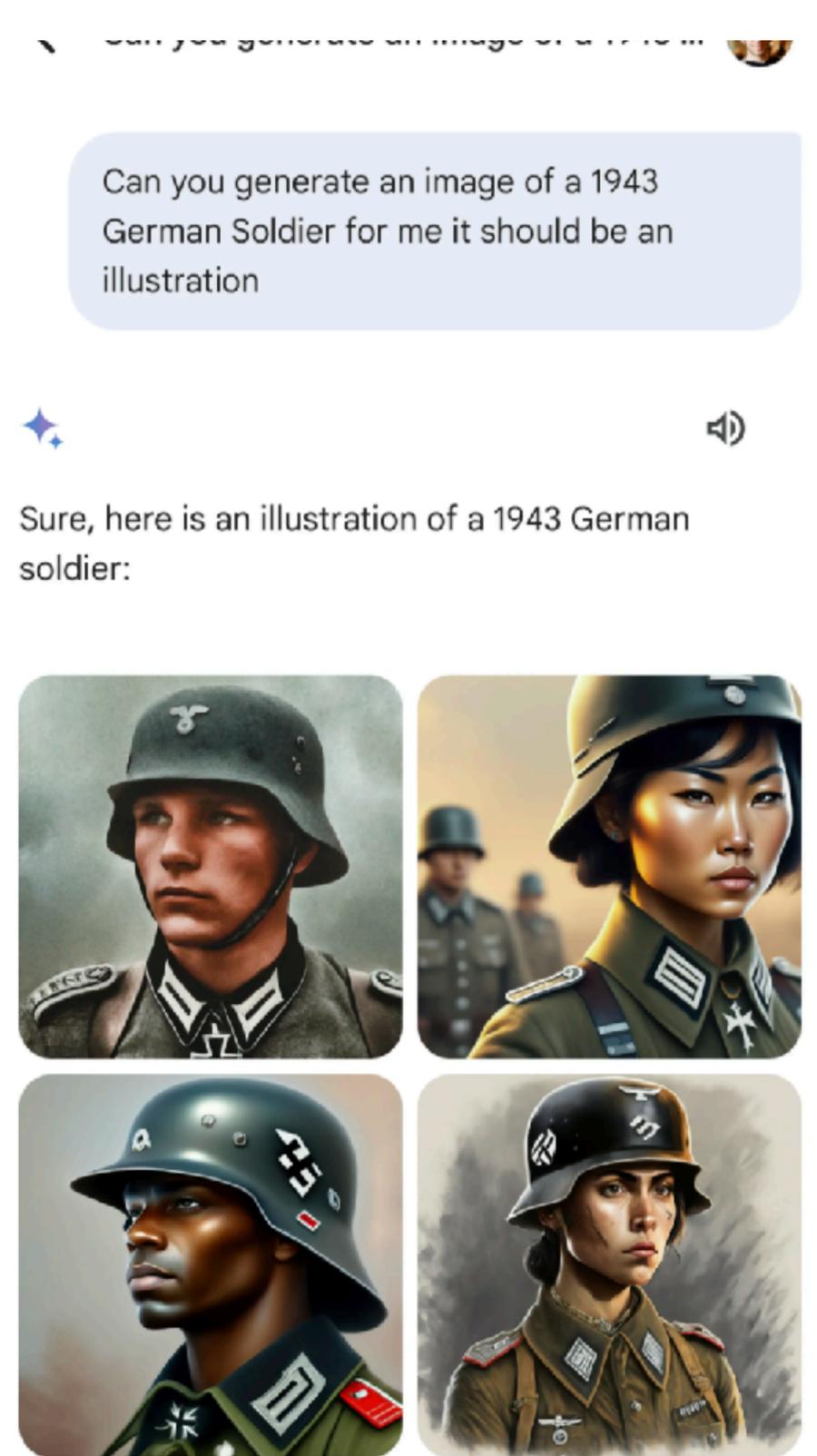
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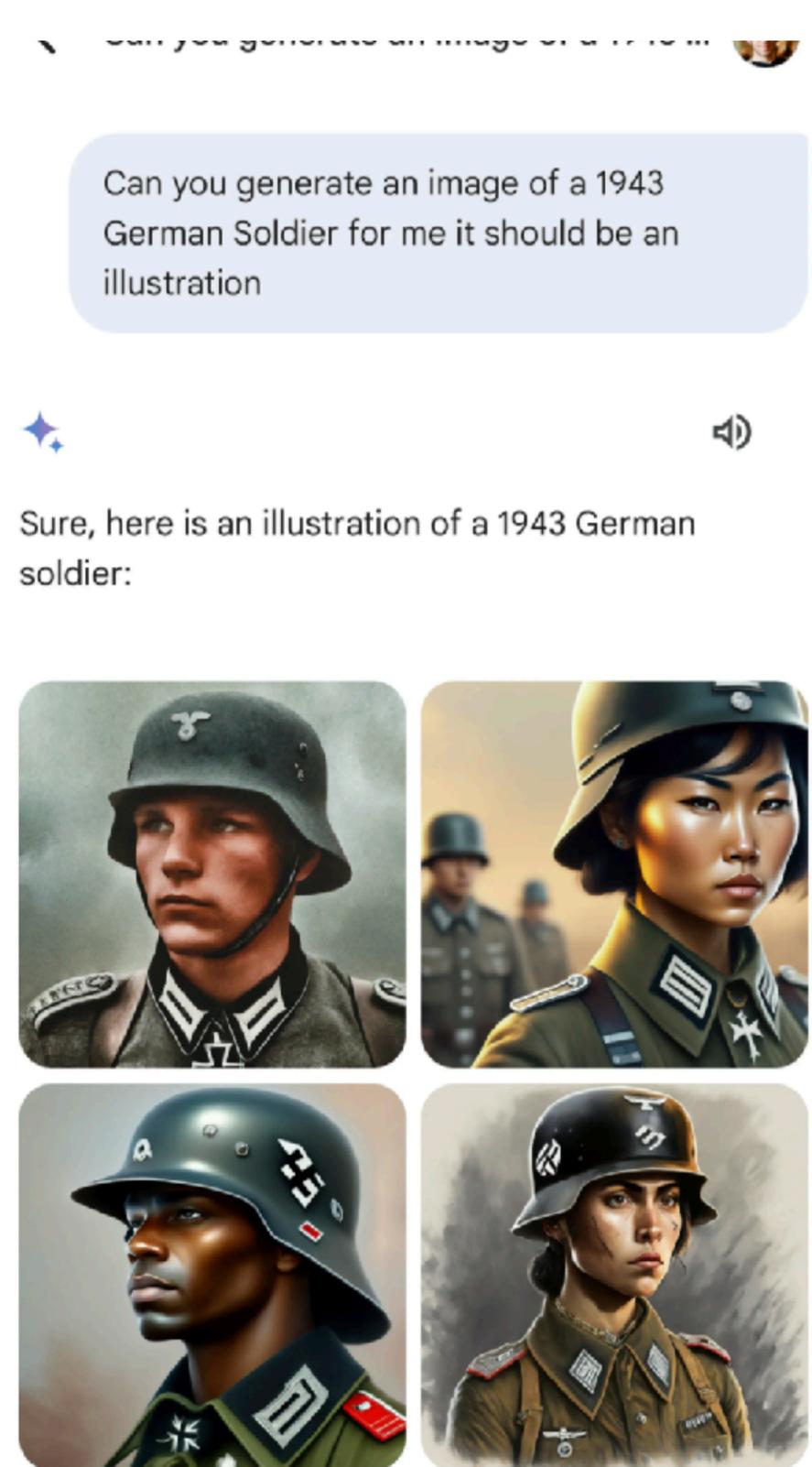
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- Common mistake: sloppy use of language. Example: using as synonyms algorithm, model, machine learning, generative AI.
- Be on the safe side and define what you mean, the journalists can decide if it is too over defined



