

IS TECHNOLOGY KILLING ENTERTAINMENT?

INTRODUCTION

Is Technology Killing Entertainment?

Our Future Talks series is designed to explore the topical issues defining tomorrow's world. Our previous events have examined - if AI is a friend or foe? What is the point of the Metaverse? And what might London look like in 2050?

In February 2024, we were delighted to host the fourth instalment of our Future Talks series at Here East, focusing minds on the question: 'Is Technology Killing Entertainment?'

Navigating the key themes which sit at the intersection of innovation, creativity and culture, our event explored the current and future entertainment landscapes, discussing how technology is changing the industry and whether this evolution is for the better or worse.

Convening leaders from the worlds of technology, media, televised sport, theatre, advertising and education on our campus, the conversations examined how emerging technologies have sparked a new era in entertainment, enhancing the industry in exciting but unprecedented ways.

Moderated by one of the UK's top journalists, Katie Prescott, the Technology Business Editor at The Times, the event saw an exciting panel of experts sharing ideas, insights and perspectives in a variety of engaging sessions.

The proceedings began with a scene-setting roundtable discussion where a diverse group of entertainment experts examined how the friction between technology and humanity creates both a reckoning and an inspiring opportunity. Following this, we convened in Plexal Park to imagine what

the future of entertainment might look like. This began with an insightful fireside chat between Katie and television industry titan, Jamie Hindhaugh, who discussed how technology is driving increased personalisation in entertainment experiences, as well as helping the industry to scale, bridge labour gaps, and capture more data.

Next, Katie sat down with an interesting line-up of panellists including - Adam Perry, Tutor & Consultant at LMA, Ruth Mortimer, Global President of Advertising Week Europe, Suhair Khan, Chair of Studio Wayne McGregor, and Solomon Rogers, Global Director of Innovation at Magnopus - to unpack the ethical and practical challenges posed by technology's advancements, as well as the multitude of opportunities around creative enhancement and access.

This discussion saw panellists offer insights on how the entertainment landscape is evolving; what challenges, risks and opportunities are emerging as a result; and how the industry can embrace and navigate this to drive new levels of creativity.

This event provided a fantastic opportunity to glimpse into the future of entertainment from the perspective of industry experts, underscoring Here East's commitment to fueling collaboration, innovation as well as the transformative power of technology.

OVERVIEW

“Bringing people together is our expertise at Here East. Our convening ability has always been our superpower, and our most recent Future Talks event was no exception.”

Mike Magan, COO of Here East



This event, which is part of our series of future gazing discussions about topical issues facing London, explored whether technology will change the world of TV, film, sports, and theatre for better or worse.

We heard from industry experts and pioneers, who were tasked with answering the difficult question - is technology killing entertainment? And we covered a lot of ground. From the advent of AI to the power of immersive experiences. From virtual venues to live concert experiences in our living rooms. It's clear that how we consume content has changed, and that we may well see further ground-breaking evolution as rapid advancements in technology continue.

We also learnt that London - and East London - where we have long been champions of the entertainment industry, will continue this exciting trajectory. Our capital is brimming with creativity, talent, and the best minds in the industry. That, we all agreed on emphatically.

At Here East we have long embraced the power of change and the importance of evolution to drive positive impact.

Just over ten years ago, the very idea for Here East was borne out of a commitment to putting regeneration and innovation in our East London community first. This was brought to life through the transformation of the former Press and Broadcast centre used during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to broadcast the Olympics to the world. This significant piece of infrastructure has been turned into a place for innovators, creatives, and students alike.

A decade on, we are home to 6,500 people who work and study onsite, and are a launchpad for innovation, convening global technology companies, start-ups, academic institutions, content developers, and creative businesses.

It is our privilege to use what we have built over the last ten years to bring together our community to learn more about the issues of tomorrow. Convening and collaboration, it's simple. But we know it works.

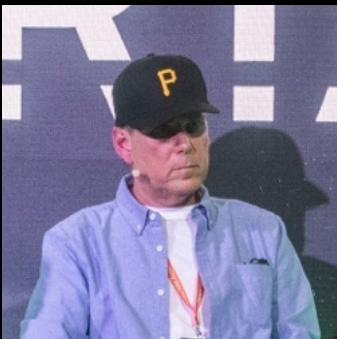
KEY FINDINGS

01 The changing landscape



"We now need to distinguish between AI and creativity and consider what it means to be creative. Will artists become more like curators of content? The question is where these technologies go, and what happens in the future."

