

Sports, Arts, and Newsrooms

AI TECHNOLOGY BRINGS ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW CHALLENGES

BY SUSAN THWING

All illustrations in this article are AI-generated.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere. Have you just watched a movie, read an article, or enjoyed a piece of music? AI may have had a role in it. Did your favorite NFL team draft a new player? AI may have had some input into the decision.

AI has permeated our lives, revolutionizing industries and transforming how we approach problem-solving, decision-making, and creativity.

The Game Changer: AI in Sports

In recent years, the intersection of AI and sports has given rise to a new era of innovation and performance enhancement. From choosing the player to optimizing performance to revolutionizing fan engagement, AI is proving to be a game-changer in the world of sports.

According to a report by Allied Market Research, statistics show the AI segment in the sports industry will reach a value of 19.2 billion dollars by 2030.

Experts say AI technology can analyze game films and improve player performance to help teams make better decisions about player personnel and improve their scouting process. In 2003, Michael Lewis' book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* (which later became a film) illustrated the early concept and coined the term "Moneyball" to describe the Oakland Athletics' innovative approach to building competitive teams.

The idea was simple—use an analytical, evidence-based data approach to make a roster. It was a game changer from the traditional method of relying on baseball scouts' traditional, often subjective, wisdom to judge player ability. Instead, machine learning algorithms analyze player statistics, videos, and other data to identify promising talent. The goal is to save scouting teams time and resources, all while improving the accuracy of their selections.

Fast forward to today's advanced AI systems. "AI is everything now in baseball," said Mark Meisner, MLBPA Certified Player Agent/Advisor at Troy-based Ball Players Agency. Meisner has been a sports agent since 2016.

"It used to be that a scout would look at the player on the field. The objective opinions of the scouts watching the player was key," he said. "Now, teams are looking at a draft model using data incorporating everything from the player's age to the circumference of his wrist. They use this model to determine who they'll be selecting throughout the draft."

Meisner said this can be a positive tool, but it also allows good players to slip through the cracks unnoticed. It makes an agent's job—to get the player in front of teams—more difficult. By focusing on data for recruiting players teams can bypass aspects of the player's ability that only the human eye—the traditional scout—can see.

"When teams rely so heavily on the draft model, it is difficult for agents to compete against a sports model to present the benefits of a player—the aspects of talent that cannot be seen in data or numbers," he said.

The draft model also affects a player's compensation. "It's affecting sports salaries, which can range from $5,000 to multi-millions in baseball. This is life-changing money that is increasingly being based on data," Meisner said, adding that sports agents are now developing similar customized data models to "bring these stats into the negotiation equation."

Meisner said the compilation of data on sports figures isn't new—think of the stats on the back of cherished, paper baseball cards—but AI brings it to a new level. "The data can be beneficial if used objectively to assess the players, the team training needs, etc. And we, as agents, can also work with this first-hand info effectively," he said.

The good news is: AI plays a crucial role in minimizing risk and injuries in sports. Predictive analytics models can assess an athlete's injury susceptibility based on various factors, including training load, biomechanics, and past injuries. This information helps design injury prevention programs and adjust training regimens to reduce the likelihood of injuries. "These programs can factor in the bat's angle, how fast the bat moves, every detail," Meisner said. "These programs can help athletes stay healthy and reduce injuries throughout their career."

In the event of an injury, AI contributes to more efficient rehabilitation. Physical therapy programs can be customized based on individual recovery patterns, and wearable devices can monitor rehabilitation progress, providing real-time feedback to athletes and medical professionals.

