

EXPERTS CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE INTEGRATION OF AI IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

By: Hussein Mukisa

On Thursday, August 24, 2023, policymakers, experts, creatives and journalists converged at Sheraton Hotel in Kampala to discuss the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and the creative economy.

Organized by Kampala Analytica in collaboration with Uganda Internet Governance Forum, The Tech Talk Session was moderated by a renowned journalist Canary Mugume, who described the endeavor as “a session on artificial intelligence and the creative economy,” emphasizing the importance of policy in addressing shifts in intellectual property and technology.

Zulfa Bobina, a data and digital researcher, opened the discussion by emphasizing the importance of responsible AI, citing the need for governance mechanisms to ensure that AI systems are developed and deployed in an ethical and equitable manner.

She expressed her worry about the lack of regulation in the AI space stating that this has led to issues of bias, data theft, and invisible labor.

"We need to debunk this myth and recognize that AI systems are not objective or neutral. They are developed by humans, and their outputs reflect the biases and prejudices of their creators," she said.

Bobina highlighted the “enduring blind spots and infinite opportunities” in Uganda's creative economy and pointed towards existing AI systems generating content, such as stable diffusion and ChatGPT.

Her assertion emphasized the dichotomy within AI deployment, where potential advancements exist alongside challenges like inherent biases in AI datasets, often reflective of the dominant cultures.

She implored the audience to “debunk the myth of neutrality in AI” and focus on responsible and ethical AI development.

In response, Silver Kayondo, a legal expert, shed light on legal implications of AI.

“As it stands, our current laws are struggling to keep up,” he said while outlining how existing legal frameworks are adapted to govern emerging technologies.

The advocate and founding partner of Ortus advocates further cited recent court rulings establishing that AI-generated works are only protected under copyright if created under human input.

“This underlines the necessity for human creativity in the ongoing development of the creative economy,” he stated

Canary Mugume shared his experience with AI, noting that he had used AI for forex trading with disappointing results.

The NBS TV news anchor emphasized urgency of African nations to invent their own AI systems, rather than relying on foreign-developed tools.

In her speech, Reachel Magola, a musician turned politician supported the idea of integrating AI in the creative economy, citing that it is time effective.

The Bugweri woman member of parliament however articulated the dilemma faced by creators in an AI-augmented world.

“While AI simplifies the process of producing music, what does that mean for the human touch in creativity? Are we diminishing opportunities for countless aspiring artists?”

Her concerns highlighted the precarious balance between utilizing AI and sustaining genuine artistic expression.

The discussion underscored the pressing need for government intervention in shaping regulatory frameworks.

Hon. Godfrey Kyabbyanga , representing the government, responded with optimism, acknowledging the ongoing efforts to expand internet access to remote areas.

The state minister for the ministry of ICT and national guidance stated, “We are working towards reducing internet costs and improving infrastructure for all Ugandans.”

He affirmed that the government is committed to fostering a secure digital environment that guarantees inclusivity and promotes diversity, emphasizing the importance of responsible use.

As the conversation evolved, it became evident that while AI harbors exceptional potential for creative growth, it is essential to navigate the ethical and practical quandaries it brings.

The ideas shared at the forum, expressed in Bobina’s closing remarks, urged stakeholders to remember accountability: “The creators, not the machines, carry the responsibility of our artistic narratives.”

In the final parts of the discussion, there was consensus around the necessity for ongoing dialogue between legal experts, creatives, and policymakers to devise frameworks that enable youths to thrive in the rapidly growing society of artificial intelligence and the creative economy.