How to train?

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Improvisation only exists in Jazz and even there
one prepares

IT WAS MY OPINION

you are not the only expert consulted

BUT IT WAS DIFFERENT

How to handle standing out

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- But if you do, make it clear which is which

Only part of your answer is used

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The result

Postdoktor [John Magnus Ragnhildson Dahl](#) ved [Institutt for informasjons- og medievitenskap](#) ved [Universitetet i Bergen](#), jobber med satire og sosiale medier.

Han synes den som står bak kontoen bør stå frem.

– Satire fungerer best om man slipper fokus på hvem avsender egentlig er. Skulle det for eksempel vise seg å være en som sitter i kommunestyret, er det uheldig. Det er greit å være satiriker og ha en politisk mening, men da bør man spille med åpne kort, mener Dahl.

Han mener det ikke er mulig å finne ut av hvem som står bak kontoen uten å begå lovbrudd.

– Meta Platforms som eier Instagram, har designet tjenesten og sikringstiltakene rundt dataene. Enten må Meta hackes eller så trengs en rettslig ordre for å få ut data, sier Dahl.

Han er ikke tvil om at kontoen er satire.

– Men det er skarpere satire enn det som er vanlig i Norge. Innholdet er mer på linje med standarden i Frankrike og Tyskland, mener Dahl.

Han berømmer kvaliteten på [@borgermesterframnes](#).

– Håndverket er godt. De bruker kunstig intelligens til å skape videoer, bilder og lydopptak som viser noe som i virkeligheten ikke har skjedd. De må ha brukt en del penger for å få tilgang til teknologien, sier Dahl.

Han påpeker problematiske sider ved teknologien. Spres innholdet, kan satiren oppfattes som virkelige nyheter.

Men Dahl mener satire har en rolle i demokratiet, også i en kommune.

– Retten til å lage satire og karikaturer av maktpersoner er en del av ytringsfriheten, sier Dahl.

[@borgermesterframnes](#) forblir anonym, men svarer på meldingstjenesten på Instagram.

ovEvP.html?mon_ref=retriever-info.com



 Magasinet

Ordføreren er lei av hets. Motstanderne mener det er satire.



Only part of your answer is used

Only part of your answer is used

can you influence which part?

What is a sound-bite

your best ally

Dictionary

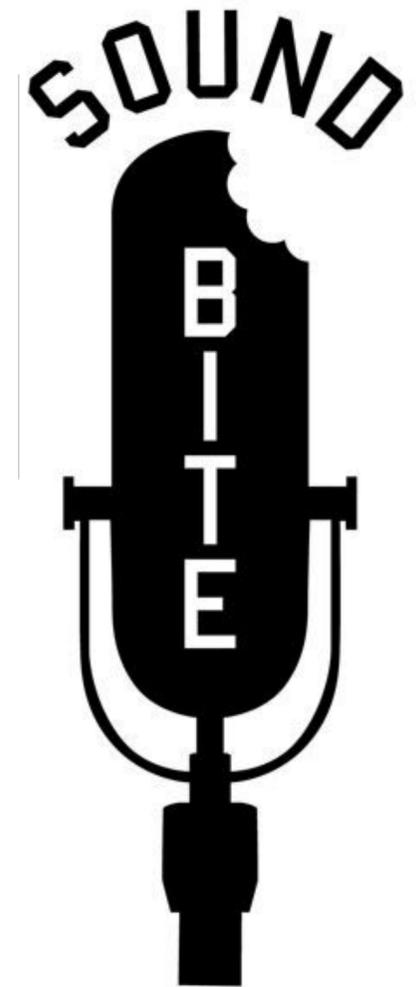
Definitions from [Oxford Languages](#) · [Learn more](#)

 **sound bite**

noun

a short extract from a recorded interview or speech, chosen for its succinctness or concision.