Other ways AI works to enhance sports include:

- **Player Performance**—Analyzing vast amounts of sports data, ranging from player biometrics to game statistics, AI enables coaches and trainers to identify patterns, weaknesses, and areas for improvement with unprecedented accuracy. AI-powered systems can process and analyze performance data in real time, providing instant feedback to athletes. This allows for personalized training programs catering to individual players' strengths and weaknesses.
- **Innovative Coaching**—AI is also revolutionizing coaching methodologies. Coaches now have access to advanced analytics and predictive modeling tools that aid in strategic decision-making during games. Machine learning algorithms can analyze opposing team strategies, predict player behavior, and recommend optimal game plans.
- **Post-game analysis**—AI helps teams evaluate their performance and identify areas for improvement. This data-driven approach allows for more informed decision-making, enhancing overall team strategy and contributing to a higher level of competition.
- **Fan Engagement**—Immersive experiences reshape how fans engage with and experience sports. AI-powered virtual and augmented reality technologies allow fans to feel more connected to the action as algorithms personalize content delivery, tailoring sports broadcasts and highlights to individual preferences. Social media platforms also leverage AI to analyze user behavior and preferences, delivering more relevant sports-related content to fans.



AI in the Arts: Creativity and Artificial Intelligence

AI in the arts has been under scrutiny, especially in the past year. In September 2023, after a 148-day strike, Hollywood screenwriters ended the five-month walkout with better safeguards against using artificial intelligence in script writing. Then, in November, after 118 days on the picket lines, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists ended its strike, at the core of which was producers using actors' scanned images—from performances in other productions—via AI to create background players in new television and movie programs without compensation to the actor.

Locally, this past October, the College for Creative Studies became the first AICAD (the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design) college in the United States to fully develop and implement an institution-wide artificial intelligence policy.

Tim Flattery, provost of the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, said the move was made to ensure responsible usage of AI. "(Using AI-generated materials) is taking from other people's work without their permission. Right now, it is a free-for-all," Flattery said. "Artists and designers have no protection for their work. I would equate it to the days of Napster when we were all listening to artist's music for free, and the artists weren't getting paid. That had to be formalized so that we eventually paid a subscription to listen. We're in the Napster days of Artificial Intelligence."

The CCS AI policy is designed to adapt and implement guardrails for AI usage so that students and faculty can use AI as a process and research tool only. Final images or papers must be human generated, according to a CCS news release.

To create the policy, "CCS systematically researched, surveyed and crafted a robust plan for broad-scale AI usage." Working group members addressed AI use in the classroom, academic integrity, and AI integration into final work.

Paul Snyder, Chair of the Transportation Design department and AI working group member, said the new policy will enhance the student experience at CCS. "An AI policy offers guidance to faculty and students by establishing guidelines to stay within, ensuring students continue to get the most of their respective departmental programs while being aware of trends in technology they will have at their disposal after graduation."

Furthermore, recognizing the challenges and benefits of AI systems and how they differ by discipline, the College looked to the program Chairs to develop program-specific AI utilization guidelines for their department's curriculum.

Flattery said AI has many benefits and can be used as a Facilitator to enhance initial creative research. "The CCS written policy is that you can't use a final image and claim it as yours by typing a prompt. But you can use it for your research process, so maybe it gives you a shape language you might not think of, a color palette you might not think of, or a writing system you might not otherwise think to use. It may inspire you to go in a new, untapped direction. But you still have to execute (the final project) on your own," he said. "It can help expand your scope and vision on how to approach design."

AI in the Newsroom

Newsrooms have increasingly turned to AI to streamline various aspects of news production. Automated content creation tools can assist journalists by generating routine reports, analyzing data, and crafting outlines of news articles.

Natural language processing (NLP) algorithms enable computers to understand and interpret human language, quickly summarizing vast amounts of information. AI-driven tools can also identify patterns, detect trends, and provide insights, enhancing news reporting quality and speed.

But the merits of AI in the newsroom are up for debate.

One notable application of AI in the newsroom is using chatbots for audience engagement. These AI-driven conversational agents can interact with readers, answer queries, and provide personalized news updates, fostering a more dynamic and interactive relationship between news organizations and their audiences.

