



“Imagining AI Futures through the Creative Industries”

Report from the AI Roundtable at TIFF50

Prepared by the Cultural Policy Hub

Introduction

AI tools are evolving at a breakneck speed, dramatically transforming the ways in which we create, consume, disseminate and evaluate knowledge. The influence of AI extends beyond productivity and innovation to questions of culture, identity and public interest.

Amidst this rapid technological evolution, the arts and creative industries—including the film, television and digital media industry—can offer indispensable contributions to public policy. Several consultations with the sector have taken place over the past two years, from [Mila's Roundtable on AI and the cultural sector](#) to [ISED's consultation on Copyright and Generative AI](#) and [the centrality of AI in the CRTC's November 2024 notice of consultation on defining Canadian content](#).

AI has ignited complex debates around creative IP, copyright and labour. These are critically important issues around which collective work by industry, researchers and policymakers must continue.

At the same time, AI can offer opportunities to innovate and to reduce technical and financial barriers for all sorts of creators—including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Indigenous storytellers and creators in remote regions—and AI assisted digital production tools can help reduce costs.

Roundtable overview

On September 8, 2025, the Cultural Policy Hub at OCAD University and Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) convened a roundtable at TIFF50 to bring together senior industry executives in the fields of content creation and digital technology alongside public sector leaders for a discussion on the future of AI on (and in) Canada's creative industries. **The conversation focused on the intersection of innovation, policy and sovereignty, with a shared urgency to shape a future that balances opportunity with responsibility.** It explored the contribution that these industries—and the creators and leaders working within them—can make to strong, balanced AI strategy and policy.¹

The roundtable opened with an acknowledgment that the creative industries are at an inflection point: they are navigating a complex business and policy context where AI adoption, innovation, investment and regulation are being developed and leveraged across sectors. The group considered the incremental changes that AI can enable; for example, how it can improve existing approaches to business services and creative processes, help content

¹ This report reflects the outcomes of a conversation with invited industry and government leaders—not a formal consultation—and does not represent the full film and TV sector.

reach new audiences and grow global markets. They also considered how AI can transform the creative industries, generating entirely new ways of creating, producing and distributing content.

Conducted under Chatham House rules, the conversation focused on concrete ways in which these industries, made up primarily of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), adopt, leverage and innovate with AI.

Key themes and considerations

Four key themes and pathways for action came out of this discussion:

- **Sovereign and Accessible Data:** Participants spoke of the need for access to data, including from the federal government and the national cultural institutions it supports, to develop effective, Canadian-made AI tools and solutions. These solutions include Canadian-owned and governed public data infrastructure, in which government should be investing alongside its investments in private companies. The conversation also focused on practical solutions that are being developed to steward data, to track data provenance and to improve transparency around how data is used in relation to AI. Participants noted that, given the vast amount and variety of data that exists across different government entities, having a centralized hub for Canadian data would be a competitive asset.
- **Skills, Training and Education:** There was general agreement among participants that Canada needs a national AI education and training strategy to support AI literacy across K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions and professional sectors, including the creative industries. Participants emphasized an interdisciplinary approach that can prepare every Canadian (and especially young creators) to understand and assess the utility of new AI tools and technologies, and harness their power to remain competitive in an evolving job market and across the production pipeline.
- **Regulation:** While some participants advocated for government regulation to provide clarity and enforceable guardrails, others preferred flexible, iterative guidance from government and industry. Harmonized standards and shared principles are required to avoid fragmentation and confusion: the risk, as stated by participants, is the multiplication of guidelines from various sources, creating confusion and achieving the opposite effect in terms of effective guidance. Standards should include ethical guidelines for AI use in media, including content provenance protocols.
- **Cultural Sovereignty and Creative Ambition:** Participants noted that this moment of economic, technological and geopolitical change is the right time for Canada to be ambitious about its creative economy and the creators who tell our stories. This is the time to think big, to be ambitious, and invest in the full diversity of creators and creative SMEs that drive Canada's creative economy. Adjustments to government funding models are needed to make sure creators and companies benefit from support as cultural engines, creators of high-quality content, and as a rapidly growing industrial sector.

Above all, participants called for ambitious thinking—the “moon shot”—around what success could look like for the country’s creators, creative SMEs and creative economy. They recognized that cultural sovereignty and identity are as important as economic sovereignty right now: this is a moment in which Canada can strengthen its position in the global economy as a creative powerhouse as part of its overall strategy for economic growth. Taking these next steps will require coordinated action across sectors, with bold policy thinking and sustained investment in talent and infrastructure.

Next steps

The roundtable reinforced that the creative industries offer a dynamic and forward-looking community eager to shape the future of AI policy in Canada.

Canada recently launched a 30-day sprint and public engagement to reimagine its AI strategy, including with a new AI Strategy Task Force to reshape the country’s strategic approach to AI. Its priorities include AI research, adoption, commercialization, investment, safety and trust, skills development, digital infrastructure and systems security.

At the Hub, we see this as an opportunity to build on conversations that we’ve been having over the past two years to ensure that arts, culture and creativity are woven into the nation’s AI future. It is an opportunity to ensure that creative voices are part of the conversation. This October, we are conducting a survey of creators and creative industries’ professionals to gather perspectives and inform a sector-wide response to ISED’s consultation on the renewal of Canada’s AI strategy. Beyond this moment, we will continue to work with partners to bring arts, culture and creative industries to the table in discussions with policymakers.

AI Roundtable Participants

Francesca Accinelli, Telefilm Canada	Shingai Manjengwa, Fireside Analytics
Keith Bennie, TIFF	Laura Mingail, Innovation Consultant
Jaime Burke, Canadian Heritage	Isabelle Mondou, Canadian Heritage
Rod Butler, Canada Media Fund	Joëlle Montminy, Canadian Heritage
Kimberley Chretien, Canadian Heritage	Carole Piovesan, INQ Law
Kim Davidson, SideFX	Ana Serrano, OCAD University
Ina Fichman, Intuitive Pictures	Tessa Sproule, CBC
Michael Hirsh, Floating Island Entertainment	Kirstine Stewart, Blink49 Studios
Raja Khanna, Dark Slope	Alexandrine Torres de Figueiredo, Canadian Media Producers Association
Richard Koo, Canada Media Fund	Louis-Richard Tremblay, National Film Board of Canada
Miriam Kramer, OCAD University	Reid Valmestad, Copilot
Anita Lee, TIFF	Kelly Wilhelm, OCAD University
Aron Levitz, Wattpad	