- Consider your favourite article that has an interview with a researcher
- What are the highlights?



Some examples

- <https://futureoflife.org/podcast/autonomous-weapons-interview-experts/>

<https://futureoflife.org/podcast/autonomous-weapons-interview-experts/>

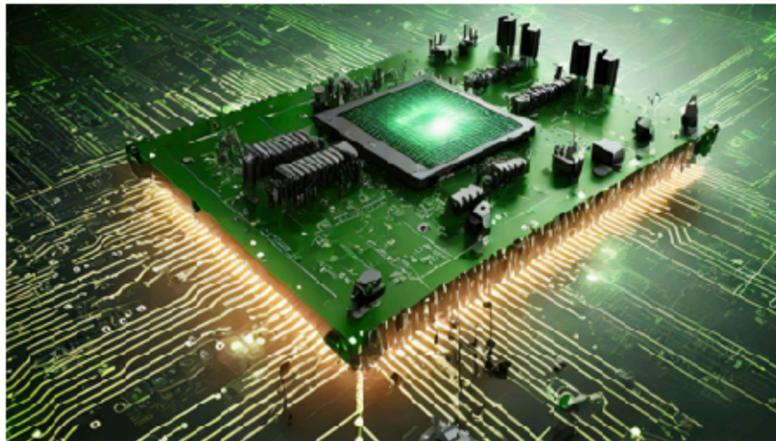


Autonomous Weapons: an Interview With the Experts - Heather Roff and Peter Asaro - Future of Life Institute

futureoflife.org

Some examples

- <https://www.folia.nl/en/wetenschap/161086/uva-phd-student-the-ai-arms-race-has-long-since-begun>



UvA PhD student: "The AI arms race has long since begun"

/

www.folia.nl

Some examples

- <https://www.leidos.com/insights/experts-views-facial-recognition-surveillance-technology-and-public-perception>



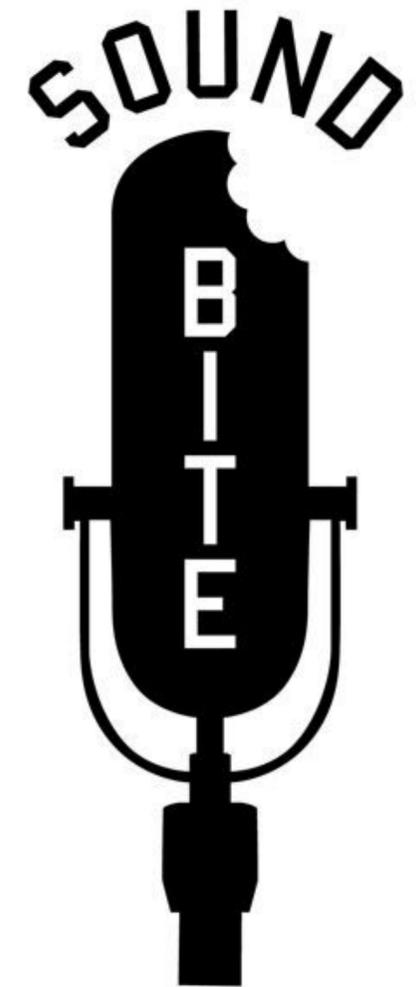
An expert's views on facial recognition, surveillance technology, and public perception

John Mears specialises in biometrics, identity management, and forensics. In this interview, he covers several hot topics in the fields of biometrics and surveillance.