In 2023, the *New York Times* filed a lawsuit against Microsoft and OpenAI, alleging that millions of the news companies' articles were unlawfully used to power these chatbots, such as ChatGPT, and questioning its fit with fair use.

In January 2024, the rise of artificial intelligence in journalism prompted a hearing in the United States Senate to examine and identifying the risks of AI, and to develop ways to mitigate these risks. Under discussion was whether 'fair use' applies to news under copyright law, such as with the *New York Times* articles. Also debated was the practice of AI companies using journalistic works to train their large language models. Legislative solutions, like the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA), were evaluated. This news media bargaining code-style bill would allow publishers to negotiate with major technology companies to use news on their platforms.

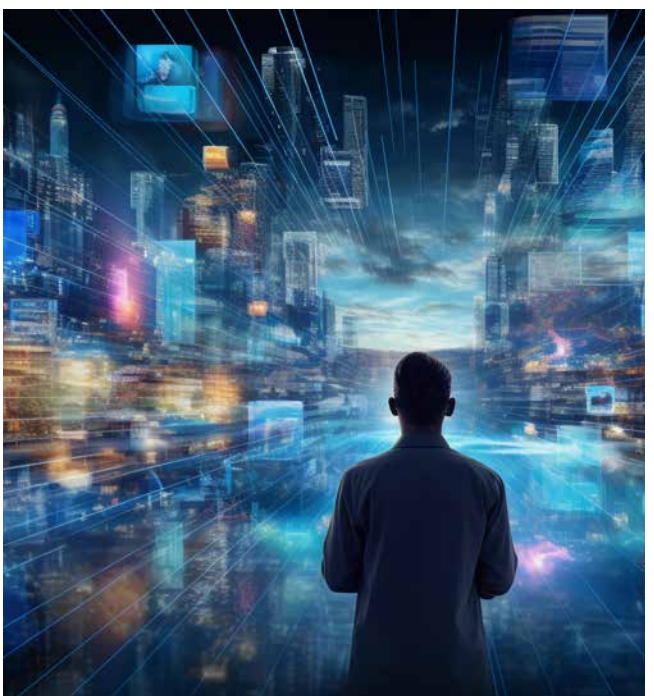
But the discussion is in its beginning stage.

Adopting AI in journalism also brings forth a host of ethical considerations. This includes issues such as bias in algorithms, misinformation, and the potential for AI to affect the industry's commitment to objective reporting.

On the plus side, Sam Srauy, associate professor in communications at Oakland University, said generative AI could bring a demand for a more skilled journalist who, while freed from some of the more time-consuming aspects of their work, such as basic research, can focus on in-depth investigative reporting, analysis, and storytelling that require human intuition and contextual understanding. "AI has no understanding of racism, homophobia, or the uglier parts of humanity and cannot make judgments on context, so we need the journalist to take that information, analyze it, and put the human element in the story," he said.

Other concerns about the integration of AI include job displacement in the industry. Journalists must adapt to the evolving landscape by acquiring new skills related to AI technologies and data analysis to remain relevant and effective.

Srauy said it's a matter of evolution. "In the course of history, we've seen these changes. The printing press replaced scribes in the Middle Ages; the typewriter overtook someone's job; we no longer have copyboys; digital replaced printing in many cases, but people still work," he said. "As technology changes, we change how we work."



Tomorrow and AI

Tomorrow's AI is poised to revolutionize the realms of arts, sports, and newsrooms, bringing unprecedented creativity, efficiency, and insight. In the arts, AI-generated content can blend with human expression, pushing the boundaries of imagination. In sports, advanced analytics and predictive modeling may enhance performance, strategy, and fan engagement. Meanwhile, newsrooms have the ability to leverage AI to streamline information gathering, fact-checking, and content creation.

But experts say we must prioritize embracing the human factor to work alongside AI—to foster trust, address ethical concerns, and create AI technologies that complement human skills rather than replace them. Balancing technological progress with ethical considerations is essential for a beneficial usage of AI.