

Who's Afraid of AI? (Mainz, 17–18 Nov 25)

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Campus, Alte Mensa, Nov 17–18, 2025
www.geku.uni-mainz.de/ai-workshop/

Steffen Haug, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

Who's Afraid of AI?

Creativity, Credibility and the Humanities.

International student- and graduate-workshop by the Faculty of History and Cultural Studies – Department of History, Institute for Ancient Studies (IAW), Department of Anthropology and African Studies (ifeas), Institute of Art History and Musicology (IKM)

The wave of developments in generative artificial intelligence is challenging some of the core concepts in History and Cultural Studies: since the advent of generative AI, 'truth' as a benchmark for knowledge production can no longer be taken for granted, and questions arise about whether 'creativity' as a source of human culture can now be ascribed to machines. At the same time, the technology opens-up a wide range of new methods and possibilities – from text and image recognition and classification to forms of academic writing. Application and reflection go hand in hand, sharpening our understanding of generative AI. The combination of active use, experimentation and critique forms the starting point for this event organised by the Faculty of History and Cultural Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University.

The international workshop seeks to foster exchange across the fields and perspectives mentioned above. The discussions will focus both on the cultural, societal and technical frameworks of knowledge production as well as questions of authenticity and creativity in machine-generated outcomes.

Monday, 17 November

Alte Mensa (left auditorium)

10:00 Welcome: Dean Prof. Dr. Heide Frielinghaus, Vice-President Prof. Dr. Stephan Jolie

10:15 Introduction: Prof. Dr. Stefanie Acquavella-Rauch, Dr. Steffen Haug on behalf of the organisers

10:50 Short break

11:00 Keynote: Prof. Dr. Stephen J. Cave (Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge):

"Origin Myths of the Artificial and the Intelligent"

Moderation: Dr. Steffen Haug

12:30 Lunch break

14:00 Lightning-talks

14:00 Classification: Dr. Barbara McGillivray (King's College, London, online):

"Analysing word meaning in Historical Texts with Computational Methods"

Moderation: Dr. Maxime Bami

14:50 Authenticity: Dr. Michael Townsen Hicks (University of Glasgow):

"Intentional Metaphors and Intentional Reality: Using Teleological Language to Discuss AI"

Moderation: Dr. Jan Beek

15:40 Tea break

15:50 Authenticity: Hadiyah Touqeer B.A. (University of Delhi):

"Forging Trust in an Unstable World: Authenticity, Deceit, and the Digital Afterlife of Oral Memory"

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Thomas Blank

16:40 Creativity: Prof. Dr. Miriam Akkermann (Universität der Künste, Berlin, online):

"Creative computing – creative computer?"

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Stefanie Acquavella-Rauch

17:30 Break, change to: Alte Mensa (Atrium Maximum)

18:00 Fishbowl-Discussion: "AI in the Academic World – Opportunities, Risks & Ethical Concerns"
(co-organised with the Junge Akademie of the Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz)

Prof. Dr. Acquavella-Rauch, Frauke Pirk, Prof. Thorsten Schrade, Michel Seiwert and others; Moderation: Carina Schroeder (freelance Journalist, host of the podcast „KI Verstehen“)

19:30 Reception

Tuesday, 18 November

Alte Mensa (Atrium Maximum)

9:00 Case Studies: Visual Art, Music, Dance

9:15 Dr. Be Andr (London):

"Code and the Sensuous"

Artist-talk with Prof. Dr. Ursula Ströbele (Hochschule für bildende Künste Braunschweig)

10:15 Coffee Break

10:30 Prof. Dr. Immanuel Ott and Henrik Schuld (Hochschule für Musik, Mainz):

"AI in Music Schools and as a tool for the reconstruction of lost scores"

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Stefanie Acquavella-Rauch

11:30 Coffee Break

11:45 Prof. Florian Jenett, David Rittershaus and Anton Koch (Motionbank / Hochschule Mainz):

"AI in Dance-Studies. Annotated Pre-Notations"

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Stefanie Acquavella-Rauch

12:45 Lunch

14:00 Working groups and round-up

Organised by: Prof. Dr. Stefanie Acquavella-Rauch, Dr. Jan Beek, Prof. Dr. Thomas Blank, Dr. Maxime Brami, Dr. Steffen Haug, Prof. Dr. Jörg Rogge and Sabine Wilke.

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Reference:

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