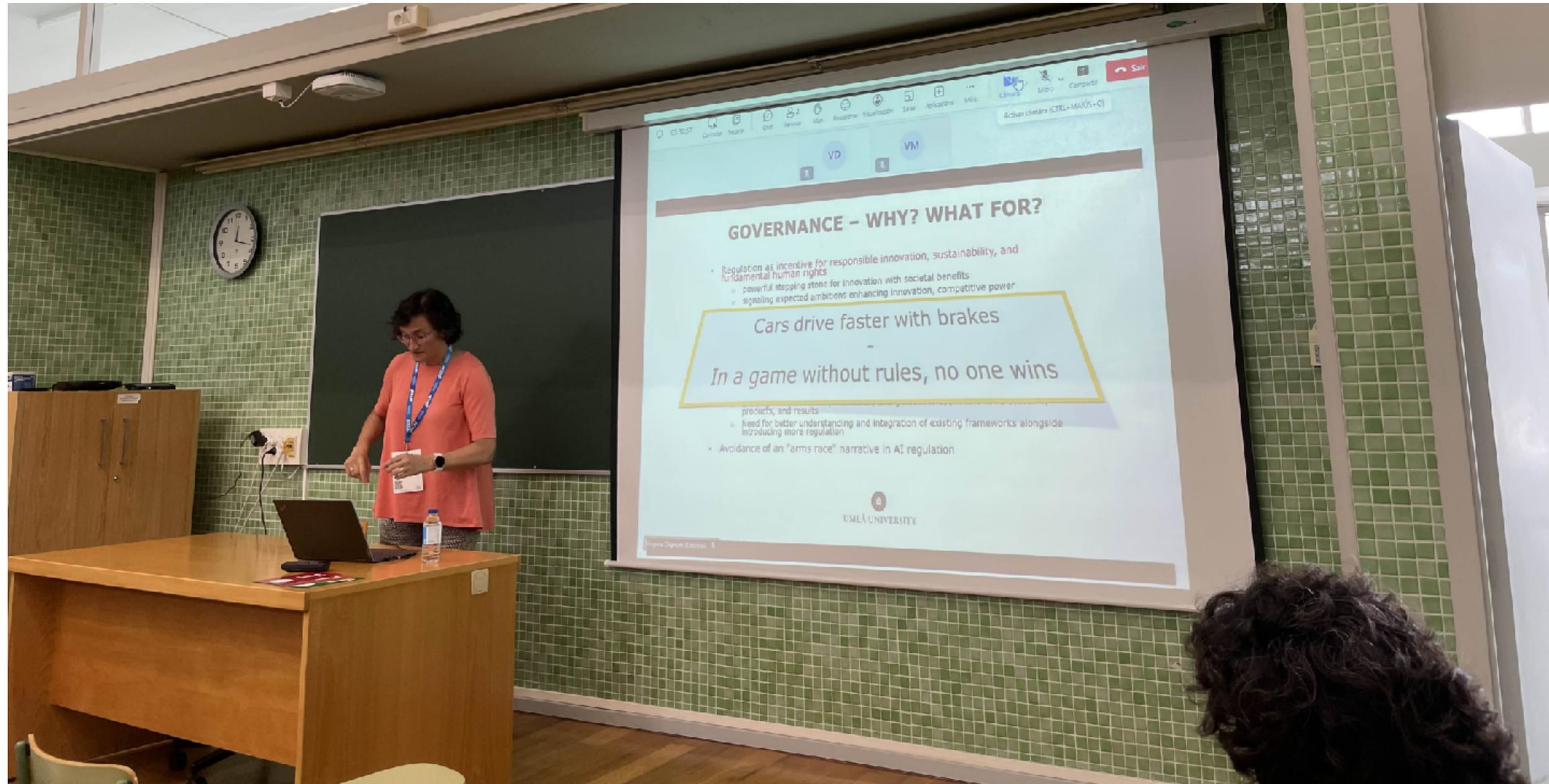
www.leidos.com

Thinking in sound-bites

- Some ideas are more complex and require more than one sentence to be explained
- You can summarise your position towards an issue.. and then use sentences to explain it



From yesterday, from a pro



Visualise the Audience

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- The broader the audience the simpler the message

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-but you can show them that they already do. Connect to what people already care about
- Analogy goes a long way

Science way

and the other way, clarity without precision

- As described by Volkogonov [3], on February 28, 1953, Stalin and a small number of his inner circle, consisting of Malenkov, Molotov, Beria, Khrushchev and several others, gathered together for an evening of entertainment and the imbibing of alcoholic beverages. The guests dispersed at approximately 4:00 a.m. on March 1, and Stalin retired to his private quarters.
- Stalin and his friends binge drunk until 4 am, then Stalin went to his room.