Suhair Khan,
Chair of Studio Wayne McGregor & CEO of open-ended



"Technology and music have always gone together, from CDs to streaming. So I don't think technology is killing entertainment, it's enhancing the way we consume and produce entertainment just as it's always done."

Adam Perry,
Tutor and Consultant at LMA



"TV never replaced radio, movies never replaced books, it's just a new type of content. We're always fearful, but it's important to let new forms of technology evolve. I don't think technology is killing entertainment, I think it's evolving it. I think it's accelerating at a pace that's hard for a company or industry to adapt to, but it's also democratising technology and shortening the gaps. I'm excited to see how that evolves to a new standard."

Solomon Rogers,
Global Director of Innovation at Magnopus

KEY FINDINGS

02 Identifying the challenges



"Technology might not be killing entertainment, but it's definitely taking chunks out of the middle section of the industry. The junior video editor can now be replaced by AI - and that's something we need to consider."

Ruth Mortimer,
Global President of Advertising Week Europe



"When everything that's being generated becomes about digital platforms, whether it's because it has been produced by AI or channelled through these systems, we have the risk of losing the potential to experience one another, to feel the world around us, and to create new ways of thinking and experiencing."

Suhair Khan,
Chair of Studio Wayne McGregor & CEO of open-ended



"Another thing to consider is the question of trust. Can we trust that what we're seeing is real if it's being portrayed as real? Computer-created content can be passed off as something authentic or human-made, so what happens to the trust in the industry if we find out that it's not? How does that affect how people feel about entertainment?"

Gavin Poole,
CEO of Here East

KEY FINDINGS

03 Evolving and embracing



"One of the great things about technology is its ability to create a personalised experience within a collective viewing. When you think about AI and creativity, you have to think about what this technology can do for your business, for you."

Jamie Hindhaugh,
VP Content and Host at
Broadcast Warner Bros. Discovery Sports



"We're in a really interesting place where technology is providing new opportunities to be creative and is enabling lots of people to enter the world of entertainment who never could access that before. Skills can be less important than ideas because technology is enabling that. For example, I'm not a good drawer, but AI allows what I see in my head to be transmitted to the screen or the paper. So does that mean am I now a cartoonist? Maybe it does."

Ruth Mortimer,
Global President of
Advertising Week Europe



CONCLUSION

Unprecedented. Challenging. Promising and exciting. These were some of the key sentiments expressed at our latest Future Talks event when examining technology's impact on the entertainment industry."

Gavin Poole, CEO of Here East



London - and East London in particular - has put itself on the map as a world-leading destination for creative talent and innovation, and has set the stage for groundbreaking developments in film, TV, and music.

But as we face a new era for our creative sectors, with the digital revolution unfolding at an unforeseen speed, it is imperative that we ask the difficult questions now, and that we welcome open dialogue and debate in order to shape a successful future.

At Here East we have always celebrated our ability to bring together industry leaders and pioneers across multiple sectors. We want to be at the intersection of that friction between technology and creativity because that is where the magic happens and new possibilities emerge.

It was a pleasure to once again facilitate such an engaged and lively discussion at our latest event, as we heard from those at the heart of this creative and technological transformation. From excitement around the inspiring opportunities that technology brings, to concerns raised about trust, ethics and authenticity - it is evident that the path ahead is not without its complexities.

But what also became clear over the course of the evening is that technology and entertainment are intertwined and interdependent. Progress in one field can and should benefit the other, but it depends on one key factor: collaboration.

If we listen and learn, we will reap the benefits of a future that looks more innovative and accessible than ever.



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Roundtable guests

The Times, Here East, LMA, Goldsmiths University, Sports Interactive, Hawk London, Royal College of Arts, Sadlers Wells, Food Arts and Technology, Advertising Week, Advertising Association, Showmax, Magnopus, Snapchat, Layered Reality, Studio Wayne McGregor, LMA Canyon Studios, Greater London Authority, Hackney Empire Theatre, LCF, Warner Brothers Discovery Sports, Chemical Brothers, Plexal, Warp Records