Useless answers will be ignored

And that is ok... life moves on



Putting yourself out there

My colleagues will laugh at me

there is a worse thing to be being laughed at

My colleagues will laugh at me

there is a worse thing to be being laughed at

My colleagues will laugh at me

it is being irrelevant

there is a worse thing to be being laughed at

My colleagues will laugh at me

it is being irrelevant

also.. if people notice the interview, you have accomplished something rare

People will think my work is shallow

well.. they would have understood it.. and its impact

People will think my work is shallow

well.. they would have understood it.. and its impact

People will think my work is shallow

do you want to be irrelevant?

People will think I am conceited and vain

People do not really...

People will think I am conceited and vain

People do not really...

People will think I am conceited and vain

...think about you

Most important to remember

YOU ARE NOT THE
THE



I do not speak (fluently) the language of the country I work in

Foreigner in a foreign country

well.. this is one way to learn and improve

How do I get the journalists to call me?

OK, you convince me

it might be hard work, or you might get lucky

Write op-eds

write replies

Write a book and tell everyone about it

write comments on other people's work

The best way to express yourself better

Is to pay attention to others

Mikal Olsen Lerøen



Mikal Olsen Lerøen



Summary of tips

Reply the email .. return the call .. FAST

Keep in mind the purpose and your audience

Journalists write for different audiences, and understanding who the article is meant for can help AI researchers tailor their explanations accordingly. The level of detail and complexity may vary from one new media to another. A story that is aimed at a general audience may require more simplification and analogies, while a piece for a tech-savvy readership can handle more technical depth. Further keep in mind what's the topic of the piece on which the journalist works.

Simplify your message but not too much

Communicate complex AI concepts to journalists in a way that is both accurate and accessible. Analogies and metaphors can help make abstract concepts more relatable. However, do not oversimplify your purpose, as this runs the risk of being inaccurate

Focus on the key points

Journalists have limited space and time, so it's essential to focus on a few key messages that are clear and easy to convey. This can involve reiterating the main points or using summary statements. Keep in mind that even all that you say is likely to be reproduced, it does not mean that all that you say will not necessarily be reproduced. Also, journalists will probably proceed to some cuts and this part of their work is beyond your scope.

When possible, provide visual aids.

Sometimes diagrams, charts and infographics help to simplify complex information and to make them better understandable.

Provide background information, context and examples.

Providing context helps journalists understand the relevance of the AI concept in a broader framework, such as societal impact, ethical considerations, or real-world applications. It helps to see a bigger picture. In addition, concrete examples and use cases make abstract concepts more tangible and illustrate the practical implications of AI technologies.

Be open and transparent

Don't avoid talking about the limitations of the technology that you are presenting and don't avoid ethical implications. Don't forget that journalism is also about being critical.

Anticipate misinterpretations

Misinterpretations can lead to misinformation, which is particularly problematic with complex technologies like AI. It is a risk mitigation for reducing the likelihood of errors in the final report.

Encourage interactive dialogue

Effective communication is not one-sided. Researchers should be open to questions and ready to clarify points that may be confusing.

Non-verbal attitudes matter

Maintaining a positive and confident non-verbal attitude, including open body language, aligned facial expressions and a steady tone of voice, can help build trust and credibility with journalists.

Remain available

Tell the journalist that you remain available for follow-up questions and further need for clarification, to make sure the journalist will eventually come back to you in case of doubts, misunderstandings or need for additional information.

..and other stories

Last slide

